

AMERICAN LIBERALISM AND WORLD POLITICS, 1931-1941

LIBERALISM'S PRESS AND SPOKESMEN
ON THE ROAD BACK TO WAR
BETWEEN MUKDEN AND PEARL HARBOR

JAMES J. MARTIN

FOREWORD BY John Chamberlain

VOLUME II

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VOLUME II

American Liberalism and World Politics, 1931-1941



MY COUNTRY, IS ANYONE SINGING OF THEE?

The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* was one of the leading American newspapers which courageously opposed the Roosevelt program of armament, interventionism and war prior to Pearl Harbor. No other cartoonist was more blunt and devastating in ridiculing the pro-war propaganda than their world-famous Daniel Robert Fitzpatrick. The cartoon here reproduced is, perhaps, his most bitingly satirical.

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POPULAR-FRONT COLLECTIVE
SECURITY MOBILIZES AMERICAN
LIBERALISM AGAINST GERMANY,
1935-1939

THE GROWING PERTURBATION AFTER
THE SAAR VOTE AND THE STRESA CONFERENCE

IN THE spring of 1935, after the Saar had voted to return to Germany, conscription had been adopted by the Hitler regime, the Hitler-Simon talks had collapsed, and the Popular Front program had gotten under way, a new possibility began to take shape. It was the first occasion when Soviet Russian moves began to indicate the eventual success of their policy toward Germany over that of exponents of Anglo-German understanding, or that of a general European security agreement, which had heretofore been the major topic of American liberal discussion of the road to peace in Europe. This latter had been true despite a strong countercurrent of quiet dread on their part upon contemplation of German determination to break the Versailles territorial settlement log-jam. Popular Front thinking and pressure on the liberals began to direct their eyes toward a Soviet-type solution, even though the Russian collective-security position involved few differences from the older French proposals except that the major beneficiaries were to be the Communists.

On April 10, 1935, the *Nation* was editorially cheered by Anthony Eden's historic visit to Moscow and speculated brightly on the possibility of an Eastern Locarno pact against Germany now, with England, France, Poland and Russia as the main partners. It qualified

this by the admission that the Poles were not likely to appreciate pressure to join, since they were on an independent tack, playing the role of buffer state between Germany and Russia; "To join the encirclement of Germany will limit this independence and bring it [Poland] back into the French system," the *Nation* further observed. But since the Poles were not sure that even this combine would be strong enough to prevent a war, which "would be fought in Poland," should it happen, "An Eastern Locarno for the sweet sake of France is no longer of interest to Poland," the editorial concluded. But it was felt that Hitler would stir up so many troubles that there was little hope of this anyway; his threat toward Russia, and his similar one toward Italy in Austria, his pressure on the Baltic States over the question of the return of Memel to Germany, while still trying to widen the breach between England and other powers, all would contribute to preventing this accord. The issue still seemed to be, however, the prevention of Hitler from adjusting any of the territorial hangovers of the War, now that rearmament of Germany was a reality. The *Nation* in particular took heart at all news in April that suggested roadblocks for German ambitions. There was no displeasure expressed that the Hitler-Simon talks proved fruitless; on the contrary, this gave new life to Soviet proposals for their collective security proposals in concert with the British and French. The Soviet Union "more than any country has urged regional pacts of mutual assistance as a safeguard of peace, and has stressed the necessity for united action by all the powers against the threat of German aggression," the *Nation* pleaded.¹

"German aggression" obviously was to be the charge against any more moves to alter the Versailles map of Europe. On April 17 an editorial expressed pleasure that the National Socialists had failed to get the two-thirds vote in the city of Danzig necessary to bring about its return to Germany. It was interpreted as a major sign of German weakness, and evidence that the opposition could take heart from it and confidently expect "an ultimate return to sanity."² In the same issue, Oswald Garrison Villard rejoiced in a column titled "Hitler Aids Moscow" that his anti-Communist propaganda had not diverted British foreign policy makers and Captain Eden from their determination to "stand together" with Russia, the corollary to the Franco-Soviet pact. Villard hoped that this "moral cordon around Germany" would deflate the Germans and make them docile.³ The *Nation* was irked by what seemed to be official American interpretation of the likely consequences of Hitler rearmament and the new *cordon sanitaire* policy against him, namely, the neutrality doctrine and the drive to build up American armed might. It ran completely into collision with those like themselves who wished to think of collective security as a war-preventer, and some irritation was expressed at the "contra-

dictory" American action of preparing to stay out of such agreements while building defenses, since collective security was so obviously a "more civilized and economical system" for inhibiting the incidence of war.⁴

More in harmony with collective security views appeared to be the news emanating from the Stresa conference, from which the *Nation* took much comfort late in April, 1935. The general tone of the conference seemed to be that of willingness to deal with collective security on regional bases as a check to German ideas of expansion and destruction of the territorial settlements of Versailles.⁵ And in early May it seemed that Hitler's fat was in the British fire for sure with his announcement that Germany was building submarines again.⁶

There was an even more pronounced schizoidal quality to liberal reporting and interpreting of Hitler Germany by now than there had been in 1933 and 1934. Over this span of time the mixing of two utterly incompatible views persisted; first, that of Hitler as swaggering bully directing a powerful brute-state aiming hostile gestures in all directions and terrifying his neighbors, peace-loving without exception; and second, Hitler the insecure hysteric leading a nation with an economy ready to break down every weekend upon the appearance of the latest Communist newspaper, and as the *Nation* put it on June 5, 1935 "hemmed in on all sides by enemy states," and "hoping against hope that he can break the ever-tightening ring that surrounds him." Between Stresa and the Communist Popular Front, his future appeared very dim, in this particular context.⁷

To be sure, the main case against Hitler Germany in June 1935 was not so much that its leaders had yet done much of anything as the fact that they had not abandoned their determination to seek the rectification of post-1919 German frontiers. Liberals, once the great champions of this program, now were quite generally hostile to Hitler's ideas on the re-occupation of the Rhineland, and the retaking of Eupen, Malmédy, Memel, the Polish Corridor, the Sudetenland and Danzig and the incorporation of Austria into the Reich, but even the most implacable of them, even the most devoted Russian partisans among American liberals, lacked the temerity to suggest that any of these areas was not profoundly German.

In Central and Southeastern Europe, liberals hoped and then took for granted that Hitler's pressure on Austria had driven France and Mussolini together, since a German Austria meant the swift collapse of Czechoslovakia and the drawing of Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria into the German politico-commercial orbit, thus ousting French influence there completely. For this reason it may be remembered that liberals were inclined toward softness in the case of French faint-heartedness when the Italo-Ethiopian war broke out. It was recognized that they could not oppose Il Duce in Africa if they wanted to

retain his support against German ambitions in Austria. Thus the liberals had devoted the preponderant part of their literary moral pressure on England. When the English did take the initiative against Mussolini, liberals on several occasions, it will also be recalled, admitted that English moral pretensions were not so much motivated by tenderness toward Ethiopians and their independence as it was by fears of Italian influence in the Mediterranean, the Suez and in the region bordering on to British East African colonial interests.

Thus can be seen the merging of the Austrian and Ethiopian questions in the spring of 1936. British softness in the matter of Austria turned liberals to face East Europe and look upon Russia as the last-ditch barrier to Hitler, even though the Soviets were obviously protecting themselves and had not been noted to this time for any extended strong views on Germany's voiding of Versailles. With the French caught between the British and Germans on Ethiopia and with Poland in a similar position concerning Russia and Germany, it left a most confused and perplexing situation. It is no wonder that editorial positions wheeled in staggering circles.

All in all, there was an insoluble aspect which the more restrained liberal writers recognized. It was expressed a number of times, one of the most eloquent being that of Marcel W. Fodor, Vienna correspondent to the *Manchester Guardian* and a frequent contributor to liberal periodicals on foreign affairs, on the occasion of the Rome conference suggested by Mussolini in June, 1935 on the heels of the ending of the second Stresa meeting. In his long report to the *Nation* on the meeting, proposed by the Italian leader to create a Danubian pact "to assure the independence of Austria and maintain peace," as well as to head off German expansionism, Fodor declared pessimistically, "No conference can undo the evils which the breaking up of the old Austro-Hungarian Monarchy caused in Central Europe." Granting that the new Rome meeting might bring some alleviation to the tenseness, Fodor went on, "stupid as the Versailles treaty was, it was a work of genius compared to the obtuse and senseless St. Germain treaty, which dismembered the old Austrian Empire." Fodor blamed the French for the most recent crisis. In their zeal to prevent the German customs union with Austria, they had precipitated it by allowing the most powerful Austrian financial institution to collapse, leading to the widened economic effects of undermining Germany, Austria and Hungary, as well as contributing to driving Great Britain off the gold standard and serious aggravations of world economic conditions generally. Fodor expressed the confidence, with distaste, that German National Socialism was sure to be the ultimate victor in this entire area if the Rome Conference did not reach a satisfactory conclusion.⁸ It was well above average journalistic prediction for the liberal press.

For the *New Republic* and most of its featured liberal contributors,

the evolution of the Popular Front and the stirring of a defiant Germany simultaneously posed a serious conflict. The fervent support of Russia now ran head-on into its established position of opposition to collective security, the result being a somewhat more restrained attitude toward European politics than that of the *Nation* and most of its writers. H. N. Brailsford's response to the outcry following the German denunciation of the Versailles Treaty clauses disarming the Reich on March 16, 1935 was in the tradition of the journal's stand since the time of the Treaty itself: ⁹

I cannot bring myself to share the general indignation. The chief of many follies perpetrated at Versailles was the attempt to obliterate German sovereignty. The conception of absolute national sovereignty is a relic of barbarism and the root of anarchy but one does not abolish it by denying it to a single beaten people. Germany has recovered her sovereignty in the only possible way, by asserting it.

Brailsford was similarly affronted by the inflammatory talk about "aggression" and caustically reminded its loose users, "The concept of 'aggression' has no meaning for morals when the peaceful Powers are merely sated Powers sitting tight on gains they won by their hunger blockade," a cutting comment on the Allied throttling of Germany in the months after the end of the World War. It did seem as if some liberals had lost their perspective, charging the Germans with "aggression" for reintroducing conscription, in view of a 900,000 standing conscript army facing them across Poland from Soviet Russia. The Popular Front was already making a shambles out of consistency. But Brailsford could not hide his sympathy toward Germany in this question, despite his understandable Social Democrat hostility toward Hitlerian domestic policies.

A week later (April 24, 1935) the *New Republic*, commenting on the import of the new Stresa conference, remarked that "Hitler gambled boldly when he defied the Allies, and he won." But it noted too that the conference "more or less ignored Germany's offer to participate in a general pact of non-aggression and to raise no objection if the other participants should supplement it by treaties of mutual assistance." It further observed that the French were using the conference as an occasion to go about constructing what were called "air alliances," adding in amplification, "The old system of alliance and counter-alliance which never wholly disappeared, is now back in the open, though weighted more heavily against Germany than it was in 1914." ¹⁰ It was not a kind comment to make considering the sensibilities of those still impressed by the sonorities of the League of Nations.

Views of this kind prevailed during the rest of the spring in the

New Republic. A May 15 editorial, "What Germany Wants," ignored the flamboyant literary evaluations of the new Germany now making the Marxist rounds and dug into physical and material realities. Of course, the era of technicolor metaphysico-psychologico-poetic analyses of National Socialism, in which part of the essay consisted of seeking and reportedly finding the elements of this dread philosophy seeping out of the German past as far back as Herman the German, was not quite at hand. But a start had been made, especially by some of the more agitated defenders of Communism. In this case, however, editorial opinion was much more impressed by Germany's industrial and food plight, its efforts to restore its 1914 boundaries and to reclaim its lost foundries and food-producing land. The "immediate compulsions of modern economic nationalism" took total preference over political psychoanalysis.¹¹ A further comment on June 5 even went so far as to hazard that the beliefs of Europe's chancelleries were correct that Hitler's foreign policy was "on the whole pacific," if he meant what he said, conceded to be "a highly important 'if.' " ¹²

National self-sufficiency aspirations had not become utterly sinister at this fairly early date. Bruce Bliven, early in November, 1935, even undertook to explain other aspects of such policies, suggesting that "autarchy" had been "forced upon certain countries by necessity, the necessity of stopping the flight of capital, of protecting the national gold supply, of preventing currency depreciation." And he had recognized deeper implications by suggesting that international tension might best be relieved, thus doing away "permanently with the greatest single cause of war," by allocating foreign trade as well as colonies and raw materials.¹³ There was not much doubt in his mind that free access and opportunity in these areas did not exist, and that some forms of combination existed rendering the efforts of some nations quite futile in seeking to attain them.

The pressures on liberals expressing such detached and objective views were increasing, as the weeks wore on. The admonition of George Soule that liberals should do everything possible to maintain world peace and subscribe to neutral feeling was especially difficult when posed against the general liberal commitment toward Germany. Various forces were at work exacerbating the German question and providing powerful instruments for creating hostility to an understanding of the German situation. The pro-Russian press, such as the *New Masses*, with its solid contingent of contributors with ready access to the liberal journals, adopted the position at an early moment consonant with the Popular Front that Hitler was a ravening beast intent on invading Russia at the earliest moment with the Western democracies as allies.¹⁴ Inflammatory material poured out in this weekly emphasizing German propaganda success among its neighbors, and stressing the mistreatment of Communists in German concentra-

tion camps, while delicately avoiding discussion of this phenomenon in Russia. A field day for pro-Communist cartoonists began in September, 1935 when the Hitler regime adopted the swastika as the national flag symbol. For an unexplained reason this symbolism had an effect on many liberals akin to the alleged impression of a red rag on an enraged bull. But in a proper sense the stepped-up Communist propaganda campaign against Hitler Germany in 1935-36 which bore such startling opinion-fruit among liberals must be related to the slow demise of the much-repeated prediction of a Marxist overthrow of Hitler.

THE HOPE FOR A MARXIST UPRISING AGAINST HITLER SLOWLY EXPIRES

It has been mentioned before that the endemic and universal poverty and low living standards of the people of Soviet Russia were subjects which simply could not have been discussed comprehensively in the American liberal press between 1930 and 1940, given the unconditional commitment to the Soviet Union as "an act of faith," as the disillusioned and discomfited Vincent Sheean put it on the occasion when the 1939 *Pakt* caused wholesale shedding of scales from the eyes of a regiment of liberal Soviet enthusiasts and supporters. There developed as a kind of compensation the story of bottomless economic and social misery in Germany, especially after 1933, volubly and vividly attested to by a steady stream of articulate expellees and escapees from the Hitler regime. In view of the two standards of reporting, in which refugees from Russia were not to be believed under any circumstances while those from Germany were not to be questioned, it hardly was to be considered exceptional that the molten adjectives of the Communist press directed toward Germany made an easy transition into the pages of the American liberal press. A general public innocent of the Russo-German power struggle with attitudes pre-cut and pre-stressed for them on both nations was expectable. But since the accent was squarely upon the presumably impossibly bad conditions in Germany, the wonder is that there were no requests for some sort of poll conducted among the vast majority which remained in Germany in order to determine why they were staying.

This internal misery was directly related to the expectation of a Marxist revolution under Hitler, and it died a slow stubborn death in the American liberal press. With about two out of every seven votes in the last pre-Hitler German election (November 6, 1932) going to the Communist and Social Democrat parties, the reason for this hope

can be understood. Knowing that over 13 million voters, of the 22 million who had voted against Hitler, had been supporters of a Marxian organization of some sort, was great comfort. For nearly three years there was, as has been developed before, a steady stream of testimonials to the vitality of the German Marxist underground, with promises that its explosion could be expected momentarily. It was the assumption that further millions not of Marxian persuasion had also joined in this anti-Hitler coalition, presumably amounting now to well over half of the voting age population. An example of what American liberals were getting as a picture of Germany as late as the end of October, 1935 was a *Nation* article of extended length titled "The German Underground Movement" by Kurt Rosenfeld, identified as the Prussian minister of justice in the Social Democrat government established at the end of the World War. Rosenfeld told the same amazing story of a vast Communist publication program, leaflet distribution, clandestine radio attacks, strikes and sabotage, and the existence of a widely distributed Socialist-Communist united front.¹⁵

But the continued survival of Hitler's National Socialist order in spite of all this opposition excited the curiosity of very few. How a regime with over half of the adult voters in fierce and implacable opposition and engaging in hostile underground propaganda constantly could possibly have stemmed a mass revolution should have mystified everyone. To give credit for this survival to the efficient employment of sheer terror was most implausible; Hitler would undoubtedly have been paralyzed if he had had to suppress a much smaller fraction of the German populace. But among many liberals it was still a matter of strong belief into 1935 that Hitler was on shaky grounds at home, seeking by coercion and terror to subdue 20,000,000 active enemies. When the *New Republic* on April 10, 1935 concluded editorially, "Nobody expects that Hitler will be overthrown in the near future, or that the military and industrial forces behind him will lose their power,"¹⁶ it hardly was speaking for more than a small portion of the liberal-left in America, and only momentarily for them. And it continued to report the struggle between Hitler's forces and the German Communists late into 1936. Beginning in this year, however, some adjustments started to be made in the ideological portrait of Germany. One of the earliest was Louis Fischer's dispatch to the *Nation* in February, reporting on what he had just seen in Germany himself. "Many radicals have entered the S.A. and other Fascist organizations for protection rather than from conviction,"¹⁷ he told the American readers who probably were wondering what had happened to the long-promised revolt. They got instead the "beefsteak Nazi," "brown outside, red inside," a reference to the color of the

National Socialist shirt and the political faith of this new band of its wearers.

On the other hand, the theory of early economic collapse of National Socialist Germany kept its vigor, and even after the faith in a Marxian revolution trailed away the repeated assertion of the unviable nature of the Hitler regime's economy showed no diminution. This remained the standard interpretation until 1940, when it was replaced by its obverse in unreality, the image of an unbeatable and omnipresent economic genius with both the power and the ability to conquer the world and reduce all other people to helots.

In October of 1935, *Common Sense* joined in the journalistic reduction of Germany by printing one Dr. A. S. Lipschitz' "Germany's Economic Debacle," a prediction of early and catastrophic internal collapse, brought about by "tremendous cuts in wages and by lowering the standards of living of the German people," and policies which were alleged to be the nadir of economic intelligence.¹⁸ Forgotten for the moment was the general assay of German economic conditions in 1931-1932, when they were supposed to have reached a depth never before attained. Accounts such as this called upon the readers to believe that the situation was now much worse, an achievement which must have tasked to the utmost the credibility of at least some liberal students of German affairs, if not the residue of hard-core wishful thinkers.

Throughout 1936 this view persisted as well. A *New Republic* editorial article in late March of that year expressed steady confidence in the sureness of Hitler's overthrow from internal stresses, recommending that every refusal to deal with him on the international level hastened the day of his dethronement from power and thus increased the chances of continued peace.¹⁹ Even though it was now admitted that the consumers' boycott against German products begun in this country had undergone a "general collapse" by mid-1936,²⁰ there still seemed to be reasons for pressing for this non-intercourse. A strong campaign was conducted by the *Nation* to get the United States to withdraw from the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, and it published rumors of various kinds coming from a British Communist publication *The Week*, edited by a well-known Communist, Claude Cockburn ("An English bulletin whose reliability is ordinarily beyond question") that the German system was in grave troubles. It did not equal the *New Masses*, however, which in June, 1936 published from *The Week* a supposed authoritative story of Cockburn's that Hitler had suffered a total mental collapse and was shortly to step down out of his position of power as Chancellor.²¹

The message of coming German debility and overthrow internally continued. Heinz Liepmann's book *Fires Underground*, with its theme of an anti-Hitler uprising, received a warm review by Franz

Höllering in the *Nation* late in August, 1936, while the *New Republic's* last issue for the year carried a long editorial article, "Nazi Morale Begins to Crack."²² The *Nation's* first issue for 1937 continued in this vein with a substantial account from Walter Duranty, "Hitler's House of Cards." Duranty's contempt for the German regime was immense, largely due to his enthusiasm over Russia's active part in the Spanish Civil War and its diplomatic endeavors among Germany's neighbors generally; "As for Russia, which is today the greatest power in Europe, it has at last begun to realize that one of the ways to avoid war is to pursue an active policy." He was sure that this Russian effort spelled the end of Hitler, and coupled with the French government's determination to back Czechoslovakia, signalled where the stopping of Germany would take place.²³ The *Nation* considered this kind of wishful thinking a formidable kind of factual reportage on European affairs.

In the meantime, the economic experts continued to file stories to the liberal press describing the mortal disease of Germany. The *Nation* featured in the same month with Duranty's black report two pieces by Alexander Vidakovic, the London correspondent of the Belgrade journal *Politika*, which once more proved the German regime was in a desperate state and about to topple momentarily. He repeated the stories of sharply cut standards of living, a crushing debt structure and other frightful costs, iterating the "guns instead of butter" slogan which had by now become standard reportage on the realities of internal German life. At the conclusion of his extended "Germany's Economic Impasse," Vidakovic demonstrated little more knowledge about Germany than most others by expressing much surprise at the absence of any revolt among the people.²⁴

Of course, contradictory material on Germany was plentiful in the daily newspapers. Villard, plagued by foreign travellers returning to America with stories of Germany's attractiveness and apparent well-being, devoted his entire page in the issue for January 30, 1937 to a comprehensive and extremely intemperate denunciation of these people and Germany and Italy as well. He was of the opinion that the measure of a person's loyalty to the United States was the degree of his condemnation of the Hitler and Mussolini regimes, though he diplomatically omitted any requirement that Americans mention anything discreditable about Stalin and Communist Russia.²⁵

Although the year 1937 was a relatively quiet one insofar as liberal attacks on Hitler were concerned, Villard reached his highest level of polemic against him. In his column for November 13 he was still on the subject. "The Hitler government," he trumpeted to the *Nation's* already long-convinced readers, "is the greatest menace to the peace and welfare of the world that exists, and I shall oppose it with every drop of blood in my body and with the last breath I may draw."²⁶

Two years later, with the war he eagerly anticipated already a reality, Villard's strictures against American leanings in the direction of participation were a curious study by comparison.

Although the impression seemed to be abroad among liberals that moral indignation was sufficient to produce tremors in the National Socialist state edifice, a little economic pressure from outside was not unwelcome. When the American press began to discuss early in 1937 the possibility of a loan being made to Germany, in addition to raw material credits, and when both British and American politicians began to talk about its possible merits, the *Nation* expressed its utter opposition to anything of the sort. Its violent editorial attack of February 20 revealed the existence of a world economic barrier already being built against Germany, but its full implications were not explored.²⁷ Its service as an incitation toward deeper exploration of the structure of autarchy, thus building up war pressures, did not come under the usual complex assessment of the economic factors leading to bad blood among national states characteristic of liberal editorial perspicacity. An ambivalent approach to both Hitler and Mussolini appeared on occasion which helped to illustrate the other image of Hitler as the planetary source of all the distress being felt by everybody, but such lessons were scarce. Eliot Janeway's "The Capitalist International," in the September 25, 1937 *Nation*, as the Hitler-Mussolini meetings got underway in Berlin prior to the reinforcement of their relations (the so-called Rome-Berlin Axis) credited them with being the agents of "the international of world capitalism," a front for the real "four-power pact," which Janeway described as a super-organization of Anglo-Franco-Italo-German capitalists, interlocked among themselves and with those of Spain and America.²⁸ This was a concession to the Popular Front fulminations over the course of the war in Spain as well as material which tended to direct attention away from the sorely-pressed Soviet as a consequence of the then current trials. But on the whole it was more common to read reports of growing tension and progressive debility rather than accounts of improved vitality and extension of efforts. On the previous May 8 the *Nation* had announced,²⁹

There are three outstanding facts in European politics today. The first and most important is the gradual undermining of the economic and social strength of Germany and Italy. The second is the evolution of Anglo-French relations into what seems to be another military entente. The third is the tremendous increase in the Soviet Union's armed might.

The renewed solidarity between Hitler and Mussolini in September did give impetus to worried speculations such as that of Janeway, but on the whole the feeling persisted that there was far more reason for

suggesting their increased weakness rather than their improved vigor. Another liberal expert on Germany, Guenther Reimann, in the *New Republic* for November 17, supported this thesis in his "Morale and the Nazis."³⁰ There seemed to be no reason for yearning for a Marxian upheaval in Germany now; the Hitlerians were crumpling internally of their own pressures.

The economic and political changes of personnel in Germany in the fall of the year and into the early weeks of 1938, followed by the swift German moves to reconstitute imperial Germany's Central European outlines, ended most of this expectation of a German day of doom brought about by their own blunders and inexpertness. Liberals were soon able to credit the once allegedly floundering Germans with the ability to saturate the commerce of the world and bring every nation on the planet behind their stride.

THE REOCCUPATION OF THE RHINELAND PRODUCES STIRRINGS OF MIXED CONCERN

The preliminary German move prior to the movements of 1938-1939 to reincorporate former German lands and peoples on their edges, the denunciation of the 1925 Locarno treaty and the moving of troops early in March, 1936 into the portions of Germany west of the Rhine, demilitarized since the end of the World War, brought a cluster of confused responses from the American liberal weeklies and several prominent commentators in them. There was an additional shiver especially in the *Nation* on March 18, which made a special point of calling attention to "the implacable hatred of Soviet Communism" expressed in Hitler's Reichstag address on the 7th announcing this latest move. Already flustered by Mussolini's successes in Africa, this step appeared to be more ominous. Fear for Russia and not for the French dominated this early comment; "From the standpoint of collective security, firmness toward Mussolini would seem the surest way of preventing Hitler from launching his widely heralded drive toward the Soviet Ukraine,"³¹ it suggested, in strange contrast to advice not long before of favoring softness toward Mussolini to preserve him as a potential adversary against Hitlerian moves in the direction of Austria.

After a week of thought, there was less heat in its editorial stand on this new disturbance, in addition to a rare concession:³²

Yet the weight of international condemnation of the Third Reich has been somewhat lessened by recognition of the truth of Hitler's contention that Germany can never have equality until it exercises full sov-

ereignty over its territory. It is difficult to work up sentiment for sanctions against a country for occupying its own soil.

"All international agreements are not equally important or equally just," it concluded this amazing essay in objectivity on Germany. But it promptly suggested the tightening of collective security via the League, while it argued down a Franco-British "preventive war," as it was being called even in those days, as being too far out of harmony with popular sentiment in these countries.

The *New Republic* in its comment on the same date was remarkably restrained, and aloofly described the predicament of all the nations involved as a consequence of being "victims of their own past, during which they have built up hostile attitudes and policies that simply cannot be obliterated quickly, even given the will," which it was convinced did not exist anyway. Before allowing its blood pressure to rise over Germany in this particular issue it asked rhetorically, "What European country in the past 17 years has renounced any national attitude or advantage. . . . in the interest of the general amity?"³³ Its own private theory on the Rhineland remilitarization was that it was a move thrust upon Hitler due to internal economic pressure, a "plight" "which daily grows more desperate," it insisted, in dogged adherence to this Marxian interpretation.³⁴ But talk of his threat to Russia, which obsessed the *Nation*, appeared rather inconsequential, what with Villard announcing in the same issue which perspired over the Rhineland remilitarization the fact that the Russians had a standing army of 1,300,000 at that moment and were spending \$7 billions a year on their army and navy.

John Gunther, writing to the *Nation* from London on March 20, conceded that Hitler could "claim almost complete victory," and that collective security, which seemed from his description to mean hardly more than Franco-British actions, had received a great blow, dividing the allies because of their conflicting positions on current Italian and German actions. But Gunther disclosed the same perturbation at the portent of the Rhineland move for the East: "Hitler's enmity to the Soviet Union is subcutaneous and ineffaceable, and anything which tends to strengthen him in the West means danger to the Soviets in the East."³⁵ Villard was much more alarmed than any other of the *Nation's* signed commentators, and issued a loud call for the League "and the former Allies" "to act with great vigor" against Hitler.³⁶ The most corrosive critic of the territorial dismemberments of Versailles was also the most adamant against the current German government doing anything about it, or regaining any of the territory lost by Versailles provision. On this question, *Nation* editorial policy was more lenient than their elder editor-commentator.

Louis Fischer was as horrified and petrified as Villard at this minor shift in the political crust of Europe in 1919-1921. He was as unable to recommend any way of peaceably satisfying grievances;⁸⁷

Any attempt to revise the map of Europe means war. In such any event Germany would be more than a match for any single European power. The safety of the European powers, therefore, lies in combinations which will offset Germany's superiority. This is the germ idea of collective security.

It also was the germ idea of Soviet foreign policy that had shifted since 1934 to one of appearing seemingly willing to accept the territorial distributions of the Paris treaties as final. Undoubtedly views such as Fischer's owed much to current Soviet foreign policy; the continuation of the status quo via collective security did not fit well with all that liberals had said since 1921 on the subject.

Another example of a prominent liberal's mixed emotions on Hitler's newest move was the reaction of Brailsford in the *New Republic*. As a champion of treaty revision of long standing he was in conflict with himself as a liberal defender of Communist Russia. On the former issue he could say⁸⁸

One may say that this European crisis began in October, 1933 when Sir John Simon, with unparalleled clumsiness, drove Germany out of the Disarmament Conference and the League by an offer that meant in effect the postponement for eight years of equality in armament. After his justifiable act of defiance, it was inevitable that Hitler should rearm, and therefore smash the fetters of Versailles.

But Brailsford was in an immediate clash with Brailsford when he contemplated German growth by the late summer of 1936 toward the development of their *Mittel-Europa* and its ultimate meaning to Russia:

Within five years would not this colossal power measure its strength against the Soviet Union? A liberal may still plead for conciliation. But a socialist perceives . . . the digging of the trenches of an international class war. It faces us not only in this question of Russia's eventual safety. It glares at us today from Spain.

Nobody on the liberal-left was able to put into so few words the tug of conflicting desires facing those who wanted a rectification of the World War treaties and the guarantee of the safety of the Soviet Union at the same time. As events in the rest of 1936 bore out, the

vast majority preferred to place themselves on the side of the latter objective.

The *Nation* was still in a conciliatory mood when Hitler proposed a world peace conference on the heels of the Rhineland maneuver, and commented with exceptional fairness in an editorial on April 1: ⁸⁹

The proposal for a world peace conference to discuss limitation of armament, the liberalizing of trade relations, and possible redistribution of raw materials, also represents a victory for Hitler, but one which no one will begrudge him. The threat of German aggression will never be removed as long as the Reich has grounds for feeling itself the object of unjust discrimination. Obviously, there can be no permanent solution of the problem except on a *quid pro quo* basis. But if the League powers utilize their strong bargaining position against Germany, they can well afford to grant substantial economic concessions.

It was a foregone conclusion that Popular Front international politics could hardly permit such a proposal to gain world-wide reputation for sincerity and genuineness. Blended with the rage which grew out of Mussolini's Ethiopian triumph and the feeling of security which the Soviet-French alliance tended to project,⁴⁰ the moving to a new redoubt against Hitler was assured, rather than a tearing down of the older barriers. It had to be widened to include defense against Mussolini too, driven into the German camp after all the careful cultivation of him as a likely German antagonist, a fruit of the Eden diplomacy on the Ethiopian-Mediterranean question. But liberals approved; a *Nation* editorial of May 27, 1936 even thought the application of more heat on Italy might have salutary effects on Hitler; "rigorous new penalties must be imposed against Italy if Hitler is to be impressed with the hazards of aggression," it loudly called.⁴¹ This stand, and that of adamant non-recognition were both expected to yield other dividends than pressing the Italian and German leaders together.

Part of the attitude was a product of thinking that Hitler was about to make a new thrust at Austria, which Fodor in the *Nation* flatly considered would surely be "the signal for a world war."⁴² The agreement between the two countries on July 11 was hardly in accord with Austrian Social Democrat pleas now that their country be neutralized in the manner of Belgium. But it did not distract the American liberal commentators from expecting the worst to eventuate anyway. And in the late summer it did not look too bad to some of them. Maxwell S. Stewart, in a *Nation* report of substance in September, "Can Europe Afford War?", after "a survey of the economic resources of the great powers," felt that there was little ground

for fear; "Germany and Italy, as the two chief disaffected powers, would have very little chance if they became involved in a protracted war with France, the Soviet Union and Great Britain," he announced reassuringly. He credited Hitler Germany with such sparse resources that it would be unlikely that the Germans could plan for more than limited campaigns for a few months' duration at a time.⁴³ A *New Republic* editorial in November, "The Fascist United Front," taking for granted that the outlines of the Italo-German understanding could be assumed to be the substance of a front, expressed similar confidence, while once more predicting the imminent internal collapse of Germany's "bastard self-consuming capitalism."⁴⁴

A *Nation* editorial of practically the same title early in December brought in the Russian issue much more solidly, and after raking over Japan, Germany and Italy, rejoiced at what was considered their bad timing in announcing anti-Communist pacts simultaneously with the adoption of the new constitution by the Soviet Union, which the editorial considered a mighty factor in favorably influencing the "Anglo-Saxon world" in Russian behalf. However it bridled at the suggestion that the announcement of the latter might have been nothing more than a political gesture calculated to win just such sympathy among the Western democracies in the Soviet's hour of peril, in view of the strategic locations of the nations now gathered in their anti-Communist determination, and with the Spanish Civil War now under way, involving new risks.⁴⁵ And with an enlarged offensive in Asia being planned in this hour of Chiang Kai-shek's "kidnapping," the picture of world politics by the end of 1936 had acquired so many new perspectives that the simple contrast posed by the Rhineland issue nine months before seemed to be of another and much more distant era.

THE AUSTRIAN ANSCHLUSS PRODUCES CONSTERNATION

Through 1937, with a number of developments taking place suggesting that relations between the democracies and Germany were not insoluble, and with no moves outside the diplomatic front except participation officially in the Spanish Civil War, the American liberals were essentially silent on the subject of alleged German world conquest ambitions. Most of the literature and thinking was concerned with German aspirations toward regaining their colonies and expanding into a dominant position only in Central Europe. As a *Nation* editorial of December 4, 1937 stated, it was willing to accept Hitler's word in *Mein Kampf* that "Germany's immediate ambition

lies in Czechoslovakia, Austria and the Ukraine." Therefore, it expressed the sentiment that the current British-French talks were the prelude to concessions to Germany in lieu of war, because they were "cheaper." Said the *Nation*, "In practical terms this means that Germany must either be given a chance to expand in Central Europe or a return of its colonies or both."⁴⁶

The *Nation* did not approve of this approach, nonetheless. The following week it lashed out at Lord Halifax, who had visited Hitler in November, in an editorial headed "Bounty for Aggressors," for what was labeled his "drive for a conciliatory policy toward Germany." It went on to charge that there were only "two widely divergent groups" favoring conciliation, "those interested primarily in preserving the present economic system and the absolute pacifists."⁴⁷ Its scorn and contempt for both could not be concealed. Although not inclined to quote the *New York Times* very often and rarely with approval, it seemed to find support for once from the *Times* in its position of grim implacability toward Germany. This editorial had a strange internal effect. It stimulated Villard to write a sharp disagreement with editorial policy, calling it "one of the most inconsistent and ill-informed editorials" he had ever read anywhere, while laughing at the *Times* for maintaining that the peace societies and the "isolationists" and not Roosevelt and Congress were making United States foreign policy.⁴⁸ He suggested that the *Times* and its supporters examine the implications of their stand, because their beligerent talk and denunciation of neutrality was leading only in the direction of pressures sure to lead to war.

But of immediate effect on liberal attitudes toward Germany, however, was resentment and irritation over German and Italian diplomatic successes without the actual employment of armed force. This was bitterly attacked as "gangster diplomacy," as if bluffing tactics had just been invented, and was on the whole something especially novel and evil when employed by the *Nation's* political enemies abroad. Reinhold Niebuhr, in a long commentary in the *New Year's Day* 1938 issue of the same weekly, suggested just such moderation in a moment of sobriety; "It would of course be naïve to distinguish this type of diplomacy too sharply from that traditionally engaged in by all the nations, for diplomacy has never lacked the element of bluff." Nor was he inclined at the moment to accept the corollary of this judgment of diplomacy, that Germany's rivals were superior morally because they were not very successful in employing it:⁴⁹

History does not justify simple moral judgments. To regard the democratic nations as "good" because they are seeking to preserve peace does not mean that we can hold them guiltless in their relation to the whole chain of vicious circles which constitutes recent history. The fury of the

hungry nations is partly the evil fruit of the vindictiveness of the victorious nations.

Niebuhr was able to find time the following year to repent such detached views at his leisure. German diplomacy was about to produce its most startling coup of the National Socialist era up to that time, the annexation of Austria into a greater Germany.

The reason for liberal sensitivity over the fate of Austria is not plain. Even after the overthrow of Dollfuss and the emergence of Schuschnigg as Austrian Chancellor, it was conventional to refer to Austria as a Fascist state. The failure of its Marxist groups to recover from the debacle during Dollfuss' times undoubtedly had much to do with this. But somehow the fact that it had not become integrated in Hitler's Third Reich was considered a most fortuitous circumstance. Of course, its absorption by Germany would put it that much closer to Soviet Russia, as the similar fate of Czechoslovakia also would eventuate. In view of the known Russian position of American liberals, a substantial part of their perturbation over Austria and Czechoslovakia in the Popular Front period was much more closely tied to anxiety for the Communists than to an exclusively tender concern for these two jerry-built products of the Paris Treaties.⁵⁰ Louis Fischer's "Austria Dams the Nazi Flood" in a late February, 1936 *Nation* reflected all these issues. He credited Austria's independence to Mussolini's support, while frankly describing it as a Fascist country. And he even more frankly asserted that with its acquisition by Germany, "the whole map of Europe might collapse," even though he was writing no brief for its persistence. "The map of Europe is a miserable, troublesome hodge-podge," he commented bleakly; "The bitterest anti-Versailles phrases do not condemn it sufficiently." Yet he was convinced that any move of any of its boundaries by twenty kilometers would produce a war.⁵¹ At this point he seemed to think that continued Anglo-French influence in Southeast and Central Europe reacting against such changes would produce the conflagration, which struck false and hollow, in view of the numerous liberal pronouncements in the previous five years that the prestige of these two nations was dragging on the bottom everywhere there. It may have been still too indelicate a moment to introduce the Russian portion of the equation.

With the spectacular changes in German personnel and policy late in 1937, and the emergence of the anti-Comintern Pact, most of this reluctance melted. Part of the evidence was the shrillness of the concern for Austrian independence in the pro-Communist press. R. Palme Dutt in the *New Masses* expressed more of a metaphysical and emotional display on the occasion of the Hitler-Schuschnigg conference in February 1938 than anyone did a month later when the actual

annexation took place. Communists dated the absorption of Austria with the earlier of these two occasions, and greeted the actual *Anschluss* in an anti-climactic manner.⁵² This was also the position of the *Nation's* editors, although in their editorial of February 26, "Surrender in Vienna," only the British and French were attacked for having stood by and permitted Hitler to obtain the many concessions made to him. A further insult was aimed their way by a reminder of how the German and Austrian Social Democrat governments had been squelched in 1931 on the occasion they had proposed the somewhat milder customs union.⁵³ Ludwig Lore indignantly complemented editorial anger by declaring in his "Austria—Last Chapter," "When the history of our times is written, the 15th of February, 1938 will not be forgotten, for on that day Germany conquered Austria without firing a shot." Most of his piece was a loud lament for the failure of the French to smash the Hitler regime ever since 1933; now "France has not suffered such a decisive defeat since she lost to the Germans at Sedan in 1870." ⁵⁴

The *New Republic's* long editorial comment on March 2 was far less disturbed; there was not the slightest trace of the talk of the "rape" of Austria which soon became liberal editorial cliché staples and helped arouse political emotions. In this sober estimate, another gesture at recalling the World War treaties did much to place the action in proper perspective. The Allies were once more blamed for having smashed the Austro-Hungarian empire, permitting it to be carved up into a series of uneconomic nationalist states, Austria being one. Having followed this by denying the creation of the reciprocal trade treaty between Austria and Brüning Germany, they had guaranteed that Vienna would be at the ultimate mercy of whatever large adjoining nation was the most influential. Mussolini was credited with having prevented the influence of Germany until this moment, and with the British opposition to his Ethiopian venture, he was "thrown into the arms of Germany. . . . Britain and France created the conditions for the tragedy, and saw it through." Henry C. Wolfe's article "Austria Succumbs to Hitler" in the same issue pursued the subject in the same manner, with ironic asides on the state of "collective security." ⁵⁵

It was to be expected that the *Nation's* writers would be stung with consternation over the final act of this political temblor. Freda Kirchwey was so provoked that she wrote her first signed editorial in the issue of March 19, "Gangster Triumphant." Robert Dell's article in the same issue matched her indignation over this bloodless coup of Hitler, adding 6,000,000 people of German language to the Central European power he was constructing. The Kirchwey editorial once more denounced the action of the French and British for halting such a union in 1931, which she revealed had her full support because of

her preference for the groups which were in power in both Germany and Austria at the time. But she could not repress still another denunciation of "the inexcusable treaty of St. Germain" for carving out Austria in the first place. Dell could not forgive Britain, France and Soviet Russia for not having acted jointly to warn Hitler away, Dell continuing to be foremost among the left-liberals who deeply believed that Hitler was a coward. The only force which he seemed to think had acted properly in the situation was the Parisian Communist newspaper *Humanité*.⁵⁶ A strenuous effort was made the following month to de-emphasize the 99.75% Austrian plebiscite in favor of the union with Germany, which was more or less imperative, since it had been liberal doctrine that over 90% of Austrians were utterly opposed to Hitler in any form. This enormous approval was obtained mainly by fear, the *Nation* maintained in its editorial of April 16.⁵⁷

It was inevitable that all the emotion spilled in the press over Austria was bound to have serious repercussions. The new wave of war talk that flamed in the columns of writers such as Dorothy Thompson greatly agitated Villard, fully as hostile to Hitler but less inclined to follow where the logic of this hate pointed. He spent most of his page commentary the week after the *Anschluss* denouncing the new journalistic warrior tendencies, even though his own forum was well in the forefront fabricating belligerent views.⁵⁸ The *New Republic* was far less infected, but the least influenced was *Common Sense*, which maintained its devotion to revisionism and neutrality. Its April editorial rehearsed the whole background once more, with added side-comments which heightened the flavor considerably as the situation concerned Russia and the United States: ⁵⁹

It was Versailles that created the Austrian problem, and the Saar and the Rhineland before it, and Czechoslovakia. Without Versailles, and the subsequent relentless determination of France and England to hold what they grabbed, there would have been no Hitler. Out of the last war, too, came Soviet Communism—its totalitarian politics, imitated with such sinister success elsewhere, no less than its progressive economics. Out of that war America got death, debts and depression. And there is no reason to suppose we will get more if we don the old mantle of idealism and rush madly into the next one.

Its May editorial, "Why Commit Suicide?", decried post-Austrian hysteria again, and refused to accept the pro-war position of various pro-French, pro-English, pro-Russian and pro-Czech elements. It was unimpressed by the widely-heard argument that a coming war would be one to save "civilization," especially the line of the American League for Peace and Democracy, and that the victory of Communism over Fascism was essential for this saving act; "Civilization is not

threatened by the victory of one over the other. Civilization is threatened by war." ⁶⁰

The forces of American liberalism against war had really seen only the pre-views of the coming struggle for the mind of intellectual America on the subject of the world crisis. The state of emotions and nerves by the end of the autumn just ahead was to make the climate at the time of the *Anschluss* seem like reasoned sobriety by comparison. But the *Anschluss* undoubtedly had a goodly part in making way for the excesses that followed. One act of intemperance in print had a striking effect in leading to one following, and usually an even more excessive one.

THE CZECHOSLOVAK PARTITION PRODUCES HYSTERIA

Probably the classic example of the trap most American liberals built for themselves between 1919 and 1939 was the case of Czechoslovakia, the synthetic state built out of Bohemians and a substantial number of minority Central European peoples emerging from the post-World War One settlements. Propped up by French money and bayonets, it had been the keystone of the French Little Entente system by which it had hoped to keep Europe in a desired political shape as far as anyone cared to see into the future. Its many unhappy splinter groups were usually ignored as a consequence of the mythology which grew out of its parliamentary form of government, and the success of Social Democrats in wielding substantial power in this new state also had a part to play in the construction of warm smiles of approval which were obtained in American liberal-left circles.

As a result of the conflicts which this event produced, it was not easy for the liberals to systematically attack the Versailles Treaty settlements and at the same time to bless this particular fruit of these treaty settlements. The Czech ingredient did not blend with the others at all. As has been seen, the constituent parts of the Versailles dilemma involved a great detestation for its territorial dispositions, followed by an admission that the benefactors of these settlements would never readjust the grievances resulting from them except under duress, and then capped by flaming opposition to all efforts to bring about such readjustment, especially those undertaken by political regimes which did not have liberal approval.

In the case of Czechoslovakia, a special liberal defensiveness evolved, which achieved full development just before the Germans cracked open this loosely-tied political construct between September, 1938 and March, 1939. The shrill defensiveness of the last few months

of the crisis which grew out of the politics of the Czech case tended to play down the glowering Slovak, Hungarian and other minorities originally dismembered from other states to give this new state some territory to exercise dominion over, and to praise inordinately its alleged achievements. It continued to the moment of collapse in 1938, and in some circles attained an even more shining sentimental reputation thereafter. The idealization of Czechoslovakia was a stirring part of the folklore of American liberalism, and its demise prior to the Second World War was one of the most bitterly-regretted and resented facts of the twentieth century.

It was the part played by the large German minority of western Czechoslovakia which was the decisive one in bringing down the whole edifice, and its restiveness and infection with German nationalism with the rise of Hitler drew liberal attention frequently in the years between 1933 and 1938. Prior to the spring of 1935 there was not too much apprehension, because the Czech authorities damped-down the German efforts at minority party activity, and their diplomatic "mutual assistance pacts" in 1934 and 1935 with France and Russia, it may be recalled, seemed to be the answer to any possible threat from Germany seeking to get returned to the Reich the western regions occupied by the *Sudetendeutsch*. But the striking victory in these German areas by a specifically nationalist party led by Konrad Henlein on May 19, 1935, three days after the signing of the Czech-Soviet pact, produced extended disturbed comments in the American liberal organs, and additional anguish among selected liberal foreign news journalists.

The *Nation*, extremely hostile to any German self-determination in Czechoslovakia, raked the new minority political activity, and completely excused the Czech government of any ill-advised acts which might have created a feeling of injury among its more than three million (out of a total of less than 15,000,000) inhabitants. It attributed this German truculence to contagion from the adjoining homeland and to a law which was supposed to have tried to force an avowal of national unity from these Germans. And although the editors permitted themselves the luxury of doubting the wisdom of "trying to assure loyalty by passing laws," they sided entirely with the government in lengthy editorials on May 29 and June 5. The most publicized state to emerge out of Versailles still enjoyed American liberal backing, even though in the next three years the story was not exclusively lacking in detachment.⁶¹

The emergence in 1937 of a new president, Eduard Beneš, upon the resignation of Thomas Masaryk, and the steeply-increased pace of political intrigue with France, Austria, Russia, and to a lesser extent with Hungary and Italy, seeking the ideal formula for preventing any German expansion back to the status quo of 1914, kept Czech affairs



Photo by Wide World

FREDA KIRCHWEY

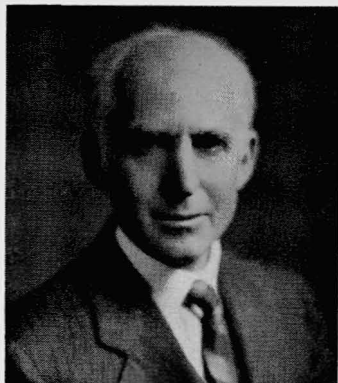


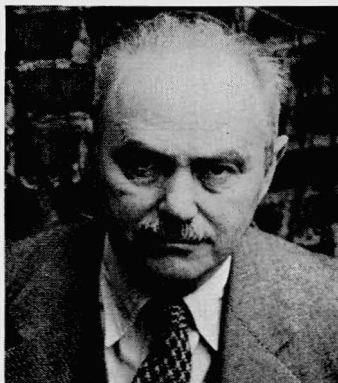
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CHARLES A. BEARD

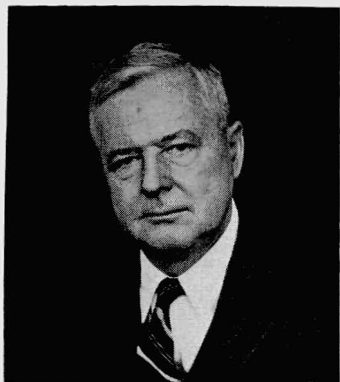


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LEWIS MUMFORD



WALDO FRANK



WALTER MILLIS



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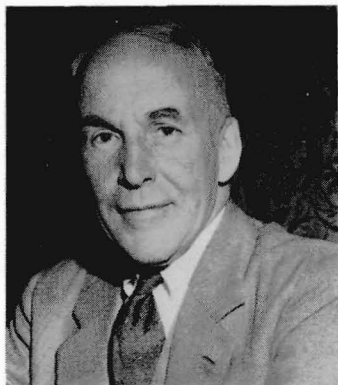


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REINHOLD NIEBUHR



HANS KOHN



ARCHIBALD MACLEISH



VERA MICHELES DEAN



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MAX LERNER



Photo by Wm. R. Simmons

SIDNEY HOOK

in the American liberal press in America. That Czechoslovakia might become a pawn just as likely as it might remain a respected state in the growing struggle between the German and Russian titans was only dimly perceived at this moment. But there was little doubt left by the Czech government as to its ambitions to exercise influence by itself when it began during these times to build an extensive series of fortifications in the Sudeten regions facing the German frontier, in imitation of the French.

During these years it was not common to see references to the situation cast in any dimensions of detachment among the vigorously pro-Czech liberals here, though vestiges of the post-war attitudes continued to crop up now and then. Robert Dell's "The Struggle for Czechoslovakia" in the *Nation* in May, 1937 once more brought up the liberal testament to the prodigious error which they thought had been made by partitioning the Austro-Hungarian Empire, as well as his referring to Czechoslovakia as a "fantastic country" both economically and politically, "a sort of Austrian empire in miniature."⁶² But it was the first German-Czech crisis in the spring of 1938 which made the region major news. A speech by Hitler in February of that year which indicated coming German interest in the conditions of minorities living outside the Reich touched it off, an event which followed six months of greatly heightened trouble in Czechoslovakia.

Frank Hanighen's dispatch to the *Nation* which appeared in the issue of July 23 titled "Czech Patchwork" discussed the problems at great length, not only the grievances of the Germans but of Slovak, Hungarian and Polish restlessness as well. But the principal trouble was obviously with the Germans and Germany. Although the main issue being made by Henlein and the Sudeten Germans in their quarrel with the Prague regime was one of demanding concessions somewhat short of reunion with Germany, the fact that this trouble had blown up so soon after the Austrian *Anschluss* tended to place this in the forefront of the discussions anyway. Hanighen was of the view that on the basis of what he had seen and heard there, the Czechs would turn over the Sudeten regions to Germany⁶³

if it were not for their expensive Maginot Line along the border. This line, it must be remembered, is part of the system of alliances and collective security arrangements built up by Russia and France, and recently supported by Britain. Thus the patchwork of local minorities combines with the demands of international power politics to make the whole question of Czechoslovakia apparently insoluble.

And at this moment, July, 1938, liberals were not entirely in opposition to concessions in this troubled place. The *Nation's* editorial for July 30 showed no hostility when the British mediator, Lord Runci-

man, set out to negotiate between the Germans and Czechs; his mission, it suggested, "assures at least a period of peaceful negotiations." But from then on the attitude toward the struggle changed as if turned about in the dark overnight. On August 6 the *Nation* scornfully referred to Runciman as having gone to Prague to talk the Czechs into giving in to the Sudeten Germans under Henlein; "He is the man in the backseat who throws out the baby just before the wolves catch up with the sleigh."⁶⁴ Dell's signed dispatch two weeks later was more blunt. Titled "Czech Suicide—London's Solution," he came up with a much publicized Communist story, the so-called "Cliveden Set" of English conservatives, who presumably had called for the destruction of Czechoslovakia by the withdrawal of English support. And propagandists were poised everywhere with a new term, "appeasement," in the most derogatory context of the word, to apply it to a settlement short of war.⁶⁵

September, 1938, the month of two serious and decisive crises between Germany and Czechoslovakia, found a mass of material featured in the liberal press. Reporters such as M. W. Fodor were not too sure Hitler would not invade, which he considered the signal for the out-break of a long and slow-moving war, just as he had predicted without success in the case of Austria. His *Nation* article on September 10 placed all the future power of decision-making on Hitler.⁶⁶ An editorial the same day suggested that the issues on the agenda were not the real ones, and that Hitler was going to set up the situation as a stage in a much larger movement which would result in the engulfment of all of Czechoslovakia and then an invasion of the Ukraine, a possibility which was found much more chilling than what might befall the Czechs.⁶⁷

The capitulation of the Czechs on September 21 as the result of Franco-English pressure and agreement with the Germans was the big blow to American liberals. A subsequent additional crumbling before the demands of the German regime a few days later brought forth fresh outcries of indignation, but they were anti-climactic. As it appeared more and more that the Czechs would not be supported by either the French or English in challenging the Germans, a note of desperation entered the American liberal editorial comments. The *New Republic's* September 21 editorial, on the day the Czechs caved in before the unchecked German pressure, also brought up the charge that Hitler was simply gaining a foothold to launch an invasion of the Ukraine and by implication the Soviet Union, whereupon he would turn and attack both France and England. The editorial plea to both the Chamberlain and Daladier governments to stand together in defense of the Czechs was based on this appeal to their self-interest, the hope of preventing a future war in which they might be involved on less favorable terms. Not only was saving Czechoslovakia for itself

no longer the pressing issue; concern over the "security" of Eastern Europe ranked first in importance. The scrupulous avoidance of direct mention of Russia in this editorial was part of a characteristic of the reporting of this entire tense period.⁶⁸

The September 24 editorial in the *Nation* flamed out, "Everything else that happened during the past week seems trifling and immaterial beside the stabbing of Czechoslovakia by its British and French body-guard," while Villard used almost identical language in his column of condemnation in the same issue, ending up with a whiplike rebuke, "I hope no one will ever speak to me again about collective security, with ourselves lined up with England and France."⁶⁹ The *New Republic* four days later in a two-page editorial "The Great Surrender," found it hard to assemble words condemnatory enough of Chamberlain's government. It again accused the English Tory government of deliberately hoping for what had happened, due to their great hostility toward Soviet Russia. It echoed Villard's words on the West by announcing, "Neither we nor anyone else can in the future rely on their pledges when these pledges conflict with self-interest or involve major risk."⁷⁰

But the new crisis of September 24-29, culminating in the famous Munich conference on the last of these days and resulting in the gaining by Hitler of all his major demands of Czechoslovakia, including the surrender of the predominantly German provinces to Germany, unleashed a tidal wave of horrified comment, uniformly and forbiddingly in opposition. The warm greetings and ovations accorded the chiefs of state who concluded the conference without war on their respective returns to their homelands had no effect on American liberal spokesmen in general. By far the response was one of distinct disappointment that Hitler had not been resisted and a major war precipitated over the Czech question. The liberal weeklies rocked with angry commentaries the entire month of October, 1938 and their reverberations appeared in print the remainder of the year. The vast crowds waving flags and cheering and shouting approval of the Munich action depressed most liberals; they wanted to wear crepe, and sought at once to find signs of "uneasiness" among the "working people," one of the first things Alexander Werth set out to find in France, as he reported in his "France's Tragic Decline," appearing in the *Nation* on October 8. But this apparently needed some time to incubate, for the *Nation* a week later commented ruefully, "Not the least tragic feature of the situation is the lack of effective opposition," pointing out that "French socialism seems thoroughly demoralized, while British labor, neglecting strategy for tactics, hesitates to inject a sour note into the popular rejoicing over peace." It appeared to be Left politics' worst blow at the hands of peace. Czechoslovakia seemed to be all but forgotten now. The note of distress remained for weeks

afterward. Late in October the *Nation* was still rubbing the wound, alarmed by the feeble reaction to Munich on the part of the French and British labor parties, their uncertainty whether to support or oppose the newest arms drives, whether to defend the distant colonies, or whether to prepare for war or make ready for new concessions among liberals and pacifists; "In the liberal journals of England and the United States the desperate struggle for a foothold in the future is as evident," it lamented.⁷¹

But though the Munich "appeasement" seemed to have demolished the whole super-structure of the Popular Front, with even the Socialist and Communist parties "for once without a formula," and with the Russians seemingly withdrawn, a great deal of printed comment piled up on the reasons for the Czech dismemberment. The *New Republic* devoted most of its editorial views to a reflection on the consequences of Munich to United States policy. The *Nation's* major efforts in the first two weeks of October recalled the First World War again, returning to chastise the English and French and almost to gloat in their predicament. Its editorial on the 1st was a fierce post-mortem on the collapse of jerry-built post-Versailles Europe, which began: ⁷²

With Chamberlain's capitulation to Hitler, the vulture bred at Versailles really came home to roost. The monstrous bird that scared Britain and France not merely into betraying a friend but into handing over the key to their own defenses was hatched from an egg which only the naive expected to produce a dove.

The process of disintegration since Mukden was reviewed, accompanied by generous abuse of the British and French "ruling classes" for their adamant stand against any concessions "while Germany was still a democracy," even though this part of the statement read the same both ways, since the reason no concessions or rectifications had been made was that Germany had then been a democracy.

This theme was covered again a week later in "The Treaty of Munich"; "having been ruthless toward Germany when it should have been generous, it grew timid when it should have been strong." This was in relation to the *Nation's* thesis, derived from its own commentators such as Fischer and Dell, as well as certain British leaders such as Churchill, Eden and Duff Cooper, that Hitler was unprepared for war and director of a general public as uninclined to fight as those of France and Britain, hence a stiff position would have called the German Führer's bluff and halted this rectification of German frontiers by "aggression." ⁷³ This was the most aggravating aspect of the German program, to the *Nation*; Hitler's gains were all being achieved without cost in the form of German war suffering. But it

could now admit that Czechoslovakia had been created in the first place as "a bulwark against German hegemony of Europe." Although weak, and told by his allies that they would remain neutral, Hitler had gone ahead so successfully because of advance knowledge of the Runciman report's recommendations that German demands be met, as well as Chamberlain's willingness; "That Hitler retreated at all proves how little he wanted war and how much might have been gained by a resolute refusal to be bluffed or bulldozed," the editorial grated.

The comments of half a dozen *Nation* correspondents and contributors enlarged on this approach and added several other ingredients. John Gunther's "Interim Notes on a Crisis" waxed especially indignant at Hitler for capitalizing on the Wilsonian "self determination" doctrine (forgetting prior German innovation at the Brest-Litovsk Treaty in 1918), but reserved special rancor for "the jackals in Hungary and Poland, the latter having the worst minority record in Europe," for their eagerness in biting off chunks of Czechoslovakia too; "You cannot grant all minority demands in Czechoslovakia without so weakening the Czech state that it must cease to exist," Gunther lamented. Sentimentalism had replaced the earlier realism in discussing how the Czech "state" had been tied together in the first place. Its preservation in the minds of sympathizers such as Gunther had nothing to do with politico-economic realities now. Said Gunther, in denouncing self-determination,⁷⁴

Wilson invented the theory of self-determination as a political force, and surely the Nazi doctrine of race is nothing except self-determination carried to an extreme point. Wilson said that peoples with a common language, cultural heritage and national history should be united. Hitler says the same thing. But he says it with guns, and Wilson said it merely with Robert Lansing.

Gunther temporarily seemed to have forgotten the American Expeditionary Force as one of the other voices Wilson had used in 1917-1919.

The journalist Paul Y. Anderson expressed one of the most colorful descriptions of the German coup at Munich a week later in declaring, "By virtue of the greatest diplomatic triumph since that achieved by the late Judas Iscariot, Neville Chamberlain has finally succeeded in losing the last world war to Germany, and has made reasonably certain of losing the next." Anderson attacked President Roosevelt as well, maintaining that FDR's unsavory contribution "was to induce Hitler to continue the negotiation," which implied that had Hitler broken off the talks, war would have ensued, and Anderson was supremely confident he would have been beaten.⁷⁵

Other contributions equalled that of Anderson in desperation and intemperateness. Archibald MacLeish's October 15 "Munich and the Americans" flayed Hitler's employment of the self-determination idea, and began to talk excitedly of Hitler's "German design on the Americas," ⁷⁶ one of the earliest preludes to the hysterical pieces of 1940-41 predicting a Hitlerian invasion and swift conquest of the entire Western Hemisphere.

The angriest and longest denunciation of the Munich pact was that of Robert Dell, which along with those of Fischer, Villard and Lerner stressed an altogether different aspect, the impact of the German advance on the future of Soviet Russia, and the Russian policy of the British and French regimes which had agreed to this change in the political structure of Central Europe. *Nation* editorial policy struck this note at the end of the first September Czech crisis, actually. Its two-page editorial on September 24, "The Great Betrayal," had laid the motives for the Anglo-French conciliatory moves toward Hitler to their fears of Communism, or, as the *Nation* put it, "they fear the implications of democracy triumphant, either by peace or war, in a period of economic disintegration and social change." Even though the universality of the press condemnation in this country temporarily put the liberals on the side of the majority view, for about the first time since the beginning of the business decline of 1929, the liberal editors saw beyond the thick moral haze of indignation quite clearly, that the English and French leaders at this moment had found it preferable that Germany and not Russia dominate Central Europe: ⁷⁷

The Western "democracies" fear Hitler, it is true. But more than they fear Hitler they fear the overthrow of Hitler and Mussolini; they fear the power of the democratic states linked in a united resistance with Soviet Russia. . . . They accept Hitler's own alternative; either us or Communism; and they chose Hitler.

Villard three weeks later echoed this view, and was most disturbed by the consequences of the much greater capitulation on ties between the West and Russia. His disgust with the Chamberlain government was almost inexpressible, but he too could not repress the statement of the issue closer to his heart: ⁷⁸

As for Russia, there is nothing left for it to do but to fortify, fortify, fortify, directing more and more of its manpower and national wealth to preparing for war. . . . Peace? Chaos, that's what it is, absolute moral chaos. With not a single nation except perhaps Russia paying the slightest attention to the sanctity of treaties.

Dell hailed the Communists in the French Chamber of Deputies, who provided 73 of the 75 negative votes against Daladier in the 535-75 vote in his favor at the end of the Munich proceedings, and also flayed Chamberlain for his Russian views as the source of his decision to agree on German terms: ⁷⁹

Above all, he wished to avoid cooperation with Soviet Russia. There was always a certain risk that Hitler might be mad enough to go to war with England, France, and Russia, especially when he had committed himself as far as he had in the Nürnberg speech. A successful war against Germany would have involved the support of Soviet Russia and of organized labor in England and France. The British and French ruling classes recognized what a danger that would be to them, and they dared not risk it.

Fischer, a firm supporter from the beginning of the Czech crisis of the thesis that Hitler was bluffing, did not want war, nor was prepared to fight one at any stage of the crisis, wrote the most voluminously on the subject of all the *Nation* writers. In this campaign of urging a standing up to Hitler by the French and English leaders, he took comfort in the fact that he had supporters such as Eden, Duff Cooper, Churchill, and Georges Mandel and Paul Reynaud among the French, collectively "the last of the imperialist Mohicans," whom he recognized as ideological opponents but who were now "strangely leagued with the anti-Fascists" such as himself, and, incidentally, Litvinov and most of the Russian as well as other Communist spokesmen all over the planet. When the loss of Czechoslovakia was definite, Fischer exploded, and his denunciation of the concessions was almost boundless. "What the Kaiser failed to do for German imperialism by war Hitler has almost done without war," he fumed, and charged that the "bourgeoisie of the Western democracies" had shrunk from war with him because they "feared to win" it.⁸⁰ But he got to the real core of the question more bluntly and with fewer words than any other liberal writer: ⁸¹

But just as in Spain Chamberlain's and Bonnet's [the French foreign minister] vestigial imperialism was counteracted by their anti-Left prejudices, so their faint wavering desire to save Czechoslovakia is frustrated by the realization that this can be best achieved through the introduction of the Soviet armies into Central Europe—an event with vast social implications.

Fischer's statement did much to explain the hyperthyroid liberal interest in the fate of a nation whose very origins they had fulminated against time and time again. It also provided a clue to the savage

attack on Chamberlain in the liberal-left press from this point on, one so comprehensive that twenty years after his death his name was still established by liberals as a synonym for betrayal.

Even well over a year after the Munich pact, and after the outbreak of the Second World War, Max Lerner could once more bring this up in the *Nation*:⁸²

Nothing could be clearer than that Czechoslovakia would have chosen to fight rather than be absorbed if a few men in the governing group had not preferred German domination to the acceptance of Soviet aid. One of them expressed it "I would rather be invaded by Hitler than helped by Stalin;" and the important thing is that he was able to make his own personal preference override the exactly opposite preference of millions.

Those who shared the views of Lerner and the putative Czech "millions" who preferred "Soviet aid" were unable to balance the consequences until that aid was received, after 1947. From the beginning of Russia's participation in the Second World War, it was possible for observers to see the first stages of the kind of Central Europe that Communists wanted to see emerge, described succinctly by Alter Brody in the *New Masses* on November 1, 1938 as a saturation of the region's nationality problems in "a Danubian federation along the lines of the Soviet Union."⁸³

Not all the liberals took the stand of the *Nation's* battery of Soviet well-wishers. Quincy Howe in *Common Sense* also was able to get to the heart of the matter, and, stressing the essentially anti-Soviet aspect of the settlement at Munich, wrote:⁸⁴

Not a few conservatives of more than average intelligence . . . can see one alternative to Hitler over Europe and that is Stalin over Europe. . . . and if the choice is between Communism and Fascism, between Russia and Germany, there can be no doubt where all the conferees at Munich stand.

Howe seemed to agree that a dominant Germany was preferable to a dominant Russia. At least he defended Chamberlain from the British opposition of Eden, Duff Cooper, Lloyd George, Lord Lloyd and especially Churchill, whose actions he thought were not guided by considerations for European politics but by the conviction that he and others could "rally the support of the United States to another crusade to save the British Empire in the name of democracy." But Chamberlain, said Howe in his defense, "more alive to the revolutionary consequences of any war than the irresponsible Churchill," hesitated "to commit the Empire either to war or a strong stand

against Hitler since that too would be likely to end in revolution." This was indeed off-beat liberalism at this moment, when the majority position was a loud lament likening Munich to the worst crime in the memory of the race.

The majority of the *New Republic* contributors were just as indignant over the outcome of the Munich settlement, although editorial response, as will be seen, was built in terms of the outlook for the United States foreign policy in its aftermath. A thunder of confused views occurred as the Dead-Sea-fruit of Versailles kept coming to the surface all over the botched map of Central Europe. Czechoslovakia was all but forgotten amid the wild speculations as to Hitler's next step, which were indulged in with thrills of apprehension. Schuman's theory was that Chamberlain and Hitler had secretly plotted the whole thing, a thesis which he later expanded in his book published shortly after. Brailsford was more dislodged by the effect Munich would have on Spain, Schuman far more by what faced the Soviet Union. When Hungary and Poland also took slices of Czech territory, the *New Republic* response was not nearly as fiery as that of the *Nation*.⁸⁵ It blamed both less heavily than Germany, which was accused of setting up a new map of Europe to provide itself with a corridor all the way to Eastern Europe. The threat of a German war on Russia hung heavily over the *Nation* in the late autumn of 1938.

Of the prominent editors and writers, only Bliven, in a remarkable three-page signed editorial on October 19, suggested that a likely consequence of Munich was not, as Schuman freely predicted, war between the Russians and Germans, but the possibility of the two dictatorships coming to friendly terms, and partitioning Poland. For those carried away by revulsion toward Hitler's public policy of Soviet hatred and convinced that it could not be undone, Bliven cautioned, "Such an arrangement could be sold to the German people as a mere economic compact, buttressed by mutual promises to refrain from hostile propaganda." And he stepped off the ideological klaxon long enough to deal with the major parties as national states with a past stretching far beyond the days of their current leaders and the year 1932; "Germany and Russia were friends for a long time, after the Versailles system had been set up," and might likely become so again.⁸⁶ But those with undimmed faith in the Communists, despite their performance everywhere else, felt sure that a showdown with Russia was next on the German agenda, and strained their hopes for a final apocalyptic triumph of the former.

Vera Micheles Dean brought up another aspect of the Munich question in the *New Republic*, suggesting that the "dynamic drive" of the Germans might lead to "a conflict whose magnitude would exceed that of 1914," yet conceding that there were extenuating factors which had to be weighed, and soon: ⁸⁷

Yet it is equally obvious that the Western world cannot remain indefinitely under arms for the purpose of holding down Germany by force. If the West is to prevail over Germany, it must do more than perfect its armaments. It must redefine, in equally dynamic terms, the economic and spiritual concepts which it offers as an alternative to Nazi ideology; and redress those grievances against Western democracy which in Europe and elsewhere have proved Hitler's most effective allies.

Her admission that there was still a German case against the French and British, and that Hitler had achieved the major objectives outlined in *Mein Kampf* without resort to war, were unusual reflections to read in a liberal paper this late in the Munich season. It was her theory, however, that Hitler was really preparing for an ultimate clash with the British Empire, with which he was already engaged in economic clashes all over the world. This was also a favorite Communist interpretation.

On the whole, dissidents were infrequent in the liberal camp. The most prominent to be given attention in the *New Republic* was the English Socialist, Raymond Postgate, via a long letter⁸⁸ in opposition to the grimness which liberals were displaying in the post-Munich era, while the editorial position of *Common Sense* was the only voice of its kind which echoed Postgate's views. Both were troubled by the apparent eagerness of liberals for war with Germany. Reporting on a vacation in northeastern France in late September, Postgate flatly asserted, "Nowhere was there the least trace of any enthusiasm for an anti-Fascist war," for "Not one regarded the proposed war as anything but a horror and a disaster; and the ideological defenses of it by the Left were not so much denied as wholly ignored." Postgate admitted the atmosphere in London on his return was "far more hysterical," but he insisted that "to have gone to war over the Sudeten question would have been something no Socialist, nor indeed any sane man, could have countenanced." It was his view that what had happened was completely in harmony with what the Labor Party had just gone on record favoring in their published program, *Labor and the New Social Order*, and that it was "no more than justice;"

Everyone knew it was a gross piece of unfairness to put the Sudeten Germans under Czech rule. For fifteen years the Germans had mildly and civilly asked for a revision of the Versailles Treaty in this and other ways. They got nothing whatever, and then just as Socialists warned the Allied governments would happen, they made the same demands insolently and violently. Since they could not get their rights by civil means, they hired a gangster. . . .

Postgate had no patience for those among liberals who planned to dodge the issue by consoling themselves that for them it would have

been an "anti-Fascist war"; "a few days after war between Chamberlain's Empire and Hitler's Reich had begun, we should have realized helplessly that we were caught in another senseless 1914 struggle between two kinds of imperialism." He was utterly against the "rather savage-minded argument" which he heard from "the mouths of certain convinced left-wingers" that a war between Fascism and "democracy-plus-Communism" was inevitable, that all efforts for peace should be abandoned, that the most fortuitous time for war should be selected and that Munich answered this requirement. Said Postgate in answer to this,

If war comes, we have already been defeated. Those who remember 1914 know that. There is only one way of fighting Nazism effectively, and that is by meeting as quickly as may be the real and moral grievances of Germany under the Versailles Treaties, and doing all we can in the way of propaganda *inside* Germany.

Postgate's vote of disapproval was probably fortunate to be published in the emotional atmosphere that prevailed in November of 1938 in the American liberal press. But it might have received as much attention in *Common Sense*, which also disapproved of the war-drive among prominent spokesmen in the weeklies and elsewhere in the American press. In a six-column editorial in October it considered the Munich settlement the signal for France assuming the status of a "second-rate" power, and for Britain "the loss of position as arbitrator on the Continent, held since Waterloo," but considered another fact of greater importance; "It is significant that both considered war—even a probably 'successful' war—worse."⁸⁹

Its November editorial conceded that "shame and joy were curiously mixed in the reaction of civilized people everywhere over the Munich settlement," but confessed that "we almost wept with thankfulness that war had been averted," underlining what neither of the weeklies and none of their correspondents wished to stress, that "With a unity of feeling new to modern Europe, hysterical crowds acclaimed the peacemakers who had, as it were, arrested the incendiary bombs in mid-air." It praised Roosevelt for his restraint, hoped he would take the initiative calling for a new world peace conference, and reserved an acrid commentary on the belligerence of the public opinion makers of several ideological persuasions calling for sustained hostility:⁹⁰

The common folk got a break, for once. And those who seem born to lead, the aristocrats and the intellectuals, showed up pretty badly. It has been a strange spectacle to see the makers of liberal opinion in America, Dorothy Thompson and Heywood Broun, Westbrook Pegler and Paul

Anderson, in fact Communist and Tory intellectuals alike on both sides of the Atlantic, finding their ablest spokesman in Winston Churchill. For Winston Churchill typifies the school-boy mind, which at its best dreams nobly of the "White Man's Burden," and at its crudest yells "Yah, you're yellow!" when one school bully backs down before another. History is written in the common man's blood when these great schoolboy minds get into power. Happy is the people that has no such history, and no such leaders.

Common Sense was a little premature in expecting Churchill to mount into the war saddle that soon, but its general evaluation was correct, in addition to giving its readers an important advance commentary on the first stages of the creation of one of the greatest political legends since the days of the Old Testament, his rehabilitation.

The cliché of a bloody but unbowed democratic Czechoslovakia reverberated through the war-liberal literature from 1938 on, and the hot talk after March 15, 1939 about Hitler having "extinguished the liberties of a proud, brave people" by marching into Prague and putting Bohemia under direct German direction and control gave heart to the perpetuation of the illusions of the pre-Munich days. By early 1940, after the war was under way, it was possible to hear such an old liberal voice as Villard declaring "no sane man believes that it would be possible or desirable to reconstitute the old Czechoslovakia,"⁹¹ but the largest number of the protagonists of September, 1938 were not to be diverted from their image this easily. The generalizations of the Munich days were elevated to the status of a scriptural text during the war, but dwindled to a sparrow's peep the second time around, when Russians instead of Germans extinguished these liberties. Since 1947 it has become commonplace to refer to the Czechs as the most passive, docile and tame of all the Communist satellite peoples.

An implacable, if febrile, case had been built up against Germany which was in full bloom before the Austrian and Czechoslovak crises, although these two events did much to stimulate fiery talk, and the belligerent tone steadily grew thereafter. A large part of the liberal writing on Germany after Munich, for sure, could hardly have been construed as anything but incitations to fight. Hitler became a threat to almost everyone everywhere, and the liberals' denunciation carried them from one excess to another. All revisions of Versailles achieved by his regime were successively raised up as evidences of designs on distant lands scattered all over the world, even though the "Germany-is-trying-to-conquer-the-world" slogan, the real ace in the propaganda hole which had to await the re-validation of the first World War, and did, was not played until 1940-1941. Even during the subsequent Polish crisis leading to the outbreak of fighting in September, 1939, most liberals kept dealing with the situation as an incident in Ger-

man plans for the domination of Central Europe only and a challenge to the Soviet Union for major influence in the Eastern sphere. But extravagant accusations started to appear during this time nevertheless.

Under such emotional assaults the wonder is that there was an anti-war camp among liberals at all. A large part of them were mobilized and ready to march against Hitler long before they were against Japan. The curious division in some liberal circles, inciting stronger and stronger stands against the Germans while simultaneously deploring the "big navy" buildup of the United States in the Pacific was puzzling. It had something to do with the policy toward Russia and China, of course, for underlying part of it was the quiet confidence in the Chinese Reds' ability to keep expanding in the Far East, while entertaining doubts that the cumulative internal effects of four big purge trials in Russia meant nothing more than evidence of serious internal dissension in the Soviet and indecision on the matter of an expanding Germany. Though the subject of Russia was kept mostly out of the Czech affair, the oblique references were sufficient to indicate widespread anxiety and agitated concern.

A MARGINAL COMMENTARY ON THE OPINION-PRODUCING EFFECTS OF GERMAN POLITICAL PERSECUTION

In November, 1938, a few weeks after Munich and at a time when blood pressures were still at a high point against Hitler Germany, a wave of new excesses against Jews in Germany broke out shortly after the third secretary of the German Embassy in Paris, Ernst vom Rath, was assassinated by Herschel Grynszpan. Grynszpan was related to Polish Jews who were among the several thousand who had just been deported to Poland from Germany in expectation by officials that they might be declared deprived of their Polish citizenship, as a consequence of a new Polish passport-visa law. The American liberal press promptly reached heights of vituperation of Germany which had not been attained since the early months of 1933. It also resulted in the reopening of the question of political refugees on a broad basis, and furnished valuable material to help fix views on Germany which may still have been in a flexible state even after the battering effects of the Austrian and Czech crises.

In one sense the subject calls for a check on significant factors in the entire area of Jewish and other repressions in the period beginning with German rearmament and leading through the series of territorial and other revisionist diplomatic coups. An ominous season of

relative quiet on this subject had prevailed during most of the year 1938, and the two previous years had found much contradictory material appearing under liberal auspices, sufficient to complicate the scene, as will be seen. Stories of anti-Jewish excesses grew numerous after both the Austrian and Czech settlements, and the worst aspect of them from the point of view of opinion-formation in the United States was the casual tendency to allow them to become thought of as a universal German characteristic, a secondary consequence of the strong feeling toward the Germans after their swift successes on the diplomatic front.

An accompanying fact of significance was that of increased refugee activity in helping Americans to make up their minds about foreign affairs and foreign policy. In view of the expansionism of the second three years of the Hitler era as compared to the essentially home-bound pre-occupation of the first three, this proved to be of vast significance. The arrival of persons from a number of lands with political scores to even and with access to a printed medium of wide influence can hardly be said to be of only trifling import. And when assembled with other ingredients, including the essentially pro-Soviet stand and sympathy for Marxian reformist politics generally, the outcome could hardly have been expected to be anything but a deepening of the anti-German entrenchment.

For all their posing as the watchdogs of the "irresponsible commercial daily press," the liberal journals, as has been seen before, frequently went off on essays in faceless journalism equal to the worst. Their thundering at the Hearst papers had something to say for it, but no one could charge Hearst with refusal to be responsible for what appeared in them. On the other hand, the liberal weeklies still persisted in far-too-frequent publication of material by unidentified persons cloaked in pseudonyms, whose intemperateness varied in a direct ratio to the secrecy of their identity. And the largest number occurred in the field of foreign political reporting on Germany, with the Far East a strong second. And, in view of the admitted fact that most of these persons were refugees, their contribution to heating up American readers' sentiments and opinions on affairs overseas was undoubtedly substantial. For a number, the chance to participate in Central European political feuds vicariously was no trifling factor, especially when one examines the vitality and energy that native American liberals with only the most tenuous European ties threw into the campaign to bring to America refugees who shared their political convictions.

A curious by-product of liberal affection for Soviet Russia and their emotional concern for refugee dissidents, especially from Germany, was the role of Russia in the drama of providing succor for refugees. Although the Soviet Union was the only nation in the world con-

sistently praised by American liberals down to the outbreak of war in 1939 for their advanced social order, tolerance, peacefulness, enlightened economic system and presumably high standard of living, they never charged the Russians with any responsibility at all for not alleviating the misery and discomfort of liberal, progressive and radical elements whose sad fates in the Fascist countries were the occasion for so many notices and articles in the liberal press, running into the hundreds. Not only was the Soviet never attacked for keeping Russia for the Russians, but liberals tended to support Communists in their belief that the Soviet Union's duty in these tense years was simply to preserve itself.

Beyond the flurry of excitement attending the abortive Biro-Bidjan project in Siberia for unhappy Jews in Europe, the liberal press never published a report on any part Russia played in the saga of the political, cultural and religious refugees from Germany, Italy and elsewhere. Even most of the hunted Communists and Communist sympathizers of other lands seemed to seek some place other than Russia to flee to and adopt as a new home land. There was an odd contradiction to liberal excoriations of the United States, where so little was deemed worthy of commendation in the depression decade, for not providing more homes for refugees, while the land which was praised beyond measure for its advancement was never reproached for maintaining the most air-tight isolationism on the planet where refugees were concerned.

Reportage on the plight of Germany's, and Europe's, Jews after the German revisionism under Hitler's auspices commenced was always intermixed with the topic of political refugees and was anything but consistent, since the reporters had particular positions of their own which they were trying to present in as attractive a manner as possible. Zionism, integrationism, Marxism, flight to various other countries, all occupied the attention of those who described the situation to American liberal readers. The confusion and absence of verifiable facts, plus the contradictions, make the reconstruction of this facet of liberal reportage on the period an irregular and disjointed matter.

At about the time conscription was begun in Germany, in March 1935, liberals began to hear of a new wave of anti-Jewish activity there, although most of the reports came from journalists in London. William Zukerman's "Anti-Semitism Revives in Germany" turned out to be mainly a report on the enterprises of the well-known anti-Jewish Julius Streicher, and an admission that up until this moment, Germany's Jews had been "left for some time in comparative peace," with business especially unruffled, but pointing out that Jewish intellectuals and professional people had been subjected to serious pressure by the Hitler organization. Heinrich L. Schiller, a German expatriate in London, had much the same story to tell in the summer,

dwelling on two well-known anti-Jewish newspapers and their effects.⁹²

During this year and also 1936 most of the new atrocity stories were in the form of letters to the editors. There was, however, one prominent exception, the report filed by James G. MacDonald upon resigning as High Commissioner for Refugees coming from Germany. The *Nation*, irked by stories of peace and order in Germany reported by tourists, and what they styled the definite propaganda campaign in Britain "seeking to swing public opinion toward Germany," hailed the sensational denunciation of the Hitler regime by MacDonald, and compared it to the Lytton Report on Manchuria in two cordial editorials in the first weeks of January, 1936.

Dr. Kurt Rosenfeld's "What Germany Does to the Jews" in the February 15, 1936 *New Republic* put its main accent on the unfortunate fate of the "common man" among the Jews with little strength and few friends. He was much perplexed by the presence of the names of twelve powerful Jewish banking houses on the prospectus of a loan sought by the German railroads in August, 1935, and of Dr. Theodor Lewald as president of the Olympic Games Committee.⁹³

Villard's column of March 4 in the *Nation* scorched the National Socialists for their Jewish policy, but also refrained from charges of physical cruelty. He claimed that theirs was worse than that of the Czars in Russia, since the latter had had the Jews killed outright in the pogroms, whereas the "mental, spiritual, and physical degradation" being suffered in Germany was more brutal and fiendish. This approach appeared several other times in 1936 and 1937. The *Nation*'s September 12, 1936 editorial condemnation of the anti-Jewish policies stressed not the physical harm but "their noiseless annihilation through slow and persistent economic pressure,"⁹⁴ while announcing that the sensational anti-Jewish decrees of 1935 at Nürnberg were being muffled. Late in October, 1937, the same journal's article by Philip S. Bernstein, "The Fate of German Jews," stressed almost entirely the process whereby the Hitler regime was driving them out through new legal pressures, annoying and humiliating, but not physically maltreating them. According to Bernstein the German Jewish population had decreased from 550,000-600,000 to about 375,000, at the time of writing, mainly through emigration from the country.⁹⁵

Stories on the concentration camps sharply fell off in 1936 and 1937. One of the few editorial mentions occurred on March 11, 1936 when the *Nation* announced, "The population of the German concentration camps, according to a recent estimate, is now 119,000."⁹⁶ No authority or source was given for this, and there was obviously no intention to underestimate the figure of the incarcerated. But indirectly it resulted in sharply undermining the horror stories of vast

numbers in the jails and special camps of the Reich, as this figure was a tiny fraction of one percent of the country's total population. It looked particularly ridiculous beside the figures of those known to be lodged in the Soviet Union's camps, and coming at a time when great rejoicing was in order over the Communists having built the White Sea canal with a vast army of political and other prisoners, it looked especially *mal apropos*. What made the picture even more lopsided, and evidence of lack of liberal editorial balance, was a boastful editorial claim in the next paragraph that the Russians were sending food parcels by mail to Germany, although this helped buttress the theory of vast economic misery and impending collapse in the Reich.

The autumn of 1937 marked the lowest point of criticism of Hitlerian Jewish policies. On October 9 the *Nation* declared that the concentration camps now contained a total of about one thousand Jews,⁸⁷ and that most had already been released, while only "those considered politically dangerous" were being retained. Furthermore, this editorial went on to say, "There is evidence that the German people take little interest in the persecution of Jews." According to this report, the general population was showing wholesale and open disregard for the Nürnberg Laws and other anti-Jewish measures, while the regime was actually encouraging those who wished to leave the country to do so rather than making their existence miserable for trying. The policy of harassment of the Jews was referred to in the *New Republic* as a "cold pogrom" to distinguish it from a program of serious physical assault, which was to get wide attention in Palestine and Poland.

The struggle between the defenders of Zionism and the promoters of Marxist socialism as panaceas for the predicament of the Jews of Europe went on at a steady pace during this time. Critics such as Fischer continued to refer to Vladimir Jabotinsky and his revisionist Zionist supporters as Fascists, and maintained that they were having influence on Mussolini. In January 1936 the *Nation's* Moscow correspondent insisted that Jabotinsky's group were urging an Italian mandate for Palestine, and were getting encouragement from the Italian authorities. In the next two years there were other accounts of widespread influence of Zionists in Italy,⁸⁸ as well as an amazing account by Ludwig Lore on the number of Jews of prominence who had held major positions in the Fascist regime since 1922. As will be seen, there was a sharp upturn of attention to this subject after the wave of violent Arab-Jewish riots broke out in Palestine.

But spokesmen denouncing Zionism and encouraging Communist or Socialist solutions were still active prior to 1938, the major occasions stimulating them being the publication of the *Fortune* Magazine study *Jews in America* in the spring of 1936 and Robert Gessner's book *Some of My Best Friends Are Jews* early in 1937. Benjamin Stolberg's lengthy analysis in the *Nation* of the *Fortune* study

headed up by MacLeish ended bitterly opposed to both assimilation and segregation as solutions to the Jewish "problem." He referred to assimilation and Zionism as myths arising out of "bourgeois reaction," and insisted, "The only way to solve the Jewish problem is to solve the great problem of social and industrial democracy," and for those who might be puzzled as to what it might be, Stolberg ended triumphantly, "You guessed it; the answer is Marxism."⁹⁹ This was substantially the advice of Waldo Frank in 1933, in the *New Republic*.

Gessner's book was another statement of the hope of the Jews lying in Marxist socialism. He repeated the story that the Soviet Union was the only land in the world where the Jews lived without trouble. It was another example of a book which tried to prove that the whole world was anti-Jewish except Russia. As Martha Gruening pointed out in her review in the *New Republic* in March 1937, Gessner maintained that "Hitler was more humane" than the Poles, who he claimed were by far the worst persecutors of Jews. He also criticized Palestine severely, and insisted that Tel Aviv had become a ghetto for the Jewish poor, while "rugged Jewish individuals" were also exploiting cheap Arab labor. What shocked some liberals was his charge of sycophancy on the part of German-Jewish middle class people, still supporting the Hitler government. James Waterman Wise supported Gessner enthusiastically in his review in the *Nation* earlier in the year, deprecating Zionism and displaying the same fervor for the Soviet Union as the ultimate model for a situation establishing equality for Jews, and economic assimilation.¹⁰⁰

In the unrelenting assault on the anti-Jewish program of Hitler Germany the liberal press paused momentarily on occasion in embarrassment upon contemplating the position of the Negro, Indian and Oriental in America and the history of ethnophobia in the United States, including the deep current of unofficial American anti-Jewish hostility. Conscientious protest would have been extremely difficult to make if the two subjects had been presented in parallel form regularly, and the eventual tarring of all Germans as racists beyond all other peoples would have been impossible. But in the period prior to 1939 the main emphasis was upon the *official* nature of the anti-Jewish policies in the Reich, since sufficient admissions were made from time to time pointing this out.

Furthermore, diversions of great scope occurred between 1936 and 1938, in the form of massive outbreaks of very violent anti-Jewish propaganda and physical maltreatment in Poland and Palestine, and rumblings of similar goings-on in East-Central Europe generally. The Poles fared especially badly in the American liberal papers as a consequence. Fischer's very dark portrait of Poland, written from Warsaw to the *Nation* on February 15, 1936 and published over a month

later, described the existence of very ugly anti-Jewish excesses.¹⁰¹ A wave of anti-Jewish riots in Palestine the following month, April, stimulated a vigorous condemnation by the *Nation* editorially, blaming local causes in each case and adding the observation that "The Arabs and Poles were adepts at anti-Semitic terror before Hitler perfected the technique."¹⁰² The Palestine riots also touched off a *New Republic* editorial early in May, which called attention to other areas than Germany, and unconsciously indicated where the journal stood on the Zionist *versus* Marxist appeals:¹⁰³

Everyone knows what the "cold pogrom" of the Nazis has done in Germany; but not everyone realizes how serious is anti-semitism in other countries. In Poland, where there are 3,000,000 Jews, conditions are nearly as bad as they are in Germany. In almost every other country in the world—always excepting Soviet Russia—anti-semitism exists in greater or less degree.

Continued comments on the plight of the Polish Jews appeared in the liberal weeklies for some time thereafter, to the extent that Germany was eclipsed for many months as a result. A serious critique on the rioting and killings in Poland appeared in the *Nation*¹⁰⁴ late in May, 1937 while Albert Allen, writing in the July, 1937 issue of the *Fight*, came to the conclusion which most others arrived at in the ensuing six months when he announced, "In no other country has anti-Semitism been so sustained and devastating as in Poland."¹⁰⁵ The ultimate in attacks on Polish policies and behavior came from Zukerman in the *Nation* early in April, 1938 with a major roundup of the facts on the Polish pogroms of the 1936-38 period; "For the last two years the Jews have suffered almost incessant physical assaults and pogroms," he stated, and then went on to evaluate it:¹⁰⁶

This outburst of anti-Semitic bestiality has no equal in Europe, not even in Nazi Germany, where despite the vicious propaganda of the *Stürmer* and the cruel anti-Jewish decrees of the regime, the people have not degraded themselves by a single anti-Jewish pogrom.

The persistence of such attacks led to the formation among liberals in December 1937 of the Writers Committee to Aid Polish Jews, and new reports of massive pogroms against impoverished rural Polish Jews stimulated this organization's growth, while the *New Republic* condemned the newest outburst "a blot upon the name of the Polish Republic and also a threat to world peace." Hitler and the Moscow purges temporarily lost top billing in the notoriety department. When a world conference on the world refugee problem was held in

Evian in mid-1938, the *Nation* in a harsh editorial on July 16 was appalled at the democracies being so niggardly in providing refuges for the Jews of Austria, Germany, Poland and Rumania, whose conditions were described as equally bad at that moment. The verdict was one that "distressing apathy" seemed to be the general feeling, while a side-comment on the United States was not particularly complimentary; "Even the American quota is pitifully small, and Mr. Roosevelt made it clear at the start that it would not be increased."¹⁰⁷

Pressure on the Poles dropped off sharply after war broke out, but even in the "Sitzkrieg" period of 1939-1940 the *Nation* ran various stories on growing atrocities against Jews in Poland, while Zukerman in the spring of 1941 wrote an angry article published by the *Nation* denouncing the implacability of the Jewish persecutions still going on among those Poles in exile in England, charging that anti-Jewish publications were even being issued by the Polish National Council, the Polish parliament-in-exile, so to speak.¹⁰⁸

Howard Daniel's "Mass Murder in Poland" in the *Nation* for January 27, 1940 was the first of the extermination stories of any length. The author, an Australian engaged in refugee work, explained that the partition of the country by the Germans and Russians at the end of the previous fall campaigns had divided the Jewish population roughly into 1½ millions under each. He commended the Communists in Poland for treating their Jews better, and declared that Jewish Communists among the Poles were even gaining high positions in the government installed in the eastern sector by the Russians. As for the Germans, Daniel told two conflicting stories. One of them charged the Germans with trying to exterminate the Jews in their portion of occupied Poland, while the other insisted that the Germans were encouraging mass exodus of Jews to the Russian side, which he said the Russians were trying to halt. To add to the confusion, the author admitted that Zionists and orthodox Jews were as badly treated by the Russians as they were by Germans. The sense of his article did not seem too clear, unless the message had been to inform liberals that Jewish Communists who were hostile to Zionism were being well-treated in the Communist-occupied portion of the former Polish Republic.¹⁰⁹

Arab-Jewish troubles in Palestine and the issue of Zionism and refugees were all inextricably intermixed, and gained increasing liberal attention, especially as the cooling-off period toward Russia advanced during the purge trial period. It may be pointed out, however, that when the democracies were condemned for their faint interest in the fate of refugees at the Evian conference, the Soviet Union was pointedly neglected, despite their much closer proximity to the distressed in Rumania, Poland and Austria-Germany than England or the United States. The Soviet Union's utter disinterest in anyone except

Communists was embarrassing, for sure. And although the bulk of liberal views sided with the Marxists rather than the Zionists in the 1933-36 period, the realities of the situation inclined them more and more to the solution in the form of emigration to Palestine.

These two views contested for attention and support among liberals during the 1936-1938 struggles in Palestine, and both views received publication. Albert Viton, in a *Nation* article "Why Arabs Kill Jews" on June 3, 1936 reviewed the "revolutionary changes" beginning to take place with the arrival of nationalistic pressures among both Jews and Arabs in the Arabic world, and as far as the relations between the two peoples were concerned, testified, "Ben Guryon [sic] is right. A permanent war is being waged." Viton was no partisan of Zionism at this stage however, and later in the year in a piece written in Jerusalem for the *Nation* expressed the deepest of pessimism on the future of Jewish refugee resettlement in Palestine. As for the Arabs, Viton was aware that they were in a great state of agitation, and he believed that part of their thinking was based on a passionate hope for a general European war to give them an opportunity to unseat the British in the whole of the Near East and North Africa.¹¹⁰

In the *New Republic* the warmest friend of Zionism was its English editor H. N. Brailsford. His "Storm Over Palestine" on July 1, 1936 was frankly sympathetic, even though he felt called upon to warn Zionists against excessive particularism. "Jews must modify in some degree their Zionist nationalism," he cautioned. "There can be no happy Jewish Home while an Arab slum surrounds it." As a refugee from European punitive treatment he thought Palestine was admirably suited, but he could not dismiss the nightmare political possibilities of ignoring the Arab part of the equation:¹¹¹

It is right that a refuge should be found in the land they love for some hundreds of thousands of fugitives from German and Polish intolerance. But mankind and the Jews will alike pay a heavy price, if the Arabs remain bitter, violent and unreconciled. A home is no home if one must guard it with a machine gun on the doorstep.

This was essentially *Nation* editorial policy during this time as well, especially pointedly expressed on January 2, 1937:¹¹²

Zionists must be content with less than most of them want, less than the Jewish masses of Europe need. They must curb their intransigent elements, make heavy concessions to the Arab masses, establish good relations with the more enlightened Arab leaders. Even now in the midst of conflict such men as Judah Magnes and some of the best of the Jewish

labor group are supporting such efforts. They should be adopted as official Zionist policy.

The *Nation* was still clinging to its proletarian frame of reference, while urging the Jews to beware being made use of by the British to balance off the Arabs as part of the British "imperialist game."

The strongest supporter of the Zionist position with regular access to the *Nation* at this time was Philip S. Bernstein. His "Promise of Zionism" in the same issue reported on the widespread anti-Jewish reaction in Rumania and Poland especially, and saw it spreading in all other European countries as well as Germany. He concluded that Hitler had made his position invulnerable in Germany in the past four years, and that it was futile to fight him internally any more. Furthermore, Bernstein repudiated Communism as any likely answer to the Jewish predicament anywhere, despite the *Nation's* stable of pro-Communist writers and the proletarian leanings of the editors. The Jews, said Bernstein, were religious, individualist, pacifist and democratic, while Communism was anti-religious, totalitarian, violently revolutionary and dictatorial. Furthermore, Bernstein warned, for the Jews of Central and Western Europe to espouse Communism as "the redemption of Jewry" would be mass suicide; "It would lead to the most terrible pogroms in all Jewish history," he predicted, thereupon deducing, "The only hope for the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe is emigration." His portrait of the blooming of Palestine at that moment was exactly the opposite picture which liberals had been reading when presented by the antagonists of Zionism and migration to this area.¹¹³ But he fully realized that the new phase of Arab opposition made things far from simple; his eye-witness description of the tension and night-fighting on the borders between Jews and Arabs later in the year 1937 made his report sound like one which might have been filed in 1947 or 1957.¹¹⁴

The British attempt to promote a tripartite form of partitioning of Palestine in mid-1937 provoked more bitter fighting. The *Nation* defended this action and although noting that both Arab and Zionist nationalists were made unhappy by it, openly supported the Zionists despite the strong historical claims of both. The Jewish claim was "far more right—in view of the anti-Semitic policies of the German and Polish governments," an editorial of July 17 explained, certainly one of the strangest arguments ever advanced on behalf of contestants in a disputed land claim anywhere.¹¹⁵ And not long after it was admitted that the partitioning was not being accepted, and that not only had it unleashed large-scale fighting between Jews and Arabs, but that it had sparked a "pan-Arab revolt. . . . Palestine and Great Britain will now have to contend with the whole Arab race," the

Nation promised in its editorial of August 6, 1938.¹¹⁶ Viton corroborated this in an article two months later;¹¹⁷

What began as an anti-Zionist movement here became a revolt against Great Britain of unprecedented magnitude. The revolt . . . aims to defeat the British imperial scheme for the Near East which took shape when the Ottoman Empire was smashed during the World War.

But Viton had come over to the Zionist position now. He was all for a "bi-national" state in Palestine, and suggested to the British to "keep the country under military rule for a few years and to open the doors for immigration till the Jews become one half of the population."

The furious Arab rebellion in the fall of 1938 was a footnote to Munich; the liberal press was most unfavorable to the Arabs but offered no comfort editorially to the Zionists either. The *Nation* stressed the "ring of hostile Arab countries" surrounding Palestine, "waiting for revenge when the attention of the British policeman is diverted." "The outlook for Zionism is black," the editorial of October 29 rumbled.¹¹⁸ Though most of the correspondents were becoming warmer, editorial policy seemed if anything a mite more chilly to Zionism than it had been at the height of the Popular Front. The ensuing riot of emotional condemnation of Prime Minister Chamberlain over the Czech partition even produced a dividend on the Palestine question. He was furiously attacked in the spring of 1939 upon the publication of the latest White Paper on Palestine, which was charged with repudiating the Balfour Declaration during the World War promising the Jews a homeland there. He was accused of capitulating to the Arab faction, in the hope of keeping the Arabs tied to "the imperial chariot," and with acquiescing in an arrangement keeping the Jews in a permanent minority.¹¹⁹

But there seemed to be other forces at work which had a say in the population picture of Palestine and the Jewish emigration from Europe, and a not inconsequential say. Villard brought up the subject in a review of Dorothy Thompson's book *Refugees* a short time before the savage 1938 Arab-Jewish fighting, and its bearing on the whole subject of German National Socialism and its Jewish repression policies plus the overall picture of refugees was rather startling in view of the complexities and interlockings it revealed:¹²⁰

The crux of the problem is, of course, where the money is to come from to move these people and give them their working capital. Here Miss Thompson falls back upon a plan which she has worked out with Moritz Schlesinger, a fellow worker of [Fridtjof] Nansen's. Her solution is based on the success of the arrangement made by the Jews with the Nazis by which 82,000,000 marks' worth of capital values have been transferred to

Palestine in the last five years, making it possible for 14,000 refugee families to settle there, taking their savings with them in the form of goods. The Nazis consented to accept payment in blocked marks instead of foreign exchange, and the Palestine importers abandoned the idea of boycotting German goods. It is true that many oppose the agreement as aiding the Nazis to go on. But the horrible alternative is plain.

However, by far the most upsetting report on the interrelations between the Hitler regime, the Zionists and the refugee redemptionists did not come out until the month before the German-Polish war erupted. On August 9, 1939 the *New Republic* published "The Jewish National Army" by a former *Time* magazine contributing editor, Allen A. Michie.¹²¹ It was the first story on the mass smuggling of "permitless" Jews into Palestine since April, 1938 by the "underground Jewish army," Irgun Zevai Leumi. A Jewish national military organization in existence since 1931, according to Michie, it had established a chain of immigration offices in all major European capitals, and the German, Polish, Rumanian and Hungarian governments were all cooperating, providing immigration papers and approving arrangements to ship refugees out. Michie revealed that smuggling of Jews out of Germany was taking place with the full knowledge of the regime; "The Nazi government has cooperated so wholeheartedly that, by an almost unprecedented arrangement, the rigid German exchange laws have been set aside so that IZL offices in Germany can bring huge sums of German and foreign currency in and out of the country to pay for the transport of the refugees."

As Michie related it, once the putative refugees were assembled, IZL officials collected and destroyed all their passports and immigration cards, rendering such individuals "stateless persons." This was no handicap to them while they remained in Europe, as each country willingly allowed them to pass through, while at sea it was a type of protection, since if they were picked up by British patrols while trying to land in Palestine, they could not be sent back to Europe, because there was no way of knowing where they had come from.

Michie made it plain why the IZL was engaged so assiduously in this program. As a military force fighting the Arabs, they were committed to the position that there was no hope of establishing a Jewish state unless there was a numerical majority of Jews in Palestine. Thus there was a raw and urgent logic behind this activity. He concluded this amazing story by referring to IZL recruiting for their armed group in Paris, London, Belgrade, Warsaw and Kovno. They were reputed to be 100,000 strong. As to their program, Michie said it was two-fold; first, the return of the Trans-Jordan as part of Palestine, and then the creation of a sovereign Jewish state out of all of it.

The impact of such information substantially affected the standard

stories of the relations between the German Jewish community and the Hitler regime. It might have created a sensation two or three years earlier, and many liberal outcries. When Brailsford's mild pro-Zionist article early in mid-1936 had been published, the *New Republic* had been bombarded by several letters written by subscribers who castigated his approach as sanctioning a colonial expedition to Asia for the purpose of establishing an European beachhead there in a land possessed for many centuries by the Arabs. But by the time the war was about to get launched in Poland, Zionist sympathies had made enormous headway among American liberals. The generally frosty attitude of the rest of the world to the refugee undoubtedly had a hand in this change of opinion, but the persuasiveness of Zionists in presenting their case with attractiveness and masterful precision could hardly be underrated. The war was to result in a fundamental change in the entire account of the Jews, refugees, concentration camps and the additional incendiary issues connected with them. The entire issue was to become an appendage of the British propaganda ministry, which eventually engaged in a prodigious chore of changing opinions and re-casting the Germans in the image of monstrosity which had served so effectively in 1914-1921. But in another sense, the triumph of Zionism among liberals represented still another stage in the decay of the Popular Front.

THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS ROUNDS OUT THE POPULAR FRONT CAMPAIGN ON GERMANY

Nathan Asch, reviewing *Escape Into Life* by Erika and Klaus Mann in the *New Republic* on May 24, 1939, made a succinct observation on the full effect of the propaganda campaign against Germany from 1932 to that moment, as well as advancing a valuable tip to an understanding of the time yet to come. He punctuated his warm welcome of this book by the hostile offspring of one of Germany's most famous emigrés of this period with the following illuminating comment: ¹²²

When Germany put her writers into concentration camps, she stored up a lot of trouble for herself; and when she drove the writers out beyond the borders she scattered her trouble all over the world. For now, in the next war there will be no need to invent German atrocity stories.

Asch admitted that "great quantities" of those of the First World War were "supplied to us by the British propaganda service," and were not capable of fooling everybody. "But they'll have to believe the stories being written now, and to be written when the next war comes. They won't sound like fiction."

No better short statement of the direction and purpose of the literary campaign against Germany between 1932 and 1939 saw print, nor revealed its inner nature so well as this. One could see the major outlines by now; the assumption that those writers who had incurred the disfavor of the Hitler regime were the entire stock of literary figures of the country, and that they were utterly blameless; that all Germans had been responsible for the troubles of these writers, that none of these disaffected literati had left Germany of their own will, and that every word they had written and were to write represented veracity to microscopic degree. The further assumption was that the German writers who were now outside the country urging a global campaign of murder and arson against their erstwhile fellow-countrymen could not possibly have any reason or desire to lie, and that their stories represented the ultimate in credibility simply because their authors were from Germany.

The establishment of refugees, especially political, as unquestioned sources on Germany was a curious process, long in the making, and a powerful factor in the fabrication of liberal opinion on German affairs. Anyone fleeing National Socialist Germany for whatever reason, and possessing a modicum of writing talent, stood a very good chance of being established as an oracle on Germany elsewhere. And a vast circle of publishers, reviewers, distributors, commentators and numerous other people holding key positions in the taste-making and opinion-influencing media could be counted on to spread their influence in ever-widening concentric waves. The sudden eclipse and abrupt descent into total obscurity which was the fate of the very largest part of these people once their purpose had been served illustrates another facet of the total picture. More attention will be given later to the essentially end-of-the-rope position of the political refugee and his nearly zero chance of regaining influence in his estranged homeland no matter how it was to be eventually battered by its enemies and his now-temporarily adopted friends.

As a factor in the making of opinion for and by liberals in America and elsewhere, it is of interest to keep in mind the essentially-pro-Soviet position of Popular Front American liberalism, regardless of what the motives of German refugees may have been. Their labors on behalf of this political program may not necessarily have been conscious, but the full effect was the same. In accepting refugees from Germany so unconditionally as experts, American liberals added another sharp contrast to the ingredients which made up the liberal mind on foreign affairs and politics. Refugees from Russia had always been systematically denounced, and the veracity of all had been placed under suspicion at once when they came bearing tales which did not reflect favorably on Soviet Russia. From Mukden in September 1931 until the outbreak of the Cold War in 1947 there was no

serious critic of Russian Communism who was ever given the stamp of unqualified acceptance in the liberal press. From 1937 to 1941, it has been seen that the friends of Trotsky among America's liberals managed to seriously weaken liberal fondness for the Soviet Union by their comprehensive attacks, and to temporarily modify a monolithic portrait of a foreign land painted entirely in a friendly pigment. But the general absence of any observable or sustained detachment toward Germany guaranteed the persistence of a similarly monolithic point of view entirely in hostile tones which was easily clothed in fighting dress and outfitted with muskets when the European system broke down for the second time in twenty-five years in 1939.

One of the curiosities of the period was the preference of the fleeing Germans for other areas than the Soviet Union from which to conduct their feud with Hitler and his regime. Since the majority of them were stern critics of bourgeois capitalism and its values, their choice of Paris, London and New York as their assembly centers had a strange quality. Their reception was a mainly unqualified welcome in the period of the Popular Front, and the liberal press and its editors chose not to make an issue out of the most obvious political backgrounds which suggested the basis for their difficulties. The major criterion seemed to be the possession of a glowing hate for Hitler's group, if not for all Germany. It was an attitude which promised the maximum of protective coloration for the advancement of Russian goals. Thus, when Louis Adamic reviewed Karl Billinger's ferocious *Fatherland* for the *Nation* in April 1935, as the Popular Front wagon was gathering its downhill momentum on the run to the August, 1939 *Pakt*, his flowery tribute suggested enthusiastically: "This book, it seems to me, is the best sort of ammunition to be used in the fight against Fascism." He did not think it of any great significance to stress that the author was really a German Communist named Paul Massing, who had spent eight months in a Hitlerian concentration camp, and who still clung to the pre-Popular Front contempt for lesser varieties of Marxists and Socialists, as his denunciation of Konrad Heiden's *A History of National Socialism in the New Masses* in June of that same year amply proved.¹²³

By all odds, the most implacable enemy of Hitler and Germany in the liberal press in 1935 was not a refugee but Frederick L. Schuman, contrasting and setting off his glowing admiration of Russia with snap and élan not commonly seen among the most convinced Popular Front liberals even in this hyperthyroid year. His *New Republic* review of Emil Ludwig's *Hindenburg* on May 22, was an acid-pouring on the author for his persistence in remaining a German, rather than much of an estimate of the book. The fashion of detecting sinister character defects in all Germans, no matter how long dead, was gain-

ing in acceptance especially in America's academic community at the moment, which made Ludwig vulnerable for finding anything respectable to say about a memorable figure in the German past.¹²⁴ Schuman's own book, *The Nazi Dictatorship: A Study in Social Pathology and the Politics of Fascism*, received fulsome praise later in the summer from Herman Simpson in the *New Republic* and Edgar Ansel Mowrer in the *Nation*. Simpson, whose reputation as a Marxian polemicist had long been established, was in complete accord. Mowrer, although confessing that he considered Schuman's tract an "admirable book," felt impelled to mention a basic difference of opinion on the interpretation. Mowrer, in trying to divine what Schuman's overall estimate of National Socialism was, concluded that "the author believes with the Communists—and he is not an orthodox Marxist—that Fascism is really the appropriate form of government in the last stage of capitalism." It was a rather lengthy book to write to establish a view which had been expressed several hundred times in scores of Communist pamphlets published all over the world in the previous ten years, but the author's reputation and occupation gave it added respectability at the moment. Mowrer insisted that in reality Fascism was "socialism as realized by the lower middle class," a view which gained added attention as German conservatives began to emerge as interpreters later in the decade. Mowrer, in addition, was not inclined to heap the accolades upon the Soviet that Schuman did in this book, and he further contributed to the intellectual disorder by suggesting that the German system in 1935 was likely to be what the Russians would have in 1955.¹²⁵

Schuman had made the point in his book that although the Germans had utilized brutality somewhat less than the Russians, theirs was worse because it was "purposeless." This hardly seemed to be the point of a second thick volume along the lines of the Communist-sponsored *Brown Book of the Hitler Terror*, titled *The Reichstag Fire Trial*, which sought to make some more political capital for Communists on this event, and in which almost every hero and heroine in the fighting with the Hitlerites was a German Communist. Its theme of Hitlerian-directed terror for the purpose of wiping out Communism in Germany was omnipresent. That it got attention from liberals as late as the summer of 1935 indicated that nothing was being overlooked which had some bearing on the situation.¹²⁶

No book hostile to either Hitler or Mussolini was ignored by the liberal press in the growing array of forces opposing them, even satirical attacks such as *Quack! Quack!* by Leonard Woolf, given a rousing cheer by Lewis Mumford in the *New Republic*,¹²⁷ but one of the more ominous aspects of the time was the beginning of the writing of books and articles on the intellectual origins of the political forces which were now in the vanguard of the attack on Communism. This

became a veritable parlor game by 1938, and reached its full peak in the first two years of the war. In one sense it was basic to the building of the approaching crisis as an "ideological" one, which helped to fan liberal fury in the moment of their abandonment by the Communists in August, 1939. Liberal contributions were many and mighty to this propaganda, and Germans were the main victims, as will be seen.

Perhaps Stringfellow Barr began the process in the 1935 days with his biography, *Mazzini*, who was credited with origination of the ideas which appeared in Mussolini's Fascism. But Louis L. Snyder's grim *From Bismarck to Hitler* was close behind. However Snyder started in comparatively modern times, as Hans Kohn's *Revolutions and Dictatorships* demonstrated, and successive authors kept leaping backward in prodigious strides, to Luther, to the Holy Roman Empire, to the invasions of the late Roman period, and then ultimately to Caesar and earlier. All these volumes were commended by the liberal press. Ernest Hambloch's *Germany Rampant*, which received the commendation of the *New Republic* in September, 1939, seemed to have finally gotten on the true course; his conviction that all the world's international troubles were due to monstrous defects in the German character, which had "remained unchanged from the dark days of Arminius to the sinister epoch of Hitler,"¹²⁸ struck the note which all the others, including William McGovern and Peter Viereck of his contemporaries, had been searching for all the time, as will be seen in a subsequent chapter. Thus it seemed most proper for Professor J. F. C. Hearnshaw to wrap the subject up in a wartime volume titled *Germany the Aggressor Throughout the Ages*.

Schuman continued to be the *New Republic's* most devoted enemy of Hitler Germany in 1936. His wild praise for an anonymously written volume, *The Brown Network*, which purported to outline a plot on the part of the Germans to revolutionize the world, continued his service for Russian goals. In his extravagance of language Schuman insisted that this book was "one of the most extraordinary" of the twentieth century, "even if only one-tenth true." His real anger was directed at the anti-Soviet ideas which this purported German international plot was propagating, in anti-Communist and anti-Marxist front organizations of its own.¹²⁹

Just as fulsome were his reviews of the two biographies of Hitler by Konrad Heiden and Rudolf Olden. The stories of these hostile German emigrés he considered the last word in objectivity on the German Führer, although the most impressive part of his review was the grim confidence he reflected in the coming annihilation of Germany under the Hitler regime.¹³⁰ The only element lacking was a description of the agents which were going to bring this about, although in June 1936 it may have been beyond even Schuman's imagination to picture the mobilization of the world which was eventually required

to bring about this eagerly anticipated catastrophe for Germany and all the rest of Europe as well, which such hopes implied.

Strangely enough, these two books produced an opposite effect on Walter Duranty when he reviewed them for the *Nation* the week previous. Although as warmly sympathetic to Russia as Schuman, judged by his writings, Duranty ended his long review of these two volumes with about the only paragraph of favorable comment concerning Hitler which ever appeared in the *Nation*:¹³¹

The effect of these two books, so painstaking and bitterly written and so well documented, has been to give me a far higher opinion of Adolf Hitler than I had before. Here is no Pied Piper of Hamelin, no strange freak of nature, "hypnotizing" the German people by loud words and frothy rhetoric, but the Man whom the Occasion calls forth, as Marxists would say, the Leader, not unbalanced but balancing, not lightweight but weighing, shrewd, pertinacious, and patriotic, who saw clearly the agony of Germany, prostrate under the Versailles treaty, and capitalized that, and saw the ravages of depression and unemployment, and capitalized that, and gave a hopeless people hope and a leaderless people leadership. In a word, as Heiden puts it, he responded to the inner cry of the German heart, "Save us and rule us." When one thinks of it, this is a more reasonable explanation than that of the "Pied Piper" or "hypnotizer." Because no man ever can rise from the deeply low to vastly high unless there is power in him and quality far beyond his fellows.

Something of this quality had appeared in *Common Sense* some time before in a review of Mildred S. Wertheimer's pamphlet *Germany Under Hitler*, and was similarly unique:¹³²

Miss Wertheimer has presented a particularly well balanced view, in which her emotions do not run away with her conclusions. She does not assume that because Hitler's regime is a brutal and in many respects barbarous dictatorship therefore the people are groaning under the lash. "A new spirit of confidence fills the hearts of many Germans, who feel that through Hitler they have regained their self-respect." . . . "perhaps the greatest psychological force at Hitler's command is the internal unity he has wrought. That is the strength of Fascism. For people don't like civil war."

Such expressions were most uncommon, of course, and might be charged off as editorial lapses in a generally consistent reflection of a light-and-darkness picture of the rival regimes of Germany and Russia.

In 1937 things were more in accord with the Popular Front image with the reissue of the frankly pro-Communist *Hitler Over Europe* by

Ernst Henri, Johannes Steel's *Escape to the Present* and Robert A. Brady's *The Spirit and Structure of German Fascism*. Despite a temporary low tide in the democratic world in indignation toward Hitler and a growing criticism of Stalin Russia, liberal reception of books hostile to Germany was uninfluenced, and both weeklies hailed the unfriendly and destructive approach of these volumes in particular. Brady was commended for his wholly condemnatory approach especially by Ludwig Lore in the *Nation*, but received an even more spirited reception in the *New Masses*, which also took pride in the fact that Brady was a contributor to the Marxist quarterly *Science and Society*.

Not so fortunate as these authors were E. B. Ashton and Henri Lichtenberger. The former's *The Fascist: His State and His Mind* and the latter's *The Third Reich* were roundly excoriated for their detachment on Italy and Germany. Ashton was so stung by Lore's almost personal attack that he wrote a long two-column letter to the *Nation* in rebuttal of some of the charges, and touched upon the phenomenon of emigré-ism as a force in opinion-making on Germany in a particularly effective and pointed manner:¹³³

It is only natural that to German Socialists like Ludwig Lore the regime of Hitler seems a nightmare, imposed by a force of darkness upon the "real" Germany in which and for which they have spent the better part of their lives. Hope that the future might revive the past is what keeps most of the exiles going. But the people of other countries have to make up their minds whether they want, out of sympathy with the victims of Fascism, to falsify their own picture of its supporters. It is not a question of siding with or against the anti-Fascist. . . . I happen to dislike the idea of saving democracy from Fascism only to fatten it for the proletarian revolution.

But of course the point was that Ashton's Marxist critics did not share his scruples; a Marxist order of some sort was the last thing they would have opposed as an alternative to Hitler.

The same fate awaited Stephen H. Robert's *The House That Hitler Built* early in 1938. Praised by William L. Langer in the *New York Herald Tribune*, described by T. Y. Ybarra in the *New York Times* as "a miracle of objectivity," and by the *London Times* as "excellent, restrained, concise, accurate—the best general book as yet about Nazi Germany," it was accorded one of the frostiest receptions by American liberalism. The refugee journalist Franz Höllering groped for words to attack it severely enough in the *Nation*.¹³⁴

A similar greeting lay in store for Lord Londonderry's *Ourselves and Germany*, slashed to shreds in the *Nation* on April 9 for his attitudes toward Russian Communism and his insistence on its threat to

England and Europe in general, as much as for his friendliness toward Germany and his efforts toward Anglo-German understanding.¹³⁵ But with the *Anschluss* now history and liberal gorges rising in protest toward anything sympathetic toward Germany, such a reception might well have been expected. Far more pleasantly-received by all was Douglas Reed's *Insanity Fair*. Arthur Rosenberg, an emigré ex-professor of history from the University of Berlin, gave it unreserved praise in the *Nation* on June 18 particularly for Reed's attack on Hitler's posing as an enemy of Communism and seeking British help on these grounds. But Joseph P. Lash far exceeded Rosenberg in his accolade for Reed's book in the *New Masses* ten weeks later.¹³⁶

But by the end of the Czechoslovak crisis there was a noticeably sharp up-tempo turn of vigorous and aggressive books aimed at Hitler Germany. From the end of 1938 on into 1941 a detached book on Germany was an astounding publishing event, and a review of one in the American liberal press an even more rare occasion.¹³⁷ Noteworthy in this literary interlude was the persistence of known friends of Soviet Russia appearing as writers of books on its German antagonist, and the similar sustained presence of German emigrés essaying as reviewers of such volumes, although not exclusively dominating this aspect of the propaganda sphere.

The British Communist F. Elwyn Jones's *The Defense of Democracy*, reviewed in the *Nation* on December 24, 1938 by Julian Bach, Jr., a member of the staff of *Life*, was characteristic of Communist efforts to offset the anti-Comintern position of the Italo-German-Japanese combine and at the same time to capitalize on local German successes in Central Europe once more to impute to them ambitions to swamp the world and convert it into one vast German vassal-state. Jones faithfully adhered to the Popular Front image by charging that the German objective was the British Empire and not world Communism, a gambit which steered the Communist position close to the wing of British Tories, already sized up as potential allies in an anti-German coalition. But his propaganda tale of Italo-German efforts to stir up trouble in some 35 other countries sounded too much like an inverted story of the Communist International. Bach found little to take issue with in the book, and even kept his composure in the face of the report once more that an internal uprising led by Hitler's enemies was likely and that a variety of "conspiracies" were in the hatching stage. Jones was still clutching to the *Neu Beginnen* stage of Marxian evaluation of Germany.¹³⁸

Martha Dodd's fervent pro-Soviet *Through Embassy Eyes* received the intense admiration of Erika Mann. This nightmare portrait of Germany reflected her mental image after a visit of the author to Soviet Russia and an ecstatic acceptance of everything she had seen there. The review revealed that the daughter of the famous German

literary emigré and the daughter of the erstwhile United States Ambassador to Germany were more in accord with the Popular Front affection for Russia than anything else; Miss Mann explained that Miss Dodd's condemnation of Germany and her acceptance of Russia was ¹³⁹

based less on subjective impressions than on simple truths—the truth of the fundamental difference between Soviet and Nazi aims, even if the methods used are similar, and the other truth that the general situation in Russia is not comparable with that in Germany. In Russia government is for the people, not against the people as in simple truth it is in Germany. The standard of living has fallen under Hitler, while it has risen in the Soviet Union. Russia shows no sign of intending military aggression in the world, while Fascism threatens to stick Europe in its pocket.

The naïveté of this Schuman-like defense of Soviet brutality as morally superior and its *Pravda*-like analysis of Russo-German internal conditions were probably unintentional.

With liberals girding for Armageddon in advance of most other forces in world politics, it seemed appropriate that the enemy be studied once more prior to the final showdown. Part of this review of the opposition consisted of Schuman's review of both the Stackpole and the Reynal and Hitchcock editions of *Mein Kampf* together in the March 18, 1939 *Nation*. Schuman matched Hitler hate for hate, and concluded with a thorough reproach for all Western political leaders for not having taken their countries to war with Hitler long before: ¹⁴⁰

Fascism can be stopped only by force. But the elite of the decadent West have consistently refused to use force, not out of fear that they would lose in a contest of arms, but out of fear that they would win. Whom the gods would destroy they first induce to save the savior who is in reality their own nemesis. . . . *Mein Kampf* is half the record of the psychopathology of the twentieth century. The other half is not thus conveniently available in a single volume. But those with eyes to see will find much of clinical interest in the words and deeds of such "statesmen" as Blum, Laval, Londonderry, Chamberlain, Eden, Bonnet, and Daladier. Thanks to them the absurdities of *Mein Kampf* are successively translated into fact. And since it is later than we think and it is already happening here, two names may be added to the roll of dishonor: Sumner Welles and Franklin D. Roosevelt. Chinese and Spaniards will understand why they deserve inclusion.

Far more effective in promotion of the interests of Soviet Russia than this was Schuman's own book *Europe On The Eve*, reviewed the

following month in both the liberal weeklies. Dell in the *Nation* announced that it could "hardly be too highly praised,"¹⁴¹ while the approach of the *New Republic* was not essentially different, although regret was expressed in the latter that he had chosen to include in his book the allegation that Chamberlain and Hitler had entered into deliberate collusion at Munich to connive for the attack and partition of the Soviet Union. Alter Brody in the *New Masses* later in the year, after the Hitler-Stalin pact, gave this thesis of Schuman's the most powerful support. The illuminating thing about the liberal essays of the book however was that this kind of guesswork was not held as the slightest reason for having reservations about the numerous other hunches which filled this specious volume.¹⁴² Its effectiveness among Popular Front-oriented liberals could hardly be over-estimated in that period, despite all this.

The coming of war and the collapse of the Popular Front brought a new emphasis on books hostile to Hitler Germany and things German in general. The implacability was not affected, but the sources and scope widened. Symptomatic of the new dispensation in the literary departments of the liberal journals was the review of Hermann Rauschning's *The Revolution of Nihilism* in the *Nation* by Höllering a week after the *Pakt*. The ultimate in the propaganda appeal to American liberals, a book by a German refugee attacking the dominant regime reviewed by still another refugee, Höllering insisted that it be considered "the first authentic inside story of Nazism," which made his appeal sound exceedingly superfluous after all the purportedly true "inside" material which had been published since 1933. Höllering could in this moment of extreme disaffection with Communist Russia explain his interpretation; Rauschning was a confirmed conservative, and thus could be more relied upon than previous books, which had been discounted as left-wing propaganda. Hitler's Leftist refugee enemies in America were finally finding a Right sect with which to ally.¹⁴³ As a temporary replacement for the Popular Front, and until June 22, 1941, it was a stroke of fortune which hardly anyone might have had the brashness to anticipate. The full consequences of this demarche will be developed in a subsequent examination of the reportage of the Second World War between the Polish invasion and Pearl Harbor.

While the great dramas of Ethiopia, Spain, China, Russia and Germany were marching with measured tread across the pages of American liberal journalism and in the chapters of several liberal books, another story was being written on the effects of these vast developments on American attitudes and internal policy views and leanings. It is now time to turn to the domestic scene for a look at the home front and what the complexities of the world scene were doing to American liberalism and its previously-established positions on such

subjects as pacifism, militarism, munitions manufacture, foreign policy, and its intellectual rationale on the whole spectrum of world and foreign affairs ideology.

NOTES

- 1 *Nation*, April 10, 1935, p. 401, for citations in above paragraph.
- 2 *Nation*, April 17, 1935, p. 430.
- 3 *Nation*, April 17, 1935, p. 435.
- 4 *Nation*, April 3, 1935, p. 373.
- 5 "Good News From Stresa," *Nation*, April 24, 1935, p. 468.
- 6 *Nation*, May 8, 1935, p. 522.
- 7 "Can Hitler Be Trusted?," *Nation*, June 5, 1935, p. 645.
- 8 Fodor, "The Roads To Rome," *Nation*, June 5, 1935, pp. 651-653.
- 9 Brailsford, "Europe's Balance Of Power," *New Republic*, April 17, 1935, pp. 281-282.
- 10 *New Republic*, April 24, 1935, p. 295.
- 11 *New Republic*, May 15, 1935, p. 6.
- 12 *New Republic*, June 5, 1935, p. 85.
- 13 *New Republic*, November 6, 1935, p. 352.
- 14 See for example editorial, *New Masses*, August 6, 1935, pp. 6-7.
- 15 *Nation*, October 30, 1935, pp. 507-509. See also the anonymously written and inflammatory "The Nazis Are Kind To Women," *New Republic*, August 19, 1936, pp. 39-41, describing in part the activities of women politically hostile to the Hitler regime.
- 16 *New Republic*, April 10, 1935, p. 229.
- 17 Fischer, "What I Saw In Germany," *Nation*, February 12, 1936, pp. 176-178. In an editorial on September 23, 1936, p. 208, the *New Republic* insisted that the German Communists had aided Hitler in arriving to power.
- 18 *Common Sense*, October, 1935, pp. 17-19.
- 19 "The Chance Of Peace In Europe," *New Republic*, March 25, 1936, pp. 180-181.
- 20 "T.R.B.," "Collapse Of the Nazi Boycott," *New Republic*, June 17, 1936, pp. 174-175; the principal source used was the schedules from the Department of Commerce on the purchases of German goods in 1935 in this country as against those made in 1934.
- 21 On Cockburn see *Nation*, June 24, 1936, pp. 790-791; *New Masses*, June 9, 1936. See also Chapter 19, note 224.
- 22 Höllering review of Liepmann in *Nation*, August 29, 1936, pp. 250-251; *New Republic*, December 30, 1936, pp. 257-258.
- 23 *Nation*, January 2, 1937, pp. 9-11.
- 24 Vidacovic, "Germany's Economic Impasse," *Nation*, January 30, 1937, pp. 125-126; February 6, 1937, pp. 153-154.
- 25 *Nation*, January 30, 1937, p. 127.
- 26 *Nation*, November 13, 1937, p. 530.
- 27 *Nation*, February 20, 1937, p. 198.
- 28 *Nation*, September 25, 1937, pp. 312-315.
- 29 *Nation*, May 8, 1937, p. 524.
- 30 *New Republic*, November 17, 1937, pp. 34-35.
- 31 "A New Watch On the Rhine," *Nation*, March 18, 1936, pp. 335-336.
- 32 "Will Europe Call Hitler's Bluff?," *Nation*, March 25, 1936, p. 368.
- 33 "Does Hitler Mean Peace?," *New Republic*, March 18, 1936, pp. 152-153.
- 34 *New Republic*, April 8, 1936, p. 234.
- 35 Gunther, "The Rhineland Crisis," *Nation*, April 1, 1936, pp. 407-408.
- 36 *Nation*, April 1, 1936, p. 416.
- 37 *Nation*, April 8, 1936, p. 442.

- 38 Brailsford, "Class War Among the Nations," *New Republic*, August 19, 1936, pp. 41-43, for this and subsequent citation.
- 39 "Has Hitler Won Out?," *Nation*, April 1, 1936, p. 401.
- 40 M. E. Ravage, in a dispatch from Paris, considered the Rhineland re-occupation by Germany a move strengthening the French anti-Popular Front Right. "Hitler Strengthens the French Right," *Nation*, April 1, 1936, pp. 408-410. See also Ravage's "The French Volcano," *Harper's*, April, 1936, pp. 592-601.
- 41 "Can Europe Avert War?," *Nation*, May 27, 1936, pp. 673-674. The same view dominated the editorial "Mussolini's Conquest Must Not Be Recognized," *Nation*, June 3, 1936, p. 699.
- 42 Fodor, "The Austrian Volcano," *Nation*, May 27, 1936, pp. 673-674.
- 43 *Nation*, September 19, 1936, pp. 324-327.
- 44 "The Fascist United Front," *New Republic*, November 4, 1936, p. 6.
- 45 "The Fascist Front," *Nation*, December 5, 1936, pp. 649-650.
- 46 *Nation*, December 4, 1937, p. 601.
- 47 *Nation*, December 11, 1937, pp. 633-634.
- 48 *Nation*, December 11, 1937, p. 646.
- 49 Niebuhr, "Greek Tragedy and Modern Politics," *Nation*, January 1, 1938, pp. 12-16.
- 50 Less oriented in this direction were Peter Drucker's pieces in the *Virginia Quarterly Review*, "The Austrian Powder Keg," October, 1935, pp. 529-542, and "Underwriting Central Europe," January, 1936, pp. 15-28.
- 51 *Nation*, February 26, 1936, pp. 246-248.
- 52 Dutt, "The Sacrifice Of Austria," *New Masses*, March 1, 1938, pp. 5-6.
- 53 *Nation*, February 26, 1938, pp. 232-233.
- 54 Lore, "Austria—Last Chapter," *Nation*, February 26, 1938, pp. 235-236.
- 55 Editorial, *New Republic*, March 2, 1938, pp. 87-88; Wolfe article on pp. 94-96.
- 56 Kirchwey editorial, *Nation*, March 19, 1938, pp. 321-322; Dell article titled "Europe Learns From Vienna," on pp. 320-321 of same issue.
- 57 *Nation*, April 16, 1938, p. 426.
- 58 *Nation*, March 25, 1938, p. 356.
- 59 *Common Sense*, April, 1938, p. 6.
- 60 *Common Sense*, May, 1938, pp. 3-5.
- 61 *Nation*, May 25, 1935, p. 614; "Behind the Czecho-Slovak Election," *Nation*, June 5, 1935, pp. 645-646.
- 62 *Nation*, May 29, 1937, pp. 611-613. But an exception to this line was that of Elmer Davis, who was very sympathetic to the Czech "solution" to the German minority question, and who supported the view that "a man's nationality is what he thinks it is." Davis, "Czechoslovakia: Bridge Or Barricade?," *Harper's*, June, 1937, pp. 84-93.
- 63 *Nation*, July 23, 1938, pp. 83-86. Other items of "serious" journalism of some importance on the question include the articles by Fodor in the *Atlantic Monthly*, "Czech and German," May, 1938, pp. 623-629, and "The Cemetery Of Europe," August, 1938, pp. 185-190.
- 64 "Hitler's Proposals," *Nation*, July 30, 1938, pp. 99-100; *Nation*, August 6, 1938, p. 117.
- 65 *Nation*, August 20, 1938, pp. 174-176. The picking up of the word "appeasement" and the using of it in the most invidious manner imaginable was one of the great pre-war propaganda strokes of the left-liberal opinion-makers, a contribution to political sloganeering which long survived the time it was originally employed. The use of the word in this sense was not always true; for example, in discussing disarmament in 1932, the *New Republic* observed editorially, "reduction of armaments is, in general, tied up with international political stability, which is, in turn, largely dependent on economic appeasement." *New Republic*, January 6, 1932, p. 202. On the "appeasement" campaign of the fall of 1938 see especially *New Masses*, editorial "Is It War?," September 20, 1938, pp. 3-5.
- 66 Fodor, "Hitler Will Decide," *Nation*, September 10, 1938, pp. 239-241.
- 67 "What Hitler Wants," *Nation*, September 10, 1938, pp. 237-238.
- 68 *New Republic*, September 21, 1938, p. 173.
- 69 *Nation*, September 24, 1938, p. 281; Villard column in same issue, p. 299.

- 70 *New Republic*, September 28, 1938, pp. 200-201.
- 71 "Black Progress," *Nation*, October 15, 1938, pp. 367-368; "Taking Stock," *Nation*, October 29, 1938, pp. 440-441. See also Werth, "France's Tragic Decline," *Nation*, October 8, 1938, pp. 344-345.
- 72 "Recapitulation," *Nation*, October 1, 1938, pp. 313-314.
- 73 *Nation*, October, 8, 1938, pp. 340-341.
- 74 *Nation*, October 1, 1938, pp. 316-317. A *Nation* editorial, "Hitler's Cold War," on March 26, 1938, pp. 345-346, had estimated Hitler's program as of undertaking "the conquest of Central Europe by the process of cold warfare," with Polish help in undermining the Czech and Lithuanian regions.
- 75 Anderson, "It's All In 'Mein Kampf,'" *Nation*, October 8, 1938, pp. 343-344.
- 76 *Nation*, October 15, 1938, pp. 370-371. In contrast to this William L. Langer's essay should be consulted as an example of thinking of liberals on the relative modesty of German ambitions; see his "When German Dreams Come True," *Yale Review*, June, 1938, pp. 678-698.
- 77 *Nation*, September 24, 1938, pp. 284-285.
- 78 *Nation*, October 15, 1938, p. 381.
- 79 Dell, "Fraud Rules In Europe," *Nation*, October 22, 1938, pp. 400-404.
- 80 Fischer, "Fascist Pacifism," *Nation*, October 29, 1938, pp. 446-448.
- 81 Fischer, "Let the Czechs Stand Firm!," *Nation*, October 1, 1938, pp. 317-318, (p. 318).
- 82 Lerner, "Propaganda's Golden Age," *Nation*, November 4, 1939, pp. 495-497.
- 83 Brody, "War By Race Theory," *New Masses*, November 1, 1938, pp. 3-6.
- 84 Howe, "After Munich-What?," *Common Sense*, November, 1938, pp. 21-23.
- 85 *Nation*, November 12, 1938, p. 494.
- 86 Bliven, "Picking Up the Pieces," *New Republic*, October 19, 1938, pp. 294-296.
- 87 Dean, "Pan-Germanism Redivivus," *New Republic*, October 12, 1938, pp. 258-260.
- 88 *New Republic*, November 2, 1938, pp. 365-366, for all citations in three paragraphs below.
- 89 *Common Sense*, October, 1938, p. 6.
- 90 *Common Sense*, November, 1938, p. 3.
- 91 *Nation*, January 27, 1940, p. 101.
- 92 Zukerman, "Anti-Semitism Revives In Germany," *Nation*, March 27, 1935, pp. 356-357; Schiller, "Prize Journalism Under Hitler," *Nation*, July 3, 1935, pp. 12-14.
- 93 On MacDonald, see *Nation*, January 8, 1936, p. 29; January 15, 1936, pp. 61-62; Rosenfeld in *New Republic*, February 15, 1936, pp. 275-277.
- 94 *Nation*, September 12, 1936, pp. 290-291. See also Franz Höllering, "I Was an Editor in Germany," *Nation*, February 5, 1936, pp. 151-153, describing in part the compensation received by the former owners of the Ullstein newspapers when taken over by the new regime.
- 95 *Nation*, October 23, 1937, pp. 423-425.
- 96 *Nation*, March 11, 1936, p. 299.
- 97 *Nation*, October 9, 1937, p. 363.
- 98 Louis Fischer, "Why Mussolini Went To War," *Nation*, January 15, 1936, pp. 67-69. See also Herbert Solow, "Zionism In Extremis," *Nation*, July 31, 1937, pp. 125-126, on Zionist activities in Mussolini Italy.
- 99 Stolberg, "The Jew and the World," *Nation*, June 17, 1936, pp. 766-770.
- 100 Gruening review of Gessner in *New Republic*, March 24, 1937, p. 217; Wise review of Gessner in *Nation*, January 9, 1937, pp. 52-53.
- 101 Fischer, "Poland: Between Poverty And War," *Nation*, March 18, 1936, pp. 343-345. Fischer summarized a number of observations resulting from his trip out of Russia in "Europe: 1936," *Virginia Quarterly Review*, April, 1936, pp. 161-179.
- 102 *Nation*, April 29, 1936, p. 535.
- 103 *New Republic*, May 6, 1936, pp. 355-356.
- 104 *Nation*, May 22, 1937, p. 578.
- 105 Allen, "Polish Pogroms," *The Fight*, July, 1937, pp. 10-11, 26.
- 106 Zukerman, "Jews And the Fate Of Poland," *Nation*, April 2, 1938, pp. 379-381.
- 107 "Death Trap For Jews," *Nation*, July 16, 1938, p. 61. When the *Nation* reviewed R. W. Seton-Watson's *A History Of the Rumanians* three years earlier it remarked,

- "What Prof. Seton-Watson writes about the *Alliance Israelite* and the Jews in general is worthy of any Nazi." *Nation*, June 12, 1935, p. 694.
- 108 Zukerman, "Anti-Semitism In Exile," *Nation*, May 17, 1941, pp. 579-581.
- 109 *Nation*, January 27, 1940, pp. 92-94. See also "No Tears For Rumania," *New Republic*, July 1, 1940, p. 45, condemning her World War One acquisition of minorities, while "her persecution of the Jews was notorious before Hitler was ever heard of."
- 110 Viton, "Why Arabs Kill Jews," *Nation*, June 3, 1936, pp. 708-709, and "The Fate Of Zionism," *Nation*, December 19, 1936, pp. 725-728.
- 111 *New Republic*, July 1, 1936, pp. 230-232.
- 112 "Stubborn Facts In Palestine," *Nation*, January 2, 1937, p. 6.
- 113 Bernstein, "Promise Of Zionism," *Nation*, January 2, 1937, pp. 12-15.
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- 121 *New Republic*, August 8, 1939, pp. 14-15.
- 122 *New Republic*, May 24, 1939, pp. 80-81.
- 123 Adamic review of "Billinger" in *Nation*, April 17, 1935, pp. 457-458; "Billinger" review of Heiden in *New Masses*, June 25, 1935, pp. 24-26; "Billinger" identified as "a young German Communist" in *New Masses*, April 2, 1935.
- 124 *New Republic*, May 22, 1935, p. 53.
- 125 Simpson review of Schuman in *New Republic*, July 3, 1935, pp. 228-229; Mowrer review of Schuman in *Nation*, September 18, 1935, pp. 334-335.
- 126 *New Republic*, June 26, 1935, pp. 203-204, carried a very sparse review of this book.
- 127 *New Republic*, October 23, 1935, p. 308.
- 128 Review in *New Republic*, September 13, 1939, p. 167.
- 129 *New Republic*, July 8, 1936, p. 275.
- 130 *New Republic*, June 10, 1936, p. 136.
- 131 *Nation*, June 3, 1936, pp. 714-715.
- 132 *Common Sense*, May, 1935, p. 28.
- 133 *Nation*, July 31, 1937, p. 139. Lore review of Brady and Ashton in *Nation*, July 10, 1937, pp. 30-31.
- 134 *Nation*, February 19, 1938, pp. 214-215. John B. Holt's *Under the Swastika* (University of North Carolina Press, 1936) was advertised but not reviewed in the liberal weeklies.
- 135 *Nation*, April 9, 1938, p. 399.
- 136 Rosenberg review of Reed in *Nation*, June 18, 1938, pp. 705-706; Lash review of Reed in *New Masses*, September 6, 1938, pp. 24-26.
- 137 Claude W. Guillebaud's *The Economic Recovery Of Germany From 1933 To March, 1938* (Macmillan, 1939) was noted but not reviewed by the liberal press.
- 138 *Nation*, December 24, 1938, pp. 699-700.
- 139 Mann review of Dodd in *Nation*, March 11, 1939, pp. 298-299.
- 140 *Nation*, March 18, 1939, p. 323.
- 141 Dell review in *Nation*, April 15, 1939, pp. 441-442.
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THE INTELLECTUAL CONVERSION
OF LIBERALISM FROM PEACE TO
WAR : I—LIBERAL PACIFISM FINALLY
RUNS AGROUND ON THE COMMUNIST
REEF, 1935-1939

SOME attention has been called to the special definitions of various political and other words which the combination of the Soviet Union's Foreign Office and the Popular Front unloosed upon the world of the mid-1930s. "Aggression" was one of the newly defined words, and the Soviet definition has been plaguing the world ever since 1933. Another one of the important words was "peace," and in this case the vogue of the definition was short-lived, expiring with the end of the Popular Front. Without a good understanding of the new definition of this word, and its place in the context of Communist politics between 1934 and 1939, it is not easy to weigh correctly the circumstances which submerged the liberal pacifist impulse between the wars and which converted a large part of its articulate and literary side in liberal hands into another sounding board for Russian political ambitions.

By the end of the summer of 1935, with the Italo-Ethiopian war threatening and with the machinery of the Popular Front whirring smoothly and powerfully, the cry of peace and the vigorous repudiation of martial propensities, and its concomitants of resistance to military training, conscription, munitions making and military education, reached a towering peak, where they were to remain for most

of a year. Some contributions of American liberals to this will be examined shortly. But a far different spirit bubbled through the anti-war and pacifist groups now than had been the case either before the World War or in the fifteen years following its termination. And the talk of the imminence of another war ran head-on into the force which lay at the fountainhead of this new spirit, the friends of which spent little time in pointing out that a totally different situation now existed which made such an event highly unlikely. An editorial in the *New Masses* on August 6, 1935, "The War Against War," explained it all in three sentences: ¹

In one decisive respect the pre-war situation in 1914 was different from that of 1935. Neither in Europe nor in the United States was there a militant, organized force against war. The Communist Party was not in existence. There was no Soviet Union, making one-sixth of the earth's surface the strong bulwark for peace that we have today.

An attempt to understand the peace movement in the last few years before the outbreak of the Second World War without a strong grasp of understanding as to the critical importance of Russian Communist foreign policy imperatives is hardly likely to be successful. The main theme of the Popular Front period was the collision of the older pacifist and anti-war organization and impulse with the grim obstacle of Soviet Russia and its "peace" fronts, and the utter wrecking of the effectiveness of the former as a result. By the time the Russians abandoned the Popular Front and the simulated anti-war effusions of its many transmission belt organizations in August, 1939, American anti-war groups were a heap of wreckage, and their influence on American public opinion and policy at one of its lowest points in many decades. The Administration's swift war-drive and the abrupt adoption of peacetime conscription encountered their main resistance from amorphous antagonistic forces in the nation, not the groups which presumably were brought together deliberately to make an issue of such moves. In many ways the debility and ineffectiveness of the organized anti-war forces in the country are to be understood better when viewed as due to mortal wounds suffered in the Popular Front campaigns with the New Pacifism, which divided wars into two categories and simultaneously struggled to aid Russia in any wars in which Communism became involved while desperately trying to discredit all other possible armed clashes as dangers to "peace." The *New Masses* editorial, which appeared over and over in various contexts under a variety of sponsorships, described the new movement superbly; "a militant, organized force against war." As a belligerent enterprise which sought to safeguard the Soviet Union and its endeavors elsewhere from the effects of unwanted wars with the antagonists

of Communism it had marked success. But American liberalism, caught up in its intrigues, never succeeded in becoming unenmeshed. Five years of enthusiastic participation led to the grim awakening in August, 1939.

The liberal editors cooperated vigorously with the actions and pronouncements of pacifist and anti-war groups in the exciting spring months of 1935. It was about the last time that the distinctions between the Old and the New Pacifism seemed blurred and of no particular significance in the struggle against militarism. The intellectual camaraderie was to melt away in the roar of the Italo-Ethiopian war a few months later, when Soviet politics began to steer the Popular Front brand into a totally different avenue, and instigate contention and disturbance among the disparate elements. The grinding jar of running aground was not to be felt by most of the forces in the Old Pacifism, however, until the summer of 1939.

Late in April, 1935 the *New Republic* loudly acclaimed a wave of anti-war demonstrations on more than 150 campuses of American colleges and universities, one of the most impressive examples of action of this sort in the entire decade, and itself related to the high-water mark of revisionist disillusionist scholarship on World War One and the concurrent congressional investigations of the munitions and war finance enterprises. Only the "Fascist-minded" had attempted to break up these gestures on the part of the college-age demonstrators, the editorial of April 24 insisted, and implied that some ominous changes might take place if this age-bracket advanced into positions where some action might follow: ²

Hundreds of thousands of undergraduates, looking at the world whose activities they are about to enter—a world of which war is a characteristic expression—believe that it could hardly be a worse one, and are determined to better it, no matter how drastic the necessary changes may be.

The implication was that a planned economy and the obliteration of national sovereignty were just about around the corner in America, and that their contribution to making the world war-free would be decisive.

In May the tide probably reached its peak with regard to this sort of direct action. The *New Republic* exploded angrily against the proposed Patman Bonus bill, which would have granted significant monetary recognition to organized veteran pressure in national politics, and also condemned a rash of proposed loyalty oath bills and attempts to squelch anti-war and anti-militarist protests in half a dozen institutions of higher learning. Selected for major denunciation in this month and for some time thereafter were the Hearst Metrotone newsreels, attacked over and over in both liberal weeklies for their asserted

militaristic propaganda content. Hearst was charged with being the outstanding single force in American public communication plugging for another war. Ivy League pressure against showing these films as "jingoistic" was acclaimed with a shout. Among the newsreel companies, only Paramount was praised for its fairness in portraying the April "national student demonstrations against war."³

Hearst newspapers and newsreels continued to be a major target through the summer and fall of 1935 in all the major liberal and pro-Communist journals, during which time, the *Waiting for Lefty* period of American literature, all attempts to "coordinate" college anti-militarist demonstrations and actions were vigorously championed and encouraged. Walter Wilson, still gathering material for a class-angling of the first World War with the emphasis to be placed on the social and other distinctions between officers and enlisted men, contributed a preliminary survey of his work in the *New Republic* on May 22, "War and the Common Soldier," denouncing the gross inequalities between the two during that time, stressing incidents of desertion, unfair legal treatment and other tension-producing and incitatory incidents which were cumulatively hardly likely to increase respect for the military among the aroused liberals.⁴ The absence of similar material on the armed forces of other countries, and especially of the Soviet Union, where the social revolution had presumably introduced the "democratic army," left Wilson's story looking like one half of a pair of shears. But with Villard stressing much the same aspect of the first World War in the *Nation*, it was obvious that temporarily such news had tremendous appeal. Placed alongside General Butler's book *War Is a Racket* and the Carlson-Bates muck-raking study of Hearst, the sentiment of the moment called for a wide opening of arms to embrace all of the related material issuing peripherally.

In mid-June, the *New Republic* expressed sharp disapproval of the War Department's plan to use a million dollars for setting up new Reserve Officers' Training Corps units in other schools and colleges. The editorial agreed fully with the National Committee On Militarism In Education that this plan called for resistance to it in every school and institution "it threatens to involve."⁵ And the accent on the objectionable aspect of the educational side of military training persisted throughout the year. Late in November, John T. Flynn poured invective upon the American Legion and the superintendent of education in Akron, Ohio, in his *New Republic* column for halting a University of Akron student demonstration against war under the auspices of the American League Against War and Fascism, deploring that the organization had been tagged Communist.⁶ The excitement and exhilaration of the drive against war seemed to have

infected the whole liberal spectrum, heightened a bit by the outbreak of an actual war in Africa. James Wechsler's hefty volume *Revolt On the Campus*, reviewed in the *New Republic* the week later (December 4, 1935) seemed to summarize most effectively the dramatic accent on anti-war, anti-conscription, anti-military-drill protestations now surging through the levels of higher education in the United States.⁷ The mobilization of all these rebels into the Communist politics of the Popular Front was the omitted element, but hardly considered a significant factor in these explosive days.

In truth, the self-conscious separation of the two pacifisms had not occurred just yet, and American liberals were not to be substantially mobilized by the newer form until the Popular Front exigencies created by the Ethiopian, Spanish and Chinese wars produced the vast, yawning gulf between the traditional opponents of all wars and the new antagonists of just the wars in which the Russian Communists were not implicated. Martha Gruening accorded Richard B. Gregg's pacifist landmark *The Power of Non-Violence* strong praise in the May 22 *New Republic*, and a week later Villard's column in the *Nation* was a stirring tribute to Jane Addams and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, "the true defenders of civilization" by their "struggle against militarism," in his words.⁹ A *Nation* editorial on July 17 sharply castigated the clergy of several denominations for failing to adopt an outright position of hostility toward "international butchery" at meetings of the Social Service Committee of the Methodist-Episcopal Church in New York and the Central Conference of American Rabbis in Chicago; "Apparently casuistry is still a mighty weapon among men of the cloth," the editorial commented testily.¹⁰

All through the latter half of 1935 evidences of impartial acceptance of pacifist figures of repute and attachment to traditional attitudes kept cropping up. The *Nation's* pre-Fourth-of-July issue hammered a speech made by Nicholas Murray Butler before the American Club in Paris and reviewed the objectionable side of the Columbia president once more, as had periodically been done with this top-level figure in the more pretentious American peace foundations and organizations:¹¹

Fresh from the commencement exercises at Columbia University, where he countenanced the Fascist Casa Italiana and had nothing whatever to say about the high-handed expulsion of a group of medical students and technicians for pacifist activities, he had the impudence to preach liberalism to his audience. . . . A reactionary in his own country and on his own campus, he champions liberalism the more strongly the farther he is from the United States.

On the foreign scene, far more acceptable was Carl von Ossietzky, the incarcerated German Nobel Peace Prize winner, whose case received sustained publicity, and which was veritably unique in that the other German figures who received acclaim for having aroused the antagonism of the Hitler regime were usually lauded for their political belligerence and ideological opposition, rather than their devotion to an ideology such as pacifism.¹²

The momentum carried well into the autumn of 1935. A *Nation* editorial on October 2 praised World Peaceways for a new radio program emphasizing mass communications media in bringing the peace message to attention:¹³

The field of battle, says World Peaceways, is the field of *dis-honor*. If that slogan can appear in print and on the air enough times, not only the man on the street but governments may finally come to believe it.

Common Sense in its October issue had a similar position, in suggesting courses to make war less likely for the United States now that another seemed to be threatening the rest of the world, which included "concerted demand for world disarmament and for intelligent cooperation in every international effort that may stave off the declaration of war," "peace propaganda to make clear to all the utter bestiality of war," and "the building up of a conviction, particularly among our young men, that the jail and the concentration camp are more honorable places to suffer and perhaps to die than some foreign battlefield."¹⁴

Editorial comment in the *Nation* could not suppress a sober shudder over the likelihood of the use which mass media would be put to by officialdom in competition with peace forces when another war did erupt, however. The incredible increase and improvement of motion pictures, radio and mass-produced printed matter since 1917 alone was sufficient to brake the enthusiasm engendered by this latest pacifist gesture:¹⁵

In the event of war we know only too well how the conflict would be "sold" to the public; the resources of publicity, the press, and the radio would be called into service; we should eat war, read and feel war, dream of war, and war would literally fill the air.

But not all the spokesmen of the *Nation* were this fatalistic and resigned to defeat at the hands of organized forces, official and otherwise, favoring participation in another war. Villard, in his signed page the following week was much moved by a new play, "If This Be Treason," written by John Haynes Holmes and Reginald Lawrence, which portrayed a surprise attack on the United States by Japan at

Manila, resulting in the death of a thousand sailors and marines, and a President who refused to take the country to war despite this. He used the play as a jump-off point to present once more an old position ("my old thesis," he referred to it) which reappeared in the form of the Ludlow resolution in 1939;¹⁶

. . . war has now become such a monstrous thing, so diabolical in all its aspects and so certain, as we all now know, to ruin victors and vanquished alike, that no one man, no small group of men, no Congress should have the right to declare war. The Congress of the United States has lost the war-making power guaranteed to it by the Constitution; it has been usurped by the Executive. All the more reason that the Executive should be compelled to disgorge that power and that we should establish the rule that no war may be declared save by a referendum vote of the American people.

Bruce Bliven struck a similar chord but in a slightly different key in the *New Republic* on November 6 in his essay "The Difficult Road Away From War" by expressing substantial confidence in the war resister apart from his function as a political actionist:¹⁷

Twenty years ago, every pacifist was automatically written down as guilty of personal cowardice; today, if the tests of public opinion recently made are accurate, a majority of the coming generation is opposed to any war except in self defense, and an impressive minority will resist even that. . . . The isolationist sentiment that is so strong in the Middle and Far West in particular, and that dominates Congress today, while it is partly irrational, instinctive and deluded, is also founded on an understanding of realities that is entitled to the respect of the radicals in any European country.

This was a substantial tribute from the senior editor of American liberalism's junior weekly, and about punctuated the pacifist story at the point where Popular Front politics was to begin to make a shambles of any anti-war sentiment and program unrelated to the needs of the proletarian class struggle and the Russian Communist regime. But it was called forth from Bliven largely by the new war in Africa and the distressing impotence of the League of Nations in halting its flowering. Insofar as that organization had the backing and enthusiastic support of pacifists, Bliven had maintained a week before in his "The Plight of the Pacifists" that "the most fanatical supporters of the League must now recognize that that body does not have and has never had any power to prevent war except in the direction and to the extent that peace was desired by two or three of the Great Powers with whose national policies a pacifist attitude happened to coin-

cide.”¹⁸ But his subsequent piece, as has been seen, hardly indicated that he equated pacifism with the supporters of the League; on the contrary, he was quite confident that the health of pacifism had never been stronger.

Traditional American pacifism sentiment was habitually neutral toward war as a gesture in localizing the struggle if nothing could be done to halt it, and it was always against United States entry into any war. Popular Front pacifism was utterly opposed to this concept of the position of the anti-war side. Collective security of the Marxian variety called for specific attitudes and policies toward each separate war insofar as Russian interests were involved. A clash between these two was inevitable. The Communists in the American League Against War and Fascism,¹⁹ the largest and most influential of the Russian-line collective security agents of the New Pacifism, were always struggling to uproot the neutrality idea among anti-war factions, and from January, 1936 on reached substantial heights in fabricating the thesis that American security was impossible in any future major war, and our entry was bound to be certain. The makings of the curious interventionist intellectual team, which found the Communists clasping hands with such figures as Henry L. Stimson, Norman Davis, the Council for Foreign Relations and Hamilton Fish Armstrong, were already dimly in existence even before the Italo-Ethiopian skirmish.

The Ethiopian war signalled the end of the uneasy collaboration of sorts between the Two Pacifisms. Before the war was over the efforts at forming a comprehensive anti-war front of the 1931-1935 period was in total wreckage. The Liberal journals reacted to the new situation quickly, and went the way of the Popular Front. They promptly stopped featuring pacifism without a class angle and paid little attention to it thereafter. From July, 1936, with the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, we have seen that the hasty enlistment of the liberals and their organs on the side of the Red-directed Loyalists had other effects besides those dealing specifically with foreign policy; what emphasis had formerly been spent on pacifism stopped as if turned off by a central switch. And in 1937 the word was rarely used except as an epithet.

Probably the first rumblings of the storm were those heard at the third “Congress” of the American League Against War and Fascism in Cleveland in the first week of January, 1936. Tempers were already hot over Italy’s war in Africa; Popular Front and pro-Communist organs had exploded angrily for three months over it, and a full-blown campaign to impose economic warfare on Italy had sailed across the country propelled by the propaganda winds of these forces. William P. Mangold’s *New Republic* article-report, “Forming a People’s Front,” in the issue for January 22 reflected the new spirit of unity which seemed about to possess ostensibly anti-war Left forces, with

the Communists and Socialists apparently forgetting past differences to pool energies. Mangold reported that Paul Porter, official representative of the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party, had tendered an offer of cooperation in organizing an anti-war, anti-Fascist body among the trade unions, which the League had accepted unanimously.²⁰ And harmony seemed to reign unblemished by the troubles which had previously featured these gatherings of widely-diversified anti-war and pacifist forces.

But the earlier clash had merely gone underground, instead of being resolved. James Wechsler promptly revealed that in a lengthy report on the convention, also in the *New Republic*, "American Pacifism Seeks a Policy." He was convinced that the achieving of unanimity among the "indigenous" pacifists and the Communist-motivated was going to be a "superhuman task." The main issue seemed to be a controversy over American positions in the new clash abroad, and Wechsler announced that "The indisputably powerful and indigenous [pacifist] movement has rallied to the idea of strict and unflinching neutrality," and was pressing for neutrality legislation, shunning collaboration with all League of Nations attempts to apply pressure to Italy, and paying absolutely no attention to the "aggressor" concept, enjoying such a vociferous vogue of popularity in pro-Communist circles since its fashioning by Maxim Litvinov. But he did not delay in spot-lighting the position of their principal adversaries:²¹

The other dominant approach, most fully expressed by the Communists. . . . regards "isolationism" as a vain hope without any bearing upon contemporary realities. This camp holds that a general European war inevitably means American participation and that . . . American opinion and effort must now be directed toward preventing its outbreak; [and] it regards such a stand as a precedent for cooperation with the League of Nations against Japan or Germany in the event of an attack upon the Soviet Union; it holds that "neutrality" is an illusion, and "peace is indivisible." Those who promulgate this doctrine are guided, of course, by the peace efforts of the Soviet Union.

Wechsler had stated the main issue very succinctly, and showed no evidence that he was out of harmony with the views of the latter element. But he was obviously saddened by the sharp division among the "pacifists" which he detected at the Third Congress. And he honestly described the sources and intent of the anti-involvement sentiment;

. . . a passionate and overwhelming opposition to American involvement in another World War. This feeling is not mere passive apprehension; it amounts to an active disgust and a genuine determination to find safeguards against the possibility. So effective has been the debunking of

the last conflict and America's role in it, so abundant the exposures of its imperialist roots, that only a handful of jingoes today dare to speak of repeating its performance.

Wechsler omitted discussing the war-making potential and propensities of the Communist position and its all-encompassing concern for Russian security at all costs. Its superiority to "jingoes" in shaping pro-war views was as yet unrecognized or an unexpressed attribute.

But the tide of the "old" pacifism was still in, and had several months to go before receding in the face of the Spanish cataclysm. Revisionism and congressional investigation of various aspects of the war of 1917-1918 was still supplying material for the making of opinions and even suggestions for policy-changes in consonance with anti-war views. Early in March, 1936 Paul Ward furnished a sympathetic comment to the *Nation* in his weekly column of news from Washington on a bill proposed by Representative Maury Maverick to eliminate "sex appeal and false glory, the emotional by-products of militarism, from military training." It would have banned the use of girls as honorary officers of cadet corps and prohibited their participation in drills or military ceremonies of any kind in the ROTC, while making seven books required reading for all ROTC enrollees: Zweig's *The Case of Sergeant Grischa*, Dos Passos' *Three Soldiers*, *The Red Badge of Courage*, *All Quiet On the Western Front*, Millis' *Road to War* and *The Martial Spirit* and Lawrence Stallings' *The First World War*.²²

The production of Robert E. Sherwood's starkly pacifist play "Idiot's Delight" in the Shubert Theater in New York was greeted by a wildly enthusiastic review in the *New Republic* by Stark Young the following month,²³ followed by an equally ardent reception of Irwin Shaw's drama "Bury the Dead," in Young's opinion an even more impressive anti-war play than Sherwood's.²⁴ The inexorable progress of Mussolini's armies in Ethiopia and the marching of Hitler's troops into the Rhineland in the same days of the first productions of these stage plays were not reflected in the sentiments of the works or the views of their enthusiastic receivers. They were indeed far more acceptable in the peace work than the efforts of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, whose report for 1935 was issued in the same week of the Rhineland move and the first production of Sherwood's play. A *New Republic* editorial called it "gloomy reading," and as far as the Rhineland move constituted a threat to peace, compared to this latest Carnegie production on behalf of peace, the editorial ruminated, "it is an open question whether such menacing warlike maneuvers are essentially more dispiriting than the oppressive ineffectuality of the endowed and official workers for world peace."²⁵

The same issue of the *Nation* (April 8, 1936) found Villard issuing a tribute to one of the most whimsical gestures of this era of satiation with war, the formation of the "Veterans of Future Wars," a college-age group which waggishly suggested that they receive pensions in advance of their coming military service and lampooned a variety of aspects of the military and its impingement on the American scene. In his column Villard gave his support without qualification. "My unqualified admiration has been won by Lewis J. Gorin, Princeton, '36, who conceived the brilliant idea of founding the Veterans of Future Wars," he announced; "Its sister organization, the Future Gold Star Mothers, is growing just as rapidly in the women's colleges." Villard thought that Gorin's selection of "the Fascist salute but with the palm up in readiness for Treasury favors to come" as the new society's salute was a stroke of pure genius.²⁶

A more sedate gesture from the campus was Professor Merle Curti's book *Peace or War*, a history of American pacifism and anti-war action in the previous three centuries, which Charles A. Beard reviewed with much warmth in the *New Republic* a week later. Beard commented with much favor on Curti's thesis that a re-ordering of economic affairs at home and abroad was a necessary prerequisite to the evolution of world peace, and the book's relevance to the time in which it appeared was extensive. Villard in the *Nation* commended him in like manner for this stand, that the American economic and social order had to be converted to "one more definitely collectivistic and democratic," but he was not satisfied with the book on the whole. He was far more impressed with B. H. Liddell Hart's somber *The War In Outline*, of which Villard declared, "no pacifist ever wrote such an overwhelming and unanswerable indictment of the whole war system as has Captain Hart." ²⁷

The last week of April, the *Nation* unleashed an intemperate attack on the Assistant Secretary of War, Woodring, for a speech before the American Legion convention in Sarasota, Florida, in which he heaped much abuse on church, labor, youth and pacifist groups for their active campaigning in the opposition to war propaganda. Part of it was related to the just formed National Peace Conference, an agency for some 35 national anti-war societies, in Washington. Villard selected this event for particularly vigorous acclaim.²⁸

The spring of 1936 closed out with more liberal plaudits to the energy and vigor of the peace demonstrations among the nation's students. A widespread series of such gestures in the last week of April in several colleges, universities and high schools drew editorial approval in the *New Republic*, which suggested, "a good deal of sense was pounded into the heads of college presidents and high school principals" by their dramatic effect. It was eminently satisfied with the cooperation being received from "pacifist-minded students." ²⁹

And as far as the graduating class of the year was concerned, a June 17 editorial comment in the same weekly felt that it was "pronouncedly more pacifist" than those of the decade of the 1920s, while admitting that "it is still a question whether their anti-war emotion would withstand the sort of propaganda the militarists are able to make before a war or during its course."³⁰

The Spanish war and the change which began to come over the organizational side of the liberal peace movement was gradual enough, but the sentiments of the American League Against War and Fascism were unmistakable. Its vigorous championing of the Loyalist side and engaging in fund-raising in the United States on their behalf estranged former ALWF friends such as General Butler. But the general picture from there on down through 1937 seemed to be one of substantial congeniality. The League sponsored an "Anti-War Dinner" in New York on the twentieth anniversary of the United States declaration of war in 1917, at which the speakers were Senator Nye and Harry F. Ward, which the *New Republic* advertised sympathetically.³¹ But the big event of the organization's agenda was its fourth "Congress" in Pittsburgh late in November. An extended report on what transpired was written by Robert Morss Lovett, and it was obvious from the foreign policy planks adopted that there was close harmony with the Earl Browder position in support of the Chicago Bridge speech of the President, just a few weeks old at the time of the "Congress." Said Lovett, "the general opinion in respect to international policy was apparently expressed by Professor Reinhold Niebuhr, who declared, 'The only way America can stay out of war is to stop war.' " It was obvious, however, that advocating a foreign policy based on making distinctions between aggressors and victims, denying resources to some countries and making them available to others, plus backing "the necessity of concerted action to quarantine aggressors" hardly suggested movement toward the goal of stopping war.³² Perhaps the decision of the "Congress" to change the organization's name to the American League For Peace and Democracy was expected to perform the pacific functions which its close adherence to the official Communist Party program made impossible.³³ The *New Republic* did not think it significant that the Communist Party withdrew from affiliation with the League at this time, though more astute observers might have made a comment on the relation between the foreign policy planks adopted and the CP dis-affiliation; its objective seemed to be accomplished.

In 1937 there was less news about general pacifist activities in all issues of the liberal press combined than formerly had been seen in a month of any of them. The difficulty of talking peace with an editorial policy progressively recruiting attitudes for accepting war in Spain and China was reflected in this paucity of attention to the

organized peace and anti-war movement. And with the collective security drive gaining strength by the week, the absence of pacifist rapport with Communism was a telling factor as well. Whatever its protective coloration may have been in the multitude of anti-war demonstrations and groups and congresses, the Communist Party's lack of sympathy with the traditional pacifism became less concealed than ever. The pacifists received the same patronization as the anarchists, with whom the Communists shared sentiments of a kind in Spain for a short time. In the case of the pacifists, hardly a vestige of the earlier uneasy fraternization remained by the end of 1937, even though Communists still liked to talk of "the fight against imperialist war." Furthermore, the Roosevelt Administration's foreign policy shift toward collective security sentiments at this time helped to undermine the abstentionists from war still further, while unconsciously giving aid to Communism's case for the same kind of policy. No organ in America by the spring of 1938 was so vehemently attacking traditional pacifism in print as the *New Masses*. To Soviet sympathizers the only genuine peace group by this date was the American League for Peace and Democracy, the re-named front which somehow found the words "war" and "Fascism" no longer proper for its title.³⁴

The collective security program split the pacifists as well as the two main liberal weeklies, although some individuals preferred to retain private reservations apart from editorial policy. Thus, although the *New Republic* was frigidly in opposition to collective security, it did not prevent two of its editors, Lewis Mumford and Robert Morss Lovett, from signing an American League statement in the March 15, 1938 *New Masses* (about one-third of the 60 signatories being *New Masses* and *Daily Worker* editors and contributors), which proclaimed, "We believe that by moral pressure and by economic measures these Fascist aggressors can be stopped and world peace maintained."³⁵

Just a few weeks earlier the *New Republic* had issued a curt repudiation to the women's groups which had just concluded their thirteenth session in Washington of the "Conference on the Cause and Cure of War," for having come out strongly for collective security to be achieved through "economic measures and even the use of military force." This was rather strange pacifism, and the editors considered it a dangerous development in the positions of these traditional feminine peace societies, because it was one now seemingly held by the President and the Secretary of State, and, furthermore, "just because their principles are high and their intentions are good."³⁶

A major clash was under way among the older organizations for sure by this time, and the *Nation* undertook to take up the opposite stand to the *New Republic* in approving of the revolt, and all moves

made toward replacing their ancient views with the new ones. Wechsler's long accounts in two March 1938 issues of the *Nation*, "War in the Peace Movement," sided with editorial policy, and reported a very sour estimate of those peace societies which persisted in "isolationism" and anti-collective security attitudes.³⁷ In April, the *Nation's* editors expressed the belief that "many American Peace groups" were "moving toward a collective security policy" despite the drag of tradition.³⁸ Since all semblance of opposition to military spending, rearmament and related facts had about vanished from Communist publications, with their new positive-good theory of armed might, and with the "innocent clubs" in full cry behind their slogans and even the Administration nodding vigorously in the direction of the form of action which this preparedness suggested most obviously, it was becoming apparent that it was going to take more than ordinary courage to stand up in the face of this powerful momentum.

The issue between the two camps on foreign policy was especially apparent in the way the National Anti-War Congress meeting in Washington over Memorial Day, 1938 was reported. Some 1000 delegates from labor, peace, religious and civic groups split away from the Communist-dominated New Pacifist fronts, and issued statements which were quite in opposition to the growing vogue for supporting collective security. A *New Republic* editorial on June 8 expressed doubtfulness about the efficiency of their "frontal attacks on militarism," but conceded that their stress on continued progress toward domestic reform and the encouragement of similar moves overseas to help remove the causes of "dictatorial militarism" were very commendable.³⁹ The *Nation* on the other hand could not suppress its contempt of the Congress. It did not disapprove of the fact that the daily press had "virtually boycotted the proceedings," but felt that this was not enough. The Congress needed notice, in its view, that it might be properly condemned for its "isolationist" and anti-collective security views. Of the delegates attending, Norman Thomas and Frederick J. Libby were selected for special attack. It was *Nation* opinion now that any anti-war meetings should support the specific wars of Spain and China as called for by the Popular Front.⁴⁰

A closer look at the peace movement among the youth and its reflection in the liberal weeklies is in order at this point. The formation of the American Student Union, on December 28, 1935, largely a coalition of the National Student League and the Student League for Industrial Democracy, was greeted with high acclaim by the *Nation* early in 1936. Its program of opposition to the ROTC, "Fascism," and "the war preparations of our own government" was hailed as uncommon wisdom, and the students were commended for disclosing themselves as "unequivocally opposed to war" and "willing to go on record as refusing to fight in any war."⁴¹ The *New Republic*

accorded the ASU approximately the same quality of tribute for its plan to stage a nation-wide walkout from classes by half a million students on April 22, 1936 in protest against war, the editorial remarking, "Surely no persons are more entitled to present their views on the subject than the young men who will be called upon to serve as cannon fodder in any future conflict and the young women who will be their wives, sweethearts—and widows."⁴²

But it was soon obvious that the student enthusiasts were going beyond the call of duty in denunciation of war. The welter of confusion which was soon to tear the liberal ranks on the issues of whether to intervene in the Asiatic, Ethiopian and Spanish wars, the Administration's rearmament moves, the Stalin purges, the Left fight in Spain and several others, also was to hit the ASU. With the Communists playing a double game on war, praising it in China and Spain and denouncing it everywhere else, putting out tracts glorifying the pro-Red cause in both these lands while simultaneously issuing other tracts purporting to demonstrate how ugly war was, there was reason to become confused. An example of the latter was *War Our Heritage* by Joseph P. Lash and James Wechsler, issued by the Communist International Publishers, with a foreword by Bruce Bliven, with the intent "to reveal the deep-seated anti-war sentiment and activity in our universities today." The *New Masses* so described this volume at the very moment it was beginning to print stories glorifying combat in the Spanish war.⁴³

To be sure, the Marxist pressures were severe, and the distinction already being made between good and bad wars was to have a serious qualifying effect on the student zeal for universal pacifism. Nor were just the students affected by this conflict. Bliven, in his ominous editorial "Earthquake Weather" in October, 1936, upset by a contingent of liberals calling for involvement in the Spanish fighting, and forecasting inevitable war for America, commented disconsolately, "I was brought up on the doctrine of economic determinism. From childhood I have been told that in the long run, people act according to their best interests, as they conceive it. But surely it is now pretty clear that this doctrine is in need of extensive modification." He was now impressed by the "irration" which a "sick civilization" was displaying, seeking a "father image" "supplied by a few megalomaniacs with a morbid craving for power."⁴⁴

Even more indicative of his gentle leaning away from the unconditional ways of peace was his interpretation of the Oxford Pledge, the following month. This he took to mean that the youth were "not willing to go out and be slaughtered, as 10,000,000 other young men were slaughtered, twenty years ago, in a senseless, idiotic war, a war that is a mere blind tropism, responding to the impulses long ago created by a world order that is no longer valid." But he was not

pleased by the religious pacifism connected with it, and what he considered its tendency to consider non-resistance the ultimate and only good. He was sure the Oxford signatories did not imply that; "if worst comes to worst, they do not mean that they are prepared to fold their hands meekly, be trussed up and thrown on the bonfire of triumphant savage Nazism."⁴⁵

What was meant here was spelled out in January, 1937, when in another editorial commendation of the ASU for its stand not to participate in any war fought outside the continental borders of the United States, and for supporting the Oxford Pledge, unhappiness was expressed that the students were backing a document which "fails to discriminate between international and civil war." But the editorial concluded with confidence, "We are sure that a majority of the ASU members who have taken the pledge would be willing to fight with the government against a Fascist uprising in the United States."⁴⁶ And a few months later, after the April, 1937 demonstrations in the schools, the editors took upon themselves the job of describing it even more plainly, trying to explain why professed pacifists were now fighting against Franco in Spain;⁴⁷

Youth is just as capable of occasional inconsistency as age. . . . the overwhelming majority, when they shout "no more war," mean no more imperialist war, no more war to save the investments of capitalists abroad, no more war for the sake of the ruling classes in one group of nations as against those of another group.

Nevertheless, the behavior of the ASU still contained elements which caused some frowning of brows among their liberal elders. Their vote early in 1938 in favor of American participation "in collective efforts to stop the aggression of the 'Fascist Powers', while adopting resolutions condemning the United States military budget "and other preparations for war",⁴⁸ indicated a lag behind the policy leadership of the Communists, now in sympathy with the Administration's arms buildup. The youth apparently did not yet understand the incompatibility of pressing war-breeding acts while refusing to prepare for hostilities.

The meeting of the Second World Youth Congress on the campus of Vassar College in August, 1938 was somewhat more to the liking of the Popular-Front-flavored liberals. Richard Rovere's lead article in the August 16 *New Masses* seemed to set the tone for subsequent commentary,⁴⁹ and he was equalled in his hailing of the behavior of the youth only by Wechsler in the *Nation* nine days later. Wechsler's "Parliament of Youth," in evaluating the strength and dispersal of the 500 or so representatives from fifty countries, concluded that the Left had been "more dominant" in the gathering of 1936, but was

"still in command by a wide margin." He thrived on the evidence that the Spanish and Chinese Communist causes aroused "almost universal enthusiasm," but added that there were unruly undercurrents, such as "the Central European quest for treaty revision," "the fiery nationalism of countries like Poland," and "the Japanese insistence upon saving China from 'Communism,' " which he obviously thought so ridiculous.⁵⁰

The *New Republic* gave this gathering just as vigorous support, especially against daily press charges that it was a Communist organization. But its anti-collective security position made its general view of the peace suggestions of Youth Congress much more restrained, and it did not think the young people wise in supporting it, because of its implications:⁵¹

Under the present circumstances the status quo that was established by the unjust Treaty of Versailles is the one that a collective war based on League principles would defend, and imperialism is not "liquidated" even among the so-called democracies. It is now either too late or too early for collective security as a feasible peace plan.

The most obvious casualty of the collective security drive among the student peace groups over the short span since their earlier gathering was the Oxford Pledge against military service. The youth did not seem to have the slightest opposition to armed service in the Popular Front-Communist cause now, and it was not surprising that the Oxford Pledge was hardly ever mentioned again. The Communist infiltration with collective security had secured a total victory.

August of 1938 brought another event of considerable significance to the anti-war movement, probably the turning-point of the era and unmistakable evidence of the victory of pro-Communist Popular Frontism, if the Youth Congress was indecisive along such lines. This was the ousting of the veteran liberal scholar and journalist Harry Elmer Barnes from a post as marshal and principal speaker at a peace parade sponsored by the American League for Peace and Democracy, for which he had been chosen some time in advance. This announcement, made with no warning upon the learning by the League that his address was to recommend that Americans have no part of either a Soviet-or-British-led crusade against Germany, Italy and Japan, produced a wave of angry calls in several liberal circles which still clung to the non-interventionist position. *Common Sense*, long the gathering-point of anti-collective security liberals as well as the sharpest critics of Left war sentiment disguised as other things, devoted substantial space to this event, and issued scathing comments aimed at the League's spokesmen for having declared that it would have been

"embarrassing" for them had this speech been delivered under their auspices. The editorial in September featured Barnes's declaration,⁵²

Propaganda favoring our entry into the next world war will be far more powerful and skillful than in 1914-1917. There will be more and better things to lie with and better things to lie about. And Fascism and the Yellow Peril will supply far more effective raw materials for propaganda lies than Germany and her Kaiser.

This development was in complete harmony with *Common Sense's* charges of some months' standing of "warmongering-on-the-left," and editorial support was unqualified for a later comment by Barnes, who now called it "The League For War Against Fascism,"

The "holy war" boys have gotten control of the League. They wouldn't fight somebody else's kind of war but they would like approval of their own.

The only significant attention devoted to this conclusive action in the anti-war front in the liberal weeklies was in the form of a satirical article in the September 10 *Nation* by the playwright and scenario writer Morrie Ryskind. In a report on his caricature as a monster by Hollywood liberals for his refusing to join various new front organizations, for suggesting the formation of a "Karl Radek Committee" to defend the Soviet journalist in the Moscow purge trials, as was Communist custom on behalf of a fellow member in the toils of a hostile government, Ryskind went on to say,⁵³

At any rate, my cynicism led me to believe, rightly or not, that the [Hollywood] Anti-Nazi League was secretly organized by much the same babies who had organized the League Against War and Fascism—which turned out curiously enough, to be a pro-war league against Fascism. As soon as the mistake became too evident, the organization adopted the alluring alias of the American League for Peace and Democracy. Under this pseudonym it recently did a nice job of mayhem on Dr. Harry Elmer Barnes, who, they tell me, will recover, but will never be the same again.

By the time the ALPD expired, in February, 1940, it was losing a thousand members a month, and had been since September, 1939. Its monthly organ *The Fight* had ceased publication with the issue of July, 1939, almost as if a signal had been broadcast that the work of the organization was about completed. The liberal weeklies greeted the demise quietly, the *Nation* maintaining that its failure to condemn the *Pakt*, or Russia's share in the Polish invasion, plus its half-hearted stand on the Russo-Finnish war, had "hastened the end." ⁵⁴

The League had "conditioned people to expect pontifical judgments on foreign affairs," its "Director of Religious Work," Alson J. Smith, reported ruefully in the *New Republic* in a study of the reasons for its collapse.⁵⁵ To the end neither liberal journal admitted that Communists controlled the organization, but the *New Masses* attacked the "fair weather liberals" as deserters when the end finally came.

But the decay of the organized "new" peace movement was not only an institutional matter. No better example of the effect of Popular Front politics and the hysteria brought on by radio and press comment on the crises of 1938 was furnished than by Villard, the outstanding single champion of the entire anti-war spectrum in the liberal press. His belligerency over Czechoslovakia after the Munich settlement found him plagued with criticism from those who had not followed him, who charged that his cries now were most inconsistent with his long career in pressing for pacifist solutions. After denying that he was for war between this country and Germany under any conditions, he promptly came forward favoring economic warfare via boycott and non-intercourse, for lifting the Spanish embargo and for applying the neutrality law to Japan, all substantial Communist goals under the Popular Front. And his fury over the British and French at Munich, where they "deliberately refused even to talk with Russia about military measures," revealed that his outlook on war had widened to the point where he did not consider a war against Germany fought by the Soviet to be a straining of his stand against military action.⁵⁶ *Common Sense*, in its lead editorial "A Positive Program For Peace" that same month, dejectedly described the situation which now faced the disheartened peace supporters: ⁵⁷

The peace movement in America has lost its shining vision of a warless world, and sees only the harsh alternative of collective resistance to aggression or a more or less isolated neutrality from other peoples' wars. The conscientious pacifists have lost confidence in their pledges not to bear arms, though they know no peoples anywhere want to fight.

Bruce Bliven, Jr.'s coverage of the Fifth American Youth Congress the following June for the *New Republic* detailed what had happened to another notable group which had also come a great way from its early days of support for anti-war programs and pacifist ideals in general. Its capture by Communists was a violently denied affair, and the famous editor's son could hardly contain himself in describing the "small Coughlinite-inspired clique" which forced the Communist issue into the open at the very beginning by seeking to get an anti-Communist plank included in the AYC's "creed." He spent little space discussing the stand of the youths on war now, and especially rejoiced that this maneuver had been defeated, even though a

separate resolution "condemning all dictatorships" was adopted the next day;⁵⁸

It was a purely strategic move. The AYC is miles away from "Communist domination," whatever that overworked term may mean, but at the same time the majority of the delegates realize that the We-Oppose-All-Isms chant is the catchword, not of democrats, but of the native Fascists.

The denouement of the complex story of liberalism and pacifism insofar as they were mixed in with student groups and movements was not long in coming once the war was on in Europe. The genuine anti-war elements gained an immediate contingent of vigorous but undesired allies from the Communists, now that the Russians were experiencing the comforts of divisible peace. And the collective security fold soon was conducting on the student level the same drive to mobilize for belligerency that their elders among the liberals were staging against the traditional neutralists and the pro-Communist recruits to "isolation" alike, with the same embarrassing consequences.

John Chamberlain, in his celebrated report to the *New Republic*, "American Youth Says Keep Out," seemed to have summarized the national attitude in general after a long trip in the South and West.⁵⁹ But the fifth annual convention of the ASU at Madison, Wisconsin that same month, December, 1939, spotlighted the rift in the ranks of the collegians. Wechsler reported the trials and tribulations of the Madison meeting to the *Nation* in the last issue of the year, pointing out the big fight which was portending over the issues of the Russo-German *Pakt* and the Russo-Finnish war, which was under way. "In larger terms the convention may demonstrate to what degree Russian affairs remain the fatal obsession of the American left," he observed.⁶⁰ The *New Republic's* eye-witness reporter of the convention, Irwin Ross, soberly described the ASU's adoption of the Communist Party position, denouncing the Anglo-French struggle with Germany as an imperialist war, urging that the United States keep out, rebuking Roosevelt and not mentioning the Finnish war. Ross felt that there was now only a faint hope for the survival of the other Popular Front groups, and was of the opinion that the Communists were actually holding back from forcing through their whole program.⁶¹ The *Nation* stormed at the ASU for rejecting the resolution condemning the Red invasion of Finland as "a precious New Year's gift to Martin Dies," for, despite the sense of injury felt toward the Communists, the *Nation* was still sensitive enough about glad days gone by to warn just as strenuously now against "the dangers of an anti-Soviet crusade."⁶² The Reds were still not considered irretrievably fallen.

The whole Popular Front youth structure was toppling now, and

the performance of the American Youth Congress in Washington on the Lincoln's Birthday weekend in 1940 finished the job of estranging the liberal weeklies which the Stalin agreement with Hitler had begun six months before. The booing of Roosevelt for denouncing the Russians in their presence and the AYC speakers calling FDR a warmonger completed the scene.⁶³ It was particularly embarrassing to the *New Republic* and its group of liberals, who had a separate anti-war position, while condemning Stalin and Hitler alike. Strangely enough, only John T. Flynn did not join in the condemnation of the AYC, exploiting the difference between FDR and Mrs. Roosevelt, by praising the latter for her defense of the student group when the President censured it. But Flynn, no friend of the pro-Soviet contingent, seemed to be much more inspired by hostility toward the President, who, he said, by this action, "gave his little war machine a boost and helped to set himself right with those who say that he too is a Communist."⁶⁴

By the grim summer weeks of July, 1940, however, the political realities had wiped the coy between-the-lines talk about the Communists in the youth movements from the *New Republic's* editorial columns. The hedging, reservations and vague circumambulatory processes of 1935 and after were completely missing in its blunt estimate of the sixth AYC meeting; "The convention of the American Youth Congress which has just ended was dominated by the Communists as previous ones had been."⁶⁵ The Communists had come many miles in a year, in recollection of the jaunty dismissal of them by Bruce Bliven, Jr., reporting at the previous convention of the AYC. As for the other formidable student organization, its January 13, 1941 editorial "Have the Young Men Gone Sour?" denounced the American Student Union openly as a Communist-dominated group and expressed faint approval of either the National Student Federation or the International Student Service; "We are still waiting for a real national democratic organization of students, with an energetic leadership," it announced. It appeared that most of the editorial impatience with the young men and their organizations was that they all agreed in opposing compulsory military service.⁶⁶ Undoubtedly most of the liberal elder statesmen at this moment fervently wished that they had not been so diligent in the past in their own campaign of denouncing this now dearly-desired innovation in peacetime America's social order.

With the coming of war in Europe, news of other erstwhile anti-war and pacifist groups boiled down mainly to reports on the meetings of the major transmission-belt organizations and the ruses and stratagems which they were able to employ to remain firmly planted in the Popular Front orbit. It was unfortunate for pacifism that so many of its adherents wandered willingly or innocently into the

embrace of the Communists, for they were unable to wriggle out with the coming of the Russo-German agreement of August, 1939. Nor were their voices able to rise much higher than a weak piping over the roar of the pro-war and involvement propaganda of the succeeding two years. Nothing demonstrated better the utter debility of American anti-war, anti-militarist and pacifist groups and sentiment than the quick and brusque entry of peace-time conscription into the American way of life in 1940, with the erstwhile friends of American pacifism and anti-militarism, the American liberal press and most of its writers, in strident approval. Caught in the backwash of a propaganda which endlessly described the war which began in 1939 as the one "good" war, the story thereafter is a weak and staggering one. Following American entry in 1941, there is to this day no episode in American social history more distressing than the misadventures and declining fortunes of organized anti-war sentiment. And in view of the deep infiltration of the organized movement especially between 1931 and 1939 by Communists and pro-Communists, and the conversion of many of the groups into a frankly pro-Russian mouthpieces, it is not unjustifiable for non-pacifists to feel that the pacifist gambits of the subsequent hydrogen age also had an element which was not averse to promoting the comfort and welfare of Soviet Russia.

The great weakness of American liberals with pacifist and anti-militarist leanings during 1935-1938 was its mobilization into the "anti-war, anti-Fascist" camp, essentially a contradiction in terms. It was possible to be either but not both simultaneously. Under careful cultivation by Communists the forces against war were skillfully drawn to man the barricades against Russia's enemies under the lamentable misconception that one might stand and wave weapons menacingly without being construed as being for war so long as the weapons were not hurled or discharged. Five years of such belligerent gesturings were sufficient to break down the major part of the resistance to using the weapons, however. Few elements welcomed World War Two as earnestly as those who built up a reputation attacking World War One, the liberal anti-militarists and pacifists of the era before Hitler.

It made no more sense to refer to the interaction of the various treaties among England, France, Russia, Poland, Rumania and Czechoslovakia in the 1933-1939 period as the workings of "collective security" than to refer to the clanking of the pre-1914 alliances as the same. But that is really all there was, the League of Nations having abdicated as an effective agent many months before the emergence of Hitler. In essence, American liberals were "booby-trapped" into supporting the satisfied side of an immense imperialist clash under the impression that it was a significant step in the direction of achieving world peace through "collective security."

The collective system itself pointed to a series of related actions sure to result in war as soon as the status quo the collective was trying to preserve became so galling to one power that it would seek revision even at the cost of war. Collective security enthusiasts gambled that the weight of power in favor of the status quo would always be so preponderant that no revisionist-inclined state would dare challenge it. But, if the challenge did come, war against that state would have to be approved. Thus the "peace" liberals were stripped of their principles by having to approve of the war in defense of the status quo, regardless of the verbal explanation of the situation. Unfortunately, being thus feinted out of position by the status quo powers made it impossible to see that these powers had not gone through a conversion; they had dispensed with "aggression" simply because of temporary satiety. So, wars fought to success by the "collective" meant the deeper installation of the satisfied, and the increase of discontent, and preparation for new uprisings by the frustrated, and the consequent dissipation of peace possibilities by the rejection of the adjustments to prevent further conflicts as "appeasement."

When put to this cruel test, by their unwillingness to look far enough ahead, the liberals for peace demonstrated that they were for war first. The peace movement disintegrated more rapidly before the Second World War than before the First. But one cannot set aside as a major conditioning factor the second time the impact of the Popular Front thinking in all this, and the additional liberal conviction, by and large, that promoting the welfare of Communist Russia was an auxiliary act in the establishment and preservation of peace. And the enlistment on the Communist side of the British Labor Party and the Continental European Socialist and Social Democrat elements smothered all efforts to use the "imperialist" label on the new war as it had been used in 1914.

NOTES

1 *New Masses*, August 6, 1935, p. 7.

2 *New Republic*, April 24, 1935, p. 296.

3 See *New Republic*, May 22, 1935, pp. 30-31; June 5, 1935, p. 88.

4 *New Republic*, May 22, 1935, pp. 36-38.

5 *New Republic*, June 19, 1935, p. 151. In March, 1937, the *New Republic* referred to a study made by the Committee On Militarism In Education, which claimed that since 1923 a total of 13 institutions had either eliminated military training altogether or changed from a compulsory to a voluntary basis, and that there had been no changes from a voluntary to a compulsory form in that time anywhere in the country. "The tide, though slow, is running in the right direction," the editorial concluded. *New Republic*, March 17, 1937, p. 152.

6 *New Republic*, November 27, 1935, p. 73.

7 *New Republic*, December 4, 1935, p. 110.

- 8 *New Republic*, May 22, 1935, p. 55.
- 9 Villard, "Jane Addams and Her League," *Nation*, May 29, 1935, p. 619.
- 10 *Nation*, July 17, 1935, p. 59.
- 11 *Nation*, July 3, 1935, p. 3.
- 12 See also Johannes Steel, "Hitler's Jail," *The Fight*, October, 1936, pp. 10-11, 30, which was largely devoted to expression of sentiment over Ossietzky and the imprisoned German Communist leader, Ernst Thaelmann. Strangely enough, the Soviet Union, with its millions of conscripts and the admittedly largest army in the world, produced no known resister at all. Between Mukden and Pearl Harbor the editorial departments of the liberal press never devoted a single column to the issue of the state of pacifism in Communist Russia.
- 13 *Nation*, October 2, 1935, p. 367.
- 14 *Common Sense*, October, 1935, p. 3.
- 15 See note 13.
- 16 Villard, "If This Be Treason," *Nation*, October 9, 1935, p. 399.
- 17 *New Republic*, November 6, 1935, p. 354.
- 18 *New Republic*, October 23, 1935, pp. 287-288.
- 19 Of significance, and often spoken of in the same breath, was the League of American Writers, in which Waldo Frank was a major force, and a related group, The American Organizing Committee of the International Congress of Writers for the Defense of Culture, headed by Isidor Schneider, Van Wyck Brooks, John Chamberlain, Malcolm Cowley, Waldo Frank and Lewis Mumford, according to the *New Republic*, "anti-war and anti-Fascist in its ends." *New Republic*, June 19, 1935, p. 169.
- 20 *New Republic*, January 22, 1936, pp. 310-311. The *Nation*, January 22, 1936, p. 87, referred to the Cleveland meeting as the largest and broadest anti-war congress yet held, and remarked that "The ten-point program adopted was strongly anti-militarist and anti-Fascist."
- 21 *New Republic*, January 8, 1936, p. 249, also for citation immediately below.
- 22 *Nation*, March 11, 1936, pp. 303-304.
- 23 *New Republic*, April 8, 1936, p. 253.
- 24 *New Republic*, May 13, 1936, p. 21.
- 25 *New Republic*, April 8, 1936, p. 239.
- 26 *Nation*, April 8, 1936, p. 450.
- 27 Beard review of Curti in *New Republic*, April 15, 1936, p. 289; Villard review of Curti in *Nation*, February 20, 1937, pp. 219-220; Villard review of Hart in *Nation*, November 14, 1936, pp. 579-580.
- 28 "The Inexcusable Woodring," *Nation*, April 29, 1936, p. 539; Villard column on p. 550.
- 29 *New Republic*, May 6, 1936, p. 354.
- 30 "Graduates of 1936," *New Republic*, June 17, 1936, pp. 164-165.
- 31 *New Republic*, March 31, 1937, p. 248.
- 32 See report by Lovett, "For Peace and Democracy," *New Republic*, December 15, 1937, pp. 164-165.
- 33 *New Republic*, December 8, 1937, pp. 114-115.
- 34 See especially Marguerite Young, "Which Way To Peace?," *New Masses*, May 3, 1938, pp. 3-4.
- 35 *New Masses*, March 15, 1938, p. 19. Max Lerner of the *Nation's* editorial staff was also a signer. See also Lerner's letter of congratulation to the *New Masses* on the occasion of its 25th anniversary, in *New Masses*, December 1, 1936, p. 2, and that of *New Republic* editor George Soule, in issue of December 8, 1936, p. 21.
- 36 *New Republic*, February 2, 1938, p. 350.
- 37 Wechsler's essay was in two parts, in *Nation*, March 19, 1938, pp. 323-325, and March 26, 1938, pp. 352-354.
- 38 *Nation*, April 2, 1938, p. 371.
- 39 *New Republic*, June 8, 1938, p. 114.
- 40 *Nation*, June 11, 1938, p. 659.
- 41 *Nation*, January 8, 1936, p. 33.
- 42 *New Republic*, April 22, 1936, p. 298.
- 43 *New Masses*, January 26, 1937, p. 36. See the articles by an unidentified member of

the Lincoln Brigade in the issues of the spring of 1937, especially "Wounded In Action," *New Masses*, April 20, 1937, pp. 9-10.

44 *New Republic*, October 7, 1936, pp. 246-247.

45 *New Republic*, November 18, 1936, p. 68.

46 "From Gin To Reality," *New Republic*, January 20, 1937, p. 344.

47 *New Republic*, May 5, 1937, p. 371. For context see Chapter 17, note 13.

48 *New Republic*, January 12, 1938, p. 266. This student meeting paralleled the second American Writers Congress, which met in New York over the weekend of December 19, 1937, at which the celebrities were Thomas Mann, Pablo Picasso and Rockwell Kent, and which issued very similar resolutions.

49 Rovere, "The World Youth Congress," *New Masses*, August 16, 1938, pp. 3-4.

50 *Nation*, August 27, 1938, pp. 204-205.

51 *New Republic*, August 31, 1938, pp. 89-90.

52 *Common Sense*, September, 1938, pp. 6-7, for this and citation below.

53 Ryskind, "Move Over, Mr. Frankenstein," *Nation*, September 10, 1938, pp. 244-245.

54 *Nation*, February 10, 1940, p. 149.

55 Smith, "Death Of A League," *New Republic*, March 18, 1940, pp. 373-374.

56 *Nation*, December 3, 1938, p. 594.

57 *Common Sense*, August, 1938, pp. 3-5.

58 Bliven, Jr., "The Fifth American Youth Congress," *New Republic*, July 19, 1939, pp. 302-303. Alfred Lilienthal, founder of the First Voters League For Landon in 1936, was one of those who walked out of the AYC meeting in protest over its pro-Communist orientation.

59 *New Republic*, December 20, 1939, pp. 253-254. Chamberlain reported that only a handful of the hundreds of youth he interviewed were "willing to vote for active American intervention either now or later," going on to say, "The only body of true-blue collective security-ites that I encountered was from Portland's Reed College, where Professor [G.] Bernard Noble holds aloft the Wilsonian banner."

60 Wechsler, "Politics On the Campus," *Nation*, December 30, 1939, pp. 732-733.

61 Ross, "The Student Union and the Future: The Communists Win One Round," *New Republic*, January 8, 1940, pp. 48-49.

62 *Nation*, January 6, 1940, p. 3.

63 Ross, "Youth Goes To Washington," *New Republic*, February 26, 1940, pp. 275-276.

64 *New Republic*, February 26, 1940, p. 278.

65 *New Republic*, July 15, 1940, p. 69.

66 *New Republic*, January 13, 1941, p. 39.

THE TRANSMUTATION OF ARMS-
MAKING AND WAR-SPENDING :
FROM CRIME TO "DEFENSE OF
DEMOCRACY," 1935-1941

THE LIBERAL ONSLAUGHT AGAINST THE ROOSEVELT
ADMINISTRATION'S REARMAMENT PROGRAM
REACHES FULL FLOWER, 1935-1937

AS HAS been seen, there was a practical side to the consequences of the disillusionist literature on the First World War, the intensification of pacifist and anti-war activity, and congressional investigations into the industrial and financial side of the 1914-1918 Armageddon. The interweavings of these efforts in the early years of the New Deal resulted in a piercing criticism of all actual or proposed increases in the size and equipment of the military and naval forces and in general budget increases aimed at heightening consumption of munitions and associated products by the Roosevelt regime, by almost all liberals. Not a single prominent liberal voice in America was to be found on the side of FDR on this subject until World War Two began to loom, and their later about-face would have done justice to the pliable minds of the every-day journalists who were on the receiving-end of so much liberal contempt in an earlier day for their presumably unprincipled and capricious tendencies.

The liberal press attacked the idea of strengthening the armed services quite impartially and indiscriminately. It was considered the most striking lapse of the whole New Deal, a giant aberration from their role as reformers and innovators of the new life which was expected to be free from the taint of militarism. To be sure, much

contradiction featured their reportage of world affairs in general and the subject of war in the world as an objective factor. As far as the United States was concerned, apart from the rest of the world, there was no letup in American liberalism's stern refusal to sanction a buildup of armed and naval might in consonance and harmony with the creeping tide of re-militarization seen in every major country on the earth. In this period, with the overwhelming majority of liberals home-front-minded and convinced of the necessity for conceiving of future armed clashes solely in terms of a defense of continental America, all increases or proposed increases in military and naval expansion and spending came under immediate suspicion as being part of a scheme for subsequent extension of American fighting forces and interests outside the country, and the creation of an unconscionably large domestic martial establishment which might conceivably become a permanent and prodigious element of fixed governmental overhead.

The *Nation* was appalled at Roosevelt's budget message in January, 1935. In its view it called among other things for "the greatest army and navy appropriations in peace time in our history," while recalling that in 1934, more had been spent on the army and navy alone than for all government expenditures combined in 1916-1917. "Could anything illustrate more clearly what the World War accomplished in the way of a permanent increase of government outlays for regular services?"¹ it asked rhetorically.

The following month it sharply criticized the Army's Chief of Staff in an editorial on February 20 for proposing an expensive plan to modernize national "defense" (it was customary among liberals to use quotation marks around the word in this period, since it was considered to be hardly that) at a cost of some \$400 millions. The editorial ridiculed the idea that any country or combination of countries could "dispatch and maintain" an expeditionary force here, and insisted that no foe could possibly take on the Army Air Force's 1500 modern planes. The armed forces were aware of this, it charged; the real reason for such plans of expansion was that the Army was "merely interested in obtaining a share of the vast sums being spent in Washington." And it closed with the earnest hope that the munitions investigation would steam up public wrath and "check this wave of war preparations."²

In its March 6 editorial "War Preparations and the Arms Inquiry," the *Nation* continued in this vein, sharply rebuking the House of Representatives for approving the War Department's defense budget appropriation, up 26% over 1933 and the biggest since 1920. It was very distressed that the peace societies did not protest, after their past actions in functioning "as a check on the ambitions of professional militarists and armament firms."³ The impressive thing about

this congressional action in the eyes of the editors was the fact that this sum of money was approved right in the midst of the furor over the Nye Committee investigation of just such actions in the past. And the suspicion was allowed to float upward that the Nye hearings were possibly being permitted to go on as a screen for new extensions of American arms; it was fully realized that terrific pressure was coming from somewhere.

And the following week it brusquely came out with what it was thought all the new military buildup was being prepared for: ⁴

One need not be particularly discerning to realize that the Administration's \$800,000,000 war budget for 1935-1936 is directed specifically against Japan. . . . all our present policies indicate that "defense" is merely a euphemism for the protection of our financial stake in the Far East against Japanese imperial aspirations.

The *Nation* went on in this editorial, "We Must Not Arm Against Japan!", to frown forbiddingly on both American expansionism as well as total withdrawal from Asia, keeping itself in the Popular Front collective security context, which here was suggested as an attractive alternative for the United States in bringing about restraint on Japan "without setting itself up as the chief opponent of that country's imperialistic aspirations." But it was convinced that the main difficulty was that the Administration had "failed to formulate a clear-cut Far Eastern policy."

Still on the naval theme, it reproached Roosevelt for urging Congress to grant open subsidies to the merchant marine, the next week. It was especially affronted by the President's reasoning, that the country might be seriously crippled by lack of ships in case of a future war in which we were a neutral, and that if we were involved in such a war, we would need the ships for transports and naval auxiliaries. The editorial "Ship Subsidies and War" flatly charged that FDR was urging the country to wage "commercial war on the high seas." ⁵

When news was released later in the spring of 1935 about the big fleet maneuvers scheduled for the Pacific that summer, plus the announcement of the biggest peace-time mock-war games to be held at Pine Camp, N.Y., coming on top of the record military and naval budget, it prompted the *Nation* to declare in depressed resignation on May 1, "The militarists are in full control in Washington." ⁶ It returned to the theme of the Pacific maneuvers with vigorous and fierce criticism three weeks later, re-emphasizing the essentially anti-Japanese nature of this enterprise: ⁷

We doubt whether many Americans have been made war-minded by the naval and air maneuvers centering in Hawaii, but we are alarmed by

their effect on the Japanese. The dispatch of an enormous air fleet west of Hawaii was announced without explanation, and must have appeared like a fist thrust under Japan's nose.

And it went on to insist,

We see no possible excuse for the Pacific tests. They are inflammatory in the highest degree; and they do not safeguard the United States, for only a fool can believe that the Japanese, engrossed with their problem on the continent of Asia, will provoke a war with us.

The *New Republic* was in full accord with this suspicious criticism of enlarged naval and military appropriations, and commented editorially on May 8 that with the passage in the House of a \$457,000,000 naval bill, a total of one billion had now been provided for all services. "It is nonsense to pretend that ours is a defensive navy in any real sense of the word," it exclaimed in reproach; "Whatever the American people may want, what they are getting through the Roosevelt Administration is an imperial military establishment capable of fighting anywhere in the world." And it refused to accept the argument that the intent of this force was defensive and that it would act as an impediment to future involvement in war; "We have yet to hear of any country that has admitted it possessed an aggressive force—or of any country that has stayed out of war for any important length of time because it possessed large military strength."⁸

Criticism of the army was probably a little more molten than of the navy in 1935, partially due to the temporarily more-outspoken nature of some Army spokesmen. On May 8 the *Nation* castigated General F. M. Andrews, then chief of the General Headquarters Air Force, for asserting before a House Committee that in the event of an "emergency," the United States should be prepared to "seize" British and French islands off American shores, nine of which he named. The *Nation* apologized for him in a backhanded manner as a "professional militarist" who was just "blurting out" "inanities."⁹ Samuel Grafton's maiden essay on national topics, in the June 26 issue, "The Army Runs Amuck," was far more generous in his abuse, a bitter four-column attack on the growing "arrogance" of the Army, its expanding budget and personnel, and its restive generals lobbying for ROTC and CMTC expansion and against the Nye Committee's recommendations for the nationalization of arms manufacture. "More than ever before in our history, our army has assumed a definite peace-time political status, has become a directing influence," Grafton declared, expressing at the same time great annoyance with FDR for his apparent complacency and willingness to go along with this development. "The army's recent arrogance has been care-

fully nurtured in the bosom of the New Deal," he went on, and predicted more expansion with a particularly grim proviso; "Guiding that army, shaping national policy to expand it, directing our thinking in many channels, will be a military leadership coddled by the New Deal, and ever more closely approximating the typical European military machine with its fingers in many departments of the national life."¹⁰

In July the *New Republic*, incensed at the Army Air Corps announcement of a new bomber and the War Department's war-scale maneuvers, continued in Grafton's vein with the simmering observation, "It is hard to see why the charge of militarism leveled against the Kaiser's Germany could not be equally well-maintained against Mr. Roosevelt's America."¹¹ And in November John T. Flynn wrote a sulphuric open letter to FDR in the same journal, commenting on the celebration of Navy Day, suggesting a "Machine Gun Day" and possibly a "Poison Gas Day," especially the former, since it was more lethal to the enemy in the First World War than the navy, and in short supply. Thus a day would develop public sentiment toward it in a "healthy, wholesome and affectionate" manner, and might make it easier for the army to get plenty of them.¹²

But by far the most incendiary writing denigrating the armed forces which appeared in the liberal press or under liberal sponsorship in the fall of 1935 was Smedley D. Butler's articles in *Common Sense*, a series of five which carried over into the winter of 1935-1936, an extension of his already nationally-circulated book *War Is a Racket*. It exceeded in vehemence anything which appeared in the weeklies condemning militaristic trends and their burgeoning in the first 2½ years of the New Deal. Of his own long service, the retired Marine General said "Like all members of the military profession I never had an original thought until I left the service," referred to the War Department as "the military sap factory," and contributed his own pungent comment on the relation between the new expansion and the Roosevelt Administration; "The New Deal has dealt us a military and naval hand that makes us big time contenders in the war racket." He was especially harsh on the idea of "defense," asserted the United States had never fought a defensive war since the Revolution, and that since that time, "Only the United Kingdom has beaten our record for square miles of territory acquired by military conquest." And he bluntly charged that the War Department's blueprints for "defense" of the United States were really "vast schemes for foreign invasion and offensive war."¹³

Editorially, *Common Sense*, in an October comment related to Mussolini's campaign in Ethiopia, delivered itself of a similar verdict on the subject of war spending; "The United States is herself leading the world in war expenditures, with over a billion dollars

being spent this year, if relief funds directed to war purposes are included." And it sounded one of the first calls on a theme which in most liberal circles did not get launched until 1937; "Prosperity both here and abroad is now dependent on war." As for American delusions of innocence, the liberal monthly had the following to say: "The American people, believing themselves to be without designs, in contrast to the Fascist countries where war is glorified, are in fact prey to the same social insanity as the rest of the world."¹⁴

But snapping at the navy was not absent due to the temporary concentration on the army. In October, 1935 the *New Republic* expressed its doubt once more that there was validity to Roosevelt's conviction as to the necessity of America maintaining its 5-3 naval tonnage superiority over Japan, and ruled out defense of the Pacific Coast as an argument entirely. It expressed the inability to see how a naval, "or even military conquest of Japan," would materially benefit United States interests, and suggested especially that the small profit that might eventuate would hardly be worth the billion a year of annual expenditures which it saw looming for the extending of "our grotesquely swollen naval establishment." In November the *Nation* expressed deep disappointment with FDR's Armistice Day address, particularly with his promise to engage in the budding arms race. "It is the ordinary sophistication of the *Realpolitiker* to justify a great war machine as self-defense, and the President did not do himself justice in this address, or we have overestimated his real concern for peace," the editorial commented.¹⁵

In December the *Nation* condemned FDR's appointments to the London Naval Conference, since the delegation did not have "a single man on it who is known as a genuine advocate of radical disarmament." It particularly ridiculed "the Norman Davis theory of having a big fleet with which to negotiate," which it blamed for having "not only hamstrung recent conferences but burdened the United States with the largest and most costly navy we have ever maintained."¹⁶ As to the Conference itself, the *Nation's* Christmas Day editorial entertained practically no hope for its success, felt that the Japanese would insist on parity at least with the United States, and that the convention would be deadlocked for reasons of national prestige. "Unless the United States is willing to make substantial concessions, we might as well recall our delegation and at least save expense,"¹⁷ the *Nation* spoke disconsolately. But in all the material on FDR as the supporter of the naval buildup, there was surprisingly little about the quiet talk of the "universal draft" being made in the event of the outbreak of another war, which was being done in conjunction with the "take the profit out of war" proposals during and following the Nye investigations.

Representative Maury Maverick's "The Menace of False Patri-

otism" in the January 1936 *Common Sense* epitomized the American liberal position on the subject of war, military activity, arms manufacture and all allied matters, with a strong stress on the idea of American retreat from involvement in the struggles of rival states. His concluding statement combined all these elements in as strong and pointed a manner as had been seen or was to be seen for some time:¹⁸

. . . it is a fallacy that you can end wars by starting a war; that you can make liberty supreme by killing liberty. The way to do it is to remain neutral abroad—but at home to wage a relentless campaign against all those who stifle liberty—in the name of liberty—for the sake of profit.

And it was not clear in many liberal minds that the course of the Administration and its actions on the foreign front did not spell just this kind of eventuality. The *New Republic* columnist "T.R.B." pointed out on February 5 that American plans for constructing big battleships began to wheel into existence "almost at the moment Japan announced its withdrawal from the London Naval Conference." He considered the House Naval Committee Chairman Vinson's hope for a debate on a construction program in the still-existing session of Congress "an infinitely dangerous proposal." In "T.R.B." 's opinion American battleship construction was more feared by the Japanese than anything except the building of more forts in the Pacific, since they were in full knowledge that their financial resources made it impossible for them to match this country in large ships;¹⁹

They would regard a battleship program as a deliberate attempt to ruin them, and their rage would be far greater than that of the British toward Germany before the World War. It is admittedly difficult to love the Japanese in their present mood, but that does not mean we should consciously set out to make war inevitable.

So the *New Republic*'s Washington news analyst hardly thought the tension growing between the United States and Japan a unilateral product of Japanese perfidy or sinister traits at this moment. But in March he expressed the confidence that a Japanese-American war in the Pacific was unlikely until the middle 1940's at the earliest, attendant upon the Navy building adequate bases and the whipping up of fear among the Filipinos, "so that they will welcome America as a protector," as well as among the people of this country, in order that the latter might "sanction the tremendous expenditures that will be required." In the immediate moment, he sharply rejected all the newest war talk and gave a long list of reasons why, but he

shrugged it all off by suggesting in an aside that "war mongering for budgetary purposes is an old army game."²⁰

In the meantime the resolute moves toward strengthening the armed forces, especially the Army itself, drew steady destructive criticism. A February 12 *New Republic* editorial objected strenuously to FDR's 1935 West Point speech in which he asserted that the rebuilding of the Army was aimed at offsetting a reduction in the past "to a level unjustified by a due regard for our own safety."²¹ The principal denunciations of this came from Villard, whose long "We Militarize" in the February, 1936 *Atlantic* challenged the reasons given for the military buildup, while incidentally alleging that Americans were at the moment "burdened with the largest navy in our history."²² In the *Nation* on March 18 he went at this topic again with much vigor, maintaining that military spending alone in 1936 exceeded the entire cost of government in 1916. Villard suggested that the citizenry needed to ask questions as to whom we were arming against, and whether we were actually getting a defense program aiming at offense somewhere. With the official talk going around again that it was "impossible" for the Japanese and Americans to go to war with each other, Villard thought the demand for 35,000 ton battleships needed explanation.²³ But in its issue for May 13 the editors thought that the "Big-Navy Boys" were about to win an apparent victory:²⁴

With President Roosevelt's none-too-reluctant help they are jamming through Congress the biggest peace time naval appropriation bill in American history.

And it was fully conceded that a new armament race was on, to be explained to the public in the expectable terms:

Of course this entire program will be rationalized as a reluctant concession on the part of a peace-loving Administration to the needs of national defense. Every militaristic program that has ever been launched has been rationalized in the same terms.

"America Is Arming," the *Nation's* April 8, 1936 editorial cautioned; "Quietly, unobtrusively, without the fanfare that has accompanied its other acts, the Roosevelt Administration has been preparing for war." With a 1936 budget for military and naval purposes up 60% over 1935, the country was "now the proud possessor of the largest peace time war budget that any country has or has had in the history of the world."²⁵ What the editors overlooked was Villard's reference three weeks earlier to Soviet expenditures which clearly placed the United States in second place by a wide margin. But at

the moment the emphasis was on the escape of peace from the grasp of Americans. "America is arming—arming not for national defense but for a war that is far from the real purposes of the American people," the editorial protested, and wound up its charges with one of the strongest statements on behalf of peace to be seen in the period prior to the Spanish Civil War:

There can be no doubt . . . that at heart the American people still desire peace more than they desire anything else. These war preparations are a defiant challenge to that wish for peace—an insult thrown straight at the faces of the American people.

The *New Republic's* position in the spring of 1936 was much the same and carried on a steaming criticism of the Roosevelt arms program which differed little if any at all. C. H. Grattan's review of *M-Day* by Rose Stein on April 22, commenting very favorably on her exposition of the plans to integrate the nation's industrial and military spheres in the event of another war, felt that perhaps the subject was already capable of being deduced just from such news as leaked into the daily press. After all, he said, "As anyone can read in the papers, the Roosevelt Administration is building up the army and navy at an unprecedented rate."²⁶ "T.R.B." a week earlier had asserted that the President was going slow about approving the building of two new battleships (which were reputedly to cost from sixty to seventy-five million dollars each) until the British had started laying down new capital ships, giving as the reason that "it is reported that Mr. Roosevelt wishes to wait until the onus of starting a naval race can be safely laid on the British." He went on to insist that despite the Nye hearings the munitions manufacturers had great political influence still, and he pointed out that a section of the War Department's appropriation bill limiting profits to 10% for airplane and ordnance manufacturers had been approved by the House but deleted by the Senate appropriations committee without any protest from either FDR or Senate leaders; "There could hardly be a more dramatic proof of the political influence of the munitions manufacturers, and of the unwillingness of the Administration to challenge them."²⁷

A spell of neglect of this subject occurred in the late spring and summer of 1936 at the height of the furor over Mussolini's success in Africa and the launching of the revolt against the Popular Front government of Spain by the Franco coalition. But in the main the liberal criticism of rearmament and all the political and economic factors which they identified with it returned with stiff emphasis. Frank Hanighen detailed in the *New Republic* in August the special contribution of scare propaganda in inducing public submission to

increase of armaments in France and England, noting in particular the assault on British public opinion with reference to the necessity of protection from poison gas attacks. Hanighen brushed this fright off as part of the "general picture of armament booms and war-scares which have been deliberately excited by the West European governments in the past six months." He informed the readers that this bruising of public sensibilities was "playing the game of the jingoes and armament manufacturers," but that there was much public resistance. "The masses in England and France may have to submit to the burden of increased armaments, but quite evidently they are not going to take it lying down."²⁸ The message for Americans was obvious, since the same campaign was under way here, part of the liberal lesson for many months.

Other liberal notables introduced personal contributions to this sustained unfavorable reflection on the New Deal's close affinity with the military ways. Villard of course favored unilateral disarmament for the United States. In September 1936 he put himself on record once more on behalf of this policy:

Armaments are bleeding the world white, yet guarantee no peace; on the contrary, they bring war nearer. We could not be any worse off if we sought a way out by some other means. At least part of the world must set the example of giving the people the war-making power and of disarming, even at the risk of injustice and the loss of territory . . . The way to disarm is to disarm.

The next few months tempered his zeal for this program, a cause which found him few supporters outside the pacifist ranks. But domestic defense was the fullest extent of his sanctioning of arms. He had the highest of praise for General Johnson Hagood's *We Can Defend America* in the *Nation* on January 30, 1937, a book which repudiated even the faintest tendency toward collective security and argued a case entirely on the merits of the thesis of defense of the national perimeter. Villard returned to the subject once more a week later with another bitter attack on the Administration's foreign policy and military-naval preparations. He charged that billions of dollars were being spent on offensive weapons intended for overseas use, and urged as an economy measure the consolidation of all the defense agencies of the nation under a single head.²⁹

The appointment by Roosevelt of Harry A. Woodring as Secretary of War seriously alarmed John T. Flynn. In his *New Republic* column "Other People's Money" on October 28 he castigated Woodring as a jingo, and recalled a 1935 address in which the new Secretary paid fulsome praise to the armed forces as a social agency as well as a military one, while hinting that the New Deal's youth rehabilitation

agency, the Civilian Conservation Corps, might prove a likely source for utilization of their manpower. And Flynn added in an angry summation, "This is the type of man put at the head of our army to match the febrile jingo who heads the navy and who talks boastfully of the United States matching Japan 'fortification for fortification in the Pacific.'" And to discommode his associates Flynn furnished a supplementary observation, calling it "an amazing phenomenon," possibly due to the fact that the "lovers of peace" were being distracted by the current presidential campaign heat, that "the liberals behold the performances of Mr. Roosevelt on so many fields and refuse to credit the evidences of their ears, their eyes, and their minds."³⁰

Still another substantial spokesman, Bruce Bliven, thought the autumn of 1936 an appropriate occasion for also subscribing to the idea of strictly home defense as the goal of armed preparation. His long article on November 18 which sought to weigh the forces seeking a peaceful world included a testimonial in the spirit of General Hagood and Villard:³¹

The geographical position of the United States is so completely one of unique isolation, its interest in the clash of imperialisms in Europe and Asia so faint and fictitious, that many sensible students of the subject believe there is no need, even in this craziest of worlds, for an American military establishment going beyond strictly and literally defensive preparations within our own continental borders.

The late winter of 1936-1937 found things unchanged in this repudiation of the affection of the New Deal for the ways of Mars. On February 24, 1937 the *New Republic* revealed that it was as bitterly opposed to military spending projected for that coming year as it had been during the previous years. The doubling of the amount between 1935 and 1937 provoked an incensed critique:³²

Even the most naïve apologist for militarism can no longer pretend that such expenditures are insurance against war. Conflict may or may not come, but this spending is done in preparation for it.

The *Nation's* wrath was expended largely on matters naval some two weeks later, when it condemned the drive toward a navy "second-to-none" on the occasion of the passage of a naval supply bill for over half a million dollars by the House, on the grounds that nothing existed to warrant such ambitions; "The only two countries which could conceivably muster the means to attack our shores—Great Britain and Japan—could not conceivably want anything from us that would be worth attacking us to get."³³

There was little doubt by this time that the tying of the American rearmament drive to those of the rest of the world was becoming a far more significant factor than ever in the previous years. A February 13, 1937 *Nation* editorial had commented that England, France, Russia and several smaller countries were arming at a rate which made "the rocket-like rearmament pace of 1935-1936 seem like the movement of snails," while Villard in his page of comment two weeks later was utterly stunned by the sizes of the military budgets of France, Poland, Germany, Russia and Britain.³⁴

On March 3, the *New Republic* called the announcement by the British that they expected to spend \$7,500,000,000 on their navy between 1937 and 1942 "staggering news," and promptly took British officialdom to task:³⁵

The distinction Anthony Eden drew the other day between British and German policy is not valid. England may prefer butter to guns, but she will get guns, and precious little butter, for a long time to come.

The implications of both British and American naval building expansion touched off irritated comments, such as "The British regard us as a potential ally no matter how many laws we may write to the contrary," and the further observation that their building was obviously directed against Germany, Italy and Japan, not this country. The editorial reasoned from this that there was no sensible reason for the United States trying to maintain naval parity with Britain, and that to do so was to admit that our navy was aggressive in intent, "or rather, a slavish imitation of the British model;"

The very fact that for 17 years we have been insisting . . . on huge vessels with a long cruising radius shows how utterly nonsensical is the theory that we are interested only in defense.

In the journal's editors' mind the only question still remaining to be answered by those urging a big navy, and by Americans generally, was "Do we intend to live at peace and mind our own business?"

But, as will be seen, there was another side to the arms-building and governmental spending on these arms which was just beginning to get substantial attention. A modicum of stress had been placed on it at various times as it had concerned earlier days and the World War period in particular. Now, its function in the general economy and the relation between the heavy industries and the nation's economic health were about to draw its first comprehensive emphasis in more than ten years.

THE MUNITIONS INDUSTRY IN THE LIGHT OF
THE 1937 BUSINESS BOOM AND COLLAPSE

On March 24, 1937 John T. Flynn's *New Republic* column "Other People's Money" consisted of the first sustained commentary on the relation between the overseas and domestic war buildup, and the new American industrial boom. "War Orders and the Boom"³⁶ began with a blunt sentence, "One of the mysteries of the steel industry at the present time is the origin of its business." After a visit to the mills, which he found working three shifts at full capacity while making very little structural steel, railroad rails or equipment metal, he asked, "What then, can these giant plants be turning out?", and he surmised that "a large margin of the steel mill business must be 'war orders.'"

Flynn went on to point out that these "war orders" had "put their mark" on copper and other commodities, and that munitions factories and shipyards were all working overtime and had been for some time. And with the stock market rising with this activity, and government officials including even the President expressing concern over the boom and the rapid price increases in the first three months of the year, Flynn queried, "Can it be that we are seeing now the first phase of a little war-business boom similar to that which roused and delighted us in the winter of 1914-1915?"

Flynn returned to this topic again the following week, but by that time he had additional company, in the form of "T.R.B.", and editorial comment itself. The "Washington Notes" columnist reported that "hot money" was pouring into American investments from Europe, the scene of "a crazy armaments race, and a twisting of the normal productive process," and propped up almost entirely by budgetary deficits. This posed a serious political problem for the New Deal, in his view:³⁷

Mr. Roosevelt has eloquently set forth the dangers to our domestic recovery from hot money. . . . What is the Administration to do? How can we protect ourselves? As long as we wish to maintain the present economic order, the only thorough-going remedy would be to bring about peace in Europe. From the expert's point of view, the next world war has already broken out. Many of the dislocations of trade and finance that accompany one are painfully visible. And in this war we find ourselves involved up to the ears. Officials of the Treasury and the Federal Reserve Bank privately discuss the present situation in wartime terms.

He went on to declare that "many high Administration members" were convinced that "in order to exercise genuine influence in Eu-

rope, we would have to give substantial commitments, perhaps of a military character, certainly of a financial character." This meant, he was certain, that "we would have to enter into one or another of the two opposing European alliances that are now forming," the very thought of which made these same officials "shrink," and faced them with a serious dilemma:

Most of them instinctively want to keep out of European entanglements, and know that, in any case, commitments would be politically impossible. But no sooner do they resign themselves to isolation from Europe, than they come face to face with problems of hot money, currency stabilization, and export markets. They begin to feel themselves internationalists, and to believe that this country has a mission to rescue the world.

And "T.R.B." rounded out this message by noting that "under the influence of reports wafted northward from Mr. Roosevelt's retreat at Warm Springs," they were becoming increasingly "internationalists."

A three-column editorial in the same issue (March 31), "The Coming Boom," also referred generously to the blending of the boom and armament developments; due to "the heavy demands resulting from big armament programs throughout the world" the country was "already to a degree enmeshed in a war boom." Flynn was quite unimpressed with the substance of this boom. He insisted that if the war orders of Europe which were now supplementing domestic governmental spending rested in turn on the deficits of a group of governments "already beyond their ears in debt," then there was a very unstable and shaky basis for it all.³⁸

This kind of news made a large part of articulate liberal America uneasy in the spring and summer of 1937. Caught between anti-Hitler, anti-Mussolini and pro-Stalin attitudes and psychically favoring arms buildups against Hitler, the growing knowledge that sustained war tensions were causing substantial improvements in the material interests of many unliked business and industrial concerns hardly was a source of comfort. Furthermore, the continuation of its effect in America threatened to undermine the domestic recovery and reform structure of the New Deal, by this time a topic of even greater seriousness. A number of commentators were much distressed to note that the Roosevelt group seemed to be slipping into a behavior pattern based on this situation.

On April 14, "T.R.B." 's *New Republic* column seriously suggested that the course of this intimate relationship between industrial recovery and arms production was already so advanced that a general European peace at that moment "would confront many

manufacturers with the prospect of serious losses," and that its effect would not just be confined to Europe; "the end of the European arms race might easily cause a business recession resulting in widespread hardship for Americans." Nor was this possibility entirely lost upon the New Dealers: ³⁹

Like an electric shock, the realization seems to have run through the circle of Mr. Roosevelt's advisers that we have become unwittingly a part of the European war system. Literally millions of Americans are profiting, either actually or in anticipation, from the preparations for slaughter abroad. . . . Apart from moral considerations, a situation is developing in which the whole New Deal program for economic stability seems jeopardized.

The occasion for this comment was the weighing of two bills under discussion in Congress which apparently had been proposed "with the purpose of isolating us from the European armaments race," one by Senator Nye and Representative Hamilton Fish which would have placed an immediate embargo on the exports of arms, ammunition and implements of war, and another by Senator Schwollenbach to embargo the export of scrap iron and steel. "T.R.B." granted both the bills were good, but felt that neither promised to go "nearly far enough."

With domestic economic planning and industrial regulation running so high in the minds of liberals at this moment, the feeling about the possibility of war enterprise demolishing its base undoubtedly took first rank. The dismaying thing about the immediate situation was the lack of forces willing and able to fight this development, and "T.R.B." saw no allies anywhere else either; "A great part of Europe's businessmen are being transformed into lobbyists for war, and no comparable pressure on the side of peace is anywhere visible."

Still another factor in this complex of forces which further macerated liberal sensibilities was the relation of the industrial war boom and the diminution of the unemployed. An April 28, 1937 *New Republic* editorial commented morosely that despite the recovery, "something like 10,000,000 unemployed" remained to complicate the scene, although it confessed that as to the real total at this moment, "no one knows exactly, the federal government having steadfastly refused to find out the actual figures." ⁴⁰ So a downturn of the arms business was bound to be greeted with much-mixed emotions, since it implied an automatic increase to the massive legion of the jobless.

For that reason the *New Republic's* May 12 editorial, "The Skies Brighten a Little," dealt only with the effect of such a dip on the bettered prospects for world peace. But the attempt to try to make

out an unqualified case for taking comfort from the big drop in commodity prices resulted in an inconsistent mishmash of wishful thinking, which ended up even taking pride in the British and Russian rearmament programs as positive-good factors in the trends seeming to make for peace at this time. A decline in war talk had had about as much influence as anything, which the editorial itself admitted; "Good news about peace is bad news about prices."⁴¹ But the theory that recent setbacks for Hitler and Mussolini in Spain and growing restiveness among the German and Italian people had sparked the peace talk was most unconvincing. The full effect of this business drop in the United States did not bring out comprehensive comment for several months, and its close proximity to the outbreak of the newer phase of the Sino-Japanese war, the sensational foreign policy speech of Roosevelt and the attack on the *Panay* produced some interesting liberal attempts to seek a cause-and-effect relationship.

In the meantime, the old-fashioned attack on bigger armed forces budgets, domestic arms accumulation and military ways continued, carried on by the older critics particularly, aided by published comments from readers which especially got attention in the *New Republic*. Villard was especially affronted when the Woodrow Wilson Foundation awarded its gold medal to Norman Davis for his services for peace and on behalf of international relations. He blasted Davis in his June 12 *Nation* column as one of the main policy recommenders for the towering military and naval strength built up to that moment, and his closing shot was a rhetorical question fired at Davis: "Looking back over the record of all the conferences you have attended, do you not think that we Americans would have been just as well off or a little better if we had stayed at home?"⁴²

The navy and army continued to draw liberal brickbats from prominent liberal critics as well. Jonathan Mitchell singled out the merchant marine expansion program for a particularly aggravated assault on August 11. His scorn for Roosevelt and Joseph P. Kennedy, the new head of the National Maritime Commission, hardly was restrained within any bounds in his article "Sailor, Beware." He opposed the plan for subsidies and new ship construction, insisted that the existing fleet was "sufficient to transport more American troops to Europe and Asia than it is to be hoped will ever go there," and earnestly hoped for a sharp curtailment of the Maritime Commission's powers. Mitchell suggested that they be placed "in a White House cupboard, while the country considers, with one-third of its population ill clad, ill nourished and ill housed, whether it wants the luxury of a non-paying ocean fleet."⁴³

Flynn's was even more incendiary, as acidic and destructive a comment on the theory of conscription as ever appeared in the American

liberal press. It grew out of a remark in which he dwelled on discussions of "risk-bearing in a capitalist society" made earlier in the month of September, 1937. His "Other People's Money" column of September 29 allowed that "It seems that the motor section of the capitalist machine is made up of those who are willing to take risks—with their money, of course," but he countered this with what he considered a grievously neglected part of the equation of risk-bearing: ⁴⁴

But this leaves another well-known risk-bearer to be considered. That is the young, healthy sap who is at this moment running the risk, without knowing it, of being dragged into an army in order that trade may move along its accustomed paths for the benefit of his brother risk-bearers who have goods to sell. . . . Upon what theory should those risks now be transferred to the shoulders of several hundred thousand or several million young Americans in an army, which is one place where a man is not paid for risk-bearing?

Flynn was obviously incensed by the increased tempo of war-talk as well, undergoing a sharp step-up since the large-scale renewal of hostilities in China, as a result of the expert Communist exacerbation of American public opinion with atrocity stories, now that the Chinese Reds were a major partner in the anti-Japanese fight for the first time. But there were calmer discussions going on as to the effect of this broadened Asiatic war on the issue of the war boom and the munitions and war-products traffic. A quiet "T.R.B." comment in the same issue of the *New Republic* noted that although there was a sensational increase of buying by Japan in the United States, officials were denying that "the Sino-Japanese conflict has yet started a war boomlet in the United States." He was sure that much buying of oil products was not represented in the Department of Commerce figures, and he added further that there was "no doubt that purchases of actual munitions by both countries are leaping upwards." With a sharp business sag now undoubtedly in progress, this was considered a subject of more than ordinary importance.⁴⁵

The Roosevelt Chicago Bridge speech, with its insinuations of American involvement in the world conflagration then starting to burn rather briskly in Spain and China, stimulated another wave of forbidding commentaries on the talk of expansion among the armed forces. On November 11 the *New Republic* commented on the first page, "Either the United States Navy and Army have extraordinarily efficient publicity agents, or we have again reached the phase of 'preparedness' which came upon the country in 1916," and it let it be known without equivocation that the Administration was not being exempted from responsibility for this newest wave of expansionist

talk for the armed forces, in a comment which reflected a particularly sardonic flavor: ⁴⁶

We cannot blame the army and navy for wanting to be ready to answer any possible demands of the government, but if the government were certain to demand nothing beyond the protection of the continental United States from invasion, such huge preparations could be regarded as nothing but costly waste. Apparently our military realists foresee that the trend toward "cooperation of the peace-loving nations" is likely to land us in another foreign war.

From now on, it was customary for abuse of the armed forces as an independent factor in the arms race to subside, and for more and more caustic comment to be directed at the Administration for its responsibility in allowing circumstances to persist which led to recurring crises directly leading to calls for more armed might. One of the best examples of this tactic was Flynn's blistering reproach of Roosevelt for permitting the policy of interference in Chinese internal waters which prevailed at the time the Japanese bombed the American ship *Panay*, far up the Yangtze River, in December, 1937. Flynn denounced the continuation of the American-conducted Yangtze River Patrol as "an act of unmixed impudence," and pointed out that we did not permit China or any other country to patrol our rivers, that we did not allow foreign vessels to even engage in coastal trade in America, and for that matter did not permit Chinese "even to enter this country." He promptly identified it as another act leading to more demands for more military spending and expansion: ⁴⁷

If the President wants to avoid war with Japan, why not yank the Yangtze Patrol out of the Yangtze? Why not stand on his August 31 proclamation to all Americans to get out of China or understand finally that they remain at their peril? . . . Instead the President and his Secretary of State become *provocateurs* and ask the nation to spend, first \$800,000,000, then, as it turns out, one billion, and now finally three billion dollars for more boats to protect more of "our" interests. That's how wars are made.

"T.R.B." suggested in January, 1938 that perhaps the leaders of the armed forces were not to be assumed to be unfriendly to the new circumstances. "Given full rein, the War and Navy Departments would spend next year [1938] from 20 to 30 percent more than their present budgets," he reported, "not enough to prevent another *Panay* incident, or enough to end the depression." And if FDR approved, he predicted, "it can be taken for granted that the generals and admirals will follow him with disapproving delight, like a group of maiden aunts entering a night club." ⁴⁸

But by this time a full-flowered business collapse was in progress, the famous "recession," as New Deal apologists referred to it, in order to escape part of the stigma which they had succeeded in attaching to the word "depression" in the 1932 political campaign when the reputation of Herbert Hoover had been assassinated. Flynn in the *New Republic* on January 19 insisted that the decline between August 15, 1937 and January 15, 1938 had been faster and had gone farther down than had business in the 21 months combined after the October, 1929 stock market crash. Still pounding away at the thesis that FDR and Secretary of State Hull "went to war almost alone" after the *Panay* case, and were now using it "to influence the popular imagination behind an armament program," Flynn warned, "We have on our hands now a frustrated messiah."⁴⁹ And a long editorial comment on February 2 paid luxuriant attention to another consequence of the new relation between domestic and foreign policy: "There has been of late a long procession of businessmen and financiers going to Washington."⁵⁰ It left little doubt that liberals might expect some eye-opening changes in the very near future.

In the *Nation* the following month in a long article "Profiteers Move Up," Paul Y. Anderson went after this topic in a somewhat less respectful and more irreverent manner. In a comment on the decreased need for armament manufacturers to rely on lobbyists, with European events stimulating "Washington's war-scare mongers," the veteran and much-revered St. Louis journalist opined that "More and more the drive for a gigantic navy . . . points toward a saturnalia of profiteering at governmental expense unequalled since the World War," pointing out that "the 'big six' among the American shipbuilders have been outfitting for an adventure which would make any of Captain Kidd's look like sheer philanthropy."⁵¹ But apparently again it was a case where it was a matter of world-wide significance. Late that summer *Common Sense* reported in its lead editorial in August, that although the 1932 arms-construction pace among the democracies had been well above that of 1913, in 1938 these same democracies were building at better than three times that of 1932.⁵² It was a great tribute to the Allied propagandists just 1½ years later that they were able to spread so assiduously the legend of the utterly defenseless "Allies" attacked by unsurpassed German force.

But a new phase of this arms-military-naval expansion and war industries boom was just around the corner, and its relation to political policy even more obvious. It was to be the point where a transition in liberal opinion was to begin, as well.

THE MUNICH CRISIS DIRECTS NEW EMPHASIS
TO REARMAMENT AND THE BOOM

Despite their agitation and near-hysteria over the German diplomatic triumph at Munich in September, 1938 the liberal press did not lose track of its separate case against domestic rearmament and military expansion, even though there was a tendency not to recognize the relationship between the reiteration of inflammatory statements about foreign political regimes and the softening of American attitudes toward accepting more of these unwanted internal programs. The *Nation*, in condemning the new surge of rearmament industrial expansion in the United States in the autumn of 1938 on the heels of the Munich alarm, tried to cover itself by asserting that it was uncalled-for, whatever the Germans might have done or continued to do. Its October 22 editorial, "Arming For What?," insisted that Germany was militarily inferior to the powers it had bested, and that "the real source" of the German success grew out of the British-French-Czech "moral unpreparedness, and their lack of a firm, definite foreign policy."⁵³

But it was now admitted that there was little hope of heading off FDR's plan to expand "our already large armament program", especially after a dramatic alarm sounded off by Bernard Baruch suggesting a possible penetration of South America by the German regime. Anderson, in a separate article in the same issue, supported editorial policy to the hilt, poured scorn on the idea of American need for more arms. Protesting that he was "neither Miss Dorothy Thompson or the Lord God Almighty," and that he did not pretend to know the answers to the military defense questions bombarding the country now, he expressed vast doubt that the alleged threat justified the United States "plunging headlong into an enormous armament program such as has been indicated since Bernie Baruch stumbled into the White House last week with every hair standing on end."⁵⁴

In the *New Republic* the leader among the signed contributors against these trends continued to be John T. Flynn. His "Recovery Through War Scares" consisted of a long critique of the war scare building in the United States on the eve of Munich and its effect on domestic economic affairs, as well as a bitter indictment of the New Deal Administration for giving it sponsorship and vigorous support. The very week this appeared, Orson Welles pointed up the already considerable success of the fright and hysteria on the general public by panicking a substantial part of the Middle Atlantic seaboard with his famous radio production of H. G. Wells's early novel *The War of the Worlds*, accepted by many that night as an authentic invasion of the United States from outer space. So Flynn had an even stronger

case as a consequence. And it appeared that the incessant hammering of years of threats of being involved in the plans of the wicked dictators outweighed all the parenthetical assurances of American immunity which had been given over the same time. Flynn spared no sensibilities among his own liberal circles in his caustic summary: ⁵⁵

Well, it looks as if the United States was going to have its war scare and of course its battle implements to match the degree of fright. The President of the United States has got out as the drummer of fear and is deliberately selling to our people the baleful notion that some enemy is about to assail us and that we are defenseless against the coming attack. It remains now to be seen whether the liberal groups in America have become so enfeebled by confusion and doubt that they will permit themselves to be marched off behind this fantastic banner.

Flynn was also the first liberal to get down to blunt language over the American Communist Party's late devotion to collective security as a factor in supporting the new rearmament bulge. Bliven and others had noticed this and mildly protested it, but had not carried it to its logical conclusion. A decade or more of agonized striving to see nothing but guilt-edged intentions made it too difficult, but not for Flynn. He promptly described the ideological allies the President's entourage and the growing group of presumably conservative businessmen had acquired on the Left:

There is one group on the Left in this country which is violently for collective security and heavy armament. This is the Communist Party. Its position is logical and easy to understand. It has one great interest in Europe and that is the preservation of the Russian experiment. In a European war it wants to see the resources of America, Britain and France on the side of Russia. It is therefore for entangling this country in the politics of Europe with the intention of embroiling us in the inevitable European quarrel. And it favors arming this country to take part in that struggle effectively.

The Communists had stopped the "merchants-of-death" propaganda completely before Munich, as a matter of fact. The steady decline of attacks on the manufacture of munitions had occurred not long after the Spanish Civil War broke out, and by July, 1937 when the intensified Sino-Japanese war exploded, it nearly vanished altogether, for from that time until August, 1939 was the peak period of Communist agitation for the shipment of military supplies to its allied Communists in Spain and China, the latter especially after April, 1939. Flynn astutely noted that student groups under Communist leadership in 1936-1937 had repudiated the Oxford Pledge

against the bearing of arms in favor of collective security slogans, which had been then held up by Communists as evidence that a shift in liberal opinion had taken place. He promptly discredited this idea, but entertained the view that it was FDR and the Administration which were a bigger menace to liberal opinion.

Flynn interpreted the coming phase of the President's plans as one pushing "the greatest peacetime rearmament of both army and navy in our history," and thought the rearmament sector represented a fundamental shift of emphasis in the recovery effort; "we are now to attempt to make a great arms program the basis," he insisted, "instead of depending on consumer-goods production," and, warned the writer of "Other People's Money," "If there is in this world a more dangerous stratagem than this I cannot imagine what it may be."

In his view we were now following directly in the path of the very regimes the Administration presumably was preparing to resist:

The present curse of Italy and Germany is that the dictators there have made vast arms operations the medium of spending money and creating employment. You can't build battleships and make guns and war materials without putting great industries to work. The support of the economic system of both Hitler and Mussolini is the employment they have created and the income they initiate by means of the armament industry. . . . But the continuation of these war preparations requires the ceaseless unloosing of war alarms upon the people. The war scare is an essential implement to the war-preparation program.

He then recited the war scares already visited upon Americans, and in answer to his question as to responsibility he pointed out

it is not being done by the munitions makers. It is not being publicized and managed by the war-craft builders. It is not being inspired by the economic royalists who are interested in spreading and protecting trade and profits. It is not being sponsored by the Republican Party, the traditional big-navy party. It is being done by a Democratic Administration supposedly in the possession of its liberal wing.

Flynn continued this assault for weeks thereafter,⁵⁶ and he had editorial support in his own journal, plus allies of consequence in other liberal ranks and publications. On November 19 Villard charged FDR in the *Nation* with aping Hitler in using the armament and defense programs to sop up unemployment "as another way to bring back prosperity." He condemned this fiercely and threw back at Roosevelt his own speech at Buenos Aires December 1, 1936, not two years earlier, in which the President had disparaged the employment of people this way as "false employment", incapable of building a

permanent economy and unproductive of consumer goods on which any real prosperity had to depend.⁵⁷ Although the *Nation's* editorial policy had played a goodly part in building hysteria among intellectuals over Munich, it also resented the consequences here, the booming rearmament bulge. It sharply criticized this the week after Villard's protest on the grounds that no observable foreign policy existed which might rationalize the new drive for "defense;" we were "acquiring a cartload of arms" and "forgetting the foreign-policy horse." Unimpressed with FDR's proclamation of the defense of "continental solidarity" ("At what point outside the three-mile limit does defense start?"), the *Nation* insisted policy had to precede action: ⁵⁸

National defense is now Washington's dominant theme. Brass hats and bureaucrats have gone into a permanent huddle under the benevolent eye of the Great Quarterback and are discovering military angles to every major problem. . . . Until we have a definite foreign policy to guide us, the amount and kind of arms we get are likely to be determined not by real needs but by the degree of heat the different services can turn on the Treasury and Congress.

This editorial of November 26 also expressed grave concern that defense might dominate the domestic economic policy, and it urgently pleaded that they be kept separate, "for any attempt to combine them is bound to produce a racket with the military brass predominant."

Anderson's comment was as barbed as usual, and suggested that Roosevelt had confused "political defense with national defense": ⁵⁹

The Administration has just suffered its first great reverse at the polls. Under such circumstances it is natural for the Administration—and it would be singularly characteristic of this one—to resort to a quick change of emphasis. If the voters are a little weary of being indignant about the Stock Exchange, the power trust, and the Liberty League, they probably will welcome an invitation to transfer their indignation to Hitler, Mussolini and the Japs. And Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japs certainly can be relied upon to supply their indignation with plenty of fuel for the next two years.

Late in November, 1938 the *New Republic* furnished Flynn with substantial support for his calling attention to the war scare as a stimulant to the economy. "Just Call It 'National Defense' " followed the *Nation* closely as well: ⁶⁰

America is evidently in for a full-sized war scare. In Washington, drums are being thumped in the effort to frighten us out of our wits about the imminent danger of invasion—or something—by Germany and Italy and perhaps Japan. . . . Even more disturbing are reports of vast internal

expenditures of dubious value that are to be made on the ground of "national defense."

A serious objection was also entered against the War Department's industrial mobilization plan, evidently based on using of a vast army of millions of men, which was assumed to mean that it was contemplating "huge military operations at a distance—perhaps in Asia or Europe." "Hadn't we better decide how big our army should be and where it is to be used?" the editorial protested. "Real defense" of the country was possible to get by the spending of only "a fairly modest amount" of money, mainly on the navy.

Commenting on the relation of the significance of the election to the hectic Administration interest in "defense," the editorial insisted that the election results had verified that "The major job of any party or any President for a long time to come will be to solve the problem of economic security," and there was "every reason for him [FDR] to persist in seeking effective remedies for the failures of our economy." But it was immediately conceded that "the international situation" might completely alter this; specifically, it was suspected, "more imminent than actual danger of war is the chance that the Administration will exploit the danger, at once a means of bringing temporary but artificial and damaging prosperity through an unnecessary armament program, and as a means of solidifying political support." Nothing could have been much plainer that this wary and distrustful sizing-up of the situation.

"T.R.B." on November 30 pounded away on this same issue, conceding that "a gigantic armament program" was on its way, but that only the President seemed to know what the money was going to be spent on, when, and why. Like others, he expressed dubiety as to what "defense of the hemisphere" meant, and felt confident that an invasion of Brazil was a scheme which would be undertaken only by a lunatic, while heaping ridicule on FDR and his advisers for intimating that the small Latin American nations were in danger of invasion by Hitler Germany.⁶¹

Somewhat more damaging in debunking the new preparedness hysteria in the *New Republic* was the recently-added George Fielding Eliot. In the pre-Christmas, 1938 issue he devoted a major essay to criticizing not only the over-extension "into wasteful extravagance and overproduction by the hysterical clamor of people who want our air strength immediately lifted to astronomical figures," but the use of the national defense program to achieve political and social reform objectives as well;⁶²

Another danger to sound military policy is the tendency now apparent to hook up the national defense program with certain projects of social

and internal reform. . . . It will be a very grave mistake in this writer's judgment, to attempt the accomplishment of non-military objectives under the cloak and title of national defense. . . . If these various plans are sound in themselves, let them stand on their own merits. If not, the imperative needs of national security should not be jeopardized by being grouped with these extraneous matters.

Eliot over-estimated the effectiveness or interest of the United States public to object to or question legislation which might try to do such things, thinking that mass hostility might lead eventually to all national defense plans being subjected to unfriendly criticism by those who would "begin to examine everything for hidden jokers." As it turned out, national defense bills and appropriations were subjected to no more attention than the famous Hundred Days' legislation of the winter and late spring of 1933. A new panic replaced the one which prevailed in that time as it was beginning to lose its momentum. A new set of fears came forth as substitutes for those of 1933-1934.

But "T.R.B." reported in this same issue that despite Major Eliot's frown the effort was being made anyway: ⁶³

Mr. Roosevelt's great national-defense program has now passed the trial balloon stage, and is to be the theme of the next session. As in the case of Mr. Roosevelt's earlier political maneuvers, it is subject to change on 24 hours' notice. But at least the principal White House advisers are working like a stoke-hold crew drafting a program, and young assistants are crawling over the Administration departments seeking national defense "angles." . . . Great efforts are being made to incorporate relief and public works in the program.

And he incidentally released a note which conveyed the eventual fate of the entire pre-Munich campaign against the manufacture of munitions and its heady slogans. In a comment on the doubling and tripling of the value of airplane manufacturing company stocks he related wistfully, "Three years ago, during the Senate Munitions investigation, these same manufacturers were merchants of death," while just a few days earlier they had been the subject of a loud public defense by no less than the President himself. The defense program was bringing about a great train of policy somersaults.

Common Sense in a six-column editorial in its January, 1939 issue titled "Guns and Butter" described the social system resulting from the new armament race as "War Socialism," and suggested that every major nation on earth was in some stage of this, regardless of the name by which it was locally known. It noted that this bridged all objections in America, where it appealed even to the New Deal's

conservative opponents, who though "hostile to public spending," seemed to have been reconciled to defense; "there is only one kind of spending which at present will not arouse the opposition and fear of private business, and that is armaments spending." In its opinion, the New Deal was ready for frank entry into this new form of socio-economic society, in imitation of the five major European nations, but would indulge in a certain amount of shallow self-deception at the same time, knowing full well the higher significance of their new course: ⁶⁴

Of course Roosevelt and Hull believe in the defense of America, "Democracy" and the "Western Hemisphere" against "Fascist Aggression." But that is not the only reason. The New Deal knows better than most people how armaments can produce prosperity. Some of the New Dealers no doubt realize that an arms program is an economic program, leading not merely to temporary prosperity but towards the goal of a planned "economy of abundance." Perhaps they are more alive than most of our liberal commentators to what is happening in Europe.

This essentially was a new interpretation, and a sensational one. The idea that planning might be achieved with more speed and completeness under circumstances of war rather than peace still had almost two years to incubate. The evidence was already in with respect to Russia, where more planning had been achieved under the exigency of preparing for an invasion of the country by "reactionary capitalists" than through all forms of purely domestic reform appeals and programs compounded. The full significance of this for the democracies was to be delayed until the massive debate over their war aims, once the new war was under way after September, 1939. The editors of *Common Sense* saw clearly at this early date the full outlines of the 1984 garrison state which was becoming the most recent political form to capture the world. It is perhaps of more than passing significance that during this mountain of liberal criticism of the armaments buildup in the United States, only the *New Masses* defended, and with great vigor, the President's military defense budget as submitted in January, 1939.⁶⁵

The quiet climbing on board the New Deal by substantial numbers of industrialists in these days had been noticed before this by some of the more sharp-eyed liberal commentators, of course. It was an essential part of the demolition of the entire façade and super-structure of the anti-munitions movement, and it did not take long for the necessary conclusions to rise to the surface. On October 26, 1938, just before the mid-term elections and at the beginning of the loud outcry against the New Deal's rearmament push, the *New Republic's* "T.R.B." had commented at length on the sharp division among the

business fraternity, noting that "A good part of the country's industrialists appear to be cold-shouldering the Republican Party and giving a wink to the New Deal." Liberals were becoming aware of this new dispensation: a sharp cleavage existed among industrial and financial figures. "The fact is," "T.R.B." noted dispassionately, "that the New Deal now has a sizable herd of tame capitalists."⁶⁶ Beginning first with Vincent Astor, who was followed by W. Averell Harriman, described as "the New Deal's chief specimen," a substantial number had come along. Harriman had "proved to be a remarkable decoy," said "T.R.B.," and had "toled in many wilder brethren." But the direct appearance in governmental posts of such as Donald M. Nelson of Sears Roebuck, Edward R. Stettinius of United States Steel and William L. Batt of SKF, among others, was not the issue at this time, although the tobacco entrepreneur John W. Hanes was to be seen as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury. The point being made was that the fabled "economic royalists" and enemies of the New Dealers, including such eminent figures as Pew, Weir, Girdler, Hoover and others, had business rivals, and the sidling of the Administration to vast industrial expansion under the cloak of defense was attracting its share of the favorably-disposed among the financial-industrial-commercial leaders, previously lumped as a monolithic opposition to the New Deal, its presumably implacable arch-enemy.

But the first real omen of things to come was the exhaustive profile "M-Day Man: Louis A. Johnson," by Jonathan Mitchell in the 1939 Washington's Birthday issue of the *New Republic*. It was a serious study of the part being played by this Southern veteran and Assistant Secretary of War in the new arms expansion and the vast plans for converting immense parts of United States industry to a war footing which were then busily going the rounds of rumor in official Washington during the 1938-1939 winter months. Mitchell stressed Johnson's rapport with FDR and their apparent similarity of outlooks on a number of related military matters. "Mr. Johnson's planning envisages a war of the dimensions of the World War, and does not exclude, at least, the sending of a great citizen army to fight in Europe or Asia," reported Mitchell, whose horror was not too well concealed. His closing sentence, more like a shudder, followed a résumé of the feud between Johnson and Secretary of War Woodring: "The New Deal group that looks on Mr. Johnson as a symbol of a war economy is praying that Mr. Woodring never resigns."⁶⁷

The passing of time had led to the discovery of virtues even in Woodring, by comparison, who just a few years before had been a liberal symbol of the worst aspects of jingoist militarism. But the time was about at hand to start piecing together the stable of war advisors and directors who were about to move in and blend with the re-tread holdovers of the domestic reform era of 1933-1938 in building up the

formidable team soon to be commanded by "Doctor Win-The-War." This also went well with the oft-repeated stories of mysterious French and British aircraft purchases and other disturbing news percolating through liberal circles in the uneasy post-Munich and pre-Poland months. The part of this new development which particularly peeved Flynn was the tendency to revise definitions of the word "liberal" and apply it only to those willing to follow Roosevelt in every twist and turn of the new arms expansion program. He far exceeded Mitchell in a later piece of ironic comment on the new type of advisor creeping into prominent positions in the Administration and the subterranean attack on old-line liberal stalwarts such as Senator Burton K. Wheeler as "tories." ⁶⁸

And it was Flynn who capped the pre-war period of criticism of the New Deal's new military expansion with the most eloquent piece of analysis in his column of March 8, 1939, which the editors of the *New Republic* considered to be of such importance that it was raised to the level of a headlined signed article, "The Armament Bandwagon." He began his summary of the existing situation with a comment on the growing universality of the appeal of arms and war buildups: ⁶⁹

America at this moment seems to be caught in the drift of powerful forces—too powerful indeed to be resisted. One cannot refuse to look at the phenomenon of men of all parties and all groups and all philosophies from the tip of the right wing to the tip of the left clamoring for war preparations. You see with dismay unquestioned liberal idealists like Lewis Mumford and Nathaniel Peffer demanding armaments and even action, along with old-time Republican reactionaries, professional militarists and political junkers.

Flynn spoke of "social fatigue" and the "growing weary of hard times" as the factors partially responsible for the audience being given to proponents of recovery by the building of weapons "to defend democracy," and now much exacerbated by the staggering growth of devil theories as to the source of the travails of the world's presumably even political tenor, all to the ultimate damage to liberalism:

In the meantime, the liberal groups, who have always provided the resistance to this sort of thing, dwell upon the fact that democracy too is good stuff—somehow have got the notion that the threat to democracy comes from Hitler and Mussolini and that if those two gentlemen were destroyed and their Fascist governments with them, democracy would be safe, whereas to me democracy would be a good deal worse off, not because Hitler and Mussolini are good for democracy, but because nothing can be worse for democracy than war—at this time above all others—and vast military preparations.

Flynn could not get over the change he had seen take place between 1937, when he had travelled about the country and found all people "resolutely opposed to war," and the reversal which was evident in 1939, confessing that in his travels he was "amazed at the eagerness with which groups everywhere sprang to the bait of preparedness as an avenue toward recovery," as well as being "even more surprised at the blunt frankness with which they expressed their satisfaction at the recovery elements in the defense of democracy." As far as Administration actions were concerned, Flynn expressed special perturbation and distress at FDR's October, 1938 peace with the public utilities, after years of baiting them, and massive plans for expanding them in coordination with War Department requests; the enormous army and navy construction program, already being praised as likely to contribute to "sustained recovery for several years"; the proposed shoring up of the railroads with vast government credits to have them in shape for the strains of "defense"; and the already booming ship-building, cited by the *New York Times* as the greatest such program in maritime construction since the First World War. And now with foreign purchasing commissions all around, Flynn felt sure that the American capacity for rationalizing this ballooning growth would itself expand:

Thus the great preparedness industry grows. I dare say no one can stop it. The Democrats have come around for it and the Republicans have always been for it. The liberals favor it, the radicals favor it. Business favors it; the idealists favor it. Hence we shall have it.

But Flynn was not yet willing to surrender to it himself. Despite the lineup of ponderous forces which he saw backing this trend, he insisted that those in sympathy and harmony with it face the logical consequences, and soon:

Here I shall merely drop this futile warning—that you cannot prepare for war without doing something to yourselves. You cannot have a war industry without a war scare; and having built it and made it the basis of work for several million men you cannot demobilize it and you will have to keep on inventing reasons for it.

THE PERSISTENCE OF LIBERAL CRITICISM OF REARMAMENT DURING THE SITZKRIEG

As Franklin D. Roosevelt was dismantling the New Deal and using the materials to build a battleship to house the headquarters of "Doc-

tor Win-The-War," accompanied by the loud crackling of liberal criticism, the Second World War finally broke out. Its effect upon and relation to the home front rearmament and remilitarization occasioned a continuation of the unfriendly reception among most liberals, with new participants joining the veteran throwers of verbal brickbats in the liberal press. The *Nation's* equivalent to the *New Republic's* John T. Flynn, Keith Hutchison, describing the upward zooming of stock and commodity prices beginning September 4, contemptuously referred to FDR's address on the day before, condemning "profiteering," as "sentimental nonsense," while expressing much skepticism that the war would solve this country's remaining economic distress. In his opinion, armed hostilities would be followed by a train of new problems adding to those which were shouldered by the domestic war boom.⁷⁰ Kenneth G. Crawford's "Washington In a Squirrel Cage" in the *Nation* on September 23 came to the conclusion that the President did not have the slightest belief in the words of his address pleading for stabilization. Describing the Roosevelt policy now as "almost precisely Wilson's with the tempo accelerated," Crawford outlined the latest result in the new home-front industrial-war buildup: ⁷¹

The President obviously has decided to make his peace with business in the interest of national unity, and the bitterness of his old enemies will now be his most enthusiastic allies. . . . In general he is encouraging war profits and rising commodity prices. His attempt to limit the special session [of Congress] to the narrow issues of the arms embargo makes it plain he has no intention of swimming upstream against the forces let loose by an inflationary war economy.

A *New Republic* editorial three days earlier echoed Hutchison's dark foreboding on the delayed-action possibilities of calamity-bearing which the war had in store for the country. Accompanying its morose predictions of a wave of profiteering was this warning to all involved: ⁷²

The business community ought to remember, of course, that prosperity during a war is temporary and illusory. People aren't really better off because property worth millions is being destroyed every day and thousands of people being killed. A time of reckoning will come just as it came before. It will be all the worse because this war was started before we had recovered from the last one. . . .

No calculations were made as to the possibility of the boom going on indefinitely as a consequence of the evolution of a state of low-voltage, sustained permanent war.

The next stage in the drama which liberals noticed and protested followed as night could be expected to follow day. "The dollar-a-year men are beginning to arrive in Washington," I. F. Stone called out in the *Nation* on September 30, 1939, in the introduction to a long piece on the appointments begun by Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau on the 5th.⁷³ It was a portentous announcement, but several weeks late, since they had been arriving on the scene weeks before hostilities. The *Nation* itself had uttered an alarmed yell as early as August 19 upon the creation of the War Resources Board, on which occasion it had flatly pronounced, "This is a board made up entirely of representatives of big business and their academic mouthpieces." "M-Day takes on a startling and vivid reality with the appointments announced by the War and Navy Departments," its warning went on, suggesting that "labor and progressive opinion" had better "make itself felt" at once, in opposition, and not wait until "when and if hostilities begin."⁷⁴ For the *Nation* it was a particularly bitter dose, for, having shown their teeth for many years toward the hated foreign regimes, now that war was on the edge, there was not much evidence that they were going to be invited to contribute much of their biting power. But it was a goodly notice that the second world war was going to see a repetition of some significant aspects of the first.

The *New Republic's* grim editorial on September 20, "Queer Dollar-a-Year Men," reflected even more hostility toward the entry of prominent men from the business, industrial and financial world into the Roosevelt regime, a crop of advisers which in its view was utterly out of place in the New Deal. After naming several of the better-known figures recently under consideration or actually accepted, it uttered a plaintive and rather naïve protest:⁷⁵

How does it happen that men like this have suddenly come to Washington? And what is the significance of the statement by Stephen Early, the President's secretary, that "the brains trust" has been thrown out the window? If we were at war, it would be easier to understand the presence of big industrialists standing close to the President and advising him since they know a good deal about the supply of munitions and kindred subjects. But we are not at war, and the President has said he hopes we shall not go in. Under these circumstances, it is no wonder that many loyal lieutenants of the New Deal are asking what in the world their chief is up to.

Some of the more determined and unruffled liberal devotees of the New Deal and its economic planning, such as *New Republic* editor George Soule, began to see a most ominous situation now in the making, and their firm faith in the evolution of a planned economy in their image and likeness was shuddering from blows of this kind.

Soule, strongly of the view that wartime was an inviting opportunity to push ahead even more comprehensive reforms than had been introduced or attempted since 1933, vehemently urged the adoption of controls and precautions to head off a war boom. He was dead set against letting the thinking grow among the general public that "war will solve our economic problems and that nothing else is necessary." His main thesis in this lengthy signed article titled "The Basis of a Lasting Peace," was the necessity for national and even international planning on a vast scale.⁷⁶

In consonance with the views of other liberal New Deal domestically-oriented reform figures, he reported that "the New Dealers are having a nightmare" as a result of the "rush of dollar-a-year men to get in on the ground floor" in Washington, and also noted that the War Department industrial mobilization planners and the advisory War Resources Board consisted "largely of big business men," and speculated, "Will the dollar-a-year men again get command of our economic system, this time from the inside?" Soule fervently hoped not, and further urged that the National Resources Planning Board was "the logical unit to take over the job," in order to keep planning in the hands of the New Dealers, and out of the reach of those who were "professionally unconcerned with social reforms," "people who are not alive to the economic and social aims of the New Deal." In actuality, Soule insisted, as a result of the outbreak of war the New Deal was facing "its greatest opportunity and its greatest risk," but to neglect this issue of overall planning was to permit "the tide toward the kind of war and peace wanted by the forces of reaction" to set in.

For Flynn the outbreak of fighting in Europe meant little if anything, because he continued to be the most consistent and most prolific attacker of the boom and the economic consequences of the war upon it in all the aspects which he had been combing over for now nearly three years. And his *New Republic* weekly commentaries began to carry especially barbed portions. His "War—It's Wonderful" essay of September 27, paraphrasing the famous remark of the Negro evangelist Father Divine ("Peace—It's Wonderful"), hammered away at the war boom, and the mixed emotions of the speculators and politicians in hoping to exploit it. The "gamblers" on commodity prices needed a long war if they hoped to maximize their prosperity, in his opinion, but he felt that many more politicians than businessmen were "flirting with the possibilities of the war putting men to work." As for the former, "Most of them talk of aiding the democracies," Flynn commented with irony. "But the Democracy they really think will be aided by it most will be the Democracy that will have a candidate for President in the field next year."⁷⁷

On October 25, in another anti-boom note and commentary on American war hysteria, titled "The South American Bubble," Flynn

commented that the Washington political climate resembled "the noisy clamor of a ladies' sewing circle presented with some sort of parochial emergency." He poked fun at Assistant War Secretary Johnson's warning that if our army were not soon built up, we would suffer the same fate as Poland at Germany's hands, and especially at the agitated statements by the President and Attorney General in the press and on the screen about a spy menace. In his view it seemed that FDR was setting himself up as "the sole spokesman of the U-Boat patrol," in which capacity he "calls out lustily from the White House towers every time he sights a submarine prowling off our shores." He particularly objected to the Western Hemisphere security belt idea and all the furor about German trade expansion in South America and the need for immediate United States counteraction there: ⁷⁸

The whole South American trade bugaboo about German penetration and barter has been a thoroughly dishonest one, got up for no better reason than to stimulate the fears of Americans as part of the propaganda for arming the country.

In his view the "busybody fever" in Washington was feeding the public "submarine-prowler scares, spy scares, Hitler scares," intended "to create a war psychosis in the American people behind the effort to build up a large armament activity here."

On November 1 Flynn returned to the subject of the strange reconciliation between the President and his conservative opponents, hastened by the war-economy pressures over the past two months. In his "Hurray For War Profits" he pointed out,⁷⁹

I find among conservative groups a phenomenon which is worth noting. It is that while there is a growing feeling against the use of deficit financing for recovery or relief purposes, there is a very strong feeling in favor of spending money for national defense, despite the fact that it must be done with borrowed funds. The object of deficit financing may be two-fold. One is to meet the expenditures of the government without resort to taxes. The other is, by the process of borrowing, to flood the economic system with purchasing power. Up to now the latter reason has been the popular one. And conservatives have grumbled in their beards. But now the expenditures seem desirable in themselves.

He suggested that the reason for this reconciliation was the vulnerability of the conservatives toward the argument of large armed forces as protective agencies, and that the Administration was using this avenue to establish deficit spending as a policy and get the support of those traditionally against it for other reasons. The arms and mili-

tary expansion worked "in favor of continued borrowing," he pointed out, "which is the thing the President is interested in."

If the conservative objectors to deficits do not like the WPA, very well, he will give them what they like—battle ships, armies. He will create an industry for them; the armament industry, which henceforth is to become one of the props of our national economy. A short time ago the liberals were trying to invent some reasons for further support of government deficits. But now the President has found one which the tory elements will applaud. It remains to be seen how the liberals will like, under the leadership of their new Messiah, what they have always denounced.

Flynn had indeed trod on a peculiarly sensitive nerve here, for a considerable number of liberal spokesmen had become extremely restive, with a war now on which they had not particularly opposed, in view of their hatred of the Fascist faction, and with the President, by his arms program, seeming to be heading in the direction of helping those forces fighting the Fascist powers. A strong feeling of guilt was abroad among them, due to their continued participation in the criticism of the rearmament moves. It rendered their position vulnerable, and inconsistent. Sooner or later some of them realized that they were going to have to abandon one or the other, and deserting the propaganda war against Fascism, which had taken so much of their time and energy especially since 1933, hardly seemed like the one which should be jettisoned. Flynn had by his remark exposed and aggravated the question, by his speculation on how long it would take those who had so deeply identified with Roosevelt to also clasp hands with their erstwhile conservative opponents and grant full sanction to "defense."

Flynn himself was anything but oblique and evasive in stating where he stood on the question. His November 15 "Pardon Me For Pointing" was a loud and angry complaint that the Roosevelt regime, in its zeal for arms and remilitarization, was doing nothing about the eleven million unemployed, nor concerning itself with the old age and security programs, the farmers, the nation's half-fed, and the sick railroad and building industries.⁸⁰ Everybody in politics and government had their attention riveted on the world situation to the utter detriment of pressing domestic reform problems. It seemed most unhealthy to him that the nation's leadership was more concerned with the six million square miles of water around the United States than with the 3,700,000 square miles of the United States itself. It was a fervent and elegant statement of the position of the old-line liberals, whose stamina and persistence had not been washed away by the almost narcotic effect of the world war conflagration. But Flynn was too sweeping in his claim that all the Administration's conservative opponents had been beguiled by the war expansion and had

taken refuge on its side. The Great Debate over American intervention in the next two years revealed that a substantial part of American conservatism and business had not been wooed into the New Deal's new war-buildup machine.

Embattled liberals such as Flynn, Villard and others received an unexpected and temporary ally at about this time, in the shape of the Communist sympathizers. One of the most spectacular consequences of the about-face after the August, 1939 pact was the sudden turn upon the Administration's defense boom. Ever since the October, 1937 Chicago Bridge speech, and especially between January and July, 1939 no group in North America had even closely approximated the zeal of the Communists in their fervent support for every dollar sought by the Roosevelt regime for the advancement of war production. Now this whole line was demolished, and as part of the propaganda against Roosevelt and the enthusiasm of his closest advisers for repeal of the neutrality law in November, the *New Masses* reprinted in its issue for November 29 Roosevelt's famous speech at Chautauqua, New York on August 14, 1936 containing his devastating rejection of a war economy and famous plea for peace, which they titled "Lines Posted In An Old Hat." But little if any help from this group of devious latecomers was sought by the stubborn contingent of liberals doggedly sticking to their traditional position.

The dark weeks and months of the winter of 1939-1940, the time of the Sitzkrieg inactivity in the West and the Russo-Finnish war, found the liberal weekly editorial positions and their principal critics in accord in persistent questioning and challenging the Administration's defense-armaments program. On December 6 the *New Republic* printed a long editorial "Taxes and Armaments," which attacked Roosevelt's announced intention of spending another half-billion dollars for "defense." Using the word with quotes, in the manner of the *Nation* in 1935, the editors adopted the position that there was nothing to be defended *from*; "We are not in the slightest danger of being attacked by any power," it protested; "Nor is there the least probability that any would attempt to set foot in this hemisphere." It was their contention that the already-authorized expenditures were quite sufficient; "It is time for the citizens to rise up and put an end to this militaristic nonsense."⁸¹

The surmise was advanced that there were only three possible reasons for "further enlargement of our already bloated arms expenditure"—preparation for participation in the war; a desire to increase the influence of the armed forces in American life, or an attempt to use it as a device to stimulate economic recovery. The editors were quite sure that FDR would not dare to admit the first two, because of the sure and overwhelming hostility which would be forthcoming from the citizenry, while the third would have been an admission that

the New Deal had failed abjectly. And if the third was the case, then they were convinced that three times as much spending as was now being done would be necessary, and that the country might just as well become reconciled to progressive militarization along with it for a long time, plus the risk of war and a possible post-war economic nosedive. In addition, the editorial was particularly provoked by the President's presumably economy-motivated cutting of spending by civilian departments, and editorial policy recommended in contradiction the immediate increase of spending in at least twelve New Deal areas and the reduction of military spending. Condemning the war-arms inflation as a form of concealed taxation, it protested, "To aim at a reduction of government borrowing while one-fifth of the our workers still lack jobs is a surrender to the enemies of the New Deal."

Editorial criticism boiled over in the month of January, 1940 in a spectacular manner at least twice more. On the 8th a lead editorial stated that "We are likely to see vast sums spent for new battleships and other military equipment without any adequate public debate and without anyone's knowing whether we need to."⁸² On the 15th a sharp blow was struck at the President's budget message, which the *New Republic* bluntly described as a wholesale runout on domestic reform. Though there were big slashes in expenditures on half a dozen prominent activities, it was thought significant that "The message and the budget together are remarkable for the fact that there is not a single proposal for new governmental action in either one, except for an increase in armaments." Lamenting that health insurance, unemployment, public housing, power, railroads and the anti-trust program under the Temporary National Economic Committee all seemed to be doomed by financial constriction, it concluded, "It is disappointing, to say the least, that the one direction in which the President is now willing to advance is that very expansion of armament which has been the only policy to which other nations of the world could seem to resort in their extremity."⁸³

For Flynn it was a period for continuing the castigation of the liberal forces in the country for their increasing silence on the subject of growing militarization and repeated accusation of deliberate governmental moving into the war sector. His "Will The Armaments Industry Save Us?" on December 6 contained a summary of New Deal spending on national defense since 1933, indicating that through fiscal 1941 it would represent a 700% increase, and he commented reproachfully,⁸⁴

My recollection is that as long as I have known the liberal and progressive movement in all its forms, it has been bitterly opposed to armaments, and, above all, to armament economics. But now, when new leaders—gentlemen like those great liberals, Mr. [Paul] McNutt, Mr. Woodring,

and Mr. Louis Johnson, functioning as the President's interference in putting over this thing on the country—appear in these strange fields of liberalism, I suppose all men who have hated these things should fling over their beliefs and follow the new leaders.

But there was no one in liberal journalism less likely to follow this satirical advice than its author.

From now on Flynn began to dwell especially on the decoy potential of the defense program as well. On December 13 he declared, "The country is being led by the government into a fog about national defense to keep its mind off the domestic problems that clamor for attention,"⁸⁵ while on January 15, 1940, in "Two Ways Out of a Depression," repeating the story of William H. Seward and his recommendation to Lincoln of a war declaration against a foreign power as a unification gesture, as related in Carl Sandburg's *The War Years*, he read a lesson for that moment:⁸⁶

War has been the escape of many a bewildered statesman from Pericles to Seward. It has not yet outlived that usefulness. We do not turn to war now to escape. But we do turn to war alarms and to the expenditure of billions for war preparations.

The *Nation*, far more deeply committed to the war emotionally by now than the *New Republic*, also was profoundly disturbed by the implications of the 1940 budget message, and on January 13 displayed its split affections by its comment:⁸⁷

A faltering war boom has done little to reduce the standing army of unemployed or to dent the ranks of youth who cannot find a job. Increased arms expenditures will of course provide some new employment. But they represent the most expensive form of "work relief," for every dollar that will feed the hungry by this route must first feed the steel trust, the ship-building trust, the chemical trust, and the munitions-makers.

For a brief moment in its zeal for a world crusade for the obliteration of Hitler and Mussolini the *Nation* had returned to the "merchants-of-death" style of which it had been so eloquent a publicizer in 1935.

Villard, the last remaining non-interventionist of note on the *Nation* by this time, gave vent to expression which would have been more appropriate in the other two main liberal publications. In his energetic attack on the new military appropriations, he considered it apropos that the Administration tell the citizens what they were being defended against, since because of their deep involvement in war, the belligerent nations of Europe were now far less able to attack the United States than even four months earlier, and what was more, in

Villard's grim conviction, "the last thing they are thinking about is attempting it."⁸⁸ But by this stage, rearmament for the New Deal had taken on the dimensions of a new Works Progress Administration of make-work projects, a veritable raking of iron leaves.

In the third week of January, 1940 both liberal editorial positions once more returned to the opinion-trenches, hurling choice castigations at the latest expansion talk for the navy, and selecting Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Harold R. Stark for special attention. The *Nation* feared that Stark's recommendation for a navy larger than that of Russia, Italy, Germany and Japan combined plus the new Vinson Bill planning for new naval expansion would be likely to plunge the world "into a naval race of gigantic proportions," but the *New Republic* exploded angrily; "How can one find words strong enough to characterize this nonsense?" The editorial verged on the incoherent in its fiery denunciation:⁸⁹

The sudden new theory that we must be equal to Japan, Russia, Germany and Italy all at once is surely militarism gone mad. . . . This set of assumptions is so fantastic that we find it hard to take them seriously. In our judgment they are part of a campaign against the psychology of the American people.

In the meantime, Bliven and Flynn were conducting a joint attack in the spirit of Villard in the *Nation* and along the same tack, namely, profound skepticism that the United States was in any real danger of attack from anywhere by anyone. Flynn's "Whom Are We Getting Ready To Fight?" on January 22 was another loud outcry against the Administration's ballooning war defense budgets, and anger at the diversion of attention from domestic problems to the advantage of foreign distractions. Flynn now openly charged that the war preparations were being made "to fight in Asia against Japan," and he returned to his favorite theme that it was America's liberals, by their hesitancy and lack of courage, who had given the program much of its impulse:⁹⁰

. . . always we have moved steadily—as steadily as the most reactionary junker administration could move us—toward this military consciousness. And all this by an administration which is hailed as liberal. . . . It is bland complaisance of almost all the progressive groups which has made it possible for the administration to push these military preparations to the point they have now reached. In their interest in something or other which they are supposed to be accomplishing, the progressives have allowed an old-fashioned Mark Hanna Republican program, including a runaway military and naval spree, to be put over on them under the label of liberalism.

Probably the most exhaustive critique of the state of the nation during the lull in the European war in 1939-1940 was Bruce Bliven's extended report in the *New Republic* on February 19, "The Six Washington Jitters," an eight-column summary of his eye-and-ear witness account of a plumbing of opinion in the national capital. "I couldn't find anyone," he confided to the readers of the journal of which he was senior editor, "who took seriously the idea that the United States will be in any danger from Germany or Japan for many years, even assuming that they win the wars in which they are engaged." He was particularly incensed at the burden the arms acceleration was placing on the less well-to-do, in view of the large proportion of the federal tax bill being obtained from the lower income brackets, through indirect and hidden taxation. For these Americans it was "guns or oleomargarine," he protested. "They can't afford butter, they can't really afford guns, but are forced to." Bliven, depressed by numerous signs of what he interpreted to be the advance omens of a 1937-type economic collapse, disconsolately announced that it appeared that "Washington has once more permitted the Forgotten Man to slip from its memory."⁹¹

Flynn's column that same day, "History of a Great Idea," contained the kernel of the controversy among the liberals over this leviathan-like armament policy, and included as well an indication of a coming parting of the ways for himself and others as the conflict of views promised to become more intensified. Though editorial policy still stood behind the largest part of Flynn's criticisms, his sensitivity to the abuse from pro-involvement readers and depression over the growing number of liberal prominents climbing aboard the new war-bound wagon could not be conjured away. This was implied in his frank announcement of "collision" with the President and his apparent decision to remain in such a state thereafter on the issue of increased arms spending:⁹²

It is not always possible for me to be quite sure what I, as a professed liberal, ought to believe. In the matter of vast military and naval expenditures I find myself, doubtless, a good deal obfuscated by what I dare say must be old-fashioned thinking. For many decades I have seen the conservative groups all over the world and in the United States fighting valiantly to build more battleships, and create larger armies. And during all that time I have seen the liberal and progressive and radical groups fighting as vigorously against what they always termed the junker groups. I have always felt in complete and earnest agreement with this resistance to the junkers. But now I am confused. I find that now I cannot continue to hold these views without finding myself in collision with our great liberal leader.

THE LIBERAL CASE AGAINST THE ARMS BOOM
COLLAPSES WITH THE ALLIED DEBACLE IN FRANCE

As the War in the West accelerated sharply in the spring of 1940, the tremors which were to shake the liberals loose from their opposition to the national rearmament and war boom movement began to be felt. As will be seen, a formidable contingent of the most articulate among them had begun a pro-war rationale since the autumn of 1937, and were getting more and more space allotted to their arguments and pleas for intellectual commitment to fight especially Germany. But the momentum of the long-standing anti-arms sentiment was sufficient to hold up for a while, and crumbled almost imperceptibly, in a national atmosphere where all reason seemed to disappear in a matter of days. The resistance collapsed in the *Nation* somewhat in advance of the *New Republic*, while the *Common Sense* bulwark remained as sturdy as before. But the two camps on arms and armed involvement crossed editorial lines rather inextricably, and it was not until well into the autumn of 1940 that the struggle appeared over and the new pro-armament view in full possession of the scene. From that point on, a large part of the controversy switched over to a dispute as to which element in the country was most competent in producing the maximum number of arms and weapons; the direction of the energies of the erstwhile "merchants of death" became thereafter the much-yearned-for liberal objective at that stage.

But in the period between the invasion of Norway until the so-called Battle of Britain, John T. Flynn continued to be the most effective and colorful of the weekly liberal watch-dog chroniclers of the Administration's drift to war via arms buildups. Despite the fact that overall editorial support gradually lagged, ended and ultimately turned against him, by the end of the year, the quality of his criticism climbed steeply as the attitudes of Americans, liberals as well as others, underwent a significant change in the last six months of 1940. Flynn's temper rose in direct ratio to the hysteria which gradually captured the country's idealist intellectuals, not all of whom were outside the journal of whose editorial staff he was a part. By the end of the year he was almost a solitary voice defending what had now become a minority viewpoint. The passage of five years had seen no change of heart so spectacular as the about-face performed by American liberals in general on the subject of arms manufacture and the growth of military institutions.

The difficulties of the British and German military operations in Norway in April furnished Flynn with excellent ammunition for his case against major arms buildup on the grounds of the threatened invasion of the United States.⁹³ Of their immense problems in trans-

porting a few hundred men each to a land as near as Norway, Flynn crowed, "If anything was needed to demonstrate the utter absurdity of all the dishonest gab in Washington about a foreign invasion of this country, this Norwegian adventure supplies it." His contempt for the talk of war for the saving of democracy bloomed even more luxuriantly as he called attention to America's growing implication "in the imperialist moves of the warring nations," singling out for special abuse Secretary of State Hull's demands on Japan, which he saw as nothing more than a determination to provide maintenance of the status quo in the Far East to protect the Asian colonial empires of England, France and Holland. Flynn saw all manner of new opportunities for FDR's intervention and participation through Greenland and Iceland. He thought the President had made it understood among the nations warring on Hitler that such form of action would be forthcoming, "And if there is any doubt on this point, we have but to take the advice of Marshal Pétain, who tells us that he seriously hopes that President Roosevelt will be reelected as he feels sure he will throw the great power of the United States on the side of Allies."

The first week of May Flynn predicted the British would soon breach the legal barriers against obtaining credits for additional war material purchases here, and in an angry column on May 27, "Johnny, Get Your Gun," he returned once more to a loud attack on the clamor for more billions for "defense," with the added fillip of hysteria over the planetary catastrophe which would surely occur should Germany overcome France and England, a fact which did not seem to be far from becoming established momentarily. Flynn was unimpressed; "To me the most important issue now is to keep this country out of war." He was convinced that "those who are now making the air blue" about alleged American unpreparedness were not worried in the least about America being invaded; "They know no one is coming here," he protested; "They are thinking about 'over there.'" His conclusion was that "At the pace we go nothing can keep us out of this war but two things; (1) an early end to the war; (2) a dweller in the White House who really wants to stay out."⁹⁴

Flynn's most inspired literary pyrotechnics in the *New Republic* during this hectic period was his famous June 10 "Who's Going To Pay The Defense Bill?" It was a veritable flamethrower aimed at the enemies of domestic reform on the grounds of cost who were now in a panic-riddled mood to have no more to do with economy and to utterly disregard the issue of cost in accumulating mountainous heaps of arms, now that the German break-through was an actuality. Flynn called their outbursts in the press and radio during

the last week of May 1940 "one of the most glorious explosions of patriotism we have enjoyed in the last 20 years," but pointed out that Congress was pausing "on its way to the bomb shelters" "to consider the little matter of paying the bill." Despite the fact that the President also was of the mind that the manner of paying the defense bill was "a minor detail," and that critics such as himself, Flynn, were under attack for even so much as mentioning the subject in this incandescent hour, Congress thought that "It is necessary, it seems, to make certain arrangements about Other People's Money as a prelude to fighting Other People's Wars." "The whole magnificent blitz-bunk leaves me a little dismayed amid the swiftly changing figures," Flynn grated, and then turned loose what was easily the most corrosive paragraph written on the subject of arms and their cost since the days of Charles A. Beard's polemics on the 1927 Naval Conference:⁹⁵

But really I do not talk of cost. It is you patriotic gentlemen who talk of cost. You want one billion, five billion, ten billion dollars' worth of defense. That's cost. I merely ask who's going to pay for it? How? And when? And with what? It really has to be paid for. You patriots want to pay for it with bonds. That is, you do not want to pay for it at all. You want to hand the bill to your kiddies. I want to pay for it. I want it paid for in taxes. I want to hear you patriots quit shooting off your mouths and dig down in your pockets and fork up some money to pay for your zeal for this world on fire.

You had a grand splurge 23 years ago. There are about 50,000 young men under the soil, several hundred thousands more ruined in health. The cost was 33 billion dollars and a good many billions since—and you passed the bill on to the kids. Now that the kids are grown up, you propose to send them loaded with the bills of the last war into the battlefields of this one. And I would like to know if you have any intentions of paying their wages while they are fighting, and for their guns and powder. Or whether you are going to pass that bill on too. Let's see how much real patriotism there is—the kind that is willing to pay for the fire engine to put the fire out.

Flynn conceded with a grimace that the "the great national defense drive" now seemed to be an accomplished "wonderful success." Seemingly in the act of bogging down three months earlier because of economy talk, "Now the whole economy drive has gone up the flue—and nobody is howling for spending so loudly as the conservative groups who led in the clamor for balancing the budget." "Now everybody is for unbalancing the budget," the testy columnist observed.

Flynn returned to the subject two weeks later, with another examination of the new enthusiasm for the war boom among businessmen, though he felt it only fair to qualify his unkind comments with the observation, "I think it must be said for the boys downtown that the war fever was not born there." He quoted Morris L. Cooke, "a perfectly good New Dealer, for whom I have high respect," as saying that the expansion of the army and vast aircraft and armaments was "the only possible solution to the long-run unemployment problem," and added as almost superfluous commentary, "It looks indeed as if the new industry—the great new industry for which we have been yearning—the armament or war industry, has made its appearance at last."⁹⁶

By this time the editors reported that correspondents were now calling Flynn a "Nazi," "Communist," "fifth-columnist," "public nuisance" and other such epithets, and it appeared that the *New Republic's* once-most-highly-regarded columnist was becoming a source of embarrassment to it too. A conflict between his down-to-earth observations and the stratospheric exhortatory rhetoric in the editorials was beginning to show. By July 1, with the editors engaged in writing a symphony of hysteria over our immediate danger of being overrun by Hitler here in the United States, and the pressing necessity of turning the country into an arms factory and drill ground, Flynn demonstrated how much out of step he was with the others by writing a quiet little piece which pointed out that between May 2 and June 20, under the excitement of Hitler's European triumphs, a weird succession of wildly overlapping bills had boosted congressional appropriations for military and defense spending from two to nearly twelve *billions*, without a peep of adverse comment anywhere. The days when the liberal press had flamingly denounced FDR for earmarking \$238 *millions* of PWA money for naval building in 1933 seemed like something that had happened two or more centuries before.

There was also something mildly pathetic in reading a group which had once been essentially critics now indulging in wistful attempts at grand strategy and geopolitical star-gazing, with public policy steadily drifting into the hands of a group of men who were hardly likely to consult liberal opinion on the best manner of emptying a wastebasket. And Flynn, fighting a battle which was now almost a solitary endeavor, could not conceal a growing tone of bitterness toward the desertion:⁹⁷

I have been taken to task almost weekly for my fears of the coming of militarism. . . . I feel sure I can rely on all my ardent liberal readers to gather around our great liberal leader to cheer him on in this newest of our great liberal advances.

Late in August, Flynn returned with another howitzer-shot aimed at how the defense program was going to be paid for, with his column "Defense On The Cuff."⁹⁸ The editorial staff with Flynn's exception was now so passionately against Hitler and so quiveringly pro-British that this approach embarrassed the editors now. They had adopted FDR's impatience with this line of reasoning, but Flynn doggedly and tenaciously insisted it was a major issue. But editorial over-commitment had rendered the journal toothless as a critic. Despite the grumbling at a variety of minor symptoms and consequences of the defense boom, they could not effectively say anything, having internalized the entire defense rationale. Flynn's position seemed to be steadily drifting to the left of his publication outlet by the week.

The willingness to conscript the young men, he observed, was not paralleled by any enthusiasm to submit to a capital levy or taxes high enough to cover the bill, so obviously borrowing was going to be the method employed, and Flynn suggested that the consequences of the government debt likely to result would amount to a shaking of the economic system to its roots;

The last was delightful, but the aftermath was not so good. The aftermath of this little war will be something terrible to behold. And no one will like it less than Mr. [Henry L.] Stimson and the members of the Save America by Helping England crowd. And the more the war is paid for on the cuff the worse the aftermath will be.

And Flynn kept his almost boundless scorn for the erstwhile critics of spending who now could not seem to be comforted by any volume of government spending for armament, yet could not get enthusiastic about the general problem of sharing costs and risks:

The Senate has been discussing the disagreeable business of paying the costs of our great alarm. Nobody is yelling for these arms and ships and weapons more lustily than our property-holding patriots who seem to think Hitler's parachutists are going to drop down on their buildings right through the mortgages any day. They are so convinced of this that they are in a sacrificial mood. They are prepared to sacrifice any number of young men. But when it comes to sacrificing any of their precious dollars—that's another matter. The conscript dollar is an image to terrify the greatest patriot and cool the hottest love of country.

Flynn did not leave these themes for very long all during the rest of 1940. In between charges that Roosevelt had "cooked up the war scare" and that he was "trying to militarize the country" he kept hammering away at the forces that enthusiastically greeted the new military conscription bill, giving America its first compulsory mili-

tary service in peacetime in its history, while refusing to countenance any kind of emergency commandeering of plant and other facilities in the same way the bodies of the young men had been commandeered. "If it is proper for the nation to take this young man and wipe out his economic stake during the war, why is it not proper to take the property of another who happens to be of no use as a soldier?" he queried rhetorically.⁹⁹

At the same time he continued his drumfire of unconditional disbelief in Hitler's intention of arriving in America under any circumstances, because "the enterprise would be too fantastic for the consideration, even for a moment, of men who are not insane," and he believed the leaders of the German military machine qualified for such description, whatever else they might be safely called.

Flynn was not for total inactivity. He suggested on September 23

That we should prepare our defense upon some plan which conforms to the conditions of a somewhat but not greatly altered world every sane man admits. It is a far cry from that to the orgy we now behold.

By October it was his opinion that businessmen had now exceeded the President in their enthusiasm for defense spending and had even surpassed him in general belligerence; "Warlike as he is, he is not warlike enough for them," he commented acidly in his "Business Plumps For Defense."¹⁰⁰

But other phases of the matter racked the liberals who were becoming attuned to the new developments rather than affronted and alienated by them, as was John T. Flynn. The political versus business infighting especially took up their energies. With FDR taking more and more Republican "hostages" into the New Deal defense "coalition," many kinds of questions came up; the clamor for war orders, complaints about taxes, the idea of military spending to sop up unemployment before the presidential election, how the President was going to get the 50,000 military airplanes which he insisted were already desperately needed, and how he was going to prevent any new millionaires from being produced by the defense effort all replaced criticism of the idea itself.

On June 10 "T.R.B." reported, that "a vast shadowy struggle for power—the most important in the New Deal's history—was in progress in Washington," and that the New Dealers were losing. The new Defense Council, with Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., of United States Steel and William S. Knudsen of General Motors as raw materials and manufacturing representatives thereto, was considered an ominous example of things to come. Stettinius' appointment was considered the most "questionable" of all, reported by "T.R.B." as more critical a move than Woodrow Wilson's appointment of Bernard

Baruch in the First World War, the point at which liberals thought the Wilson Administration had "lost its social conscience."

There was no doubt that FDR was rapidly converting his bitter opponents into cordial fellow-travelers via the defense drive, and the hard core of New Deal remnants were angry and vocal, as were most of his liberal supporters. But "T.R.B." himself did not think the New Dealers had lost out yet. Yet he kept reporting a string of successive victories and steady advances by businessmen all through June, 1940. He did not think the Republicans were any less devoted to this program, and seriously doubted that if they replaced FDR in the White House in the fall they would change anything. And he was especially alarmed when the *Magazine of Wall Street* suggested that Roosevelt be reelected by acclaim and that the Republicans abandon the campaign against him.¹⁰¹

The *Nation*, somewhat more involved in the joyous subscription to the national defense activity, also was concerned in this lamentable and unanticipated dilemma. It felt quite certain even at the height of the frenzy over the fall of France that businessmen were going to rake off substantial profits on national defense contracts, which the journal editorially deplored. But it was especially incensed by a drive which it thought emerged from many quarters to reduce labor standards and inhibit wage increases. The June 15 editorial commented on this irritably, especially in view of FDR's May 21 promise that "not a single millionaire would be created." Singled out for special disapproval was Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall, who on June 12 had testified before a Senate Subcommittee on military affairs and blamed the Walsh-Healy Act and other pro-labor legislation, plus high service pay, for the fact that the United States was spending 20 times as much as any European nation to maintain an equivalent military force. The *Nation* also expressed much unhappiness with the President's expression of hope that "labor" would not use the emergency of the national defense effort to strike and halt production "to squeeze higher wages from employers in so-called war industries," especially in view of the fact that restrictions on profit-making were being lifted. Still another *Nation* protest in an editorial on July 6, was lodged against business interests striving to maximize profits on war contracts although its rage was fully as high against army and navy authorities testifying against profit limitations being written into new defense spending bills up for consideration. The "costs plus ten percent" of the First War had not been forgotten. This was still another wrangle which created much heartburn among the new liberal converts to the Administration's war spending drive and the stepped-up surge of urgency on behalf of Britain. But the train of unexpected and unwanted consequences to liberals had hardly gotten out on the road.¹⁰²

"T.R.B." continued to document the steady influx of the big business and financial people into the Administration's defense effort, during this time. The group which FDR's devoted supporters had just a short time before stopped denouncing as "economic royalists" seemed to be gaining greater favor by the week, and the discomfiture among the liberals was hard to measure because of its immensity. This great parallel struggle, as FDR was moving from the domestic to the foreign arena and liquidating the reform machinery, was to continue, and for the liberals it was a retreat from one redoubt to another. On June 24 "T.R.B." reported that in his opinion the New Dealers had "unprotestingly given up," because of the "complete enthusiastic backing that Mr. Roosevelt has given the big-businessmen." "The New Dealers could not fight their 'leader,'" he commented ironically.¹⁰³

An even better example of the uneasiness and forthright distress sweeping liberals with affectionate ties to New Deal aspirations was "T.R.B." 's cry of anguish on July 8 upon the appointment of James Forrestal of the major banking house of Dillon, Read and Company as a presidential assistant. "Just who is to run the rearmament program now getting under way?," he asked; "On its face, Mr. Forrestal's appointment is the most marked step so far towards freezing the New Dealers out." He was still of the mind that ultimate control should rest with previous New Deal personages, but this event made him ask the readers, "just how chummy can the New Deal be with Wall Street and still continue to be the New Deal?"¹⁰⁴ The latter-day mythology of the ponderous serenity of the New Deal transition from domestic reform to planetary defense and war was not being borne out by these events, chronicled week by week in the liberal press, some of whose spokesmen were nearly prostrated by the new dispensation. For these people the shift amounted to no less than the murder of the progressive tradition; after the war began, however, it became convenient to forget that the 1940-1941 criticism had ever taken place.

Occasional references to the submarining of reform accompanied this drumfire of criticism of the penetration of the Administration by the figures from the world of industry and high finance. In mid-August, 1940 "T.R.B." made the observation that "We are unlikely to see any more dramatic proof of the incompatibility of the New Deal and a war economy than the present dispute over Mr. Thurman Arnold's anti-trust suit against the major oil companies." With Arnold and the TNEC at work on them for their "evading measures of social control" while Stettinius and the National Defense Advisory Commission were trying to induce them to start work on synthetic rubber, the issue could hardly have been plainer. A compromise was in the making, the *New Republic* columnist reported, but added

with a regretful note, "it is hard to see what compromise can be reached that will not injure the New Deal's anti-trust policy."¹⁰⁵

But by far the most aggravating topic by the fall of 1940 in this great drama of arms production was the constitution of the NDAC. Most liberals were still dreaming of a "war effort" in which the dominant view would be that of a socialist-left liberal-labor element, and they were extremely irked by the President's turning over direction to big business and finance.¹⁰⁶ Of the eight NDAC commissioners, only Sidney Hillman, in charge of labor, and Leon Henderson, commissioner of prices, were New Dealers. Jonathan Mitchell was extremely incensed by this, and in a *New Republic* essay at the end of August, "Is Our Defense Lagging?", suggested that some fundamental steps be taken in imitation of Churchill's moves in England:¹⁰⁷

Last May, in its hour of peril, England belatedly removed its armament program from the control of the big businessmen who had monopolized it and placed it under the supervision of two Labor Party members, two tested representatives of the voters, Messrs. Morrison and Greenwood. We need not wait until we are in similar danger to follow that example.

Feelings had grown so molten on the subject by the end of September that the *New Republic* permitted itself one of its now rare moments of criticism of the Administration in the broadest sense by publishing a whole article devoted to NDAC clashes with New Dealers, and their steady victories. In extenuation it was thought necessary to say however that¹⁰⁸

It is true enough that the dollar-a-year officials of the NDAC are big-business men, the majority of whom either do not understand, or else have no sympathies for New Deal objectives. Yet the New Dealers themselves supinely permitted Mr. Roosevelt to deliver the defense program over to its present big-business masters.

Of course, as we have seen, the liberals who had gone over completely with Roosevelt had another viewpoint on this. By doing what he had done, FDR had captured an important part of the hostile business-financial community to his support via "defense," thus ending their enmity to his goal of unlimited expenditures via debt expansion, which they would not support when undertaken for domestic peacetime purposes.

An occasional liberal voice was heard suggesting, just before the election in November, that not anywhere enough rigid controls existed even under the changes which had already taken place, and

that maybe Roosevelt might be replaced as President in the hope that a more efficient director might be found among the opposition. Charles E. Noyes, in an amazingly even-tempered account of the growth of the German economy in the *Nation* in mid-September, even favored some imitation:¹⁰⁹

Anyone who maintains that the United States can match the productive efficiency of Germany without curtailment of personal liberties, or without drastic changes in the organization of our economy is a liar, a demagogue, or a fool. A centralized authority with full power to allocate all raw materials and all labor, as well as to determine the kinds and qualities of goods to be produced, can unquestionably solve its problems of production and distribution more effectively than a country which preserves even a partially free market.

Even Oswald Garrison Villard was touched by the defense hysteria by this time, and in a long open letter to the editors of the *New Republic*, having severed his relations with the *Nation* by now, he explained that he was going to support Wendell Willkie for president that fall, citing the shortcomings of Roosevelt as a mobilizer of men and machines of war as the principal reasons. But with the air battle going on over England, and the press and radio working on American consciousness to a degree that was not to be matched until Pearl Harbor, and by nothing like either before or since, it was the season when even the coolest of the veteran anti-militarists might break down.

Villard's capitulation to war production and defense was matched in profundity only by Bliven in these days among veteran liberal editors. Bliven delivered himself of three major signed editorial statements between mid-August and the election mainly on the issue of war production and related subjects, displaying a hysterical note quite out of character. His first, "Not Enough Jitters," complained bitterly over the sag in war preparations and war talk now that the French collapse and the excitement of May and June had had six weeks to recede into memory. Over half of this essay was devoted to expressions of belief that Hitler was trying to conquer the world and that his easily-achieved operations in the lands adjacent to Germany could be readily duplicated in lands 3000 to 5000 miles away. Chiding the stalling of the American defense program, he complained that "nobody in authority seems to care very much." Once an attacker of Representative Vinson for his support of Roosevelt naval expansion bills in 1933 and after, Bliven now hammered Vinson for supporting the House of Representatives in its refusal to grant FDR authority to take over and operate plants needed for

national defense, on grounds that this was too sweeping power to grant the Government in peacetime. "Representative Vinson thinks this is peacetime!" Bliven exclaimed scornfully.

In mid-September there was a real note of anguish and a strong flavor of panic in Bliven's editorial, written in the form of an open letter to FDR, "Get Tough, Mr. President!" He was sure Congress and businessmen were dragging their feet on the defense program, and that the President himself was deliberately slowing the momentum of the drive because of the election, in order not to antagonize "the profiteers, the labor baiters, the monopolists, the friends of appeasement, and the defeatists." It was now going on to fourteen weeks since the Great Fear of June, 1940, and things had fallen to new lows of apathy. His closing paragraph compared favorably with the orations of the "Four Minute Patriots" of World War One whom he had critized so sulphurically in the past; "I demand that you resolve the conflicts that may hold us back, that you give up whatever old traditions, no longer fitted to the new day, may be retarding our national effort." But his recommendation of Churchill's offer of "blood, toil, tears and sweat" to the British public as good for the people of the United States as well must have incensed the more reluctant of the *New Republic's* unreconstructed readers, who were accustomed to seeing rhetoric of this type scoffed at as "schoolboy braggadocio" on Churchill's part not many years before.

Bliven's third major stint on the defense question in November revealed that he was still heatedly concerned over the likelihood of an immediate invasion of North America by Hitler, as well as by the course and the amount of defense. The amazing part of this contribution was his confession, "I am in a position to reveal a most extraordinary piece of news which has a direct bearing on the question of defense and our national economy. I am able to report that the general impression about what has happened in Germany since 1933 is quite false." Bliven continued in the established view of describing the country as a great ordeal for the enemies of the regime, but now dismissed entirely the notion that the country had been built up "by laying the whip on the backs of the German people, by starving them and otherwise reducing their standard of life to the absolute breaking point."

No longer having to carry the Communist baggage on Germany which the *New Republic* had been toting since the arrival of Hitler and even before, Bliven now could shrug off the beliefs which had made the prediction of an easy and imminent overthrow of National Socialism so attractive down to May, 1940. Now he quoted from a study made by Dr. Otto Nathan of New York University, the reverse of the scores of articles printed by the journal from a dozen "experts" on the German economy, which had painted such a picture

of internal desperation and weakness as to warrant a vote of no confidence for any period at all since 1933. What Bliven's fate might have been had he published such material at the height of the Popular Front can only be surmised.

Now Bliven went into detail on the program of governmentally-made work, vast internal building of roads, docks, airfields, shipyards, drydocks, the farming out of vast contracts for war supplies to private firms as well as internal government enterprises, as well as the use of a very RFC-like governmental loan program to aid plant expansion, along with the sopping up of the whole unemployed labor pool, the regulation of capital investment and the like. He even discounted the "guns or butter" legend, satisfied that Nathan's figures on even higher butter consumption in the Hitler period was proof that Goering was "lying" when he was credited with having declared it to be the alternative facing Germans.

Bliven saw a distinct lesson for the United States in Hitler's actions now; "Quite aside from the inhuman barbarism of Hitler's regime, his policy of putting everyone to work, whether private business was prepared to carry the load or not, is a sound one that might well be copied elsewhere," he summed up the case. Remarking, "The lesson of all this for the American armament program should be plain enough for all to see," he added for the discomfiture of many, without a doubt, "As a cold matter of fact, we are now doing in this country many of the things on the economic and industrial front that Hitler did in 1933, 1934 and thereafter."¹¹⁰

The re-election of FDR brought to an end this series of criticism and the sniping which had been growing since June. A new era of good feeling set in, and liberals tried more than ever to see the brighter side of the defense-production picture for a change. "T.R.B." was one of the first of the more bilious who got over his dismay with Roosevelt's conduct of the war machine in the making. In a somersault column in the *New Republic* on November 18 he hailed the now-third-term President for having restructured the Democratic Party "into a liberal political instrument," and commended the new cabinet appointments, and now even maintained that he had wired down the NDAC solidly within the New Deal element.¹¹¹ In the same issue Jonathan Mitchell found it hard to select words praiseworthy enough for Sidney Hillman as the really key figure in the production of armaments, through his labor policy. Mitchell's "Labor Makes Guns" even suggested that industry might be in for a penetration of advisers from this sector, which might prove even more efficient at directing the process of production:¹¹²

As a part of the defense program, an attempt is being made to bring efficient management to a wide sector of American industry. It is being

carried out, with President Roosevelt's backing, by labor-union leadership.

This was a rather alarming about-face from the position of just a few weeks before, when the conviction had been widely broadcast that FDR had sold the entire defense program bag and baggage to grim-jawed reactionary enemies of labor and reform. But the assumption again was based on the legend that Roosevelt had beaten Big Business at the polls and that therefore he was free to handle the situation in any manner that struck his fancy. Liberal commentators had already forgotten the "large herd of tame capitalists" they had found resting in the shade of the New Deal's political stables some time before. The *New Republic* even felt so confident that FDR had divorced himself from the business and financial community that they chose to instruct the President not to pay much attention to the pleas for "unity" rising in the business world, on the ground that it was an attempt to gain a decisive hand in policy even though defeated in the election; "big business is endeavoring to regain in the actual operation of the defense machinery the power it lost to the majority on the political field." This editorial, "Limits of Unity," severely distrusted the willingness of businessmen to "put national interests first," and suggested that the President be very wary, "more wary than he has been in the past, not to allow his constitutional majority to be circumvented in the privacy of defense lobbies."¹¹³

But liberals were soon to be disabused of illusions that the business-financial community and its political forces had left the planet or gone into complete obscurity. And the "unity" gestures remained part of the overall strategy, with gradual evaporation of the fog of suspicion which had risen so high and so thickly just after the election. When Stimson in a speech at the convention of the American Federation of Labor in New Orleans in December gave brief but eloquent support to the New Deal labor policies as a powerful incentive to higher defense production, the *New Republic* responded with voluble praise of him.¹¹⁴ Only the blending of domestic and foreign policies could have produced a circumstance in which a previously much-denounced Tory such as Stimson might be found praising a New Deal domestic policy, and a liberal paper congratulating him on something he had said about internal affairs.

An even more pronounced sign of the slow cracking of liberal stands on the businessman in the New Deal's arms-making program was Jonathan Mitchell's December 16 *New Republic* admiring profile of Donald M. Nelson, vice-president of Sears, Roebuck Company and Coordinator of Defense Purchasing in the NDAC. It was about the first favorable estimate of a businessman which had been known to appear in the liberal press. And it was even more startling

to read Mitchell, heretofore a long-standing critic of almost the entire business community, and early enemy of arms manufacture, saying, "If a big-business man, skilled in the uttermost refinements of his trade, even if apparently oblivious to many of the New Deal's peace time aims, is to run our war industry, he is today the foremost candidate." ¹¹⁵

By such slow rationalizations as these the liberals steadily receded back up and off the political playing fields and into the rooting section to cheer the performance of men for whom they had nothing but contempt and abuse not a very long time before. The zeal for the war with Hitler was yet to perform even more fundamental changes in the liberal ranks, as the leadership for it gravitated into the hands of those who were not motivated an iota by liberal political and economic hopes, views and ideals. Of the situation in the winter of 1940-1941, however, as "T.R.B." put it, commenting on the steady success of businessmen in taking over the control of the defense program, "except in labor matters, where Mr. Hillman's division of the NDAC has a large measure of authority—the big businessmen will act, the New Dealers only talk." ¹¹⁶

The only sour note in the new unity-concerto was the sharp criticism which was occasioned by the fall-off of production and delivery of war supplies to England during the late fall and early winter of 1940. The *New Republic* trumpeted that FDR ought to "lay down a policy" on this particular subject, which involved disregarding the critics of aid-to-Britain; "Three out of four decisions which limit aid to Britain and the speed of production for defense are caused by the Administration's fear of offending those who criticize it for edging nearer to war." This was bitterly resented, and in exasperation the editorial "Lags In Defense," fully sensing the national idiocy in being simultaneously *against neutrality* as vigorously as being *against getting into the war*, fought for resolving this conflict. In its conviction that Americans could not be against both indefinitely, it was aware that there was good chance, from its pro-involvement position now, of circumventing the latter. Thus, as time went on, it was vindicated in seeing the former *commitment* undermining the latter *sentiment*: for most people, trying to stay out of war while favoring policies stimulating involvement produced an unbearable conflict. And the *New Republic's* stand now was in support of active leadership which would go ahead with arms production and supply to England, regardless of the critics who were already at odds with themselves in supporting these mutually contradictory stands.¹¹⁷

Shall we let the fear of war plunge us into hostilities? This journal cannot believe that outspoken leadership in this issue would not elicit overwhelming support. The task of the United States for the next few months

is to organize its economy exactly as if it were at war, in order to avoid hostilities in the near future or a war economy for a generation.

The *New Republic's* latest amazing about-face in policy proved to be an accurate prescription for getting everything that was supposed to have been avoided.

Again, in the Christmas, 1940 issue, editorial policy returned to the theme of "lags" in defense production, and it urged the President to "convince the country" that the best way to avoid war was "to declare a full emergency" and begin producing as "in wartime," confident that he could get the country "to back him up."¹¹⁸ By this time there was a noticeable overtone in the pressure for industrial expansion in the arms-defense drive. Some of the newer voices among the liberal enthusiasts for this program were firm in the belief that it was a scintillating opportunity to make fundamental changes in America's overall industrial productivity, a veritable upward vault into *permanent* expansion, to become the basis for a widened or "bigger" economy, regardless of whether the nation went to war or not. If it were unachievable under the domestic New Deal, then achieve it through this defense stratagem. Samuel Grafton was one of the most persuasive arguers for this brief. And this furnished a key to understanding the irritation and dissatisfaction with the "lags" in defense production. These sentiments were directly motivated by the feeling that this dream for America's future planned economy was being frustrated by the same forces that had inhibited it from even getting off the ground between 1933 and 1938. Others spoke vaguely of the possibility of a "social revolution" resulting from the increased power of the government over business which was surely to come about as a result of the extension of the defense emergency, despite the continual worrying of such spokesmen as "T.R.B." about the power of business over the government. The blending of the two into something different from either over the succeeding decade took American liberals years to analyze.

The issue of arms-making and defense resulted in a new image of Winston Churchill looming in the liberal port-hole; the tough independent tribune of the people, resolutely joining hands with the aggressive elements in the Labor Party such as Ernest Bevin, and cracking down sternly on British business and industry, forcing them into expansion and subjecting them to a multitude of taxes and restraints, all of which were warmly applauded. Some liberals yearned for a similar man in the United States, and hopefully gazed in the direction of FDR in the hope that he would exercise similar power soon. But, realizing that the line was still all-out aid to Britain short-of-war, it was understood that it would be difficult to explain such a course of action. Thus, out of a welter of criticism of defense on

the grounds of dilatory and insufficient production, the call went forth in December, 1940 for conversion to a war footing anyway, as we have seen. The atmosphere of desperation in the winter of 1940-1941 felt in the liberal press could not have been better stated than in the second sentence of the *New Republic's* Christmas issue editorial: "Surely the world has never been in more desperate plight in the 1900 years of Christian history."¹¹⁹ This could hardly have been the opinion of 99% Christian Germany at that moment, and in retrospect, to a generation alive on the edge of the age of the cobalt bomb, such a line might have been written by a camp follower of Charles Martel, as far as relative threat to human survival was concerned.

And the year closed out with "T.R.B." complaining of the lack of a master-strongman on the NDAC to whip recalcitrant industrialists into line, recalling to his mind the new picture of Churchill. "Mr. Churchill, last spring, gave Lord Beaverbrook full powers over the business men of the English airplane industry," he recalled for the readers; "He could tap a business man on the shoulder and tell him to resign from his company's board, and the business man had to resign."¹²⁰ "T.R.B." grieved that Knudsen had no such power, nor did anyone else seem to have it either. But some signs seemed to offer hope and consolation, for the *New Republic* applauded FDR's creation of a "super-commission" in the defense administration of Knudsen and Hillman, plus Stimson and Colonel Frank Knox, the Army and Navy Secretaries.¹²¹ At every stage the politico-economico-military blending which was slowly being fitted together in the form of America's war-defense monolith had unconditional approval of the new war-galvanized liberals, the very group which gave vent in alarmed tones a decade later upon their discovery of a "power elite" in American society.

THE LIBERALS FIND A HOME

IN THE ARMS-NATIONAL DEFENSE COMPLEX IN 1941

It has been seen that the subject of munitions-production and national defense after the spring of 1940 produced two main themes in the converted sector of the American liberal press: (1) that arms output was miserably small and scanty because too much of the program was in the hands of businessmen who did not want to expand productive capacity and lacked administrative talent, and (2) profits from the defense production contracts in the arms boom period were becoming crushingly excessive. In one form or another the solution to these aggravations which liberals advanced consisted of moving in a New Deal direction with power to crack the whip. The specific

suggestions included a steep excess profits tax, comprehensive wage and price controls, and allocation and priorities discrimination in supply of strategic raw materials and manpower.

The emphasis on this steadily increased into 1941, but additional issues appeared which widened the scope of the implications in a staggering manner. To some liberals the steady movement into a war economy was welcomed because it presented a sterling opportunity to move in and exercise that comprehensive political control of industry and the economy in general which had never been possible or successful in the eight years of domestic tactical bobbing and weaving under the New Deal's agencies. Price controls, rationing, wage controls, profit taxing to the bone and materials allocation all appeared alluring not only because of what they might contribute to hastening the output of the merchandise of death, now hectically being called for. They also had a separate significance as symbols which pointed to the ultimate achievement of the planned economy. The only dark cloud in the sky, accompanied by sad and painful observations, was the recognition that the hated economic royalists in the basic war industries were prospering beyond their wildest dreams as a result of the pressure upon them for more "defense."

But other liberals were not disheartened by this. In their long-range outlook they were able to take the temporary prosperity of Big Business in stride with a cool and confident mien, expecting the emergencies of the war to provide the excuse for massive state interference with the economy which the New Deal had never dared to essay upon, and which were hoped would cut down these independent forces to size. Some idea of the grandiose plane of these new visions was to be seen when the British Labor Party's national executive committee headed by Harold J. Laski came forth with a proposal to nationalize all land, banks, all forms of transport, health, social services and education, once the war was over. The *New Republic* had greeted this with a mighty shout, "the most valuable set of domestic war aims yet to have come out of Britain," the message "which all liberals have been waiting to hear." This subject will be examined at length subsequently in evaluation of the entire matter of war aims, in another chapter.

But the 1940-1941 revamping of the Roosevelt regime is a good laboratory in which to examine the tendencies and growth of another revolutionary development, the politicalizing of the armed forces and the militarizing of the political. When added to the industrialization of the military and the politicalization of industry, all the ingredients can be seen present which helped to fabricate the many-faced phenomenon which several years later was to draw the term "power elite." As these forces drew closer together to prepare for a massive war which had no objectives other than simple military

victory, and no expressed political or social aims whatever, the mindlessness of its overall implications grows more impressive with additional examination. It is not a matter of wonder that these forces turned loose a chain of circumstances after their victory had been won which made the problems prevailing before it look rather simple by comparison. But at this time, consideration of possibilities and probabilities was rarely on the agenda.

One of these factors may be mentioned insofar as it impinges on the arms and munitions subject under discussion. Part of this revolution involved the making of political decisions of great import on the basis of military and naval readiness to fight, a stunning reversal of roles, in view of the American tradition of guiding political and diplomatic decisions on the basis of existing naval and military strength, and not committing the country politically to an international course not likely to be successful on the basis of existing organized force to make the "national will" effective. But the characteristic of new foreign political policy in the Roosevelt arms buildup period was not the tailoring of this policy to existing military-naval realities, but rather the turning over to the military and naval the power to make policy directly through encouraging the building of a force of proportions large enough to envisage a political policy of no restraining dimensions built on it. In other words, in past times it was customary to have the policy first and to fashion the armed forces to its exigencies. The new system under Roosevelt consisted of having no policies until a staggering armed force had built up which so saturated the scene with power that unlimited policy was permitted; in reality, total power made policy unnecessary. It was a change of function of such vastness as to pop the brain of the wildest dreamer of power-wielding, on a stupendous scale unhampered by either space or time considerations. The only requirement was the existence of enough potential enemies, sufficiently dispersed to justify colossal action. "T.R.B." 's *New Republic* comment on the Administration and Japan on March 3, 1941 was one of the best illustrations of what this innovation was doing to the Navy. He reported that the Navy was torn into two groups that were badly divided on their views as to Japan's fighting power and lasting ability, with much hesitancy resulting. "The Administration, as yet, has no clear policy toward Japan," he pointed out, and as a result, "Until the Administration knows whether the Navy is prepared to fight, and, if it fights, what it will need, no Far Eastern policy is possible."¹²² It was one of the most succinct statements of this revolution in policy making with the burden of responsibility cast upon the fighting instead of the civilian forces. This was one of the most stunning fruits of the "defense" buildup, and one which liberals never did bother to understand.

For the most part, 1941 was a period of such breath-taking reversals of stand on several matters connected with the great rearmament program that significant changes of a more subtle, even if more-far-reaching, order were likely not to be noticed. One of the most impressive was the *Nation's* editorial comment on January 18 on the President's proposal to spend \$17½ billion for defense in the 1941-1942 year. It was mildly conceded to be a vast sum, but in support of FDR the *Nation* declared it "only about one fifth of the national income which we may reasonably expect during the period for which this expenditure is budgeted."¹²³ This single sentence established an utterly revolutionary departure from previous estimations and reasoning on defense expenditure; criticism of the sheer size of absolute figures, which dominated the period between the wars, was completely dismissed now.

With a positive-good theory of armaments now installed rather securely among the liberals generally, the topics which concerned them most now swung around the question of power and influence, as was true of the last few months of 1940. This involved a steady propaganda on behalf of the labor side of the defense industrial activity, and at the same time a consistent denigration of business forces which irrepressibly made their way deeper and deeper into the inner sanctuary of the Administration's war-arms-defense production edifice.

America's equivalent of the German Labor Front was headed by Sidney Hillman, who was steadily built into a figure of commanding importance in the liberal press. Mitchell hailed him in a most flattering profile in the *New Republic* late in January, describing his duties and functions thusly:¹²⁴

In the present emergency, his duty is to keep the American faith. As the representative of labor—which means the man of the people—his job is to see that we don't lose our birthright defending it.

The recent creation of the Office of Production Management, supplementing the National Defense Advisory Committee, was the occasion of the laudatory tributes to Hillman, who had been appointed to the OPM as the labor associate to Knudsen. A just as elated piece had appeared in the *Nation* by I. F. Stone the previous week, in which it was alleged that Hillman had been bitterly opposed by the "dollar-a-year" businessmen, but that they had been defeated by the combined efforts of Harry Hopkins and Attorney-General Robert H. Jackson.¹²⁵

To be sure, the early months of 1941 were not the best for organized labor and its friends such as the liberals, who hoped to see it gain a far more decisive part in the arms manufacture program

than already enjoyed. Many strikes in critical industries had already been given much publicity, and in general the unions had received a very bad press. The *Nation* in particular berated the New York *Times* for featuring strike news in defense industries in these days, and although in agreement with the *Times* in support of conscription and for a war declaration against Germany, it roasted the *Times* as reactionary for its handling of the labor news.

The loss of favorable public opinion was acknowledged with deep dismay, and on occasion efforts were made to discount it. The *New Republic*, which made copious and beaming references to the Gallup and other polls which registered strong majorities in favor of such Administration steps as the destroyer deal, Lend Lease and other moves which made the country a veritable belligerent, reacted with grim hostility when a Gallup poll in early March reported that 52% of the people were blaming labor for delay in defense arms production, 68% labor and the Administration combined, but only 2% "profit-seeking businessmen." The editorial comment on March 18 exploded, "This is panic judgment—panic created by a distortion of defense news." "It is an old trick,"¹²⁶ it tried to explain, but this was precisely the approach John T. Flynn was taking to demolish the schemes and programs and news which the journal approved of and deemed scripturally dependable. An uncharitable observer at this moment might have noted that a substantial part of what had been printed in the *New Republic* since the spring of 1940 was the purest form of "panic judgment."

It was disconcerting for liberals to find that war-hysteria could be employed for a variety of purposes, and not necessarily all the ones the defense-enthusiastic liberals desired. In this instance, with their whole case resting on an almost unqualified indictment of the industrial community as responsible for the arms slowdowns, it was most shocking to be faced by this absence of agreement with the general public. In the same way the angry pieces about the decay of civil liberties, purges of persons for Communist Party membership, "red hunts" among teachers, and Federal Bureau of Investigation industrial plant searches, reflected the same situation. All this was extra baggage not contracted for when the arms buildup was initiated.

Insofar as the labor side of this activity was concerned, liberals were seeking a one-way-street war hysteria which could be kept focused overseas exclusively, while the domestic scene could be continued in the enjoyment of the placid ways of normal times. But in a sense the alarming intensity of public resentment against defense-industry strikes was in a way a measure of the country's approval of the Roosevelt foreign policy, and it was one manifestation of unity which suggested that the interventionists among the liberals might have profited from paying more attention to the warnings of

their "isolationist" confreres about the pervasiveness and contagion of war hysteria. But as the situation tended to get worse instead of better, on into the spring of 1941, the general shock and horror of the liberal editors, which was felt over the public growling at strikes, and the street talk intemperately suggesting shooting and jailing strikers, overcame them. When it came to such a matter as this, the bloodthirst of the "man on the street" was too much to endure. Directed against a personalized foreigner, it was proper, but not against a preferred faction at home. "The 'Public' Is Wrong," a *New Republic* editorial on May 19 flamed out, in condemnation of this grim anti-labor denunciation.¹²⁷

In fact, by this time the *New Republic* had become so perturbed by the renewed activities of "powerful reactionaries" assaulting New Deal labor and other legislation that they formed the "New Republic Committee For Democratic Defense" in February,¹²⁸ to aid all victims of "illiberal action" and to prevent "reaction and repression" on a nation-wide basis. The editors were astounded at the new health of these forces, and sickened by the realization that they were getting their nourishment from the great defense and invasion hysteria which the liberals were contributing rather generously to themselves. At this stage they did not seem to have great faith in the Administration's numerous agencies to protect civil rights or its own legislative reforms, or FDR's ability to provide liberal leadership in pushing for these objectives.

Still another facet of the period was the opposition of the Communists to the war production phase now, instead of their pre-August, 1939 vociferous support. Rightist pro-war forces were able to magnify this situation as well as the strikes, and tie them together in several places. It did great harm to the anti-militarists among liberal and other circles to have as flankers the Communists on one hand and the German sympathizers on the other. But it was to the eternal discredit of the interventionist liberals and belligerents among them that they permitted no discrimination to be made in wrapping all these forces in a parcel for public display. It helped to lower the coffin lid on liberalism in the United States and the war spiked it down.

There were other causes for distress as well. The *Nation* was deeply angered by developments on the tax front when the House Ways and Means Committee in April started working on how defense and aid to Britain were to be financed. "Republicans and conservative Democrats are determined to place as much of the burden as possible on the low-income groups," it announced with much grimness on May 3, suggesting as an alternative steep income taxes in the brackets above \$25,000.¹²⁹

Occasional quiet calls still were to be heard suggesting that the whole-souled liberal devotion to the arms and defense program was not entirely a healthy thing for the future of liberalism and the progressive tradition. Frank Hanighen, writing in the still adamantly-anti-interventionist *Common Sense* in April, read the weeklies a lesson on the rapid abandonment of domestic reform and the transformation of some fifteen prominent figures in the domestic New Deal into "foreign experts" in just the previous year, as well as Roosevelt's infrequent attention to any kind of domestic program. And he noted the invasion of the Administration by a new contingent of formerly despised businessmen, admirals and generals. It was his conviction that the New Dealers had made a fatal mistake hoping they could superimpose "defense" upon the regular civilian life of the country, in view of its demonstrated tendency now to absorb everything, under a different group of directors entirely.¹³⁰ And even the *New Republic*, in its zeal for defense and all-out aid to Britain, was able to entertain at least briefly a note of caution in its enthusiasm for "all speed ahead" on the conversion to a modified war economy. It reminded the readers, "Last time we began with the New Freedom. But when the war was over, the New Freedom had gone with the buffalo."¹³¹ As it turned out, this time America began with the New Deal, but when the war was over, the New Deal had gone with the passenger pigeon.

But in the case of the NDAC the liberals had a substantial subject into which they were able to sink their teeth without remorse or looking back. It was a consolation prize of a sort, a sop for resentment and dismay which cropped up as a consequence of observing some of the other aspects of a country steadily moving toward a war footing via an arms boom which liberals had finally gotten around to endorsing unconditionally. The creation of the OPM did nothing to allay liberal unhappiness over the persistent penetration of business and industrial figures into the interstices of the defense machine. "T.R.B." was completely absorbed in the struggle between the domestic New Deal holdovers and these unliked newcomers for the major plums, and occasionally gave vent to testy judgments on the subject. On January 27 he summarized the state of the situation in view of the latest niche which had been carved in the bureaucratic totem pole:¹³²

The old New Deal group is beginning to be badly crowded by the millionaire patriots of the new Office for Production Management. They need someone who can yell and pound a desktop for expansion in the steel and aluminum industries . . . and who can present the New Deal viewpoint forcefully to the President.

The inference was painfully plain that although it was considered the height of bad taste to criticize Roosevelt for filling so many important posts in his government with people hostile to his professed views, nevertheless he no longer represented the New Deal viewpoint.

But things did not seem to be wholly bad, despite the tone of despair. The following week the *New Republic* columnist suggested that the OPM seemed to be "somewhat less crudely anti-New Deal than its predecessors."¹³³ He expressed kind words for Averell Harriman, who though a railroad president was "one of the few big-businessmen who have loyally supported Mr. Roosevelt's domestic policies," and also approved of George M. Moffett of Corn Products, R. R. Dupree of Procter and Gamble, John D. Biggers of Libby, Owens and Ford, and W. L. Batt of SKF. He was also happy over Under-Secretary of War Patterson and Assistant Secretary of War Lovett, despite the fact that the former was a protégé of Stimson's and the latter a partner in Brown Brothers, Harriman Company. "T.R.B." was puzzled by their "cooperative" attitude, and was particularly pleased that they had had outstanding combat records in the First World War. Some idea of the revolution which had swept the editorial stands of the liberal press in a year can be gained from observing here and later the handing out of high praise to persons for their past military accomplishments, after two decades of an attitude which had ranked military prominence not very far above having had a criminal record.¹³⁴

Max Lerner joined "T.R.B." in suggesting that some changes in relationship between the New Dealers and the newcomers were in the offing. On March 10 Lerner wrote in the vein that the figures from the business community would soon all be in a second class citizen category within the New Deal arms buildup; in the new reorganization the New Dealers were to have ultimate authority, and "the 'dollar-a-year-boys' with the exception of Mr. Knudsen will be set on a clearly inferior rank." In Lerner's reassuring tones, "It will mean that the dollar-a-year business men haven't captured the government, after all."¹³⁵

As if in support of this, and to further underline the renewed faith and confidence in FDR after many black months of despair, "T.R.B." the following week chronicled the rise to prominence of Harry L. Hopkins in the defense-New Deal as he had been in the relief-New Deal. Though he was not yet ready to concede that the problem of the dollar-a-year men was over, he was in high confidence over this development. "At the moment, Harry L. Hopkins—at least on the surface—is the key man in the United States," he confided, and as such was "foreordained to act as chief wartime trouble-shooter."¹³⁶ And "T.R.B."’s column of March 31, "FDR: President of the World," a documentation of his capture of total power in eight

years, was a mighty apotheosis of a man whom "T.R.B." himself had hoped four years earlier might soon be brushed aside and his place taken by someone of genuine progressive qualities.¹³⁷

The lightning German victories in the spring of 1941 in the Balkans and the Mediterranean, which demonstrated that a change in orators was not the fundamental solution to the British problem, was also the signal for a new wave of hysteria in the United States, and American liberalism partook of it generously. In May and June the fear of an invasion of the United States via West Africa and Brazil also reached flood tide, aided by stupendous predictions of an apocalyptic Armageddon from many *soi-disant* experts in world politics. Most of these fledgling geopoliticians forgot to point out to the American public that after Hitler had gone to this tremendous effort, involving shipping facilities many times larger than actually at his disposal, he would be further from the United States in Brazil than if he had remained in Germany. And their shudders were always predicated on an America which would do absolutely nothing about it except stare at the proceedings like a hare fascinated by the uncoiling of a python.

Its relation to the arms-defense complex was electric. Liberals exploded in agitated attacks on production "lags" even more bitterly, and a much higher wave of bitterness toward the business community was set loose in the liberal press. "All Out Now!" was the title of one of the longest editorials in weeks in the *New Republic* for May 5, 1941. An editorial of similar content in the *Nation* five days later, "The Lag in Defense," boiled like a lava flow over the failure of the industrial system to convert to a war time footing yet, while businessmen were once more raked for being responsible for resistance to capacity expansion as a consequence of their selfishness: "All too often the blinders of private interest have impeded the vision essential to the planning of an undertaking as vast as the defense program," it commented bitterly.¹³⁸ The advocates of planning had not lost the vision of getting it established as national policy under the aegis of national emergency and defense, and every new crisis in the world was exploited to keep the vision alive.

In the *Nation* the main campaign accompanying this latest explosion over inadequacy of war production took the form of a series of torrid attacks of an almost personal nature on Knudsen by I. F. Stone in the first three weeks of May. Stone included in his picture of the nation's war industrial situation a relentless criticism of the "defense effort" for not producing arms fast enough and in sufficient volume in a manner which should have made any putative "merchant-of-death" beside himself with pleasure. Stone charged that plant facilities were not being converted to arms-making fast enough with not nearly enough expansion of plant. His particular animus was directed at

Detroit for not having converted the automobile factories to the making of military vehicles and planes exclusively, for making too many private cars and for taxing the supplies of basic metals. He called for suspension of all design work on 1942 models, and was almost beside himself because the plan of Walter Reuther for making 500 airplanes a day, broached to Hillman in August of 1940, had been snubbed. This seemed to be the main reason for Stone's "Why Knudsen Should Go." The next week another incandescent attack was made on the General Motors executive high in New Deal defense direction as a symbol of "business as usual," and for allegedly salting down subordinate positions in the defense organization with like-minded executives.¹³⁹ And on May 17 Stone wound up his comprehensive disparagement of defense and Knudsen, and delivered himself of a piece of special advice in closing:¹⁴⁰

A government that cannot organize its own country for production cannot organize the world for freedom. So long as the Knudsens remain at the controls of defense we risk our own humiliation and the contempt of the nations we have encouraged to resist Hitler. Business-as-usual cannot produce arms fast enough.

There was no more concise statement of the issue of the grandiose concept behind the revolution which had swept liberalism since the "merchants-of-death" propaganda days than this one by Stone. Making an arms factory out of the nation was to be a prelude to making an armed camp out of the world. To make it more emphatic, the *Nation's* editorial on May 24, "Up To Mr. Roosevelt," laid down the line as editorial policy:¹⁴¹

The *Nation* believes it the President's job to order an investigation of productive capacity in every industry. . . . Obviously the dollar-a-year men cannot be trusted to make this survey alone. . . . They must be aided by representatives of labor and independent engineering technicians.

It appeared that, though the country had failed to get two automobiles in every garage in the era of Mr. Hoover, the *Nation* was exceedingly alarmed that Mr. Roosevelt was not doing enough to make every back yard a storage spot for a military airplane.

However, things did not improve during the subsequent summer months of 1941. The failure of the invasion of England, widely expected by liberals and others in April and May, brought a relapse instead of an acceleration of movements toward the objectives of the defense-world planners. There was an anti-climactic flavor to the *Nation's* June 21 editorial, "Letting Britain Down," shocked by the

small flow of arms to England since the passing of the Lend-Lease Act in March, particularly in view of all the heated predictions of invasion not long thereafter.¹⁴²

But the *Nation's* omnibus critic par excellence of the armament and defense scene continued to be Stone. His communiques in July showed him disheartened by the apathy and doldrums in the nation's capital, and impatient that war production was still not stepping up to his expectations, in addition to the fact that now that Russia had entered the war, the arms aid to the Soviet was at a standstill. He was grateful that a movement to bar Russia as a recipient of Lend-Lease aid had been stopped, under the leadership of "so hard-headed a right winger as Luther Johnson of Texas," and he was confident that the "sturdy realism" of enough businessmen and conservatives was in existence sufficient to back FDR when he decided that the Communists should receive such help. Overall, Stone did not think the President was dealing with the problem satisfactorily; "Unfortunately," he complained, "the President continues to sidle up to the war issue, to approach it obliquely and by subterfuge, and he gives no indication of a readiness for drastic measures in speeding up production." ¹⁴³

Stone may have appreciated the efforts of Luther Johnson in blocking the attempt to keep Soviet Russia off the Lend-Lease gift-list, but he had far less cordiality for several other Southern politicians. He was very apprehensive over the new friends of war production in the Southern wing of the Democratic party, and the reflection of their views contained in the May and Connally bills, which included provisions for suppressing strikes with great sternness. And the persistence of Southern legislators indulging in humorless citations of strike-less Germany and Japan as ideals, and their patriotic willingness to even give up the Bill of Rights in their devotion to obliterating Hitler, was over and beyond the call of duty as liberals saw it, for sure. Stone, condemning these new barb-studded fruits of the arms-defense-preparedness-war hysteria in a piece on July 19, "FDR and the May Bill," was afraid that Roosevelt was becoming "the ally and prisoner of the intellectual hookworms who infest the Southern end of the Democratic party." ¹⁴⁴

As the rearmament oak sprouted newer and even more wondrous limbs later in the summer, Stone was impelled to continue his dark apprehension over what might come of it. He was not the least bit heartened by the creation of the Supply Priorities Allocation Board to reconcile the hostility between Knudsen and the OPM, and the Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply headed by Leon Henderson, despite a 4-3 margin of known New Dealers as members. Nor was he enthused by the removal of Stettinius and John D. Biggers from the OPM, given even still more important posts, as Lend-Lease

administrator and minister to London in charge of Lend-Lease operations, respectively. Said Stone,¹⁴⁵

When Mr. Hoover was in doubt, which was practically all the time, he would appoint a new commission. When Mr. Roosevelt has to make a decision between two of his subordinates, he ducks the issue by naming a new board and appointing both of them to it.

In full accord with these adverse views on Roosevelt and the running of the national arms production enterprise was the *New Republic*. Its editorial of August 11, "Dollar-a-Year-Democracy," was still deeply resentful of the business direction of the OPM. It again asserted a multitude of charges of incompetence and overall mismanagement of defense production, while sharply taking Roosevelt to task for not undertaking basic reconstruction of defense administration. Charging that he had "flunked" in his conduct of the defense effort thus far, the critique revealed that the most persistent irritant was the undiminished importance of representatives of big business as policy-makers.¹⁴⁶

The fact is that they are needed but they have been in the wrong place. They have, as a business managerial group, a definite set of skills to contribute. But what Harold Laski once said about all experts should apply particularly to our dollar-a-year men; they should be on tap but not on top.

The unpleasant economic consequences of the big industrial armament drive were not easy for liberals to accept or acknowledge, as the second half of 1941 began and the full effect of a full year of this massive drive began to come home to roost. Cause and effect occupied little of their time. The steadily rising price inflation and the heightened corporation profits were the issues most noticed and deplored. Legislative interference was repeatedly recommended, and, in fact, entreated. A jittery *Nation* editorial on May 17, "Is Inflation Here?", showed a disconcerting reaction to a rapid price rise, which was set before FDR as "a first-rate challenge." "If he is wholly sincere in his determination to prevent an inflationary price rise such as occurred in the last war, he will have to act quickly and decisively."¹⁴⁷ This unwelcome consequence of the wildly-willed war effort drew major attention from the *New Republic* on July 7, "Runaway Prices," and its position, lamenting a Bureau of Labor Statistics report of a 16% price rise since September, 1939, and still showing "signs of acceleration," was rueful; "We have already lost the front-line trenches in the battle of inflation." But it took consolation in laying all price boosts resulting from shortages at the door of "the dollar-a-year men in the

defense organization" once more, and urged Congress to pass laws at once providing for priorities, rationing and rigid price controls over the whole industrial system; "There is no available alternative," it pronounced. A major article on the same subject appeared a week later written by Michael Straight, who had already written a trailer on the effect of the war boom early in June, "Shirts That Shrink," a substantial commentary on reductions in quality and quantity which had already appeared as substitutes for price rises, and amounted to an even sharper jump-up in the cost of living. Straight had passionately denounced these practices, but they were really just evasions of the OPA's retail price section to him, not inherent in the nature of the whole system now evolving.¹⁴⁸ But it was interesting to see that this was an admittedly serious problem eight months before American entry into the war. One of the great liberal fictions was that such practices were controlled and held in rigid check *after* the country went to war.

Despite a feeling of impotence which was steadily moving through the pro-Administration and pro-war liberals in mid-1941, and that there was not much to do except to cheer on the defense-war buildup, there was usually a bristling at any serious criticism from liberal-left sources. When John L. Lewis, Earl Browder and Norman Thomas issued separate statements criticizing what they called Fascist tendencies growing in America under the impact of the war boom, "T.R.B." took them sharply to task. His June 2 *New Republic* column, "Democracy Holds Its Own," saw nothing but a course of triumph in this major change coming over the country. There was no dark side to the situation in his view. Labor was doing fine, there was more organizing, wage rates were going up, and such evils as did exist would soon be rectified by more laws. He especially looked forward to early passage of price control and excess-profit tax laws, which would finish the job of contributing to a stable equilibrium. "The assumption that this country's shift from peace to war economy under the Roosevelt leadership has sown the seeds of Fascism, or is about to do, simply does not hold up under scrutiny," he scoffed.¹⁴⁹

Yet a few uneasy tremors continued to course through the solid convictions of righteousness in the direction of the country's movement behind Roosevelt. A suspicion still prevailed that the new New Deal defense deck was stacked a little unevenly in favor of the business community. When the President broke the Communist-led strike in the North American aircraft plant in Los Angeles with troops in June, 1941, the first time the Army had been used by the President for such purposes since Grover Cleveland had done so to break the Pullman strike in 1893, the *New Republic* applauded. But the applause trailed off rather unevenly upon reflecting on the total situation: ¹⁵⁰

We use soldiers to break a strike; what are we doing to prevent profiteers from withholding essential goods and services, and then retaining their ill-gotten gains? We are not lifting one little finger. Mr. President, put the heat on Congress, to act on excess profits and commandeering. If it will not act, and act quickly, act yourself!

On June 2 Max Gissen had written an agonized *New Republic* plea, "Tax Excess Profits!" The disheartening consequence of the dearly-cherished defense-for-Britain boom, the substantial profits of the firms supplying it, had by now become a major issue with liberals. Gissen's was an anguished recital of this vast increase by American firms since 1939, and a loud call for legislation to halt it, punctuated by another saddened reflection on the dilatory conduct of Roosevelt: ¹⁵¹

It is too bad the President does not find it politic to bring the tax question directly to the nation. Both he and business might be surprised to discover the widespread desire for a ruthless tax on profiteers.

But the real force of this campaign did not start until the last four months of 1941. On September 8 the *New Republic* issued a groan of dismay upon the publication by the National City Bank of New York City of the profit statements of the 350 largest corporations in the United States for the first half of 1941 as compared to 1940. It alone was felt grounds for an urgent appeal for the immediate passage of a high "excess profits" tax.¹⁵² The hope still hung in the air that this war-arms boom might be a major device for disciplining the financial and business community and result in the placing over them both of a new type of public official in command and control. Among some of the more committed liberals, such an outcome became as important as military victory, after the country became involved as a belligerent.

Supplementing this was a new series of assaults on the conduct of the defense program and its business leaders by Straight, who got new support from I. F. Stone's widely-heralded book *Business As Usual*, a volume which received the strong endorsement of Senator Harry S. Truman. Straight thought the book meritorious but still not strong enough. However, in the last four months of peacetime America the *New Republic's* most exhaustive critic of the profit side of the nation's economy was E. D. Kennedy, the author of repeated scholarly critiques which included the ultimate in liberal somersaulting since the "merchants-of-death" days. In an article "The Big Fish Get Away" on September 29, deploring the vastly stepped-up corporate profits, Kennedy expressed the firm conviction that the business community as a whole was not enthusiastic over this war, and his main

complaint against it was its sluggishness and unwillingness to have much to do with the business of war at all. Kennedy's charge that the business community lacked faith in FDR by failing to do more to support his enlistment of the nation in "the struggle against Fascism" represented the post-World War One story inside-out: the American business man now was an object of deep contempt for his hesitance and reservations toward becoming a totally committed "merchant of death."¹⁵³

Kennedy's frequent pieces through the autumn had a similar tone, and successively reported on the increased financial health of major industries, with a disapproving tone. The automotive, steel and railroad companies were chided in their turn for their money-making, but he was so appalled by the profits of the aluminum companies that he recommended the nationalization of the Aluminum Company of America, at which time he betrayed one of his concealed but basic intellectual assumptions and convictions in the entire series:¹⁵⁴

The war crisis has created an opportunity for practicing government ownership on a previously unknown scale. . . . But those who believe in government ownership, or who object to monopoly control, might now bestir themselves to see that the aluminum of the people falls as far as possible into the people's hands.

The *Nation's* suggestion for an excess profits tax on October 4 recommended the taxation of all profits in excess of 6 per cent. It hoped the Administration would get around to such a taxation bill at once, grieving that Congress had been so lenient in its just-passed new tax bill. It argued that this was only fair, since income taxes had been substantially raised over their levels during the World War, while profits taxes were at a level substantially below that time.¹⁵⁵

The attack on the directors and policy-makers in the defense program under nominal New Deal leadership continued up to the eve of the Pearl Harbor attack. Straight found it easy to locate the culprits on November 17, having searched for several months. "The Republicans Betray Defense," was the title of this late-season diagnosis.¹⁵⁶

And on December 6, 1941, Jonathan Mitchell's *Nation* article bore the heading, "Why Any Dollar-a-Year Men?"¹⁵⁷ The Japanese bombs on Pearl Harbor the next day punctuated this question additionally, as well as providing the prodigious thrust which carried the country, the New Deal, and the liberals clinging to it, well beyond any traces of the gravitational pull of remaining anti-military and anti-armament traditions, which had seemed to be flourishing with such luxuriance in 1934-1936. For liberals it was the consummation of another dazzling intellectual about-face on their passage from one war to another between 1919 and 1941.

NOTES

- 1 "Our Navy Madness," *Nation*, January 23, 1935, pp. 88-89.
- 2 *Nation*, February 20, 1935, p. 205.
- 3 "War Preparations and the Arms Inquiry," *Nation*, March 6, 1936, pp. 265-266.
- 4 "We Must Not Arm Against Japan!," *Nation*, March 13, 1935, p. 202.
- 5 "Ship Subsidies and War," *Nation*, March 20, 1935, p. 321.
- 6 *Nation*, May 1, 1935, pp. 494-495.
- 7 *Nation*, May 22, 1935, p. 586, for this and subsequent citation.
- 8 *New Republic*, May 8, 1935, p. 353.
- 9 *Nation*, May 8, 1935, p. 522. The following week the editors commended Roosevelt for repudiating General Andrews' use of the word "seize" as too strong a term. *Nation*, May 15, 1935, p. 558.
- 10 *Nation*, June 26, 1935, pp. 733-734.
- 11 *New Republic*, July 17, 1935, p. 262.
- 12 *New Republic*, November 13, 1935, p. 17.
- 13 *Common Sense*, November, 1935, pp. 8-9. A series of amplifications of Butler's book, partially written in collaboration with Robert Wohlforth, appeared from the fall of 1935 into the spring of 1936; see *Common Sense*, October, 1935, pp. 6-10; November, 1935, pp. 8-12; December, 1935, pp. 10-14; January, 1936, pp. 18-21; March, 1936, pp. 22-24. On Wohlforth see *Common Sense*, July, 1936, p. 31. Review of Butler's book in issue for August, 1935, p. 28.
- 14 Citations from *Common Sense*, October, 1935, p. 2.
- 15 *New Republic*, October 9, 1935, p. 227; *Nation*, November 20, 1935, p. 577. A vociferous campaign against any building up of the Pacific fleet was going on simultaneously in the *New Masses*. See for example "The War Against War," *New Masses*, August 6, 1935, p. 6.
- 16 *Nation*, December 4, 1935, p. 634.
- 17 *Nation*, December 25, 1935, p. 725.
- 18 *Common Sense*, January, 1936, pp. 16-18.
- 19 "T.R.B.," "A Dangerous Naval Program," *New Republic*, February 5, 1936, p. 367.
- 20 *New Republic*, March 11, 1936, pp. 136-137.
- 21 "Do We Spend Enough On Armaments?," *New Republic*, February 12, 1936, p. 7.
- 22 *Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1936, pp. 138-149.
- 23 *Nation*, March 18, 1936, p. 350. In this column Villard stated that the Communists had a standing army of 1,300,000 and were spending \$7 billion annually on their army and navy.
- 24 *Nation*, May 13, 1936, p. 598, for this and subsequent citation.
- 25 *Nation*, April 8, 1936, pp. 436-437, for citations in this paragraph.
- 26 *New Republic*, April 22, 1936, p. 320.
- 27 *New Republic*, April 15, 1936, pp. 276-277.
- 28 Hanighen, "Poison Gas and the Civilian Front," *New Republic*, August 5, 1936, pp. 373-374.
- 29 *Nation*, January 30, 1937, pp. 134-135.
- 30 *New Republic*, October 28, 1936, p. 350.
- 31 Bliven, "Pacifism: Its Rise and Fall," *New Republic*, November 18, 1936, pp. 67-69.
- 32 *New Republic*, February 24, 1937, p. 59.
- 33 *Nation*, March 13, 1937, p. 83.
- 34 "Spain Is the Key," *Nation*, February 13, 1937, p. 172; Villard in *Nation*, February 27, 1937, p. 240.
- 35 "Britain's Navy—And Ours," *New Republic*, March 3, 1937, p. 97, for citations in this paragraph.
- 36 *New Republic*, March 24, 1937, p. 209.
- 37 *New Republic*, March 31, 1937, pp. 237-238. Flynn's column was published on p. 239.
- 38 *New Republic*, March 31, 1937, pp. 223-234. But Flynn apparently was willing to concede the existence of a boom a short while later, on the basis of his *Harper's* article, "The War Boom Begins," July, 1937, pp. 113-122. According to his figures, world

spending on arms had doubled between 1931 and 1936, with the Soviet spending the most of all and the Japanese the least of the big powers.

39 "T.R.B.," "The Perils Of Peace," *New Republic*, April 14, 1937, pp. 293-294.

40 "A Worm's-Eye View Of Relief," *New Republic*, April 28, 1937, p. 345.

41 *New Republic*, May 12, 1937, p. 6.

42 *Nation*, June 12, 1937, p. 677. See also *New Republic* "Mailbag," August 11, 1937, p. 22.

43 *New Republic*, August 11, 1937, pp. 7-9.

44 *New Republic*, September 29, 1937, pp. 214-215.

45 *New Republic*, September 29, 1937, pp. 213-214.

46 *New Republic*, November 10, 1937, p. 1.

47 *New Republic*, March 16, 1938, pp. 163-164.

48 *New Republic*, January 5, 1938, p. 254.

49 *New Republic*, January 19, 1938, p. 38. Two years earlier, Flynn, in a critical survey of contemporary political authoritarianism, declared, "History teaches this lesson—that dictators and demagogues, when they exhaust the artifices of peacetime promising and can survive only on a stream of national sacrifices, turn inevitably and of necessity to war." *New Republic*, January 1, 1936, p. 226.

50 *New Republic*, February 2, 1938, pp. 351-352.

51 *Nation*, March 5, 1938, pp. 263-264.

52 "A Positive Program For Peace," *Common Sense*, August, 1938, pp. 3-5.

53 *Nation*, October 22, 1938, pp. 396-397.

54 Anderson, "'Peace'—Abroad and Home," *Nation*, October 22, 1938, p. 399.

55 In his column for December 14, 1938, discussing Roosevelt and rearmament talk, Flynn asserted, "Some of the things he [FDR] has been saying have frightened some of the visitors who heard them. Here is a sample. To one group he said: 'Armament is not only necessary but it will create widespread employment. Look at Germany. There is not an idle man in Germany. They are at work in the armament industries.' I report this from the eyes of responsible men who heard the President say it. If anything more disturbing than this has been reported in my many years of watching public affairs in Washington, I do not know what it could have been," p. 172.

57 *Nation*, November 19, 1938, p. 536.

58 *Nation*, November 26, 1938, p. 551.

59 Anderson, "Continental Defense," *Nation*, November 26, 1938, pp. 556-557.

60 *New Republic*, November 23, 1938, p. 56.

61 "T.R.B." columns in *New Republic*, November 30, 1938, p. 98, and December 7, 1938, pp. 127-128.

62 Eliot, "How Much National Defense?," *New Republic*, December 21, 1938, pp. 191-193.

63 *New Republic*, December 21, 1938, p. 200.

64 *Common Sense*, January, 1939, pp. 3-5.

65 *New Masses*, January 24, 1939, pp. 10-11.

66 "T.R.B.," "The GOP Is Betrayed," *New Republic*, October 26, 1938, p. 332, for all citations in this paragraph.

67 *New Republic*, February 22, 1939, pp. 63-65.

68 Flynn, "How To Tell A Liberal," *New Republic*, August 16, 1939, p. 47.

69 *New Republic*, March 8, 1939, pp. 121-122, for subsequent three citations as well. The *Nation*, in an editorial comment on the admitted shortage of men and materials in Germany, observed on July 29, 1939, "The American unemployed and the dismissed WPA workers must get dizzy reading the news of 'Men Wanted' in Germany as the starving Sudeten worker who a year ago saw everybody at work across the frontier. It is all very well to argue that it is not Fascism that works the miracle of complete employment . . . but a totalitarian war economy in the peculiar peace of these post-Munich days; that the same miracle worked in the democracies during the war; and that we could achieve the same unnatural boom immediately if we should build a bridge to China or simply throw immense amounts of material and work into the Pacific." p. 115.

70 Hutchison, "The Boom Is On," *Nation*, September 16, 1939, pp. 291-292.

71 *Nation*, September 23, 1939, p. 312.

72 *New Republic*, September 20, 1939, pp. 169-170. Flynn's column, "War On the Home Front," on page 188 of the same issue, was a somber speculation on what the enthusiasts for war might look forward to at home after fighting began, in the form of myriad government regulations, economic exactions and interventions, which he preceded by a recital of those in effect already among the European belligerents.

73 Stone, "Portrait Of A Dollar-A-Year Man," *Nation*, September 30, 1939, pp. 345-346.

74 *Nation*, August 19, 1939, p. 182.

75 *New Republic*, September 30, 1939, p. 174. Those selected for hostile review were Walter Gifford, president of American Telephone and Telegraph, Earl T. Bailie, "one of the most important members of the banking firm of J. and W. Seligman," Tom K. Smith, former president of the American Bankers Association, W. R. Burgess, vice president of the National City Bank, Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., chairman of the board of United States Steel, and Brigadier-General Robert E. Wood, president of Sears Roebuck.

76 *New Republic*, September 20, 1939, pp. 176-178.

77 *New Republic*, September 27, 1939, p. 214.

78 *New Republic*, October 25, 1939, p. 339.

79 *New Republic*, November 1, 1939, pp. 367-368.

80 *New Republic*, November 15, 1939, p. 113.

81 *New Republic*, December 6, 1939, pp. 182-183.

82 *New Republic*, January 8, 1940, p. 35.

83 "The President Digs In," *New Republic*, January 15, 1940, pp. 72-73. See also the continued heavy criticism in the two-page editorial, "Guns For Butter—Here Too?," *New Republic*, January 22, 1940, pp. 104-105.

84 *New Republic*, December 6, 1939, p. 193.

85 *New Republic*, December 13, 1939, p. 229.

86 *New Republic*, January 15, 1940, p. 84.

87 *Nation*, January 13, 1940, p. 29.

88 *Nation*, January 13, 1940, p. 47. See also Villard, "What Good Are Battleships?," *Nation*, January 20, 1940, p. 76.

89 "Big Navy Nightmare," *New Republic*, January 22, 1940, pp. 102-103; *Nation*, January 20, 1940, p. 58.

90 *New Republic*, January 22, 1940, p. 115.

91 *New Republic*, February 19, 1940, pp. 233-236.

92 *New Republic*, February 19, 1940, p. 246.

93 Flynn, "Billions For Defense—Against What?," *New Republic*, April 29, 1940, p. 575.

94 Flynn, "How Credits Start," *New Republic*, May 6, 1940, p. 610; "Johnny Get Your Gun," *New Republic*, May 27, 1940, p. 728.

95 *New Republic*, June 10, 1940, p. 792. Flynn had been very sympathetic to an "anti-war-profits" bill introduced by Senator Homer T. Bone and 49 other senators, and devoted his entire column on April 26, 1939 to it. Of this bill Flynn said, "The object of the bill is not to upset, but to protect the economic system. These taxes will certainly upset the economic habits of those who are taxed. But they will protect the economic life of the nation as a whole. They are indeed the only way to safeguard the national economic life against the disastrous effects of war inflation. Men have got to make up their minds that war is not a means to a boom, but that it is a grim and terrible thing which involves sacrifices and that these sacrifices must be shared by the whole society—by the young men who will be taken bodily to fight the war and the others who will remain behind and who must pay for the war." *New Republic*, April 26, 1939, p. 335.

96 *New Republic*, June 24, 1940, p. 857.

97 Flynn, "Billions For What?," *New Republic*, July 1, 1940, p. 26.

98 *New Republic*, August 26, 1940, p. 276, for citations in three paragraphs below.

99 Flynn, "Why Should Youth Pay the War Bill?," *New Republic*, September 23, 1940, pp. 416-417. See also his column "Happy Days Are Here Again," *New Republic*, September 16, 1940, pp. 384-385 on his charges aimed at Roosevelt.

100 *New Republic*, October 7, 1940, p. 475.

101 "T.R.B.," "The Bloody Shadow," *New Republic*, June 17, 1940, p. 822. See also "T.R.B." columns "The Fog Of War" and "The Camel's Nose," on June 3, and June 10,

- 102 "Labor's Front Line," *Nation*, June 15, 1940, pp. 725-726; *Nation*, July 6, 1940, p. 2. Lindsay Rogers, reviewing the Tobin-Bidwell *Mobilizing Civilian America* remarked, "Pres. Roosevelt has recently expressed the view that generals and admirals are experts and know more than laymen. That is a dangerous half-truth." *Nation*, June 15, 1940, p. 735.
- 103 *New Republic*, June 24, 1940, p. 856.
- 104 *New Republic*, July 8, 1940, p. 53.
- 105 *New Republic*, August 12, 1940, p. 214.
- 106 "The pending excess-profits and amortization tax promises to worsen the position of the New Dealers and to deprive them of all real control over the armament program." *New Republic*, August 19, 1940, p. 244.
- 107 *New Republic*, August 26, 1940, pp. 265-267.
- 108 "Germans Don't Wait," *New Republic*, September 30, 1940, p. 446.
- 109 Noyes, "Nazi Challenge To Democracy," *Nation*, September 14, 1940, pp. 207-210.
- 110 Bliven, "Not Enough Jitters," *New Republic*, August 12, 1940, pp. 208-209; "Get Tough, Mr. President!," *New Republic*, September 16, 1940, pp. 377-378; "Preparedness: The Lesson Of Germany," *New Republic*, November 11, 1940, pp. 49-51. Villard's letter in *New Republic*, August 19, 1940, pp. 247-248. See also Bliven, "Trying To Keep Calm," *New Republic*, August 26, 1940, pp. 273-274, another example of a considerable breakdown of restraint on the subject of defense and possible invasion.
- 111 "T.R.B.," "Third Term Lineup," *New Republic*, November 18, 1940, p. 692.
- 112 *New Republic*, November 18, 1940, pp. 684-685.
- 113 *New Republic*, November 18, 1940, pp. 678-679.
- 114 "Mr. Stimson Meets The Press," *New Republic*, December 9, 1940, p. 775.
- 115 Mitchell, "Nelson: He's Bought An Army," *New Republic*, December 16, 1940, pp. 832-833.
- 116 *New Republic*, December 16, 1940, p. 834.
- 117 *New Republic*, December 16, 1940, pp. 823-824.
- 118 *New Republic*, December 23, 1940, p. 851.
- 119 *New Republic*, December 23, 1940, p. 856.
- 120 *New Republic*, December 23, 1940, p. 868.
- 121 *New Republic*, December 30, 1940, p. 884.
- 122 *New Republic*, March 3, 1941, p. 305.
- 123 "Billions For Defense," *Nation*, January 18, 1941, pp. 60-61.
- 124 Mitchell, "Hillman-Labor Partner," *New Republic*, January 27, 1941, pp. 112-113.
- 125 Stone, "From NDAC To OPM," *Nation*, January 18, 1941, pp. 63-64.
- 126 "City Editors' Panic," *New Republic*, March 31, 1941, pp. 423-424.
- 127 *New Republic*, May 19, 1941, p. 685.
- 128 *New Republic*, February 10, 1941, p. 255. The Committee consisted of Roger Baldwin, Charlotte Carr, George Counts, Daniel Mebane, James Patton, Bliven and Soule.
- 129 "The Tax Proposals," *Nation*, May 3, 1941, p. 517.
- 130 Hanighen, "Are the New Dealers In Retreat?," *Common Sense*, April, 1941, pp. 116-117.
- 131 *New Republic*, February 17, 1941, p. 227.
- 132 *New Republic*, January 27, 1941, p. 115.
- 133 *New Republic*, February 3, 1941, pp. 146-147.
- 134 Later, when Robert L. Mehornay, a Kansas City furniture man, was placed in charge of sub-letting defense contracts, a gratified comment was made that "like many of the defense organization," he was "a hero of the last war." *New Republic*, February 10, 1941, p. 178.
- 135 *New Republic*, March 10, 1941, p. 339.
- 136 *New Republic*, March 24, 1941, p. 403.
- 137 *New Republic*, March 31, 1941, p. 434.
- 138 *Nation*, May 10, 1941, pp. 545-546.
- 139 Stone, "Why Knudsen Should Go," *Nation*, May 3, 1941, pp. 519-520, and "Mr. Knudsen's State Of Mind," *Nation*, May 10, 1941, pp. 550-551.
- 140 Stone, "The Cost Of Knudsenism," *Nation*, May 17, 1941, pp. 575-576.

- 141 *Nation*, May 24, 1941, p. 602.
- 142 *Nation*, June 21, 1941, p. 712.
- 143 Stone, "Heat Haze In Washington," *Nation*, July 12, 1941, pp. 28-29.
- 144 *Nation*, July 10, 1941, pp. 46-47.
- 145 Stone, "The Judgment of Rosenman," *Nation*, September 6, 1941, pp. 194-195.
- 146 *New Republic*, August 11, 1941, p. 175.
- 147 *Nation*, May 15, 1941, pp. 575-576.
- 148 *New Republic*, July 7, 1941, pp. 8-9; Straight, "Shirts That Shrink," *New Republic*, June 2, 1941, pp. 757-758.
- 149 *New Republic*, June 2, 1941, pp. 758-759.
- 150 "The President Breaks A Strike," *New Republic*, June 16, 1941, pp. 810-811.
- 151 *New Republic*, June 2, 1941, pp. 755-757.
- 152 "Wartime Profits," *New Republic*, September 8, 1941, p. 293.
- 153 *New Republic*, September 29, 1941, pp. 398-399.
- 154 *New Republic*, November 10, 1941, pp. 615-617. See also the Kennedy reports on profits in *New Republic*, October 27, 1941, pp. 529-531; November 3, 1941, pp. 583-585; December 8, 1941, pp. 755-757.
- 155 "The Tax On Profits," *Nation*, October 4, 1941, p. 297.
- 156 *New Republic*, November 17, 1941, pp. 641-642.
- 157 *Nation*, December 6, 1941, p. 570.

LIBERALS AND THE ROOSEVELT
FOREIGN POLICY : I—THE
CONTROVERSY OVER NEUTRALITY
TO THE CHICAGO BRIDGE SPEECH,
1935–1937

THE immense complexity and richness of the events of the six years prior to United States involvement in the Second World War, and articulate American liberalism's response to all of it, require a particular treatment. This subject is being approached from three different avenues, with a certain amount of unavoidable repetition: (1) the reportage of the actual events themselves, and the interpretation of their meaning; (2) the week-to-week reaction to the foreign policy statements and actions of the Roosevelt Administration; (3) the literary criticism and theoretical articles on the subject of war and peace, with stress on attitudinal matters instead of actual events and existing policies.

Substantial attention has already been devoted to the matter of liberal response to the foreign policy of the Roosevelt Administration and its relation to that of the Hoover Administration which it replaced, largely for the purpose of pinpointing specific attitudes and points of view. The affairs of the time were not slighted, but the facts indicated a minimum of attention to the subject. Liberals did not consider that the President made more than a single important statement on foreign affairs between his inaugural in 1933 and his message to Congress in January, 1936, with the exception of his views on the

London Economic Conference, in the summer of 1933. Until 1936 only his speech in San Diego, California, in October, 1935 was considered worthy of significant attention. Between that time and the Chicago Bridge Speech in the first week of October, 1937 there were five other public addresses which were held to be of major importance insofar as they were related to foreign relations of the United States: the previously mentioned message to Congress in January, 1936; his radio address in the second week of January, 1936; the speeches delivered at Chautauqua in August, 1936 and at the Pan-American Conference at Buenos Aires in December of that year; and his address delivered on Constitution Day, in September, 1937.

In addition to the President's statements, there were the three wars of this period—that between Italy and Ethiopia which broke out in October, 1935; the Spanish Civil War, in July, 1936, and the much-widened war between China and Japan, in July, 1937. On the policy level liberals were most concerned with the effects of the basic law of the early New Deal, the Johnson Debt Default Act, passed on April 13, 1934, and the three Neutrality Acts of August, 1935, February, 1936 and May, 1937. These speeches, events and laws formed the skeleton over which liberal attitudes toward American foreign policy was stretched in these three years, supplemented by copious material concerning relations with other nations, Japan in particular.

The Roosevelt Administration started the year 1935 with some residues of the previous two years still on the agenda and almost all American liberals in disagreement with it on almost every important issue, and suspicious to a marked degree, a feeling which had been incubated ever since the London Economic Conference in the summer of 1933. The conviction was implanted that the President had no interest or intention of engaging in a foreign program to their tastes. Paul Ward expressed liberal opinion on Roosevelt and foreign policy eloquently in the *Nation* in July of that year in a marathon attack on Cordell Hull and the State Department, "Hull House on Pennsylvania Avenue":¹

Although under the Roosevelt administration virtually nothing has been done to ease international tensions and much has been done to increase them, no rational man can assert with accuracy that the New Deal has been disappointing in its foreign relations. Hope must precede disappointment, and the rise of Roosevelt to power offered no grounds for hope of a change for the better in the foreign policy of the United States.

The only significant event down to that time in 1935 had been the rejection once more, by an overwhelmingly New Deal Senate this time, of American membership in the World Court, in January. The *New Republic* had expressed no particular unhappiness over this,

fully expecting the President to be lukewarm at best over it, and going along in a mechanical way only to fulfill a campaign promise in 1932. In its view, events in Europe were making the Court "even more negligible than in the past," anyway. The *Nation* on January 20 had said about as much, citing it as further evidence of a lessening of interest in world affairs in the United States which had set in after the London Conference fiasco, plus another example of the "nationalist" character of the New Deal.²

Of course, the aroma of neutrality was strong and heady throughout the country in these early months of 1935, arising particularly out of the Nye Committee hearings into World War One, and the pacifist and revisionist and anti-militarist literature and discussion, when even the *Reader's Digest* could be found publishing an abridged version of General Smedley D. Butler's *War Is a Racket* for national distribution. This was to produce a serious conflict of sorts later on for those liberals who became immersed in the Popular Front, with its deep commitment to saving Communist Russia from trouble with its hostile neighbors; American neutrality and hands-across-the-sea to the Soviet Union were not mutually complementing policies, they were to discover. But prior to the Italo-Ethiopian war in the autumn, it did not produce too great a conflict, even among the group identified with the *Nation*, the center of American liberal Popular Front foreign policy between 1935 and 1939.

"An overwhelming majority of the American people are firmly resolved to stay out of the next war—a war that has not yet begun and has not yet raised any concrete issues and difficulties," wrote *New Republic* editor George Soule in a long article "The Price of Neutrality" on August 21, 1935. This fully expressed the view also of an overwhelming majority of American liberals at the time. Soule was not inhibited in the slightest in assessing part of the blame for the worsened state of the world on his own country;³

We are guilty of much of the present trouble in Europe—our parts in the last war and its settlement, our tariffs, our loans, our attempt to collect uncollectible war debts, our boom and depression, were all powerful contributions . . . to the desperation that produced Fascism in Germany. If there is to be real insurance against war, we must not confine our attention to ways of staying out. We must learn, along with other peoples, how to avoid provoking it.

Something along this line seemed to be coming forth, or at least the groundswell of such a position was evident, in these times. The *New Republic* that spring had deemed it important to mention a joint resolution introduced in Congress by Representative Lewis Ludlow of Indiana, calling for a nation-wide referendum to validate

any Congressional declaration of war except in case of actual continental invasion, plus the power to take over industries and to compensate owners at not more than 4 per cent of the assessed value in the year previous to the war and takeover.⁴ These positions had wide following in the liberal view at that time, but the program which seemed most likely to be installed as policy at the moment was a comprehensive sort of American neutrality toward any war which might break out in some other part of the world. The Nye Committee and others had raised sensitivity toward the history of the Wilson Administration's tortured actions of 1914-1917 to an extreme pitch, and determination to make such a narrative incapable of being repeated lay behind the special energy being spent on neutrality.

LIBERALS APPLAUD THE INITIAL ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEUTRALITY POLICY

The *New Republic* well in advance of actual legislation had favored much of what went into the law eventually, even if in slightly modified form. In a December 26, 1934 editorial it had favored giving up all United States neutral rights in case of a new war, keeping all American ships out of the war zones, forbidding them to carry munitions or materials designated as contraband, and forbidding civilians to travel in war zones except at their own risk. At that time it had given a vote of "no confidence" in the new "aggressor" doctrine as a means of determining the purity and rascality of the foes in a new war, a project which both Maxim Litvinov and President Roosevelt had cheerfully leaped into, unmindful of the tortured wrestling with this word for so many years in the League of Nations, before the Russians had finally made their official entrance to membership. As the editorial pointed out,⁵

The chances are that any major war would split the League itself, that each side would call the other the aggressor, and that the United States would again be subject to the danger of being involved that resulted so disastrously in 1917. The way to stay out of war is to stay out, by announcing in advance that we will have nothing to do with it.

The following spring, on April 10, the *Nation* put on the record the main outlines of the rival liberal view toward neutrality, as congressional activity in forming this new policy began to quicken, under the stimulus of the Nye Committee hearings and recommendations. Part of it was attributed to general American desire to stay out of an impending European war which Germany's Adolf Hitler was accused

of instigating momentarily, even though he as yet had no army to speak of to fight with. The editorial "The Problem of Neutrality" protested that as far as the Nye Committee was concerned, "We sympathize with its determination to make sure we shall not be embroiled in another ruinous European war," admitting that the United States was "geographically invulnerable," and that the country "need never fight unless in defense of interests beyond our shores," and that if the bills the Committee was considering "had been on the statute books in 1914 we probably would not have entered the World War." ⁶

But the Popular Front enthusiasm and the revival of the dream of a new and more effective collective security system, largely the work of astute Communist propaganda, forced the *Nation*, a firm convert, to qualify its support of American neutrality seriously. The editors favored leaving the door open to United States participation in this loudly hailed but yet shadowy improvement on the League, if it would lead to "establishing a genuine peace system." The concession was made at this point however that the system which seemed to be building up was "a peace system of international sanctions," and it was unwise for the country to join it. The *Nation* held it prudent to seek to avoid becoming embroiled in either a European war or one "arising from Japan's penetration of Asia." Yet, it concluded that instead of a tight neutrality law, it "be made more flexible by giving the President discretion in determining whether we shall assist a belligerent." "What we oppose is a legalization of the principle that if we refuse to fight in a war we also must refuse to help one side," it concluded. In essence, it may be seen, the Popular Front liberals simply favored a position which made entry into war a slower process, and was based on the idea once more that participating in economic warfare against one side would not have adverse consequences even if the favored side began to lose; the message which the *Nation* had so often tried to teach with respect to America and the Allies between 1914 and 1917 apparently was not constructed of materials capable of withstanding the ardent combustibles of the Popular Front.

Late in the summer of 1935, as the war-clouds began to gather in Africa between Ethiopia and Italy, and with Congressional pressure for a neutrality law accelerating, the positions of the two liberal weeklies drew a little closer in favoring it, but still with a significant difference in their reasoning. The *New Republic* favored it, and suspected that neither the President nor the State Department did. "T.R.B." referred respectfully to Senate leaders Borah and Johnson pressing for its passage as "devoted pacifists," while suggesting that the State Department was hostile because its officials had "a bureaucratic instinct against measures that restrict its freedom in diplomatic negotiation." Editorially the journal was uneasy about FDR well into September, believing that he was for peace but that he was unwilling

to pay any of the economic price necessary to maintain real neutrality.⁷

When Senators Nye and Clark filed their resolution for neutrality legislation late in August, the *Nation* discussed it at great length in a long editorial titled "Must We Fight In the Next War?," torn badly still between neutrality and collective security. "The hope of remaining out of a major war once it has started is slight," it stated as a basic premise; "In the interdependent world today our greatest hope lies in averting war, not in avoiding participation." This implied, the *Nation* said, "willingness" to "accept our responsibility in creating and maintaining a world system of collective security," which in turn implied readiness "to enforce economic and financial sanctions against aggressors." Thus far it was dealing with orthodox Popular Front doctrine. However, in the practical situation of the moment, it appeared to the editors that collective security would break down completely in the Italo-Ethiopian affair about to explode, thus making it "essential that we make an effort to keep out of the conflict," and thus brought them around, with what appeared not too much enthusiasm, to supporting the resolution of the agenda; "If we are to achieve this, there is no way open save something closely approaching the Clark-Nye formula." And it favored immediate action on such "formula," to (1) prohibit the shipment of arms and ammunition to all belligerents in time of war; (2) outlaw all loans and credits to these belligerents; (3) restrict trade to them in goods and raw materials designated as contraband, and (4) limit travel by United States citizens in the war zones. The following week Oswald Garrison Villard devoted part of his weekly column to extravagant praise of Senators Nye and Bone for pushing for this neutrality legislation against the opposition of both FDR and State, while hailing Senator Wagner's efforts on behalf of social security; "I hope the liberals of the country will join me in giving unqualified praise to Senators Wagner, Bone and Nye for their recent services."⁸

The frosty attitude toward the State Department concerning neutrality was an extension of a sustained unfriendliness which had been on for some time. Ward in his long fulmination against Hull and the Department in July had declared that "Roosevelt might just as well have hung from the White House portico a banner saying 'No foreign relations wanted' " when he appointed the Tennessean to this post. He had also dismissed the entire Department's career service as a "careerist clique," blamed Hull for not clearing them all off the public payroll, and for not establishing "A New Deal in Our Foreign Office." In excoriating equally Sumner Welles, Jefferson Caffrey, Wilbur J. Carr, Francis B. Sayre, Norman Davis and Hugh Gibson, Ward had handed bouquets for the appointment only of William C.

Bullitt and William E. Dodd, especially the former, credited with doing the "groundwork for Russian recognition."⁹

This statement in a way explained part of the animosity toward the Department further, for a running conflict had been going on for months. In July the *Nation* had bitterly condemned the continued interpretation of the Johnson Act as a barrier to extension of loans or credits to the Soviet Union by banks or industrial organizations, warning that we were voluntarily excluding ourselves from the "one expanding foreign market" in Europe.¹⁰ But the event which set off the major liberal press fulmination against Hull was the occasion of his strong protest note to the Soviet Union threatening "most serious consequences" unless the Third International was induced to refrain from promoting Communist propaganda in the United States. On September 4 the *New Republic* sniffed at the charges and commented haughtily, "Mr. Hull has succeeded in making this country look silly."¹¹ The following week the *Nation* defended the Russians of the charges and accepted their position without reservation that the Comintern was an "international agency" for which the Soviet "could assume no responsibility," and was not engaged in activities redounding to the welfare of Russia, anyway. Blaming American action as resentment for a big drop in Soviet purchases due again to the Johnson Act, the editorial insisted the United States needed the USSR as a friend, insisted our recognition in 1933 had postponed a Japanese attack on both countries for "several years," and recited again the Popular Front position on Russia's indispensability in the crisis starting to expand in Europe:¹²

Since American recognition the Soviet Union has joined the League of Nations and is generally recognized as the bulwark of peace on the Continent. If the United States is to throw its forces with the League in a last minute attempt to prevent the Italo-Ethiopian crisis from developing into a world conflagration, it needs the undivided and sympathetic support of the Soviets. Nothing could be more unfortunate than for the Administration to allow irrelevant domestic political issues to divert it from a courageous effort to prevent this catastrophe.

All the varied lines of American foreign policy seemed to be converging on the Russian Communist junction-point, but the interesting thing here was that the State Department by its hostility to Congressional neutrality law efforts, and its Russian policy, seemed to be responsible for interfering with neutrality and collective security interventionism simultaneously; the *Nation* was working both sides of the street.

Roosevelt's proclamation of American neutrality and the clapping on of an arms embargo on October 5, 1935 as hostilities between Italy

and Ethiopia began received approval of both weekly liberal editorial stands. The action overrode the *Nation's* collective security preferences momentarily, and in commendation it declared on October 16, "In promptly recognizing that war is war no matter what the aggressor chooses to call it, the President has established a useful precedent," since, in its view, "Under modern conditions the declaration of war has become archaic, and wars are called police action."¹³

The *New Republic*, going a little deeper into the subject, professed to be mystified by what appeared to be FDR's sudden change of heart since September, when it seemed to be certain that he would do all he could to circumvent or frustrate any neutrality stand. But they also acted as if a new dawn had broken when the President acted to establish the embargo on arms, as well as to issue a warning to Americans not to take passage on ships of belligerents except at their own risk. The October 16 editorial described the position taken as "a decisive step toward keeping the USA out of war," and wholly approved; "To isolate ourselves from any and all nations engaged in war is a terribly difficult and expensive business, but it is less difficult and expensive than the alternative, which is almost certainly ultimate participation."¹⁴

But unqualified approval of policy statements was not forthcoming; "T.R.B." thought the State Department had engaged in too much righteous verbiage and had committed itself psychologically behind the position of the British and others who immediately assumed an anti-Italian position. He described the New Deal foreign policy as "still-born," and believed that Secretary Hull and the State Department officials had "committed themselves to the belief that the present crisis is entirely due to the unaccountable personal wickedness of Mussolini;"¹⁵

The luxuriant flattery that has come from London as a result of the American pronouncements recalling the Kellogg-Briand Pact has delighted Mr. Hull. The charge that he is transforming this country into a sort of ladies' auxiliary of British imperialism in its contest with Italo-French imperialism—against the clear intent of Congress that we should stay out of all European controversies—would be rejected by him with scorn. He is an aged, valorous knight, riding forth to rescue the maiden Peace.

And to give the subject emphasis, the *New Republic* breathed a sigh of relief in its editorial of October 23, "it was a godsend that the President and the State Department did not get their way and obtain authority to discriminate between aggressor and victim."¹⁶

When Roosevelt spoke at San Diego not long after the African war was on, promising that the United States "should and must remain

unentangled and free" of foreign wars, the *Nation* came forth with a rousing second; "Never has President Roosevelt more directly expressed the will of the American people," it enthused. Although giving vent to expressions of "shock" and "indignation" at the Italian action, it countered,¹⁷

But the experience of one war fought for what we believed to be the highest of idealistic principles has convinced us, rightly or wrongly, that the harm resulting from Il Duce's mad adventure will be slight compared to the havoc that would be wrought by another world conflict. Whatever may happen, we are determined that American youth shall not again be sacrificed to the greed of munitions makers and war profiteers.

Fearful that "the same forces which drew us eventually into the World War" were again at work, it took comfort in the fact that there was some protection now; "Our lone safeguard is the Neutrality Act which was jammed through Congress in its closing hours," though it also expressed gratitude for the Johnson Act as well in this connection, whatever source of discomfort it had been in the issue of Russian trade relations. There was *New Republic* support for these fears and suspicions as well. "T.R.B." 's column on October 23 was headed, "Business Ogles the War Boom," and discussed at length the opposition of some businessmen to neutrality. John T. Flynn also vigorously supported neutrality, and bluntly reproached the *New York Times* for its remarks about the five million dollars lost by traders as a result of the country's "New Neutrality." Chided Flynn,

We might remind the *Times* that while we may have lost \$5 million of trade by our "new neutrality," we lost \$2 billion by our "old neutrality" in the last war in our dealings with Italy alone. Italy still owes that money. What good did that trade do either ourselves or Italy?

But a solid residue of suspicion remained as a consequence of the strong feelings aroused by the neutrality law debate as to just how devoted to neutrality Roosevelt and Hull really were. Villard was not very trusting at all:¹⁸

I do not lay so much stress upon the President's declaration that the United States will not be drawn into a war, because, after all, he is at bottom a politician, and he would yield to the bankers and public clamor and take the advice of a muddle-headed and incompetent old gentleman like Colonel House as readily as did Wilson.

Jonathan Mitchell had a view not far from this. His "Where Roosevelt Stands Today" in the *New Republic* on November 13 suggested that FDR was making political capital out of the crisis:¹⁹

Last summer Mr. Roosevelt flatly refused to agree to legislation imposing a stringent form of neutrality on this country, which was advocated by the Nye Munitions Committee. Since the outbreak of the Italo-Ethiopian war, however, he has burglarized the Nye Committee's program very efficiently, and there are many signs that he has a keen sense of its future campaign value.

Mitchell insisted the President was going to set himself up as the symbol of peace and his Republican opponents as the symbol of war, which he thought would win him the 1936 election hands down, "even though Mr. Roosevelt is the most fervent big-navy man ever to be President."

Nor was there any lack of scrutiny of Hull's actions and declarations. The *New Republic* categorically rejected his argument that the executive branch should be allowed to decide neutrality at its discretion. It was convinced that the absence of a mandatory neutrality program had led the country into the war of 1914, and that failure to adopt one now would "greatly increase the danger of being drawn into another one." "T.R.B." also was in full sympathy with keeping the neutrality policy in the hands of Congress exclusively. On November 6 he suggested, and cautioned as well,²⁰

If the moment arrives when that policy of neutrality is abandoned, then let the decision be made by Congress—the representatives of the American people. Let us not put ourselves at the mercy of a President who can always bring us into war a little at a time by ineptness, indecision, submission to powerful trade groups.

Villard was quite sure this grip would be maintained by the legislative branch; "the spirit of Congress fills me with amazement and joy," he called in delight in his column of October 23, upon reviewing the course of neutrality thus far.

THE ITALO-ETHIOPIAN WAR TOUCHES OFF THE NEUTRALITY VERSUS SANCTIONS DEBATE

It did not take long before Communist-oriented Popular Front collective security gestures collided head-on with neutrality among American liberals. The main objective of the former, the drive for the imposition of economic warfare on Italy via the stratagem of "sanctions," deprivation of several seriously-important raw materials, racked the liberal press with a serious controversy which was suspended only by the decisive Italian victory in Africa in the spring of 1936.

The most deeply involved were the group associated with the *Nation*. Hardly having concluded handing out tributes for the adoption of a position of neutrality toward this conflict, on November 13, 1935 the editorial "Sanctions Under Neutrality" announced an about face; "The *Nation* has advocated the abandonment of neutrality, and direct action by the United States [against Italy] as a violator of the Kellogg Pact," it tersely reported. It expressed great irritation with the British government's individual actions of sending its fleet to the Mediterranean and engaging so heartily in the world rearmament boom as well, suggesting that a general war was unavoidable unless "an effective system of sanctions" were developed, "machinery" put into existence "to correct some of the more glaring injustices perpetrated by the Treaty of Versailles, "an admission that the origins of the European troubles were not entirely one-sided.²¹ But its key policy was sanctions. On November 20 it admitted editorially that "sanctions are economic warfare, which like all warfare costs heavily,"²² but insisted that their cost would be much less than the military form, and a week later, as an interim suggestion for American action it proposed,²³

it would be immediately practicable, though not wise as a permanent policy, to define cotton, oil, and other essential materials being sent to Italy as "implements" of war. And rather than see the United States wreck the chance of sanctions being effective we favor this policy, and believe that most Americans, if they understand that the outlawing of nationalist wars is at stake, will agree.

On an intellectual level the pro and con positions on sanctions had already been thoroughly aired in the *Nation* for some time, in the form of a private debate between Raymond Gram Swing, an editor, who favored them, and Dorothy Detzer, one of the best-known figures in the American pacifist movement, in opposition, through the last seven months of 1935. So there was little more left to say on the subject when it came around to an actual event where the theory of sanctions presented an opportunity for experimentation. Even Villard, no orthodox collective security advocate, followed the general line of preventing American war materials from reaching the belligerents in a new war as the most effective manner of guaranteeing American abstention, as his column of November 27 amply testified:²⁴

I believe—and I am encouraged in this belief by the reactions of not less than 125 audiences I have addressed on this and cognate subjects during the last two years—that the country wants a real neutrality in the next war which will keep us out of it, which means the prevention of any Americans profiting by such a struggle or taking sides in it in a business

way. I still think that the merchandising of war materials is a horrible business, to be outlawed and taken over by the government at the first moment possible.

At no time did this argument ever discuss the possibility that governments with arms factories and strategic raw materials stockpiles might engage in war trade with belligerents just as cheerfully as citizens of a given state. And a good example existed at this moment; for although the *Nation* could hardly condemn the shipment of petroleum products by American firms to Italy during the Ethiopian war strongly enough,²⁵ it refused to pay any attention to the repeated stories of simultaneous shipments of oil to Italy by Communist Russia until well after the war was over, by Villard's own shame-faced admission, as we have seen in discussing the eventual liberal disillusion with the Soviet in 1939.

The *New Republic* refused to subscribe to the collective security-sanctions approach, and held that self-protection and advancing peace in Europe were both irrelevant arguments as reason for supporting it. In its editorial opinion, in backing such a policy they would not be sure whether they would be "supporting the Good Samaritan or the brigands":²⁶

The width of the Atlantic Ocean is a fact that the advocates of collective action seem constantly to ignore. As far as Europe is concerned, it is not true that this country has a choice between supporting, or refusing to support, efforts for collective peace. In practice, the only choice ever open to us is to support, or refuse to support, one group of European nations against another group. . . . We have not the power to bring about the economic and political reorganization of Europe, even if we had the will to do so.

This editorial hoped that the Congress would adopt a "permanent policy" of "strict neutrality" when it met again in February, 1936, an act which would pledge the United States "to do nothing to hinder Europe in settling its own conflicts."

Bruce Bliven a week later expressed the confidence that there was little chance of the collective security-sanctions argument succeeding in this country, since he was convinced that the tide was still running strong in the land against joining the League of Nations or participating in any of its programs, and running in favor of neutrality not only for the United States but for every country that could adopt it, "on the basis that every nation that can be kept out of any war is so much gained for the future of all mankind." He strongly urged the pacifists of the country to pressure for rewriting the neutrality act to include more stringent provisions guaranteeing American aloofness.²⁷

By far the most active in the attack on the very idea of American neutrality and in the advancement of the collective security-sanctions idea in the closing months of 1935 and through the spring of 1936 was Frederick L. Schuman, who used both the columns of the *New Republic* and the book review medium of the *Nation* to propagate the views of the "new League," as it slowly began to take on the trappings of a Communist front. Schuman protested that the League by the end of 1935 had "become a grand alliance of liberalism and Communism for mutual defense against Fascism," and he pleaded for American alignment with France, Britain and the Soviet Union, on the grounds that their interests were "identical." The *New Republic* subjected him to a long column-and-a-half editorial chiding on Christmas Day, 1935, insisting that "the deep popular instinct in this country to stay out of the mess is one of the fundamental forces in the situation," and warned that "Liberals and other friends of peace can oppose it only at the peril of their cause." It provoked Schuman into a guilt-by-association charge better associated with the *New Masses* in those days, "I never expected to see the *New Republic* in the same bed with Father [Charles] Coughlin, the Hearst Press, the oil merchants, the Croix de Feu and all the other Fascist and quasi-Fascist elements throughout the world which are attempting to hamstring League sanctions against Italy." ²⁸

Schuman's war of words on the *New Republic* and neutrality broke out several other times before the African war ended. There were notable outbursts in February and April of 1936, drawing both editorial badgering and a number of toweringly angry letters to the editors, some of which were published. The *New Republic* asked Schuman, who had such high faith in the ability of sanctions to force Mussolini to return in defeat from Africa, what would happen if sanctions did not succeed in this objective; "The threat of sanctions is nothing but a mild bluff unless those who impose sanctions are ready to back them up, if they lead to forcible resistance by military and naval force." This was the crux of the issue, and no sanctions enthusiast even answered this question at any time in the pre-World War Two period. The guessing on the potency of an oil embargo bringing Mussolini's regime down never calculated on his being stung into seeking such supplies wherever he could get them rather than capitulating. The core of sanctions at all times was the theory that "the-enemy-is-a-coward." The *New Republic* wasted few words on Schuman the second time around; they retorted, "League sanctions are not a road to peace, but to war against the disturbers of peace," and announced that it would have greater respect for Schuman's opinions and those who believed the same "if they would come out frankly for a military alliance, directed against aggression by Italy, Germany and Japan." ²⁹

The publication of *Can We Be Neutral?* by Allen W. Dulles and Hamilton Fish Armstrong early in 1936, one of the very earliest books which frankly looked forward to an end to all talk of non-involvement in wars for the United States and argued for an interventionism for this country on more patrician than Marxian grounds, which latter most of the collective security arguments of the time were based upon, was leaped upon as a perfectly superb vehicle to help propel the sanctions-collective security approach. Schuman, although presumably finding the social philosophy of the authors quite loathsome, reviewed the book for the *Nation* on February 12 as "the most lucid and comprehensive analysis of the present dilemma of American foreign policy," a preparatory statement to a furious attack on the new and pending neutrality legislation of that very month, "incredibly supported by certain isolationist 'liberals,'" as "one part lunacy, one part stupidity, and one part criminal ignorance of diplomatic and economic realities."

Schuman was supported in his flaming hate of neutrality by Vera Micheles Dean, who published a comprehensive attack on its assumptions and entire idea in the *Nation* two weeks later, reflecting the same intense belief in the bluffing powers of collective security.³⁰ Editorially the *Nation* stood on the side of both and also Dulles and Armstrong, rejecting in an editorial on February 5 the idea of a stiff neutrality policy for the future, as the new bill now before Congress promised to be.³¹ It insisted in still another editorial comment a week later, "Can We Be Neutral?," that the right to continue to be indignant at the behavior of others abroad should be maintained, and saw nothing but evil in an attempt at "complete impartiality" in a future war. Its main proviso was an amendment giving the President "discretionary power to raise the embargo on shipments to countries attacked in violation of the Kellogg Pact."³²

Late in January the *Nation* had published Walter Millis' "What Does Neutrality Mean?," a fairly temperate estimate of the difficulties of writing an iron-clad neutrality act good for all possible eventualities. Millis, though favoring a more "flexible instrument for the control of our foreign trade in war time," thought the debate on the subject a very worthwhile thing, and broke quite cleanly with the editors and Schuman on the subject of the merits of the Dulles-Armstrong book, which he thought had just proved that in the cases the two authors cited they personally "would not wish to be neutral," but had not proved that American neutrality would be impossible.³³

The *New Republic* brought up Charles A. Beard as its heavy artillery in support of neutrality legislation even tighter than that being considered. His pungent comments in two meaty pieces indicated

that he was willing to take his chances with neutrality, after remembering what had happened before. Said Beard,³⁴

It is a matter of calculating probabilities. We tried once to right European wrongs, to make the world safe for democracy. Even in the rosiest view the experiment was not a great success. Mandatory neutrality may be no better, for aught anyone actually knows. But we nearly burnt our house down with one experiment, so it seems not wholly irrational to try another line. By staying entirely out of it we shall not be loved any less than we are now, if love be the highest good.

And in a cutting comment on the "sale" of goods to belligerents, remembering the war debts, Beard suggested, "I prefer to give the goods to starving Americans rather than to fighting Europeans."³⁵

Schuman continued to deliver harsh blows at neutrality even after the passage of the newest Neutrality act, one of his most violent occurring in the *Nation* early in April, while reviewing the four-volume study, *Neutrality*, issued by the Columbia University Press. He denounced Beard and other "liberal isolationists" elaborately and saved special abuse for the Administration for its abandonment of the collective security ideas in the Versailles Treaty, the Briand-Kellogg Pact and the Stimson Doctrine.³⁶ But the argument had lost some of its savor because the hope of halting Mussolini's troops by way of collective security sanctions had about been dissipated at this moment and victory for Il Duce was just around the corner. The first stage of the battle over American neutrality had been settled by the Congress in favor of the non-involvement contingent of American liberals and incidentally the vast majority of United States citizens.

THE GROWING UNEASINESS BETWEEN THE SECOND NEUTRALITY ACT AND THE BUENOS AIRES SPEECH

Still another aspect of the neutrality-sanctions-collective security complex existed in addition to the debate on the subject on the theoretical level. This involved its relationship to the practical politics of the moment and in particular the likely views and actions of the Administration and the President. And it directly bore upon the rearmament impulse which was gaining momentum by the month despite criticism and the Nye Committee.

The *Nation*, with its new burst of enthusiasm for the League of Nations after the Soviet Union became a member, favored collective security, League sanctions actions and cooperation with Russia, which guaranteed opposition to neutrality for the United States and to resist-

ance to an independent arms buildup. In view of its enthusiastic acceptance of the separate treaties of "mutual assistance" between the Communists and both France and Czechoslovakia, there was no ethical opposition to any number of separate agreements between any number of other states and Russia, since the position taken was that since the Communists were for collective security, all alliances they might make were "drawn as to be within the framework of the League" and "intended to supplement the Covenant." The unfriendliness of the *Nation's* approach to the other nations of Europe and its admission of the invulnerability of the United States through territorial remoteness left nobody else but Red Russia to be the beneficiary of this program of collective security. No provision it stood for in 1936 was calculated to strengthen the United States as an independent force.

As far as the pending neutrality legislation at the start of that year was concerned the *Nation* had two positions: it deeply opposed it on ideological grounds, but was also realistic enough to recognize, as admitted editorially on January 8, "the strong isolationist sentiment which exists throughout our country."³⁷ This forced it to support a second-best, consolation-type of program, "neutrality legislation that is at least not inconsistent with the world-wide struggle for collective security." No part of the Comintern could have expected to exceed the pragmatism of this approach.

The *Nation* did not think Roosevelt out of harmony with collective security views in the last analysis. It praised his radio speech of the second week of January with great vigor, calling it "his first significant utterance" on the international situation "since his ill-starred incursion into the London Conference in the mid-July days of 1933." Granting that he may have been trying "to bolster his failing prestige in domestic affairs by vigorous leadership in foreign affairs," it took much comfort in his obvious effort "to capitalize on the widespread anti-war and anti-Fascist sentiment in the country." This it thought was proved, else "he would not so studiously have avoided mention of Soviet Russia," and "That he did so avoid it is a tribute to his good sense, and proof of his intent to single out the Fascist dictators as the imperialist war-makers."³⁸

The *New Republic* did not choose to make an issue out of this statement, but it obviously did not share these sentiments. This became evident when it commented with much asperity on the President's message to Congress, in which it was noted that he had attacked the Fascist and National Socialist states with "extraordinary truculence." This indication of the leaning of the President's views on the foreign situation and the rise of pro-war talk detected among persons "ordinarily reckoned in the pacifist ranks" together were summed up as an ominous development.

But in the matter of neutrality legislation the editorial position of the two journals was somewhat closer. Both wanted as few aspects of the question left to Presidential discretion as possible, and preferred to have all provisions incorporated into permanent legislation, the *Nation* in particular singling out the matter of whether private citizens might conduct business with belligerents and expect the protection of the government at the same time. The *Nation* wanted the law to specify that such business be transacted at the citizen's risk, and that armed merchant vessels be excluded from United States ports as well.³⁹

Throughout the month of January the *New Republic* documented the steady success of the forces pushing for a permanent neutrality policy under Congressional auspices and the slow evaporation of the provisions heretofore advanced by Hull and the President as the basis for neutrality legislation, which had incorporated the idea of the executive department enjoying wide discretionary powers. On January 22 it reported with much satisfaction,⁴⁰

The Nye-Clark group is seeking in general to have all these actions removed from the President's discretion and made mandatory or referred back to the Congress for immediate action. In this we believe the Senators are wholly right and the President and Mr. Hull are wholly wrong. The responsibility for making decisions that may mean peace or war is too big for any one man.

It had already snorted at the suggestion from the executive side that the President be given the discretion to remove embargoes on any nations "deemed the victims of aggression in violation of the Pact of Paris" (Kellogg-Briand Pact) by countering, "does anybody in the world fail to realize by now that no nation, including the United States, ever took it seriously for a moment, or has 'renounced war as an instrument of national policy' "?⁴¹

"T.R.B." was convinced that mandatory neutrality legislation was assured, and suspected that perhaps there was a political angle involved, in that Senators Nye, Bone and Clark and Representative Maverick would be transformed "from potentially embarrassing critics into temporarily enthusiastic supporters." And John T. Flynn added his comment in support of Congressional control over neutrality policy; "it should not be put into the hands of so unstable a man as Mr. Roosevelt."⁴²

The *Nation* had expected Roosevelt to stick to some portions of his demands on the neutrality issue and was quite alarmed when the capitulation took place, resulting in the continuation of the existing law to May 1, 1937, plus the ban on loans and credits to warring powers. Villard called this move "a first-class political blunder for the

White House,"⁴³ and on March 11, 1936 a two-column editorial, "Three Years of Roosevelt," arraigned him as the "master of the technique of the split personality" and condemned him for "his abandonment of the chance to achieve a vigorous peace policy," by which was obviously meant a pro-collective-security war policy. The *New Republic* in a twenty-page special supplement in June, "Balance Sheet of the New Deal," was no more commendatory. Two thirds of the space devoted to the New Deal's foreign policy was spent in unfriendly assay of the arms buildup, the charge of provocation of Japan and the botching of neutrality provisions.⁴⁴

The actions of the President through the spring and summer produced a series of shocks, surprises and bewilderments among a large part of the liberals as well, complicated by the fact that by becoming a candidate for reelection by mixing foreign and domestic policy, analysis was made that much harder. The *New Republic* reacted to the news in April that a Pan-American conference was being projected, to convene in Argentina, by agreeing with critics that FDR's apparent zeal to get a re-definition of neutral rights in wartime seemed to be a fishing expedition "for the pacifist vote in next autumn's election," since "the number of Americans opposed to war is amazingly large," and the Administration having done nothing thus far to give them cause to rejoice, this seemed to be the answer to this need. But it suggested that if this was the intent of the President, "we doubt whether it will succeed:"⁴⁵

The most important aspect of American foreign policy has to do with Japan. We are now spending \$1,100,000,000 annually in preparation for a war in which Japan is our only conceivable opponent. The American pacifists are too heavily conscious of this to be put off with talk about helping peace with Latin America, where we were unlikely to go to war in any case.

Late in June the *Nation* started up angrily upon the lifting of the embargo on Italy with the comment, "The President could scarcely have chosen a more unfortunate moment to discover that the war between Italy and Ethiopia is over," adding as an additional unpalatable gesture a double-barbed remark, "the fact that the United States was the first to acknowledge Italy's conquest gives rise to at least the suspicion that we are deliberately aiding Britain in its efforts to wreck collective security."⁴⁶

And with the presidential campaign on, it appeared as if the *New Republic's* suspicion that Roosevelt was seeking to impress the anti-war voter was exceedingly astute, when he delivered his famous speech at Chautauqua, N.Y., in August. With the pro-Communist and collective security-sanctions liberal press crying for a strong stand

against the Fascists, with Hitler in the Rhineland, Mussolini triumphant in Africa, and Japan threatening the Communist satellites in Mongolia, and all other indications pointing to a situation calling for "quarantining the aggressors," the President instead delivered himself of an address in which he proclaimed the nation's intention to "shun political commitments which might entangle us in foreign wars," as well as the determination to "avoid connection with the political activities of the League of Nations." The *New Masses* responded with a contemptuous one-and-a-half column editorial, "He Hates War."⁴⁷

Liberals who manned the non-interventionist side did not take the bait that FDR had emerged as their champion, despite the address. Villard, in the *Nation* on September 19, praising the strong anti-war and pro-peace content of both the President's speech and that by Hull before the International Power Conference, expressed great uneasiness over the fact that the President had not repudiated the militaristic sentiments being simultaneously expressed by Secretary of War Woodring and high ranking naval and army officers. Villard also brought up two additional unpleasant matters, the first being the charge that the Administration was "preparing for war as never before in the ridiculous belief that preparedness means safety from war," the second being a comment on an unstressed aspect of the Chautauqua speech; Roosevelt declared there, he pointed out, "that in the last analysis it made no difference what laws were written to keep us out of war if the President and Secretary of State did not stand fast against our going to war when the emergency came."⁴⁸

John T. Flynn had expressed very similar sentiments three days before in the *New Republic*. Describing Roosevelt as "a lover of peace who is also a lover of battleships," he related the consequences accordingly; "To the pacifists he donated a truly magnificent oration on peace; to the jingoes he gives the far more substantial contribution of armaments." Nor did anyone seem to be indisposed by the formula:⁴⁹

But in any case everybody seems to be happy. The pacifists liked the speech; the warriors like the ships and guns. Truly this is an unfailing technique. You do not have to give the liberals bread or even cake. "Let 'em eat speeches" might well be said of them.

The *Nation* trained its major fire the first week of September on the President on another issue, when he suggested the prototype of what has since become known as a "summit conference" to iron out the conflicts among the major powers, which would have consisted of Stalin, Hitler, Mussolini, King Edward and himself. "It's a Pipe

Dream, Mr. President," cawed the editorial on September 5, and it promptly went into the reasons why the *Nation* thought so:⁵⁰

The real difficulty with Mr. Roosevelt's plan is not that it is too daring but that it is too disembodied. Its premise—that the causes and the solutions of international strife are personal—is only a half truth and the lesser half. It gets nowhere at the sources of war—the collision of expanding nationalisms, the vendetta of the hungry and the sated nations in a world of unequal imperialisms, the desperate need when the masses do not have bread of giving them war as circuses, the deepening clash between Fascist and democratic nations. These things don't get ironed out at a conference table, no matter how impressive are the eminences gathered at it.

But by this time the election campaign was in full swing, and diversion by internal politics cut down sharply on attention to the President and foreign policy, although there was a thread of this topic that ran through the entire period from renomination to reelection, as will be seen.

FOREIGN POLICY NOTE-TAKING DURING THE 1936 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

The liberal press was as glum over the national nominating conventions of the major parties in 1936 as in 1932. Villard, reporting on the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia in the *Nation* on the Fourth of July, announced in sepulchral tones, "I have just come from the worst political convention I have ever attended, except perhaps that of 1924 in Madison Square Garden." His comment on the foreign policy side of the platform partly suggested the cause for his gloom; "especially in the matter of peace and war it gives me no assurance whatever that the President, if reelected, will not continue to militarize this country at breakneck speed and thereby open up an easy road for Fascism."⁵¹

The *New Republic* had choice words of opprobrium for Landon and his vice-presidential partner, Colonel Frank Knox of Chicago, who was identified as the "ultra-conservative publisher of the Chicago *Daily News* and former Hearst employee," and, what was worse, shared "most of the most undesirable views of that gentleman." But its comments on the foreign policy planks of both parties were anything but cheerful. "There is little more assurance that the Democrats will keep us out of war than that the Republicans will," it grieved editorially on July 8. Noting that the Democratic platform supported the Kellogg Pact, neutrality and "taking the profit out of

war," it pointed out that the "permanent neutrality legislation proposed by the progressives in the last Congress was not passed," and although there were no inferences of getting involved in collective security schemes, the editors were still troubled by the actualities of the day; "Never in history have all the nations, including the United States, been arming at such a furious pace."⁵² What was said in political platforms seemed secondary in importance.

When the *Nation* on July 18 published in a special section the political platforms of the six parties on the ballot, only that of the Communist Party coincided with its editorial stand on foreign affairs in the matters of imperialism and war, international organization, neutrality, preparedness and munitions.⁵³ And it appeared sure at this moment that both editorial positions would follow 1932 and recommend to American liberals that they once more vote for the Socialist or Communist candidates. But in the summer and early fall a gradual defensive veering toward Roosevelt began among liberals which became a landslide a few weeks before the election. The sharp decline of interest in Thomas and Browder was due mostly to internal political circumstances, partly to counteract what was interpreted as venomous character assassination of FDR, a substantial contingent becoming incensed when he was attacked for Communist sympathies and related friendships. Most liberals forgot at once the invective which they themselves had heaped on him for other reasons, as well as the attacks they had conducted against Harding, Coolidge and Hoover, in addition to what was being said currently about Landon.⁵⁴ As usual, a value clash was defined as a struggle between absolutes. But the foreign policy question was rooted out of the minds of all except the toughest and most tenacious.

Still, there was no great hope among liberals for much of anything from the Democratic party. The strategy seemed to be one of preserving Roosevelt for the leadership of a fundamentally changed party picture in 1940, probably best expressed in the *New Republic* editorial of September 23, 1936, "The Editor's Choice"; "To vote for Labor or Socialist candidates in local, state and congressional elections and for President Roosevelt nationally, will, most of the editors believe, be the clearest possible demonstration of the simultaneous demands for a national labor party in 1940."⁵⁵ But most of the defense of the New Deal was largely due to sensitivity to criticism of its domestic policy still; even the most favorably inclined tended to have vague misgivings on the issue of foreign affairs, with a tendency to give Roosevelt just a shade of advantage. As the *New Republic* editors had put it, Roosevelt was opposed to American participation in a war, and, "Though his record is not wholly satisfactory in the matter of neutrality legislation, he would probably resist business and financial pressure for dealings with belligerents more strongly than

his chief opponent.”⁵⁶ Events were to point up that there were many other forms of pressure, including the desire for sustained tenure, but such was not likely to be even intimated in the atmosphere of 1936.

In September and early October the *New Republic* polled a substantial list of the better known figures in American liberalism as to whom they intended to vote for, all but six indicating they would vote for Roosevelt. Response to this poll was mixed, but John Haynes Holmes was almost beside himself with horror at the overwhelming choice of FDR, although he was even more repelled by the reasons which were cited for following him into another term. Wrote Holmes to the *New Republic* on November 4,⁵⁷

I want to say that, in all my experience, I have seldom seen an exhibition quite so disillusioning as this. If we are looking for evidences of the bankruptcy of liberalism, of the collapse of contemporary middle class intellectualism, here it is.

Professing to see scarcely a trace of principle or ideal in their reasons, only a tendency to follow the path of expediency, and to “grope and stumble” along in the hope things might improve, the eminent figure in the conscience of liberalism noted as a characteristic of them all, “these men are themselves pathetically eager only to follow,” and he chided the editors sternly; “You did a bad turn for us all when you asked these liberals to come down from their ivory tower and state the faith that is in them.”

Few references were made to foreign affairs and policy at all in these many replies to the editors, but that from the renowned pacifist Frederick J. Libby confirmed early liberal suspicions as to the intent of the Chautauqua speech. In a commentary published on October 14 devoted largely to foreign policy as a determinant in the 1936 election, listing all the things which he said should have kept him from considering FDR, Libby concluded by saying he was going to vote for him anyway, because Landon was an even bigger question mark; it appeared as if the Chautauqua speech was the deciding factor:⁵⁸

President Roosevelt was specific in his Chautauqua speech and while he extended the Democratic plank on national defense dangerously to include the defense of our “neighborhood,” thus justifying an unlimited navy, and, as in the past, gave scant treatment to international justice with apparent support of the status quo, nevertheless the speech was on the whole a strong bid for the “peace vote.” The liberal advisers of Governor Landon have been urging him to do likewise. His platform does not even mention neutrality . . . nor has he used the word in any of his speeches or statements. . . . Yet his specific plans for keeping us out of war are more important than any domestic issue; for if our government

blunders into war the whole domestic program will obviously be wrecked. . . . I am profoundly dissatisfied with President Roosevelt's naval program and regard our policy towards Japan of pressure diplomacy as either dangerous or futile, and probably both.

Some of the other older figures in the wary segment of liberals were not willing to make concessions as graciously as Libby. On October 10, Villard announced in his *Nation* column that he was voting for Norman Thomas, on foreign policy grounds alone; "I could not conscientiously vote for an Administration which has so militarized the country," he protested; "I feel that Mr. Roosevelt, unwittingly, if you please, despite his great peace speech at Chautauqua, has set us on the road to war." And on November 4, Flynn announced in his *New Republic* column, "I am not a Socialist. But I shall vote for Norman Thomas." Comparing the two candidates of the major parties, Flynn conceded Roosevelt was "a little bit more liberal than Mr. Landon," then countering, "But I think he is also more unstable and less to be trusted," then throwing the anchor in atop the torpedoed pair with the conclusion, "I would have nothing to do with the selection of either."⁵⁹

On November 11, 1936 the *New Republic* exulted over Roosevelt's massive victory, in contrast to its tight-lipped attitude in 1932, and in a first-page editorial speculated over the possibility of the Republican Party going the way of the Whig Party in the pre-Civil War era,⁶⁰ a premature funeral message which was reworked for the *Nation* by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., five years later, as a prediction of things to come if the GOP did not terminate its opposition to Roosevelt on foreign policy grounds. As to the direction things were likely to take now, two grim comments in both liberal weeklies in the first week of January, 1937 had pregnant suggestions. On the 6th the sobered *New Republic* ran a bleak paragraph announcing, "Washington correspondents report that an alarmingly large number of those 'bright young men' who have done the real thinking behind most of the New Deal legislation are leaving the government service for various reasons, including the belief that Mr. Roosevelt intends to do nothing of importance in the way of reform from now on."⁶¹ Four days earlier, Paul Ward gave vent to one of his characteristically pungent commentaries in his Washington column report to the *Nation* describing the other side of the new political coin; "The Great Peacemaker—who is about to have the most militaristic inaugural Washington has seen since the war years—also seems ready to press for a softening of the neutrality bill to the extent of demanding for himself broader discretionary powers in picking our next war."⁶²

THE LIBERALS RETURN TO THE BARRICADES
ON THE NEUTRALITY QUESTION

The honeymoon of the *New Republic* with the reelected Roosevelt ended the week it began. The uneasiness and rumblings of suspicion about foreign policy and especially neutrality intentions were back on the record in the Armistice Day issue. In a long editorial which dwelled for a time on the previous world war and speculated on the possibility of a new one, it declared,⁶³

There is no question that an overwhelming majority of the President's supporters, not to say of the whole population, wants to stay out of war if it comes. Is the Administration prepared to effectuate this aim with practical measures? Does it have a feasible program of neutrality legislation that would keep us from being involved? . . . Is the President ready to create an economy of peace that would offset the illusory attractions of the economy of war?

A serious reservation seemed to be present that any of these questions could be answered affirmatively.

Again on November 25 an editorial mulled over the President's pronouncements on peace, and revealed that policy had not drifted away from neutrality and non-involvement a particle:⁶⁴

We all know the President hates war—so does Congress, and so does everybody else. The duty is to show that hatred by staying out of it. Entering the League of Nations now is out of the question. . . . We simply cannot work with the League of Nations. To stay out of war we must do two things: first, maintain economic, military and political neutrality; second, extend reciprocal trade treaties, encourage the breaking down of tariff barriers, promote international understanding, keep our soldiers at home. By an unselfish neutrality policy this nation may accomplish a great deal for peace.

There was thought to be some hope for such steps. "T.R.B." in the same issue had commented, "Mr. Hull has repeatedly declared that economic disputes are the real cause of war, and that peace can only be achieved by their solution."⁶⁵ The materialization of the long-awaited Buenos Aires conference a few days later was expected to be the place for launching significant peace steps by the President in harmony with liberals' views. But they were quite disappointed. His talk of hemispheric economic and political insulation from a new war in Asia or Europe and hints of diplomatic, financial and economic boycott of the belligerents upon the outbreak of hostilities did not set

well with the *New Republic's* editors.⁶⁶ Their December 23 editorial comment expressed the conviction that he had failed to sell this program in southern South America;⁶⁷

The half-Fascist states below the equator do not share Mr. Roosevelt's alarm about a seizure of land in this hemisphere by Germany or Italy. Their gaze is still toward Europe and not toward the North. Mr. Roosevelt would be well advised to begin thinking about neutrality for the United States alone and not for the entire Western Hemisphere. Even the former is a big enough job for anybody.

The issue of Popular Front politics was much present at the close of the year as well, helping to complicate the foreign policy picture. Both liberal weeklies had gruff remarks to make when Joseph E. Davies was appointed ambassador to Communist Russia. The *New Republic* thought it worth knowing that he was a "heavy Democratic campaign contributor." The *Nation* was especially unhappy that he was a corporation lawyer and the husband of one of the country's wealthiest women. But Ward in his *Nation* column tied the appointment to the Buenos Aires conference in as ingenious an interpretation as might have been seen, and incidentally revealing that the *Nation's* bitter enemies of American militarization had no faint moments about the subject if it could be expected that Russia might become a beneficiary; here it was objectionable because the policy which was read as being behind it had the discomfort of the Soviets as its goal:⁶⁸

The connection between the Davies appointment and Roosevelt's impending performance at Buenos Aires may seem a little obscure at first, but the link is easily revealed. The Buenos Aires conference is important only in relation to the peace of the world, and the peace of the world at the moment all too plainly hangs upon the fate of Soviet Russia and the plans of its enemies—German, Japanese, Italian, French, British and Polish—to destroy it. It is already apparent that the ruling classes of these European nations which thus far have escaped militant Fascism and retain some vestiges of democracy, prefer even the German and Italian brand of Fascism to Communism, and to save their own skins will join Hitler and Mussolini, if necessary, in an assault upon the U.S.S.R. . . . In such a situation it is vitally important, if the United States is to play a potent role as peacemaker and peacekeeper, that this government have at Moscow as ambassador a man profoundly conversant with the complex forces now bearing remorselessly upon that point, and above all, a man of true impartiality. Instead, Mr. Roosevelt has chosen in Davies a blood brother to the Edens, Baldwins and Laval of the world.

And as a post-Buenos Aires complaint, there was the celebrated embrace of Getulio Vargas of Brazil by Roosevelt, at which time he referred to him as a "fellow New Dealer." Liberals far more affectionate toward the Brazilian Communist Luis Carlos Prestes were quick to suggest FDR had given an *embrazo* to a Fascist tyrant, and later in the season a geyser blew up in the editorial columns of both weeklies when it was rumored that Jefferson Caffrey, a much-despised career diplomat, alleged reactionary and Fascist, would be appointed as ambassador to Brazil.⁶⁹

The other aspect involved neutrality and the Spanish Civil War. Late in October, 1936 the *Nation* adopted the position that in view of the fact that the United States did not belong to the European non-intervention pact concerning the Spanish war, therefore this country could send help of all kinds to the Loyalist side, its "sister republic," because the February 1936 Neutrality Act was "wholly inapplicable to civil warfare."⁷⁰ Little success was gained, however, and the matter lay dormant until the first week of January, 1937. An angry editorial greeted the suggestion of Senator Pittman that United States citizenship be withdrawn from anyone taking part in the Spanish struggle, a grieved commentary complaining that "the moment a few American idealists enlist in the defense of Spanish—and world—democracy, agitation is started not only to punish future volunteers but to apply it retroactively to all Americans fighting on the Loyalist side."⁷¹ It was not an issue at the moment that the "idealists" for whom the *Nation* was expressing such grave concern had been recruited by the Communist Party. A week later (January 9) another agitated *Nation* editorial pondered the outbreak of sentiment for including civil wars within the Neutrality Act, and deprivation of citizenship for participants in such wars, as debate began once more on an amendment to the basic law, unchanged since February, 1936. This new discussion was supported, among others, "by Mr. Roosevelt himself," the editorial said with regret.⁷² Thus new reasons presented themselves for the *Nation* to oppose mandatory neutrality legislation, although, as will be seen, the world situation presented quite a problem, especially after July, 1937. The *Nation* was at one point favoring the simultaneous invocation of the neutrality law against Japan in its war in China and the lifting of its provisions against Spain, though there seemed to be enough foreign participants in the latter to make it anything but a "civil war" by then.

As far as the preliminaries to the 1937 neutrality law debate were concerned, the stand of the *New Republic* was unchanged. It was against giving the power to the President to distinguish between aggressor and victim in a war, on the grounds that it could result in a concept paralleling the sanctions policy of the League, and far from being neutrality, "would be overwhelmingly likely to get

us into war," as it pointed out in January, 1937. The principal columnists, including even Villard in the *Nation*, were sure that there was still a sea of popular support for a "cast-iron, automatic, mandatory neutrality law," and also against allowing the President to interpret a given war and apply the embargo provisions according to his own judgment. As Villard put it on January 2, "the proposal that Washington shall have the right to decide as between the aggressor and the aggrieved seems to me to insure our taking part in future wars." He disparaged Roosevelt's repeating that "the aggressor nation is the one whose troops first cross another's boundaries," as too simple and unreliable a yardstick, since this would always be exceedingly hard to determine exactly.⁷³

The heat of this new round of argument over neutrality stimulated *Common Sense* into giving foreign policy and foreign news its first lead in one of its issues since it had begun publication. In a substantial commentary, "Pacifism Is Not Enough," it disparaged what it saw being done to bring about peace, beginning with the State Department's reciprocal trade agreements, on the ground that it was "utopian" to believe that international trade increased international understanding. As for collective security, "that queer combination of Wilsonian idealism and Soviet pragmatism," it was written off as really an invitation to make war "a contradictory method of preventing war." The third development for which it held out a chill reception was "the medieval method of exorcism in modern terms," namely, "the conference method of windy talk," pacts, and other "attempts at peacemaking by word of mouth." *Common Sense*, despite its realism toward Russia, was still deep in the "merchants-of-death" thinking pattern, and thought even at this late date that the Soviet was the only disinterested state in the world, because there were "no economic forces in the Soviet Union which would gain by war." Like most all the other liberals of the moment, the fixation upon the purely monetary gains of war entirely concealed political tenure as just as potent an interest in war-making as buying and selling war materials. But the liberal monthly's recommendation for American policy was as rigid an avoidance of European politics as anyone had yet proposed;⁷⁴

But we must be wary of appearances. To destroy Fascism and merely restore the Europe of 1919 would be no gain. To help England retain her sources of tribute in Asia is a cause no more worth dying for than the saving of our markets in Asia. To kill and be killed in order to prolong a little longer the status quo is as unworthy of human beings as the pacifists say it is. It may be that we will indeed have to fight to make this a warless world. But we cannot afford to be fooled again.

The *New Republic*, commenting on FDR's inaugural address initiating his second term, described it as "another of the brave sermons about the rights of the common man that he knows so well how to preach."⁷⁵ And the neutrality battle was on again, officially. The features of the contest in the liberal weeklies were major editorial statements in both as to the kind of neutrality law they preferred in January and February,⁷⁶ and a comparison between their wishes and the resolution which emerged in Congress in March. In the *New Republic* the recommendations were buried in a major editorial policy statement signed by Bruce Bliven which ran a full eight columns on February 24, "The Future of Foreign Policy."⁷⁷ Bliven entertained little hope of the country's staying out of a war once it had broken out without neutrality provisions, even though "the American people had indicated decisively and on several occasions their desire to remain aloof from European international politics." He ridiculed the possibility of war being averted by a "meeting at the top" of six heads of State as credited to FDR's suggestion the previous year; "the hope that peace is advanced by personal conferences comes out of what Charles A. Beard describes as the 'devil theory' of the causes of the war—the notion that combat arises from the personal wickedness of individuals who know the better and select the worse." Bliven could not conceal his sympathy with Beard's approach, "that in the long run, we can attain a greater degree of prosperity, peace and happiness for our population by reducing foreign investment to a minimum and foreign trade to the legitimate quantity possible on a virtual barter basis," nor could he suppress that he considered Hull's reciprocal trade views as naïve. But he thought it was already too late to argue about Beardian autarchy.

Neutrality was the issue now, and he baited those who insisted on a qualified neutrality "of a sort that will ensure our coming in on the right side" when the war was resumed. This was not neutrality, Bliven insisted; "Those who advocate this policy ought to call themselves the Noble Interventionists, or some similar name." As for what he thought neutrality meant, Bliven suggested a "possible" program; embargoes on arms and munitions to belligerents, exclusion of American merchant ships from the war zones, permission to American citizens to proceed there only at their own risk, allowing the sale of non-embargoed war supplies only on a cash-and-carry basis, the buyer supplying the shipping to carry such goods away, and the accumulation in the country of large stocks of non-perishable goods normally available only overseas. Any program less than this, said Bliven, "would have little real hope of keeping us out of the next war."

Bliven's fellow-editor George Soule supported him to the hilt two weeks later in a substantial contribution titled "The Next Four Years," introducing the element of domestic reform as a companion

piece to neutrality. Soule dwelled on the idea that "orderly progress" in "domestic reconstruction" could be brought about best if the entire world remained peaceful; but granting that a general war did erupt, this cause in America at least could still "be far better served by staying out of it than by going in;" ⁷⁸

A nation at war is a playground for every reactionary force—at least until war weariness and defeat overwhelm the population. Even then reaction may establish itself on the resulting breakdown. Legislation that will greatly increase the chance of our staying out of war, such as was outlined in Mr. Bruce Bliven's article and in previous *New Republic* editorials, already seems to be within sight. To obtain its improvement and passage is a task of immediate urgency.

The *Nation* had begun making pointed suggestions somewhat earlier. On January 9, in a dramatic piece of advice to the Congress in the form of an editorial open letter addressed to that body, it had stated its position on neutrality and its relation to two other issues: ⁷⁹

We favor, as a neutrality policy, an embargo on the sale of munitions and basic war materials or the extension of credits to belligerent nations. Such an embargo should be imposed at the outbreak of war, but the President is to be empowered to suspend the embargo in case the majority of the signatories of the Kellogg Pact find that a country has been attacked in violation of the Pact.

The statement went on to favor the Nye Committee's plan for nationalization of the munitions industry, and war-profits limitation by legislation, and concluded, "We favor a unified national defense policy which shall be restricted to the defense of the continental territory of the United States, and we ask a special Congressional investigation to determine a reasonable budget for such a policy." This compound stipulation was the most breath-taking essay in "isolation" undertaken by the *Nation* as far back as anyone could remember, and quiet speculation began on the possibility that this position and their stand on Presidential leeway in applying the arms embargo were bound to produce serious conflict, in the event of a war.

But the *Nation* stuck steadfastly to this program, and repeated it almost verbatim on February 27 in a major editorial, "How To Stay Out Of War," as "Our Peace Plan."

It was bound to be that the actual resolutions introduced in Congress were going to fall short of all liberal demands. But a substantial part of their suggestions were incorporated, at that. The *Nation* agreed that the neutrality bill sponsored by Senator Pittman was preferable to the Nye-Clark-Bone-Vandenberg bill, because of its

flexibility in permitting the trade in basic raw materials at the discretion of the President.⁸⁰ A month later, on March 10, the *New Republic*, in a four-column estimate of the situation, declared, "The Pittman bill, though subject to minor improvements, is substantially the sort of measure advocated by the *New Republic*," and a week later, spoke of it after passage in the Senate as "an important advance over existing neutrality legislation." Its prohibition on the sale or shipment of arms and munitions to belligerents, its prohibition of loans and credits to belligerents and its restrictions on travel in war zones by United States citizens, were in language almost precisely that used in editorial after editorial in the liberal press for many months.⁸¹

But the *Nation* was soon quite unhappy with the Bill. The collective-security viewpoint returned to erase the continentalism which had enjoyed its brief vogue in *Nation* thinking at the time neutrality bills were being envisaged. A minor civil war broke out on the journal itself between the editors and Villard, over the merits of the new law, on May 1, 1937. Part of it was due to Villard's resentment of the fervid collective security and "save-the-democracies" talk of Vera Micheles Dean, which in a broader sense underlay much unhappiness with the new law. With the Popular Front campaign for collective security reaching its apogee at about the same time, converging on the already-bitter struggle over the Soviet purge trials, those with unordinary sensitivity toward the safety and security of the Soviet Union resented the withdrawal implied so broadly in the newest Neutrality Act, and their abuse for it on the grounds that it simply provided a mechanism for staying out of a war rather than preventing one from taking place was the gambit to which Villard objected so strongly. In his view it was not airtight enough, since he resented the provision for presidential discretion in making certain materials useful to a belligerent capable of buying and carrying them away from the United States; the editors chose to chide him for insisting in his column on the same day that no trade in any materials should take place, else we would as a nation soon repeat the story of 1914-1917;⁸²

I deny that it is the duty of the United States to sit in judgment, like Jehovah, and then sacrifice its sons for the side it thinks right on the basis of such little or such biased information as is available in the hysteria and excitement leading up to a war and after the war censorship are clamped down. I know the charges of selfishness and all the rest that are brought against this attitude, but as a pacifist I accept Mrs. Dean's challenge and say I'll never countenance any war, or our selling supplies to one side or the other.

The editors got in the last word the following week, in an editorial "Are We Safe From War?", in which they once more handed down a

harsh verdict on the Neutrality Act, declaring, "As it stands it does little more than place in the hands of the President the final choice of the side we shall support in the next war." They now declared their opposition to most of the law, insisted the economic forces of 1917 were utterly "unfettered" at all by it, and they sounded an ominous note of warning that although no loans were permitted by the Act, there was no restraint on commercial credits, predicting that the barrier against loans would be breached as soon as the credits got big enough.⁸³

LIBERAL WARNINGS AND CAUTIONS ON JAPANESE POLICY, 1935-1937

Neutrality and its ramifications obviously were argued and thought of and figured out against a background of another catastrophic European war on the lines of 1914-1918. But another element had appeared by the time twenty years had elapsed since the outbreak of that planetary-shaking event, the rise of Japan and the three-cornered clash between that land and the Chinese and Russians. While deeply engrossed in the neutrality debates, the liberals kept an eye focussed on this region all the time, not only with respect to the fortunes of their Chinese and Russian favorites, but in another regard as well: the impact of the expansion of Japan on the older European colonial powers in Asia and what this portended for the United States, an interested participant materially in Asia in its own right. A review of this situation is in order, in view of how significant it became in the next unfolding of the New Deal foreign policy, with the announcement of intent enclosed within the famous Chicago Bridge speech of the President in October, 1937.

It has been developed in an earlier chapter that insofar as American policy toward Japan was involved as an independent and separate aspect of foreign affairs, the attitude of American liberals was one of fundamental disagreement. Despite their championing of Japan's enemies in Asia, the position toward America in this complex controversy was one of almost unbroken frowning. The majority of the observers were convinced that the United States were heading straight for war with Japan, following the policy line which was being run out by the New Deal. And it was plain that they did not think the situation would be entirely the fault of the Japanese.

Early in 1935 as the Roosevelt Administration was about to round out its second year, there was a sharp step-up in attention to American-Japanese relations in the liberal press. A part of it was due to an increased volume of talk in official circles about Japanese threats to

American trade and interests in China by its continued military operations there in the north, and resentment toward increased Japanese talk about their strong desire to obtain naval tonnage parity with Great Britain and the United States in fighting ships. The possibility that the United States might go to war with Japan over these or any other issues made most commentators reflect very bleakly on the basic premises of those in this country who looked on such a possibility favorably. One of the most notable comments aroused by this was the long *New Republic* editorial on January 9 of that year, "Decision In the Pacific." Declaring that insistence on the traditional "Open Door" policy in China was now an ineffective strategy, and that it simply incited Japanese leaders to steel their own public for a coming showdown, this major statement suggested that it was a good policy as long as those involved agreed to its content voluntarily, "but is it worth fighting for?," the editorial asked. In their view it was not; "Our investments in China, our trade with China, however large they might be, would not be worth one drop of blood." In point of fact it was a matter of record that the sum of all these was actually relatively small, and the conviction was expressed that nobody in Washington would ever suggest that a war be waged in this cause. "Nevertheless," it countered,⁸⁴

the issue will not be stated in these terms. It will be stated as a crusade against Japanese imperialism, as a validation of solemn international promises, and the like. We all know how incidents, in the proper setting, can be used for incendiary purposes.

It was time, said the editors, that this country's leaders and general public decided if they really wanted to go to war with Japan to help China or to fight for Chinese trade. If not, and their position could not have been more plain, that our policy should not entertain either of these objectives, "then we must grant Japan naval equality." Talk of defense against Japanese aggressive designs was brushed aside as specious; "She could not possibly attack us if she had it [naval equality], and she would not want to." In fact, the editorial used the reverse argument, that the Japanese demands for a new naval tonnage ratio was dictated by their own defense needs and weaknesses, so that "her navy may dominate in her sector against any possible combination of Great Britain and the United States." In their view, the possession by Japan of "a fighting force equal to ours would not enable her to attack us, but it would safeguard any operations by her in China." The editorial did not sanction this; in fact, the confidence was expressed that Japanese imperialism would bring sufficient "punishment" upon Japan by its own workings, and in any event "could be left to some other force besides that of American sailors and sol-

diers." The suspicion could not be downed, however, that behind the moral posturing that was going on, "in the background there lurks the consciousness on the part of many, however much it may be suppressed, that a war is the way par excellence to revive business and employment."

Bruce Bliven, in a March report, "Washington Revisited," confessed to being "astonished" at the Administration's attention to military and naval affairs, "and in particular, to the possibility of conflict with Japan." Bliven was convinced that three months of fighting there "would cost far more than our trade and investments in the Far East would be worth in a generation." He charged that there were those who were hoping the Chinese-Japanese conflict would go on for some time, in a kind of don't-let-the-war-end-too-soon attitude, enhancing the possibility of American involvement by giving additional excuses for increased military and naval spending. And he could not down the feeling that striving for "imperial destiny in the Far East" could have only a nightmare outcome.⁸⁵

Later in the same month, Nathaniel Peffer, in a long article, "We Drift Toward War In the Orient," was anything but delicate in stating the situation; "As everybody in the world knows except the American people, it is the United States that is being counted on by the European nations with imperialistic possessions in the Far East to preserve the status quo there by checking the Japanese." It was a warning in the manner of the January editorial for public arousal and complaint about the trend of policy direction;⁸⁶

the government . . . in the last few years has been taking them step by step in the direction of war in the Pacific. Each step is irrevocable before the American people even know that it has been taken. . . . The war in the Pacific is being made now. Preparations will soon be in the final stages unless the American people ask themselves whether China means enough to them to send their sons to die in Manchuria and then call off the government if it does not.

Like the journal's editorial, Peffer also felt that too many were of the mind that war was "the conventional solution to the problem of providing jobs."

The persistence during the spring of agitated talk of Japanese trade competition in the sense of a "menace" to the United States sparked another series of liberal protests over government policies. Jonathan Mitchell especially debunked the full-dress investigation of this allegation by the New Deal administration through the Tariff Commission. Mitchell deprecated the "preachers of the Japanese trade menace," insisted that "Japan's competition is comparatively trivial," and countered with a serious charge of his own: "by

advancing the price of silver in response to the demand of the sixteen silver Senators, Roosevelt . . . has done as much harm to business as Japanese 'cheap' competition has done, or will do in the predictable future."⁸⁷ A *New Republic* editorial the following week (May 8) insisted that the propaganda furor against Japanese imports was "the sort of thing that leads to war," and once more related the different elements of the popular case against Japan to the country's overall problems and situation:⁸⁸

It is an irrational attempt to supply a foreign scape goat for the failures of our domestic economy. When one sees a movie audience first applauding textile manufacturers who argue that the wicked Japanese are bringing starvation to American workers, and then applauding the big navy that is setting out for maneuvers in the Pacific, one is forcibly reminded of the prediction by Charles A. Beard that if the depression continues, a way out will be sought by war in the Far East.

The *Nation*, caught in the toils of the pro-Soviet collective security policy of the Popular Front, for that reason was as adamant as the *New Republic* against unilateral moves in the Asia theater by the United States, and advised against them continually. In June, 1935, when Japan threatened to organize another state such as Manchukuo out of part of North China, its editors heatedly warned the New Deal foreign policy makers against advising independent American action to try to forestall such a move. "Any attempt at independent action by the United States to restrain Japan," it cautioned, would only be incitatory and "would turn the fire of Japanese wrath on us and involve a serious danger of conflict."⁸⁹ *Nation* suggestions at the moment did not go beyond the usual vague recommendation that America act in concert with Britain, France and Communist Russia on the problem, taking the Popular Front line of the day that "basically the interests of the four countries are the same."

Liberals were as hostile toward unilateral moves by the British in Asia as they were toward such gestures by America, and they resented British attempts to lock arms with this country in some kind of a joint front against Japanese advances, as another way in which this country might stumble into a war fought to no ultimate good for American interests. A *New Republic* editorial on June 19 saw the new Tory government of Baldwin searching around for an understanding with the United States because of Japanese threats to English Oriental interests, admittedly "many times greater than our own." And it resented the presentation of this as an attempt on the part of "the two great English-speaking nations" to "join forces to maintain peace throughout the world;"⁹⁰

Nevertheless, the net result would be that in order to make a probably useless attempt to pull British chestnuts out of the Oriental fire, the United States would run the risk of being drawn into a war that would be the ultimate example of folly.

Peffer, in a major statement in *Harper's* the same month, argued that in view of the great show of strength being made in the Orient, the United States should either frankly enter an alliance with England and proceed on a *realpolitik* course or else withdraw from the Far East entirely.⁹¹

During the rest of the year this subject kept cropping up, reviving with a vengeance in the fall, after the Ethiopian war broke out, causing the British to relocate large fleet elements in the Mediterranean as the Naval Conference scheduled for the second week of December drew near. The *New Republic* pounded away at the point that British interests in Asia were ten times as great as ours, that our whole Oriental trade would hardly pay for a single day of a Far Eastern war, and that FDR was playing with fire if he was under the impression that he could "scare Japan into being good by building ships and by following a policy that in nearly every respect is provocative in the extreme."⁹² Bliven, in his urgent signed editorial "Neutrality Is Not Enough" on November 20 had urged popular pressure on the Administration to change the navy to a defensive service and to "resist the desperate efforts" behind the scenes to bring the United States into a naval alliance with Britain for the announced purpose of "preserving peace throughout the world," which he said was just another way of saying "maintaining the status quo in the Orient."⁹³

Nor was the element of personal criticism of the President and the relating of foreign policy to domestic political processes lacking. In a lengthy and uncomplimentary review of Roosevelt's policies in mid-October, in the light of an appeal made by him for a liberal common front, a *New Republic* editorial added in the midst of an arraignment of his domestic program a note to the effect that the liberals had "seen this country move steadily towards a perfectly unnecessary, insane war with Japan through a program the naval aspect of which is now costing the nation a billion dollars a year." The editorial "Mr. Roosevelt and the Liberals" suggested that he enroll under the banner of the liberals, rather than his requesting that they enroll under his. A parallel editorial "Good Neighbors in the Orient" in the same issue insisted, "The question that this country should decide, and decide immediately, is whether this [China] trade is worth a war," and it followed this with the grim conviction, "Today the answer would be vociferously in the negative."⁹⁴

"Bigger, Brighter Battleships," an ironic editorial on December 4,

continued in this spirit, refusing to believe that granting naval parity to Japan would endanger this country in the slightest, but "to put ourselves in a position to defend our supposed interests in China" certainly would, in addition to turning the Pacific into an armed camp, draining a large part of our energies to the Far East, and bringing an ominous development to the home front as a consequence; we would have to "be content to have future elections turn upon questions of foreign policy instead of domestic welfare."⁹⁵

In the uneasy commentary of January 15, 1936 on the mysterious dropping of Presidential opposition to mandatory neutrality legislation with relation to the European situation while simultaneously applying pressure for approval of increased army and navy appropriation bills, "T.R.B." promptly asserted,⁹⁶

This can only mean that we shall have a military air race with Japan added to the naval race that is likely to result from the London Conference. It seems foolish, at the same session, to take elaborate steps to keep out of war in Europe while taking expensive means to get into war in the Far East. The advantages, to ordinary citizens, of dying in Asia rather than Europe seem infinitesimal.

It was well understood that the main Japanese objective at the London Naval Conference would be the attainment of naval parity with England and America; "T.R.B." in his column on November 20 thought the rejection of Japanese desire for it by the United States since 1930 was simply incomprehensible, and on December 11 in his "Are We Blundering Into a War In the Pacific?", showed much unhappiness on the publication of Navy and State Department ruminations on the possibility of war with Japan in Asia. With a hate-Japan aspect in much of mass communication related to Asian news reaching the public in newspapers and newsreels, he thought public temper much too fragile to be able to endure this sort of attack on its sensibilities very long, in the event of an Asiatic incident, and he felt that the State Department in particular was confident that public support could eventually be gotten to support preparation for a Far East war.⁹⁷ It was poor underpinning for a conference seeking to alleviate tensions over conflicting national interests in the relative sizes of assemblages of fighting ships.

Common Sense added its observation, remarking that the United States clung to the 5-5-3 ratio "with paternal fondness," and also saw a case for the Japanese, without feeling sympathetic to their ambitions. "The current Japanese demands for parity at least have the virtue of candor," it remarked mildly; "Frank imperialism is better and easier to recognize than imperialism coated with British liberalism."⁹⁸

Liberal disappointment and dissatisfaction with the outcome of the Naval Conference, the London Treaty, was quite universal. The *Nation* wondered "how anyone except shipbuilders and armament manufacturers can derive any particular satisfaction" from it, and expressed great displeasure at the impetus this treaty gave to the unwritten cooperation of the British and American fleets as a consequence, an undeclared military alliance which just went another step further in undermining collective security.⁹⁹ "Back To the Naval Building Race," was the *New Republic's* editorial comment, a very blunt condemnation of the resumption of the naval and Pacific fortifications complex as "a gamble, trying to outbluff the Japanese," with consequences that could not be foreseen:¹⁰⁰

We hardly need to point out that this gamble is a desperate one; that if the Japanese refuse to be intimidated, we shall have got ourselves in a serious mess. In that case, we trust that the diplomats will apologize to the surviving relatives of the American soldiers and sailors whose deaths they have caused.

After once more baiting FDR as a big-navy man and rejecting his insistence now on talk of British cooperation, it handed down, in this Lincoln Birthday issue of 1936, as harsh an estimate of the total situation as appeared in print up to this moment:

Every sign now points toward a war sooner or later in the Pacific area, a war to preserve rights in Asia that probably cannot be preserved in any case, rights that are of little importance or value to the American people as a whole, rights involving trade and investment whose worth, for a generation, would be counterbalanced by the cost of three months' conflict. From any common sense point of view we are making one of the worst bargains in our national history. And we are doing so in the almost complete absence of public consent, or even public discussion.

No thaw occurred in the liberal press toward the New Deal's Asian policies in 1936. If anything, the disapprobation heightened. And most new developments were interpreted as additional moves toward girding for a Pacific-wide showdown with the Japanese. Harold E. Fey's "Militarizing the Philippines," in the *Nation* on July 10, was an aggravated attack on General Douglas MacArthur, urging his recall for having been mainly responsible for putting into effect the National Defense Act passed by the Philippine Islands Commonwealth, instituting compulsory military training, which he thought would have serious effect on American-Japanese relations:¹⁰¹

That nation can hardly be indifferent to the fact that the American army's leading Japanophobe has quietly begun the organization of a force

of half a million men which will not have to be transported thousands of miles in case of trouble in Asia. Neither can the American people afford to be indifferent to this unauthorized addition to the armed forces under the American flag.

On September 16 another major arraignment of FDR's Asian policy appeared in the *New Republic*, "Our Far Eastern Balance Sheet." The editors insisted the policy was costing twice as much as it was worth in trade, "clearly a bad investment," that it was aimed entirely at Japan, our best customer, featured the building of battleships instead of the lowering of tariffs, and was overall a national liability, even if very good for "certain extremely limited groups in the country." Said the editors in conclusion,¹⁰²

The real truth is that our Far Eastern policy is not intended to pay, and the little group of men in the government and in big business who make that policy know that it does not pay. President Roosevelt and the rest of the big-navy group, if they speak frankly, will say that primarily our Far Eastern policy is intended to maintain our prestige, to "hold up our end." . . . There was never a better example of wishful thinking and muddled sentimentalism than when the President and his friends argue that it is necessary, for the national welfare, that the United States maintain a strong military position in the Pacific.

Two books appeared during the year which seemingly provided operational and moral support for the conflict in Asia. Quincy Howe, reviewing *War In the Pacific* by Sutherland Denlinger and Charles B. Gray, called it a study of "the irrepressible conflict between the United States and Japan for control of the Pacific," and reported that the United States "will ultimately crush Japan, but to no purpose so far as the authors can see." Howe's main complaint with the book was expressed in this manner; "Had they emphasized the role of the American Department of State as the arm of the British Foreign Office, they would have clarified the one possible obscurity in an otherwise clear presentation of the most urgent issue before the people of this country today."

Owen Lattimore, reviewing Henry L. Stimson's *The Far Eastern Crisis* also in the *New Republic*, criticized it as a study in legalistic topheaviness, featured by an unwillingness to state the bread and butter issues. He felt that Stimson was hurt mainly because the Japanese had taken an imperialist leaf from the Western book and produced a 20th century imperialism which was undercutting Western political control in Asia at the time that their trade was underbidding Europe and America in the world. Maxwell S. Stewart was much kinder to Stimson in the *Nation*, mainly because his arguments for

collective security were in harmony with the position of the journal; though their social philosophies were a light year apart, the origin of the makings of the strange intellectual alliance for the war of 1941 were partially in evidence here. But Stewart seemed to think that Stimson's arguments for remaining in the Far East were expressed slightly tongue-in-cheek, because the evidence was accumulating that there was little hope for United States interests on the mainland of Asia whether the Chinese or the Japanese won the struggle then going on.¹⁰³

Bliven's magisterial "The Future of Foreign Policy" in the *New Republic* on February 24, 1937 contained a sharp and uncompromising summary of the New Deal's Far Eastern policy which advocated a specific tactic and also scolded the President for continuing the conflict with Japan over the China trade and the perpetuation of immigration exclusion of Japanese "in terms which this proud people regard as an insult to national dignity," along with the maintenance of a navy "which is generally assumed by the experts of all countries to be intended for use against Japan or against nobody." In his view it all "showed up badly on our national balance sheet." Bliven suggested that scrapping the navy and providing full reimbursement to all United States traders and investors in the Far East would be a "burst of magnificent common sense," but unlikely. But he stuck to an established view as a consequence; "In the long run, our Oriental commitment constitutes an extremely grave peril for us, not less serious in that it is so unnecessary."¹⁰⁴

THE UNEASY PRELUDE TO THE CHICAGO BRIDGE SPEECH

The first six months of 1937 were an ominous, restless season in world politics. They lacked the sensational, dramatic events of 1935 and 1936. The unruly and rebellious regimes in Germany, Italy and Japan were the cause of little disturbance to the status quo during this period, although the Spanish Civil War and the Communist purge trials provided sufficient excitement and subject matter for such as wished to become embroiled in controversies of wide impact. This was a more than ordinary period of tranquility in United States foreign policy as well, with only the grand debate on the third Neutrality Act providing much newsworthy material. A relatively somnolent stage of the Sino-Japanese difficulties and a sharp slump in agitation over Russo-Japanese quarrels accompanied this era of uneasy good feeling, so to speak. In America there were even rumbling rumors of a thaw in the frigid front against Germany and Italy,

although the issue of greater import at the moment involved purely domestic affairs; the President's titanic struggle with the liberal-led opposition to his plan for reorganizing the United States Supreme Court, and the panicking, dismaying signs and symptoms of another substantial business and economic toboggan-slide.

On the possibility of melting the barriers building up between the two camps of nations in Europe, the *New Republic* on June 30 contained an essay of extraordinary length by "T.R.B." devoted to a discussion of a pending Anglo-American trade treaty, which, he thought, had now "become the chief immediate objective of American foreign policy." FDR had dropped all thought of an international conference now, he felt, and was not seeking to achieve political goals via this method. The main task was the halting of the spread of economic nationalism and the widening of the belt of free-trade nations. With Italy and Germany "slowly pulling all of eastern Europe into its ranks," and threatening to do the same with Scandinavia, it was felt to be the time for serious concern. The President's vision, he insisted, was "a democratic, free-trading bloc, composed of America, England and France," which would "serve to turn the present trend in Europe, and drag back first the small nations of Europe, and ultimately Germany and Italy, to economic safety."

"T.R.B." insisted that the Fascist countries were being systematically cut off from world markets in 1936, and that now "it was reported that tentative discussions were being held among government officials and business men about the possibility of restoring the Fascist countries to the world economic system by enlarging their potential foreign markets through tariff reductions and granting them loans for the period of readjustment." It was his conclusion that this was going to be much more difficult to achieve now; Germany and Italy had made vast investments in plants producing *ersatz* materials, because of shrinking access to world markets especially in cotton, rubber and petroleum. Free trade resumption would make all these uneconomic, and, furthermore, "Under a regime of free trade, it is believed that not only the remaining moneyed Jews of Germany, but businessmen generally in both countries, would try to sneak out their capital to lands where the future seems less catastrophic." This discussion revealed trenchantly that there was more to the problem of the conflicts of interest among the major states of Europe than ideological and personal name-calling.¹⁰⁵

This beam of reality playing on the situation did not mean that the established politico-moral clichés of collective security were beginning to weaken as a means for stating the case. The same issue of this journal contained a notable trial balloon release in this very spirit by the celebrated British economist J. A. Hobson, "Will America Stop Another War?", pleading for America to join England, France

and Communist Russia in a common cause against "aggression."¹⁰⁶ The editors were moved to respond in an editorial twice as long as the article with their case against considering any kind of collective security action for the United States whatsoever. They held it impossible to prevent a war by ritualistic action of this sort.¹⁰⁷ It was "too simple" a solution, from the editors' viewpoint; "aggression" might be defined so broadly that no way might be left for anyone to back out. Furthermore, it was countered, "Wars are started by military authorities on the basis of realistic calculations as to whether they can win." It was their position that the United States "ought never to join a European compact unless we are ready to fight," and the situation was that "the people of the United States are not now willing to fight in any conceivable European struggle, and a statesman who committed them to doing so would be acting with levity."

Looking at the context of European affairs at the moment it was their conclusion that

No nation wants war, but each nation wants its own way and is backing up its demands with force of arms. . . . The aggressor powers . . . are continuously threatening to fight without really meaning to go to war, believing that by doing so they can frighten their opponents into acquiescence in their aims.

This sharply contradicted much of the *New Republic's* own writing on Germany, Italy and Japan, which often posed them as almost insane and following capricious and unfathomable courses, at best. It was a realistic look at the conduct of foreign policy by national sovereign states instead, brought on by a fundamental disagreement with Hobson as to the basic concept behind such gathering-together:

Would such a war of "democratic peoples" achieve its assumed object of stopping Fascism and assuring peace in the future? There is a fatal similarity between these new slogans and those of twenty years ago. That was a war "to make the world safe for democracy," a "war to end war." But wars fought for such noble purposes seldom achieve them. It is just as likely that in the process the "democracies" would themselves turn Fascist, which itself would bring ruin impartially on all participants.

Editorial position stubbornly refused to desert the approach that the "North American continent" should be spared "the ravages of war," so that at least "something might be saved out of the wreck." In any case, it argued, "we do not think it wise to threaten war under the impression that by doing so we make war impossible, or on the assumption that such a threat will exempt us from the necessity to fight." "And we do not want to fight," it concluded grimly.

Although the study at hand is one of American liberalism's relationship to world affairs and foreign policy, one cannot at this point avoid reference to the state of domestic affairs at this moment, the mid-summer of 1937. A furious struggle was splitting liberals badly over the merits of the President's program for changing the structure of the Supreme Court, a great deal of morose opinion was abroad that the New Deal was collapsing, a new business decline was under way, and just as much talk was circulating whether Roosevelt might seek a third term in the White House, despite the fact that he had barely started his second. The fact that old-line liberals were leading in the fight against the President on the Court question did not make matters any easier for America's liberals.¹⁰⁸ It was the start of a major split which eventually provided the main division-point for a later clash on foreign policy.

On the other issues, the liberal press had comment more pointed and not as conflicting. A *Nation* editorial on July 3, "Third Term: Bad Medicine," frowned on it blackly, and declared point-blank, "There is only one thing for Mr. Roosevelt to do. He must 'unqualifiedly and finally' announce that he will not be a candidate in 1940 to succeed himself!"¹⁰⁹ And as far as the New Deal was concerned, John T. Flynn's August 18 *New Republic* column summarized starkly what had been said in a variety of other contexts:¹¹⁰

It is very obvious that the New Deal is now cracking up fast. No one outside Washington can appreciate the extent and depth of the opposition to the President not only in the Senate but also in the House. His power to influence any important legislation is apparently gone, surely for the time being. And most of his trouble is coming from his former champions.

All these factors indicating serious decay within the Administration were about and drawing comment when the Sino-Japanese war broke out on a much widened basis the first week of July. Far Eastern foreign politics returned to the fore in American affairs with a vengeance, and promptly. The first big test of the Neutrality Act just passed a few weeks earlier was at hand, and American liberals watched and commented almost on a daily basis.

Those who expected the President to proclaim a state of war in Asia and to start the operation of the May legislation were disappointed, and the disappointment heightened all during the month of July. At the end of the month the *New Republic* revealed its unhappiness with the dilatory behavior of the Administration in an open editorial admonition:¹¹¹

The primary decision for us to make is whether, in pursuit of a natural impulse to aid China against Japanese aggression, we wish to incur the

risk of war. If we do, then of course no kind of neutrality legislation has any point, and we ought to make our power count as best we may. But if not—and the *New Republic* is confident that an overwhelming majority of the American people want to stay out of war at all costs—then we should take the course best adapted to keep us out of trouble, no matter where our sympathies lie. We can see no reason to modify our support of the new Neutrality Act in the event of a war between Japan and China. It should be applied at once and as full as possible. There is no other sensible course.

But the war between the two Asiatic nations was not something that might take place; it was already flaming across the mainland of China; the Japanese captured Peking the day the editorial appeared in print, and Tientsin the subsequent day.

In early September the anxiety of neutrality-conscious liberals climbed steeply, as hostilities had spread considerably and there was still no official reaction here. On the first of the month the *New Republic* expressed strong editorial alarm that the President and Hull were being won over by the British position, that of joint action guaranteeing the neutrality of the Shanghai International Settlement, even if force was necessary. In a vigorous counter-assertion that we had no business in the Far East struggle, the editors granted that it was a satisfactory British course; "Great Britain has an empire to protect, with vast interests in the Orient." But as for the United States, "We have no empire, our investments and trade are comparatively insignificant, and we have the best of reasons for staying home and minding our business."¹¹²

Again on the 8th, in an editorial "The President Heads Toward War," it went on record insisting once more that the President should have announced that a state of war existed in Asia weeks ago, thus bringing the Neutrality Act into operation. The fighting had now been going on for two months, "Yet the President and Secretary Hull blandly continue to act as if they had a completely free hand to pursue whatever course they pleased," it complained, "a defiance of the Legislative branch, a denial of democracy," not to apply the measures the law prescribed. "The campaign to enlist our support in a unified stand against Japan is already well under way, and Secretary Hull, like a good little boy, is following the lead of the British Foreign Office in this matter," its comment went on, with evident disdain. The editors warned FDR that if he continued along the path of attempting to halt the Japanese by applying separate pressure, he would be "responsible for the possible consequences, in a sense that no previous war President has ever been," since he would be "adopting the policy in defiance of the expressed will of Congress and the people."¹¹³

The same issue contained an unsurpassed scolding of Roosevelt in "T.R.B." 's Washington column, using twice as much space as usually allotted, for derogatory observations on the President as a liberal leader. "The writer believes that liberals owe it to themselves to indulge in an interval of quiet brooding," he began; "Mr. Roosevelt was our leader, and the horrid fact is that under his banner we have just taken a dreadful wallop." The reference was to the rejection of the President's Supreme Court plan. Roosevelt had "botched" the basic job of political leadership, he maintained; "he broke the unity of the liberal movement, and he simultaneously lost his legislative program." "He ought to have saved one or the other," the *New Republic's* Capitol commentator lamented; "No one could have done worse." He ended up by suggesting that the liberals would have to "find their leadership from within their own ranks," since FDR could no longer be considered adequate for this task.¹¹⁴

It was not an especially heartening report, for there was abroad the same degree of dissatisfaction insofar as the New Deal foreign policy of the moment was concerned. But the personal emphasis switched to Hull the next week, in a blistering editorial open letter addressed to the Secretary of State, in the issue for September 15, three weeks before the Chicago Bridge speech: ¹¹⁵

You propose, Mr. Secretary, according to reliable reports, to use American influence to checkmate aggressors, but without "moving one inch toward war." All recent history confirms the dictates of common sense in telling us that the ambition is an impossible one. Surely, no one is any longer sufficiently naive to suppose that there is an effectiveness to the mere statement of moral principles, as exemplified for instance in the Kellogg-Briand Pact, which has proven so tragically futile. If you are considering economic sanctions, it is clear today that these are ineffective unless you intend to back them with force. And if you plan to do that, your policy is not one of keeping out of war but one of involving the very danger of going in.

Anyone intent on pursuing a policy of collective security "must be prepared to fight for it," it went on, and complained, "The fatal policy, from the standpoint of peace, Mr. Secretary, is in our judgment the one you are now pursuing, of striking a moral attitude against aggression and at the same time insisting that we do not intend to go to war to halt it." "What the American people want, as they have demonstrated over and over again, is peace," declaring in final admonitory caution, "We urge you, Mr. Secretary, to implement that policy effectively, as regards the war zone, by getting out and staying out."

The *Nation*, deeply enmeshed in the Popular Front's variety of

collective security, was fully as hostile to the Administration's Far East policy but for different reasons. "It has made no effort, either individually or in concert with the other powers, to check Japanese aggression, or to devise measures for protection against future aggressors," it complained on September 18. Frowning on the Roosevelt-Hull behavior thus far as "unilateral attempts" to protect American national interests in the Far East, it went on to suggest its own variety of vague action, providing American "leadership" to the League as a member of the almost forgotten Far Eastern Advisory Commission to bring about the preparation of "collective penalties against the aggressor."¹¹⁶ But it viciously counter-attacked the *New Republic's* insistence on abiding by the Neutrality Act as "isolationist."¹¹⁷ It was not that this latter journal had retreated from a position of sympathy with the Soviet Union. Bliven's prophetic signed editorial "The Second World War Is Here," which, significantly enough, appeared in the issue for October 6, expressed a solid pro-Soviet position in looking upon Fascist governments alone as a "steadily increasing threat to peace," as well as accepting without a tremor of reserve the Communist explanation of their immense war machine as a mere checkmate to Hitler and the Japanese, and omitting reference to their already massive military preparations well in advance of Mukden and Hitler. But editorial policy still adhered tenaciously to a position of neutrality for the United States when the question was narrowed down to the issue of whether this country should enter the arena or not. As Flynn put it in his column in this same issue,¹¹⁸

I am utterly sick of the polite stirrings of nice people who think they can soften war by making rules for it as if it were a bridge game, or those who imagine they can end it with their silly little treaties; above all, of those many-times-confounded militarists who tell us that war is to be made impossible by the accumulation of armaments. We cannot end war anywhere. But we can keep out of it. We cannot, however, while we are willing to gamble the peace of a nation to save a few paltry millions of profits in the Orient—and as long as a President of the United States is willing to violate the law and even defy it in this gamble.

The mixed nature of the forces tending to edge the country into war was a novelty of liberal interpretation by this time. The unilateral approach of the previous few years, which concentrated almost entirely on the business and financial forces making for involvement was being modified now, paired with the newly-discovered political ambitions of the President for the first time. References to this had been growing since the economy had gone from its summer dip into a full-fledged nosedive. A *New Republic* editorial on September 22, "The Cost of Neutrality," actually suggested that the economic forces

tending to involve the country in the Far East contest were now even secondary to the designs of the Administration: ¹¹⁹

Far more important, however, in framing government policy, is in our judgment the desire of the President and the Secretary of State to play an active part in the development of affairs in the Orient. . . . This attitude of the Roosevelt Administration involves a greater danger of getting us into the war than even the sale of military supplies that is now so merrily going forward.

There were enough contradictions and variety in the President's public pronouncements in the fortnight before his speech in Chicago on October 5 to feint out of position almost the most tenacious opponent of involvement in the Far East war. When FDR announced in mid-September that Americans remaining in China, with hostilities resumed, would have to do so at their own risk, the *New Republic* applauded him for what seemed to be the first time in many months on an issue of foreign policy, suggesting in addition that all United States soldiers, sailors and marines be withdrawn from the area as well; "In our judgment, the President is 100-per cent right. No American in China has business there sufficiently urgent to justify the danger of getting this country into war." ¹²⁰

The actual prelude to the speech of October 5 was Roosevelt's Constitution Day address, which, although largely devoted to domestic affairs, contained a spirited attack on the dictatorships abroad, "both plutocratic and proletarian." The *New Republic* strangely enough overlooked the incitatory quality of that part of the speech and temporarily agreed with him again, diverted by his concern for domestic improvement. ¹²¹ A note of apprehensiveness returned however on September 29, with the news that FDR was undertaking a western trip "to see members of his family." In an editorial "The President Goes West," a note of inquietude was voiced that he had not "postponed the visit a few weeks," made important by "much that requires the Chief Executive's presence in Washington, if we are to minimize the danger of our being drawn in." ¹²²

Nothing better illustrated the split in American liberalism over American foreign policy than the editorial statements of the *New Republic* and *Nation* on the "Quarantine Speech" delivered by FDR at the dedication of the Chicago Outer Bridge, on October 5. Long editorials in both in their mid-month issues stated all the basic views once more, and the struggle over neutrality or involvement was now cleanly joined. "The President Torpedoes Neutrality," announced the *New Republic*; ¹²³

In one of the most important speeches of his career, President Roosevelt at Chicago definitely turned his back on the neutrality policy pre-

scribed for him by Congress, a policy which he has so far refused to execute in relation to the Chinese War. The rationale of the new neutrality is that the principal national aim should be to stay out of war when it comes. Mr. Roosevelt on the contrary accepts the thesis of those who believe in "collective security"—that it is impossible to stay out; that in fact if international anarchy and aggression continue, we shall be attacked. Therefore it is necessary for the "peaceloving" nations to take positive measures against the aggressors, and check them before it is too late. These aggressors, whom he roundly denounces, are easily identifiable from his language as Italy, Germany and Japan. The speech is interpreted by the diplomatic world as giving the clear signal to the League of Nations or to Great Britain and France for any policy of sanctions they may wish to adopt in Europe and Asia. We should say it not merely opened the way for such measures, but actually made them more likely. The moralistic fervor of the speech, its tone of anger against treaty-breakers and disturbers of the peace, are reminiscent of Woodrow Wilson at his most effective. Much depends upon what concrete meaning may be put into the "quarantine" which Mr. Roosevelt wants to establish against the guilty nations, but the inescapable conclusion is that if things go very far along this line, the United States is likely to be involved in a new world war.

The *Nation* greeted the Chicago speech with spirited applause; "President Roosevelt's speech at Chicago was a shot in the arm to the discouraged forces of democratic world opinion, and Secretary Hull's statement aligning America with the League of Nations in its condemnation of Japan has strengthened its effect." It considered it a reflection of the changing of American thinking from "isolationist pacifism," and thought that FDR had "seized the strategic moment to place himself at the head of a vigorous democratic counter-movement" aiming at restraining Germany, Italy and Japan. "That the *Nation* is heartily in accord with the President's speech must be obvious to those who have been following our position on this issue."¹²⁴ But it immediately saw the first fruit of this abstract statement. The ease with which opinion could be mobilized against Japan at the moment caused much perturbation. It immediately registered objection to the singling out of Japan as an incitation to American involvement in war. Rarely was it possible to see interventionist liberals recognize the consequences of their overall strategy in such quick order.

Even more surprising was the reaction of Villard, the *Nation's* almost sole voice in support of American neutrality. He praised the address as "perhaps the most pertinent speech" that Roosevelt had made since becoming President, and declared that he had "rendered a tremendous service to the world." But like the editors, Villard

almost at once began to complain of the increase of war-tempo thinking concerning Asia and expressed deep fear that we might subsequently embark "on another holy crusade, this time to save civilization in China." Neither he nor the editors wanted to see that the speech and the anti-Japanese push had any relationship. Villard's suggested alternative was fully as incendiary; he recommended extending the condemnation of Japan by a large number of nations, "by which the whole force of an outraged world opinion could be directed against Japan," followed by the breaking off of diplomatic relations.¹²⁵

Exceeding all liberals in hailing the Chicago speech was the *New Masses*. Its enthusiastic reception in the issue of October 19 was accompanied by a mention of the *New Republic's* opposition, with conscious distaste. But for most collective security supporters of the Popular Front vintage, the quick diversion of the noble and high-sounding phrases of this sentiment in the Chicago speech into a psychological buttressing for a purely get-tough policy toward Japan was an unexpected and acrid after-taste.

In February, 1935 *Scribner's Magazine* had published an essay by Charles A. Beard titled "National Politics and War." Beard had predicted in this that the political fortunes of Roosevelt would decline steadily until 1940, when, faced by stupendous domestic problems and serious splits in his own party, and unable to develop a "strong" workable domestic program, he would adopt a "strong" foreign policy instead, and cause the country to "stumble" into war. It was of significance that a book by Mauritz Hallgren, a critical study of Roosevelt titled *The Gay Reformer*, should be published at this moment, re-stating this thesis once more.

NOTES

1 *Nation*, July 17, 1935, pp. 71-74.

2 *New Republic*, February 13, 1935, p. 2; "Our Growing Nationalism," *Nation*, January 20, 1935, p. 209.

3 *New Republic*, August 21, 1935, pp. 38-41.

4 *New Republic*, May 15, 1935, p. 21.

5 *New Republic*, December 26, 1934, p. 175.

6 *Nation*, April 10, 1935, p. 404, for citations in this and in following paragraph.

7 *New Republic*, August 14, 1935, p. 18; September 4, 1935, p. 85; September 11, 1935, p. 118.

8 *Nation*, August 28, 1935, pp. 228-229; Villard, "Senators Wagner, Nye, and Others," *Nation*, September 4, 1935, p. 259.

9 Ward, "Hull House On Pennsylvania Avenue," *Nation*, July 17, 1935, pp. 71-74.

10 "Vanishing Opportunity," *Nation*, July 17, 1935, p. 61. But the following week the editors reported with relief and pleasure, "The tariff agreement with the Soviet Union lifts our relations with Russia to a level of wholesome normality." *Nation*, July 24, 1935, p. 86.

- 11 *New Republic*, September 4, 1935, p. 85.
- 12 "Behind America's Note To the U.S.S.R.," *Nation*, September 11, 1935, p. 284.
- 13 *Nation*, October 16, 1935, p. 421. See also editorial comment on p. 425 on usefulness of the Johnson Act against Italy.
- 14 *New Republic*, October 16, 1935, pp. 254-255.
- 15 *New Republic*, October 9, 1935, p. 243.
- 16 *New Republic*, October 23, 1935, p. 282.
- 17 "Can America Remain 'Unentangled?'," *Nation*, October 16, 1935, p. 425.
- 18 *Nation*, October 23, 1935, p. 455.
- 19 *New Republic*, November 13, 1935, pp. 11-13.
- 20 *New Republic*, November 6, 1935, p. 362; November 20, 1935, p. 30; "T.R.B.," January 27, 1937, p. 383.
- 21 "Sanctions Under Neutrality," *Nation*, November 13, 1935, p. 553; "The Revival Of British Jingoism," *Nation*, November 13, 1935, p. 552.
- 22 *Nation*, November 20, 1935, p. 577.
- 23 *Nation*, November 27, 1935, p. 605.
- 24 Villard, "Elucidation and Correction," *Nation*, November 27, 1935, pp. 612-613.
- 25 See especially "Oil On Troubled Waters," *Nation*, December 18, 1935, p. 700, in which instance the editors implored Roosevelt to interfere with the American companies.
- 26 "Dress Rehearsal For Neutrality," *New Republic*, November 13, 1935, pp. 4-5.
- 27 Bliven, "Neutrality Is Not Enough," *New Republic*, November 20, 1935, pp. 38-40.
- 28 "Sanctions Or Neutrality," *New Republic*, December 25, 1935, p. 185; Schuman on pp. 200-201 of this issue.
- 29 *New Republic*, February 12, 1936, p. 266. See also the letters of Norborne Harris Crowell in the issues of February 5 and April 15.
- 30 Schuman review of Dulles and Armstrong in *Nation*, February 12, 1936, pp. 196-198; Dean, "The Responsibilities Of Peace," *Nation*, February 26, 1936, pp. 244-246.
- 31 *Nation*, February 5, 1936, p. 141.
- 32 *Nation*, February 12, 1936, p. 173.
- 33 *Nation*, January 29, 1936, pp. 125-127.
- 34 Beard, "Heat and Light on Neutrality," *New Republic*, February 12, 1936, pp. 8-9.
- 35 Beard, "In Time Of Peace Prepare For Peace," *New Republic*, March 18, 1936, pp. 156-159.
- 36 *Nation*, April 8, 1936, p. 456.
- 37 "Strengthening the Neutrality Act," *Nation*, January 8, 1936, p. 32.
- 38 "Mr. Roosevelt's Magic," *Nation*, January 15, 1936, p. 60.
- 39 *Nation*, January 8, 1936, p. 32; January 15, 1936, p. 57; February 19, 1936, p. 205.
- 40 *New Republic*, January 22, 1936, p. 294.
- 41 *New Republic*, January 8, 1936, p. 238.
- 42 "T.R.B." in *New Republic*, January 15, 1936, pp. 28-282; Flynn in *New Republic*, February 26, 1936, p. 74.
- 42 Villard, "Roosevelt Betrays Neutrality," *Nation*, February 26, 1936, p. 239.
- 44 *New Republic*, June 10, 1936, pp. 150-151.
- 45 *New Republic*, April 29, 1936, p. 326.
- 46 *Nation*, June 27, 1936, p. 826.
- 47 *New Masses*, August 25, 1936, p. 4.
- 48 *Nation*, September 19, 1936, p. 335.
- 49 Flynn, "Does Roosevelt Love Peace?," *New Republic*, September 16, 1936, pp. 155-156.
- 50 *Nation*, September 5, 1936, p. 260.
- 51 Villard, "The Donkey Brays Again," *Nation*, July 4, 1936, pp. 10-12.
- 52 *New Republic*, June 24, 1936, p. 187; July 8, 1936, pp. 252, 254.
- 53 *Nation*, July 18, 1936, Section Two.
- 54 Knox was bitterly attacked by Bliven in a signed editorial "Upper Class Muckering," *New Republic*, October 21, 1936, p. 307.
- 55 *New Republic*, September 23, 1936, pp. 207-208.
- 56 "What Will The Parties Do?," *New Republic*, September 23, 1936, p. 196.
- 57 *New Republic*, November 4, 1936, p. 19.

- 58 *New Republic*, October 14, 1936, p. 277.
- 59 Villard in *Nation* October 10, 1936, p. 420; Flynn in *New Republic*, November 4, 1936, p. 19. Among the other respondents to the *New Republic* poll who announced they would vote for Thomas were Van Wyck Brooks, John Dewey, Harold M. Groves, Morris R. Cohen and Sidney Hook.
- 60 *New Republic*, November 11, 1936, p. 29.
- 61 *New Republic*, January 6, 1937, p. 283.
- 62 *Nation*, January 2, 1937, pp. 8-9.
- 63 "Mr. Roosevelt's Blank Check," *New Republic*, November 11, 1936, pp. 31-32.
- 64 *New Republic*, November 25, 1936, p. 102.
- 65 "T.R.B.," *New Republic*, November 25, 1936, p. 111.
- 66 *New Republic*, December 9, 1936, p. 155.
- 67 *New Republic*, December 23, 1936, p. 228.
- 68 *New Republic*, December 2, 1936, p. 127; Ward, "Washington Weekly" column, *Nation*, November 28, 1936, p. 617.
- 69 "T.R.B.," *New Republic*, January 6, 1937, p. 298; *Nation*, April 10, 1937, p. 393. The *New Republic* suggested that if Caffrey were to be kept in the "Foreign Service," that he not be assigned to any nation in the Western Hemisphere or any Latin nation in Europe. April 21, 1937, p. 307.
- 70 *Nation*, October 24, 1936, p. 462.
- 71 *Nation*, January 2, 1937, p. 1.
- 72 "Pro-Fascist Neutrality," *Nation*, January 9, 1937, pp. 33-34.
- 73 *Nation*, January 2, 1937, p. 19.
- 74 *Common Sense*, January, 1937, p. 29.
- 75 *New Republic*, February 3, 1937, p. 395.
- 76 "What Kind Of Neutrality Law?," *New Republic*, February 10, 1937, pp. 3-5.
- 77 *New Republic*, February 24, 1937, pp. 63-66, for citations below.
- 78 *New Republic*, March 10, 1937, pp. 192-193.
- 79 "14 Points For Congress," *Nation*, January 9, 1937, p. 32.
- 80 *Nation*, February 13, 1937, p. 170; February 27, 1937, pp. 228-229.
- 81 "Trade In Peace and War," *New Republic*, March 10, 1937, pp. 125-126. The bill would avoid placing "the seal of governmental approval on one side of the conflict while building up an enormous export trade to it," "the surest way of getting us in." On statement on Pittman resolution passing the Senate, see *New Republic*, March 17, 1937, p. 150.
- 82 Villard column, *Nation*, May 1, 1937, p. 508. Editorial criticism of Villard on p. 495.
- 83 *Nation*, May 8, 1937, pp. 524-525.
- 84 *New Republic*, January 1, 1935, pp. 235-236.
- 85 *New Republic*, March 13, 1935, pp. 126-128.
- 86 *New Republic*, March 20, 1935, pp. 154-156.
- 87 Mitchell, "The Japs Live Cheap," *New Republic*, May 1, 1935, pp. 337-338.
- 88 *New Republic*, May 8, 1935, p. 352.
- 89 "Japan Takes Another Step," *Nation*, June 19, 1935, p. 700.
- 90 *New Republic*, June 19, 1935, p. 150.
- 91 Peffer, "Our Choice In the Far East," *Harper's*, June, 1935, pp. 18-25.
- 92 *New Republic*, October 23, 1935, p. 282. On the other hand, in an editorial on November 27 the *New Republic* declared that it was the businessmen who were pressuring Roosevelt to adopt an aggressive policy toward Japan. pp. 58-59.
- 93 *New Republic*, November 20, 1935, p. 38.
- 94 *New Republic*, October 16, 1935, pp. 257-258, 259.
- 95 *New Republic*, December 4, 1935, pp. 90-91.
- 96 *New Republic*, January 15, 1936, pp. 281-282.
- 97 "T.R.B." columns, *New Republic*, November 20, 1935, p. 44; December 11, 1935, pp. 128-129.
- 98 "A Gentleman's Agreement," *Common Sense*, February, 1936, p. 5.
- 99 *Nation*, April 8, 1936, p. 435.
- 100 *New Republic*, February 12, 1936, pp. 5-6, for this and subsequent citation.
- 101 *Nation*, June 10, 1936, pp. 736-737.
- 102 *New Republic*, September 16, 1936, pp. 143-144.

- 103 Lattimore review of Stimson in *New Republic*, October 28, 1936, p. 357; Stewart review of Stimson in *Nation*, January 2, 1937, p. 24.
- 104 *New Republic*, February 24, 1937, pp. 63-66. A *New Republic* editorial comment on November 25, 1936 scoffed once more at the memory of Henry Cabot Lodge, declaring that his main stock in trade in the field of public policy had always been "advocacy of the tariff and down with the Japs."
- 105 *New Republic*, June 30, 1937, pp. 220-221.
- 106 *New Republic*, June 30, 1937, p. 224.
- 107 "Can America Ensure Peace?," *New Republic*, June 30, 1937, pp. 209-210, for citations below.
- 108 See especially the bitter editorial "The Court Bitter-Enders," *New Republic*, July 14, 1937, p. 264. A large part of the animus here was directed at Burton K. Wheeler.
- 109 *Nation*, July 3, 1937, pp. 4-5.
- 110 *New Republic*, August 18, 1937, p. 46.
- 111 *New Republic*, July 28, 1937, pp. 319-320.
- 112 *New Republic*, September 1, 1937, pp. 88-89.
- 113 *New Republic*, September 8, 1937, p. 116.
- 114 *New Republic*, September 8, 1937, pp. 130-131.
- 115 "Scuttle Or Bluster," *New Republic*, September 15, 1937, pp. 144-145.
- 116 *Nation*, September 18, 1937, p. 281.
- 117 See Geoffrey Stone, "Neutrality—A Dangerous Myth," *Nation*, September 18, 1937, pp. 283-285, which read like a breath from the *New Masses*. One of the editors of the *American Review* had the same name, and made a strong point of denying authorship while stressing his own anti-Marxism.
- 118 Flynn in *New Republic*, October 6, 1937, p. 243. Bliven's signed editorial in same issue, pp. 231-232. Said Bliven, "The fear of German and Japanese invasion has caused Soviet Russia, in the past five years, to drop everything else and center her whole effort upon military preparation. To do this has damaged her socialist experiment to a degree we cannot yet appreciate, a degree that may prove one of the deep tragedies of all history. Part of the price was an end of Russia's isolation and entry into that much-derided Capitalist sewing circle, the League of Nations."
- 119 *New Republic*, September 22, 1937, pp. 172-173.
- 120 *New Republic*, September 22, 1937, pp. 169-172.
- 121 *New Republic*, September 29, 1937, p. 201.
- 122 *New Republic*, September 29, 1937, p. 198.
- 123 *New Republic*, October 13, 1937, p. 253. Two pages over a *New Republic* editorial queried, "Is This A New Depression?"
- 124 "Quarantine: Gesture Or Policy?," *Nation*, October 16, 1937, pp. 291-292.
- 125 *Nation*, October 16, 1937, p. 405.

LIBERALS AND THE ROOSEVELT
FOREIGN POLICY : II—THE
“COLLECTIVE SECURITY” VERSUS
“ISOLATION” PITCHED BATTLE,
PANAY TO POLAND, 1937–1939

THE PRO-NEUTRALITY LIBERALS TAKE HEART
IN THE EARLY MONTHS AFTER CHICAGO

THE Chicago Bridge address of October 5, 1937 was not the first time President Roosevelt had antagonized the neutralist liberals by indicating his marked leanings on foreign affairs. In his message to Congress in January, 1936 he had attacked the Fascist-National Socialist states with “extraordinary truculence,” in the words of the *New Republic*, which promptly expressed deep disapproval of it, and the now ill-disguised pro-war talk they detected among persons “ordinarily reckoned in the pacifist ranks.” This stimulated a long critical editorial early in February of that year, “Another War For Democracy,” which followed another a short time earlier which did not hide displeasure with his “harsh and entirely true words about autocracies”;¹

It is an ancient rule of diplomacy not to start a fight unless you are prepared to finish it. If it turns out that the President was merely writing an editorial about the superiority of democracy to tyranny, it may yet prove that he would have been wiser to leave the task to the journalists who do it so well—on dull days.

The immediate response to the Chicago speech was not too much different, though there was now the element of disregard for the

fairly stiff May, 1937 Neutrality Act, which caused some novel writhings of apprehensiveness. "T.R.B." disconsolately concluded that the Act was losing its popular support, since there was little popular resentment that he could detect from Washington about its not being invoked in the renewed China war. He could find no newspapers in any section of the country which were not either implacably hostile to it, as those of New York City, or entirely diverted by Japanese atrocity tales, as those of the South and Midwest, to be concerned if the country might be "flirting with war" in a few months. And, as a clincher to justify his deep gloom, he reported on October 13, "Permanent officials of the State Department, who have always opposed the Neutrality Act, are reported to be greatly cheered by the country's evident apathy."²

The speech of the President brought about some strange reactions, to be sure. In approval were roughly the English Tories, Soviet Russia and Communists everywhere, the French, the largest part of the daily press, especially that part which detested the domestic New Deal, the *Nation*, and the Communist Party of the United States. In disapproval were the official policy groups in Italy, Germany and Japan, the Hearst press, almost every pacifist and anti-militarist group in North America, the *New Republic*, and the American Socialist Party.³ But public reaction in the rest of the month of October and into the following month hardly supported "T.R.B." 's bleakness. American Institute of Public Opinion polls registered 69% in favor of stricter neutrality legislation during this time, rather than continuing to leave the issue to the discretion of the President, who had ignored the present one, while 73% demanded that any decision to go to war be submitted to popular referendum, indicating a vital current of support existing for some version of the Ludlow resolution of 1935, about to be brought up again.

The *New Republic* returned to the lists against the Administration with hardly a jog in its pre-Chicago stride. As in the case of the January, 1936 Congressional oration, they concluded FDR was largely engaged in talk for the record, and doubted that he could muster up much support to do anything about the despised regimes abroad;⁴

The incalculable factor in the situation is the President himself. He is probably influenced by the division of his political support on domestic issues, by worry about the economic situation and by the romantic idea that he can unite the country in a world crusade for peace. Unless his new foreign line proves to be more embarrassing than his domestic policy, he may commit the nation to adventure. But the present situation is that nobody knows what can possibly be done to implement the President's bold words. Action is almost sure to be more confused than they were, and to follow them at a very humble distance.

This was an acute presaging of the Brussels Conference, which turned out to be distant enough, and its actions, in view of all the brave talk, humble enough.

Of the three substantial critiques of the Chicago speech published in October by the *New Republic*, that of October 20, "Forcible-Feeble Diplomacy," was by far the lengthiest and most critical. "He used a language made familiar by Woodrow Wilson twenty years ago, and one which has been the stock-in-trade of adherents of the League of Nations, collective security, of the doctrine that peace is indivisible ever since," it stated early in the piece, pouring out a quiet and restrained ridicule of the morality in it, and the devil theory of the "wicked ten per cent who cause the trouble." In this sense it was a continuation of the same type of critique delivered in February, 1936, when it detected the same kind of approach and had commented with acerbity,⁵

This division of the world into the Fascist and the democratic nations is too completely black and white to be true. It is just as realistic to say that the democratic nations are those which have got what they want and are trying to keep it while the Fascist powers are still hungry. Substitute those terms, and the noble war for democracy becomes simply a struggle between a group of elderly burglars and another group of young ones.

But in the main, the attack of October 20 on the newest speech of the President was a review of all its main arguments against such a policy, and an arraignment of FDR for having neglected the law of the land in the case of the May Neutrality statute. It once more asserted the idea that there were better hopes for long-range peace if the United States remained outside such ambitious projects of trying to pacify the world, and warned that the making of threats without intending to back them up with force was a much more incendiary policy, making collective security "dangerous nonsense," since "It merely provided the agitation necessary to excite us to a fighting pitch after the damage is done and our potential enemies have gone too far to withdraw." The attack on the League of Nations was more aggravated than that on the President, the League now having sunk to simply an agency for peace preservation which sought to achieve it through "the menace of its threats." And for the President it reserved the official rebuke of the journal itself: ⁶

If Mr. Roosevelt means anything by his words, he means that he has abandoned the neutrality course laid out for him by Congress. The *New Republic*, which has supported this course from the beginning, believes he has made a dangerous and tragic choice. But if the United States is to follow that line that he seems to have chosen, it will be fatal to pursue it with anything less than whole hearted vigor.

Stung by the epithets of the supporters of the Chicago speech policy, another editorial the following week rejected the idea that "adherents of resolute abstention from war, and from courses likely to lead to war," were "isolationists who cared nothing about what happens to the human race outside the United States," and greatly resented that "the movement to participate forcibly in world affairs is pictured as courageous action." It stubbornly insisted that "To keep a large part of the North American Continent from this contagion is as difficult, heroic and positive a contribution to the future of humanity as can well be conceived." ⁷

Common Sense, which backed a stronger neutrality law and the cutting off of all trade with warring powers only in war materials, turned over its pages to John T. Flynn in the October issue, and his comments on the situation reviewed many of the arguments he was using in his *New Republic* column, in an even more spectacular style. He was for a complete neutrality, and incensed that the 1937 law had not yet been invoked in Asia. Flynn, in great horror of another cycle of war inflation as in 1915-1919, was fully aware that the economic life of Europe was already well under way toward the repetition of such pressures; "Europe today faces the grim fact that her economic life is built on war industries and trade supported by war borrowing-war credit inflation." He suggested supplementing the neutrality laws with additional statutes which would go into effect immediately upon American involvement in a war, providing for the paying of all war costs entirely out of taxes instead of borrowing, an argument which he spread in the *New Republic* with great urgency in 1939 and 1940, it will be recalled. But he was extremely hostile to the politics of the collective security idea as well: ⁸

Are we in favor of joining Britain and France to prevent Germany and Italy from wrecking the British or French Empire? Is there anyone who wants to send a great host of young Americans and a great stream of American dollars to Europe to make good for the external imperial rackets of two democratic nations? I doubt if there is any lover of democracy who hates German and Italian Fascism more deeply than I do. But I am not prepared to destroy American men and wealth to save European empires under the guise of destroying Fascism or the pretense of saving democracy.

Liberals who had become convinced of the rightness of the collective security view began to bombard the *New Republic* with critical letters in the fall and winter of 1937, including a goodly number of Soviet sympathizers. The crisis produced by the Trotsky trials resulted in much defensiveness among the well-wishers of Communist Russia, where there was a tendency to believe the trials were evidence

of serious internal weakness and therefore calling for an extra measure of support from Communists and fellow-travelers outside of Russia. There was an intimate relation between this fact and the wave of fervor for collective security among Communists at the same time. By far the loudest whoops of support for the Chicago Bridge speech on the Left in America were to be found in the *New Masses*, the *Fight* and the *Communist*. Simultaneously Communist attacks on the President halted, the bitter cartoons disappeared and a defense began of his domestic program, which the Reds had ridiculed month after month since its inception.

At the same time the Communist sympathizers conducted a vitriolic attack on the neutralist liberals, the *New Masses* establishing for the first time the dogma that anti-interventionism, neutralism, "isolation," were really only different terms for anti-Sovietism. Both the *New Republic* and *Common Sense* were selected for a bitter assault in the *New Masses* on November 23, with Bliven, Flynn and Nathaniel Peffer the individual targets, in a piece by Theodore Draper, "The Case Against Isolation."⁹ The article trembled with fear of an immediate German attack on the Soviet Union and the consequences in the absence of collective security. The pro-Soviet press was slightly inhibited from striking Bliven too hard, since he supported the lifting of the embargo on the Spanish Loyalists and favored the invocation of it in Asia, which Communists also supported. Furthermore, he was recognized as a friend of Russia of long standing. But they could not forgive him for his tenacity on the issue of standing for American neutrality; the *New Republic's* unconcealed sympathy for the Stalinists in their intramural contest with the Trotsky forces was insufficient to balance off this domestic foreign policy stand.¹⁰

Though the *Nation* escaped Communist condemnation, it in its own turn was temporarily appalled and subdued by other consequences of the Chicago speech. Villard, who had impulsively championed the address, found himself in distress, disagreeing with half a dozen peace societies for making a public statement in which they had charged that the President had "set us directly upon the path to war." Villard protested that FDR had stated "an attitude, and not a program."¹¹ The editors were also repelled by some of the old and new recruits to the collective security side of American foreign policy which the President's speech had flushed up, and the statements especially of Stimson and Alf Landon, Roosevelt's adversary for the presidency, made them particularly apprehensive. Their spirited and joyous subscription to the sentiments of the address, the editors said on January 1, 1938, "smell far too much of powder for our comfort," and in particular they resented Landon's view that the British socialists and pacifists should not have opposed that country's entrance into the First World War, as "a resurgence of the martial spirit." But their

faith in collective security was undimmed, even if it was unsuccessful anywhere, and they persisted in denying that it was meant as a policy for action "against any nation." "It is rather action for certain standards of peaceful and non-aggressive international behavior," they averred.¹²

As far as the home-front political scene was concerned, the weeks right after the momentous declaration on foreign policy intentions were marked by a relapse from the alarm and concern of the early fall. The *New Republic* late in October thought that the special session of Congress called to enact domestic legislation was a sign that the President was trying to change the subject and retreat from the bee's hive that he had stirred up earlier in the month, under the conviction that the attempt "to unite his followers in a foreign crusade" was even more potentially embarrassing than the domestic situation. In addition, it was hoped that Congress would get around to a tougher neutrality policy while it was in session.¹³ The *Nation* in an editorial on November 27, "Is Roosevelt On the Run?", said, "The gloom among the liberals in Congress is thicker than it has been for years," and believed that "a large part of the blame" for the deteriorated situation "rested on the shoulders of Mr. Roosevelt and the Administration."¹⁴

In all the talk about collective security after the Chicago speech, it was usually assumed that the British and French were the main factors in this, now with the aid of the United States, at least on the psychological level. But "T.R.B." brought out on November 3 that if any opposition to Japan was to come out of all the talk as a concrete step, it would have to be Russia as Japan's nearest neighbor among the collective security powers; "Despite Mr. Roosevelt's challenging words, if Japan is to be quarantined, the USSR willy-nilly must be the quarantine officer."¹⁵ For this reason, as the Nine Power Conference meeting began to gather at Brussels for the ostensible purpose of preparing a policy of pressure to apply against Japan, there were some mixed views as to what was likely to emerge from the talk. Nathaniel Peffer's "Nine Power Politics" in the same issue of the *New Republic* thought that there would be some stupendous buck-passing there, with an attempt to induce or maneuver the United States "once more into the position of carrying the ball in whatever offense may be contemplated against Japan," while the other powers stuck to matters much closer home, particularly in the Mediterranean, now that the conflicts resulting from interference in the Spanish war were reaching a molten stage.¹⁶

The *Nation* ten days later expressed exceptional unhappiness with the statement made at the Conference itself by Norman Davis, the American delegate, and with the whole tenor of the meeting, suspecting that not much was going to come out of it. With a session of Con-

gress about to begin, it urged public pressure on it and the President to take the initiative at Brussels "in sponsoring collective measures to quarantine aggression."¹⁷ But it was to no avail. The outcome provided the *New Republic* an opportunity to gloat on December 1. In an editorial "Chicago Fails At Brussels," it noted that the Conference did nothing but issue a "mild reproach" to Japan. "The Brussels failure was predicted by the *New Republic* and it is a sad commentary on the enthusiasm aroused by Mr. Roosevelt's bold words," it spoke in mock concern.¹⁸ To the *New Republic* it was the best news it could think of to back its call for a toughening of the 1937 Neutrality Act.

But there was no calculation that an incident in Asia would bring the issue back so urgently and vividly, which the Japanese bombing of the ship *Panay* up the Yang-tze River in China promptly did. On January 5, 1938 the *New Republic*, in connection with the furor over this, called loudly, "We urge our readers, if they are opposed to our further running the risk of war, to bring all possible pressure upon the authorities in Washington to remove Americans from China."¹⁹ John T. Flynn exploded in an angry column over the spate of war talk and aggressive posturing which had resulted from the way in which this event had been portrayed to the people of the country, and both he and Bliven, the latter in a long signed editorial "This Is Where I Came In," outlined the first stirrings of the bi-partisan interventionist team taking shape, with sharp disfavor. Much emphasis began to be laid now on the shift from domestic to foreign policy.

In his somber comparison of the tenor of the United States-and-world situation with that prevailing in 1917, Bliven declared,²⁰

I remember vividly the days before April, 1917 when a country that did not want to go to war was tricked and bullied and persuaded into doing so. That war was a useless and unholy enterprise; not only this country but the whole world would have been far better off if we had stayed out of it and permitted the European conflict to end, as it probably would have ended, with a negotiated peace. Today I see signs that the same sort of pressure is being applied, for reasons which have as little merit, to push us into the Far Eastern struggle.

Speaking of the new round of tension he commented, "People are beginning to spout magnificent but meaningless phrases concerning 'our national honor,'" and he also expressed much alarm at the recruits to the cause in the form of Landon, calling the situation a "deep national crisis," and Colonel Frank Knox, "the fighting newspaper publisher," announcing he was "standing behind the President." "There isn't any national crisis, Mr. Landon," pleaded Bliven, while in the case of Colonel Knox he observed, "Nobody has asked

Col. Knox to stand anywhere at all." He was as much agitated by Hull's announcement that 7,000 American servicemen would be kept in China indefinitely, Stimson's belligerent letter to the *New York Times*, the martial flavor of the columns written by Dorothy Thompson and the glib irresponsibility of Walter Winchell talking about the likelihood of war with Japan in a matter of weeks. Japan was taking the minds of the people from a business collapse "which in a few weeks has recapitulated the whole economic history of 1930 and 1931," he went on, while, as in 1917, "we were writing notes to a foreign power that was interfering with the right of our citizens to walk in the path of an avalanche." And he considered it unfair for FDR to announce at a press conference that he could count on the patriotism of the American people to stand behind him in whatever action he took; "When you put it that way, Mr. President, the country will always and automatically say Yes," Bliven put it apologetically; "We have been conditioned through lifetimes to make a positive response to such a positive demand." And it was all irrelevant, besides; "The flag is being waved as though the past twenty years of world history had never taken place."

But the fight was far from gone in the anti-collective security liberals, even if this editorial seemed to feel that hostilities were not too far away. The *Nation* during these days was still defending collective security as an ideological policy but attacking the Administration's concrete steps in the national defense field, with editorial policy in harmony with Villard's strictures for one of the brief moments in these hectic days between the *Panay* and Austrian crises. One of the first fruits of the collective security program so dear to the *Nation's* heart was the budget proposal of FDR early in the month. A January 15 editorial was most shocked at his request of a billion dollars for defense, which it correctly surmised was "just the beginning of a rearmament program comparable to those recently imposed upon the peoples of Europe." As for the defense of this step and the expansion of the Navy in excess of the limitations of the London and Washington Treaties, on the grounds of providing employment and strengthening of the armed forces against Fascism, the *Nation* could only growl "rank hypocrisy;" "Our defense establishment is already greater than is necessary for any legitimate purpose."²¹ There was still no admission of the relationship of cause and effect among the editors of the *Nation*, despite their unrest over the sudden spurt of attention to arms. Max Lerner in a piece titled "Mr. Roosevelt, Ringmaster" on January 15 sounded more like the *New Republic* when he suggested that as far as he could see the Administration had nothing to rely upon in combating the reigning depression than what was left of the WPA appropriations and "the armament appropriation of a billion." In the crisis and the confusion, Lerner said, "Mr. Roose-

velt's mind turns more to arms and navalism, where he feels himself on firm ground, and away from economics, where (if I may be allowed the pun) he is at sea." ²²

Flynn three days earlier in the *New Republic* had also tied foreign policy and the domestic economic impasse together in the form of a parable in which the President was the "Great Physician" called in to conquer the "Great Epidemic," employing futile remedies proposed by all manner of advisers, who then ²³

remembered one group he had failed to consult. So he called in the generals and admirals. Before long the trumpets were sounding, the drums rolling. Great battleships rose upon the ways and thousands wrought upon their sides, and in the great steel and chemical and other industries. Men rushed about selling government bonds. Women toiled night and day knitting for the guards. Before this vigorous regimen the dreadful disease rolled away like the morning mist and soon the sun was shining down upon a healthy, happy and marching people.

As Heywood Broun put it the week before in his column "Shoot the Works" in the same liberal weekly, "Generals seem to be moving back again into favor." ²⁴ The *Panay* case slowly subsided, as a new wave of agitation for the passage of the Ludlow war declaration popular referendum bill replaced it on the foreign policy agenda.

THE DEFEAT OF THE LUDLOW AMENDMENT AND THE GREAT BEARD-BROWDER DEBATE

On Christmas Day, 1937 the *Nation* announced, "We do not like the Ludlow resolution proposing a constitutional amendment for a national referendum on war." Especially disliked about it was its crippling of Presidential power "to speak with authority," that our foreign policy might not be "brushed away with contempt by the world's dictators." Its main weakness however was thought to be the assumption that "foreign policy is determined at the point of the declaration of war," and since a long series of steps preceded this in all cases, the resolution to be consistent should call for a referendum at each step. ²⁵

Four days later the *New Republic* announced its firm editorial support of this measure; "We believe that the convictions back of the Ludlow resolution are valid, and that if the government is to respect them it must dispense with the traditional ideas and methods of diplomacy." It argued that its support was based on the convictions that American participation in the war of 1914 was a mistake, that it

caused irretrievable losses without winning what we were assured it was being fought for, that the miseries and costs of modern war were so great that there was no reason for ever fighting except only for defense against invasion, and that finally there was "the suspicion that even representative government cannot be trusted not to get itself involved in a war situation through the devious channels of diplomacy and under the pressure of interests and propaganda."

It had its doubts whether such a measure might stop the onset of war, nevertheless; "The President," it pointed out, "can carry on a dispute with a foreign power and even conduct hostilities abroad without any declaration of war whatever," going on to say, "A still more serious objection is that diplomatic and executive action, coupled with a long history of incidents, speeches and newspaper and radio agitation, can get the voters themselves into a fighting mood, so that the referendum would, when the crisis comes, be merely an empty gesture." It still considered "adequate neutrality legislation" more important, because this prevented the crisis from coming instead of proposing to deal with it after it had become a fact.²⁶

A variety of old-line liberals took the stand on behalf of the referendum also, Villard challenging *Nation* editorial opinion in all respects and publishing copious extracts from the President's Chautauqua speech of August 14, 1936 as evidence on his own side. Norman Thomas wrote to the *Nation* registering his support as well, with the reservation in cases of attack, while several writers to the editors suggested a substitute in the form of a referendum on conscription, which was much more easily defined than invasion and was clearly intended for service overseas. The *New Republic* gave top priority in their correspondence section to a long telegram from Homer Martin of the United Automobile Workers, giving the text of a resolution of the Executive Board of the UAW announcing its "whole-hearted endorsement to the Lafollette-Ludlow resolution." With the furor over the *Panay* case still fresh, the resolution also called upon the President to warn all United States citizens out of the Asiatic war area and withdraw all United States armed forces from China.²⁷

But despite an A.I.P.O. poll which registered a better than 70% popular support of it, and the fact that, as *Common Sense* put it, "every genuine progressive in the country but one was on the side of the referendum" in the voting, the forces in favor were unable to match the political acumen of the President and those determined to prevent its passage. The *Nation*, admitting it was for its objectives, but insisting that it was impractical, and likely to "strengthen one of the most sinister developments of recent years—the tendency to wage war without formal declaration," announced that it had been "buried by a close vote" and expressed no regrets.²⁸ But the *New Republic* was especially critical in comments late in January, calling the Presi-

dent's letter to Representative Bankhead seeking his support for defeat of the measure "an unusual resort for any President in defeating undesired legislation," while "T.R.B." in his January 26 column was confident that other measures similar in intent to the Ludlow resolution stood a good chance of passage ultimately, since he was sure that the way in which the Ludlow proposal had been defeated was good evidence "that a majority of Congress" was "far from being converted to Mr. Roosevelt's 'active' foreign policy." ²⁹

In actuality the defeat of the Ludlow measure, given a minimum of attention while it was on the agenda by liberals, represented a major opinion watershed, the last real gesture in the liberal non-intervention tradition to be seriously considered as legislation. Its fate reminded Bliven of that of the bill introduced by Representative Gerald Boileau of Wisconsin, one of the liberal shining lights of 1937-1938 whom "T.R.B." had once suggested as one of the possible Congressional ralliers of an independent congressional liberal movement apart from Roosevelt. Boileau's bill in 1935 would have defined as the military policy of the United States the defense of the United States, Alaska, Hawaii, Panama and United States Caribbean possessions. At the time of the Ludlow measure in 1938 it had not yet been reported out of the congressional committee. Bliven, in his famous "Memorandum on National Policy" of January 26, was more angered by this than by the Ludlow referendum measure's fate. And he harshly went about the task of chastising the Administration for dodging the implications of this and similar legislation because of its deep psychological commitment to be ready to fight anywhere and at any time the British were ready and willing; ³⁰

The American people as a whole do not want war. They fear having our soldiers sent to fight overseas. In so far as they fear anything else, it is military invasion. In spite of this, we continue in a policy which is aimed primarily not at defending our own shores but at being able to fight whenever Britain fights, and in the same way.

Although in one sense the initiative was lost on the national political level with the defeat of the Ludlow forces, following which there began the most remarkable somersault of American political opinion on foreign affairs and politics in the nation's history, in the following eighteen months, liberals in favor of non-involvement via collective security acted in subsequent months as if the fight had just begun. The struggle with their interventionist colleagues waxed to an ardent glow, and some notable exchanges occurred in the last two months of 1937 and in the first two months of 1938, during which time some serious testimonials of faith in one view or the other took place. The most important was that of the monthly *Common Sense*, which

changed its format and platform in January, abandoning its tendency to ride between the two weeklies and coming into the foreign policy tournament frankly for the first time, espousing a vehement non-interventionist approach to American foreign policy and utter refusal to take sides in the Communist-*cum*-democracies-*versus*-Fascist power struggle. In a six-column editorial in February it frankly confessed "We may say at once that we hold to what is crudely called the 'isolationist' position as opposed to 'collective security,'" admitting that the latter position was an honorable one and not seeking to undermine the character of those supporting it. And when it held its third annual "Jamboree" in New York on the fifth of that month, its speakers, Major General William C. Rivers, Thurman W. Arnold, H. Jerry Voorhis and Henry A. Wallace, produced copious and vigorous "isolationist" remarks coupled with just as vigorous exhortations to pursue reform at home rather than military adventure abroad, with Wallace judiciously confining all his remarks to domestic issues.⁸¹

This turn was partially forecast by a long and angry two column letter to the *Nation* by one of *Common Sense's* editors, Alfred Bingham, protesting a particularly aggravating Popular-Front-type, pro-collective security article by I. F. Stone in the former weekly on November 6 of the previous year. Its tribute to the Soviet Union as the really only genuine anti-Fascist State, and its taking seriously the possibility of an Italian air raid across the Atlantic on the United States, and its allegation that Communists fighting on the barricades in Madrid were actually defending the United States aroused Bingham's ire. He heatedly denied Stone's claim for the Russian Communists, at the same time insisting that sticking to collective security meant the eventual "taking up the cudgels on behalf of Moscow." He dismissed Stone's "1937 Is Not 1914" as "alarmist cries," and felt there was not the slightest reason for fearing the export of German, Italian or Spanish Fascism to this country, although we might easily incubate a native form, "as a direct result of our participation in a war to save democracy."⁸²

This was the form in which the more famous exchanges occurred, that between Norman Thomas and Raymond Leslie Buell in the *Nation* in December, 1937, and the even more celebrated one between Charles A. Beard and Earl Browder in the *New Republic*, which was published on February 2, 1938. They pitted two old stalwarts of the non-interventionist school against voluble exponents of the collective security persuasion, and incidentally spot-lighted the widely-separated elements which were gathering for collective security in the persons of Buell and Browder.

Thomas called collective security "a utopian dream," and charged that its protagonists were far too interested in denouncing its opponents than defining it, or suggesting how to apply it. If it was to be

put into effect via sanctions, how were they to know if it was successful, or whether they had really launched a preface to war? He insisted that application of this form of economic pressure on Japan at the moment would lead to a speedy attack on the Netherlands East Indies, and he refused to believe that defense of this colony would be a war for "democracy." He characterized Roosevelt's Chicago speech as "an undemocratic gesture toward changing American policy, a gesture inconsistent with the President's preceding acts, and one which led the world to expect something more than another futile conference to add to Norman H. Davis's long unbroken record of failure."

As far as he himself was concerned, Thomas bridled angrily at how he had been victimized by the only form of attack he had charged the collective security supporters were capable of; "I object to being dismissed as an isolationist when I insist that we have a right to utilize for our peace the advantages of our geography and historic position, and that it is more practical to keep the United States government out of war than to use it in war for ideal ends." But he could not suppress a telling shot of his own at the psychological base of the collective security mentality;³³

Truly a new age of faith is upon us when men and women old enough to remember how we proposed to make the world safe for democracy in one war and got Hitler—can believe in a crusade for democracy led by Stalin, Roosevelt, Chamberlain and the French General Staff.

Buell was serenely confident that the "New Isolationism" of economic self-containment, continental self-defense, conscription of capital in wartime and the Ludlow Referendum was already a proved failure and could easily be subverted. He favored the strengthening of the Hull reciprocal trade program, amending the Neutrality Act to provide for Presidential discretion in imposing embargoes, cooperation on international embargoes in raw materials, as well as a policy to "seek a basis of appeasement in the Pacific." He favored the Boxer Rebellion-era thinking of restoring Chinese "sovereignty," while applying serious consideration to "Japan's grievances against the outside world" through some "definite offer of reconstruction." The persistence of a feeling of partial guilt for Japan's behavior was the remarkable aspect of this testimonial by Buell, one of the most articulate spokesmen of the League of Nations-*Foreign Affairs* circle of admirers of a collective security redounding primarily to the benefit of England.

The slant of collective security seen exclusively from the point of view of its contribution to the comfort and well-being of Communist Russia, the other side of the curious collective security complex, was

delivered for the readers of the *New Republic* by Earl Browder a little over a month later. It was stirred up by one of Bliven's most telling forays against interventionism, a long signed piece published on December 1, 1937 titled "Collective Insecurity."³⁴ It was mainly inspired by the collapse of the Brussels Conference and its flabby rebuke to Japan. But what made it memorable was its frank recognition that the protagonists of the League had formidable allies, and ones which he admitted taking more seriously, even though the United States Congress did not seem to be aware they existed; "It is the American Communist movement and its sympathizers." Confessing that he still was of the belief that Russia was "the least aggressive, most genuinely pacifist great country in the world" at the moment, he could not go along with the case of the American Communists, nevertheless. The main reason for his skepticism was his belief that the Communist statement of the case for collective security was not "framed in American terms or the American interest," "but for the preservation of the Soviet Union." "Obviously, it is to Russia's advantage to make as many allies as possible," Bliven admitted; "If I were a Russian, I am sure I should take the same attitude and work for it with all my might." But, not being a Russian, Bliven said he had to recognize other possibilities; that the Russians might be wrong in saying that Fascism and democracy *had* to come to an Armageddon showdown; that the Russian government might be poorly advised about the temper of the American people, and that what was best for the future of Russia was not necessarily best for the future of America.

Bliven also rejected the "inevitability" theory of being dragged into any big ensuing war, and he was especially unimpressed now by the contagion theory of the spread of Fascism, long a Communist property and on the whole still eagerly accepted by pro-Russian liberals. He argued that this proceeded "from internal factors and along characteristic national lines," and that outside aid could never be more than of very slight help to such a movement. The danger to democracy everywhere was purely local in his view, and he admonished the Communists and others still thinking along the foreign bogey formula of the advance of Fascism, "If we really want democracy to survive and to triumph over Fascism, we might well begin by making it work at home in every one of the great powers that are listed as democracies today," and not "destroy their civilization in a vain attempt to fight brutality with brutality."

When the editors presented the case for and against neutrality as expounded by Beard and Browder a few weeks later, it was titled "Collective Security—A Debate,"³⁵ and in a prefatory comment it was announced that Browder was basing his statement not on Beard but on what Bliven previously had said about the relationship between the Communists and collective security.

The term "peace-loving nations," which became a ubiquitous political catch-phrase in the 1941-1945 period, and used generously by United States leaders in particular, as in the short address by Cordell Hull at the beginning of the Dumbarton Oaks conference in 1944, was originally a property of the Communist Party everywhere and Russian leaders in particular in the 1933-1939 era of their propaganda in the advancement of collective security. Such a slogan was absolutely necessary to give meaning to the Popular Front drive aimed at molding liberal governments into a common understanding with the Soviet Union. The Communist press used it liberally to distinguish Russia from Germany, Italy and Japan, "the three war-making powers," as Browder described them in the *New Republic*, and the Communists began to thunder it after FDR's Chicago speech. It was an integral part of Browder's whole approach to collective security; the peace-lovers had to protect themselves from the war-lovers. Browder hailed Roosevelt's speech as also "the Communist conception of a correct and effective peace policy for the United States," and gave vent to unrestrained enthusiasm at the President's having analyzed the world scene as one in which the freedom and security of 90 percent of the world's people were being endangered by the threats of the other 10 percent. For that reason he urged the "fifty to sixty effective governments of the world" to combine in support of this thesis at once, and enforce an airtight "embargo upon all economic transactions with the aggressors," as "the only sensible means of implementing Roosevelt's speech in Chicago on October 5." This he asserted "certainly can be done," "unless the great masses are also afflicted with the Hamlet-like paralysis that has gripped the minds of the *New Republic's* editors."

Browder angrily denied that collective security promised to help Russia more than the United States, asserted that Japan's interests lay east and not west, and that the California coast was one of their objectives. Therefore he reasoned that America needed Russia's help "far more pressingly" than the reverse at that moment; Russia, Browder boasted, was fully prepared to defend herself, and was busily weeding out the last of the traitors who might have turned her over to Hitler, while the United States, "rich and full of booty, is still considered by the world to be in a pacifist funk."

At the close of his brief summary of the Communist position, Browder announced, "It is my conviction that the Fascist dictatorships can be halted only by superior force." It was a significant deviation from his early plea for economic sanctions, and a beam of blinding light on the real essence of the struggle, delivered with aplomb, and illustrated particularly by the resistance of the Communists in Spain and China, which he thought might be much more successful, given "concerted economic action by the great powers." He closed by

commending the President once more for seeing the world as the Communists did.

Beard began by revealing he was utterly unimpressed by FDR's Chicago speech, counter-charged that his Administration, "bewildered and baffled by the economic impasse at home, is employing sentimental coverages for excursions abroad," and scathingly attacked Hull for his taking "flight into lofty clouds of sentimentality" over the *Panay* bombing case. Beard went on to challenge most everything the speech and Browder had said, denied that the 90% of the world all wanted peace and democracy, promised that the "quarantined" 10% would retaliate in desperation upon any such concerted pressure as Browder outlined, and that there were honest grounds for their unrest anyway. It was his point that "the present distribution of population, resources and empires" could not be "maintained indefinitely," that the governments of the 90% were motivated more by clashes in national interests and not merely by "democratic ideology." As for the larger states in this sanctified group, Beard charged that "The great democratic powers want peace and the possession of all they have gathered up in the way of empires by methods not entirely different from those recently employed, let us say, by Italy in Ethiopia."

He went on to challenge the idea that democratic ideology was the conditioning factor, pointing out that it had done nothing for the survival of democracy in Germany between 1918 and 1933, nor for Spain, and as for spreading it by war, "if any person can see hopes for democracy in another military and naval crusade for democracy, after looking at the fruits of the last crusade, then his mind passeth my understanding." Beard dismissed the idea of ideological purity of the contending sides FDR and Browder had conjured up, insisting that there were no such sides assembled in reality, and he scoffed at Browder's assertion of the deadly danger to California by Japanese invasion as "technically absurd."

Browder had declared that collective security was a promise due to the 27,000,000 voters who had supported FDR in 1936, but Beard took him to task here rather brutally, pointing out that there was no evidence of popular support for collective security at all in 1936, and that Roosevelt had carefully refrained from posing the issue then; "Like Woodrow Wilson in 1916, he waited until he was safely past the election hurdle." Beard insisted the opposite was true; the people had voted down the League of Nations and all other similar schemes, and certainly wanted to stay out of the next war. "That Roosevelt would take them in swiftly if it comes is highly probable," Beard granted, "but they are certainly not longing for another preposterous crusade for democracy on the battlefields of Europe." Beard thought that there were enough things to get straight in the United States "for

anybody who feels hot with morals and is affected with delicate sensibilities,"

But assuming that we are just burning up to right all the world's wrongs, it is highly probable that the European powers can settle their affairs better without our help than with it. If we offer our aid, we enable one group of powers to impose their interests on another group. If we stay out, they know they have to count on themselves and may be able to compose their own difficulties. If they cannot, then there is the experience of 1917-1919 to show that the government of the United States cannot close European history by ushering in the utopia of universal philanthropy and universal democracy. It is not lack of good will that should hold our hand. It is a little suspicion, born of experience, that we are not quite smart enough to dispose of Europe's unfinished business.

The *New Republic* backed Beard without reservation,³⁶ but the letters by readers which were published in subsequent issues were mixed, indicating much more support for collective security than had been evident in that department in the previous five years. For some months thereafter the Communist press and its supporting agencies poured invective on Beard, Bliven and the *New Republic*. Browder published his own rebuttal of Beard in the *New Masses* on March 1, denying that it had been a debate with Beard but merely posed as one by Bliven. Fred Brown in the *Communist* the same month deprecated Beard at some length as "the spokesman of isolationism among the confused liberals in America," the famous controversy reverberating in intellectual circles for many months. But among the Communists, collective security was now being posed as more than a matter of pragmatic expediency to deal with a crisis at home or to help project their foreign policy. In the January, 1938 editorial "Lenin and Collective Security" in the *Communist* and in the *New Masses* it was argued that collective security to bring down Fascism was a part of Marxist theory and not merely Soviet foreign policy. As the *New Masses* declared on March 22, "the full execution of his [FDR's] Chicago Speech by the United States government is in the interests of progress and therefore in the last analysis of the future Socialist society." ³⁷

This type of interpretation made the views of fellow travelers on the *Nation* look remarkably simple-minded. The Communists did not shrink from the logic of the utility of force, but the former persistently adhered to the argument that collective security was essentially a non-violent measure which was based on its superior bluffing power. Louis Fischer, in a fervent plea on February 26, 1938, "The Road To Peace," imploring liberals not to believe that collective security was a Soviet device, and also not to believe that the Italo-German-Japanese Anti-Communist Pact was sincere, assured his readers that the

Fascist regimes were much too frightened to fight "the larger countries" and that "America's contribution to this peace policy would be safe and inexpensive," consisting of merely withholding materials which these regimes might need.³⁸ A score of *Nation* writers adhered to this view, essentially the time-honored "the-enemy-is-a-coward" approach, yet if he *was not*, and *was not* bluffed down, then collective security *was* a preparatory step to war. But a strong opposition strain still ran through the liberal left, recognizing the contribution Marxist theory gave to such adventurism as collective security. Lancelot Hogben in *Common Sense* for February supplied the antidote to the fellow traveler in his "Marx to Mutton," utterly out of harmony with the usual flow of British Marxist Socialist-liberal writing on foreign affairs, with its fixations on collective security, pro-Russia and war-against-Fascism pleas. In Hogben's view, "Marxism has become a menace to socialism, and the more potent a menace as it compensates for domestic failure by acting as an alibi for Soviet foreign policy." The first faint glimmer of the Communist use of a permanent war scare to promote control and political tenure was seeping in, even though it was to have a brief, violent existence and complete burial after June 22, 1941. Hogben, hoping his fellow countrymen might heed this view, told his American liberal colleagues in this anti-collective security monthly,³⁹

I write now what no British Socialist organ will print. Dragging Britain into another war to end war might kill German Fascism but would certainly establish British Fascism. A peace and isolationist policy with large imperial concessions is the only one for a democratic socialist party to follow. Otherwise socialists will reap the bitter harvest of disillusionment and destruction which lies in wait.

THE POST-CHICAGO SPEECH, RETURN TO CRITICISM OF BIG-NAVY AND JAPANESE POLICIES

In one of his *Nation* columns in the late winter of 1937-1938, Villard characterized the diplomacy of the Administration as the "Hull-Davis-Roosevelt policy of getting ready to steal up behind the bandit nations and hit them over the head when they aren't looking."⁴⁰ It was his belief that it had been done in by changes in British policy represented by the resignation of Anthony Eden and the position of Neville Chamberlain toward Italy and Spain. Ridiculing the support FDR was receiving from figures such as Alf Landon and Frank Knox, Villard was convinced that the overwhelming mass of Americans were utterly opposed to any kind of alliance with Britain, no matter how concealed.

Editorial policy, which favored vague cooperation with Britain, and also France and the Soviet Union, insofar as Asia was concerned, responded strongly to the Administration's reaction to Japan after the *Panay* bombing, and for the next three months it was similar to the *New Republic* in its disapproval, but for utterly different reasons. The *Nation* thought Roosevelt had adopted "probably the most dangerous course which the United States could pursue," neither isolation nor collective security, but "attempting to play a lone hand in opposing Japanese expansion in China." "The United States is running a far greater risk in acting alone," it warned in its January 29 "Policies On Japan" editorial.⁴¹ And with the Hearst press starting to get concerned about the menace of Communism in China, the Administration's program seemed to be going in an avenue quite apart from the issues as posed thus far; the bland vision of a China in which the political forces appeared to be those of *circa* 1905 seemed to be the Administration's assumption.

Through February, 1938 the *Nation* kept battering away at the Japanese policy and tied it in directly with the drive to expand the Navy. On February 5 it sounded the alarm, "Mr. Roosevelt's naval program can be regarded only as a threat of offensive war against Japan,"⁴² while Villard kept punching away at the opposite side of the picture, quoting from Japanese newspapers which explained that Japan would have to match American naval building plans with identical steps. Warned Villard,⁴³

This is the way it always happens. We raise the ante and Japan responds, and then we go her one better, and the vicious circle continues until one day there is a spontaneous conflagration, and the good and kind men, like Franklin Roosevelt and Secretary Hull and Norman Davis, wonder how on earth it could have happened and feel so sad that thousands of American boys must be "liquidated" in early manhood because they could see no other way to save us than by piling up the munitions and the armaments which made the explosion inevitable.

The *New Republic* editors were similarly perturbed during this time, and wanted many questions asked as to what our foreign policy was and what understandings we had with Britain in the issue of Japan; "The country ought not to be bamboozled into this perilous and expensive adventure without knowing why," it protested testily on February 16. Noting that the State Department, "with the obvious encouragement of the President," was "day by day adopting a stiffer attitude toward the Japanese government," it wanted to know why the Neutrality Act still had not been applied to the Asiatic war. The editorial "What Is The Navy For?" stuck firmly to the view that a large majority of the voters wanted no part of any fighting abroad

"for any reason whatsoever, even for such new and high-sounding slogans as enforcing 'collective security,' " and believed that the new secretiveness was bound to lead them "into a position from which it would be impossible to withdraw." This editorial, plus Jonathan Mitchell's essay "Instead of Battleships," denounced the testimony of such admirals as Chief of Naval Operations Leahy maintaining that a greatly enlarged Navy was necessary to defend both the Atlantic and Pacific simultaneously and also South America as "unrealistic nonsense," and counter-charged that the Navy being contemplated in high places was not defensive at all, but "planned to fight in any part of the world, to carry on aggressive warfare." ⁴⁴

Confident in these evaluations of the intentions of the Hull-Roosevelt group as basically warlike, the criticism mounted through the succeeding weeks. "Mr. Hull's Foreign Policy" on February 23, an especially hostile critique, saw the President and Hull repeating "the self-same process by which the pacifist Woodrow Wilson took us into the European war in 1917," with the exception that they were far more culpable than Wilson since they were deliberately ignoring the policy laid down by the Congress, and embarking on a naval expansion program which was a direct consequence of the failure to apply the Neutrality Act. "It is not appropriate to the defense of our territory in North America," it challenged; "it is appropriate only to ability to intervene in foreign wars." ⁴⁵

Inextricably intertwined in Japanese policy, in the view of the *New Republic*, were the Administration's British and foreign trade policies. Only these seemed to explain the vigor of the moves in the direction of the Far East. "T.R.B." insisted that the reciprocal trade program, once fashioned to include Britain on a joint basis, would provide "an extraordinary weapon versus the totalitarian states;" "The Administration's big-navy plan is merely a reinforcement for Mr. Hull's program." Aimed at battering down any attempts on the part of these regimes to secure raw materials and markets from other states through their exclusive bartering arrangements, the plan was to exclude them from all countries which cooperated with America and Britain, under the penalty that any nation choosing to do business with them "would shut herself off from perhaps two-thirds of world trade" in her turn.⁴⁶ This economic theory behind the big-navy and anti-Japan line of early 1938 was rehearsed several times. In his column of February 16, "Merrily We Roll On To War," "T.R.B." was even more convinced that this was so, commenting on the evasions and empty formalities which featured the previous week's Senate debate on foreign policy every time there was a challenge for an explanation or information. He expressed strong suspicions that there already were secret agreements with the British over the Far East, partially reflected by the sudden renewal of interest in the Philip-

pinas, where the return of General MacArthur to train the Filipinos in American military methods and the furnishing of technical aid to President Manuel Quezon seemed to indicate that the Administration was seriously planning to defend the region as a base.

The main piece of evidence that there was more than coincidental circumstances involved was the issuance of almost identical notes to Japan by the United States, France and Britain, virtually in the form of an ultimatum, that the Japanese announce their naval building plans by February 20. This was condemned as an attempt "to bully Japan into behaving," with no possibility of any response by Japan except rejection, although it thought that if the request for information had been submitted to the Japanese "with less ceremonial bellying," they might have been induced to supply the desired news. As for the purely American side of this issue, the *New Republic* expressed much alarm that there was an "apparent willingness to risk a grave incident without any real necessity," and charged the Administration with trying "to buy a stack of chips in the game of international bluff."⁴⁷ And it rejected out of hand the interpretation in Washington that it was the Japanese who had signalled for an unlimited naval race.

As testimony and controversy increased as the naval appropriations bill started nearing the point where the Congress was about to act in March, the criticism among liberals also heightened, and produced some out-of-character reactions. It was a mild sensation to see "T.R.B." lavish praise on Representative Hamilton Fish for testifying in opposition to the bill before the House Naval Affairs Committee, chaired by Carl Vinson, whom "T.R.B." scoffed at in his column of March 2 as "a Roosevelt idolator." The *New Republic* columnist compared Fish to his grandfather (credited by Allan Nevins as being responsible for preventing President U. S. Grant from meddling in foreign adventures in the post-Civil War era), considered his stand sane and judicious, and added incidental comments on the arguments advanced for expanding the navy. "T.R.B." insisted the Japanese tenacity on naval parity would simply result in a situation where neither Japan nor the United States could strike at each other across 7000 miles of the Pacific, and similarly ridiculed threats of invasion by way of Brazil by Germany or any other European power, since the draining of strength which this prodigious venture would require would guarantee that military control of Europe would immediately pass over to the opposition of whatever power undertook it; no power in Europe possessed reserves of any quality or quantity permitting them the luxury of such a venture as a Latin-American expedition.⁴⁸ To John T. Flynn, the situation was one in which Hull was engaged in a one-man war with Japan, and he suggested a peace conference at the upcoming New York World's Fair, which, even if it did not result

in much peace, would have the diversionary effect which the President seemed to be straining for.⁴⁹ But the reporting of the May bill a few days later by the House Military Affairs Committee, which Paul Y. Anderson promptly called "probably the worst measure ever recommended for passage by a committee of Congress" in the *Nation* on March 12, plus FDR's entry of a claim to Canton and Enderbury Islands in the mid-Pacific, which a *Nation* editorial called a "scramble" for property "on the supposition that they may prove strategically useful," were evidences that the thrust toward Asia and preparations for major military growth were not being diverted. H. C. Engelbrecht's "America's Gift To Aggressors," a *Nation* article of some length a few weeks later, indicated that the part being played by the United States in supplying materials of war to the Japanese as part of the steep climb in the world arms trade made the situation anything but single-lane traffic across the Pacific.⁵⁰

But the intense political struggle caused by the debate over the naval appropriations bill was not being overlooked. Beard's "Rough Seas For the Super-Navy" in the *New Republic* on March 30, 1938 was a collection of testy remarks on the methods by which the bill was being presented for passage by the House, part of which consisted of pressure being applied to congressmen to support the bill on the pain of loss of WPA funds on their home-state level. Beard was amazed at the strength of the Republican opposition to the bill, commenting, "When Big-Navy Republicans think the country is safe, something has happened in American politics." Said Beard in his closing comment,⁵¹

The order from on high will be suave enough but it will mean in substance: "Give the President his naval weapons or do without bread." At this beautiful pass the American Republic has arrived in the sixth year of the beneficent New Deal.

THE "NATION" POLL ON COLLECTIVE SECURITY SHARPENS THE CONTROVERSY AMONG LIBERALS

While the editors and contributors of the liberal press continued to support a running attack, for differing reasons, on Roosevelt and post-Chicago American foreign policy moves, their intra-fraternal controversy over the merits of collective security was not being neglected. Non-interventionists burned at the application of the epithet "isolationist" to their position, now poured upon them in a particularly aggravated form by the pro-Communists, and they responded with

the charge that "collective suicide" was a preferable label for collective security. The contradiction on alternate pages of the two weeklies, the *Nation* in particular, grew by the week into 1938. The propagation of collective security as a peaceful and anti-war proposal looked lame when compared to the minute coverage of the Spanish and Chinese war fronts and the reportage which savored the victories of its chosen side; hostility to wars did not include "civil" wars, in the accepted Marxist viewpoint. But there was one obvious byproduct, growing impatience with pacifism.

In the meantime Bliven and the neutrality wing, concentrated in the *New Republic* and its monthly ally *Common Sense*, the latter in favor of some of the merits of collective security only in a very limited sense, were becoming more and more aware of the Stalinist source of much of the policy, now that the scales were starting to drop from their eyes on the nature of the Soviet, and as their ability to detect the thinly-veiled pro-Russian partisanship of some of the loudest liberal supporters improved. The persistence of the Stimson circle and the unreconstructed Wilsonian pro-League liberal group championing collective security complicated things somewhat. But liberals such as Beard put these latter camps down to the efforts of Anglo-philés and American citizens of British birth.

The attempt of the *Nation* to precipitate the controversy with a massive poll of its readers and others in mid-March was one of the notable efforts to finish the argument in short order. On March 19 the editors announced that "a questionnaire on war prevention" was being sent to "over 130,000 American liberals," and they expressed the hope that the replies might be of use "to an Administration whose foreign policy in a crucial hour remains to be formulated." As a weapon in the internal battle of opinions, it promised to be almost as useful. During April, bright and optimistic reports were published regularly, indicating that responses were running from 5-1 to 6-1 in favor of collective security, with a final report being made on May 7, which admitted that only 9,263 signed ballots had been returned. On this sample the editors felt comforted that "isolation" had been "rejected by progressive opinion all over the country," since only 13% of the respondents had replied in favor of "isolation." The word "neutrality" had become almost as hard to find in the *Nation* by now as in the *New Masses*. In addition, 40% were reported as favoring joining the League, 81% in favor of economic sanctions, but no issue was made out of a parenthetical comment that nearly half of the signers had favored a national referendum on the question of a war declaration, powerful evidence that even a one-sided poll had not blacked out sentiment for the Ludlow resolution.⁵²

This issue of the wording of the poll questions was of great import to other liberals. *Common Sense* was especially displeased by it, de-

claring that nowhere in the *Nation* poll was "the question of the risk of war honestly faced," and resenting its posing of an undefined "isolation" against its vague and favored "policy of cooperation with other nations in defense of peace."⁵³

The *New Republic* was most puzzled by the *Nation*'s inquiry of views on the question as they had posed it. To the former it appeared to be an obvious case of the form of argument, on-this-conclusion-I-base-my-facts. In an editorial "Unrealism About Collective Security," for one of the few times in the inter-war period it criticized and reproached its colleague, for "phrasing its inquiry in such a way that it is almost impossible to return any answer except one in favor of collective security." What they should have asked, the *Nation*'s junior associate suggested, was the question, "Are you willing to fight on foreign soil on behalf of collective security?" From their point of view the discussion at the moment about collective security contained no specific content; the admission was still being made that the world's problem was mainly due to the malfunctioning of contemporary politics which was at the core of 20 years of Versailles, yet no concrete proposals at all were forthcoming to eliminate the grievances long admitted. The logic of collective security, lamented the *New Republic*, seemed to be totally negative, suggesting ultimately that the nations fight again.

The *New Republic*'s part in this appeal for liberal affections was the publication on March 30 of a hefty 25-page "national defense" supplement summarizing its views on what American foreign policy should be, putting into rather elegant form the editorial stands which had been advanced now for many years, although there was evidence that the case of Spain had brought them around from a position of across-the-board application of the Neutrality Act, for in this case they favored the passage of an amendment allowing the Act to be suspended so that help might be sent to the anti-Franco cause. This plank of their case sounded like a verbatim transcription of the hectic editorials on the subject in the *New Masses*,⁵⁴ in the same way that the *Nation* and *New Republic* attacks on this same Neutrality Act in 1940-1941 looked like the 1938 *New Masses* fulminations against it, although by the latter date the Communist sympathizers had a position almost identical to the non-interventionist liberals of 1937-1939. The welfare and comfort of Communist Russia produced wondrous opinion somersaults during this mercurial period. The aberration on Spain was the only serious and glaring discrepancy in the tight neutrality position of the anti-collective security liberals.

The reverberations of the *Nation* poll continued to be heard for some time. In mid-May, 1938 a long protesting letter signed by 32 prominent pro-neutrality liberals was published attacking the journal's collective security drift, and accusing the editors of stacking the

questions on their foreign policy opinion poll, so as to produce answers favorable to this policy, as well as using loaded words without definition. "Isolationists" were asked whether they believed their policy should be backed by army and navy increases, but this was not asked of the collective security supporters, whose policy logically called for it far more than for non-intervention. Furthermore, it was pointed out that collective security advocates were not asked if they favored war if their bluff were called; and worst of all, in their view, was the failure of the editors to allow the matter of actual warfare to enter the questionnaire at all.⁵⁵

Additional evidence that the whole progressive movement had not gone over to collective security was triumphantly given publicity by the *New Republic* on May 11 when the Socialist Party at its national convention at Kenosha, Wisconsin, reaffirmed its old anti-war stand. "Collective action by the democratic nations failed to find a single defender," the editorial comment enthused.⁵⁶ Despite the ambitious effort of the *Nation* to stampede the liberal-progressive-left on the subject, a deadlock still existed on the issue of American foreign policy at the mid-year mark of 1938.

THE LIBERAL ARGUMENT FOR NEUTRALITY PERSISTS IN THE SPRING AND SUMMER, 1938

The dual aspect of collective security—the source of support which had the safety of Russia in mind as its major objective, paired with that which had England and France in mind as beneficiaries—was a weakness which the non-interventionist and neutrality liberals were able to exploit increasingly after 1937, as these two wings showed their separate plumage and sought to head collective security in different directions. Such forces as the *Nation* sought to bridge over this undeniable conflict by adopting a shadowy form of collective security as an intellectual conviction, and insisting that the interests of all these three powers, plus the United States, were identical and ought not to be a reason for the incitation of rivalry. It was a position which did not impress the most persistent of the liberal neutralists, and at the height of the internal trouble in Russia it attracted ironic and damaging commentaries. Villard even used the *Nation's* pages themselves to expose the situation to ridicule, of which the following during the uproar over the Ludlow resolution was an example:⁵⁷

Nothing puzzles me more than the attitude of those who say that we must save the democracies of England and France—and Russia, since Russia is bound to fight with France under existing treaties. What a joke

that will be: American troops fighting not as at Archangel in 1918 to *destroy* Russian Communism but to *defend* it, and especially the bloody brand of one Joseph Stalin!

Villard was also one of the most sensitive to the epithet "isolationist," which the pro-Communist and Communist press had taken up by the middle of 1938 as an almost unbroken bark aimed at all neutrality and non-involvement views and personalities. The idea that it conveyed the impression of ostrich-like behavior and total abandonment of all contacts and the utter withdrawal from the rest of the world was especially resented. As Villard put it, "The so-called isolationists are isolationists *only as to war*." In a *Nation* column not long after the editors' inconclusive poll of liberal opinion on the subject of collective security, he listed the numerous non-coercive internationalist activities the "isolationists" were active in, using the opportunity to show once more his complete disenchantment with the "defend-the-democracies" slogan and its omnibus structuring to include the Soviet. Villard insisted that Britain and France were really more deserving of the term "capital-imperial" than "democrat," while Russia was nothing but "a bloodily self-purging dictatorship." ⁵⁸

As Bliven put it in the *New Republic* on the eve of the Austrian *Anschluss* and the fourth series of Red purge trials in Moscow, the distinction between isolation and collective security since the Chicago speech had become "unreal." Admitting that no nation was going to be immune from a future war in the sense of one watertight compartment in a sinking ship, he insisted that the issue should be phrased differently, and that "on what terms and for what ends" should be the question asked when cooperation with the rest of the world was posed in the United States. And he suggested a number of embarrassing questions of his own which were not being considered now among the more stratospheric levels of the fervor for collective action against the revisionist powers: ⁵⁹

Granting that the Fascist powers are today demanding many things to which they are not entitled on any possible basis of justice, must we fight to maintain a status quo created in 1919 which many of us have spent so much of our time for 19 years in denouncing as unjust and unworkable? Does anyone believe that the "bandit nations" will respond to pressure from without in any other way than all nations have always responded to such pressure? Should American radicals in particular abandon their lifelong principles and support one type of exploitive international capitalism against another for temporary and opportunist reasons? If we fight another war "to make the world safe for democracy," is there any

reason to believe that we shall come out of it any better off than we were at the end of the last war?

Elmer Davis seemed to supply an eloquent answer to these questions from the same point of view of Bliven in his *Harper's* article of the same month of March, 1938, "We Lose the Next War," in which he disparaged all the hysterical talk of German ambitions of conquering the world, among other things;⁸⁰

Everybody will lose the next war—victors as well as vanquished, neutrals as well as belligerents; we are going to lose it whether we go in or stay out. . . . Twenty years ago we went on a crusade which would have made sense if we had got what we wanted; but we failed to find the Holy Grail, and the experience ought to have cured us of our inclination to go grailing.

The *New Republic* had taken up the chorus of criticism of Britain and France which Villard specialized in on the eve of the switch in British foreign policy and the resignation of Eden. Its editorial "England Shows Her Colors" was about as concise a formulation of neutralist liberal views on these two states as was to be seen in 1938. Commenting on all the talk by British and French sympathizers in America of the necessity of joining with them "to defeat Fascism by a policy of 'collective security,'" and that such spokesmen "even contemplate with equanimity our entry into another world war" with them as partners on "a crusade to save democracy," the editorial asked with much vigor, illustrated with several examples of their discrepant past behavior,⁸¹

But how can we save a Europe that does not want even to save itself? The greatest and most powerful of the so-called democracies is in reality a great empire ruled at present by cold-blooded reactionary imperialists. The action of Britain and France in settling the last war was predatory and imperialistic in the extreme. They created and maintained the conditions which bred Mussolini and Hitler. They fought against the Soviet Union as long as there was any hope of defeating it. They sabotaged German and Austrian democracy. . . . Why should anyone be surprised or disillusioned at the latest turn of events? The truth is that these great "democracies" are not Galahads who can be depended upon to support the cause of the people. In spite of the wide democratic forces within each, they are still capitalist empires, in which the forces of reaction are always strong enough to use national policy for their own ends. Any new world war will be like the last one, a war of competing imperialisms, and it will end as disastrously for democracy.

The addition of George Fielding Eliot as a regular contributor in the spring of 1938 gave the *New Republic* its first military commentator, a concession in one sense to the plethora of war talk, logistics and planning, weapons and other technical impedimenta which had previously been largely ignored by anti-war liberals. But Eliot proved to be an enthusiastic recruit in the neutralist cause as well as an adamant non-believer in pro-British and French collective security forces now talking of their weakness and need for American strength. Eliot's May 25 essay directly challenged these stories reporting an alleged pathetic state of military strength among the democracies, maintaining that "Their superiority to Germany in military strength and resources is overwhelming." Despite his unconcealed sympathy for the British-French-Russian combine, Eliot was utterly opposed to United States assistance: ⁶²

We must remain aloof, we must guard our own interests, we must preserve that which is ours behind our ocean barriers. The salvation of the European democracies is in their own hands. They can still save themselves. If they will not, they have no right to expect us to save them. The fate of Europe must be determined by the people who live there. It must not be American blood which waters European fields. . . .

Through June, July and August the *New Republic* neutralist voice criticized and challenged the Administration over and over again. When Hull addressed a note to airplane manufacturers urging them to sell no more planes to governments which bombed civilians—a reference to the Japanese bombing of Canton—the editors interpreted this as another attempted evasion of the Neutrality Act, and a gesture aimed at ultimately breaking it down; "Secretary Hull takes upon himself the fearful responsibility of applying an economic sanction against Japan which will do the Chinese a little good but will embroil the United States even more deeply in Far Eastern affairs," the editorial of June 22 complained. "The foreign policy of the United States is too important to be improvised fresh every day by a coterie of appointed officials in the State Department," was its description of this latest gambit by the Secretary of State.⁶³

In July there were repeated references made to the campaign of the Administration "whipping up public sentiment in favor of a policy which it approves but to which a majority in Congress and about 75 percent of the American people strongly object," ⁶⁴ meaning the efforts to tear up the Neutrality Act and replace it by one giving FDR the power to designate and act against an "aggressor" in favor of the "victim." "It is far more damaging to leave in the Executive's hands a virtually unchecked power over war and peace than to delegate to him those many powers in control of our economy against

which his enemies have been protesting," it asserted, and recommended especially a suggestion made by Hubert Herring in his book *And So To War*, that Congress by resolution require that the President consult with the House and Senate Foreign Relations Committees before dispatching any important note, making any public declaration on foreign policy or entering into any commitment. The idea of a continuous check on executive foreign policy by the legislature was very attractive. And on two occasions the *New Republic* suggested that such a policy might be introduced by constitutional amendment if necessary,⁶⁵ quoting James Madison as saying in his letter to William Cabell Rives, "War is in fact the true nurse of executive aggrandizement." Other liberal forces still clung stubbornly to more formidable barriers. The National Council for the Prevention of War and its vigorous secretary, Frederick J. Libby, were still actively pressing in August, 1938 for the passage of the equivalent of the popular referendum on war declarations along the lines of the Ludlow resolution. Charged Libby in the *New Republic* on August 10,⁶⁶

The President and Postmaster General Farley during the forenoon of January 10 of this year [1938] obtained by telephone and political pressure the recantations of fifty-one Democratic Congressmen who had signed a discharge petition which would have required discussion of the Ludlow War Referendum bill. No clearer indication could be given of the fact that peace is not safe in the hands of the President and Congress.

THE MUNICH SEASON UNDERLINES THE ISSUES ONCE MORE

The liberal press was somewhat mystified by the silence of the President through much of 1938 insofar as statements of the type of the Chicago Bridge speech were concerned. Very little was said about this aspect of foreign policy, and there were no significant remarks made over his virtual silence at the time of the Austrian *Anschluss*. But, as has been seen, much had been said about various actions and suggestions for action. The next public address by FDR which drew comment was his July 14 San Francisco speech, declaring that 1939 would be a year of "world-wide rejoicing" if it saw "definite steps toward permanent world peace." Villard replied that it appeared Roosevelt was confident an eventual end would come to the four-year-old armaments race, but complained that he proposed nothing that this country planned to do on its part to make this come true. The *Nation's* eldest voice called Roosevelt's conduct thus far "the

most complete bankruptcy of statesmanship in the history of the modern world,"⁶⁷ and urged him to ask for an immediate disarmament conference, and, as a model to the world to unilaterally disarm, in any event, the United States being invasion-proof.

Common Sense's major statement in August went beyond Villard and the editorial positions of either weeklies. It called for a program which it did not hesitate to label "appeasement," and favored substantial concessions to the revisionist states. "First of all," it declared, "our intellectual and political leaders must abandon demonology—the picturization of certain nations and their peoples as demons, because we do not approve of their governmental policies," admitting that it was already to the point where it was "treasonable to write a paragraph" "which suggests that our 'enemies' are human after all." It was the status quo which made them "aggressors," and, it bluntly observed, "the status quo is an appallingly unjust status quo." *Common Sense* favored a world congress at once, where "all the swag would have first to be thrown on the table, all the fruits of conquest and power, colonies, spheres of influence, trade advantages," and a new settlement worked out.⁶⁸

The President stirred up another gust of reproach after his speech on August 18 in which he promised help to Canada should she be attacked. Issued at a time when the Czech crisis was reaching a fever peak, the *New Republic* two weeks later suggested that it had nothing to do with European politics essentially, and although appearing to be an effort "giving moral support to Chamberlain" in the negotiations with Hitler, it was really a stunt aimed at once more trying to wear down the vast preponderance of opinion hostile to engagement in European wars by turning the spotlight to this hemisphere and implying a consequence. Such wearing down was taking place; the *Nation* insisted that the powerful assault on the public mind by public communications handling the Czech issues in the most flaming terms was yielding results in turning increasing groups against both the Neutrality and Johnson Acts, and it editorially approved. Still the President's speech was not taken as evidence that he had given anything but moral support once more. His position on Spain and China kept the enthusiasm of those who wished to see him as a great champion of anti-Fascism well under control. But "T.R.B." on September 14 was of the mind that both Roosevelt and Hull had "urged a firm resistance" to Hitler even if they had not made the British and French any "binding commitments." Neutrality liberals began to get much perturbed and anxious once more.⁶⁹

The collective security-conscious *Nation* got even more alarmed in the fourth week of September, when the concessions being made to Hitler revealed that the British-French front had not had anything

very substantial from America behind it at all. On September 24 the *Nation* called the situation editorially "A Challenge to America," and expressed its indignant concern that FDR had done nothing to stave off this festival of crow-eating, "the suicidal policy of concessions to international brigandage," as it described the situation. It called for a threat of denying the "brigands" access to the "half the world's raw materials" alleged to be in America's control, plus the employment of the President's "tremendous personal prestige" on British-French behalf against the Germans. It also urged him for the second time to call an immediate international conference, but the surprising thing about the editorial was that in the midst of its heated emotional condemnation of the Germans, it still had enough reserve to admit that there were grievances capable of "general settlement through economic appeasement,"⁷⁰ which made it sound like *Common Sense* on this issue.

Ultimately the *Nation* adopted the position, after it was all over, that Roosevelt's responsibility "for the tragic setback that democracy suffered at Munich" was very grave. It suspected that he had acted so modestly because of a request from the British Prime Minister Chamberlain, now being accused by the more pro-Soviet liberal collective security figures as having deliberately arranged the partition of Czechoslovakia with Hitler. It returned to the theme that "the foreign policy of the United States was devised in Downing Street,"⁷¹ although its particular anger seemed to be not against this kind of procedure but hostility toward the kind of British government now occupying Downing Street. This editorial also expressed great agitation over a syndicated column by Drew Pearson and Robert Allen charging that FDR had sent an extremely commendatory telegram to Mussolini at the height of the tension.

In the *New Republic* the opposite interpretation was being aired. Flynn's "The President's Foreign Policy" on September 28 also went into the Pearson-Allen columns for leads as to the direction the nation was taking under FDR's leadership and its complex and often seemingly contradictory steps. Commenting on their statement that the Chicago Bridge speech had been written in the State Department and delivered by FDR on October 5 verbatim after a conference with the admirals, and that bellicose speeches by Hugh Wilson in Berlin in April and Woodring in May were both approved in advance by the President, Flynn did not think that the long-range situation had been altered by the subdued action around Munich-time; "the inescapable impression," he was utterly convinced, was that "the President, the Secretary of State and the career men in that department are conspiring to put us definitely on the side of Britain and France in the event of war." He added as additional warning,⁷²

Of course, if the leaders of our people are working quietly to that end, the American people ought to know it. Nations do not go to war suddenly, overnight. They go one step at a time. The first step is taken quietly and unnoticed. The other steps follow equally unnoticed, until a situation is created when no choice is left but war.

As its verdict, to counter the *Nation's* belief that the crisis at Munich had edged many more Americans toward collective security and involvement, the *New Republic* on October 12 in its lead editorial, "Mr. Roosevelt and the Crisis," asserted flatly,⁷³

There is no reason to believe that Mr. Roosevelt's intervention turned the scale between peace and war. And in spite of the President's desire to play a leading role in crushing the aggressor nations before his term in office expires there is still no reason to believe that the American people are any less fearful of foreign entanglement than before. Indeed there is much indication that their desire to keep aloof has been greatly strengthened.

But the internal consequences of the exacerbation of public sentiment could not be denied as a potent factor in future public opinion on foreign policy. In two long editorial ruminations on the significance of Munich, in October, 1938, the *New Republic* juggled the new fact of the solid turning of American public opinion against Germany, even if it did insist that "American opinion is still firmly against participation in another European war, no matter what the issue." "American opinion is far more bitterly aroused against Germany than it was between August, 1914 and April, 1917," it admitted. The seven-year war against American sensibilities was beginning to pay off, and most liberals were unable to acknowledge their part; in fact, even the neutralist *New Republic* was convinced of the rightness of being enlisted emotionally in the struggle while striving to avoid shouldering a gun, an agonizing posture. "We are not and do not want to be impartial in such a struggle as now seems to impend," it went on; "it is necessary, therefore, to serve two aims at the same time—first, to keep out of war; second, to refrain from action which would materially injure the chances of success of those whose cause we favor."⁷⁴ American neutralist liberalism had come around to a position which hardly differed an iota from the situation prior to American entry into the First World War which liberals spent two decades denouncing—again, a case of deciding who they were going to be neutral against.

But it was an ingenious setting for the beginning of a push for the invocation of the 1937 Neutrality Act once more, this time under the persuasive cover that control of the seas would enable the "de-

mocracies" to get all the American raw materials they needed for fabrication into war goods in their own factories. "Hitler and his friends might and undoubtedly would resent this enormous help that his foes were receiving from us but they would have no legal grounds for objecting on the basis of a law adopted long before the crisis arose, and technically applying with equal force to all belligerents." A direct attack on this country would be necessary to stop it, and in that eventuality, "we should know what to do." The American public was not the only factor in opinion-making which had been affected by the propaganda hysteria accompanying Munich.

The most obvious result of the frantic press and radio campaign in blowing up the Czech affair in America, as has been shown, was the drive for a major armament program. Its basis was a new popular legend that Britain and France had capitulated to German demands because their military establishments were not formidable enough to deter Hitler. By November the *New Republic* had recuperated from a good part of its own hysteria, returning to old ways as far as United States foreign policy position was involved. It now dismissed the Hitlerian diplomatic coup as merely a "moral victory of the Fascist dictatorships in Europe," and refused to believe that there was anything in the European situation which warranted any fear of invasion of this country whatever, or any other reason to sanction a big arms boom insofar as our foreign relations were a factor.⁷⁵

Later in the month in an editorial "Let the Johnson Act Alone," on a Washington report that a new attempt was being made to bring about the repeal of this legislation of 1934, it opposed it without reservation. Commenting that Europe was already in debt to this country by some twelve billion dollars, and for twenty years payment in goods and services had been refused, and "New debts would be even less collectible than the old ones, in view of the degeneration of international morals in 20 years," it recommended,⁷⁶

If we want to give away our wheat and cotton abroad, let us do so openly, without pretending that we should some day be repaid. And before we do, let us consider earnestly Secretary Wallace's suggestion for first taking care of needy persons here at home.

But the *Nation's* foreign policy suggestions in the post-Munich debacle were largely its old program, including the imploring of the President to drop the embargo on arms shipments to Spain, to stop arming and supplying Japan, and to make no trade agreements with Germany and Italy no matter what the circumstances, in addition to opening up America to refugees without stint. These proposals were referred to in an editorial of October 29 as "the least common denominators of a democratic foreign policy."⁷⁷

The struggle to get Roosevelt to breach the special Congressional resolution establishing an arms embargo to the Spanish Civil War made allies of the two liberal weeklies, one of the few clear-cut issues on which they agreed in the United States foreign policy complex. Ever since the spring of 1938 there had been a concerted drive to obtain this objective, as the military fortunes of the anti-Franco Loyalists began to show signs of sagging, despite substantial Russian help, only occasionally referred to by American liberals while they stressed continually the nature of German and Italian help reaching the opposition. The *New Republic* on April 20 had expected this to happen momentarily, despite known opposition of "a little group of career men in our State Department."⁷⁸ On May 25 it castigated Roosevelt and Hull for frustrating a Senate bid to lift this arms ban from Loyalist Spain, blaming Hull's memorandum to the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, which was sent with FDR's approval, it charged, and with some bitterness; "That this maneuver favors the Fascist aggressors in the present instance does not seem to bother the man who spoke so eloquently in Chicago of quarantining the war-makers and treaty-breakers."⁷⁹

At the time of Munich the *New Republic* insisted the reason for failure of the Administration to do anything about the arms block-off was due to British pressure on Roosevelt from the Chamberlain government, which was supposed to be on the edge of granting belligerent rights to Franco. Additional factors were assessed to be the President's unwillingness to antagonize American Catholics, in addition to a growing bloc of pro-Francoites alleged to be collecting in the State Department. The editors became so angry at the idea of the British having an important part to play here that they recommended a stoppage of the vast quantities of arms and airplanes going to Britain after the Munich settlement, in their editorial of November 23, "Should We Help Britain to Rearm?" An editorial the following week, "Rearming the British," was even more emphatic on halting aid to England because of its Spanish policy.⁸⁰

The *Nation* had been in this area of policy-suggestion for an even longer time than the *New Republic*, and took up the struggle again with a vengeance in the autumn of 1938. The pressure increased in the early weeks of 1939, as it became evident that the Loyalist forces were approaching a catastrophic defeat barring massive support from somewhere. The *Nation's* editorial on January 21, "Lift the Embargo!" shouted, "Those whose belief in democracy is more than rhetoric have no more important task at this session of Congress than to fight for repeal of the Arms Embargo on Spain." It was once more chalked off as a piece of special legislation in the first place, "rushed through Congress under pressure from various reactionary sources," and the editors were greatly angered at charges that the struggle for

repeal was "Communist-inspired,"⁸¹ even though a few days earlier the Joint Committee to Lift the Embargo had held a mass meeting in New York City, with the scheduled speakers Lieutenant-Colonel John Gates and Major Milton Wolff of the Lincoln Brigade, in addition to Louis Fischer of the *Nation* staff and the British Labor Member of Parliament, Dr. Edith Summerskill.⁸²

On January 28 the *Nation* reproached the entire country for the persistence of the embargo; "To America's shame the Spanish Embargo has been permitted to remain in force another week although the life of the Spanish republic hangs in the balance." Though Congressional committees seemed to be sitting on their thumbs, great confidence was taken from the new recruit received, Henry L. Stimson, who had "added the weight of his very great prestige to the view frequently expressed in these pages, that the President has the power to lift the embargo with or without Congressional approval."⁸³ The tables had been turned in still another instance; the support of a man long attacked as a reactionary had been eagerly accepted, while great unhappiness was being expressed over continuation of "the President's silence."

In this same month, the temperature of the *New Republic* rose as well, a far more contradictory course for it because of its renewed offensive for an enlargement of the Neutrality Act. Its editorial on the 4th had expressed an incensed note on observing that the President's message had not included the subject as fit for immediate action.⁸⁴ But the most memorable demonstration of all took place on the first of February. With Franco's advance on Barcelona panicking liberal supporters of the Loyalist forces everywhere, a long and urgent telegram to Roosevelt, signed in the name of the entire editorial board of the *New Republic*, filled a full page of the issue of that date. It restated the entire liberal case against the Executive Department's refusal or failure to remove the Spanish arms ban, also citing on their behalf "so great an authority as ex-Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson," reviewing in an extremely anxious rehearsal of two and a half years of the war in Spain the *New Republic's* official stand and once more accusing the Chamberlain government in England of being mainly to blame as the secret influence on the Administration.⁸⁵ But the war in Spain was nearly over; it was one issue to be settled in the pre-Pearl Harbor decade.

Though the Communists had stood side by side with the liberal press on the Spanish embargo question, their post-Munich attitudes toward the collective security question veered over to frank support of the logical consequences of the policy. During the election of 1938 their National Congressional Program had supported a vague recommendation, "We propose an American peace policy in line with President Roosevelt's October, 1937 speech to quarantine the war-

makers, to promote concerted action with France, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the other democratic peoples and governments of the world in order to halt and isolate the Fascist war-makers, to assist their victims and to guarantee world peace." But Plank E of this program stated flatly, "We oppose the expenditure of billions on armaments and war preparations as a substitute for concerted action for peace." In the absence of using military force, the big word in response to this combined policy was still "How?," and the answer came eventually on November 27, 1938, after the election. At that time Earl Browder gave his assent to the American arms build-up if the arms were to be used against the Fascists. Charles A. Beard's point against Browder in their famous *New Republic* debate earlier in the year had finally been supported and verified by Browder himself, with a sizable camp of neutralist liberals now baying in dissent.

By January, 1939 the Communist organs had found the right note. The idea of the United States and the USSR as a mutually helpful team in an essentially anti-German and anti-Japanese front filled the air. As it was put by Alexander Bittelman in the *Communist* that month,⁸⁶

By defending our national security and democracy against Fascism we are helping the Soviet peoples to defend their socialist achievements from foreign aggression, and the Soviet peoples, by resisting aggression against themselves are leading in the general fight of all peoples against Fascism, are contributing materially and substantially to our own fight for democracy and national security.

The concomitant of this tack was a renewed and much more bitter assault on the liberals who clung to neutralism. William Z. Foster, in an article "Isolationist Defeatism!," in the same issue of the official Communist monthly, spared no one in this camp in imputing to them the desire to give way at any cost to "aggression," singling out Thomas, Villard, Beard and Dewey and pairing them with Hoover, Hearst and Father Coughlin in an omnibus attack for their efforts in opposing "peace action," Foster's new definition of collective security, as a provocation to war.⁸⁷ "We have long advocated the severance of economic relations with the Nazis," the *New Masses* announced editorially on January 3.⁸⁸ The new Communist peace movement was now in motion, with partial liberal subscription, aiming at a solution which promised, at least for Communism, the disruption of all their allies as well as their enemies with civil war in all the larger allies a strong possibility when the anti-Fascist war was over.

A remaining consequence of the Munich situation worth noting was the sudden attention to Latin America by the Roosevelt Administration, and the amazing growth of protectiveness toward the

entire region on the President's part. The *Nation* specialized in giving wide circulation to numerous scare stories of espionage, sabotage and infiltration by the Germans and Italians especially, the tempo of which increased in direct ratio to lack of verification. Its aid in helping to create a state of mind which could readily imagine an invasion of the Western Hemisphere, a cardinal talking point in urging defense buildups and later all-out aid to Britain, was substantial. Increasing attention had been given in 1938 to the growing trade competition by the controlled bilateral barter trading with blocked currencies especially by Germany, which did not fit well with constant attention to the predicting of imminent German collapse at home by liberal economic pundits.⁸⁹ But the Lima Conference underlined the subject dramatically, and helped to divide liberals once more.

The *New Republic* editorially disparaged the sudden discovery of Latin America by FDR, and ridiculed the idea that Germany or Italy could "conquer by force of arms one square inch of territory on this continent."⁹⁰ At the same time the invasion scares were being roasted by "T.R.B.," who spared no time in discounting all such talk as so much poppycock. And editorial opinion did not share the favor cast on the Lima conference by others. On January 4, 1939 the *New Republic* conceded that the United States had won a "small" victory there, and that despite the American press and its praise of Hull and European suggestions that it appeared America had finally been converted to the idea of collective security, it insisted, "the fact is that the most important issues in Pan-American relations were all evaded and that the declaration of solidarity had to be written and rewritten before the Latins would accept it." In its view the hysteria of Europe and North America had not yet left them "prepared to throw themselves in Uncle Sam's arms."⁹¹ The most wholehearted acceptance of the Lima Conference was that by the Communists. The article "Lima—An Answer to Munich," in the February, 1939 *Communist*, suggested that Roosevelt had demonstrated his intention to become involved in a world-wide coalition against Hitler, and their acceptance of the idea was almost boundless.⁹²

THE CONTEST OVER FOREIGN POLICY CONTINUES UNRESOLVED TO THE EDGE OF THE WAR

The confusion and exasperation with the coyness and vagueness of the President concerning his foreign policy increased in scope in 1939. Liberals who thought they had finally detected a clear-cut line on which a major controversy could be joined were seriously disap-

pointed, and Administration advancing, backing and filling seemed to grow worse as the Munich crisis receded into the past. Liberal supporters of the domestic program especially went through a serious crisis in the pre-war months of 1939; a large number were flatly unwilling to follow FDR through the devious and obscure adventures of post-Munich. The editors of the *New Republic* and *Common Sense* fired away repeatedly at his cross-purposes and the conflicts in his actions and statements. The basic anti-German-Italian-Japanese sentiment among them was stubbed by the growing Administration truculence in those directions, at the same time expressing more than mild worry after a few looks ahead in the manner of Charles A. Beard as to where they were being led by this hostility. Perturbed by FDR's Spanish and China war policies, unnerved by the Chamberlain and Daladier regimes in England and France, which were suspected of the darkest plots against Soviet Russia, and not expected to be any source of strength whatever in the event of a Russo-German war, there were opportunities abounding for unrest and anxiety. The responses to the tension were increasingly critical editorial explosions during the period. Meanwhile the *Nation*, eagerly moving deeper and deeper into the collective security position and gradually adopting all its implications, reflected a constant sense of being teased by the Administration's advances and retreats, alternating between paeans of praise and dark outbursts of irritation and resentment.

Bliven, in a signed editorial on January 11, "Mr. Roosevelt's Undeclared War," called attention to the dramatic changes in American foreign policy since the Chicago speech, which he said had to be inferred from the acts, since there had never been any public announcement of intention. He was convinced that the actions since October, 1937 were significant evidence. "It seems to me quite clear that Mr. Roosevelt is now engaged in a sort of undeclared war of his own against the Fascist triumvirate," a war which was "economic and political." The latest chapters of this story, the recently concluded visit of Anthony Eden, "a good British Tory" charged with having "but one fixed principle in foreign affairs, which is to cling to the United States first and foremost," and Harold Ickes' private denunciation of the non-Russian dictators, filled out what seemed to be a clear picture to Bliven of an Administration which did not mean to get us into a shooting war but which aroused his suspicions nevertheless. Bliven was still enthusiastic over the suggestion of Hubert Herring for the creation of a joint congressional committee on foreign relations which the President was to consult before taking any significant steps of any kind in foreign affairs. He was sure it would enable the country to come much closer "to the ideal of a democratic foreign policy carrying out the wishes of a

democratic people," since in his view the Congress was now but "a rubber stamp to approve a declaration of war after it has been made inevitable by acts of the President, secret or public, wise or foolish, extending over years."⁹³

The *Nation* for its part gave unlimited approval to the President's message of that month, describing it in an editorial on January 14 as having "rang out like a bugle across the world," "glowingly eloquent," "both in its manner and its matter place it among the great state papers of our history." This represented one of the first kind statements about FDR which the *Nation* had published since before Munich, rejoicing that he had seemed to issue "a call to recognize the crucial nature of the Fascist challenge and to accept it firmly and coolly." No issue was made of the recency of the Eden visit and a possible relationship. And it followed up this long statement by eagerly expecting something to be done; "Hesitation will reduce a magnificent speech to mere wind—we look to him to act and act now."⁹⁴ But not much was said as to what he was expected to do, the neutrality law being what it was.

In the *New Republic*, "T.R.B." registered a bit of the thaw which had set in among the opponents of collective action by suggesting that if FDR was deeply devoted to halting the gains of the Germans and Japanese, the logic of the situation called for him "to give moral support, at least, to the USSR," one of the few occasions when Russia was introduced into the American foreign policy picture in these days. These first stirrings of a suggested positive program of working with Stalin to the discomfiture of Hitler grew out of comments made by Ambassadors Joseph Kennedy and William Bullitt before the Senate and House Military Affairs Committees, in January, where they were supposed to have predicted an invasion of the Ukraine by Germany in the spring of 1939.⁹⁵

But the *New Republic* editorially thought that the public opinion polls revealed that American aid was likely to go to Britain and France, and was impressed by the revelation that the "upper income group" was so heavily in favor of this, although it made no comments about educational exposure and reading habits as a conditioning-factor in this opinion-making process. Overall, the growing interest in taking sides in a war nonplussed and alarmed the editors. In this long outburst on March 8, they took an opportunity to once more attack the supporters of collective security as "really not so much interested in preventing war as in joining it when it came." The editors were very antagonistic about pointing where American support was likely to go; it was an encouragement to Britain and France to stay weak, at the same time encouraging in their turn the "aggressors" to think that they were too frightened to fight, thus increasing the probability of war. It was their conclusion that the United States should know

what the British and French would fight for as well as study what the results were likely to be. "This is no time for vague romanticism in foreign policy,"⁹⁶ it warned the sentimentalists who were once more idealizing Britain and France in the manner of 1917.

Beginning early in 1939 a great deal of additional attention began to be focussed on the foreign policy aspect of the arms buildup, never neglected in the previous period but, as has been seen, somewhat more closely related to the necessity of purely home-front defense. The post-Munich agitation had proved to be an immense nutrient to all the desires for arms expansion, but by four and five months later the unquiet as to the possible employment of the arms had expanded considerably. For the *Nation* it was a bigger problem than the neutralist liberal elements. Already enlisted in collective security, its difficulty was keeping its position on this policy consistent while at the same time finding it within its sphere of propriety to criticize arms accumulation. The third week of January its vexation was aroused by a public opinion poll which indicated 9 out of 10 persons favored a substantially larger air force, and FDR's defense program provided for nearly doubling that which existed. It was a matter of much unhappiness for the *Nation*, since it was praising the good sense of the public for supporting the repeal of the embargo on Republican Spain at the very same time. But the two were fruits of the same hysteria, and the *Nation* did not relish the ordinary citizen's fine lack of hairline ideological discrimination. It considered Roosevelt's action on air expansion to be a reflection of public preference, and considered this advice here to be bad:⁹⁷

In the present state of the world we do not deny the necessity for armaments in this country or even the probability that considerable additions to our existing defenses may be wise. But we do question the wisdom of letting decisions as to the type of arms we require be influenced by poorly-informed popular sentiment.

A little over a year later the *Nation*, as we have seen, favored an immediate expansion of the air force to a point which made that of 1939 seem modest indeed, and abused the general public for its slowness in pressuring the Administration to hurry on with that goal.

In these early months of 1939, the *Nation* still clung to the idea that America's part in collective security needed to be almost entirely an economic war campaign. "To ideological onslaughts on our system, arms are an ineffectual barrier," it declared in its February 4 editorial, "Our National Defense." It was of the mind that inordinate arms growth would be a factor inducing the risk of war involvement, and favored trimming such buildup sharply, while at the same time being ready to send large quantities abroad. It was

not yet of the mind of Eliot Janeway, in its own pages, who was already counting France and Britain in the Fascist camp, in a series he was producing titled "America and the Post-Munich World." Thus the editors differed with the "isolationists" who were loudly calling for a much expanded military establishment, as they also differed with the "believers in unarmed isolation," as they tactfully referred to their fellow neutralist liberals; they preferred a position suspended between the two, while encouraging the Administration to redouble its efforts at making the country's weight felt in the economic war which it did not object to being waged especially against Germany and Japan:⁹⁸

The *Nation* does not believe that in the world today pacifism is practical politics or that America can afford to neglect its armament. But we have two other lines of defense. We can strengthen our democracy by making it more a reality at home; we can make the full weight of our economic power felt abroad. While these weapons remain to us, to put the whole stress of our defense policy on armaments is as dangerous as it is unintelligent.

The following week, it joined the *New Republic* briefly in an irritated editorial comment on FDR's foreign policy fluctuations, "The Doctor Dilutes His Prescription," complaining in a most vexed tone at his pursuit of "an ambiguous foreign policy," and finding most objectionable of all his seeming retreat from the grim-jawed moral expostulations of his speech the previous month. Nothing had been done to back up the words with deeds; "every time the President has stated a firm and clear policy he has quickly nullified it by explaining he meant something rather different." Villard's angry critique of Presidential wavering in the same issue marked one of the few times in those months that he and editorial position coincided, even though their intents even in this case were diversely motivated, the *Nation's* comment being in the context of another plea for the killing of neutrality legislation and the beginning of steeply boosted aid to Britain and France.⁹⁹

On the *New Republic's* side, mighty blows were being struck by Eliot and Flynn on the same anvil, although their distress was caused by the suspicion that the President was moving too far in too stealthy a manner rather than not rapidly and resolutely enough. Eliot's "Shall We Fortify Guam?" on February 1 was really a long critique of the Asian policy in general. He professed to be unable to tell where United States policy was heading under Roosevelt, and wanted the Administration to say something as to whether they intended to stay in the Philippines, or if it were to be policy just to keep them from falling to the Japanese, and also if steps would be taken to

prevent the Japanese advance southward into the Dutch East Indies and toward Australia. He was sure that cutting off American oil supplies would make "the possession of the DEI a sine qua non for a military Japan." He had started commentaries on the sudden interest in fortifying Guam the previous week, when he had burst out, "What is our policy about Japan, anyway?" He thought he saw the country "drifting in a warlike direction," and was most suspicious of the similarity of United States and British notes to Japan and attendant actions as evidence of an already-made joint decision "to close in on her," but there was still no policy statement from the White House.¹⁰⁰

Flynn was much more excited by the intentions of the President in the opposite direction in February, 1939. On the heels of the charge that FDR in a public statement had asserted that America's frontier was on the Rhine River, Flynn turned out a sulphuric commentary in his column of the 15th discussing in a prophetic manner the coming homogenization of domestic and foreign affairs, with its attendant escape of finding solutions to problems by simply making the problems bigger and more complicated:¹⁰¹

As this column seeks, as much as possible, to stick to domestic matters, it is necessary for us to make some adjustments because of our growing boundaries. Since the United States is now bounded on the north by the Arctic, on the south by the Horn, on the west by the Yang-tze and on the east by the Rhine, it must be seen that the beat of a reporter covering domestic matters has been consistently enlarged. With the development of aviation, however, we may find ourselves soon under Mr. Roosevelt's leadership engaged in three-dimensional expansion with a demand for a large appropriation to fortify the moon.

Flynn's ironic references to the President's speeches concerning Canada, the *Panay* incident and the Lima Conference in addition to the most recent one was here concluded with a breath-taking forecast of what was to become known as "globaloney" after 1945, and actual "space-defense" policy after 1955.

In the meantime, *New Republic* editorial policy had its own private conflict concerning American foreign policy, as did the *Nation*. That of the former was a product of its long-standing concern for the survival of Soviet Russia and the anti-Franco cause in Spain. Reference has been made to the awkwardness produced in its neutrality position by its simultaneous plea for the shipping of arms to Loyalist Spain, following the devious Marxist argument of the difference in kind of "civil" wars. Much has also been discussed about its persistently kind view of Stalinist Russia and its frequently-expressed fears for its security from the ambitions of the Germans.

Thus, well into the spring of 1939 it was still offering parallel advice to the democracies of Europe as to how to go about defending themselves without incorporating American help into their plans, while continuing to advocate American withdrawal from European politics.

Its editorial "Unstopping Hitler" on April 5,¹⁰² inspired by his latest moves of incorporating Memel back into the Reich and concluding a commercial understanding with Rumania, as well as the recently-posed Italian claims against the French in North Africa, suggested that "The stakes that Hitler and Mussolini have won or played since the capture of Prague (a reference to the investment of Bohemia by Germany in mid-March) are not large and are not, in themselves, worth starting a world war about." Memel had been originally German, and German gathering of Rumanian trade was likely "under any normal economic system," while there were no good reasons why Italian claims against France in Tunisia, Djibuti and Suez could not be satisfied without endangering either world peace or the French colonial empire. But it was the long-range effects which it thought bad; concessions to Germany were evil mainly because they were making possible an ultimate two-pronged march toward the Soviet Union. This was an extremely important liberal admission, and probably underlay more of their continuous complaint and alarm over Hitler and Mussolini than all their diverse and ingenious arguments since 1933 rolled together. Russian security was the foundation stone of the entire interventionist liberal crusade against Fascism, and it was revealed in one crisis after another. Only after August, 1939 was it found necessary to invent other reasons for persisting in the great jihad against the German and Italian regimes.

In this moment, the *New Republic* deftly applied the collective security argument to France and Britain while finding it unsatisfactory for the United States, recommending that their current governments be ousted and replaced with political forces which would make "a binding alliance with the Soviet Union and smaller states to stop, by military means, any further aggression by Hitler and Mussolini," as well as threatening military and naval reprisal on both regimes if they did not withdraw their aid from the Franco forces in Spain at once. This was suggested to the British and French as the only way they could stop Hitler in Europe "without any aid from us." Another lapse had occurred in their front of war-resistance; the gap between the *New Republic* and the collective security forces which they attacked weekly did not seem to be such a yawning abyss as soon as the safety of the Communists in Russia was added to the agenda as a significant ingredient. It had no alternative to suggest should this alliance prove to be insufficient as a dam to German

strength; in the same way it questioned collective security exponents what they proposed to do if their bluff of superior strength on paper did now cow or awe the very same elements. At this point the *New Republic* had taken on the weakness of their antagonists. The immense consequence of this suggested form of collective security, the logical rise of the Soviet Union to the top position in any such collective array in Europe proper if it took place, was never discussed.

Common Sense, no longer encumbered with the residues of a sustained affection for Communist Russia, had no such admonitions and advisements to make to European democracies. It shared Flynn's sentiments, expressing deep anger with the reported statement by the President about America's new Rhine frontier in the famous "secret" conference with the Senate Military Affairs Committee. It was not convinced he was sincere in his declaring that he was "obviously" opposed to "any entangling alliances." Its ire was as intense over the continued building of "defenses" in the Pacific "almost to the Japanese Islands," as well, commenting brusquely that "Apparently it is our duty to defend British Pacific interests and to maintain perpetual sovereignty over the Philippines," adding as its own evaluation, "This argument is even weaker than the argument that we ought to make Europe 'safe for democracy.'" ¹⁰³

The *Nation* through April and May, 1939 largely reflected the growing intemperate flavor of the editorial statements of Freda Kirchwey, who had begun the practice of signing editorials with the Austrian *Anschluss*, reaching high peaks of fervor at the time of Munich. The tone of the journal successively approached the frothing "propaganda mill" which it chose to suggest so frequently as the proper description of other journals in the 1920s and down into the mid-1930s. Her advice in flaming language in April to boycott Germany, Italy and Japan was actually a re-statement of a plea made repeatedly in the Communist press six months earlier, and it reiterated accusations that the war potential of all three Powers was due to the vast amount of war supplies and basic materials they were still able to purchase from the United States. Her overall suggestion was still in harmony with the early collective security of a world-wide economic war against the disturbers of the 1919 peace, and as the editorial of May 6 revealed, it was still felt that a comprehensive planetary economic freeze conducted by Communist Russia, the United States, Britain and France was the policy which was expected "to prevent the aggressors from resorting to war." The "enemy-is-a-coward" theory had lost none of its vigor or appeal; there were still no considerations among the *Nation* writers as a whole what might eventuate if the "aggressors" did not knuckle down.¹⁰⁴

The Kirchwey formula did not involve neglect of the intramural struggle over collective security, and it defended the Administration

against hostile charges on fundamental issues. She was incensed at isolationist and pacifist criticism of FDR's mid-April address, when he was charged with meddling and war-mongering, and his proposals for a ten-year "moratorium on war" was called a publicity stunt. She stoutly defended his challenging tone toward Hitler and Mussolini and his emphasis on the likelihood of American material support going to Britain and France in the event of a war. She maintained that these expressions entitled him to be called "the world's leading peace-monger."¹⁰⁵ Just as aggravating were the persistent isolationist-liberal calls on FDR to do something about the evils at home. The *Nation's* "An Undo-Nothing Congress" on May 13 was an example of its unhappiness over charges of Congressional inertia in all manner of now-languishing New Deal reforms. "T.R.B." seemed to have given the signal in his *New Republic* column of April 26 when he confided, "Mr. Roosevelt's attention is now obviously absorbed by the imminence of war in Europe," following this up with a prediction that "Even if war does not come, it seems inevitable that domestic issues should be of secondary interest for a long time to come."¹⁰⁶ It was another of the significant predictions of the period, equalling Flynn's predicting the logic of attempting to fortify the moon for "defense," if the current rationalizations were extrapolated into the future.

Kenneth G. Crawford, destined to be Heywood Broun's successor as president of the American Newspaper Guild, was the most persuasive defender of Presidential foreign policy maneuvering in the jumpy spring days of 1939. His "Foreign Policy and 1940" on April 22 was a sympathetic account of how FDR had used foreign affairs since Munich to reestablish his prestige, dimmed in the 1937 and 1938 home-front political fiascos, while also "augmenting his personal popularity, and making him his party's most logical 1940 candidate." The loud call the *Nation* had made not long before urging Roosevelt to announce his unavailability for a third term was already in limbo.

Crawford was convinced that the vast majority of the American people were now inclined "to trust the President to conduct foreign affairs," while he saved choice abuse for the Congressional isolationists who were unable to make the fine discrimination "between a cooperative effort to keep the peace and willingness to plunge the United States into war on the side of the peacemakers." Crawford had vast faith in Presidential gambling in the foreign situation, and thought him sound in eschewing neutralism. "By taking sides in the ante-bellum maneuvers Roosevelt hopes to prevent war in the first instance," Crawford explained convincingly; and "If war comes in spite of efforts to avert it, it is not impossible that he will then shift over to a policy of isolation."¹⁰⁷ Deviousness of this sort had not

been seen in liberal journals for many years. Crawford's was really a polite form of stating what Senator Robert A. Taft was saying, for which he was so bitterly denounced by Miss Kirchwey on April 29, "a preposterous and odious charge" "that President Roosevelt has faked a war scare just to distract attention from the failure of his domestic policy and get himself reelected in 1940."¹⁰⁸ But there was a distant rumble of the reverberations of painfully similar liberal prophecy from the lips of Charles A. Beard.

Common Sense's contribution to the internal turmoil among liberals on foreign policy was a scathing reminder to "those who believe in the New Crusade" that "the New Deal's fiercest enemies are lining up with its supporters" on the new belligerence toward Germany and Japan, and that it was not for them to act too righteous in pointing out the disparate elements among the "isolationists," a favorite diversion among liberals convinced of the soundness of collective security. Their opposite files were as stubborn and unyielding in the final analysis, however; as late as June 7 the *New Republic* persisted in phrasing the references to the anti-war camp among the liberals as the "so-called isolationists."¹⁰⁹ Approval of the word as a smear still lay in the future; John T. Flynn devoted most of his column the following week to a heated reply to Cordell Hull for using the term in an invidious sense to identify the anti-collective security elements. "A masterpiece of confusion," Flynn referred to it, while asserting "Opponents of the collective security idea, for the most part, believe in the fullest and most active intercourse with all the nations of the world," but they objected "to being enlisted by France and England to fight their imperialist battles for them." Hull's "contribution to the general confusion, a role not entirely new for him," complained Flynn, was to present the "isolationists" as favoring "cutting off all commercial and other intercourse with the rest of the world," "a sort of schoolboy essay," and he reminded Hull that the only group in the country which had ever favored such a plan was one "headed by Mr. Hull's distinguished chief who is now the leader of the collective-security idea." The reference was to the economic nationalism of the NRA and AAA, and the policy adhered to in the 1933 London Economic Conference. Flynn closed by challenging Hull to name a single "normal relation" with another foreign state which American "isolationists" favored abandoning.¹¹⁰

The *New Republic* persisted in its contrary stand to the *Nation* on essential matters dealing with foreign policy through this period. It saw the President's April speech in an utterly different light from Freda Kirchwey, and it disagreed completely with Crawford on the attitude of the United States public on the country's future relations with Europe. In the case of the former, it tended to approve FDR's

theatric proposition to Hitler and Mussolini that they promise to refrain from aggression against three specific European nations, in return for assurances of similar treatment from them, and his encouragement of conferences to bring about disarmament and economic appeasement, though it was thought that his use of the term "Grand Alliance" had an ominous ring. But they saw other considerations; "Mr. Roosevelt is not impartial; if he had been less outspoken in the past he would now be in a much better position to mediate." The April 26 editorial "The President and the Dictators" grudgingly conceded that the German press was correct in calling FDR prejudiced and hostile, while at the same time suggesting that if Hitler were to reject this proposal, it could be used against Germany later on in the manufacture of slogans against the dictators if war occurred.¹¹¹

But the editors were disquieted still about the prospect of this war. "The *New Republic* raises again the issue of war aims," it protested, wanting to know what the war would be for and what kind of peace was likely to emerge from it. If it were to produce another Versailles, to restore the "ill-starred self-determination of small nationalities," and the "economic chaos" created by the drawing of boundaries around "non-economic units of territory," they wanted no part of it whatsoever;

Who has a solution for the ills of Europe that gave rise to Hitler and Mussolini? As the anger of the rest of the world hardens against them we must not forget that, inevitable as destruction sometimes is, it never by itself justifies the cost. To prepare to resist evil is necessary. But to prepare to create something better is indispensable. What would the Grand Alliance be fighting *for*?

As to the cheerful assumption on the part of collective security spokesmen such as Crawford, that mass approval now existed nationwide, Bliven had the following counter-statement in his signed editorial "Looking At 1940" two months later: ¹¹²

If the polls of the Institute of Public Opinion are reliable, this country is still overwhelmingly opposed to active participation in another European conflict. President Roosevelt is supported in his foreign policy only insofar as the people believe we can give moral support to the "democracies" and perhaps aid them with goods, without ourselves declaring war and sending our soldiers to fight.

Bliven thought this would be a serious political liability if the people commenced to think that the President was acting recklessly and

irresponsibly in the next twelve months, "since it would be difficult for such a candidate to run on a platform accepting Mr. Roosevelt's domestic ideas but repudiating the heart of his foreign policy."

By mid-summer, 1939, liberals such as Bruce Bliven were becoming frightened. They were beginning to realize that the nerves of the general public had been so exacerbated by seven years of unremitting propaganda that the chance of a general peace conference had grown exceedingly remote. After seven years of incessant hammering that Hitler, Mussolini and the Japanese leaders were all uncontrollably criminally insane (the liberal press had published repeated articles "proving" this in Hitler's situation), it was simply asking too much to suggest that the people sit by patiently while a sober settlement of European and Asian problems was worked out with these same persons as responsible participants. Liberals had contributed much to this opinion-making, and had particularly emphasized a one-sided picture of treaty-breaking which had done much to establish a monolithic thinking pattern and spread the conviction that no peace might possibly be effected through treaty because the leaders of these states were utterly faithless and incapable of respecting a treaty with anyone. The pounding which this view received all during this time was bound to induce a feeling of futility as to sober negotiation and make the despair which led to the doorstep of war grow in attractiveness.

It is this which made Roosevelt's April speech hinting at possible conferences, which liberals eagerly supported as a possibility, seem so unreal, when compared to the implacable propaganda case being waged in parallel columns. It is also this factor which made Bliven seem like an anguished modern Sancho Panza, wringing his hands over this political folly in late July, in a two-page signed editorial, "Just Before Zero." It was one of the last such gestures before hostilities, a plea for a world conference as suggested by Sir Arthur Salter, and urging that despite all that had been said about the demented state of the aggressors, it was important "that we should continue to act as though Germans, Italians and Japanese were normal human beings." Bliven also suggested that Roosevelt "should appeal to the heads of the six great powers for an armistice in the "cold war" that is already going on and has been going on for years."¹¹⁸ Other than the fact that Bliven should have used a term which did not gain wide acceptance until six years later to describe a totally different conflict, that which broke out at once among the victors of the clash he was anxious to avoid in 1939, the situation was one where Carthaginian thinking was already too far advanced. The "aggressor" powers had been earmarked for demolition by a large and complex force in the world with recruits among its ranks from extreme right to extreme left, ideologically speaking. Bliven's

moment of reasonableness in the summer of 1939 was an anomaly. There really remained only the issue whether the United States would get in or stay out of this coming war, not whether the war itself might be postponed or staved off by a fundamental reconsideration of all the issues on which the likely enemies were still at odds. It is this latter issue which makes the intrafraternal liberal contest over American neutrality of significance in liberal examination of opinion-making on the subject of American foreign policy.

LITERATURE IN REVIEW:

THE ACCENT ON ISOLATION AND NEUTRALITY

The stormy years of controversy over American foreign policy and the question of neutrality or collective security between 1937 and 1939 stimulated the writing of several books which drew attention from reviewers in the liberal press. Since the majority of these volumes and their authors were firmly on the non-involvement side, it can be understood why they received their best reception in the *New Republic* and *Common Sense*. Yet there were still enough hold-overs of the anti-militarist days of the *Nation* to greet some of the veterans of the struggle with favor, as will be seen. Though the main editorial policy of the *Nation* clung to collective security, it was not unusual to see "isolationist" arguments treated with favor and respect in the book reviews.

About the most timely liberal book of the period of the 1937 neutrality fight was that by Edwin Borchard and William Potter Lage, *Neutrality For the United States*. It was treated with notable warmth in the *Nation* by Stephen Raushenbush of the Nye Committee staff just three weeks after the passage of the new Neutrality Act of that year. George Soule dealt with this product of the veteran *New Republic* contributor Borchard in the summer, and accorded full support to the latter's strictures on the League of Nations and collective security. But he revealed the influence of arguments of the moment, that it would be exceedingly hard for this country to stay out of a future war, by deviating from Borchard on policy. Two earlier books, Walter Millis' *Viewed Without Alarm: Europe Today*, and C. Hartley Grattan's *Preface To Chaos*, had exerted some influence in this respect, in opposite ways. Millis had been criticized by Bliven and John Gunther in reviews for his attitude of confidence that there would be no European war for some time. Gunther spoke of him disparagingly in the *Nation* as "smug" and his confidence in the continuance of peace as "armchair optimism." Bliven thought Millis wrong in his assumption that war and peace were the consequence

of "deliberate planning," and he countered, "So far as I know, nations almost never want war. All they want is to pursue national policies that interfere with the policies of other nations. As the conflict becomes sharper it produces a fog of patriotic emotions."¹¹⁴

Though Gunther showed no particular interest in proposals for heading off this "inevitable" war, the response of Bliven to Millis, and Soule to Borchard, was part of the basic approach of their journal, namely, the firm support of neutrality legislation as a supplement to traditional insistence on "old-fashioned" neutral rights, if the desire was to remain out of a future large-scale war. As Soule argued, legislative inhibition on trade with belligerents was less risky than depending on voluntary restriction of this intercourse as an aid to decreased involvement possibilities.

A trickle of additional books of consequence to the isolationist liberals continued to appear in the subsequent months of late 1937 and early 1938. In October, Selden Rodman had high words of praise for Quincy Howe's *England Expects Every American To Do His Duty*, though he thought Howe had overrated the pro-British forces here:¹¹⁵

On the credit side it is a compelling plea for isolation, for neutrality legislation with teeth, and for a solution to our soluble problem of "poverty amidst plenty" as an example to the rest of the world. Correctly Mr. Howe emphasizes that another war to make the world safe for democracy will be a war for British imperialism, whether the call comes from the Communist John Strachey or the reactionary Nicholas Murray Butler. Probably it will come from both.

Early in 1938 the *New Republic* hailed three other books of related consequence, Stephen and Joan Raushenbush's *The Final Choice*, H. C. Engelbrecht's *Revolt Against War*, and *Background Of War* by the editors of *Fortune*. John Chamberlain described the Raushenbush effort as "a superbly hard-headed book" in the *Nation*, and it was praised by William T. Stone in the *New Republic* as a powerful attack on the collective security idea; "Saving democracy is something more than knocking down a bully and then going home," the reviewer commented. Robert Wohlforth described the Engelbrecht and *Fortune* volumes thusly: "They are powerful arguments for isolationists and bring the realization that whatever the cost, peace never costs too much."¹¹⁶

The book of 1938 which rivalled that of Borchard in 1937 was *Save America First* by Jerome Frank. Chamberlain in his *New Republic* review in June stated the author's estimate of the European scene:¹¹⁷

On its moral side Mr. Frank's support of relative isolation follows his rejection of Hobson's Choice. Like any humane person, Mr. Frank hates Fascism and trembles to see it spread in Europe. But he fears that any move by Great Britain to fight German Fascism would stem more from a desire to keep Europe from achieving continental integration than from any love of democracy. This puts the progressive American in a dilemma. If we fight with England to prevent Germany from making an integrated economic region out of Central Europe we will be abetting European economic anarchy and extending the power of France as the great European Dog-in-the-Manger. On the other hand, the cost of integrating Central Europe on German terms promises to be so horrible in its destruction of human liberty that economic anarchy and rule by a Dog-in-the-Manger seem preferable.

But, said Chamberlain, Frank refused to take these alternatives and stuck to a position of keeping the United States out of it, whatever the solution. The Soviet Union as a third alternative in saturating Central Europe was not discussed by Frank, Chamberlain or any other liberal, but Frank's case for American abstention was a very attractive one, and he received additional praise from Bingham in *Common Sense* later in the summer. Probably no book of the period came closer to the foreign policy of this monthly; "intelligent isolation," Bingham described it, plus the display of an example to the world of a detached and prosperous America by making an efficient continental economy work; "If the New Deal has a future it lies down the road Mr. Frank points out."¹¹⁸

Significant volumes helping to contribute to the neutralist position continued to appear in mid-1938, Hubert Herring's *And So To War* and Charles Callan Tansill's magisterial *America Goes To War* drawing outspoken commendation from George Fielding Eliot in the *New Republic* and Dorothy Dunbar Bromley in *Common Sense*. Eliot saw in their descriptions of 1917-1918 a moral pointing to the terrible necessity to stay neutral; "What is important now is that having made the adventure and learned the lesson, the burned child shall have the common sense and self-control to shun the fire of other peoples' wars."¹¹⁹

Undoubtedly part of Major Eliot's enthusiasm was a reflection of views which he had about placed in final literary form himself; his *The Ramparts We Watch*, which received the plaudits of the neutralist liberals in the fall, joined Borchard and Frank as a significant statement of the non-involvement position for the United States. It received the highest praise from Edward Meade Earle in the *New Republic* in November as a blueprint for American security which gave a first priority to isolationist considerations in every respect. Earle eagerly supported Eliot's main contentions, (1) the practical

invulnerability of the United States no matter what combination of powers we faced; (2) the preservation of naval superiority off our coasts as a practical guarantee of maintaining that invulnerability, and (3) that "we shun like a plague all participation in the blood feuds of Europe and the Far East." Earle declared vigorously, "By this volume he has raised himself to the status of foremost American military critic." In the *Nation* Keith Hutchison came to very similar conclusions on the significance of Eliot and his practical suggestions for continental insularity.¹²⁰ Buried in this parade of neutralist books was Soule's vigorous chastisement of Frederick L. Schuman's Foreign Policy Association booklet *America Looks Abroad*. His post-Munich review of Schuman in the *New Republic* was an occasion for once more denouncing the author's collective security calls and re-stating the *New Republic's* position on a desirable future course for the United States.¹²¹

The early months of 1939 saw two more major additions to the neutrality camp in the form of Stuart Chase's *The New Western Front* and *Keep America Out Of War* by Norman Thomas and Bertram D. Wolfe. With a well-formed pro-war liberal interventionist wing now in existence, as will be seen in the next chapter, headed, among others, by Lewis Mumford and Waldo Frank, and issuing loud calls from the liberal weeklies at the same time, no additional support in rebuttal of them was likely to be overlooked. Chase, unreservedly on the side of the anti-interventionist liberal contingent, was estimated by Earle to have made a persuasive contribution to this side, and he made a point of mentioning that Chase's book would be found "useful as an answer to Mr. Lewis Mumford." In the *Nation*, Villard exceeded Earle in his warmth, especially valuing Chase's book for its lack of hysteria about impending invasion and doom which had come into fashion among part of the liberal-left after Munich. As for the Thomas-Wolfe effort, Bliven himself reviewed this, and gave nearly unqualified approval to the whole program outlined by the authors for keeping the country out of war. Part of this zeal for the book was due to the fact that Thomas and Wolfe had used material from past *New Republic* editorials very generously. Bliven especially appreciated their disparaging the notions that in a future war Britain and France would be "fighting as pure democracies in a noble cause," and that the United States was in immediate danger of a German attack. Bliven concluded with deep conviction, "I feel there is so much truth in it that I wish the book would have a million readers."¹²²

America In Midpassage, by the elder statesman of American neutralist liberalism, Charles A. Beard, was published not long after this, and reviewed with favor in the *Nation* by the *New Republic* editor Lovett.¹²³ But at this moment, in the late spring of 1939, not much

of anything remained unsaid in the interests of the anti-involvement position. On the literary side it appeared conclusive that this approach had been proved the best choice for the country; collective security had rarely been at such a discount. There was even a strain of confidence that the United States would fare well even if it eventually did get involved in another European war, as was evident in Quincy Howe's *Blood Is Cheaper Than Water* and *Our Maginot Line*, by Livingston Hartley. This troubled Earle considerably, and he was not so sure that a new war would end as favorably for American interests, nor would it be fought on behalf of the best interests of Europe either. In his *New Republic* review in May, 1939, Earle restated in another way his unshaken conviction that avoiding another war by any means was the top consideration on the neutralist-liberal agenda;¹²⁴

What neither of these authors tells us and what every American has the right to know before he even considers American entry into another war is this: assuming the greatest possible military victory for the United States and its allies, what sort of world would remain for us and our children to live in? Is there any reasonable likelihood that the blood-soaked tragedy of Europe will be materially altered after another American army may have brought victory to France and Britain? Or will the same old problem await solution?

THE LAST STAGE OF THE NEUTRALITY CONTROVERSY PRIOR TO HOSTILITIES

As the new session of Congress convened in January, 1939 with neutrality legislation occupying an extremely prominent position on its agenda, American liberalism in a sense went back two years to about the same time in 1937, and refought the issue all over again, although the situation was markedly different now, in view of the enormous gains in the propaganda contest by the protagonists of collective security during this interval. To some extent the fact that the sides were closer to each other in this new cannonade of ideas had something to do with a new measure of bitterness that the exchange reflected.

On January 18 the *New Republic* editors turned the job of restating the non-involvement position over to the redoubtable Charles A. Beard. He promptly went after the forces seeking amendment of the 1937 law in his "Neutrality: Shall We Have Revision?", insisting that the issue was still "Shall Congress surrender to the President its constitutional power to declare war?" If the President got the

power to discriminate among the belligerents, the major change sought, Beard maintained that it would be buttressed by "the authority to perform unneutral acts when war begins," namely, "to enter the war on the side he favors, first by hostile measures against the designated enemy, and then, when retaliation comes, by accepting the challenge of arms."¹²⁵ This remarkable prescience of the Roosevelt-Hitler destroyer-submarine battle of the Atlantic in late 1941 almost three years before it occurred was followed by a definition of neutrality for those whose sensibilities on the subject had been dulled and blunted by the series of remarkable incidents and crises since the Chicago Bridge speech; "The essence of neutrality," said Beard here, "is abstention from war, abstention from hostile acts by the government and abstention from changing the policies of the government for the benefit of one belligerent or the other, after the war has begun." It was his position that if Congress were to confer on the President the power to change policies for the benefit of one or the other, it was conferring upon him the power to commit unneutral acts, "that is, hostile acts, easily leading to war." For that reason Beard believed that the collective security forces ought to call their bill "An Act Allowing the President of the United States to Enter Any War That Begins Abroad."

Of course Beard hoped the opponents of this change would rally to defeat it. On the heels of the just-rebuffed executive reorganization bill, he suggested, "It seems preposterous to charge the President with seeking a dictatorship because he wants a reorganization of the federal administration and then turn around and make him a real dictator in a far more important matter—the power to maneuver the country into a position from which war is the only escape."

And in view of the expressed bent of the Administration in the emergency of the moment, Beard thought defeat of amendment of the Act even more pressing than if it were just a theoretical situation in a quiet moment in foreign relations:

If the official directors of our foreign policy would quit preaching sermons to the world—sermons which they have had to eat again and again—if they would keep their powder dry, if they would turn solemn and inscrutable faces to the three world trouble makers and let them guess, then the country would be less confused and the way would be prepared for the support of necessary decisions when and if decisions became necessary. But with all the sermonizing, preaching, lecturing and sentimentalizing, with the air full of rhetorical smoke, it would be dangerous for Congress to surrender its power over war to the Executive Department, no matter who is President.

A powerful back-up statement came from the editors a month later in the editorial "What Is Our Foreign Policy?," which posed a series of embarrassing rhetorical questions to FDR, with a concluding reproach, "Your foreign policy, Mr. Roosevelt, creates division and discouragement among your strongest supporters on domestic policy."¹²⁶

The *Nation's* stand did not involve the enlistment of a collective security figure of Beard's status, although it was able to take comfort from the fact that the daily press and other organs recruited from the most eminent in this category, and the *Nation* simply seconded their eloquent remarks. One of the most effective was Stimson, who drew spirited praise in the senior liberal weekly "for his able exposition of the case for an affirmative foreign policy"¹²⁷ and for his vigorous defense of FDR in the new season of trouble over the Neutrality Act, which was due to expire May 1. There was some relation between the rehabilitation of Stimson among American collective security liberal-left forces and a similar rehabilitation of Winston Churchill by the same groups in England. Though both men stood for socio-economic philosophies about as far away as possible from their leftward friends, their zeal for this foreign policy made them much appreciated and idolized. After the scalding ridicule both had received from progressive forces since before the great world depression set in, it was indeed a remarkable opinion somersault. Even the *Nation* could not overlook Stimson again in this category, for in the middle of the praise for his foreign policy position the weekly could still publish an attack on him by I. F. Stone for a letter he wrote to the *New York Times* referring to the Wagner Act as "class" legislation.¹²⁸ But foreign policy and the New Crusade were to make large numbers of curious allies in the years ahead.

A feature of the new round of dispute over the Neutrality Act among liberals was a fascination with public opinion polls, which had grown into an industry in the late 1930s, and had edged into consideration substantially as a force in the making of tastes and views on a large number of subjects by this time. The *Nation* once again expressed its puzzlement and irritation over a poll which did not show opinion to be drifting in its direction, one which registered large majorities in sympathy with the French and British, favorable to supplying them with food, but against furnishing war materials and "tremendously hostile," as the *Nation* put it mournfully, "to any idea of military support," and it viewed the situation with mixed emotions:¹²⁹

Public opinion is rightly, first and foremost concerned with the maintenance of peace. The belief that this objective can be secured by having

as little to do with Europe as possible is still widely held and is an obstacle to the kind of affirmative policy Mr. Stimson desires. Yet on the premise that a general European war would eventually engulf us, there is everything to be said for taking steps now that will discourage any aggressor from precipitating a conflict.

On the subject of rival proposals for adjusting or strengthening the existing neutrality legislation, the *New Republic* had switched its support to Senators Nye, Borah, Johnson, Wheeler, Clark, Bone and La Follette, leaders in the fight to preserve and extend neutrality provisions, and who helped complicate matters, to the delight of the editors, by reviving the Ludlow resolution. Senator Pittman was in their view now to be considered in a camp with the President, Hull, and others in favor of bringing about drastic revision of the law. The *Nation* editorially supported Senator Thomas of Utah, who proposed an amendment under which the President could ask Congress for authority to apply embargoes on "aggressors," "defined as powers which embark on war in violation of treaty to which this country is a party," its editorial of March 18 explained, another way of restating its tenacious insistence on the re-introduction of the Kellogg Pact into the picture.

To the *New Republic* the key to the drive for amendment of the law was to be found in relations with England, even before the English-Polish treaty late in March deeply involved the former in possible hostilities between Poland and Germany. As the editors said in their substantial survey of the situation on March 22, "Will America Save Europe?," "It seems to us that President Roosevelt, Secretary Hull and Senator Pittman are acting as if the United States were part of the British Empire—and not an autonomous dominion at that, but merely a crown colony."¹³⁰ All during the spring it published a series of editorial suspicions of the British, repeating complete opposition to the Pittman proposal for revision and giving vent to deep hostility toward the Chamberlain government, which was still not forgiven, along with the French, of the charge that they had run out on an alliance with Czechoslovakia. Lack of knowledge of French and British "plans and objectives" was cited as reason for shying away from any significant commitment via neutrality law change in their behalf. In the March 29 editorial it warned once more,¹³¹

If we were sure of the policies of these nations and had their aid in our policies, it might be wise thus to help them, although at great risk to ourselves, of being drawn into war and of suffering economic dislocation. But let us not, like romantic sycophants, rush blindly to serve the interests and follow the lead of the gentleman with the umbrella.

The left-liberal press all over the world had by now made the carrying of an umbrella a virtual misdemeanor because of its connection so many times with the British Prime Minister, personally charged with the policy change which had resulted in Czech partition.

"T.R.B." also felt that this was a major factor in the political wrestling over neutrality. In his *New Republic* column from Washington on May 3, he maintained that the renewal of pressure by the FDR camp for drastic neutrality law revision was based on the belief that a majority of the Senate was no longer "isolationist," and was in favor of neutrality as it stood only as long as it appeared that an "English-French coalition" could beat Hitler and Mussolini. In his view the situation was one in which the Administration had only to wait until the outbreak of hostilities to get Congress to push through the desired alterations in the Neutrality Act, so that there was no reason for putting on an exhausting and time-eating wrangle with the Senate at that moment. Except for the leaders in the fight to preserve the law, in his opinion the expressions of senatorial support for neutrality "rested on an extremely fragile base."¹³² The editors on the other hand in the same issue pointed to public opinion polls again, which showed that only 16% of those polled were "ready to send soldiers to Europe again," and that the reason for fighting the Thomas and Pittman amendments was basically one of supporting public reaction; no one was ready to fight.

On June 7 the *New Republic* commented acidly on the Administration's neutrality policy as enunciated by Hull on May 27, which sounded almost identical with the Pittman amendment, providing for a cash-and-carry provision for the supplying of munitions to belligerents, another way of guaranteeing British access to the lion's share of American war production by virtue of its immense superiority in a surface merchant navy as well as its fighting fleets. But its editorial remarked with a feeling of comfort, "There seems little likelihood, however, that the Administration will get its way, at least for the present." It revealed that the enemies of neutrality law change were "prepared to filibuster week after week to keep the arms embargo from being dropped" in that session of Congress.¹³³

On this particular issue the editors and "T.R.B." had a difference of opinion during most of the early and mid-summer. The latter's July 19 column, "Into the Trenches By Christmas," predicted FDR would defeat all his opponents in getting his desires on neutrality worked into law, but the editors disagreed a week later, even professing to see a conflict in the official camp upon comparing what they believed to be the known sentiments of the President and those expressed in Hull's July 14 speech. This made them highly doubtful that there would be a change of any kind.¹³⁴

The *Nation*, with the exception of Villard, adopted a vigorous

pro-amendment position, and accompanied their championship with a sometimes savage propaganda. Crawford's "Goodby Neutrality" on April 15 described the statute as one which had "probably thwarted the will of the majority of Americans more completely than any other statute Congress had ever written."¹³⁵ "Showdown On Neutrality," on May 13, after the 1937 law had expired, showed great impatience with the neutrality force and attacked both the Thomas and Pittman bills as unneutral substitutes for the elapsed act. Strangely enough, this editorial agreed with the critics, but replied in defense, "complete impartiality is a myth." The *Nation* supported both of these amendments in the making, switching to the Bloom bill in June.¹³⁶

But the slowdown of the political fight on behalf of revision did the journal's editorial stand no good. All through July there were bleak reports on the dim possibility of amendment taking place, with 34 Senators reported against change. In a panic about the continuation of a ban on the export of munitions and implements of war to belligerents, the weekly was starting to support complete repeal of neutrality legislation by the middle of July, and for restoring the status quo before the New Deal. Freda Kirchwey angrily charged at the end of that month that the Senators opposing amendment were engaging in what "was in effect a strategic move favoring the Fascist powers," which was powerful criticism indeed.¹³⁷

Yet no attempt was made to silence Villard, who defended the existing law and who stood for no change; "The present neutrality law was epoch-making, for no other country ever undertook such a policy," he called out in his column on July 22; "I believe it will stay—and go far toward keeping us out of war."¹³⁸ It was a position he had been repeating for many weeks. Early in June he had sided with Senators Borah and Vandenberg when they charged that those interested in changing it wanted to do so for "unneutral purposes" not shared by the public at large, and he commented ironically on the possibility of finding ourselves in a war defending Poland and Russia, which he cited as dictatorships with all the characteristics of those against which the friends of the democracies railed endlessly.¹³⁹

Villard's reservations about fighting a war in the interest of the Russians, among others, pointed up that Russia had entered the argument in another way. With American and world Communists making the point ever since 1935 that the United States could not possibly stay out of another big war, this "irrepressible conflict" approach of collective security had gained many adherents among the influential. It was at the core of all *Nation* editorial foreign policy and repeated week after week. But two different sets of standards had crept into use by the spring of 1939, ever since the March speech of Stalin which had hinted at a form of Communist isolationism toward

any possible general European war. Thus, although it was thought by pro-Soviet collective security enthusiasts that it was impossible for Americans, from four to five thousand miles away from the possible shooting,¹⁴⁰ to remain apart and untouched, these same spokesmen quite blandly contemplated the Russians, right next door to possible involvement, remaining serenely aloof without any wrenching to their logic whatever. No one of this camp, not even Frederick L. Schuman, questioned the ability of the Soviet, though next door to Germany, to stay out of a war which might see Germany and Italy pitted against England and France, which in the spring looked far more likely than the oft-dreaded Russo-German war which had so inflamed the Popular Front movement. The assumption of the collective security *realpolitikers* with a softness for the Russians actually was that either of the likely wings of an anti-Hitler opposition could choose whether to go to war or not.

The pressures of the neutrality fight drove the *New Republic*, despite its long-standing pro-Soviet sympathies in general, to challenge this position, by virtue of its anti-collective security stand as well. In defense of independent American action on the outbreak of hostilities, its July 19 editorial, "Roosevelt, Stalin and Neutrality," finally applied logic to the problem; pointing out:¹⁴¹

If he [Stalin] can make terms in the interest of his responsibilities, so can we. There is no good reason why the President of the greatest democracy in the world should be less shrewd and realistic than the dictator of the Soviet Union. . . . The hackneyed generalities of the collective securityites simply will not hold any longer. We assuredly can stay out of war if we really want to.

Though the liberal press in general hailed the neutrality legislation of 1937, it was quite disappointed by that of the summer of 1939. The *New Republic's* August 2 editorial was headed "The Neutrality Fiasco," and deeply regretted the Congressional failure to adopt a cash-and-carry provision to go along with its retention of the arms embargo. In their opinion, the law now replacing that of May, 1937 was dangerous:¹⁴²

As it is, we have an arms embargo, but no safeguard against economic involvement or quarrels about searches, seizures and sinkings at sea. If European war should break out before anything more is done, we should now be in almost the same position as before 1917.

The thought of American ships carrying munitions to Britain curdled the editors' blood, even though they were in favor of offering all possible economic aid to the "western democracies" at this mo-

ment. The President was personally blamed for adhering to changes as he desired instead of supporting the Bloom compromise bill providing for both these precautions, and which had passed in the House. But they also had harsh words for the pro-neutrality political leaders for not having the acumen to include a cash-and-carry provision in the law. Later in August in an editorial "What Congress Really Did," in re-evaluating the aspect of the congressional session dealing with neutrality, the *New Republic* saw fit once more to describe the complex nature of the national picture on this subject and why they thought it had come about in this way:¹⁴³

The greatest personal defeat sustained by the President was on the neutrality legislation. But this is an issue on which he never has had his way with Congress. Moreover, it is one that cuts squarely across internal political lines. The President joins with a miscellaneous assortment including the Communists, Wall Street bankers, President Butler of Columbia, liberal adherents of the League of Nations, and followers of Woodrow Wilson, in favor of collective security. His opponents on this issue include not merely the Nazis, William Randolph Hearst and Republican conservatives, but a large number of the most progressive elements in the country and hordes of plain citizens without definite political views.

And there was little doubt that in the *New Republic's* view it belonged well in the forefront of the country's "most progressive elements," and its fight for neutrality seemed one of the most honorable causes it had ever supported.

The *Nation* greeted the defeat of neutrality legislation revision with a sour tribute. In an editorial on August 12 and in an article by Crawford a week later, it advanced the theory that if the then current Polish-German controversy erupted into war and invasion of Poland, the United States Congress would be to blame for having spurned Roosevelt's desired changes. On August 26 Villard ridiculed the idea, and expressed his astonishment and alarm that anyone would even imagine that Hitler's foreign policy was guided by how the United States Congress had voted on its own neutrality. He was appalled that anyone should support the President in views of this sort.¹⁴⁴

In the same issue (August 2) in which the *New Republic* reviewed the new neutrality provisions with mixed emotions, it had published another editorial, "We Appease Also," denouncing the failure of the President to invoke the law against Japan, after two solid years of pressure to do so. Perhaps it was not prepared for his subsequent act, and the comprehensiveness of it, for the following week it left no doubt that it thought the President need not have gone that far:¹⁴⁵

Mr. Roosevelt's action in denouncing the 1911 commercial treaty with Japan seems to have been one of his characteristic impulsive actions . . . The more one thinks about the President's action, the more serious it becomes. Without consulting anybody except Secretary Hull, the President has taken his most challenging step toward defiance of the Fascist bloc. In one day he has brought the United States far along the road toward war with Japan.

The editors strenuously objected that "Such responsibility ought not to rest in the hands of a single individual, no matter who he is or how worthy his motives," arguing that the authors of the Constitution never intended to permit such a concentration of power, and used the opportunity to back strongly Senator Nye's repeat of a proposal made several times by Hubert Herring and the editors, that the President should consult with a joint committee of the House and Senate on foreign affairs before taking such actions. "The members of such a committee would be fully informed as to developments abroad, and would be able to serve as a check upon an impulsive Chief Executive with a messianic complex." The *Nation* added for emphasis, "The President's action on the Japanese treaty confirms the wisdom of this proposal."

But the titanic Hitler-Stalin non-aggression pact was just a few days away, and war in Europe immediately after that. That they signalled an utterly new chapter in the liberal controversy over American foreign policy goes without saying, and the fortunes of that war were to prepare American liberalism traditionally opposed to United States involvement in European war for a majestic somersault on the subject in a matter of weeks, as will be seen. But the immediate response to hostilities in the *New Republic* was still another plea for the immediate passage of the cash-and-carry provision, which it had been backing editorially, plus admonitions for Americans to "keep our heads" and "act coolly," and especially not to get panicked by Anglo-Francophiles into rash and irremediable commitments leading to involvement: ¹⁴⁶

Nor ought we to get into a position where we shall be gradually edged toward war, or be drawn or plunged into it, by any act other than our own deliberate choice. . . . Too many people seem to believe that, while they do not want America to go to war, circumstances will eventually force it to do so. There is no reason in the world why we should accept any such mechanistic inevitability.

However, it might have been an opportune moment for the editors of the junior liberal weekly to recall an article by O. W. Riegel which they had published four years earlier, "The Propaganda Balance

Sheet," in which he had advanced the tough-minded sober rumination, "If one wished to bet on the outcome of the propaganda conflict in this country in the event of an international crisis, he would be wise to lay his money against neutrality and peace."¹⁴⁷ Liberals were to prove that they had no more special immunity to the irrational pressures of wartime hysteria than any other segment of the community at large, and somewhat less than some others.

NOTES

- 1 *New Republic*, January 15, 1936, pp. 270-271.
- 2 "T.R.B.," "Do the Voters Dislike the Neutrality Act?," *New Republic*, October 13, 1937, p. 268.
- 3 See editorial comment in *Common Sense*, November, 1937, p. 5, on the line-up of the opponents and protagonists of the President on the basis of his Chicago speech.
- 4 "How Shall We Stop the Aggressors?," *New Republic*, October 20, 1937, p. 281.
- 5 "Another War For Democracy," *New Republic*, February 5, 1936, pp. 354-355.
- 6 *New Republic*, October 20, 1937, pp. 283-285, for citations in above two paragraphs.
- 7 "Positive Neutrality," *New Republic*, October 27, 1937, pp. 327-328. The position was reiterated that "you cannot defeat Fascism by defeating Fascist nations in war."
- 8 Flynn, "U.S. Neutrality: Muddling Through To Sudden Death," *Common Sense*, October, 1937, pp. 8-10.
- 9 *New Masses*, November 23, 1937, pp. 6-7.
- 10 See *New Republic* editorial of December 1, 1937, p. 87, which thought it humorous that it should be attacked by the *New Masses* as anti-Soviet and by the *American Mercury* as pro-Soviet simultaneously.
- 11 *Nation*, October 23, 1937, p. 434.
- 12 *Nation*, January 1, 1938, p. 4. The *New Republic* unleashed columns of letters on William Allen White at the same time by publishing his provocative "A Yip From the Doghouse," in its issue of December 15, 1937; January 5, 1938, pp. 258-259.
- 13 "Back To Internal Affairs," *New Republic*, October 27, 1937, p. 325. The editors observed three weeks later, "Neutrality policy is of course pressing and we hope Congress will quickly enforce its previously expressed will." November 17, 1937, p. 29.
- 14 *Nation*, November 27, 1937, pp. 576-577.
- 15 *New Republic*, November 3, 1937, pp. 370-371.
- 16 *New Republic*, November 3, 1937, pp. 360-361.
- 17 "Unholy Alliance," *Nation*, November 13, 1937, pp. 520-521.
- 18 *New Republic*, December 1, 1937, p. 85.
- 19 *New Republic*, January 5, 1938, p. 237.
- 20 *New Republic*, January 5, 1938, pp. 245-246. Flynn's comment on pp. 254-255 of this issue. *The Communist* was much more agitated by the *Panay* bombing than the liberal weeklies; see issue of January, 1938, p. 15.
- 21 *Nation*, January 15, 1938, pp. 57-58. Villard in his column on the 8th, p. 45, had battered away at the whole concept of "defense," and cited the testimony of Generals Butler and Hagood on the absence of a plan for coastal defenses, and any established government policy. Said Villard, "We have never settled what we are going to defend or where we are going to defend it."
- 22 *Nation*, January 15, 1938, pp. 63-64.
- 23 *New Republic*, January 12, 1938, pp. 282-283.
- 24 *New Republic*, January 5, 1938, pp. 252-253.
- 25 *Nation*, December 25, 1937, p. 702.
- 26 *New Republic*, December 29, 1937, pp. 212-213, for citations in above two paragraphs.

27 Villard, "That War Referendum," *Nation*, January 15, 1938, pp. 71-72; Norman Thomas letter in same issue, pp. 83-84; on referendum on conscription see especially letter of David Rhys Williams, *Nation*, February 26, 1938, p. 255. Martin-UAW telegram in full in *New Republic*, January 26, 1938, pp. 340-341.

28 *Common Sense*, February, 1938, p. 6; *Nation*, January 15, 1938, pp. 61-62. The *Nation* maintained that the resolution placed the emphasis on the wrong thing, that it checked "the declaration of war" rather than "the pursuit of policies likely to lead to war."

29 *New Republic*, January 19, 1938, p. 294; "T.R.B." column, *New Republic*, January 26, 1938, p. 336. In its editorial of the 19th the *New Republic* declared, "It can safely be said that the masses of the people throughout the country who favor Mr. Roosevelt's social program are opposed to participation in any war on foreign soil. The split in liberal ranks on this question is largely among intellectuals."

30 *New Republic*, January 26, 1938, pp. 328-330. Bliven referred to the possibility of the invasion of the United States as a "popular delusion," and debunked the trans-Atlantic bombing scares, probably a product of talk following the famous Balbo flight from Italy to the United States, as "the prediction of alarmists." Bliven maintained that the basic idea behind the naval and military program was an attempt to imitate the British in world imperialism, as opposed to the Flynn-"T.R.B." sentiment that the military buildup was related to the new depression and the need to crank up the economy. See also the commendatory letter to Bliven from Jeannette Rankin, *New Republic*, February 16, 1938, in which she suggested to him, "If your readers would write President Roosevelt asking why the Boileau bill received treatment similar to that accorded the Ludlow amendment the answers might shed light on the present war trends and vanishing democracy."

31 "'Isolation' vs. 'Collective Security,'" *Common Sense*, February, 1938, pp. 3, 6. Excerpts from the speeches of February 5 were reprinted in *Common Sense*, March, 1938, pp. 13-17.

32 Stone's article in *Nation*, November 6, 1937, pp. 494-497; Bingham's letter in *Nation*, November 20, 1937, p. 571.

33 The exchange was headed "How Can We Escape War?," Thomas' contribution subtitled "Neutrality Plus Socialism" and Buell's "The Failure Of Isolation," *Nation*, December 25, 1937, pp. 707-711.

34 *New Republic*, December 1, 1937, pp. 93-95, for citations in two paragraphs below. Among the commendations Bliven received on this essay was one from Major-General William C. Rivers (ret.); *New Republic*, January 5, 1938, p. 258.

35 *New Republic*, February 2, 1938, pp. 354-359, for all citations in subsequent six paragraphs.

36 See especially editorial "Behind the Big Navy," *New Republic*, February 9, 1938, p. 6.

37 "Lenin and Collective Security," *The Communist*, January, 1938, pp. 17-28; Brown, "For Concerted Action Against Isolation and War," *The Communist*, March, 1938, pp. 251-265 (Report at Plenary Session of the Central Committee, CPUSA, New York City, February 18-21, 1938); Browder, "Concerted Action Or Isolation," *New Masses*, March 1, 1938, pp. 3-4; "Questions and Answers," *New Masses*, March 22, 1938, p. 6.

38 *Nation*, February 26, 1938, pp. 238-241.

39 *Common Sense*, February, 1938, pp. 8-10.

40 *Nation*, March 5, 1938, p. 271.

41 *Nation*, January 29, 1938, pp. 117-118.

42 *Nation*, February 5, 1938, p. 141. Villard in his column in this issue (p. 157) declared, "The President's latest proposals for increasing the army and navy take us much farther along the road to genuine militarism."

43 *Nation*, February 12, 1938, p. 184.

44 *New Republic*, February 16, 1938, pp. 32-33; Mitchell essay, pp. 34-36 of same issue. Part of the editorial was also based on an interview with Charles A. Beard which had been published in the Scripps-Howard newspapers.

45 *New Republic*, February 23, 1938, pp. 60-61.

46 *New Republic*, February 9, 1938.

47 See note 45.

- 48 *New Republic*, March 2, 1938, pp. 99-100.
- 49 *New Republic*, March 2, 1938, p. 100.
- 50 Anderson, "A Bill To Promote Dictatorship," *Nation*, March 12, 1938, pp. 291-292; editorial, *Nation*, March 12, 1938, p. 286; *Nation*, April 9, 1938, pp. 407-410.
- 51 *New Republic*, March 30, 1938, p. 210.
- 52 *Nation*, March 19, 1938, p. 314; April 2, 1938, pp. 376-378; April 9, 1938, p. 403; May 7, 1938, p. 522.
- 53 *Common Sense*, May, 1938, p. 7.
- 54 See especially "Amend the Neutrality Act!," *New Masses*, March 29, 1938, p. 11, and the letters in praise of this policy suggestion from Robert Morss Lovett and Leland Stowe, *New Masses*, May 3, 1938, p. 20. *New Republic* "National Defense" supplement included in issue of March 30, 1938, pp. 233-258.
- 55 *Nation*, May 4, 1938, pp. 569-570. John Chamberlain, an editor of *Fortune* at the time, in his response to the *Nation* questionnaire, replied, "Isolation may result in war, but there is at least a small chance it will not. And though it may prove impossible to stay out of the next war, I should rather enter it late than early. I admit that isolation automatically creates a war party at home, financed by those who want to trade with belligerents. But that is a hazard we have to run. I should prefer to die fighting that war party than to die fighting in a war." *Nation*, April 9, 1938, p. 404. The liberals who signed the May 14 letter suggesting "voluntary rather than governmental collective action" against Germany, Italy and Japan did not explain how they hoped this unofficial action would similarly prevent the development of a "war party."
- 56 *New Republic*, May 11, 1938, p. 2.
- 57 *Nation*, February 5, 1938, p. 157.
- 58 *Nation*, July 2, 1938, p. 18.
- 59 Bliven, "What Next?," *New Republic*, March 16, 1938, pp. 157-159.
- 60 *Harper's*, March, 1938, pp. 337-348 (346-347).
- 61 *New Republic*, March 2, 1938, pp. 87-88.
- 62 Eliot, "Hitler's Balance Sheet," *New Republic*, May 25, 1938, p. 65.
- 63 "Mr. Hull's Economic Sanctions," *New Republic*, June 22, 1938, pp. 171-172.
- 64 *New Republic*, July 6, 1938, p. 233.
- 65 See especially "Limit the War Power," *New Republic*, July 27, 1938, pp. 320-321, and note 63.
- 66 *New Republic*, August 10, 1938, p. 21.
- 67 *Nation*, July 30, 1938, p. 110.
- 68 "A Positive Program For Peace," *Common Sense*, August, 1938.
- 69 "The Peace Skies Brighten," *New Republic*, August 31, 1938, p. 89; "America's Role In the War Crisis," *Nation*, September 17, 1938, pp. 256-257; "T.R.B." column in *New Republic*, September 14, 1938, p. 158.
- 70 *Nation*, September 24, 1938, pp. 285-286.
- 71 "Neville Chamberlain In Washington," *Nation*, October 15, 1938, pp. 368-369.
- 72 *New Republic*, September 28, 1938, p. 213.
- 73 *New Republic*, October 12, 1938, p. 253.
- 74 "America's Part," *New Republic*, October 5, 1938, pp. 228-230; "Nemesis Postponed," *New Republic*, October 12, 1938, pp. 255-257.
- 75 "National Defense Again," *New Republic*, November 2, 1938, p. 348. The *Nation's* comment on the famous Orson Welles broadcast of the evening of October 30, which caused such a wide outbreak of hysteria on the Eastern seaboard, tried to discount the reaction as an emotional holdover from the days and nights of intense radio emotionalizing over Czechoslovakia the month before. "Panic From Mars," *Nation*, November 12, 1938, p. 498. Paul Douglas added a comment defending the American critics of the British government's action at Munich, who had been countercharged with similar unwillingness to fight, and therefore not blameless; said Douglas, in a letter to the *Nation*, "Our government has at least been honest. Believing that we should not enter the League of Nations, it has made no promises and broken no vows. The British government, on the other hand, has been loud in its protestation of loyalty to the principle of collective action to restrain aggression, but in practice it has consistently betrayed the victims to their aggressors." *Nation*, November 19, 1938, p. 548.
- 76 *New Republic*, November 16, 1938, p. 30.

- 77 "Taking Stock," *Nation*, October 29, 1938, pp. 440-441.
- 78 *New Republic*, April 20, 1938, p. 315.
- 79 *New Republic*, May 25, 1938, pp. 60-61. See also its criticism of Hull on this question; "Our Belligerent Secretary," *New Republic*, April 13, 1938, p. 288.
- 80 *New Republic*, November 23, 1938, p. 55; November 30, 1938, p. 88. The editors also tied into this question the refusal of the State Department to grant the British Communist John Strachey a visa; see the angry two-page editorial "Investigate the State Department," *New Republic*, October 26, 1938, pp. 319-320. There was a curious editorial lapse in the issue of November 23, an article by one Melvin M. Fagen, "We Built the German Air Force," (pp. 61-63), which cited figures which indicated that American shipments of aviation products to Germany amounted to only one-tenth of that going to Britain as noted in the editorial six pages away. It was not a very convincing case in support of the article's sensational title. Too much of his article was based on a report of the Lawyer's Guild.
- 81 *Nation*, January 21, 1939, p. 77. See also *Nation*, December 31, 1938, p. 1.
- 82 Report in *New Republic*, January 4, 1939, p. 268.
- 83 *Nation*, January 28, 1939, pp. 105-106.
- 84 "The Job For Congress," *New Republic*, January 4, 1939, pp. 244-245.
- 85 "Telegram To the President," *New Republic*, February 1, 1939, p. 357.
- 86 *The Communist*, January, 1939, p. 11.
- 87 *The Communist*, January, 1939, pp. 40-47.
- 88 *New Masses*, January 3, 1939, p. 11.
- 89 See for example editorial in *Nation*, December 10, 1938, p. 607.
- 90 "Essentials At Lima," *New Republic*, December 14, 1938, pp. 161-162; "Pots and Kettles At Lima," *New Republic*, December 14, 1938, pp. 163-164.
- 91 *New Republic*, January 4, 1939, p. 241.
- 92 R. A. Martinez and Harry Robinson, "Lima-An Answer to Munich," *The Communist*, February, 1939, pp. 128-135.
- 93 *New Republic*, January 11, 1939, pp. 281-282.
- 94 "The President's Message," *Nation*, January 14, 1939, pp. 51-52.
- 95 "T.R.B.," "F.D.R.'s Russian Policy," *New Republic*, January 25, 1939, p. 340.
- 96 "America Volunteers," *New Republic*, March 8, 1939, pp. 116-117.
- 97 *Nation*, January 21, 1939, p. 78.
- 98 *Nation*, February 4, 1939, pp. 136-137.
- 99 *Nation*, February 11, 1939, pp. 164-165; Villard's column on p. 178. Villard went beyond his *Nation* style in an extremely sharp condemnation of Roosevelt in the *Atlantic Monthly* not long after, declaring, "we do know that he has led this country into a most dangerous militarism, which, because of inadequate forethought, and lack of planning or definition of what we are to defend, repeats the worst blunders and follies of the statesmen of Europe and other countries. Under him we have joined in the deadly race for preparedness and more preparedness, which even Mr. Roosevelt stated, in Buenos Aires on December 1, 1936, spells bankruptcy and the lowering of the standard of life for vast multitudes, and the destruction of a country's economic system and war." "An Editor Balances The Account," *Atlantic*, April, 1939, pp. 452-460. See also Villard's "Wanted: A Safe Defense Policy," *Harper's*, April, 1939, pp. 449-456.
- 100 *New Republic*, January 4, 1939, p. 242; January 25, 1939, p. 325, pp. 334-335; February 1, 1939, pp. 364-366.
- 101 *New Republic*, February 15, 1939, pp. 45-46.
- 102 *New Republic*, April 5, 1939, p. 237, for citations in following two paragraphs.
- 103 *Common Sense*, March, 1939, p. 6. Another particularly potent contribution of this kind was C. Hartley Grattan's "No More Excursions," *Harper's*, April, 1939, pp. 457-465.
- 104 The Kirchwey editorial was titled, curiously enough, "Let's Mind Our Own Business," *Nation*, April 15, 1939, pp. 421-422. On the suggested Anglo-Franco-Russo-American economic world campaign to embarrass the "totalitarian" states, see "The Economic Lineup," *Nation*, May 6, 1939, p. 518.
- 105 Kirchwey, "Roosevelt, Peace-Monger," *Nation*, April 22, 1939, pp. 456-457.
- 106 *Nation*, May 13, 1939, p. 549; "T.R.B." in *New Republic*, April 26, 1939, p. 334.
- 107 *Nation*, April 22, 1939, pp. 459-460.

- 108 Kirchwey, "Fable For Our Time," *Nation*, April 29, 1939, pp. 458-486.
- 109 The term "appeasement" was used with quotation-marks in the *New Republic* as well in the early months of 1939.
- 110 Flynn, "Isolation and Foreign Trade," *New Republic*, June 14, 1939, p. 159.
- 111 *New Republic*, April 26, 1939, pp. 321-322; for citations in this paragraph and that immediately following.
- 112 *New Republic*, June 21, 1939, pp. 182-184. In its editorial "What Is Our Foreign Policy?," on April 26, 1939, pp. 317-318, the *New Republic* stated flatly, "there never has been a time since the Versailles Treaty when the League of Nations was really a collective, or when collective security was other than ersatz."
- 113 *New Republic*, July 19, 1939, pp. 299-301.
- 114 Soule review of Borchard/Lage in *New Republic*, July 14, 1937, p. 286; Raushenbush review of Borchard/Lage in *Nation*, May 22, 1937, pp. 595-597. Bliven review of Millis in *New Republic*, March 10, 1937, pp. 143-144; Gunther review of Millis in *Nation*, February 20, 1937, p. 212. Review of Grattan in *New Republic*, March 10, 1937, p. 144.
- 115 *Common Sense*, October, 1937, p. 29.
- 116 Stone review of Raushenbush in *New Republic*, January 19, 1938, pp. 316-317; Wohlforth review of Engelbrecht and Fortune study in *New Republic*, February 2, 1938, pp. 374-375.
- 117 *New Republic*, June 29, 1938, pp. 220-222.
- 118 The review of the Frank book by Bingham appeared in the issue of *Common Sense* for August, 1938.
- 119 Eliot reviews of Herring and Tansill in *New Republic*, June 29, 1938, p. 221. The Bromley reviews were in *Common Sense* for July, 1938.
- 120 Earle review of Eliot in *New Republic*, November 23, 1938, pp. 80-81; Hutchison review of Eliot in *Nation*, January 21, 1939, pp. 95-96. Earle disagreed with Eliot on one point, his impatience with the testimony of civilians at hearings on military and naval affairs, which Eliot thought unduly influenced by pacifist propaganda. Earle was affronted by this, and he cited Charles A. Beard as having shown that "some of the most muddle-headed statements at these hearings came from the 'professional experts of high rank.'"
- 121 Soule review of Schuman in *New Republic*, October 12, 1938, p. 287. Curiously enough, the editors published two articles by Schuman attacking the concept of "collective security" as used subsequently by the Chamberlain Tory spokesmen ("a shibboleth" when used by them, in Schuman's mind) and accusing them of being mostly motivated by the desire to isolate Communist Russia and bring about the Soviet downfall at the hands of Germany. Schuman, "The Tory Dialectic," *New Republic*, December 28, 1938, pp. 219-222; January 4, 1939, pp. 253-255.
- 122 Earle review of Chase in *New Republic*, March 22, 1939, p. 201; Villard review of Chase in *Nation*, March 11, 1939, p. 295. Bliven review of Thomas/Wolfe in *New Republic*.
- 123 *Nation*, June 10, 1939, pp. 674-676.
- 124 *New Republic*, May 31, 1939, pp. 106-108.
- 125 *New Republic*, January 18, 1939, pp. 307-308; for citations in subsequent three paragraphs.
- 126 *New Republic*, February 15, 1939, pp. 32-33.
- 127 "Isolation Is Not Enough," *Nation*, March 18, 1939, pp. 307-308.
- 128 Stone, "Our One-Sided Labor Act," *Nation*, April 29, 1939, p. 500.
- 129 See note 127 above.
- 130 "Will America Save Europe?," *New Republic*, March 22, 1939, pp. 180-181.
- 131 "Chamberlain's Deathbed Conversion," *New Republic*, March 29, 1939, pp. 208-209.
- 132 "T.R.B.," "The Fever Mounts," *New Republic*, May 3, 1939, p. 376.
- 133 "Mr. Hull On Neutrality," *New Republic*, June 7, 1939, p. 113.
- 134 "T.R.B." column, *New Republic*, July 19, 1939, p. 305; "The President and Neutrality," *New Republic*, July 26, 1939, p. 318.
- 135 *Nation*, April 15, 1939, pp. 423-424.
- 136 *Nation*, May 13, 1939, pp. 548-549; June 6, 1939, p. 630.

- 137 *Nation*, July 15, 1939, p. 58; Kirchwey, "Two Foreign Policies," *Nation*, July 29, 1939, pp. 116-117.
- 138 *Nation*, July 22, 1939, p. 102.
- 139 *Nation*, June 10, 1939, p. 673. His closing sentence read, "But if Russia should join the saviors of democracy and we should send our sons to aid, what a sight for the gods that would be—the flag of free America alongside those of the Russian and Polish dictators, the soldiers of all fighting gloriously for the right of self-government and the freedom of the individual." Ironically enough, propaganda for domestic consumption after 1941 sounded precisely like this, and with hardly any change in literary style.
- 140 See for example the *New Masses* editorial of July 25, 1939, "The Neutrality Fight."
- 141 *New Republic*, July 19, 1939, pp. 292-293.
- 142 *New Republic*, August 2, 1939, pp. 348-349.
- 143 *New Republic*, August 16, 1939, pp. 32-33.
- 144 "Saved By the Bell," *Nation*, August 12, 1939, pp. 163-164; Crawford, "So Roosevelt Got A Licking," *Nation*, August 19, 1939, pp. 186-187; Villard column, *Nation*, August 26, 1939, p. 222.
- 145 "We Appease Also," *New Republic*, August 2, 1939, p. 345; "Making A Face At Japan," *New Republic*, August 9, 1939, pp. 4-5.
- 146 *New Republic*, September 6, 1939, pp. 116-117.
- 147 *New Republic*, August 14, 1935, p. 13.

THE INTELLECTUAL CONVERSION
OF LIBERALISM FROM PEACE TO
WAR: II—WAR CRIES MATCH PACIFIST
NEUTRALISM BETWEEN THE SPANISH
WAR AND THE FALL OF FRANCE

A STUDY of liberal opinion on foreign affairs and politics in the United States in the decade prior to American involvement in the Second World War must concern itself with the ideological accompaniment to this opinion, as well as the commentary on the politics and economics of the world scene. Some part of this has been dealt with in an examination of pacifism and liberalism, with major attention to the institutional aspect of their relationship. The concern here is with the growth of a counter-ideology which gradually advanced abstract reasons why liberalism should support another war despite its nearly quarter of a century of standing opposition to such support. Its relation to the political reasons always offered by partisans of the Russians or Franco-British has considerable impact, but in general there did evolve and emerge an appeal to arms based on grounds of moral content and so stated as to make an identity with values and standards of ancient standing, as distinct from purely momentary political goals.

The liberal press by mid-1936 was beginning to show definite signs of an ideological split personality, especially on the subject of war. It is difficult to say that it was prepared to adhere to pacifist views with the survival of Marxist class war ideas as vigorous and healthy as

they were at that high moment in the budding Popular Front, and in the inflamed state they were to become especially after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. On the national level, two camps were starting to appear, and their outlines were plainly apparent by the start of 1937. Along with the Marxist pro-Russians steadily moving in the direction of positing the matter as a problem of defending the Soviet Union from Germany and Japan was a slowly materializing element interested in protecting the "democracies" from the same nations.

Liberals who were either convinced pacifists or in the anti-militarist tradition began to find it harder by the month to make up their mind, what with the Spanish war already straining their sensibilities after the serious tension caused by Mussolini in Africa, which saw even such a reputed pacifist as Paul Douglas profoundly moved and induced to abandon his views. In general pacifist views against sanctions were weakened, while a steady barrage of stories attacking the Hitler regime took their toll and quietly helped form liberal attitudes here as well. Adding the Spanish and Sino-Japanese wars to the picture, plus the booming propaganda campaign for the defense of Russia, sufficient ingredients were present to guarantee an exceedingly difficult season ahead for those with convictions against the resort to armed force.

Attention has been paid to the Communist front pacifism and its collaboration with the traditional groups after 1933 in vigorous opposition to conscription, compulsory military education, armament appropriations and related affairs. Yet the parallel enthusiasm from 1936 on, for the resistance in Spain and China, lauding the forces which were favored there, accompanied by occasional oblique comments about the possible value of checking Fascism with violence, was a signal that a rationale for fighting was not very far below the surface. Its joining hands with a totally strange opinion force which would have nothing to do with determinism in the Marxian sense but which was able to argue lightly and persistently about the mechanistic inevitability of United States participation in any new war likely to break out in Europe helped to draw up the outlines of this phenomenon.

There was an uneasy recognition among a wide sector of liberalism by early 1937 that liberalism in combination with these other forces ran a serious risk of inventing its own excuses and rationalizations for fighting in another major military upheaval. There were premonitions of several kinds that a new ideology supporting warfare might easily evolve out of the potentially incendiary materials lying about. Horace Gregory gave expression to one fear in reviewing Groff Conklin's *New Republic Anthology*, a collection of material which had appeared in that weekly between 1915 and 1935, in *Common*

Sense in February, 1937. Speaking of that journal's World War One experience, he asked,¹

Will the liberal change within the next decade? I think he hopes to—but will the recent victory of Roosevelt II (in which he shares) deceive him as completely as Woodrow Wilson's call to arms? The temptation to be deceived is very strong and in event of another war the temptation will be still stronger. The courage of such men as Charles A. Beard is very rare.

A *New Republic* editorial early in the following month itself suggested a denouement of quite the same sort, discussing where the intellectual impetus behind the leadership in a new war might be found; the big threat insofar as this was concerned was not seen to be lodged among the "fire-eating militarists or profiteering munitions makers":²

It is that we shall be deceived by people who are absolutely sure of their good intentions, by people who are so strongly in favor of peace, and of a peaceful world, that they are willing to kill and die for it. Nothing seems more likely at the moment from the nature of the present international lineup, than that if we go to war in the near future we shall do so again to preserve democracy and to end war. That is the real danger, and the more strongly we believe in our pacifistic good intentions, the greater the danger is. Fighters for peace don't make wars, but when war comes they may lead us into it.

The first noticeable big voice for war in the liberal chorus for peace in these times was Frederick L. Schuman, as well as the first comprehensive destructive critic of pacifism. From the time he violently attacked the anti-war book by H. M. Tomlinson, *Mars His Idiot*, and *War* by Norman Thomas in the third issue of the *New Republic* in 1936, down to his vociferous reception of Hamilton Fish Armstrong's *We Or They* in the same journal's June 23, 1937 number, he developed into a formidable protagonist for war against Germany. In 1936 he had declared that "What is important is the halting of Fascist aggression by any and all means at hand," rather than subscribing to the sentiments of the anti-militarist authors. The joining of Schuman and Armstrong in a psychological union as reviewer and author was symbolic of the nature of the pro-war sources which were to sweep American liberals and intellectuals subsequently, despite their vast differences of intent and social psychology. Of the thesis of the aristocrat editor of *Foreign Affairs* and devout admirer of British power, Schuman said with enthusiastic emphasis,³

With a vigor and forthrightness somewhat reminiscent of Thomas Paine, Mr. Armstrong hurls defiance in the teeth of the despots. And he recognizes that the sword may be needed as well as the pen. Democracy has no right to suicide. Its first victories were won by force. Its heritage must, if necessary, be defended by force.

Schuman's imprimatur was writ in large script on this clarion call to arms, one of the earliest appeals to gunfire as a solution to the world political problem. It was obvious that Schuman was grateful for Armstrong's dedication to fighting all "despots" but Russians.

Schuman's first allies rose in numbers in the rival *Nation*, however. Its firm commitment to collective security attracted far more of those favorably disposed to Schuman's intellectual phrasing of the issues. One of the most effective, Vera Micheles Dean, similarly was guided by an underlying commitment to a pro-Soviet position, but delivered telling blows at the still alive and vigorous liberal pacifist tradition. Her essay "A Challenge to Pacifists" on February 6, 1937, though it made a good case against pacifists who urged resistance to Germany, Italy and Japan, and who demanded sanctions yet condemned armaments, was weakened by her own transparent preference for the Soviet Union, indicating that her hostility to dictatorship was more a fear of German hegemony of the states east of the Rhine. She was convinced that a war fought to halt the expansion of German and Japanese power by the "armed democracies in cooperation with the Soviet Union" would be far preferable to their sustained gains, even if it did result in "a new Holy Alliance designed to suppress the dictatorships and freeze the status quo," bringing into existence all the pressures prevailing before 1914.⁴

A similar appeal came from Spain from a former *Nation* contributor, Samuel Romer, fighting in the Mackenzie-Papineau International Brigade, on October 9 of that same year. Romer set the Marxian proletarian note more clearly than any of the contributors on the American side of the Atlantic with a stirring call to understand the differences between the two war eras and why pacifism simply had become obsolete in the later one;⁵

Revolutionary pacifism found no test in 1917; a struggle between rival imperialist powers offered no real problem to those who wished to be loyal both to the workers and to the tenets of pacifism. But in 1937 loyalty to the international working class demands an absolute renunciation of pacifism.

Still another of the regular voices of the *Nation* whose Marxist philosophy had never been concealed during this decade, Reinhold Niebuhr, disclosed himself in this early period to be one of the most

contemptuous of liberal pacifism,⁶ and along with Lewis Mumford, Waldo Frank, Archibald MacLeish, Robert Sherwood, Max Lerner, Hans Kohn, Schuman, Mrs. Dean, with a generous push from a galaxy of European refugees, became the principal spokesmen who tailored the intellectual rationale for liberals to follow in internalizing a new war psychosis.

THE FIRST STAGE OF THE LIBERAL RESISTANCE
TO THE NEW BELLIGERENCY IN THEIR RANKS

The growth of the Marxist and pro-Russian-inspired war talk among liberals did not go undetected or unnoticed; on the contrary, there was almost immediate recognition on an intramural level, an awareness of its potential as opinion-making, utterly aghast at its growth in a time when world tensions were already much accelerated. Old-line progressives such as Norman Thomas recognized the situation, granted that there were weaknesses in the traditional rejection of warfare as a solution, but insisted that the new war-calls did not state the issues any clearer, if as clear. In his *Nation* article "The Pacifist's Dilemma" on January 16, 1937 he illustrated that the Popular Front and American League Against War and Fascism thinking was catching up with the pacifists now, and slowly bending them in the direction of stands which led straight to belligerency over the issues of Spain, China and Russia. Thomas himself was much aroused over Spain and the anti-Franco cause, and for aiding it, but his sympathies were still with the plumb-liners who refused to support war on any level, international or civil. And he was convinced that the new ideological superstructure being built to make war appealing to its traditional opponents did not bring the real issues clearly out in the open:⁷

. . . Fascism itself is not basically a conspiracy of wicked dictators against democracy. It is a logical stage of development of the ideas and institutions of capitalism and nationalism. They made the first world war, they made the peace of Versailles. They plowed the soil in which Hitler sowed the seeds of his tribal Fascism. Loyalty to democracy, even bourgeois democracy, may well be invoked in the struggle against Fascism. But at best it can only win a temporary victory. The essential struggle is still socialism versus capitalism, not democracy versus Fascism.

This, the approach of a pre-1914 vintage, was not utterly incompatible with the direction the new war drive wanted to take, as became apparent in the war-aims propaganda in 1940 and 1941, subsequently

to be seen. But it disclosed that even in this universally-respected figure of progressivism the same leanings toward combat were evident, though in a different form.

Alex Mathews Arnett, author of the revisionist book on Claude Kitchin, was another of the early detectors of the new martial bent. His communication in the *New Republic* late in April, shortly after the 20th anniversary of American entry into the first war, went into the subject a little more sharply: ⁸

I have noticed of late a tendency among liberals—some liberals—toward the same sort of psychology, or psychopathology, that got us into the World War; the urge to go a-crusading or to bluff the Evil Powers with threats of a crusade—threats more than likely to lead to a tragic fulfilment in another harvest of death and unpaid debts.

The letters to the editor during these months of 1937 repeatedly reflected the uneasiness of readers protesting the attempts to reconcile civil war and pacifism, the idea that it was the destiny of democracy to defeat Fascism through war and to foment what one reader described as “the spread of sloganism, or the wholesale substitution of nomenclature instead of analysis,” as well as to prop up a no-way-out interpretation of the “struggle between Fascism and Communism,” accompanied by endless invocation of “the workers,” “by people who have never in their lives had two minutes of serious conversation with a worker (small “w”).” “The excuse that intellectual-liberals and their talk are not important is invalid because they are,” this astute interpretation went on; “They may not represent the masses but they *are* misrepresented *to* the masses, if and when a genuine destructive force arises.” ⁹

The source of much of this new proletarian-theory-inspired beligerency was not a secret. Perhaps the liberals around *Common Sense* understood it best and spoke the most bluntly about it, in view of the orientation of both the liberal weeklies. The editors of the former had not been fooled by the American League Against War and Fascism. Despite a mildly pro-Soviet position of their own, they did not hesitate to charge as early as March, 1936 that it was a Communist-controlled organization and one devoted to “the preparation of a public opinion favorable to a war against Germany,” and that the Communist Party had been the “major force in starting and directing the American League.”

The signal for the major defection from any ties with Soviet-aimed Communist foreign policy however was a three-part article by one of the editors, Alfred H. Bingham, “War Mongering On the Left,” which ran through May, June and July, 1937.¹⁰ It aroused more comment than anything the journal printed before or after. Stirred up by

the jarring caused by the Trotskyite purges in Moscow and the propagandistic outcries in the weeklies on behalf of the Stalin regime, it stated the issue in the bluntest terms in this first big clash within liberal ranks over war and peace. Bingham stated his main thesis without delay:

America is being prepared for another slaughter and once more it will be "to make the world safe for democracy." This time, however, the public mind is being prepared not by bankers anxious for their foreign loans, but by some of the most idealistic and intelligent leaders of thought in the country—liberals, radicals, writers, editors, lecturers and even some political leaders. The most amazing thing about this phenomenon is that it was these same men and women who recanted most humbly after the last war for falling prey to the hysterical propaganda of the war years. It was these same men and women who took a militant pacifist position until the last year or two, vowing that they never again would fall for such empty slogans. And now they are putting their very considerable brains and influence to work to spread the idea over America that we must soon fight "for democracy" again and once more against the same enemy, though he is labeled "Nazism" instead of "Prussian militarism" and his moustache is one inch long instead of four.

Bingham got to the point at once about where the spirit of the new war drive was coming from.

The fact is that anti-Nazi sentiment in America today has become a weapon in the hands of the Soviet foreign office. Germany is the one serious threat to the peace and progress of the Soviet Union. Soviet foreign policy has one overpowering motivation: to secure allies in the war that Germany is believed about to wage against her. No honest person will deny that the policy of the Communist Party, in America as in France and other countries, has the same motivation.

Bingham went on to say other astounding things, virtually the only time they were to be read in a left-liberal publication in the entire pre-war decade. He wasted no time in charging that these two main European contenders were remarkably similar in many respects, asserting that militarism was "a form of collectivism" and that a military collectivism did not have to emerge from a working class revolution. He concluded from this that the most highly collectivized nation was bound to be the most effective in war, maintaining that Russia as of that moment (June, 1937) had 11½ million men in arms, and 19½ million as a trained experienced reserve. He made still another sensational point, that the Soviet had used war scares since their inception to furnish excuses for consolidation of military and political

power; "as time went on they found the war hysteria worth keeping alive for its own sake; it enabled them to maintain a higher tempo of progress." And of all the liberal fixations on Russia, Bingham thought it most silly to imagine the Soviet Union as a pacifist haven of international socialism. Nothing dismayed the pro-Soviet liberal sector more than his stunning charge,

It is beginning to dawn on those who are able to face facts that Fascism and Russian Communism are more alike than unlike, and their likeness is increasing day by day. This may seem an astonishing statement to make in a left wing magazine. But it is time someone on the left spoke out. There has been enough pussyfooting. There have been some valid reasons for that pussyfooting, but they can no longer outweigh the overwhelming danger of American involvement in another futile world war.

As for the concern about Spain, Bingham declared that it was simply Communist propaganda that there was a "fascist International" intending to subvert the democratic world and using Spain as a battleground. He urged the maintenance of absolute neutrality, no arms for Spain, and a return to attention to reform in America. He also paid tribute to the just-forming war camp motivated by concern for England and France, and rejected fighting in their interest as well. It would become a struggle "to save Britain's and France's Asian and African loot, not democracy," in the same way that "neither democracy nor socialism will necessarily be served by supporting the Soviet Union in a war against Germany." But he was most concerned about the abstract ideological propaganda being fashioned for attitudinal conditioning:

A great myth is being built up by liberals and radicals in America. It is a myth as dangerous to everything we hold dear as the myth of 1917: "a war to make the world safe for democracy." Here is a good example of the new hysteria that is threatening to destroy another generation of young men on Europe's battlefields, and end all hope of intelligent change to a new social order in America.

Bingham's stunning pieces were accorded spirited praise by Harry Elmer Barnes, Jay Franklin, Robert Morss Lovett, Rosika Schwimmer, Hugh S. Johnson, Maury Maverick, Thomas Hart Benton, Frederick J. Libby and Herbert Agar.¹¹ "There is much in this warning that we can well afford to take to heart," advised Agar; "The American people are naturally combative. We are easily stirred to violence by long-continued propaganda." Unfortunately Agar was one of the first to disregard his own advice, as he became one of the most vociferous of the very element Bingham had taken to task. The

more devoutly pro-Soviet personalities with access to the liberal eye and ear were deeply offended by Bingham. Harry F. Ward attacked his coolness toward Russia with gusto, while Rose Stein considered him "hysterical" and raged that he had presented the "Fascist and Communist regimes" in such a way in order "to prove that neither side is worth fighting for."¹²

The controversy inside the left-liberal complex on the rising war temper was never better stated, although there were supporting statements from others in succeeding months. The liberal press wrestled with this along with the other many serious and complicated issues which was their daily task to evaluate. But as long as the Communists and the Popular Front allies were able to maintain that Fascism versus Democracy was the only serious issue, Communists being democrats for the purposes of this definition, the struggle with their Socialist- and Social Democrat-inclined liberal groups was prominently on the agenda. Late in 1937, with the Communists pressing the wars in China and Spain as undiluted cases of "democratic-anti-Fascist Peoples' Front resistances to Fascism," the argument brought to a boil by Bingham continued. The *Nation* was torn between admitting that the wars in both China and Spain were operating under propulsion provided by Communists and that they were on the other hand just a part of Popular Fronts "dominated by moderate groups."¹³ But the liberal anti-war elements with views such as Bingham's were either holding their own or gaining in numbers.

Villard in the *Nation* on October 2, 1937, commenting on a Seattle *Post-Intelligencer* poll which indicated the readers were 37-1 in favor of the United States getting out of Asia, spoke with confidence in declaring that "Whatever else may be said about the temper of the American people, there can be no doubt that they are today united in their opposition to being drawn into another war," and adding a personal conviction: "Even if a European conflagration should take place, I should be quite optimistic about our staying out of it," citing as a supplement to his belief, "Another reason for believing that there is little danger of our being drawn into a future war is the strength and vigor of the peace movement."¹⁴

Other contributions to the "warmongering-on-the-left" campaign came from persons with strong reputations among the liberals. John Dos Passos' December, 1937 *Common Sense* article "The Communist Party and the War Spirit" stressed especially its behavior in Spain at the moment. He insisted that the Party's organizing genius there was badly splitting the country, and seeking to destroy "physically and otherwise all the men with possibilities of leadership who were not willing to put themselves under its orders." His conclusion was that the "popular base of the Republic" was getting narrower. And though the "workmen and country people" had produced excellent

military leadership, "the tragedy of their situation is that they have produced no political leader able to supersede the liberal journalists and intellectuals who had made a mess of the Republic in the first place." As far as America was involved, Dos Passos deplored Socialists and Communists feasting on atrocity stories and whipping themselves into indignant cries; its portent for wider war appeals was immensely dangerous, in his view:¹⁵

The truth is not in atrocity stories or partisan propaganda. Lashing ourselves up into a partisan fever will only make us the prey of whatever propaganda the warmongers want to put over on us. Last time they got us to hate the Huns and the first thing we knew we were persecuting the Wobblies. This time we ought to be more careful. . . . Fascism thrives on the war spirit. Fanning the war spirit is preparing the ground for destruction of our own rights and liberties.

About the most destructive of the essays of the Communist Party and its infiltration of some 300 groups in America with the same pro-Russian war message in this period was James Rorty's "Mobilizing the Innocents; Communism Behind the Scenes," in the January, 1938 issue of the *Forum*. It was about the last searching critique of the Left contribution to America's new pro-war propaganda, a study of the Party's efforts "to use every possible means of mobilizing labor, middle-class, and liberal-intellectual sentiment in support of Moscow's present strategy, which is to involve America in the next war on the side of the Soviet Union." He saved particular abuse for the American League Against War and Fascism, already re-named the American League for Peace and Democracy, "the Party's prize Judas goat" which he saw "in the van of this dismally familiar parade toward war," "perhaps the largest of some 300 Stalinist-controlled flocks of innocents which today graze the woods and templed hills of America and drink at the rills of Stalin's truth," as he bitterly and graphically described the situation.¹⁶

Liberal anti-war spokesmen probably found their peak support in the early months of 1938, prior to the German absorption of Austria, and surely before the Munich diplomatic coup of September. It was a period also coinciding with a high feeling of unhappiness among the same groups over the conduct of the Russian trials and the killing of so many of the famous figures of the 1917 Communist revolution. It also dove-tailed with a substantial volume of support from both liberal and non-liberal sources hostile to collective security and anxious to see the United States build a hemispheric concept of interests rather than a global one.¹⁷ The spotlight continued to be played upon the forces within liberalism still in the grips of a war promotion drive unlikely to benefit any nations other than those where Communists

were in power or struggling to gain it, and to some extent the anti-war liberals were able to make some headway.

On January 22 of this year the *Nation* printed the famous letter of the "Forty-five Liberals" attacking its collective security stand in very vigorous language, charging that the *Nation* was in the process of "aligning itself with those forces, both of the right and the left, which are pushing this country toward war," and leaving nothing to the imagination in its dramatic appeal for information as well as in its complaint:¹⁸

Will the *Nation* continue to defend "collective security" with all the risk of war involved in such a policy? Or will it reassert its traditional opposition to *all* wars and warmongering? . . . we protest against what seems to us a betrayal of its splendid liberal position.

The editors, abashed at this rebuke from so many notables of their own circle, took a column to answer, denying inconsistency with past ideals by claiming to have been for collective security all the time, while refusing to admit that it had to be backed by "military sanctions," defining collective security for their purposes as "the development of a non-violent technique for the enforcement of law," an admirable statement, and an utterly irrelevant one in the face of the realities of Spain and China, and what they had already advised to be done in these places.

Common Sense continued to act as the conscience of the liberal press during this period, publishing Jay Franklin's "National Defense: A Liberal View" in March, just before the hysteria over Austria. It was another contribution to the criticism of the liberal trudge off to war, to the growing neglect of the domestic reform which once had also dominated their hearts and minds. Franklin's hammerblow supplemented the Bingham position admirably:¹⁹

One of the singular ironies of the World War was that the most blood-thirsty of the Wilsonian interventionists were the liberals and pacifists who allowed themselves to be emotionally maneuvered into a belief that the only way to protect their ideals and perfect their institutions was through the lavish shedding of German blood, and the starvation of German women and children. "Warmongering on the Left" is again more than a smart editorial phrase. Liberal and radical sympathies for the victims of Fascist aggression, for the suffering Chinese and for Comrade Stalin's Soviet Union have predisposed a large element in our population to accept an identification between War and Fascism which will facilitate their mobilization in another world coalition of the "haves" against the "have not" nations.

Franklin observed that the war-minded liberals were preoccupied with "the sufferings of foreign proletarians," and while domestic circumstances were crying for their attention, "progressives were staring out to sea, oozing valuable emotions which could have been more constructively employed in our own affairs." He ended up by warning them about their attitudes toward the new impulse for arms spending; "Now, unless American liberals can formulate and dramatize their own contribution to the principle of national defense, they can easily—as in the period of 1914–1917—become the most dangerous single element in the policy of drift."

THE REFUGEE CONTRIBUTION TO THE IDEOLOGICAL CONDITIONING OF LIBERALISM FOR WAR

The development of an abstract case justifying subscription to another world war among American liberals was not entirely a product of domestic manufacture. A significant part of the raw materials which went into the finished item were pre-fabricated by political refugees, almost all of them from Germany and contiguous areas of Central Europe, who managed to gain access to liberal publications and to publish significant books as well which persuaded many that the ills produced by the First World War could be dissolved without a trace in the blood of a Second.

Emigré politics as represented in this literature were especially depressing. Cold fury against the dictatorial regimes in Germany and Italy and a purely negative distractionism possessed most of their writing. The grim-jawed "democracy" which they talked of and which they urged the United States especially between 1938 and 1941 to go forth to defend, grew steadily less distinguishable from the hated enemy system, except that they were identified by different names. There was no desire to reproduce the post-World War One order, and in such instances as they did actually reflect a program, a shallow and flabby Social-Democrat world seemed to be the extent of their vision, a blend of British Laborism, Popular Front and Central European Marxian Socialism, vaguely tied and strung together. Their venom toward Germany was largely the cement that held them together. Some German and Czech exiles talked of an amorphous "European Federation," but there was hardly the slightest idea as to how it might be brought about, especially since they were quite uniformly of the idea that it should be built upon the rubble of an obliterated German state.

The Social Democrat-Left-Liberal emigrés never did explain why

they had lost out in the German political struggle, nor did they admit they had made a "mess" of the governments turned over to their custody after the first war, as Dos Passos charged had happened in Spain. Nor did they explain why they seemed so anxious to have foreigners redress their grievances, nor reveal the slightest awareness that after the foreigners had been invited in to settle their unfinished business, they might be most indisposed to get out. There was a constant call which amounted almost to cacophony as the war got under way, with Pole, Czech, Austrian and Hungarian voices all sounding the note of insistence that one or another less numerous folk should by varying degrees dictate to or dominate Central Europe, while they were going down before the Germans. In America, while liberals glowed with sympathy and while the general public, almost universally oblivious of the geographical realities of the region, offered mild sympathy, no one suggested that a North America would be a better place to live in if it consisted of a partitioned United States under the hegemony of Canada, Mexico and Cuba.

One of the predominant characteristics of the numerous German refugees, in particular, writing in the liberal press, even when they professed strong affinity with it, was their grim hostility toward pacifism or anti-militarist leanings of any kind. These persons wanted a trial by battle at the earliest opportunity between Hitler Germany and any possible combination which might be constructed out of other states. In a flood of brilliantly and implacably constructed prose these writers took a prominent advance-post in the conversion of American liberalism from its predilections toward the ways of peace to those of what has since become evident as almost perpetual war. Occupying first rank among this group were such as Thomas Mann, and his daughter and son, Erika and Klaus, Franz Höllering, and in particular Aurel Kolnai.

Mann was probably the first to draw concerted attention for his conversion to a tough stand toward Germany, early in 1937, after several years of silence. He had been the target for Marxist abuse in these previous years for his non-participation in the propaganda against Germany under Hitler, as was seen in Chapter 12, but bloomed out in this capacity in the early months of the above year.²⁰ One of the earliest to note his sudden conversion, and with gratification, was Harry Slochower in the *New Masses*, the same critic who had denounced Mann for his detachment some time earlier in the liberal press. Slochower quoted Mann as having declared among other things that "I am convinced that freedom and democracy will no longer be possible without some dictatorial elements," and that he was for a social democracy that would not permit "its own destruction by its deadly enemy."²¹

However it was not until the following year that he began to draw

liberal attention as a standard bearer for the new school of tough-muscled democracy. Max Lerner reviewed Mann's heated book *The Coming Victory of Democracy* in the *Nation* on June 25, 1938 in elevated terms, as "the sharpest and noblest political utterance that has come out of exiled Germany," an opening gun of a new war drive which was properly identified in the *New Republic* some five weeks later in a much more extended review by John Chamberlain. It was too warlike for him. "As long as he sticks to philosophical fundamentals, Dr. Mann is unassailable," he told the readers. "But in certain paragraphs Dr. Mann seems to be calling for an international united front of all nominal democracies to wage a Holy Crusade against Germany," not entirely a wise suggestion for democracy, for, as Chamberlain thought it important to point out, "even the holiest of wars can saddle nations with self-perpetuating military castes." ²²

Mann's warlike pamphlet *This Peace*, reviewed in *Common Sense* in January, 1939 by editor Selden Rodman, was given an expected harsh handling, since Rodman did not appreciate the author's evolution in a short time as a great seer and prophet of lordly times to come by the now well-established pro-war liberal contingent. Remarkd Rodman,²³

Dr. Mann identifies himself so heavily and humorlessly with "righteousness" at the very outset that the reader anticipates a torrent of emotional rhetoric even before it comes. As one who saw nothing and predicted nothing right up to the day Hitler seized power, the great novelist now tells us that "I have in my previous writings borne witness to my knowledge and my all too clear understanding of the mighty movement which we know by the name of Fascism."

But the season for enlistment calls disguised as literature was well advanced by now, Rodman having to take time out also to cast a bleak glance at Henrik Willem Van Loon's *Our Battle*, which he put in the same category as Mann. And by now Mann had been exceeded in virulence by Kolnai, and by a half dozen or more Americans of wide repute in liberal journalism and thought.

Although many Marxist refugees from Germany had poured large amounts of print in the American liberal press assaulting the Hitler regime, the first really telling blow was struck from a different direction. This was a book written by Kolnai, *The War Against the West*. It disregarded the Communist-Fascist fight entirely and went into an interpretation of Hitlerism as an "anti-Western" philosophy and counter-revolution, in 711 pages of metaphysical and mystical attack. It took the pressure off the Marxists at a very crucial moment, coming out at about the time of the Munich crisis, and sought to gain the

Germans a large group of enemies from a different sector, albeit a much larger and not-very-well-defined one. Hans Kohn praised it immoderately in the *Nation* in October, 1938, and it was followed by an avalanche of books in the same vein during the next 36 months, some of which enjoyed a great vogue, though often as belligerent as the theory of the National Socialist "system" they pilloried. Kolnai and others carried on a hard, tough propaganda on a moral plateau of immense height, utterly uncluttered by material considerations and the consequences of conflicting statecrafts. The book also received a vociferous acclaim of Communist fellow travelers recognizing the usefulness of its implacable anti-Hitler theme. This book and Mann's *This Peace* received reviews of the highest praise in the *Fight*.²⁴ The Communist press itself spared no words of commendation, recognizing its usefulness as camouflage. It was one of the few non-Communist books published in the pre-war decade on public affairs which drew unqualified Communist approval.

Kolnai proved to be one of the *Nation's* most valuable recruits in the post-Munich stiffening among liberals. His article "Pacifism Means Suicide" in the January 21, 1939 issue was the most ferocious attack on pacifism ever printed in that journal to that time, from the viewpoint of this advance guard figure among the new moral philosophers who in transfiguration were seeing this stage of the struggle of rival European states as an almost interstellar Armageddon of sure significance for veritable eons of geologic time. "Pacifism is only barbarism turned inside out," he announced to the affronted remaining pacifist readers; "Its outlook is not only unpractical but degrading." Nothing else so proved his inner capture by the Hitlerians, who had been saying the same thing for over fifteen years all over Germany.²⁵ It provoked a savage response from the veteran progressive McAlister Coleman a month later:²⁶

"Pacifism is only barbarism turned inside out?" Fascism is only Communism turned inside out. Capitalism is only socialism turned inside out. The *Nation* is only the *Herald Tribune* turned inside out. Aurel Kolnai is only George Sokolsky turned inside out. After a few more pieces like this, yours truly will be only Mayor Frank Hague turned inside out.

Kolnai had taken part in a symposium, the other participants being Reinhold Niebuhr and Bertrand Russell. Niebuhr was much closer to Kolnai, making the renowned English philosopher responsible for dealing with both. Russell remarked that Niebuhr's "abstract truisms" had "very little bearing upon the actual situation," and devoted most of his attention to Kolnai, whom he dismissed as an eighteenth-century rationalist, with his talk of virtuous and evil nations, and adding Niebuhr to him for discounting because of their

thinking of people as "unalterable embodiments of ideological forces," as if politics were the whole of life. At the moment, Russell felt as disturbed by German actions in the Rhine, Austria and Czechoslovakia as anyone, he admitted, but countered that they were things which should have been consented to by France and Britain long before, "while Germany was democratic." He disparaged American moral indignation over Munich, and on another question, declared, "If our object is to help German Jews, not merely to enjoy the satisfactions of revenge, it is perfectly evident that war is the worst method we can possibly adopt." Russell reasoned that Munich showed the German population just as averse to war as any, and with Jewish persecution there unpopular and with the bulk of the people in great discontent and desire for a less tense way of life. Russell was sure the Hitler order would be overthrown from within, that there was no reason for believing that it was "eternal," which the thinking of his adversaries on the question of pacifism seemed to have as their basic assumption unless Germany was to be wrecked by a war brought on by outsiders. Russell was the only one of the symposium worried about Europe; his portrait of the area should another great war get loose was an expectable prediction; "for Europe nothing but disaster can result from war."²⁷

Kolnai returned to the *Nation's* pages on April 15 with "The Ghost of Versailles," where he joined hands spiritually with Kohn and Niebuhr as the most redoubtable attackers of liberal historical interpretation, aiming now at proving that the Versailles settlements had little or nothing to do with the growth of Fascism. It was "fundamentally erroneous" to blame Versailles for anything, in Kolnai's view. In another mystical investigation of evil and wickedness, with a conclusion sounding like the post-1914 allied propaganda as to the origins of that conflict, he placed the German and Italian systems of the moment squarely on the doorsteps of men more wicked than those in their opposition. He saved particular venom for "pacifist Germanophiles," on whom he heaped the blame for the Versailles interpretation, and also for the pessimistic predictions as to the likely outcome of a new war.²⁸ This was one page removed from Villard's column, in which the latter praised the Canadians for declaring that there would be no conscription in Canada for overseas service, in addition to declaring that of all the things America needed, the thing they needed least of all was conscription.

THE DOMESTIC LIBERALS BEGIN THE FORGING
OF THE IDEOLOGICAL WAR RATIONALE

Thus, although the opposition to views such as those of Aurel Kolnai was still being stoutly expressed, the important thing is that his views were getting into print and before the liberal readers, with the implication that editorial opinion was convinced that they deserved serious consideration. However, in close psychological alliance and actually starting a short time before, a native ideological drive for gaining liberalism's support for another war had begun. The leaders were Lewis Mumford and Reinhold Niebuhr, prominent in each of the liberal weeklies and enjoying immense reputations as thinkers on the basis of previous publications. Both began to get active in the spring of 1938. Mumford was, after Schuman, the first important liberal intellectual to declare personal war on Hitler, and the first to be associated exclusively with the *New Republic*, as an editor. His famous and lengthy "Call To Arms" appeared in the issue of May 18, and consisted of a point-blank assault on the journal's hands-off neutrality position and rejection of collective security.²⁹ It recommended an independent belligerent position for the United States toward Italy, Germany and Japan, "Democratic Militancy," forbidding all travel, trade and diplomatic intercourse with all three, as a step "in advance of war, to restore the confidence and initiative and morale of democracy." "In short, we act alone," he urged. He gave fierce assent to the big-navy drive, excusing this by emphasizing that "Fascism has already gone to war," and that if it led to war, this was infinitely preferable "to something far more brutal and disastrous than war—submission to Fascism itself." He dismissed the issue of world Communism everywhere as a "fictitious threat," but to the three hated states he gave overwhelming importance and eagerly concluded that they had it in their power at that moment to blot out the race from the entire planet.

His contribution to the new metaphysicians analyzing Fascism was giving credence to the view that all three states were victims of collective pathology traceable to sinister elements in their national character centuries in the past, which, as has been seen and will be seen further, was exploited by numerous writers, who matched the mysticism of Rosenberg and Hitler by inventing a variety of their own. No longer content with the Versailles Treaty to explain German explosiveness, Mumford was for delving back into the dim origins of Western society to find it.

Mumford took comfort from Niebuhr in dealing with all this as an emanation of "radical evil," and he broke with editorial policy by flatly declaring at the beginning of his loud and angry war declara-

tion, "I accuse my colleagues and friends on the *New Republic* of maintaining this state of woeful apathy," by which he meant the belief that peace was preferable to war, and that in the long run Fascism could not "seriously menace the world," as its National Defense Supplement had concluded. Thus began a new season of gross over-rating of these three regimes, in the shadow of which Russian and Chinese Communism thrived unnoticed, never considered as the logical victors of an extirpation campaign waged against the "devil" states. Mumford's approach was the new extremism of looking upon the entire populations of these hated lands as monolithic supporters of their detested political rulers, thereby making it possible to give intellectual support to harsh programs calculated to injure everybody and to deal with friend and foe indistinguishably. The distinction of Wilsonian times between evil leaders and their peoples was now giving way before this comprehensiveness, an especially important ingredient in the eventual growth of a world outlook identified in a few years as totalitarian liberalism. In seeking to annihilate a form of totalitarianism held unspeakably hideous, liberals following the Niebuhr-Schuman-Mumford approach adopted an outlook hardly much different in total effect, which latter they eventually took a prominent part in criticizing.

There was swift editorial rebuttal of Mumford in the same issue, and although given credit for sincerity, he was likened to a "sublimated recruiting officer" for his use of "unveiled warlike terms." His program of total non-intercourse was dismissed as "so impractical as to be absurd," while it was recognized that the real merit of his appeal was the "warlike spirit" which he was invoking and helping to propagate. The editorial "What Is the Enemy?" dismissed his fear of the external conquest of America, and considered it "a betrayal of intellectual responsibility to suppose that we can protect ourselves or the rest of the world from Fascist barbarism by sending armies and navies to conquer other nations." It went on to maintain that "the forces of evil" were "not localized in Berlin or Rome," and that internal rot was the key to the situation, not foreign aggression, while re-asserting that the democracies would only be in danger if they followed the Fascist states by imitating the latter's strength-sapping programs of "excessive armament" and "adventurous foreign policy,"³⁰ toward which Mumford's suggestion led.

George Fielding Eliot was so incensed by Mumford's piece that he wrote a three-column "Open Letter" insisting that the Mumford program of total non-intercourse would actually be an immense stimulant to the three nations he hated, and would unleash far more mischief than had already occurred, and be an open incitation to war. He chided Mumford personally twice in June; in one communication he announced, "Your fears for the spread of

Fascism in this country are ill founded unless, by building up an aggressive crusading psychology here, you create the very danger which you profess to dread." On the 29th he took Mumford to task for insinuating that Italians and Germans in the United States might be unhappy over a policy of "strong political action" against their homelands, and for having accused him personally of not daring to fight Fascism in America "because we have so many active Fascists in our midst." Eliot was angered by this, insisted no one could assume all those of Italian or German extraction were Fascists, and asked Mumford what he would do about the problem, since he was now positing that all inhabitants or descendants of a land headed by an objectionable government were to be presumed to be fervent supporters of it.³¹

In his rebuttal to the editorial rebuke, Mumford recruited the words of Thomas Mann to the effect that what was needed at the moment was "a humanity strong in will and the soldierly determination to preserve itself," and that "Freedom must discover its virility, must learn to walk in armor and defend itself against its mortal enemies," as well as realizing that "with a pacifism which will not have war at any price, it is provoking, not banishing, war." The intellectual support which the two branches of the new war spirit could give each other was being recognized.³²

The most important person to come to Mumford's defense was Louis Fischer, who supported him without reservation in his total non-intercourse suggestions in a letter on August 10, 1938. He declared that "the Fascist aggressors are weak," and felt sure that "a bit of courage and daring" would quickly bring them down. Several others were not long in coming. The fold quietly expanded with the eager testimonial of Schuman in the same issue in support of the "freedom-must-discover-its-virility" dictum, and it received still another in November with the review of Max Lerner's *It Is Later Than You Think*, joining Mann and Mumford in the production of pro-war ideological armor plate for liberals. Lerner announced in drill-field tones that "The price of survival is militancy and social intelligence," deprecating in addition all political forms which he now found loathsome—the "old liberalism," "the pacifism of 'men of good will,' " "frustrate extreme leftism," and "the tedious and frightening parroting of the merits of any 'middle way.' " ³³

This was another striking ideological antecedent of the "vital center" political approach described as never winning, always on the go, forever hacking through an endless jungle of opposition, but existing through the love of hacking. As the advance guard of the "blood, toil, tears and sweat" school of politics, without principles, or doctrine, forever in the making, characterized by its restless look in all directions simultaneously, wiping its sword while preparing

for the next step-and-slash, it was a force which more liberals should have contended with. The architects of the perpetual war for perpetual peace approach were already well at work on traditional liberal sensitivities while the latter were still devoted to old objectives. One of the best laboratory examples of this clash between the old and "new" liberalism was the review in the spring of 1939 in the *New Republic* by Lerner of Oswald Garrison Villard's memoirs, *Fighting Years*. Lerner dismissed Villard's views as "paleo-liberalism," incensed that he still adhered to pacifism and criticism of President Roosevelt.³⁴ The fission was widening at a frightening rate by this occasion.

Some idea of the consequences of luxuriant hate to liberalism and ultimately to the entire national community was abroad in these tension-filled days between the spring of 1938 and 1939. *Common Sense* devoted a particularly strong editorial to the subject in its October, 1938 issue, "The Liberal and Anti-Fascism," in which it stated point-blank that anti-Fascism had become "almost as much a menace," and that its creed "in many essential respects" was "the reflection and duplicate of the monster it abhors," and warned in exceedingly dark tones of reproach,³⁵

If insanity once more engulfs the world it will not be because of the aggressive brutality of Fascism alone; it will be in no small degree because of similar traits in its enemies, who could find no way of meeting madness and hatred except with madness and hatred. The liberals, who should today be a major force for honesty and peace, have been duped, as many of them were in the last war—duped into betraying their liberalism for a demonic cult of ignorance and crusading intolerance.

George Soule, in a long article in the *New Republic* the following spring, commented at length on the growing antagonism toward the nationalist totalitarian powers, especially Germany, as a particularly unhealthy development. He related it to the apparent collapse of internal reform, and that "we suddenly were confronted by an external enemy against whom we could canalize our aggression," referring to the pent-up hostilities in the domestic wrangles of the previous ten years. And, said Soule,³⁶

There is a subtle danger in this type of response—the danger that in the process of preparing to cope with our enemy we shall become like him. Defense by imitation is in reality no defense at all. Though we defeat him in overt warfare by growing as sharp teeth and claws as long and as tough a hide as his, he defeats our detestation of him by impelling us to become a larger version of himself.

In a long examination of the psychology of hostility and fear, with application to Germany and to the United States, involving the mobilization of the German domestic economy and the stirrings of our own in the same direction, Soule deplored it all strongly, and attacked the buildup of military forces as not a contribution to national defense but a response to "a subjective need to find an outlet for our frustrated aggression," and in his view if the country persisted in this course, because of an expressed anger toward totalitarianism, "we shall have done as much as the American character permits to become totalitarian ourselves." Soule was extremely loath to give up the idea of internal reform for adventures in foreign politics, and the strong likelihood of ensuing war.

THE RESURGENCE OF PRO-BRITISH SYMPATHY
ADDS ANOTHER WAR PROPAGANDA INGREDIENT

By late 1938 the American liberal press had become as badly infected by the war-drift as the commercial journalism so often attacked in its pages as leaning toward another round of world belligerence. To many it seemed hopeless to hold off the slide toward increased truculence. After all the years which had been spent in thoroughly explaining how the personalizing of evil had helped make fighting seem reasonable in 1914-1917 and had enlisted civilian opinion, the liberals were deeply involved in repeating the process, and playing a goodly part in the fashioning of intellectual attitudes in the same manner the mass journals were molding the attitudes of the "man in the street" toward world affairs. The post-Munich period was one of the best occasions to view the dilemma of the left-liberal and his long-clenched fist at Hitler. Attention has been paid to the Marxist-oriented nature of the first calls to war, based on the deep hope of Marxian victories against Fascism, which had produced its share of strains. One was able to examine the *New Republic* and notice the obvious conflict between the views of Bruce Bliven and John T. Flynn as compared to still-devout believers in the Popular Front, such as Malcolm Cowley and Heywood Broun, for example.

The next complication was produced by the new breed of fighters for democracy who sidestepped several years of close association with Marxist goals and beliefs to fashion a much more abstract reason for supporting war against the same enemy. Among this group the sober discussions of national conflicts of interest and imperialism as the forces producing war were over. Bad Men had replaced them; the Seven Years' War of Marxist liberals on the sensibilities of their readers had produced diverse fruits, and those who wished to forget

what they had said before 1938 still had difficulty in inducing the older generation of anti-militarists to go along, despite their cultivated taste for a favorable predisposition toward the welfare of Communist Russia.

But still another theme was to be added to the propaganda concerto, and an old one, which had once been most effective in an earlier time. Long under contempt, the Munich crisis provided protective coloration for its significant growth once more, even though a trace or two had always been evident to indicate that it had never died. This was the resurgence of pro-British and later pro-French affection, later incorporated in some of the most prodigious pro-war propaganda fronts the nation ever was to see. Its earliest significant stirrings at this moment excited mostly derision. It was the war which provided it with its most effective energizers and impetus for growth, and in combination with the high-level abstract argument for war eventually made a full capture of the liberal press months before Pearl Harbor.

At the height of the Czech crisis, with intellectual liberal minds starting to clench fists over the latest provocation to war in Central Europe and world trouble, the *New Republic* published Horace Coon's bitter dissection of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, titled "An Endowment For War."³⁷ Especially selected for attack was its president, Nicholas Murray Butler, for his current talk and work on behalf of "collective security" and an "international police force." "Once more he is preparing public opinion to rush to the aid of Great Britain and France," warned Coon, after a long and embarrassing dissertation on the Carnegie Fund's part in sponsoring a large parcel of allied propaganda speakers in the First World War prior to United States entry, and its enthusiastic enlistment on the Allied side afterward. Coon had nothing but contempt for Butler's frequently expressed dictum that "a nation cannot remain neutral without at the same time being immoral," and for his endless talk of a "world rule of law," which made his international police force ideas meaningful.

The author maintained that Butler's 1936 annual report had been "a call to arms," that in October, 1937 he had "helped the cause of good feeling by calling Japan an 'assassin,'" and displayed vast enthusiasm for Roosevelt's quarantine speech. "Isolation is a folly only exceeded by its immorality," was Dr. Butler's opinion on that subject, Coon pointed out, and after analyzing the Fund's propaganda, led him to the conclusion that the American Navy had been selected as the logical policeman for its "international police force." He also pointed out that Fund trustees were well known businessmen, banking and legal figures, and that Butler had frowned on all emphasis on economic imperialism as a force promoting world war.

But he insisted that a closer look might be embarrassing to the interests of some of the trustees, and might also "involve harsh criticism of the foreign policies of France and Great Britain." Coon's final analysis was not comforting: "Consciously or not, the Foundation is fooling the public and itself, and it would be a ghastly joke if it turned out that while ineffectual in the promotion of peace, this Endowment should be successful in the perpetuation of war." The liberal suspicion of the depth of the Columbia University president's pacifist protestations of a few years back, when he had been a Nobel Peace prize figure, seemed to be justified, even though there was now a substantial liberal contingent that had made the transition to belligerency with him in the interval.

From now on this third aspect of the intellectual war propaganda campaign drew its share of attention, increasing through 1939 and reaching a peak in 1940. Marcus Duffield, reviewing in the January, 1939 *Common Sense* William A. Orton's *Twenty Years Armistice* and its restatement of the propaganda legendry of the first war, added as an observation on that moment,³⁸

The same old myth is rising again in the United States: two fair princesses (Britain and France) are being threatened by a villainous brute (Germany) who has already stolen the baby they were guarding (Czechoslovakia). A pretty myth; untrue, of course, and dangerous because we may again itch to play the rescuing hero. Such myths win acceptance because it is so much pleasanter to have the European situation neatly settled in one's mind, instead of wrestling with its complexities.

The editorial position was not essentially out of harmony with this; although entertaining some apprehension over German aspirations to integrate Europe, it was their firm conviction that Britain and France had failed totally as rulers of post-war Europe and had failed to integrate it in any way whatever.

February 15, 1939 marked the return of Elmer Davis to the *New Republic's* pages after a lengthy absence, during which he had evolved in the pages of *Harper's* and on the radio into the top rank of pundits on foreign affairs, as a change from the quiet and careful comments on domestic affairs which had been his forte just a few years before. His "Is England Worth Fighting For?" was a fairly sober weighing of the situation, despite the fact that his prior commitment ruled out any idea that there really was a choice such as the title of his article suggested. His taking seriously the argument that the British Navy might "line up on the same side as Hitler and the Japanese Navy" if American help was not forthcoming did not make a strong supporting point for his parenthetical rhapsody over England as "the most civilized of all the larger nations," although it was an indi-

cation of one of the major talking points in the slowly-building war rationale.³⁹

It was not until the fall, after war broke out, that the full weight of neutralist liberal alarm was turned to an examination of this phase of pro-war conditioning, the most incendiary contribution to which was Porter Sargent's "British Propaganda In the United States," published with gusto by *Common Sense*. "The effective machine that got us into the last war is being oiled for noiseless action again," Sargent warned; "today the only lie most successfully put forth by the propagandists in England and America has been that there is no British propaganda organization." Sargent's comments on the opinion-mobilizing forces represented by the Rhodes scholars, the English Speaking Union "spearhead," the League of Nations Association, the Foreign Policy Association, the *New York Times* and other pro-British newspapers, publishers and broadcasters were pithy and picturesque, and largely corroborated by James Wechsler and Harold Lavine in a substantial book the following year, though his article significantly infuriated Davis and stimulated a fiery retort to the editors from him.⁴⁰

THE IDEOLOGICAL WAR LINE AND THE REACTION IN THE CLOSING MONTHS OF PEACE TIME

In the meantime the new muscular democracy was being preached by additional figures of importance, and intellectual loin-girding progressing apace. The growing belligerence of Niebuhr was a matter of record since the beginning of 1938. Like Schuman, Kohn, Lerner, Mumford, Frank, Fischer and MacLeish, he also counted among his ideological baggage in the previous decade a substantial flirtation with Marxist views, insofar as published fragments of his thinking could substantiate. No estimation of the steep rise of anger among this group in the closing two years of the decade could achieve possible precision without taking this issue into consideration. But the growing abstraction of their case marked this latter stage of its evolution. Niebuhr had fumed at the publication of neutralist books such as Hubert Herring's *And So To War* and Jerome Frank's *Save America First* in caustic *Nation* reviews in the spring and summer of 1938, obviously furious at their detachment before the specter of "European Civilization" in the face of "advancing barbarism," denouncing these volumes as simply incitements to "national irresponsibility."⁴¹

But his essay "Peace and the Liberal Illusion" in the same weekly on January 28, 1939 marked his emergence in the manner of Mum-

ford, though not yet as emotional in style. Revealing himself to be of the school of thought of Harold Laski, who maintained that the issue was not just that of destroying Fascism but the unloosing of a vast social revolution as part of the process, he reflected his enormous disillusion, irritation and despair over Munich, declaring that "Democracy as a political system is important precisely because liberalism as a culture is not based on truth, that is, because its interpretation of human nature is fallacious and too optimistic." He revealed now his vast contempt for views not based on the ultimate reliance on force overtly used in emergencies; "there are moments in history when the covert threat of force which underlies all political contention must be brought into the open." And further delineating his evaluation of why he now considered liberalism badly deficient in supplying the impetus to violence, which he so dearly hoped to see take hold of the democratic world, he went on to say,⁴²

The liberal culture which is unable to assess the relation of force to reason, to understand the coercive element in all political life, and to appreciate the "ideological" taint in all human reason when the interests of the reasoner are involved, is compounded of the characteristic prejudices of academics and businessmen. In this compound is usually an admixture of denatured Christian perfectionism.

A few days earlier the *New Republic* had printed Mumford's *tour de force* review of the newly-reissued *Decline of the West* by Oswald Spengler, which he firmly nailed to Hitler's mast as a Nazi pamphlet par excellence. This contributed mightily to the assemblage of other writers busily delving into the history of German thought and bringing together the collection of ideas which they asserted were the ideological springs of Hitlerism. Unfortunately, the main effect of work such as Mumford's was to refurbish the always latent anti-Germanism still lying around and far from dissipated since 1919, making possible that the crusade which began against Hitler would make an easy transition once more to an implacable extermination campaign against everything German and all Germans.⁴³

It was Mumford's next published book *Men Must Act* which squarely set off the next round of fireworks among liberals debating the war and peace question, however. It was largely a restatement of his earlier *New Republic* article, with added decorations, including a recommended foreign policy program of total non-intercourse: the forbidding of the ships of the hated German, Italian and Japanese regimes from even entering an American port, plus the systematic deportation of their citizens living in this country and all "naturalized aliens who maintain a divided allegiance," which would have produced immense consternation even among those squarely on

Mumford's side had it ever been applied systematically. Constance Rourke hailed it in the February 18, 1939 *Nation* as "in the great pamphleteering tradition," "not merely a tract for the times," and dealing with "permanent values."

"That the Mumford plan means war," she admitted, "is clear enough; but this is less an obstacle to its acceptance than would have been the case six months ago," documenting the growth of the ideological war argument. She aimed contempt at those who would call his program "war hysteria," and reasserted her conviction that "I think this program will sustain itself because it is simple and forthright, because it comes close to popular feeling, and because it is built upon fundamentals in our character and tradition."⁴⁴

Mumford and his book were fiercely combated in the *New Republic* and *Common Sense* by Cowley and Bingham. The latter was especially repelled by Mumford's delight and rejoicing over the "timely murder" of Huey Long, his savage attack on liberalism, while his recommendations for the suspension of free speech and civil rights in order to suppress all favorable reflections on the current German regime left Bingham virtually speechless, but no more so than his earnest plea for the immediate breaking of diplomatic relations and the recruitment of a volunteer army at once and the making of preparations to use it. Remarked Bingham, almost in a tone of regret,⁴⁵

Men Must Act is a powerful theological tract. Mr. Mumford is against sin and sinners. . . . The inquiring mind has become the religious dogmatist. The intellectual has become all but anti-intellectual. His whole attack on Fascism is emotional. His method of treating the Fascist disease is that of the witch doctor who would exorcize it as sin.

It was accompanied in the same issue of the non-involvement monthly by an impressive symposium on whether America should join in the event of another war, with Bertrand Russell, Charles A. Beard, John Dewey, John T. Flynn and Harry Elmer Barnes issuing vigorous statements for a neutrality stand, and with Mumford and Lerner posting forceful pleas for the prompt abandonment of neutrality and preparation to fight "Fascist aggression." An accompanying editorial championed the neutrality supporters, and again challenged the cry of the new pro-war ideology, deprecating especially as a most dangerous attitude the issuing of "the simple assertions about the nature of Fascism, such as its identification with all that is cruel and barbarous," and citing Mumford's just-published book as the best example.⁴⁶

But the neutralist liberals were not yet swamped by the pro-belligerence literature by any means, nor were they ready to concede the field. In the *New Republic* John Chamberlain became one of the

most watchful of the critics ready to lay heavily upon ideological calls to war. His special target for the moment was Dorothy Thompson, whom he had considered already at war in the summer of 1938 even before Munich, on the basis of two small and truculent volumes. He greeted her *Let the Record Speak* a year later with an uncompimentary estimate in a review headed "Delilah of the Inkpot," asserting that because of her "gift of unsettling your mind with an appeal to your emotions," some ten years later "she may loom out of the past as the Reverend Newell Dwight Hillis of the Second World War," a reference to the formidable pro-war clergyman of 1917 who had been memorialized at length in Ray Abram's book *Preachers Present Arms*. Chamberlain was adamant against considering for a moment her urgent desire to go to war "to preserve the Franco-British balance of power in Europe," and bitterly counterattacked her personal denigration of Charles A. Beard and the latter's desire to concentrate on domestic reform in preference to joining in another war. In a similar manner he also stripped Vincent Sheean's *Not Peace But a Sword*, another formidable warhawk call published in the weeks just before the German invasion of Poland.⁴⁷

Long-standing neutralist liberal figures such as Stuart Chase and Norman Thomas contributed sharp blows struck on behalf of the segment of liberalism protesting the new pro-war abstract ideology during these ominous days just prior to the new war. Chase's "Civilization In Our Keeping?" in the August, 1939 *Common Sense* summarized the entire liberal neutralist position, adding comments on the latest development, the "democracies versus dictatorships" slogan of the New Apocalypitics, which he abhorred, and the ideology of demonism already brought to a high pitch by Niebuhr, Mumford and others. "For any nation to engage in war now for ideological reasons is a kind of ceremonial suicide," Chase warned, while waving away the fears of a Hitlerian world conquest as "the wildest kind of hysterical guessing."⁴⁸

Thomas, reviewing John Foster Dulles's *War, Peace and Change* in the next month's issue, hailed it as a most useful book for the moment, rejoicing that its author was not calling for "an irresponsible collective security, having learned nothing from Wilsonianism except to repeat its worst mistakes." Said Thomas in beaming approval, "He recognizes that change is the law of life in the relations of nations, that it cannot be blocked forever by treaties or agreements, and that no provision against war is sound which does not permit change." But he was pleased with Dulles' contribution to the undermining of the new ideological war demonology, complimenting him for "a magnificent job in considering the role of mass emotions and their relation to the personified entities, the Nation-Hero-Benefactor and

the Nation-Villain," and for opposing this "Hobson's Choice" type of approach.⁴⁹

NEUTRALISM REGAINS THE INITIATIVE DURING THE SITZKRIEG

The coming of actual fighting seemed to signal a dropping off of ideological appeals justifying the support of war. Perhaps the manner in which it occurred had something to do with it, as the bulk of the abstract war-liberal case emphasized an offensive carried against the Fascist states, and again it was Hitler who moved first. The suddenness of the campaign and the quick end to the first stage of the fighting, followed by the long inactive winter of 1939-1940, punctuated only by the embarrassing war that Russia waged against Finland, also had a part to play in the sudden quiet. But the Russo-German *Pakt* preceding the hostilities undoubtedly hurt the ideological case gravely, since none of the liberals-turned-warriors had stressed the necessity for even considering the Soviet Union, and after so many years of silent philosophical assumption that a Russo-German war was the most likely future military clash, this event was grounds for inducing subdued contemplation among almost any group of prophets.

Temporarily, only the propaganda for collective security, which was intimately related with the subject of foreign policy and partially government policy anyway, enjoyed much of any vogue, although the element of appeals to defend Britain as a stronghold of Western Civilization, apart from international politics, made a silent but pervasive appearance. The main editorial in *Common Sense* for December⁵⁰ had sharp words for Britain, while incidentally dealing with other lines of appeal to Americans from the belligerents against Hitler:

Patrick Henry's "Give me liberty or give me death" has become sheer nonsense in the modern world of great national states. It is no longer possible, if it ever was, for nations to fight for freedom. Freedom is an attribute of individuals not of nations, and when nations seek freedom they do so at the expense of individuals. A war for democracy is a contradiction, in terms, just as is the more obvious phrase used recently by Lord Halifax, "fighting for peace."

The journal's editorial policy favored an understanding at the earliest possible moment and a halt to fighting, for the purpose of arriving at a solution to the controversy in Central Europe without recourse to more war;

We who think of ourselves as progressives and liberals cannot afford . . . to take a narrow or defeatist view. We cannot resign in favor of the Allied war lords and their slogans. . . . Our hopes and our efforts should be concentrated not on an Allied victory, which in itself would prove nothing, but on a permanent peace. The sooner a peace conference can be called the better is the peace likely to be.

Through the succeeding months the editorial position continued to hammer away that the European war was secondary and domestic reform was of primary importance, and that the country could not afford to sacrifice this latter program to take on the burdens of solving Europe's civil war problems.⁵¹

The immediate rein applied to the new war rationale was the utter confusion produced in the American liberal-left by the Hitler-Stalin agreement and the outbreak of the Russo-Finnish war right on its heels. These two thunderous events scrambled the above groups so badly that in some ways composure has never been regained. In the immediate days they brought on a dissipation of devotion and energy, which lasted for a long spell. One of the few to stand up under the shock, Niebuhr, expressed his impatience and irritation with the reaction to these features in a *Nation* article in early January, 1940 complaining of the "cynical detachment" from the war on the part of pacifists, Socialists, Communists, and especially of college students of all kinds. He ascribed once more to this struggle the virtue of a fight for the preservation of "the cultural and social virtues of what is still left of the civilization of Europe," and the raising of the region from German "tyranny," a goal presumably to be reached by total demolition of Europe itself to exterminate the hated Hitlerians.⁵² As was customary in the appeals of the new group of enthusiasts for war, they detected not the slightest threat by the Communists to the un-named virtues and values of Europe which they were determined to save, even though the Russian war on Finland was fully as ominous as anything attempted by the Germans in the previous five years.

In America, with the non-belligerence of the Russians, the pro-Russian press had immediately taken the cue. The *New Masses*, after years of attack on the *Nation* and *New Republic* for their lagging spirits in promotion of the Popular Front collective security, on January 30, 1940 printed a scathing attack on both titled "Two More Brass Checks," "those two lofty crusaders for liberalism," on grounds of having gravely distorted news of the Finnish War, and singling out the *Nation* in particular. The sensational rift, after so many years of rapport, had shaken the ideological scene loose. One could grasp at least part of the impact in Lerner's "The Left: End and Beginning," in the *Nation* a week and a half later. Stunned by

its collapse since August, 1939 Lerner was now willing to realize that in the past two decades it had become far too embroiled in Russian affairs. The American Left was at "the end of a stage in our development," he pronounced, and that the worst part of the estrangement now that the Communists had left the fold was "the terrifying sense of being left intellectually rootless, emotionally homeless." And he now appeared willing to abandon the planetary thinking pattern: "the only possible focus for an American left is America," he now asserted; "This does not mean seceding from the world or abdicating our judgment as observers of world events, but it does mean that we should think and act in the American grain." Lerner's deep leftist "America First" manifesto in this moment of desolation contradicted much of what he had been saying for some time, and it was something which he quickly outgrew when war pressures increased after the winter doldrums. But this attitude prevailed for some time, as was observable in his laudatory reception of John Chamberlain's *The American Stakes* in the *New Republic* on April 8. Said Lerner of the author's thesis, "In one of the best chapters of the book—meaty, factual, reasoned—he argues against any form of interventionism and for the laudable policy of cultivating our own garden"; and he added immediately, "I have considerable sympathy with this attitude," explaining that his reasons involved goals only slightly less nationalistic in import.⁵³

I. F. Stone, in a mass review in the *Nation* on March 9 of eleven books, mostly urgent pleas to Americans to stay out of the war as well as calls to become embroiled, selected for special praise the four most implacably opposed to involvement, C. Hartley Grattan's *The Deadly Parallel, Keep America Out of War* by Norman Thomas and Bertram D. Wolfe, César Searchinger's *The Way Out of War* and the symposium edited by Willard Waller, *War In the Twentieth Century*. As deep in a disillusioned neutralist stance as Lerner, Stone agreed with the main thesis of the anti-involvement writers that no noble outcomes or revolutionary socio-economic consequences could be logically expected from the war, even though "the issues, as always, are cloaked in moral terms." "Like Grattan, I see no issue here that warrants American intervention," he went on, accepting Searchinger's dictum that "Hitler himself was only a symptom of a disease that has been gnawing at Europe's vitals for years," and that "This new war began as the last one did—in a clash between German and Anglo-French imperialism, masked on the Allied side then as a crusade against Kaiserism," and volunteering a bleak and realistic prediction:⁵⁴

I see no solution to this conflict that could possibly compensate us for the expenditure of lives and money, and for the bigotry, madness, and

folly inevitably unchained by war. This struggle among England, France, Germany, and Russia, with the lineup shifting as strategy dictates, has been going on ever since the appearance of the European state system. The ideologies change. The basic factors of national interest, geographical position, and commercial rivalry remain virtually the same.

What an approach such as this might have meant to liberal America and its outlook on foreign politics had it been standard outlook since 1931 can only be imagined.

But not the entire front of war propaganda had gone into winter hibernation, even though some strains were at a nadir of influence. Though Gallup polls were registering overwhelming popular support for abstention from war on the part of ordinary citizens, even at the height of the Finnish war, the *New Republic* reported in its Lincoln's Birthday, 1940 issue that ⁵⁵

Nevertheless, there is a hot wind beginning to rustle in the parched grasses among our best people, a wind that may in time start a prairie fire of eagerness to fight Hitler and Stalin. Their words, though not soft, are still whispered in private; they know well enough what the public temper is and that the time is not ripe.

These "best people" were identified as pro-Finns, pro-League of Nations enthusiasts, pro-collective-security-and-sanctions survivors of the left collapse, the exponents of "world order," and the converts to Clarence Streit's *Union Now* Anglo-American world police force substitute. And they talked of joining in the war "beside our sister democracies resisting the onrush of barbarism" and to defend "all that has made civilization precious in the Western world." The editors did not question the sincerity of these propagandists, but this editorial "The Moral Urge Toward War" left no doubt whatever about considering them all "mistaken" to relapse into moral terms and to think of fighting the evil in the world with righteousness and to conceive it as personal combat;

. . . we now explicitly and permanently renounce any belief that evil can be crushed by exterminating those who seem for the moment to embody it. This . . . is the sternest lesson of history. The last war generation learned it, to their great cost.

It was indeed a realistic historical note to bring up, and one which the editors themselves forgot within four months, despite their intentions of permanent remembrance.

But their innings of detachment had some weeks to go. A March 18 editorial returned to the subject; ⁵⁶

The other night we attended a press preview of "The Fight For Life." It was an impressive documentary film, but . . . what we can't keep out of the editorial section is the reaction of a New York intellectual audience to the newsreel on the same program. Every time a Finn was shown on skis, many of the intellectuals clapped wildly. Every time a British tar stood pigeon-toed before the camera, or Winston Churchill bulldoggedly beamed at it, they clapped wilder still. The war atmosphere was so thick that you expected everybody to join in singing "Over There."

This induced them to suggest that the country had been so well coached on what to expect from British lecturers that no amount of their talk might persuade the citizenry to enter the war on their side, but "The real danger is that we will be pushed, not dragged, into it by a small but influential section of our own people."

THE 1940 CAMPAIGNS SPARK THE NEW WAR LIBERALISM TO ADDITIONAL HEIGHTS

The reopening of the war in April, 1940 shattered liberal composure, especially after the Germans swept into seaboard Scandinavia. The *New Republic* was shaken badly and its famous editorial board shrank by two more members when Lewis Mumford and Waldo Frank, before resigning, challenged editorial policy and issued loud and angry calls to war, while attacking pacifist and non-interventionist liberalism with language that might have been appreciated by enlistment officers in any country in the world. Though eminent liberal figures snapped back and charged the two with utter hysteria, the initiative was noticeably slipping in Frank's direction. His beligerent jeremiad even cited a text from Hosea; the religious war flavor was spreading.

Mumford's savage twelve-column attack "The Corruption of Liberalism" appeared in the *New Republic* on April 29. It was essentially a political document which sought to dislodge liberals from their state of detachment and to discover a new emotional basis for pressing a vigorous anti-Hitler position.

Liberalism was now condemned by Mumford as too abstract; it had vastly minimized the role of "emotion," "instinct," "tradition" and "history," as well as "the dark forces of the unconscious." Mumford's was a call to place feeling in a superior position over cerebration. Liberal concern with the blood, destruction and death of war he now thought to be simply evidence of shameful moral weakness and near-cowardice. It was viewed as directly responsible for its "color-blindness to moral values" and for the general failure "to

recognize the crucial problem of evil." Mumford insisted that this was incredibly faulty, and urged liberals to understand that "There are times when active resistance or coercion is the only safeguard against the conduct of men who mean ill against human society," that like the crises of the human body which necessitate surgery, "so there are moments of crisis in society when anti-social groups or nations that resist the ordinary methods of persuasion and compromise must be dealt with by coercion." For Mumford, force was a device and not an attitude, to be picked up or laid down, like a tool.

The article pulsed with the positive good theory of war, in the interest of "justice," "order," "culture," "freedom" and "truth." The cardinal sin of "disoriented," "pragmatic" liberalism, however, was not hard to discover in Mumford's eloquence; it was isolation from the existing war, which he called "corruption" which had "bitten deep. . . . The isolationism of a Charles Beard or a Stuart Chase or a Quincy Howe is indeed almost as much a sign of barbarism as the doctrines of a Rosenberg or a Gottfried Feder," he shouted. The fruits of it were coming Fascism, militarism, despotism and barbarism, in America, although he did not explain how these horrors were going to be avoided by adopting the form of militarism his change of heart now dictated.

Mumford concluded by fervently hoping that liberalism was psychologically predisposed to "a large-scale conversion," and rededication "to the tasks of ideal liberalism;" "To the disoriented liberals of today one must repeat the advice Krishna offered Arjuna," he insisted: "'Counting gain or loss as one, prepare for battle!'", because "In that spirit—*only* in that spirit—can civilization still be saved."⁵⁷

The editorial response in the same issue reproached Mumford for being in danger of making the same mistake as the Nazis, "setting primitive emotional impulses against reason," leading to "an obscurantist and destructive mysticism." But as to the main intent of the Mumford broadside, they sized it up as political, and promptly came to the defense of those whom he had attacked personally, Beard, Howe and Chase, and obviously did not relish that he "chose not to discuss directly the wisdom of entering the war, but rather on broader grounds to impugn the characters of those who are against participation," though conceding the discussion had been "a relevant one." For a concluding admonition the editors offered,⁵⁸

But Mr. Mumford should be the last to deny that it is possible to feel deeply, and intelligently as well, about the waste and horror of war . . . He should take more pains to remember the deep shock to the sense of human dignity which was suffered by the incurring of such losses 25 years ago for causes which turned out to be deception and illusion. And

he ought to admit that it may be as false to principle to blind oneself to the crimes and deficiencies of those who today rule Britain and France because of belief in the cause one hopes they are fighting for, as it was five years ago to ignore the crimes and deficiencies of the rulers of Russia because of emotional dedication to the declared aims of the Russian Revolution.

The companion piece to Mumford's was Frank's "Our Guilt In Fascism," the following week,⁵⁹ as the German war machine began to pour into the Low Countries, a war propaganda piece of the highest order, concealing a few matter-of-fact nuggets of immediate political advice buried in a long mystical discourse which summarily blamed the intellectuals for everything that had gone amiss in the Western world since the Thirty Years' War. Its main message was an urgent plea to the makers of public opinion to push for immediate nonbelligerent ally status of the Allies, although Frank's claim to having served as a Jeremiah to the liberals for twenty years was patently transparent, even to those only able to remember no further back than his efforts to get a Communist president elected in the United States in 1936.

The reaction to the Mumford-Frank call to war in the *New Republic* was electric. The editors featured rebukes from celebrated liberal figures and writers in progressive circles who challenged or repudiated their entire line of reasoning. The first letter published was a scalding rebuke from Pearl Buck:⁶⁰

I should like to say that the net effect of Lewis Mumford's article, which I read with understanding and considerable sympathy, is to make me want to declare myself immediately as a liberal and a passionate liberal, if Mr. Mumford's point of view is the only alternative to liberalism. . . . But it is obvious from this article that Mr. Mumford understands nothing of liberalism or of liberals. . . . Mr. Mumford has taken the easy way out in repudiating liberalism. It takes courage to be a liberal at any time. It will take surpassing courage in the days to come.

A quartet, Selden Rodman, A. Fleming MacLiesh, Nathan Alexander and Michael Bodkin, "young men of military age, liberals, democrats and not pacifists," largely associated with *Common Sense*, referred to the article as "Lewis Mumford's vicarious bloodbath," and expressed puzzlement that the author of *Men and Technics* could author this, as well as "Men Must Act." They insisted he was conducting a wholesale assault on "liberalism itself" with his "two-valued orientation" and his enthusiasm for "general blood-letting to cure social maladjustment."

They managed to get in some cruel references to his Marxist days as well:

It was not the "liberals," the Beards, the Chases, the Howes, whom Mr. Mumford ridicules for making a distinction between democracy and plutocracy; it was not the liberals who supported Foster for President in 1932 and the various "United Fronts" in 1934-1939; it was the Lewis Mumfords. It was not the liberals in England who sold Spanish democracy to the Totalitarians; it was the Duff Coopers who now seek to expiate that "sin" by calling for the "extermination" of the "German people," an example of racism not one whit less barbarous than Hitler's, and one which Mr. Mumford doubtless approves.

The angry young men concluded by inviting "the Führer of anti-Fascism" to lead the way to the battle zones; "If the strain of peace on Mr. Mumford's nerves was not great enough to send him to China, surely a trip to one of the enlistment posts across our Northern border would not overtax an orator so shrill, a hero so lion-hearted."

Harvey Swados, a rising figure associated with the progressive *Partisan Review*, in the same issue was no less corrosive. He referred to Mumford's call as "not only deadening, but stupid," a "chain of contradictions" and "flat misstatements of liberal and radical positions," concluding, "But then it is true that the complete collapse of intellectuals during wartime is seldom a pleasant sight," and that "Mr. Mumford has a head start on the pack."

McAlister Coleman grimly drove home a few barbs on the ideological turncoatism of Frank. "Thank God everything is cleared up by the crystal piece of Waldo Frank," he exclaimed in pseudo-relief, promptly launching into ridicule of the more obscure portions of Frank's essay in a manner which could not possibly convey an impression other than that he thought it all nonsense.

In the June 10, 1940 issue the *New Republic* documented the logical follow-up of the civil strife shaking the editorial department, the resignations of Mumford and Frank, which they announced as submitting with regret that editorial policy insisted on remaining attached to its erroneous doctrines of "modern empiric liberalism and isolationism."⁶¹ Though an editorial on August 19 announced that "The working staff and working policies of the *New Republic* are the same today as they were before the Big Wind," there was a significant drift of policy toward the foreign affairs position of the resigned men, at least.⁶² A long editorial comment on June 3 had informed the readers that correspondence was running 3-1 against the stand of both Mumford and Frank, and in support of the traditional position, but three weeks later, with the fall of France before

the Germans an accomplished fact and the commercial press whipping the nation into great shivers of fear of a German invasion of America, the editors announced abruptly, "our correspondence department is already in the war."⁶³

In a few weeks the editors were also beginning to finger the edges of their weapons as well, but not before they had published still another stinging rebuke to the resigned long-time editors from John Chamberlain, now a featured book reviewer with the *New Republic*. He repudiated both, though admitting that their prewar-hysteria writings had contributed to his education. He had no objection to their considering that this was a very special war and not to be judged by the standards applied to previous ones, "But merely because they have changed their minds a year, a month, or two hours before other liberals have shifted their sights hardly gives either Mr. Mumford or Mr. Frank the right to indulge in self-righteous "I-told-you-so's." Chamberlain chose to read a text to them in retaliation: "Sinclair Lewis said the other night that the one sin against the Holy Ghost is to urge others to fight when you yourself have not yet enlisted," and "No liberal has a monopoly on the pipe line to the one true God."⁶⁴

The *New Republic's* sendoff to Frank on June 10, 1940 was a bitterly critical review of his just-published book *Chart For Rough Waters* by Malcolm Cowley. "Most of the theories Mr. Frank advances here—as opposed to his intuitions—are based on a dangerous simplification of history and lead, in the end, to eloquent but empty exhortations," commented Cowley, who charged Frank with repeating views approximating "the general trend of authoritarian thought":⁶⁵

When Mr. Frank condemns the 16th century rebellion of the ego against the Great Tradition he is repeating an old charge of the Jesuits against Luther and Calvin. When he attacks the liberals for committing all sorts of crimes—for believing in the efficacy of reason, for hating the tragic sense of life, for despising mystical intuitions, for thinking that well-being is the supreme value—he is quoting unconsciously and almost verbatim from Mussolini's speeches. When he talks about "the shallow prophets of reason" and "the sleazy love of peace," he suggests the language of the *Völkische Beobachter*. And there are subtle resemblances between his book and the authoritarian philosophies. . . . All writers opposed to liberalism are tempted to use the same terminology.

Cowley did not take Frank seriously. In a review headed "Samson" Cowley pointed out, "Like the rest of us, he is an heir of the 18th century, nourished in the very tradition he abominates," and he sug-

gested that "If he ever succeeded in destroying it, he would be like Samson, pulling down the pillars of the temple on his own head."

Others identified with liberalism in a prominent way were moving in this direction during these stormy May and June days of 1940. Elmer Davis and former *Nation* editor Raymond Gram Swing had graduated to radio, which had become a potent force in dramatizing foreign crises especially since Munich, when the broadcasts of Edward R. Murrow, George Hamilton Combs and H. V. Kaltenborn established the tradition of carefully-oriented opinion read over the air as detached observation. The *Nation* had hailed all three that autumn, and in this new episode, Margaret Marshall used the *Nation's* pages on May 4 to refer to the former two as America's "two best radio commentators," who had "achieved an objectivity that is truly remarkable."⁶⁶ The snowballing of literary, journalistic and radio reputations was a tribute to effective liberal logrolling, Davis's recently published book *Not To Mention the War* being reviewed by Miss Marshall at the time the tribute to his radio effectiveness was issued.

Still another notable in liberal repute who showed signs of joining the new war enthusiasts was Robert Sherwood. His play *There Shall Be No Night* was reviewed in the *Nation* on May 11, by Joseph Wood Krutch. How far he had moved from his pacifist classic *Idiot's Delight*, of 1936, was indicated by Krutch in two closing sentences of an otherwise long favorable review; "For the sake of the record I might add that the play has already been the subject of excited newspaper comment, in which it is attacked as propaganda for American participation in the war," the *Nation's* drama critic quietly stated, and added his own sober corroboration, "Certain incidental remarks made by the characters do seem to suggest pretty clearly that Mr. Sherwood is on that side."⁶⁷

But for arousing American liberalism in the manner of Mumford and Frank, none approached Archibald MacLeish. Still deep in his period of "social consciousness" in the spring of 1938, when his *Land of the Free* was published, he had been hailed by T. K. Whipple in the *New Republic* on April 13 of that year as "the most interesting writer in the United States today," and commended for the "long way" he had come from his writings of the late 1920s and early 1930s, and his new-found pronouns "we" and "you" instead of "I." But in articles in the February and May, 1939 issues of the *Survey Graphic*, he also revealed the influence of the Munich days by beginning to edge away from the Communist-dominated "anti-Fascist" campaign to which he had contributed so much since 1936, to build himself a "pro-democratic" policy. This sign of relapse had been the occasion of a mournful review and long critique by A. B. Magil in the *New Masses* on May 30, regretting the change in their one-time

contributor. Magil showed no hesitance in preferring "the Archibald MacLeish of 1937," as he chose to phrase it.⁶⁸

MacLeish's appointment to the formidable post of Librarian of Congress a few days later indicated an even closer movement in accord with the majority thinking of the time and along side the throne of the mighty, surviving an accusation of a radical past and no professional training, and earning one of the most flowery editorials written by Freda Kirchwey in her tenure as editor of the *Nation*, on June 17, which said in part,⁶⁹

He will bring an imaginative understanding of the contemporary world. His scholarship and knowledge of literature are beyond question; but in addition he is as sensitively alive to the important currents of thought that shape and drive the affairs of men today as any person. Felix Frankfurter has called him the best journalist in the United States—which is a way of saying the same thing.

Like Mumford and Frank, MacLeish reacted to the stunning war news of the spring of 1940 as though the end of the world was approaching. Three weeks after Mumford's Roman-candle-like pyrotechnics in the *New Republic*, MacLeish delivered his just-as-famous essay "The Irresponsibles" in the *Nation*, a quivering high-brow hate piece aimed indirectly at Hitler Germany and directly at those in the Western world who had not reacted to Hitler violently enough prior to that moment, couched in some of the most exquisite prose ever to appear in an American publication. He named no specific "irresponsibles" who had placidly gone about their ways and allowed what he thought to be such unspeakable evil to flourish. Struck with his most destructive blows were the intellectuals, scholars, scientists, writers and artists, whom he found impossible to forgive for their traits of detachment, objectivity, skepticism and dispassion. He whipped into ribbons their unwillingness to fight, denounce, become angry, judge, and above all, to act. In his mind they had already dug the grave of the West. It was illuminating, however, to notice that he did not consider Communism even worthy of a brief allusion as a force aiming at destroying the Western culture he so treasured in this impassioned essay. His closing indictment was one of the all-time peaks of literary composition published in liberal circles:⁷⁰

There are examples in history of civilizations made impotent by excess of culture. No one, I think, will say of us that we lost our intellectual liberties on this account. But it may well be said, and said with equally ironic emphasis, that the men of thought, the men of learning, in this country, were deceived and rendered impotent by the best they knew. To

the scholar impartiality, objectivity, detachment were ideal qualities he taught himself laboriously and painfully to acquire. To the writer objectivity and detachment were his writer's pride. Both subjected themselves to inconceivable restraints, endless disciplines to reach these ends. And both succeeded. Both writers and scholars freed themselves of the personal responsibility associated with personal choice. They emerged free, pure, and single into the antiseptic air of objectivity. And by that sublimation of the mind they prepared the mind's disaster.

MacLeish's torrid essay was a cry for a voluntary selective service act for intellectuals, in anticipation of the compulsory one for the general citizenry.

In support of MacLeish the *Nation* published spirited notes of approval by Lerner, Kohn, and Frank, with much more restrained praise from Frank Murdock, Perry Miller, Waldo Leland and Willard Thorp, and one rather critical one by Joseph Freeman, among the numbers which were printed in the early weeks of June. Some of the respondents were inclined to think that MacLeish had indicted them for not joining in enough Communist front groups protesting Hitlerism in the previous seven years, although the omission of all mention of Communism offended none of the commenting contributors.⁷¹

MacLeish's parallel contribution to the *New Republic*, "Post-war Writers and Post-war Readers," appeared on June 10, as the editors were bidding good-bye to Mumford and Frank. He now got down to specific cases in the literary field, who were particularly to blame for the parlous state of affairs,⁷²

The post-war writers whose work educated a generation to believe that all declarations, all beliefs are fraudulent, that all statements of conviction are sales-talk, that nothing men can put into words is worth fighting for, and that there is a low-down to everything—those writers must face the fact that the books they wrote in the years just after the war have done more to disarm democracy in the face of Fascism than any other single influence.

MacLeish pleaded innocence of judging these writers, on the grounds of his own culpability, which was appropriate, since as the editor of *Fortune* in 1934 he had been the director and stirring defender of the greatest muck-racking campaign undermining the official reasons why America had fought in the First World War ever conducted in the American press. His chief guilty men were Henri Barbusse, Andreas Latzko, Dos Passos, Ford Madox Ford, Hemingway, Erich Maria Remarque and Richard Aldington, in particular the last

two, although he comprehensively condemned all who had ever written denouncing the First World War.

Malcolm Cowley had finally received an answer to the question he asked MacLeish in the early depression as to what the latter was doing to prevent another great military conflagration. In flaming rhetoric easily matching Mumford and Frank, he had emerged as an ideological drill sergeant for American participation in the second installment of Europe's civil war suicide pact. And his comprehensive assault on the "traitorous" intellectuals as the force which was decomposing democratic society was echoed with gusto and vim shortly after by William S. Schlamn in his volume, *This Second War For Independence*. But a sour and acrid note was contributed to the situation by young liberal letter-writers to the *New Republic* complaining that not a single advocate of the New Truculence was within any likely conscription age bracket. Not one admittedly young person writing to the journal to this point commended any one of these pleas for return to the cultivation of belligerent ways.

The appeals of Schuman, Mann, Kolnai, Robert Dell, Kohn, Frank, Mumford, Lerner, MacLeish and others in these quivering days of 1939-1940, were collectively entitled to a niche as the most exquisite war propaganda yet produced, couched in superb literary style and buried in a distillate of moral sentiments in a manner which almost defied description. Rarely have such exhortations to warmaking been concealed so effectively in language which tried to say almost anything except that. The transparent material of 1914-1918 was merely a collection of clumsy street-corner shouts compared to this elegant literature.

There was one awkward and burr-like incidental to the thunderous attacks on liberalism as a craven ideology by Mumford, Frank and MacLeish. They were really not essaying something new. It was a chrome-plated echo of a line which the Communists had perfected to a polished finish in 1937-1938, at the height of the "collective security" appeal for aid to the Communists fighting in Spain and China, and again in the fall of 1938 on behalf of threatened Russia at the time of the Czech crisis. "Robert Forsythe" in his *New Masses* column on May 3, 1938 had delivered a single-sentence estimate of what these men were saying at such great length when he declared contemptuously, "The plain truth is that the world, the liberal world, filled with isolationists and 'realists,' has developed a yellow streak a yard wide."⁷³

And now that the Soviet seemed quite secure with its understanding with Hitler Germany, the reaction of its supporters in America to the new liberal edging toward engaging in the hostilities was an exact copy of the attitude they had so generously condemned as comprehensive and congenital cowardice just a few short months be-

fore. But their blows at the new liberal belligerents did have a strain of content which did not ring false, regardless of their motivation for making an issue out of it now. Liberal anti-militarists and pacifists did feel extremely importuned on finding them as sympathizers in their intra-mural fight, since their common opponents were favoring a view which the allies of the Soviet Union in America had hardly stopped cheering for, themselves. But some of their observations on the new behavior and views of old friends had a strong bite, the *New Masses* being particularly effective.

On May 22, 1940 an editorial attacked both the *Nation* and *New Republic* for following once more their 1917 "pattern of betrayal of liberalism in wartime," commenting that "The *Nation* has for long been plumping for the Allies and for every iota of the Roosevelt foreign policy." It cited Dell as a precursor to Duff Cooper of England now calling for "a war to the death on the entire German people," and smiled mirthlessly at the "once-isolationist" *New Republic*, which it alleged favored a war declaration should England and France be beaten by the Germans.⁷⁴

But it was their comment on the intellectual leaders of the new liberal belligerents which contained the sharpest hooks. Samuel Sillen's "Archibald MacLeish, The Irresponsible," in the *New Masses* on June 11 topped all the liberal critics, referring to him as "only the spiritual arm of a war-bent administration" and the leading spirit of the new war-liberalism. Their answer to MacLeish's broadside was the publication on June 25 of an essay by the head of the industrial engineering department of Columbia University, Walter Rautenstrauch, titled "America, Why War?," to which editorial comment added, "The appeal which he addresses to the youth to prevent America from being dragged into war and to claim the great heritage of democracy is especially pertinent these days when men like Archibald MacLeish and Lewis Mumford and the editors of the *Nation* and *New Republic* are trying to seduce the youth into yielding up this heritage to the destructive forces of imperialist war," while Isidor Schneider in the same issue referred to Mumford, Frank and MacLeish as the "triumvirate of disintegration." Schneider angrily denounced them for "assailing some of the noblest purposes of our civilization as disintegrators of moral forces," remarking that Frank and Mumford "would have us go hysterically into action at once," but adding that "Of the three, Mr. MacLeish's attack is the most insidious and the most dangerous." Collectively he termed them "defectors from the ranks of progress now engaged in supplying moral authority to reaction."⁷⁵

On July 9, in its "Crisis of Liberalism," the same journal quoted a long speech by Carey McWilliams in Los Angeles, deploring all

three pro-war liberals and their papers as published in "the house organs of the liberal movement." It was a sign to McWilliams that Frank, Mumford and MacLeish had "definitely broken with the liberal tradition," and that "the foundations of liberal thought" had been "seriously undermined," especially by MacLeish. The following week's editorial, "A Challenge to Liberals," was the most comprehensive rebuff to all three, referring to their statements as "hysterical recanting" by men who revealed that "they have wholly misread the history of post-war Europe or that they have forgotten it," and adding that to "charge that the liberals of this world are responsible for the present chaos in Europe" was "a shameful betrayal" on their part.⁷⁶ Nothing could better have illustrated how the war had scrambled ideologues than this attack on three figures associated with many pro-Communist front groups of the middle of the decade, by a pro-Communist journal which had once published some of their material, and which was now defending the very segment of American liberalism which they themselves had found so objectionable for the same reasons in the years before Mumford, Frank and MacLeish also discovered it. The *New Masses* was to see the day arrive when it was to change sides again, and join enthusiastically with the three war-liberals it detested in June, 1940, when the Soviet Union went to war with Germany in June, 1941.

NOTES

1 *Common Sense*, February, 1937, pp. 27-28. Conklin emphasized that Bruce Bliven claimed the *New Republic* had contributed the phrase "peace without victory" "to Wilson's repertoire of sublimated epigrams."

2 *New Republic*, March 10, 1937, pp. 125-126. On the other hand, Oswald Garrison Villard did not think Armstrong was making a call for war as clearly as Schuman implied. See the Villard review of Armstrong in *Nation*, January 23, 1937, p. 103.

3 *New Republic*, June 23, 1937, pp. 200-201. Schuman's violent attack on Tomlinson and Thomas appeared in the issue for January 15, 1936, pp. 288-289, along with a laudatory reception of the British collectivist T. H. Wintringham's *The Coming World War*, which asserted "the workers' revolution is the only road to peace."

4 *Nation*, February 6, 1937, pp. 148-150.

5 *Nation*, October 9, 1937, pp. 387-388. Romer's letter was written from Spain on August 15, where he had been fighting with the Communists for a little over three months. See Chapter 17, note 96.

6 See especially Niebuhr, "Greek Tragedy and Modern Politics," *Nation*, January 1, 1938, pp. 12-16.

7 *Nation*, January 16, 1937, pp. 66-68.

8 *New Republic*, April 28, 1937, p. 362.

9 Letter of Lucy Benedict, New York City, to *New Republic*, May 5, 1937, p. 387. See also letters of Henry W. Pinkham, Newton Center, Mass., and George Halsey Hunt, Seattle, January 6, 1937, pp. 302-303 and October 3, 1937, p. 273, respectively.

10 *Common Sense*, May, 1937, pp. 8-10; June, 1937, pp. 15-18; July, 1937, pp. 11-15, for citations in following four paragraphs.

- 11 See letters by men cited in *Common Sense*, June, 1937, pp. 2, 30; July, 1937, pp. 2, 30.
- 12 Review of Bingham's *Beware Of Europe's Wars*, the reprinted and amplified book form of his articles in *Common Sense*, in *Nation*, September 11, 1937, pp. 269-270.
- 13 "War—East and West," *Nation*, September 18, 1937, pp. 279-281.
- 14 *Nation*, October 2, 1937, p. 349.
- 15 *Common Sense*, December, 1937, pp. 11-14.
- 16 *Forum*, January, 1938, pp. 43-47.
- 17 Niebuhr interpreted this in the following manner: "The dominant financial groups in the democratic nations are afraid that a too vigorous stand against the Fascist powers will lead to the spread of Communism." *Nation*, January 1, 1938, p. 13.
- 18 *Nation*, January 22, 1938, p. 111. The signatories included Alfred M. Bingham, Anita Brenner, John Chamberlain, Lewis Corey, H. C. Engelbrecht, James T. Farrell, John T. Flynn, Louis Hacker, Mauritz A. Hallgren, Frank Hanighen, Abram L. Harris, Sidney Hook, Quincy Howe, Suzanne LaFollette, William Potter Lage, Harry W. Laidler, Frederick J. Libby, Dwight MacDonald, Homer Martin, Mary McCarthy, Ernest L. Meyer, A. J. Muste, Senator Gerald P. Nye, Philip Rahv, James Rorty, David Saposs, Norman Thomas, Lionel Trilling, Edmund Wilson and Bertram D. Wolfe.
- 19 *Common Sense*, March, 1938, pp. 11-13.
- 20 Klaus Mann, "Thomas Mann: Exile," *Common Sense*, February, 1937, pp. 8-10, argued that his father was abroad in 1932-1933 and did not return to Germany, therefore becoming an "exile" and not a refugee or emigré.
- 21 *New Masses*, April 27, 1937, pp. 15-16. Heinrich Mann contributed directly to the *New Masses* in this period; see his "The People's Front In Germany," in the issue for May 4, 1937, pp. 6-7. A further contribution appeared in April, 1938.
- 22 Lerner review of Mann in *Nation*, June 25, 1938, p. 726; Chamberlain review of Mann in *New Republic*, August 3, 1938, pp. 367-368.
- 23 *Common Sense*, January, 1939, p. 28. The pro-Communist press gave *This Peace* a stirring commendation.
- 24 Kohn review of Kolnai in *Nation*, October 1, 1938, pp. 329-330. Review of Kolnai in *Fight*, January, 1939, pp. 18-19.
- 25 *Nation*, January 21, 1939, pp. 86-88.
- 26 *Nation*, February 25, 1939, p. 248.
- 27 Russell, "Munich Rather Than War," *Nation*, February 11, 1939, pp. 173-175.
- 28 *Nation*, April 15, 1939, pp. 427-429.
- 29 *New Republic*, May 18, 1938, pp. 39-42. When Mumford reviewed Pitirim Sorokin's *Social and Cultural Dynamics* on July 14, 1937 (*New Republic*, pp. 283-284), he concluded his unfavorable estimate by commenting, "No amount of erudition that the Paretos, Spenglers and Sorokins may exhibit can atone in this field for their lack of emotional poise."
- 30 *New Republic*, May 18, 1938, pp. 32-33.
- 31 *New Republic*, June 15, 1938, pp. 160-161; June 29, 1938, p. 218.
- 32 *New Republic*, June 1, 1938, pp. 103-104.
- 33 Fischer and Schuman letters in *New Republic*, August 10, 1938, pp. 19-20 and 27; Lerner article in *New Republic*, November 2, 1938, pp. 355-356. Lerner had just left the *Nation* to become a colleague of Schuman's at Williams College.
- 34 Lerner review of Villard in *New Republic*, April 26, 1939, pp. 342-344. This was one of the longest book reviews in the journal's history. See also the much kinder verdict on Villard in Robert Morss Lovett's review, *Nation*, April 15, 1939, pp. 437-438.
- 35 *Common Sense*, October, 1938, p. 5.
- 36 Soule, "After the New Deal; I. The New Political Landscape," *New Republic*, May 17, 1939, pp. 35-38.
- 37 *New Republic*, September 21, 1938, pp. 180-182; for citations in this and following paragraph.
- 38 *Common Sense*, January, 1939, p. 24.
- 39 *New Republic*, February 15, 1939, pp. 35-37.
- 40 *Common Sense*, November, 1939, pp. 13-15, 29; Davis's response in *Common Sense*, January, 1940, p. 30.

41 Niebuhr review of Herring in *Nation*, May 21, 1938, pp. 594-595; his review of Frank in *Nation*, July 9, 1938, pp. 45-46. Niebuhr was particularly incensed at Herring for the latter's repeated criticism of the October, 1937 "quarantine" speech of Roosevelt.

42 *Nation*, January 29, 1938, pp. 117-119.

43 *New Republic*, January 11, 1939, pp. 275-279. Many writers echoed Mumford's opinions on Spengler for the next ten years.

44 *Nation*, February 18, 1939, pp. 206-207.

45 *Common Sense*, March, 1939, pp. 27-28. Elmer Davis wrote the following month, "My compliments to Bingham's review of *Men Must Act*, which hit Mumford on the button," and then went on to defend FDR and the policy of bolstering up France and England as a means of inhibiting the Germans from attacking them. *Common Sense*, April, 1939, p. 2.

46 Symposium, "If War Comes—Shall We Participate Or Stay Neutral?," *Common Sense*, March, 1939, pp. 8-13, editorial "Waging Peace," pp. 3-5.

47 Chamberlain, "Miss Thompson Goes To War," *New Republic*, August 24, 1938, pp. 80-81, and "Delilah Of the Inkpot," *New Republic*, September 27, 1939, pp. 220-221. Chamberlain review of Sheean in *New Republic*, August 2, 1939, pp. 367-368.

48 *Common Sense*, August, 1939, pp. 3-5.

49 *Common Sense*, September, 1939, p. 26. On Dulles as a neutralist and anti-collective security protagonist see also his articles "The Road To Peace," *Atlantic Monthly*, October, 1935, pp. 492-499, and his contribution to the *Nation* symposium, "A Foreign Policy For America," *Nation*, April 23, 1938, pp. 460-462.

50 "Freedom For Whom," *Common Sense*, December, 1939, pp. 16-17, for citations below.

51 The increasing evidence of the trends toward the Administration's world-saving tendencies perturbed Marquis W. Childs substantially, as was evident in his "The War vs. the New Deal," *Common Sense*, March, 1940, pp. 3-5.

52 Niebuhr, "Idealists As Cynics," *Nation*, January 20, 1940, pp. 72-74.

53 *New Masses*, January 30, 1940, pp. 20-21; Lerner, "The Left: End and Beginning," *Nation*, February 10, 1940, pp. 164-166, and review of Chamberlain, *New Republic*, April 8, 1940, pp. 477-478. Lerner was one of the liberals who became disenchanted with Soviet Russia as a consequence of the purges of 1938: see *New Republic*, November 23, 1938, p. 69.

54 *Nation*, March 9, 1940, pp. 340-341.

55 "The Moral Urge Toward War," *New Republic*, February 12, 1940, pp. 198-199, for citations in this paragraph.

56 "British Agents," *New Republic*, March 18, 1940, p. 360.

57 Mumford, "The Corruption of Liberalism," *New Republic*, April 29, 1940, pp. 568-573, for citations in above three paragraphs. Mumford emerged as a pleader for universal pacifism after the Korean War, and in 1954 and after, some of his writings and declarations appeared in the pages of the British pacifist weekly *Peace News*.

58 "Mr. Mumford and the Liberals," *New Republic*, April 29, 1940, pp. 562-564. In an advertisement in the *Nation* soliciting subscriptions, the *Jewish Frontier* printed a letter from Mumford to its editor, Hayim Greenberg, praising this magazine as "the one magazine of its kind that I can bear to read in these times," and expressing the wish that "something of your spirit would by some miracle take possession of the liberal weeklies." *Nation*, May 4, 1940, p. 580.

59 *New Republic*, May 6, 1940, pp. 603-608.

60 *New Republic*, May 13, 1940, pp. 643-644, for citations from letters of Buck, Rodman, MacLeish, Alexander, Bodkin, Swados, and Coleman, below.

61 *New Republic*, June 10, 1940, pp. 795-796.

62 "No Vacancies," *New Republic*, August 19, 1940, p. 229.

63 *New Republic*, June 3, 1940, p. 762; June 24, 1940, p. 860.

64 *New Republic*, June 17, 1940, pp. 827-828. The editors chose to reproduce one satiric response to Mumford earlier, written by Wadsworth Mulrooney, who declared, "Now as one who has actually carried a rifle in the armed services of this country and who, spang in the middle of the draft age, will certainly shoulder another should enough fancy prayer men keep fingering their emotions in public, I send you a poem. It is

dedicated to number three in the rear rank and titled "When Johnny Comes Marking Time at Home:"

So Men must act,
It's really being done.
Johnny, it's a fact;
Get your gun on the run.
Everybody really ought to die for someone other
And Lewis Mumford will become a Gold Star Mother.

N.B.: Now is the time for all good men to keep a stiff upper hysteria and take a tuck in somebody else's belt." *New Republic*, May 13, 1940, p. 644.

65 *New Republic*, June 10, 1940, pp. 797-798. See also review of Frank by Niebuhr in *Nation*, May 11, 1940, pp. 600-601. John Knox Jessup, an editor of *Fortune*, reviewing Frank's *In the American Jungle* for *Common Sense*, June, 1937, p. 27, found the same mixture of Marxism and metaphysical mysticism which reviewers objected to in his *Chart For Rough Waters*.

66 *Nation*, October 1, 1938, p. 310; *Nation*, May 4, 1940, pp. 570-571.

67 *Nation*, May 11, 1940, pp. 605-606.

68 Whipple review of MacLeish in *New Republic*, April 13, 1938, pp. 311-312; Magil, "Mr. MacLeish Hesitates," *New Masses*, May 30, 1939, pp. 21-24.

69 *Nation*, June 17, 1939, p. 689.

70 *Nation*, May 18, 1940, pp. 618-623.

71 *Nation*, June 1, 1940, pp. 678-682; June 8, 1940, pp. 718-720, for the comments of persons cited, and others.

72 *New Republic*, June 10, 1940, pp. 789-790.

73 *New Masses*, May 3, 1938, p. 11.

74 "Liberals' Road To War," *New Masses*, May 21, 1940, p. 21.

75 Sillen in *New Masses*, June 11, 1940, pp. 24-26; Rautenstrauch in *New Masses*, June 25, 1940, pp. 8-9; Schneider in *New Masses*, June 25, 1940, p. 17.

76 *New Masses*, July 9, 1940, p. 30; July 16, 1940, pp. 12-14.

LIBERAL EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
REPORTAGE FROM THE POLISH-
GERMAN CRISIS TO THE RUSSO-
GERMAN WAR

THE American liberal press emphasized on numerous occasions the fact that they were journals of opinion, which absolved them of responsibility to maintain even the semblance of objectivity in making judgments and evaluations on public affairs. The presentation and selection of news took place within this context as well, which makes what was selected for emphasis of vast significance in arriving at some understanding of the nature of liberal thought on international relations and America's relation to its overseas neighbors. This became of even greater importance as Europe moved into the final stages of the great drama of the decade of the 1930s terminating in the explosion of a second global war in a single generation. And the most important event of the pre-hostilities period without the slightest shadow of a doubt was the multi-angled diplomacy which culminated in the treaty of non-aggression between the presumed most implacable antagonists since classical times, National Socialist Hitler Germany and Marxian Communist Stalin Russia. An examination of this staggering act is called for, outside the context of purely Soviet affairs and its impact on America's pro-Communist-disposed liberal opinion-makers, which has already been done.

THE HITLER-STALIN PACT: FATEFUL EVENT
OF THE CENTURY FOR AMERICAN LIBERALS

Walter Duranty cabled a piece to the *New York Times* on October 10, 1938, with the Munich crisis hardly cool, in which he discussed the possibility and probability of a Russo-German rapprochement, declaring that the only obstacle to it was "Hitler's fanatic fury against what he calls 'Judeo-Bolshevism.'" But Duranty's next sentence read, "But Hitler is not immortal and dictators can change their minds and Stalin has shot more Jews in the two years of purge than were ever killed in Germany." I. F. Stone recalled this prediction, in a *Nation* summary of the significance of the eventual coming to terms of the Russian and German leaders, on September 23, 1939,¹ along with several others preceding the event by many months, which had the effect of depriving any literate and informed reader of the luxury of acting shocked and surprised at the event. The subject had indeed been covered from many angles long before the fateful treaty in the fourth week of August, 1939.

The first major wave of such suspicions and predictions had started after Stalin's famous speech before the 18th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in March of that year. Combined with the opening of diplomatic negotiations between England and Poland and also between England and Russia soon after, there was evidence enough that several major changes of direction were possible in the coming months, which was greatly heightened when Maxim Litvinov was dismissed as the Soviet Foreign Minister in May.

The Communists in America were infuriated by the talk of a coming Hitler-Stalin understanding, what with the Popular Front collective security propaganda moving into its period of greatest intensity.² But others were not quite so tender and sensitive. Peter Drucker's *Common Sense* article in the issue for March was flatly titled "That Coming Nazi-Soviet Pact," a sober and matter-of-fact discussion of the strong possibility of an understanding. The editors of this monthly felt called upon the following month to cite Stalin's speech once more as a sign that better relations were coming, and even more strongly in June. With the appointment of Molotov in Litvinov's place, they felt sure that this was the signal for the alliance now, since Hitler would have been unlikely to bargain with Litvinov, "the man who had fathered Chamberlain's encirclement policy." This was a reference to the change of heart which the British leader had suddenly undergone, pointed up by his diplomatic about-face on Hitler and Germany, in itself as remarkable a change as that which was being suspected as being around the corner between the Germans and Russians.³

But of the open Anglo-Russian and covert Russo-German negotiations, the liberal weeklies selected only the former for extended examination, and hardly acknowledged the latter existed until the evidence was in, in the form of the stunning *Pakt*. The *Nation* in spring of 1939 was wholly favorable to the Russian viewpoint in its dealings with the Chamberlain government, and thought that the Communists were offering a "comprehensive alliance" with England and France, as the British journalist Aylmer Vallance wrote on May 20, which the editorial of that day supported; ⁴

It will take strong pressure to convert Mr. Chamberlain to this proposition. But the public knows, if he does not, that a combination of pawns cannot do more than check the dictators. To checkmate them it is essential to bring in the Red Queen.

The reluctance of Chamberlain to admit Russia into Central Europe a few months earlier was still remembered, and with bitterness. Unfortunately for the *Nation*, its blithe confidence in the "Red Queen" was to be badly shattered, and her coming in was under quite different circumstances, in addition to the fact that once in, no one from that time on might devise a scheme for getting her out.

In June the *Nation* excused the Russian rejection of the British proposal for a three-power defensive alliance "in the form submitted" on the grounds that Chamberlain was still seeking to put the major weight for stopping Hitler on the Soviet Union. The editors recommended accepting the Communist plan for extending the "guarantee" to the Baltic states. It was not argued that they had asked for it, since guarantees had been made in this manner to Rumania and Greece. And it was advanced that they now had to be accepted in view of British commitments in the same region; "The pledges made to Poland and Rumania are not only futile but highly dangerous without Soviet aid," a matter-of-fact observation which events proved most accurate. The faith of the journal was still firmly lodged in collective security, for with just the moves being made in that direction at the beginning of 1939, it was convinced that it was proved as the correct formula; "The world knows now that Hitler can be stopped without war," it confidently announced.⁵

Freda Kirchwey's signed editorial on July 8 sharply disagreed with Villard on the picture of Central Europe as of the moment. He had declared that the Germans were on the verge of completing their program of restoring their 1914 territorial losses, with the incorporation of Danzig, the Polish Corridor, Silesia and Prussian Poland just ahead, while also adding his voice to the assertion that a Russo-German "non-aggression pact" was in the offing if the two countries could come to an agreement on Russian and Rumanian claims on

Bessarabia. She recited the practical difficulties still in the way of a British-Soviet agreement on Polish defense against Germany, but asserted that the British and French were "working feverishly" to get their war preparations alliances in order, that the Russian alliance with Britain was very likely, and soon, that the Poles were already prepared to fight, in view of the strong guarantees they had already been given by the "West," and that a "crucial inner weakness" in Germany was likely to be an immediate brake on Hitler. An article "Why Hitler Must Bluff" in the same issue of the *Nation* by Judith Gruenfeld and L. F. Gittler supported this reasoning, one of the most catastrophic misreadings of Germany yet published, as it turned out; an estimate of some evidences of German distress as a fatal weakness of the regime.⁶

Miss Kirchwey was confident that Winston Churchill was right in comparing the situation as of July, 1939 to that of September, 1938, with the difference that "this year no means of retreat are open." For some weeks, of course, pro-Communist organs in America such as the *New Masses* had been proudly quoting Churchill's view that the Russian proposals of the moment were the best,⁷ giving them a common ground of agreement despite a slight chill existing as a consequence of differing interpretations on the reason for the debacle in Spain, and a sneaking feeling on the *New Masses* that there might be some sympathy in the *Nation* camp with the views of General Krivitsky, who, incidentally, had also launched a charge in July that a Hitler-Stalin embrace was just around the corner.

The *Nation* had already advanced the views of some of its experts on Russian and German affairs the previous month on the reason for the existing situation. Fritz Sternberg's "Russian War Strength" had declared that the "stubbornness" of British negotiation was based on their knowledge that the Germans could not win a two-front war, even though he had no worry about Soviet competence, with full editorial understanding that neither the Russians nor British wanted to be embroiled in a war with Hitler alone.⁸ Others, like Joachim Joesten, talked as if the war was reasonably sure to come between the Russians and Germans. On June 24 he had predicted that Sweden would be the first country in northern Europe involved in the coming hostilities between the two, with the Communists using force to prevent Swedish iron ore from going to the Germans, and the likelihood of a civil war in Sweden, precipitated by its Communists' unwillingness to aid Russia's enemy. His sympathy for the Russian case was unconcealed.⁹

The only cloud on the sky of a sure pro-Russian settlement of a front against the Germans seemed to be the Pope; Miss Kirchwey accused him point-blank of being the main obstacle to a Moscow-

London understanding late in June, 1939, which is how she interpreted his activities in peace negotiations: ¹⁰

That the Pope wants peace no one need doubt. But the peace he seeks is plainly one of further appeasement coupled with the elimination of Moscow. He has denied the report that he intended to call a five-power conference; but whether he did or not, his agents are active and the center of their efforts is Warsaw. Various dispatches indicate that the French Foreign Office and the French army are strongly-opposed to a new Vatican-arranged Munich; while Halifax, and, of course, Chamberlain are working for its success. It may well be that the lack of progress at Moscow is due less to Russian intransigence than to Chamberlain's desire to stall along in the hope that the Pope's efforts may still save England from a Soviet alliance.

In the meantime the American Communists presented as confident a picture as anyone of the ultimate triumph of a Soviet-directed collective security alliance, with overtones of boasting about Russian strength. Neither the August nor September, 1939 issue of the official monthly, the *Communist*, contained the faintest hint of the coming splintering of the Popular Front or a word on the possibility of a Russo-German neutrality pact, or even a mention that these two governments were in conversations. Anti-war and non-interventionist figures who described the approaching crisis as another imperialist war in the making, the counterpart and extension of the Great War of 1914-1918, were still being denounced in the language of William Z. Foster in the issue of January, 1939. His editorial "Isolationist Defeatism!" described the earlier situation as one in which members of a vigorous capitalist system were fighting among themselves for imperialist aims as compared to that now existing, which he considered to be a desperately sick capitalist world trying via the emergency of Fascist regimes to hold its head above a rapidly rising tide of world socialism.¹¹

"They Can't Ignore Moscow," boasted Richard Goodman in the August 15 *New Masses*. Goodman insisted that the Reds could mobilize fifteen million men and put them into action immediately, with a total of 22,000,000 by the end of six months, a larger force than Germany, Italy and Japan combined, while also having the most "moto-mechanized" army in the world, the best tanks known anywhere, a larger artillery park than the French, British, Italian, Japanese and Polish armies combined, and artillery "unquestionably superior" to anything in Germany. This was indeed a startling tribute for what had been hailed up to a few months ago by liberals and Communists as the largest pacifist big power.¹² But it at least con-

firmed why so much confidence was being expressed in the outcome of whatever action the Soviet undertook.

"Stalin's Munich" was the astounded and offended *New Republic's* August 30, 1939 editorial heading on a long and painful editorial on the Hitler-Stalin pact. Stung that the Kremlin could value its cost-free friends all over the planet in its various collective security fronts so low, it criticized the action at length, predicting a sharp drop in the "moral prestige" of the Soviet at home and abroad. Admitting that the Comintern had based "all its policy" for years "on a consistently and powerfully anti-Nazi" line, it expressed vast bewilderment that it was letting the various United and Popular Fronts, support for "democracy," Spain, and other small countries go down, adding as a superfluous prophecy, "Non-Communists throughout the world" who had been sympathetic with the Soviet regime and friendly toward its recent line "will be further puzzled and alienated."¹³

It continued to try to glean consolation from this electric event in the first two weeks of the ensuing German-Polish war, gloating over the "wretched position" of the American Communists, having in recent times "far more than anybody in Moscow," "filled the air with moral exhortations on behalf of collective security." On this point the *New Republic* rejoiced at having its editorial position vindicated, while at the same time warning its readers and the country at large to continue to be "distrustful of idealistic slogans, interested propaganda and simple-minded divisions among 'good' and 'bad' nations," because European affairs were "still full of insincerity," as well as for the reason that American action with relation to foreign affairs needed to be conducted with "the utmost possible realism and wariness."

The junior liberal weekly was inclined to accept the Soviet story that the breakdown of talks with the English and the refusal of the Poles to conclude a limited collective security agreement with them made their action necessary, but it did concede that in view of Russia's championship of collective security, the timing of her action and her sudden reversal "made it seem like betrayal."¹⁴

The *Nation* was nearly prostrated by the *Pakt*. Freda Kirchwey's editorial "Europe's Last Stand" on September 2 reflected a total state of despair. After having clung into the later summer to the assertion that the negotiations going on were still a prelude to stopping Hitler's revisionism without warfare, she now wailed, "War would be preferable to another deal with Hitler, and war would be preferable to the continued struggle of nerves and diplomacy that has exhausted the people for the past month."¹⁵ In point of fact, her wish had already been realized the day before.

Robert Dell in the same issue had included a story on French readiness for violence, including in his article a quotation from

Pravda of considerable significance even though no longer pertinent to the Russian side of the equation: ¹⁶

The war of the Soviet Union against Fascism will be the most just and most legitimate of all wars that humanity has known. It will be a war for the liberation of humanity from Fascism and the liberation of the oppressed nations reduced to slavery. It will be for the defense of the international proletariat and the culture of the whole progressive humanity against Fascist barbarism.

Though Communists everywhere promptly laughed at these views and prepared a completely contradictory story why the world was at war again, in one sense they fabricated the propaganda justifying the case of those who continued to fight and were able to make use of this statement with minor alterations. Dell and several other figures in the liberal-left found it eminently satisfactory as an explanation. Though disenchanted with the Russians, having repeated this in substance since 1933, they used it as a war cry anyway during the period when those who had invented it adhered to the new line and were devising shamefaced evasions in extenuation of their previous views. The long-planned planetary crusade by the Communists against Hitler still appealed to the war-minded element among the Communists' erstwhile liberal comrades. No amount of Soviet treachery was sufficient to bring about a lessening of the white-hot hate incubated among them in the previous seven years by the unremitting Communist propaganda furnaces. Liberals had not been induced to feel so intensely about anyone prior to this, nor have they been able to do so about anyone else since.

Other liberal estimates of the *Pakt* came in to the *New Republic* from H. N. Brailsford in London and Louis Fischer in Paris. The former, much saddened by the break-up of collective security, tried hard to see it with sympathy for the Russians, but reported that the English government was actually stiffened by the event, and felt confident that when the war was over there would be no need whatever "to consult Moscow over the eventual settlement," an attitude which gained great credence in the succeeding 22 months. He was of the belief that the Chamberlain government was now hoping to enlist Japan, Franco and the whole Catholic and conservative world to its own camp.

Fischer's attitude was expressed by the heading over his contribution, "An Inexcusable Treaty," "totally indefensible," in his estimate. Its suddenness left him fluttering in all directions and completely unhinged, almost a portrait of a man who had just been made bereft of his religion: "Nothing is settled—everything is fluid," he murmured, commenting in addition,¹⁷

The moral effect of the Russian step is devastating. Such a change of front without notice sows mistrust of all regimes. Ideology? Parties of the Left? These have been dealt a blow from which they cannot quickly recover.

However, Fischer's evaluation was somewhat superior to Nathaniel Peffer's "Communism Liquidates Itself" in *Harper's*, probably the poorest piece of immediate liberal prognostication as to the future of Russia and Communism. Peffer seethed with resentment over Stalin's "Machiavellian" behavior, and was utterly convinced that he had sunk the cause of world Communism permanently.

The coming of the war made an expert on foreign affairs out of many other contributors to the liberal press, including I. F. Stone, whose *Nation* article on September 23, "Chamberlain's Russo-German Pact," sought to establish the point that the British Prime Minister had encouraged the *Pakt* on the grounds, said Stone, that "it would make for a new Munich or a 'little war' between Germany and Poland."¹⁸ This was the same kind of reasoning used by Schuman of Munich, that Chamberlain had secretly conspired with Hitler to hurry the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia. But the net effect of his essay was to indicate pro-Soviet liberal obtuseness in refusing to believe a word from Otto Tolischus, Duranty, Knickerbocker and several other foreign correspondents whose predictions of the likelihood of a Hitler-Stalin understanding had been spread over the nation's most important newspapers during the previous fifteen months. The implacability of these two European dictators had become such a cardinal article of faith among liberals now that their only recourse had been to denounce such stories as the work of anti-Soviet writers. And the firmness of this ideological fixation on the eternal enmity of Hitler and Stalin helped to explain the especial painfulness of the event among liberals and Soviet well-wishers. Lacking party discipline to aid them in their transitional thinking, their reaction was one of heated indignation toward an act of betrayal.

What had made it far worse was the famous "Manifesto of the 400" in the liberal weeklies the week the *Pakt* was signed, the full flower of a decade and more of liberal writing and thinking in denigration of charges of similarities of the Soviet to the Hitler regime. It was a debacle of far greater import than the *Literary Digest's* miscalculation on the outcome of the election of 1936, but the recovery of equilibrium of the personalities connected with this amazing testament was astonishingly rapid, in the manner of a weighted top righting itself however buffeted about. Practically none of the 400 signers of this testimonial followed with any public admission of error anywhere in testifying to the eternal nature of Soviet-Hitlerian hostility, among other things. But when they began to notice the Communists

dealing with such a deadly serious matter so lightly, and especially after *Izvestia* calmly reported that "Fascism is a matter of taste," their endurance gave out. The feeling of indignation and embarrassment evoked condemnations which made prior orthodox conservative criticisms seem marvels of restraint by comparison, as was partially seen in dealing with the reaction of liberals to Russian affairs and the personal impact of this episode on their thinking. The same approach was to be seen in dealing with it as a factor within the context of foreign affairs and international relations.

The more deeply offended liberals adopted as a means of preserving their self-respect the apology that Communism had become infected with Fascism and had taken over some of its characteristics. To admit that it had possessed them all the time, as a few voices had suggested it may be recalled, implied the necessity for confessions of gullibility so comprehensive and profound that they simply could not be faced. Now, France and England became Russia's "democratic dupes"; the week before, the Chamberlain and Daladier regimes were considered so rotten with Fascism that some liberals professed to be unable to see much difference between Hitler's regime and either of them.

There were a limited number of attempts to explain away the Russian action. By far the most succinct and persuasive apology for the Communist foreign policy was that by Richard H. Rovere, in the September 5 *New Masses*, "What Every Appeaser Should Know." According to Rovere, Stalin had been contemplating this move since 1934. In his mind it was a hard-headed Russian nationalist move for self-protection, and did not contradict or betray Russia's stand since joining the League in the same year. Like Stone, Rovere's demon was the British Prime Minister:¹⁹

The Soviet peace policy has not changed. Neither has Fascism nor those who advance it by appeasement. The Soviet Union refuses, and always will, to play the Fascist game, but it is no more eager to play Chamberlain's, which would have the Fascists fatten on a few democracies until it is ready to take on the Soviet Union in a war which, by Tory calculation, would destroy both. . . . The record is there for any man to see. Those who feign surprise or charge betrayal did not care to see. But for the rest, who love and want peace, the Soviet Union remains what it always has been. With the peoples of the world it will fight Fascism—without appeasers.

Nor did Rovere's judgment change much in the ensuing ten weeks. In a letter to the *New Republic* on November 15 he hailed its traditional non-involvement position with a congratulatory remark, "The *New Republic* has been smart for years," and asked it to be

even more frank and blunt in its estimate of the new hostilities: "Why doesn't it call this war what it is, a tussle for loot among the world's handiest crooks?"²⁰

The insincere note which grew in liberal writing on the *Pakt* was largely due to neglect of the fact that an Anglo-Russian treaty had been anticipated for four months, its possible provisions and likely details having been hammered and ground over in the daily and weekly press until they had been reduced to a fine meal. To ascribe a serious moral lapse and wickedness to the agreement between the Russians and Germans which took place instead gave the entire episode a not entirely reprehensible quality, and hardly merited the moral uproar.

There was also a lame and anticlimactic note to the dogged pro-war liberal position after the keystone of the collective security which they had propped up so many years was withdrawn. Great bewilderment prevailed as to where the British and French might fight Germany for a while, battlefield sites being very uncommon except in the traditional places of 1914-1918, in the West. The self-conscious defense of Franco-British imperialism was for a time a desperate clutch in the dark at something to give meaning to a cause which had been dynamited to the sky when it no longer suited Russian interests. The war was no longer a contest between a young buccaneer and two retired pirates, in their mind. The ineffable moral qualities described by the Kolnai-Mann-Mumford-Frank-MacLeish circle of thinkers were an admirable substitute for collective security, as a war aim. But liberals were a long time recovering from the discovery that the latter had been simply a stage in Russian foreign policy and not a blueprint for permanent planetary peace for lions and sheep alike. Litvinov's great catch-phrase "Peace is indivisible" was one of the first casualties, but for many other liberals one of the most crushing aspects of the *Pakt* was what it did to the ingenious story of a short time before which had been used to justify the bloody Communist purges, namely, that a formidable and evil plot to turn the country over to the Germans had been nipped and the victims of the purges were these putative traitors. Much time and thought had gone into this lifeboat for sagging Russian esteem among American liberals who were most firmly planted in the Soviet orbit. The new comradeship on the Eastern Front was made even harder to swallow than ever when this was remembered.

By the end of the year, with the Soviet Union in much worse odor because of its invasion of Finland, it was time for even more drastic evaluations of the Stalin-Hitler agreement. Louis Fischer's in the *Nation* on December 30 was the darkest and most realistic. He dismissed the signing of the pact by the Russians as an act of self-defense. "Hitler did not intend to strike at Russia," he flatly asserted;

"No self-defense on Russia's part was necessary." "It was Moscow's conviction that the Allies would fight, and not the fear that they would not, which brought about the pact." Fischer now suggested; "If the Russians had been worried about a German attack, they would have sought safety with the Allies," by which he meant Britain and France. Fischer insisted that Britain's early verbal pledges of protection to Poland and Rumania destroyed her bargaining power, since by these the Russians gained all they could hope to get by negotiation with Britain, since these pacts in effect guaranteed the Polish-Russian and Rumanian-Russian frontiers. Furthermore, he pointed out in this belated flush of realism that Russia had the advantage in Britain being hostile to Germany, since it made Russian help to Britain far more necessary than the reverse; ²¹

The present war is the logical consequence of the British pledge to Poland. Moscow saw this coming. It gave Russia a freedom of choice. Before that Russia could only have been pro-Ally. Now it had an alternative.

So, Fischer now admitted, Stalin negotiated openly with Britain, which all the liberals saw and commented upon, and secretly with the Germans to extract the best conditions he could from the latter, an action which none of them wished to even admit had taken place until it was a *fait accompli*.

The *New Republic* echoed this view a month after the Russians and Germany had gone to war the following year, in an editorial retort to a correspondent complaining that there now was too much criticism of the Soviet in the journal. It had not forgotten the feeling of bereavement felt at the time of the *Pakt*, and despite the fact that the German invasion had returned the Communists to high moral favor once more, could not resist re-opening the issue; "We believe Stalin started the European war, through signing his pact with Hitler, in the hope that the Great Powers would exhaust themselves and let Russia alone." ²² But the days of the Great Reconciliation were at hand, and harsh feeling toward the Communists soon became as hard to find expressed as detachment toward Hitler Germany.

THE CHANGING PICTURE OF POLAND, FROM MUNICH TO THE RUSSO-GERMAN PARTITION

The season for passionate moral rhetoric on Poland among liberals began late. The theme of harsh criticism which prevailed in 1937 and 1938 continued unabated even into the crisis months between March and September, 1939, and coldly realistic pictures of the Polish

state were the usual fare until the country had been overrun by the German and Russian armies in the fall. Its emergence as a defenseless and helpless image followed much after the pattern of Czechoslovakia, which went through such a transformation, after a long interval of repeated boasting of its armies, weapons and military effectiveness prior to the Munich diplomatic decisions of September, 1938.

Part of the reason for the coldness toward the Poles was their own part in the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia in the spring of 1939, but there were few illusions about this nation for some months prior to that, largely an outgrowth of irritation with the refusal of its leaders to deal with the Soviet Union or consider collective security arrangements with the Russians. The pro-Soviet American liberals also did not forget its attitude at the time of Munich, and found other reasons for pouring on disapproval in the following weeks.

Not long after, the Polish government issued its famous warning to Polish citizens abroad that a special visa had to be acquired by October 29, 1938, or they would lose their citizenship. When the Germans, fearing the denaturalization of a large number of Polish Jews living in Germany, deported seven thousand of these persons back to Poland, they touched off liberal fulminations against both countries, drawing an especially vigorous condemnation in the *Nation* on November 5.²³ Liberal papers had been far more outraged at the Poles than the Germans for their treatment of Jews in the previous two years, and they were not spared here. But the assassination of a secretary in the German embassy in Paris by a son of one of the deported Polish Jews not long afterward, which touched off the *Krystallnacht* outburst of outrages against the property of Jews in Germany, tipped the balance of condemnation toward the Germans again, as it had been in the 1933-1936 period.²⁴ It was undoubtedly a serious mistake for the German regime to permit this, and it told heavily against them in the world propaganda arena. It had an indirect and unconscious part to play in the rehabilitation of Poland, by default, although this was not fully realized until the spring of 1939, when the British astounded the world with their unilateral promise of aid against the Germans and demands for adjusting the Versailles settlements on the Polish-German frontiers. But temporarily the image of Poland of the period of 1931-1937 changed little. An ex-Vienna journalist, Henry B. Kranz, wrote an extensive essay for the *Nation*, published on November 19, "Poland and the German 'Peace,'" which continued the portrayal of Poland as anything but a tender, trembling democratic blossom. Kranz's Poland was a nation of fanatic nationalists, one out of every ten men a "magnificently equipped and trained soldier," one-half of its total national budget spent on its army, and with a regime riding herd on a country of 35 millions, one-third of whom were unwilling national minorities of other countries

assigned to their dominion by Versailles. In his view Poland was being run by hardened realists who were not "victims of slavish dependence on French promises" and conducted a tough attitude toward their smaller neighbors, especially Lithuania, upon whom they were applying serious pressure all the time and with whom they had had no diplomatic relations since 1920. Kranz also pointed out that 85% of the population of the Eastern provinces of Poland were Russians and Ukrainians, "And the Communist tide is rising in these districts," he commented.²⁵

The earliest responses to the news that the British had returned to the encirclement policy toward Germany by promising aid to Poland in its dealings with Hitler were rather quiet in both liberal weeklies.²⁶ And a major editorial on the subject in the April 19, 1939 *New Republic*, "The Stop-Hitler Alliance," was a long recital of the factors standing in the way of any British-led coalition in that region, because of the existence of the Russians. Hitler's ambitions to create an autonomous Ukrainian state had been a major liberal item of discussion for some time. As Kranz had suggested, "with this state as a vassal, Hitler's dream would be a reality;" for "Germany would be industrially independent, and Soviet Russia and Communism would receive a staggering if not fatal blow." But this editorial discussed the other side of the picture, for although Kranz and others pointed out Polish objection to politicalizing the Ukrainians as a separate independent state, there was a Polish case against too close action with the Russians as well. It had been a subject of great irritation to American pro-Soviet liberals for some years. Said the *New Republic* editorial,²⁷

But the Poles are almost as much afraid of the Russians as they are of the Germans. . . . Would they consent to allow Soviet troops to enter their territory, apprehensive as they are that those troops, once in, would never retire? Would the ruling classes welcome as an ally the people who overthrew their counterparts at home, who have collectivized agriculture and socialized industry?

In its momentary lapse from discussion of foreign politics within the sentimental framework, it went on to suggest that "It is abstractly possible for Germany and the Soviet Union to live in peace; economically the two nations complement each other." And it went on to further point out that the British wooing of Russia did not necessarily rest on an immovable Russian policy; "the Russians have at least as many scores to settle with British imperialism as with German." For once progressive political theorizing did not blind the editors to the realities of national interest clashes.

But the *Nation* immediately returned to previous form with the

beginning of serious British attention to Poland. After weeks of calm assumption that the Poles were in accord with the Germans on the need for the revision of the settlements of 1919-1921 concerning the city of Danzig and the Polish Corridor, its editorial of May 6, 1939 commended the Poles for "stout-hearted resistance to Hitler's demand for Danzig and a corridor across the Corridor." In this obvious show of enthusiasm for the Poles, it hoped earnestly that the British would not back down from their promise of help, and it chided the French Government for its talk that Danzig was not a very intelligent cause to fight a major war over.²⁸

But all the voices in the *Nation* hardly took up this view, or moved in the direction of visioning Poland as a mild and unoffending victim of German aggression. Too much had been written in the past to obscure condemnations of Poland as a prominent contributor to Central European impasses since the War of 1914. Jonathan Griffin, reviewing Raymond Leslie Buell's apologetic *Poland: Key to Europe* in the same journal on June 24, refused to accept Buell's charge that the Czechs were responsible for the lack of Central European Slavic unity. "Polish foreign policy is heavily responsible for the present danger to peace," he countered; "The rulers of Poland have treated their minorities badly and have played a double game in foreign policy." Griffin was not of the view that "the alliance which Mr. Chamberlain has given to Poland is the way to help either Polish peasants or the cause of peace. . . . Is this the sort of country to which it was wise to give an unconditional promise of military aid?"²⁹

And as in the case of Czechoslovakia in the five months before Munich, there was no concealment of Polish military preparation. There was no trivia about an unprepared innocent in the pre-war months of the spring and summer of 1939. In fact, Villard in his column for July 8 insisted that the Poles had been "fully mobilized for six months on a war basis" already.

Poland nearly dropped out of sight in the seven weeks before the war began, what with the major emphasis being placed on the Anglo-Russian negotiations, and the thunderous news of the *Pakt* all but pushed it from the agenda completely. The liberal press maintained a mainly embarrassed silence over British helplessness while the German and Russian armies were mutually engulfing the country; the canary which had hoped to swallow two cats had failed in a signal manner. It really was a stunning demonstration of the liberals' own contention since the spring that the guarantees to Poland were utterly worthless without Soviet support as an ally, but in the subsequent weeks it was considered proper to merely sputter at Communist faithlessness.

The clever use of the word "liberation" to accompany the Allied military campaign against Germany between 1941 and 1945 was of

course long anticipated by the Soviet, which had used it as a standard article of political and military propaganda ever since their Russian emergence. It was used again by them as a softening device to prepare Poland for Russian occupation of the eastern sections containing the several million Russians and Ukrainians. The *New Republic*, though one of the voices which had long brought up the fact that this area had been snatched by the Poles in 1920, was indignant over this action as well as the German actions in the remainder of the century. Its editorial on September 27, "Russia Shakes the World," was just as dismayed by the Russian armistice with Japan, however, that inhibited a war liberals had been predicting since 1931 at times on an almost monthly basis.³⁰ It was ironic that the country which American liberals thought most likely to become involved in a war with Russia managed to keep on non-belligerent terms with the Soviet until the last week of active hostilities. But, in Central and Eastern Europe, the stage was now set for the re-absorption of the territories so prodigally handed around after being pried off Germany and Russia in the Paris treaties, in one sense the realization of the material side of the question which had been delayed since Rapallo.

The *Nation* also issued a violent rebuke to the Russians for their occupation of Eastern Poland, in an editorial on September 23, but registered the symptoms of total exhaustion after following all the convolutions of Russian policy since August 24 seeking to discover the Red objective.³¹ Both liberal weeklies were promptly given a vicious combing by writers and editors of the *New Masses* for having criticized the Soviet's part in the over-running and occupation of Poland, A. B. Magil selecting Fischer, Stone and Wechsler of the *Nation* for particular attention in his angry piece "Virtuosi of Confusion." The pro-Communist weekly's seven-column editorial on September 26, "Why the Red Army Marched," called the Russian action "liberation" of Poland, and "the greatest piece of open diplomacy since the October [1917] Revolution itself," while predicting that "a new day will dawn" for the Jews of Eastern Poland; "Socialism accomplishes what the prayers of the Chassidic rabbis, the bribery of the wealthy Ghetto spokesmen, the nostalgic futility of the Zionist emigration could not achieve." ³²

Only the pro-Communist sources such as the *New Masses* now made an issue out of the fact that British leaders such as Chamberlain and Halifax had both gone out of their way in October to construe the Soviet occupation of Eastern Poland as an advance to a rightful ethnological frontier conceded by the Allied Supreme Council—the famous Curzon Line, although Dell, in a dispatch to the *Nation* later in 1939, charged that Winston Churchill in a broad-

cast speech on October 1 had apologized for Russia's participation in the partition of Poland, and that Chamberlain had told the House of Commons that it was self-defensive on Russia's part. This was rather embarrassing fare as war news for liberals, in view of the fact that they had adopted England rather solidly as a substitute for Russia as a champion in foreign politics, after a long decade of nearly unbroken abuse of almost everything English except its Left-Labor Marxist tendencies and politicians.

An issue was made out of this belatedly by the *New Republic* in its editorial of November 8, 1939, "Appeasing Stalin," in which it commented with alarm that both Halifax and Chamberlain had stated that the British had never been under obligation to protect Poland from the Soviet Union, which was acting only in self-defense. Only then did they realize what the pro-Communists had been telling them for some time, that the Anglo-Polish treaty of mutual assistance signed on August 25, based on the oral agreements of March 31 and April 6, was really a secret understanding between the two governments against only Germany, even though the published treaty was worded as a general anti-aggression pact not directed against any particular power. Halifax's admission on October 26 that the sole purpose of it had been to prepare to meet an act against Poland by the Germans alone underlay the failure to become as excited by the Russian action in Eastern Poland as they were about German action in Western Poland.³³

But occupation was not the only fact of life. On November 1, the *New Republic* recognized editorially that in the Russian zone, at least, preparations were being made for more permanent change than that. The Communist government in Poland, which the Allies suddenly became aware of as the war was well under way and commitments to Russia had become unalterable, was already being thrown up concurrently with the occupation. The *New Republic* was not hostile to this aspect of the Russian presence, strangely enough:³⁴

There is real significance in the elections that have recently taken place in the Soviet-held provinces of Poland—though the American press does not seem to recognize it. Formerly the people of these areas were largely deprived of the vote. . . . Now the elections are taking place under the Soviet system of a universal franchise, with no requirement of a party membership of candidates. The scanty available dispatches indicate that the Russians have been urging the Poles to vote for individuals they know and trust. Whatever may be said of the Soviet system, an election such as this is clearly a first step in self-government and political education for these areas and it will help to create a popular demand for good government.

The editorial tried to justify this additionally by pointing out that the Germans were not holding elections in the provinces they occupied, which might have been construed just as well as evidence the Germans did not intend to stay. But the *New Republic's* editors probably could have been excused for their naïve and wide-eyed approval, since they had no previous experience in watching the first stages of the creation of a Soviet satellite very closely. However, their conclusion the following week on the eve of learning the Chamberlain-Halifax position on Russian occupation in Poland indicated a greater degree of realism: "The clear implication is that in any reconstitution of Poland after the war the Polish Ukraine and White Russia will not be a part of the new state." This more than explained Communist diligence in setting up "self-government" in the Eastern provinces.⁸⁵

Plenty of advance notice seemed to exist for those who later were to go to war alongside the Soviet and then adopted an attitude of shocked indignation at her Polish policy, that it apparently had been approved from the start. And if one adds up the busy political re-orientation going on in these Soviet-occupied areas, it was obvious in October, 1939 that the new Poland was going to be both truncated and Red. The liberal press did not try to fool themselves on this, despite their momentary irritation with the Russians. But they did grossly misrepresent it later. On September 2, 1940 the *New Republic*, in one of its new-style reconsiderations of Poland, had the following to say to its readers: ⁸⁶

Poland was destroyed as Norway, Holland, Belgium and France have been; but the Poles were far more unanimous in their willingness to die for their country. There were no Quislings or Pétains among them; the Germans tried but failed to set up a puppet government, and finally had to annex the country in self-defense. Perhaps it is better after all to be a live jackal than a dead lion, but the Poles didn't think so.

Unfortunately for the *New Republic*, it had already documented almost a year before that Poland had been the first country in Europe to develop "Quislings" and "Pétains," the Communists of the Eastern provinces who willingly formed pro-Russian Communist governments while the smoke from burning Polish towns was still drifting across the landscape. But, strangely enough, though the Russians were still technically persona non grata by virtue of their stubborn isolationist stand toward the war, it was not thought pertinent here to mention Russian-occupied Poland and its Communist governments.

But apologies for the Russian behavior in Poland had preceded this apologetic forgetfulness, and were to follow it as well, especially

after the German invasion of June, 1941 brought the Russians into the war. A *New Republic* editorial on April 22, 1940 had reported that most of the 13,000,000 people in Russian-occupied Poland were suffering extreme privation because a food shortage in Russia had stripped Eastern Poland of its reserves, but commented that there were no such atrocity stories coming from there as were emanating from the German-held territory.³⁷ The persistence of this kindly view helps to make understandable the refusal to believe the Katyn Forest massacre of a few months later. Though the war against Finland had driven most liberals away from active championship of the Communists, the residues of favorable predisposition acquired over the long period before were hard to eradicate.

From the point of view of diplomatic reliability, skepticism in the validity of treaties, pacts or agreements entered into by Russia became widespread especially in the *Nation*, after its spurning of Britain in favor of Germany in August, 1939. But in the matter of Poland, after the Russians had gone to war with Germany, it was impossible to suppress one more testament of faith. On August 9, 1941 the *Nation* applauded the agreement between the Soviet government and the Polish government-in-exile in London as a "miracle of conciliation," providing for a Polish army in Russia, and withdrawal of claims to former frontiers.³⁸ With a large part of the flower of the Polish officer corps already buried in a mass grave near Smolensk, what sort of command was likely to head this Polish army in Russia might have made a good issue to bring up at the moment, but it was not part of the agenda. Nor was there any statement about the Communist governments already in existence in Eastern Poland. The *Nation* again did not feel that this was an appropriate moment to question Communist reliability in entering into an agreement with a political force enjoying no tenure in the region where the agreement was presumably to go into force. But this was as much a place to question this new lion-and-lamb agreement as the previous occasions had been similarly pertinent.

For a time it seemed that liberal editors would condemn Russian action in the Baltic states in the same way that its occupation of Poland had originally been looked upon with disfavor. A *Nation* editorial on September 30, 1939 doubted that the Reds would honor a non-aggression pact with the Balts, apparently forecast by a *New Masses* editorial three days later, "We view with appreciation the success of the Soviet Union in strengthening its peace position and in liberating oppressed populations threatened by Fascist conquest."³⁹

But when the investment of Lithuania, Latvia and Esthonia took place, there was no great protest made. The *Nation* commented icily, "Moscow's whistle brought the helpless little Baltic states to

heel quickly enough, and the Red Army and fleet are already taking over the bases won through diplomacy backed by threats." Predicting that it would now be the turn of the Finns and Turks to come to terms with "Stalin's *realpolitik*," it went on in a grim and realistic weighing of the practical and operational situations instead of the heated moral fulmination which had become increasingly the stock in trade for a substitute for criticism after the *Pakt*.⁴⁰

The *New Republic* revealed an even more remarkable come-back from the hostility it had expressed over earlier Soviet moves. On the Baltic action it declared, "We simply cannot share the high moral fervor that is being aroused against Russia by her attacks on the so-called independence of the little Baltic states." The editorial refused to believe that they had ever been independent, and chose to support the contention that they were really conceived as "Franco-British outposts against Russia, part of the *cordon sanitaire* that would prevent Bolshevism from spreading westward," back at the end of the First World War.⁴¹ But its generosity and charity did not extend to the Germans and their handling in a not much different manner of the brain-children of Curzon, Wickham Steed and Seton Watson between the autumn of 1938 and the spring of 1941.

THE WAR WITH FINLAND EXTENDS AND DEEPENS THE LIBERAL ESTRANGEMENT FROM RUSSIA

The "Moscow Express," on which a substantial number of America's most prominent liberals rode during the decade beginning with the great depression, stopped for most of them at the Finland Station in Leningrad, when Stalin's armies boarded it and turned it around toward the Finnish frontier in December, 1939. Only a tenacious group of devoted fellow travelers were able to survive this event, coming so close to the disillusioning Russo-German non-aggression pact. It was followed by eighteen months of suspended animation for many, a large part of whom were able to return to the arms of Russian Communism and push for its goals with even greater fervor after the German attack on June, 1941 changed its role in Western eyes once more. H. N. Brailsford, speaking morosely on the new Russian nationalist attitude and its territorial extensions, in a *New Republic* piece on October 11, 1939, declared that Stalin had by following this policy, "flung away the old claim to the leadership of the European working class," and that in the future "If by another sudden reversal of policy he should ever seek to revive it, he will speak to deaf ears."⁴² Brailsford of course was proved eminently wrong on every possible count in June, 1941. Even Stalin's most

injured and psychically wounded liberal critics at that moment returned to their earlier stand before the winter arrived. But between the time Brailsford wrote his prognostications and the 1941 somersault, relations between Russian Communism and liberalism did get much worse, and the Finnish war was one of the most damaging incidents in this accelerated worsening of relationships.

In the fall of 1939 the *Nation* began to identify Communist Russia with Stalin on a wide scale for the first time and used his name as a synonym for the country in the same way it used "Hitler" to mean all Germany and all Germans. And for the first time, in November, it began to talk of "Communist Imperialism," a much stranger terminology, in view of the long period when "imperialism" was a characteristic of all other countries except Russia. Its appearance at this latter time was related to the newest turn of its foreign policy, the application of serious pressure upon Finland for territorial concessions and military and naval installations in the manner of those just wrested from the Baltic states. A *Nation* editorial even included the above term in its head on November 11,⁴³ attacking this move as entirely unwarranted and inconceivably related to any Soviet protestations that it was made in the interests of Russian security. All the month of November it harassed the Reds with this interpretation, comparing it to the same kind of pressure the Germans had applied to Poland, and looked upon the Russian denunciation of its non-aggression pact with Finland as a particularly ominous move.⁴⁴

The ensuing invasion of Finland by Russian troops on November 30 was the signal for the strongest editorial condemnation of Russia in the *Nation* to that date; the issue of December 9 denounced this act and called the Communist reasons for so doing "shocking nonsense," and insisted that it could have gotten all its demands without war except the Hangö peninsula, which was really part of Finland proper and to which the Russians were not entitled.⁴⁵ But there was a little trouble on the propaganda scene, what with the Italian and Japanese newspapers also condemning Russia, while those of China were silent. The criss-cross of world politics had produced another scrambling of what had seemed for so many years as a clear-cut and permanent ideological arrangement of the nations of the world.

The *New Republic's* editorial three days earlier, "Persecution Complex," also ridiculed Russian self-defense excuses; "Nobody in the world with the possibility of the propaganda-drenched Russian masses, will believe that the Soviet Union is afraid of little Finland, or that the Finns are now trying to pick a quarrel," it remonstrated. The attacks in the Communist press and the fabricated incident were identified as a "typical maneuver of an intending aggressor," and adding a comment which reached a new level of unkindness

toward the Communists in this open season; "The Soviet Union has for years as a result of its experience after the Revolution been so fearful of capitalist attack as to have developed what amounts to a paranoid persecution mania."⁴⁶ The followup the next week in an editorial "Stalin Spreads the War" went even further:⁴⁷

There never has been a clearer case of calculated and unprovoked aggression by a large power against a small neighbor than the invasion of Finland by the Soviet Union. There has never been one more universally denounced by persons of all shades of belief, the world around.

Louis Fischer expressed his indignation in much the same form on January 6, 1940 by defining the war in a long essay on Russian foreign policy thusly: "The war on Finland is a brutal, unwarranted assault on a small nation which I cannot distinguish from the Fascist invasions of Ethiopia, Spain, China, Czechoslovakia and Poland."⁴⁸ But after June 22, 1941 liberals found a wealth of distinctions between Russia's war in Finland and the other much-denounced international martial action.

The *Nation's* interpretation of the meaning of this new development within the context of the Anglo-French war on Germany was of some interest. Its pre-Christmas issue almost gloated at the expulsion of Russia from the League of Nations, but dreaded that this would give Hitler more support behind his peace drive, by encouraging the growth of a "Communist bogey" among the other countries. "Irony at Geneva" expressed the cool confidence that this would have no effect on the other war, and that the French and British would go on to fight Hitler to the end, and would never join with him in any alliance against the Soviet Union, for to do so would be a "fatal step," making Hitler's "mastery of Europe" a closer reality.⁴⁹ That the editors should think that another French-British "mastery" of Europe in the manner of 1919 was even faintly possible as an alternative, and that they could again make a Europe with neither a Germany nor Russia in it, is a testament to the suddenness of its switchover to the policy of following French-British imperialism to the bitter end, no matter where it led. But it was a policy which actually put them behind a Communist "mastery" of the Continent by default.

The same tendency to misreport a war on the basis of emotional commitments prevailed in the liberal press in the case of the Finnish war as it had in the case of China and Spain, where it saw catastrophic Japanese defeats nearly every month and a swamping Loyalist Spanish victory over Franco almost to the month before the latter's annihilation of the Loyalist forces. In this respect it was no more culpable than the daily press, which for once it commended; "it

seems certain that our daily press has accurately reported the main events of the war," it observed editorially on January 20, 1940, referring to sensational stories of majestic Finnish routs of great Communist forces.⁵⁰ The perverse pleasure in reporting the discomfort of the Russians unfortunately induced them to believe almost anything, however.⁵¹ The disillusionment came in a matter of weeks, instead of years, as in the case of Spain.

The reportage of successive Soviet reverses continued through January, with the *Nation* in particular stressing the war and featuring cables from the front by the correspondent Leland Stowe, whose views were in accord with editorial policy. In February, however, the enthusiasm for the Finnish cause dropped off sharply, although undiminished on the ideological side. Stowe began to hint at the possibility of bad things to come in the spring for the Finnish forces, his dispatch of February 17, 1940, "Time Against Finland," carrying a dark undertone. The Finnish predicament was quite freely admitted by the following week, and by the first week of March the Finns were admitted to be giving way noticeably. But the end came much sooner than the liberal press reports had been suggesting, as in the case of Loyalist Spain.⁵² Pro-Soviet journalists such as George Seldes had been making an issue out of their lagging relationship to the day-to-day facts; in a major article in the *New Masses* in early February he had attacked both liberal weeklies on their reporting of the war, charging that "the two liberal publications which so often counteract the commercial poison of the commercial press, have done nothing at all about one of the greatest campaigns of misrepresentations in all history," by their handling of the Russian war in Finland.⁵³ Seldes was apparently unwilling to observe that the switch of liberal affection to Franco-British causes was bound to make their distinction from the "commercial press" far less noticeable; in a few months it was to become almost indistinguishable on foreign affairs.

Once an accomplished fact, liberal editors quickly tied the Russian victory to the bigger but dormant war between the Franco-British Allies and Germany. The *Nation* and their correspondent Robert Dell considered it "a great victory for Hitler," with Dell especially incensed at how "the sudden end of the Russian-Finnish war" revealed "more sharply than ever the extent to which the Soviet Union has been guilty of aggression," ironically basing his contention on the "Convention for the Definition of Aggression" which Litvinov had concluded in the Soviet's name with other powers in London on July 3, 1933.⁵⁴ It was indeed a lachrymose conclusion to write at the end of the extended period of pro-Communist Popular Front politics based almost entirely on the sentiments of this document, and now so blithely brushed away.

George Soule addressed a strong attack on the Communists late in March, 1940, which had the curious aftertaste of regret so common in that time among liberals who believed they had been betrayed by a champion whom they had so dearly wanted to support; his long signed editorial "The War Nobody Won" said in part,⁵⁵

The Russians have been betrayed into as costly and senseless an aggression as can be found in all history, and they must some time come to know it. The intangible loss to the Soviet regime, with all its fine pretensions, is incalculable. And its cruel cynicism could not have been more dramatically arrayed before those in all countries who would have been its natural allies if it had been straightforward and competent.

The dishonest reportage of the Russo-Finnish war in the Western and especially the American press, with its sensational daily accounts of vast defeats inflicted on the Reds at the hands of a small band of Finns, helped pump confidence into the camp now actually supporting a general war against both Germany and Russia. Dell, for instance, had been infuriated at the British government for what he thought its timidity and fear of being involved in a war with the Russians in not helping the Finns with more material support. But this growing belligerence did not set well with the neutralist wing of liberalism, which deplored especially the muscle-flexing going on among the "best people," although the non-involvement group never quite grasped the function of the press in selling the idea that a war against the two major totalitarians would be little more than a brief excursion, their weakness being so apparent. Not until April did the *New Republic* attempt to get at the core of the meaning of the Finnish war. Its moderate report "How Strong Is the Red Army?" concluded that the Communists were weak but capable of defending Russia, and suggested that Allied spokesmen had better get over their expanding illusions that the Soviet forces were insubstantial and capable of being defeated with little effort.⁵⁶ This was, of course, the other side of the coin with respect to the Orient, with Americans of some repute openly claiming in high confidence that the Japanese could be destroyed in a matter of a few months, six at the most.

But there was little time for post-mortems on the Russo-Finnish war. Its last gunfire had hardly ceased echoing when the British and German maneuvers and campaigns in Scandinavia erupted, followed by the swift and dramatic German envelopment of Belgium, the Low Countries, and seemingly invincible France, all in a matter of weeks. Probably no other campaign in history upset and discommoded so many complacent persons, and proved so many experts wrong.

A MEMOIR ON FRENCH POLITICS FROM
THE POPULAR FRONT TO WAR WITH GERMANY, 1939

The story of American liberal interpretation of French foreign politics has been a part of several different portions of this study, intermixed as it has been with other complexities of British, American, German and Russian affairs. But a brief look at the overall flavor of French affairs in the years before that country's involvement in war with Germany is called for, as a prelude to an examination of the liberal turn-about on France and the return to emotional reportage when French fortunes underwent a catastrophic collapse.

Prior to the 1940 debacle which both the French and British suffered, there was no position among American liberals about a demilitarized and peaceful France and Britain. On the contrary, it has been shown that in their view, the French were the main troublemakers of Europe even after the emergence of Hitler, and though the British were almost solely responsible for the material, political and territorial settlements after 1918 which caused such wrenching and dislocation to European life thereafter. Furthermore, on scores of occasions, the American liberal press had resounded with statements deploring their arms buildups and powerful military and naval establishments. The point was made over and over that the arms budget in Britain had been steadily increased year after year in the decade prior to September, 1939. After June, 1940 a legend rapidly spread among liberals that Hitler had monopolized war preparation and attacked two peaceful democratic powers. Accompanying this was another legend that the French had collapsed because they had not spent enough money on military preparations, and had been betrayed in this by their right wing politicians, who had neglected to make the country powerful.

Universally ignored was the fact that in September, 1939 it was France and Britain that had declared war on Hitler Germany first, an indication that these two governments must have possessed the minimum confidence in their martial strength to take such a step, otherwise their actions were the height of insanity. But the panicky days in the eighteen months between the French catastrophe and Pearl Harbor were not occasions for bothering with memoirs of the immediate past. Instead, they were days when propaganda replaced fact to a degree which made the experience of the First World War seem like one of utter truth-telling by comparison in many particulars.

A look at this and other matters of immediate consequence and relation to the new picture of France which began to take shape after the great disillusionment now is in order. The *Nation* on July 31,

1935 published another in its series of denunciations of the towering war spending and military machine in France, sparing no pointed language in doing so: ⁵⁷

Two-thirds of the French national expenditures goes to support the army, navy, the air force and the service of the national debt. No doubt, the savings effected by the new budget will also be put where they will do the most harm, namely into the perfecting of that vast armament machine which will presently go off and blow Europe to pieces again.

Its unhappiness was addressed to the regime of Pierre Laval, looked upon as a warmonger and fierce nationalist, in strange contrast to the vision of him which was broadcast five years later as a craven and "appeaser" who lacked courage to conduct military operations against the enemies of France.

The summer of 1935 was the moment when France's entry into the Marxist Popular Front was being anticipated, the construct which was supposed to halt the advance of Fascism. A preliminary aspect of this was the warmly cheered rise of French Communism to a greater stature than ever before. In October, 1935 the *Nation* rejoiced editorially over the election of Marcel Cachin, veteran Communist leader and editor of the French Communist newspaper *L'Humanité*, to the French Senate, the first Red so honored, and, the *Nation* commented hopefully, "a sign of the changing order in France." ⁵⁸

Of course, it was the Laval ministry which had concluded the alliance treaty with Communist Russia in May, 1935, an event which caused some ideological jumbling, in view of American liberal distaste for Laval and his supporters. And though he was eventually ousted, after the propaganda attending the Ethiopian war had thoroughly exploited his part in trying to find a way out for France and not to disturb French policy of preventing a German-Italian rapprochement, it was still followed by a season of bewilderment. The *New Republic* even praised the appointment of Pierre Flandin as minister of foreign affairs and Marcel Déat as minister of aviation in the cabinet of his successor, Albert Sarraut, in January, 1936. ⁵⁹

But its foreign policy toward Germany was not under fire, despite the groping of the new Communist-run Popular Front elements and the traditional forces for an understanding. In April, *Common Sense* had observed that France had "taken to her old policy of the 'iron ring' around Germany," "a threat which Hitler could not overlook" in view of the importance of Russia in the new "iron ring." ⁶⁰ The *New Republic* even ventured the opinion that the alliance was a sign of French weakness; "If you set yourself up to be cock of the walk you must presently either fight or relinquish that position," it

commented quietly, noting that "Ever since 1919 France has enjoyed a more important place in European affairs than her own strength entitled her to," and evaluating her grasping the hands of the Russians as acknowledgment of this fact.⁶¹

Indeed, the liberals made no effort to shield French debility in its colonial empire either, let alone its home-front relationship with Germany, where hostility to Hitler gradually brought American liberals around to a season of cordiality, especially in the Popular Front left ministry of Léon Blum. But rumblings in the Near East and East Asiatic French colonies got wide publicity. Albert Viton's dispatch from Jerusalem on February 19, 1936, "General Strike in Damascus," described a massive Syrian demonstration against the French, declaring that "Syria is determined to shake off the French yoke." He confessed that at that moment he could not find "a single Syrian, Christian or Moslem who had a good word for the French."⁶² The *New Republic's* most published authority on France in these times, reviewing Andrée Violli's *Indochine S.O.S.* later in the year, bitterly attacked French policy at the opposite end of Asia:⁶³

The five states, and particularly the largest of them, Annam, have become under white misrule a vast concentration camp. Famine, disease, extortion, forced labor indistinguishable from slavery, a total absence of civil rights, sudden death and imprisonment that is worse than death—in short, a despotism beside which that of the Cossacks and the Romanovs seems almost indulgent, such are the blessings of civilization imported by the French Republic into the unhappy country.

These were indeed harsh words to be reading about one of the bastions of democracy at a time when the Popular Front Blum regime was already six months in office, and while fulminations about Italian action in Ethiopia and German concentration camps were providing most of the raw material for moral indignation. A similar story was to be read in the *Nation* a few weeks later when Barbara Wertheim reviewed Thomas E. Ennis' *French Policy and Developments in Indochina*, with both author and reviewer applauding the galloping nationalism and agitation for independence as factors protesting French misrule and promising sure eventual independence.⁶⁴

The enthusiastic liberal honeymoon with the Popular Front ministry of Blum, beginning on June 5, 1936, was far more pronounced on domestic than on foreign policy matters.⁶⁵ There were great expectations at the beginning. Leon Trotsky's dispatch from Norway to the *Nation*, published on July 4, was actually titled "The French Revolution Has Begun," and in his opinion a repetition of the Russian experience was expectable.⁶⁶ Similar views continued along this

line from others for weeks, but it was not long before disappointed reports began to be filed, expressing great impatience over Blum's indecisive behavior.⁶⁷ On the foreign scene, matters were worse because of the outbreak of the fighting in Spain just a few weeks after Blum's coming to power. The more devoted Popular Front enthusiasts among American liberals, which group numbered Waldo Frank, expressed vast alarm that Blum did not show any sign of joining with the Loyalists and the Soviet in a common front, and even dispatched a memorable trial balloon along this line in the *New Republic* in the October 7 issue, "A Letter to Léon Blum," urging him to dispense with his wariness and shrug off "the criminal leadership of English labor." The editors backed Frank on this, urging Blum to aid the Spanish fighting Franco even at the risk of spreading the war.⁶⁸ But this did not have any effect either. It so depressed Robert Dell, that in his *Nation* dispatch from Geneva which appeared on October 31, headed "Europe's Fate and the French Front," he was convinced that Blum's failure meant that the chances were two to one that the greater part of Europe would be Fascist within three years, "thanks to the egoism and duplicity of the British government and the helplessness of the government of the Popular Front in France." ⁶⁹

The liberal cooling toward Blum as a result of his continued hands-off policy toward Spain had other complications. With the growth of the American liberal anti-Stalin faction resulting from the purge trials in Moscow, a note of criticism grew up which considered the Blum ministry to be mismanaging foreign affairs to accommodate Soviet diplomacy with respect to Germany, although the *New Republic* hailed the Communist disturbances in the Blum government as an effective force in preventing the country from being "enlisted" in an "anti-Soviet block." ⁷⁰ Ravage's "Blum and the Communists" in the January 9, 1937 *Nation*, commenting on the 72 Communists who abstained on December 5 from approving the *Front Populaire* foreign policy, declared that "What the Communists hold chiefly against Blum and his comrades is their pacifism," going on to say that the French Reds were convinced "that war with Germany is bound to come," and wanted the suspension of all conversations, as well as for meeting "bluster with bluster and force with force." ⁷¹ The French Communists were already at war with Hitler, but in whose interests was in some doubt.⁷²

The next stage in the decay of the French position, the announcement of the Belgian government that it was abandoning its alliance with France and returning to its pre-1914 neutrality position, though it meant heavy French spending for more fortifications along this frontier as a consequence, was greeted with aplomb by the *New Republic* on October 28, 1936; it was more evidence that Germany was

breaking "the bonds forged in 1918," in addition to being "perfectly clear that whatever validity the device of collective security through the League and Locarno may have had—and it was never very much—has now departed."⁷³ This editorial also predicted that the new war if it occurred would likely repeat the tactics of the old.

No special concern was voiced when the Blum government fell on June 19, 1937.⁷⁴ The fact that the Baldwin cabinet in England was replaced by Chamberlain just a few weeks before tended to distract some attention, although it was pointed out by Alexander Werth in the *Nation* a week later that a vast increase in costs and prices was the principal legacy of this one year of French New Deal, plus greatly increased borrowing as well, "to keep her armaments at a safety level," he explained.⁷⁵ There was still no story abroad that the French were dissipating their military power, despite the fact that their Communists considered the government shot through with pacifism.

The uneasy interim between the Blum Popular Front ministries was a time of much concern about the possibility of a Rightist armed uprising, although George Seldes predicted such a coup in the *New Republic* on May 12, five weeks before Blum left office the first time in favor of the "care-taker" ministry of Camille Chautemps.⁷⁶ Though the French Communists were following a position identical with Russia on foreign policy, there was no liberal condemnation of this, but a French Right favoring a pro-German approach was considered to be planting the seeds of high treason. Ravage reported to the *Nation* on January 22, 1938 that there was a definite threat of civil war after the Reds deserted the cabinet, on the grounds once more of objecting to the Spanish policy of Chautemps and Blum. The subsequent fall of Chautemps and the frenzied scurrying of the Blum forces to produce another abortive Popular Front ministry between mid-March and April, 1938,⁷⁷ while Hitler was directing the sure-footed march into Austria, was a hectic and trying time for American liberals. Coming at a time of another ministerial impasse in France, with bad news coming from Loyalist Spain and with the fourth and bloodiest purge of all going on in Communist Russia, it could not have been timed better by the German Führer, or worse for the liberal spectators on the American side of the Atlantic. And to be followed by the Daladier ministry on April 10 was adding a consequence that was almost unbearable. *Common Sense* reacted to the Austrian incorporation into Germany with an editorial complaint which included the French among those responsible:⁷⁸

What about France?—the country that promised never to let Austria down! Was France immobilized by a guilty conscience? Was the country that left Austria a bleeding stump, that helped paralyze her economy for

twenty years, too burdened with the guilt of it to stop another highway robbery?

But from a purely French aspect the coming of the rightist Daladier ministry was looked upon as a much worse event. The *Nation* commented in horror on April 16, 1938 that with Daladier in the premiership, and with Georges Bonnet as foreign minister, and with the Chamberlain government in office across the English Channel, the situation for collective security never looked worse. Furthermore, Daladier's government contained not a single Socialist or Communist; "no recent government [of France] has so deserved a short life," it grimly pronounced.⁷⁹ And to make things worse, Ravage reported from Paris that the French rightist press was already pushing the slogan "To hell with Czechoslovakia."⁸⁰ But the real break with the French Left was to come after the new ministry's policy toward Czechoslovakia had become a reality in the autumn.

The furious liberal reaction to the Czech settlement of September, 1938 has already been examined in another context, but the opprobrium heaped on the Daladier regime cannot be separated from its basic political philosophy and lack of cordiality with the French collectivist Left. Whether another Blum government would have acted any differently, in view of its behavior at the time of the Austrian *Anschluss*, will remain only conjecture, although a partial mobilization for war did occur in France under Daladier. Geneviève Tabouis, writing to the *New Republic*, explained the collapse of the French on the Czech issue as a "class betrayal of France," resulting from a combination of the "aristocracy and big finance" to abandon the resistance to German demands, out of fear of the consequences of a war between the "democracies and the dictatorships." She casually included Communist Russia in the former category, and conceded that had it happened, "the Soviet Union would have played a predominant part," another expression of the frustration felt among the liberal-left that the Russians had been denied entrance into Central Europe, basically the major charge lodged against both Chamberlain and Daladier. Miss Tabouis and the editors did devise a curious picture of the political results in view of this interpretation of French debility.⁸¹ Matching this was the editors' apprehension in America over the growth of collective security feeling among "the extreme rightwing internationalists of the Eastern seaboard," who along with the American Communists, seemed to be the backbone of this impulse. In England Miss Tabouis observed the same situation, with a group of Reds and a rehabilitated band of Tories led by Churchill, Duff Cooper and Eden comprising the element that bristled at Munich and promised war. These strange teams apparently had no rapport with the French, whose situation was in-

terpreted as one where the Communists alone favored a belligerent policy.

The *New Republic* continued this view as a post-mortem in the after-Munich bitterness, renewing the attack on the French and carrying it back once more to the period after the War: ⁸²

Looking back at the record, we have to remember that it was the French government which was mainly responsible for the mistakes which led to the rise of Hitler in the first place. France imposed the punitive peace and refused steadfastly to relent . . . as long as Germany and Austria were trying the road of social democracy, disarmament and conciliation. . . . Few things Hitler has done in Austria and Czechoslovakia were more cruel than the French occupation of the Ruhr. French policy ringed Germany round with armed opponents, fostering the militarism of Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Little Entente long before Hitler's advent was suspected.

But at the core of the anger toward the French now was unhappiness over the "virtual abandonment of the Franco-Soviet alliance" of 1934, the event which liberals at that time had hailed as the keystone of a bright new international political settlement for Europe.

Through most of the first eight months of 1939 the liberal press disregarded the French as a strong factor in the situation involving German and Russian relations, and largely concerned themselves with the new wave of Franco-Italian troubles which promptly hatched after Munich, concerning African colonial conflicts, supporting the French in their uncompromising attitude toward the Mussolini regime's requests. Not much emphasis was placed on the fact that the Daladier regime began to rule by decree and boosted armament spending, while maintaining partial mobilization, and backing the British quietly in the newest phase of the "iron ring" diplomacy against the Germans. Its declaration of war on Germany on September 3 was greeted with such casualness that it amounted to an anticlimax. All the ingredients were present which might make possible a majestic opinion somersault on France. The Russo-German agreement seemed to precipitate out the Communist question as the decks were cleared for another war with the Germans; Alexander Werth delivered himself of one of the usual incredible misconceptions of these quivering days when he calmly reported to the *Nation*, "The Hitler-Stalin pact has resulted in the disappearance of the Communist Party as a political force in France." ⁸³ Only the misfortunes of combat were needed now for American liberalism to return to its sentimental image of France of the World War One vintage, and these were not long in coming.

THE SCANDINAVIAN, LOW COUNTRIES AND
FRENCH CAMPAIGNS RE-TAILOR LIBERAL OPINIONS

The liberal press and many of its contributors had presented over and over again evidence demonstrating the material preponderance of the British and French empires over Germany. The swift passing of the Polish campaigns and the subsequent period of stagnation and the Hitler peace overtures was a time when these accounts were re-asserted. A non-shooting war of economic strangulation via blockade was considered sufficient to crush the Germans soon, and doubt was even expressed that the adversaries of Hitler might need even American economic help. The *Nation* as late as February 10, 1940 in its editorial "Shadow and Substance" declared, "On the basis of the present situation there is no reason to believe that the Allies are looking for or require our military aid." It was suggested that "our material, and perhaps even more, our moral support" would be very welcome, however.⁸⁴ The *New Republic* was of this sentiment even as late as April 1, at which time it also expressed strong confidence in the ability of the French to go on to the victorious end. On the occasion of the downfall of the Daladier government and his replacement by Paul Reynaud, under circumstances suggesting serious internal dislocations, the editors responded buoyantly in addition, "France is not dependent on any one individual for ability to fight. That is her democratic strength."⁸⁵ But she was not expected to have to do much, at any rate. As late as April 6, the *Nation* scanned the scene and issued the editorial opinion that "The long-propheisied spring offensive on the Western Front shows no sign of materializing."⁸⁶ It materialized almost at once, before the print on the issue had dried.

The lightning campaigns in Denmark and Norway in April drew mixed responses at the beginning, and only at their conclusion did a note of hysteria begin to sound in the editorial departments. The *Nation* on April 13 was disturbed as to whether England or Germany was responsible for this act of "spreading the war." Although inclined to blame the Germans through habit, it admitted that "the Allies, too, have flouted legality on numerous occasions," and discussed further that "For months the Allies have been toying with the idea of establishing a northern flank," ever since the Finnish war of the previous winter. Hitlerian moves were supposed to have conditioned the Allied decision "to tighten the blockade in the North," as it was now put.⁸⁷ Some publicity was given to Churchill's calling the German coup "as great a strategic and political error" as Napoleon's invasion of Spain in 1808.

The *New Republic* had mixed emotions over the outbreak of the Scandinavian campaign as well. It was not pleased by the spreading

of the war to Denmark and Norway, and thought the British and French equally to blame with the Germans: ⁸⁸

The British and French may satisfy themselves by saying that what they have done is no worse legally than what Germany had been doing, and not so bad in its immediate effects. The rest of us are left to reflect that something is lost when the British and French begin to imitate the Nazis.

The emergence of Churchill in England and Reynaud in France was taken as the signal that it was "at least a partial victory for the activists who wanted to intensify and spread hostilities," and was followed by the frank statement that "The activists desired to drag Scandinavia into the war," but appended a dark warning:

If they took this action without being ready to obstruct and defeat an immediate German invasion, they are guilty not only of aping totalitarian methods, but of taking the risks of combat without being prepared to resist the force they have invoked. . . . If the British and French governments challenged Germany to conquer the Scandinavian peoples without being able to thrust her out again, they will go down to lasting ignominy.

The editors were both right and wrong; the Franco-British Allies had challenged the Germans to move into Scandinavia without being able to repel them, and they did not go down to "lasting ignominy" because of it. A marvelous propaganda campaign rescued them with hardly a scratch in the presence of world opinion.

The momentary liberal objectivity was soon replaced, beginning in the third week of April, with the story that the invasion by Germany had long been planned by the Germans and brought into existence with the aid of large numbers of local traitors. The reports of Leland Stowe were responsible for this, and were credited with being the truth by both liberal weeklies. The *Nation* lauded Stowe's stories from Sweden as "The greatest journalistic scoop of the war to date," and his sinister accounts of cunning Norwegian traitors began the famous "fifth column" scare which swept the United States and a large part of the rest of the world as well. Freda Kirchwey was most emphatic in accepting Stowe as utterly reliable, and the *Nation's* trembling stories undoubtedly helped to contribute to the hysteria and fear of foreigners which bore fruit here in the famous Smith Act a few weeks later. Readers of the *Nation* were somewhat more skeptical of Stowe than the editors. Loud protesting letters questioning his accuracy and that of another reporter, Maurice Feldman, were appearing as late as August of that year.⁸⁹ But no publicity accompanied Stowe's retractions of some of the more sensational of his

charges until Louis De Jong's book *The German Fifth Column In World War II* was published in 1956.

It was the Scandinavian successes of Hitler that began to unfold the poorly concealed hysteria behind the calm and measured tread of liberal prose. Among the uneasy rumblings, George Soule's "If Germany Wins" in the April 22, 1940 *New Republic* was especially prophetic:⁹⁰

Though in words the question of her possible victory has often been raised and answered, we have never before really believed in it. How could anyone whom we hate as much as Hitler, whose actions were so irrational in terms of all we based our lives on, be ultimately victorious? We have been keen to prove his weaknesses and perceive disadvantages in his position. Like any bully, he would collapse if he were seriously challenged. . . . But now it is time to face point blank the consequences of Hitler victory.

In this bleak facing of the bankruptcy of "the-enemy-is-a-coward" theory, Soule voiced a loud plea for more aid to the Allies, in order to head off a Hitler victory, since he was convinced that the United States would be saddled with a fabulous military expenditure indefinitely to keep the Germans from conquering the Western Hemisphere. But the United States had only to perfect "democracy" at home, and let the Allies do the fighting; "It is not merely our preference, but the impartial fact, that they must win the war for us if it is to be won." It was not often that so many wrong predictions were made in a single editorial, although Soule was right in prophesying an indefinite period of stupendous American military expenditures.

The Low Countries campaigns caught the liberals napping again, as had Norway and Denmark. The main speculation in the *Nation* concerned the possibility of an Italian invasion of Yugoslavia at this time, even though there had been comment all winter about pressure being applied to Holland and Belgium by Churchill, in a radio address, and the French, to align themselves with the Allies and eschew neutrality. The *Nation* expressed the opinion on January 27, 1940 that they should, while the *New Masses* castigated Churchill for this proposal to spread the war in this manner, and openly commended the Dutch foreign minister Eelco van Kleffens for his strong condemnation of "the siren voices trying to involve us directly in the war," and expressed pleasure that the Dutch Parliament had given him a vote of confidence and that the British government was forced to deny official sanction of Churchill's speech.⁹¹ As late as April 20 the *Nation* brought the matter up again, and again supported the Allies on the issue:⁹²

. . . the Allies may now try to force a showdown. They are rumored to have made offers of protection to Holland and Belgium in the past week, and they are redoubling their efforts to defeat German economic pressure in the Balkans. For some time the British and French governments have been urging the neutrals to line up on their side. They have pointed out that safety is not to be found by cowering in the neutrality ditch. . . .

German drives through both countries in a few days proved that safety was not to be found following the Anglo-French formula either, but eventually the liberal explanation of these collapses followed that of Scandinavia; Dutch and Belgian traitors were given the lion's share of the credit for the swiftness of the German advances.⁹³

But the almost as rapid collapse of the French and British in the succeeding weeks brought the liberal press into harmony with the commercial daily press insofar as emotional reaction was concerned. Great waves of sentimentality swept the weeklies toward an ideal France and Britain that had never existed in their pages since the First World War; the lugubriousness of 1917-1918 was repeated with a vengeance. The ideological issue was not forgotten even in the midst of this anguish, however. In retaliation for stories blaming the French collapse on the Blum ministries, especially the first, for its social reform program and nationalization of the arms industry, the *Nation* countered with charges that the French private business interests had failed in the job of defense production in the 1930s.⁹⁴ It forgot entirely its "merchants-of-death" literature and the scores of exposé articles on the alleged burgeoning of an Anglo-French interlocked munitions manufacturing super-empire in this decade, and its frequent denunciations of British and French arms buildups and belligerency.

By the end of June, when the numbness of the sudden German conquest had partially worn off, more explanations made their way forward. A favorite one, already tried out in Scandinavia and the Low Countries, was treachery,⁹⁵ the reason for the collapse of the French army and the sudden surrender of the Pétain government. A stream of "why-France-fell" and "who-betrayed-France?" stories began in July, 1940, these two themes enjoying particular vogue. In a short time they evolved into full-size books. The *Nation* launched one of the more formidable of these, by Heinz Pol, who blamed it on treachery, sabotage, pacifism and ignorance of Hitler. Pol easily rivalled Kolnai in his blistering of the pacifist leanings in the liberal-left, in France selecting especially Paul Fauré and Léon Jouhaux for personal abuse. His July 13 "The Guilt of the Left" was almost entirely devoted to the subject.⁹⁶ When Pol's book *Suicide of a Democracy* came out, Albert Guérard, professor of comparative and general literature at Stanford, greeted it with sturdy support in review in the

Nation as well, fully in accord with the author that it was the French Right which had sold out the country, since it wanted above all "a victory over the socialist masses."⁹⁷ Guérard had much the same to say of André Simone's *J'Accuse! The Inside Story of the Men Who Betrayed the French Nation*, another attack on the French Right as mainly to blame. It was the counterpart of Cato's *Guilty Men*, which had as a main message that the Baldwin-Chamberlain period was one of gross neglect of British rearmament. Kohn reviewed this as lustily as Guérard did Simone; the late summer of 1940 was the time for the *Nation* to praise authors and sanction reviewers who in effect called almost all of the views of the journal on Britain and France between 1931 and 1938 a tissue of lies. Guérard also addressed a rebuke to the American liberals in passing, for partial responsibility in incubating a guilt complex among the French:⁹⁸

One of the causes of France's fatal hesitancies was that we, American liberals, unwittingly acted as a fifth column. For twenty years we kept denouncing the iniquities of Versailles. Our attack sapped France's self-confidence.

But the *Nation* had not noticed this in July, 1935 when it was blistering Pierre Laval for spending two-thirds of his budget on military preparations and past wars.

Almost overlooked in this episode of rampant emotionalism was the Russian action in finally occupying the Baltic states. A mildly uneasy *Nation* editorial on June 22, 1940 commented on the Soviet using as an excuse the charge that these governments were intriguing against the Soviet, which was conceded to be at least partially true.⁹⁹ The agitated concern over the German absorption of the ethnically-similar Austrians less than two years before was hard to imagine among America's liberals in these days of cataclysm. The *Nation* felt more critical a month later over this event, making a sarcastic comment about the action following a petition asking that the Russians move in, coming from the parliaments of these three small states, following which only a Communist Party-dominated "Working Peoples' Bloc" party had been allowed to campaign in all three countries. The editorial concluded that "On grounds of self-defense Russia has a case for absorbing the Baltic States," but then added in an acrid after-thought that "It would be more convincing without resort to hokum which deceives no one."¹⁰⁰ Though the Russians were still held in deep contempt by the *Nation* at this moment, its editors never deigned to issue ugly taunts of "isolationism" then or later. The line that "the USSR is an independent power in world affairs" prevailed even in the tightest moments for the Anglo-French Allies, a generous view which had never been considered appropriate for application

to the United States in the 1934-1939 period of Marxist literary abuse, and which was not even held to be proper now.¹⁰¹

THE EVOLUTION OF THE NEW ATTITUDE TOWARD THE GOVERNMENT OF OCCUPIED FRANCE

Liberal hostility toward the post-conquest government of France and its form was unbounded. A steady drumfire of articles and editorials on the regime based at Vichy continued from the time it was formed, holding that it could do no good. That *all* the French could not go to England, and that a government hardly could authorize the citizens to become a vast irregular army, fighting the occupying enemy in the manner of the Communist guerrillas in the dust and rubble of a destroyed countryside, was not too well comprehended. The *Nation* cheered all its difficulties, whatever consequences they had on the ordinary citizens. It especially commended the British attack on the French fleet at Oran in July as "a desperate act of self-defense, obviously justified by Pétain's refusal to keep the nation's promise to turn over the fleet to Britain in case of surrender," and praised Churchill's apology for Oran as "eloquent."¹⁰²

But it was particularly aggravated in the early months by the trials at Riom of various political leaders on charges of having taken France to war with Germany needlessly. The editors of the *Nation* attacked them violently in August, and an article by Harry J. Greenwall, "Witch Hunt at Riom" in the issue for September 14 charged that Laval and Bonnet were staging the trial to "get" Georges Mandel, minister of the interior in the last Reynaud government, for having allegedly conspired with Churchill and Lord Beaverbrook at Tours to carry on the war in defiance of a Laval-Bonnet "arrangement" to surrender.¹⁰³

Freda Kirchwey was extremely incensed by former ambassador Bullitt's favorable report on Pétain in August, and hoped that President Roosevelt would disregard his advice that the Pétain regime be treated as "a sovereign neutral power." But his Philadelphia speech on August 18, in which he claimed that refugee Communists in France had performed sabotage and espionage tasks for the German army, touched off the *Nation's* editorial page like a firecracker. With the Smith Act now the law of the land, domestic sensitiveness had returned on the Communist question, whatever the foreign situation may have been, and in view of the criticism of the Russians, it was not good. The editorial of August 24 demanded that the charge that Communists had deliberately sabotaged France's war efforts deserved "careful and public substantiation," because, as it deduced, "The

continued toleration of the Communist Party as a legal organization in the United States may hang on the accuracy of Mr. Bullitt's report." ¹⁰⁴ It was a strange stand, in view of the fact that the *Nation* had to this moment accepted every rumor of sabotage and treason everywhere credited to non-Communists and Rightists as proved fact.

When Admiral Leahy was appointed ambassador to the Vichy government in November, 1940, an editorial expressed the idea that his appointment was nothing for the Pétain regime to take comfort from, and informed Vichy that the United States was interested only in a British victory and had no sympathy for this government of "ap-peasers." ¹⁰⁵

As for the other side in France, the portion occupied by German troops, a position came into existence among liberals in very short order. The *Nation* told its readers on one occasion that the German army of occupation cost the French people half of their annual national income, and in general the liberals gave an impression of a great burden being imposed upon the French, which heightened the sentimental image gaining favor everywhere. One of the few significant pieces which seemed to be based on actual experience with French opinion on the Germans was published early in September, 1941, written by Michael Clark, one of the Americans on the ship *Zam Zam*, which was torpedoed in the South Atlantic. In his "How the French People Feel," he wrote "Much has been written, and accurately for the most part, of the correct behavior of the German troops of occupation." Clark could only contribute that the French hated them for their affectations of superiority.¹⁰⁶

But in general the liberals entertained a peculiar position toward the Germans in the occupied countries. They believed that the civilians in these countries could actively work for the overthrow of the occupiers and yet not be subject to repression, that their "underground" collaboration with the British deserved no harsh treatment and that German reprisals were veritable sins against humanity. Why such incitatory behavior was encouraged on such terms is mystifying. It must have been realized that they would be suppressed as long as the Germans had any vitality. In general it was a direct invitation to turn any area into social chaos, producing an environment from which sweeping revolutionary change might ultimately come out.

It was not stressed that usually the underground consisted of carefully selected and trained provocateurs, not the general public, in the occupied countries. Reprisals did harden the views of the previously uncommitted, or the uncombative majority, against the Germans. "Resistance" was an alarmingly effective tool against the Germans; it was unfortunate for the British and French that the lessons learned so effectively were used by the Communists for wholesale disruption

after 1945, and with terrorizing effect in the British and French colonial empires thereafter. Sixteen years after the end of the war against Hitler, the British and French were still fighting the "underground" and the "resistance" in other forms in Asia and Africa, with little or no more success than the Germans in the closing months of the European war.

The *Nation* did not conceal that the British had a goodly hand in organizing this campaign. Its editorial of October 18, 1941 announced,¹⁰⁷

The British government has stated that it is compiling dossiers on Germans responsible for murder and oppression in the occupied lands. . . . the news will serve as a warning to their few collaborators in the occupied countries and it will help to cheer those who are putting up such a stout resistance.

Thus the British had given full approval to work both sides of the street; they might stimulate assassinations and sabotage, and at the same time promise punishment for the retaliators.

As to reports from France, the most revealing were written by Louis Dolivet, a writer who had the "peoples' war" approach. Early in May, 1941 his "Underground in France" reported on the "hundreds" of "resistance groups" which had come into existence since the previous October, with Communists collaborating the month after and heavily since January, although it was uncertain where their directive to participate was coming from. Late in July Dolivet published another story, which incidentally contained one of the first calls for a counter-invasion, to take advantage of the now-reinvigorated French Communists and their followers, whom he estimated to be over one and a half millions around Paris alone. Such an invasion of Western Europe, Dolivet enthusiastically urged, "should be taken in order to utilize a great potential enemy, the 200,000,000 people of Europe, who would have a chance to engage in guerrilla warfare on a scale heretofore unknown in Europe."¹⁰⁸ The great uprising which the Marxist parties and all groups expected in 1934-1935 was apparently going to take place under cover of a much larger conflict to furnish it proper protective coloration.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE GERMAN SCENE FROM THE SPRING, 1939 CRISIS

On March 25, 1939 the *Nation* referred to the establishment of German hegemony over Bohemia as "Hitler's murder of Czechoslovakia," rejoicing that it represented the final discarding of the "tainted lead-

ership" of the West, even though it had now undergone "eleventh hour conversions." This was a reference to the surprising right-about-face on Poland which had taken place in England and France and their encouragement to the Poles to resist all German suggestions, offers and demands for changes in the status quo of 1919-1921. "For those peoples of Europe who value democracy, freedom, civilization itself, the issue is now one of self-preservation itself," the editorial went on, and it hoped that the new stiffness in facing Germany might prove the Czech take-over "a crime fatal to its author."¹⁰⁹

But much confusion existed still on what was happening in Germany and what the policy of the Hitler regime was hoping to achieve. Villard, in these spring weeks of 1939, still supported the idea that a total non-intercourse policy of other countries toward Germany would preserve peace. He was sure it would not provoke Hitler into declaring war, and was convinced the influence of world moral opinion on German leaders and the large numbers of Germans not in accord with Hitlerian policies would act as brakes on action. And as for any change, he thought that it would have to come from within, along the lines of non-resistance such as Gandhi was popularizing in India against the British;¹¹⁰

I believe that Germany can only be purged of National Socialism from within. I do not believe that the loss of a foreign war will eradicate it. Hence I earnestly hope that we may see the policy of non-resistance once more invoked in Germany as it was in the Ruhr.

Villard's analogy was not too good, since though the Germans had used it effectively against the French in the Ruhr, it did not follow they would have recourse to it on their domestic level, even though he thought there were enough people there ready to do it again. That he should say this, in his column of June 5, after his comments in mid-March on an article in the *New York Times* by Anne O'Hare McCormick, was a little surprising. The McCormick article, written from Germany March 4, had stressed the feverish activity in Germany, the great feeling of belonging and purpose which everyone seemed to reflect, even among the enemies of specific German policies under the National Socialists. Villard had not challenged it.¹¹¹

During the troubled diplomacy and maneuvering of the spring and summer of 1939, there were even occasions when Hitler's diabolism and the ineffably sinister character of German policy as reiterated in liberal writing were forgotten, and contradictions were voiced to prove that some reservations existed in liberal minds, despite the seeming monolithic opinion which each passing week's output embellished. The *New Republic*, commenting on Hitler's Reichstag speech of April 28 in answer to Roosevelt and others who were making pleas

and suggestions for resolving the Central European impasse, made the following sober observation on the German Fuhrer's overall approach: ¹¹²

Hitler's primary purpose is to retain in foreign policy the freedom of action which he has employed successfully in the past, and which Mr. Roosevelt is trying to check. This policy is to achieve one carefully defined objective at a time without having to fight for it, and without arousing a general united front against him.

"Hitler mixes large portions of truth with his misrepresentations," it admitted further; "It is true, of course, that the Versailles Treaty was an unjust and tragic mistake, that general conferences have proven fruitless, that there have recently been many aggressions in the world besides the Axis powers, and that American intervention in Europe has not been happy."

The *Nation's* July 1 issue contained an editorial paragraph commenting on the increasing toughness of British speeches on the Germans, and the reaction of Hitler to this new belligerence; "So far, Hitler's words, however much his acts have belied them, have been more of peace than of war," but it went on to say, "Now he seems set upon convincing the German people that they may have to fight after all, that the period of bloodless conquest is over." ¹¹³ It left a distinct impression that in the event of hostilities, the German regime would hardly be entirely to blame, but it may not have been the intent, in view of the *Nation's* long-standing total-depravity doctrine on Hitler. Still, Reinhold Niebuhr, reporting to the same journal from London on August 10, stated flatly that insofar as he had been able to determine in England, "Most persons agree that Hitler does not want and could not afford a general war." ¹¹⁴ Coming from a grim, relentless moral warrior who was unable to concede any other side to the European controversy and who spoke in accents closer to Peter the Hermit than to a reasoned observer of world affairs, it was an unusual admission. But the theme was an important one, for it re-appeared after the German campaigns in Poland, during which another matching of opinions took place on the merits of the newest peace proposals emanating from Germany.

THE FASHIONING OF THE WARTIME IMAGE OF GERMANY BEGINS WITH HOSTILITIES

The general feeling among liberals by the outbreak of war in September, 1939 was that a combination of German acts and the skillful

preparation and presentation of European news during the previous six years had prepared American thinking for an overwhelming anti-German position. The situation was utterly different from 1914; the Hitler regime and Germans in general were completely isolated as far as positive support was involved. Psychically the liberal press and nearly every writer associated with it were not truly neutral a day. No opprobrium was visited upon Britain and France when they declared war on Germany first. There were a few moments of embarrassment over this, but the collapse of any post-Polish campaign peace overtures and the beginning of German hostilities aimed at the Allies made it possible to forget the whole affair and dwell exclusively on German culpability for the spreading of the war. The "we must stop Hitler" slogan later was used to excuse the spreading of the war over the whole continent, even though this did not produce the desired result. It took the spreading of the war to Russia and the United States to do that.

The *Nation* obdurately attacked the Russo-German peace overtures in October, 1939, as did a large part of the liberals, even those opposed to American involvement. But they were plagued with unrelenting pain contemplating the alternatives. Much bitterness was expressed toward the Russians for their new-found relativism toward Fascism, and for comparing the Anglo-French war against Hitler to "the dark medieval epoch of the religious wars for the extermination of heretics." There was a bright flash of great prophecy and foresight in the *Nation's* comment on the consequences of this political tie in the East: ¹¹⁵

But if Hitler is leaning on Bolshevik friendship in the East, fear of Bolshevism remains an influence for peace on his terms in the West. The rulers of Britain and France look apprehensively down the corridors of the future and see only an infinite series of dilemmas. Hitler's peace means further blackmail and the end of their empires. To continue the war may make Stalin master of Eastern Europe.

In addition, in waging war "to the death" against Hitler Germany, Britain and France might "exhaust themselves and see the end of capitalism" and the rise of the "revolutionary specter" in Germany, while to bail out Germany after the overthrow of Hitler's defeat "would subsidize England's foremost commercial competitor," and the finishing of Hitler "might end the war but not the imperialist conflict between an emergent Germany and an arrived England—a conflict which has plagued the world since Bismarck." This was a rare flash of historical retrospection in what was usually a cauldron of unrelieved emotion, and both the *Nation* and "the rulers of Britain and France" might have profited immensely from doing much more

of it in the long years after 1933, instead of waiting until this period.

Yet the *Nation* now praised Chamberlain and Daladier highly for their having "emphatically" rejected Hitler's peace terms, and expressed considerable grievance that Hitler and the Germans should make such capital at the moment over the silence of the Allies as to war aims, since they offered nothing as against disarmament and participation in a general economic settlement. It was sorry that Hitler's spokesmen were able to say that the Anglo-French objective was simply to destroy the Reich and the German people, and that the Allied psychological warfare against Germany was so inept; "A definite statement of the Allied war aims would be worth many divisions on the Western front," it remarked wistfully. This matter of reluctance and almost total silence at all times on the part of the Allied leaders on war aims will be examined at length subsequently.

In America the *New Masses* violently attacked Louis Fischer and the *Nation* for their attitude toward Hitlerian war objectives and for spreading the story that world conquest was foremost in German consideration. On February 6, 1940 Theodore Draper's "Falsifying History" insisted, "Despite appearances, Germany fought a strictly localized war in Poland, just as she had planned."¹¹⁶ It was an unusual thing to read in this periodical, but the season of Russo-German neutrality was at its height. The publication of the *German White Paper* found liberals slightly taken aback; they had apparently conceded the propaganda war to the Allies without a test. The *New Republic* wrestled with this in an editorial which went for almost two full pages seeking to discredit its contentions, which prompted a reader to write in and declare the editor's unconvincing contortions "one of the most wiggly, uneasy, morally obtuse editorials on record."¹¹⁷

The *New Republic* was especially puzzled by Hitler's behavior in the weeks following the collapse of the peace proffer; their New Year's Day, 1940 issue wondered why he had not made any effort to demolish Paris and London, nor carried out any campaigns against either Britain or France. "And the dreaded German Führer has made one overture after another for peace," it commented.¹¹⁸ Like the *Nation* it backed the rejection of all peace suggestions by the Germans, yet also saw an outbreak of wholesale social revolution in Europe as quite likely in the event of a long war. In relation to this it frowned on Roosevelt's appointment of Myron C. Taylor, former chairman of the United States Steel Corporation, as personal representative to the Vatican, with ambassadorial rank. The editors did not trust the Pope, and felt that if the war did last a long time, there would be an attempt on the part of Catholicism and capitalism to join hands "in a New Holy Alliance to suppress social democracy." For that reason it declared,¹¹⁹

We should be happier if President Roosevelt would not establish too close bonds with a force that has in the recent past sanctioned autocracy and countenanced Fascist aggression, with one which has political ties with an aggressive Italy.

The editors quietly omitted to mention that Stalin had the most amiable of relations with Mussolini Italy.

The *Nation* readers had two approaches to Germany offered them in December. First was Villard, who actually was in Germany in the fall and wrote from Berlin that "Germany wants peace," and that Germans were eager for an overture to be made outside the warring nations. Villard claimed that 75 to 90% of Germans were against Hitler, but this opposition had no program or policy; "I still find a good many kindly, high-minded Germans, just as in the past, who want their country to do the right, the Christian thing and not be a brutal, overbearing bully, basing its whole policy on force," he commented with emphasis on October 25. From The Hague three weeks later he submitted an overall estimate of Germany, after admitting that Germans had greatly irked him by insisting that their *Pakt* with Stalin had been forced on them by British negotiations with Russia, in view of their inability to fight a two-front war;¹²⁰

All in all the picture I get of Germany is one of tremendous dangerous strength, of power organized with great efficiency for the purpose in hand. The industrial development in the past few years has been remarkable. Berlin is being torn down and rebuilt, and there is no question that the Nazis deserve credit for beautifying the city. If their tremendous organizing talent, force, and driving power were only devoted to humane, altruistic, and peaceful ends, they would go far indeed.

Villard's violent condemnation of the new German policy in Czechoslovakia was prefaced by a curious paragraph in which he commended the German authorities for their "consideration and courtesy" in allowing him to go to Prague; "I am sincerely grateful for the tolerance and broadmindedness they displayed in granting entrance and freedom from censorship to one who has been 100 percent opposed to all their doctrines," he wrote on December 16.¹²¹ Most of his *Nation* writing on this trip was later incorporated in a book, *Inside Germany*, published before the war reopened, early in 1940, and clearly reflected the fierce internal conflict consuming him, with his pacifism and "isolationism" and good will toward Germans as people and forebears clashing with his interest in an English victory because he could not bear to think of the alternative.¹²²

On the other side the *Nation* offered the views of Robert Dell, whose "The Menace of a United Germany" on December 23, 1939

praised the war as a noble "peoples' war" and commended those English who laughed at threats that Communism might win out in Germany, while expressing his belief that those who wanted to batter Germany to impotence were completely right; "Communism is unlikely in Germany, and in any case it could be no worse than the Nazi regime," he scoffed, supporting a program which would chop Germany up into a multitude of parts and establish an autonomous state west of the Rhine to be perpetually occupied by French troops; "Germany is a pathological case and needs pathological treatment,"¹²³ the *Nation's* most devoted Francophile correspondent shouted. His own blue-print for a federated Europe on the heels of this kind of political surgery belonged in a class with the fantasies of Jules Verne. His article was condemned only by the *New Masses*, which felt him to be the most undetached foreign correspondent in Europe reporting German news to the American press and describing his *Nation* outburst as one which "reeks of aggressive imperialism and totalitarian contempt for the German people, surpassing anything which the most rabid British Tory has yet dared express." Its editorial "Fighting the German People" was amazed that his violent attack on all the Germans could appear "without editorial reservations in a supposedly liberal magazine." In actuality, there was not much here that Dell had not written many times since 1933; it sounded more dramatic now that war was actually under way.¹²⁴

GERMAN NATIONAL SOCIALISM GETS A FUNDAMENTAL RE-EVALUATION

Mercurial somersaults in liberal thinking on the nature of the German system under Hitler continued in the year the war broke out, and proliferated thereafter. There was the usual fluctuation between despair over its seemingly insuperable strength, and the presumable unshakability of the regime except by a war from the outside, if possible at all, to one of feeling that the long-delayed leftist coup was about to materialize at last and that internal conditions were exceedingly bad. This latter was the position especially of the Friends of German Freedom, which had a roster of famous liberal and Socialist sponsors. Once the war was on, of the many predictions made of coming German defeat in another European war, none mentioned the possibility of the United States participating in it; the forecasters made no issue of going beyond balancing the weight of Germany's might against its combined European opponents.

By this time also, another trend began to show itself. After many years of interpreting Fascism and National Socialism as capitalist

conspiracies, the liberal Left performed an especially clumsy maneuver in an effort to re-interpret these systems especially in view of their sometimes substantial curtailment of the capitalists and the evolution of some frankly collectivist institutions and solutions. But for many the fixations of the previous decade were permanent. The early evaluation was permanent.

The *New Republic's* experts on Germany were Alfred Vagts, Guenter Reimann and Fritz Sternberg, although the last appeared considerably in the *Nation* along with Max Werner. These writers, plus Peter Drucker and Gustav Stolper were the most influential in starting a thaw toward the business community by describing the Hitler organization as essentially a left-moving enterprise, although from a political point of view the thesis continued to be that Hitler would be overthrown from within by a left-Socialist upheaval. Real fury was still held against the Führer and his supporters for moving in on a situation in 1932 which had offered socialists a brilliant opportunity. As Norbert Guterman put it in the *New Republic* on November 29, 1939, "We must never forget that the National Socialist swindle would not have had a chance had not the conditions in Germany been ripe for real socialism."¹²⁵ This was a breath from the *Neu Beginnen* era.

But, in consonance with the newest trend to discussing the unhappiness of various German conservatives with Hitlerism, Reimann's "Revolt From the Right in Germany" in the same weekly on December 6 examined another potential source of trouble for the regime,¹²⁶ the one from which the famous assassination attempt finally emerged in 1944. Still, it was recognized that unhappiness was much subdued, and any serious internal threat unlikely at that time. Indeed, no significant gestures were to come from anyone until Germany was evidently beaten.

The literature which went beyond the Marxist theoretical level and tried to examine what was really going on had begun with Drucker's *New Republic* piece early in the year, "How Nazi Economics Works." He escaped the stereotypes of a wretched groaning German proletariat working incredible hours for a mere pittance, and established the thesis that the Hitler regime had brought about sharp reductions of the income of "the upper and middle classes," whereas that of the lower classes on the whole had been maintained. He claimed that the regime was running a policy of financing capital goods investments through reducing consumption by either cajoling or forcing the upper and middle income brackets into large-scale compulsory savings, which were then appropriated by the government for their projects.¹²⁷

Drucker foresaw no serious troubles facing the Hitler group, in their program of continuing to prevent any idle money, manpower

and resources by reducing consumption to get new capital for further capital goods production investment. He held such figures as Hjalmar Schacht to be really representative of the German business world which considered the Nazis "Bolsheviks" but were unable to stop this drive of consumption-reduction which had led to his dismissal. And he also believed there was no alternative to Hitler's search for a self-sufficient economic area as long as this policy was continued; the need for raw materials forced production for export, thus reducing some more the area remaining for home consumption, a progressive "vicious" downward spiral. "Conquer or perish" was the ultimatum before the Third Reich, in Drucker's view, to acquire raw-material producing areas contiguous to Germany as a solution to raw material imports, or otherwise face the "danger of a rapid reduction of consumption to the physical minimum." Still another warning to private capitalism that National Socialism and Fascism were forms of radicalism was that of Stuart Chase, repeated by the *New Republic* editors at the end of May,¹²⁸ which seemed strange after what had been said about them as the darkest forms of capitalist reaction over the preceding six or seven years.

This message came from Reimann also in a series of articles printed after the war was under way. Most of the material appeared in his book *The Vampire Economy: Doing Business under Fascism*, also aimed at the private sector of the business community to disabuse it of the idea that it was a barrier to Communism. Vanguard, the publisher of this book, even addressed their advertising for the book in the *New Republic* in October, 1939 "An Open Letter to Henry Ford."¹²⁹ Reimann's article that same month, "How Long Can Germany Hold Out?" was in the vein of what had appeared scores of times since 1933, a prediction of early dissolution from internal collapse.¹³⁰ The *Nation's* editorial a month later "Can Hitler Sit It Out?" also followed this well-worn groove, dominated by the idea that the Hitler economy was trembling on the edge of breakdown. It was sure that the Allied blockade was extremely debilitating, and that European food and raw material shortages would wreck Hitler's hopes of "outstaying the Allies." It laughed at Hitler's resumed threats to the British Empire and faithfully accepted Churchill's boast that the German submarines were being "kept in check."¹³¹

Stolper had a somewhat different tale to tell. His *German Economy, 1870-1940* was much nearer the case, that two generations of economic and social mechanisms were responsible for slowly shaping Germany into the corporative and totalitarian model, accompanied by the spread of social welfare measures to take the jolts out of the passage. John T. Flynn made much of this book in the *New Republic* on September 9, 1940, and suggested that the United States

was moving steadily in this direction; "When we get through with this last phase of the New Deal, we shall have added the elements of militarism, the shifts of power to the executive and the militant chauvinism, basing our economy on a war industry—promoted by an aggressive foreign policy."¹³²

Indeed, the shocking military triumphs achieved by the Germans in the months before Stolper's book appeared indicated that there was far more endurability in the German system than any liberal had ever dreamed thus far. A score of experts on Germany had been coaching liberals since 1933 that Germany had no staying power. An index of the resentment and irritation over the failure of these predictions to materialize was Sternberg's angry query in article form in the *New Republic* on May 27, 1940, at the height of the German campaigns in the West, "Why Isn't Germany Bankrupt?" He again proved to himself and his liberal readers that Hitler should have collapsed long before, and comforted himself with the prediction that the older German workers would become liabilities in production if and when Hitlerian victories ceased.¹³³ It was unfortunate for all the liberal prognostications that the index of German war production reached its peak in January, 1945.

In between the wishful thinking and the shuddering on the nature of the Hitlerian economic system, *Common Sense* intruded a sober observation in September, 1940:¹³⁴

Hitlerism is taken to mean the setting up of brute force as the only criterion in human affairs, and it is on that ground that it is being opposed by those who would put human decency first. Actually Hitlerism is a lot more than brute force; it is a revolution against a decadent old order, it involves the economic planning and the administrative management of contiguous areas, it means a new (though freedom-killing) efficiency in human organization.

And the editors adhered to the view that it could not be successfully met by force but only by a plan of social and economic action which was just as dynamic.

Books which received wide acceptance and vast promotion among liberals in 1941 on the German economy, its operation in foreign trade and its policies in occupied Europe, such as Thomas Reveille's *The Spoil of Europe*, Douglas Miller's *You Can't Do Business With Hitler*, and Reimann's *The Myth of the Total State*, all of which appeared after the war had actively spread to Russia, were too hectically propagandistic to explain much of anything, in the manner of Drucker, Stolper and others. "Reveille," the pseudonym of a writer named Rifat Tirana, portrayed an occupied Europe which if true would have been an unworkable chaotic nightmare incapable

of being of use to the German military machine at all. But Miller reviewed it in the *Nation* without reservation, and its foreword was even written by Raymond Gram Swing. Miller's own book became a formidable propaganda vehicle after the United States became involved, and was the base for a long and inflammatory series of radio skits which undoubtedly had a powerful effect in mobilizing opinion in the United States, and which probably could have been used over again with Stalin's name substituted for Hitler's after 1946.¹³⁵

As for the rightists and businessmen entertaining second thoughts on the Hitler regime, the reception of such persons among liberals was quite cool. Though they were accepted as allies of a sort, it was with noticeably bad grace. Franz Höllering, reviewing Hermann Rauschning's *The Voice of Destruction* and *The Conservative Revolution* in the *Nation*, could barely restrain his contempt at all, although at times his ideological bent made his evaluations of these books sound like German Social Democrat editorials from 1932. And when he reviewed Fritz Thyssen's *I Paid Hitler*, another memoir from the disenchanted business community, Höllering confessed to the readers that he finished Thyssen's account "with feelings of distrust and disgust."¹³⁶ The Thyssen story was an interesting propaganda gambit by itself; though he had broken with Hitler in 1937, it was not until near the winter of 1941 that his story was considered worth telling to an American audience. And it was never too clear how much of it Thyssen had written. Max Lerner reviewed Rauschning for the *New Republic* in the issue for March 11, 1940, while the journal was still staunchly anti-involvement and while Lerner himself had relapsed into a neutralist attitude temporarily in the months of the Russo-Finnish war. His estimate of the book was in somewhat different context than Höllering's.¹³⁷

In the last war, we had a series of "out of their mouths" books about the enemy—about the German doctrine of force and egotism (I note that Santayana's war book, *Egotism in German Philosophy* is being reissued with a new chapter), about German military philosophy as expressed through Clausewitz and Bernhardt. This is doubtless a necessary and legitimate war activity, only we had better recognize that Rauschning is at war and this is in a real sense a war book.

But in an overall sense the widening of the ideological spectrum of anti-Hitlerism to include non-leftists and liberals was an event of more than ordinary importance. It promised a war propaganda of breadth which could be appealed to in case those who continued too skeptical complained of a too narrow ideological base.

THE RETURN OF EMPHASIS
TO THE JEWISH PERSECUTIONS
AND CONCENTRATION CAMPS, 1938-1941

The liberal press followed both the Austrian and Czechoslovak expansions by Hitler with new rounds of stories on anti-Jewish excesses in both countries after an ominous quiet season on this subject, and diversion to the situation in Poland, where the precarious position of the Jews had drawn major attention for some months. But there was always the inextricable element of Marxist Social Democrat politics in these accounts, as had been true from the earliest days of reportage on the emergence of Hitler in Germany. As will be seen, the coming of the war produced some significant shifts in emphasis on this problem, with the abstention of the Russians from belligerence. But other regions continued to get their attention as well in 1938. In the second and third weeks of August the *Nation* offered their readers a conflicting picture of the situation, with Ludwig Lore's "Can a Jew Be a Fascist?", an amazing account of the extensive activities of Jewish figures in the Mussolini regime since 1922. This was followed by a report by ex-Ambassador to Germany William E. Dodd, "Germany Shocked Me," which told a completely different story of intensifying anti-Jewish actions in Italy and Germany, the first report on this in these two countries for some time.¹³⁸

The return of stress on the plight of German Jews, as has been related in the discussion of the reports on Poland, came with the excesses on Jewish property in the famous November 10 vandalism, following Ernst vom Rath's assassination in the German Embassy in Paris by Herschel Grynszpan, whom the *New Republic* described as "a half-insane young Polish Jew."¹³⁹ Both liberal weeklies boiled with stories of new anti-Jewish reprisals and persecutions in November, accompanied by exaggerations of the total population of Jews still in Germany¹⁴⁰ and tying the whole matter in with the refugee question, a matter which will be examined at length in discussing the question of Allied war aims. Both editorial policies immediately urged adoption of plans for mass emigration, although there was sharp disagreement whether this newest outburst in Germany was a staging by the regime or a reflection of the sentiments of the German people.¹⁴¹

During the winter the subject cooled once more. Little attention was directed to it during the period of the crisis of the Polish-German and Anglo-Russian diplomatic conversations, when the Poles tended to be once more the subject for criticism in their Jewish policies. On July 1 the *Nation* announced, in conjunction with a report that a serious shortage of men and materials had grown in Germany

as a result of its business boom, "Jews in Germany are being called back to work; immigration permits already issued are being cancelled."¹⁴² And after the war had broken out, an editorial comment on September 23 reported that the anti-Jewish journalist Julius Streicher was being "purged" by the regime, and that Jews were being restored to their jobs and allowed to mix freely in places of employment "with the Gentile slaves of the Nazi regime," a phrase which recalled the underground Communist press of 1933-1935.¹⁴³

The release by the British in November, 1939 of their famous White Paper on the German concentration camps was not only one of the great masterstrokes of the propaganda war of the Second World War. It re-opened the whole question of Jewish misfortunes in Germany, along with giving the British a most embarrassing problem of refugee policy, which all British leadership neatly side-stepped the entire war once they had made political capital over it against the Germans. The liberal weeklies hailed this report extravagantly,¹⁴⁴ although there was some innocent puzzlement expressed over why the British had waited so long to issue this report, since it was admittedly prepared some time before the war broke out. In discussing the "pathological abnormality" of the Germans in running such institutions, not a breath of criticism was published concerning the somewhat older and much more extensive Russian penal colonies, despite the fact that the Soviet was a benevolent witness to German expansion now, and no real reason of diplomatic or other nature apparently existed to require circumspection in dealing with Russian sensibilities. Nor were any references to the phenomenon of the concentration camp as a historical issue considered important now. It was the beginning of the spread of the simple notion that Germany needed to be the object of global attack because of the treatment of some of its people by their government, and the arguing of the assertion that all the blood-letting was fully justified on the grounds of the necessity of changing Germany's internal policies.

In one sense this White Paper was the Balfour Declaration of the Second World War. The American Communists were the first to become alarmed over the prompt expression of enthusiastic sympathy with the British by prominent Zionist leaders, and bitterly attacked this as willingness on their part to see the mass of unorganized European Jewry gravely endangered for political advantages. The most drastic statement of the case came in the spring of 1940 in the *Communist*, Paul Novick's "Zionism and the Imperialist War." Novick bitterly condemned especially Ben Gurion's fervent assertion of Zionist unity with the British Empire cause in the November, 1939 *Jewish Frontier* as "a libelous attack on the Jewish people. . . . It is not true that 'every Jew' is praying 'for the victory of the

British Empire,' or that Jews generally are engaged in that pursuit," Novick hotly denied: "It is most emphatically not the case."

Novick also dwelled at length on a speech by Jabotinsky at Manhattan Center on March 19, 1940 in which he had admitted that an Allied victory would bring no hope for Jews in Europe; "The Zionist leaders have no objection to extending a war which will bring untold suffering to millions of Jews in Europe, most of whom will be uprooted, many exterminated," Novick charged, and he went on to discuss the politics of this commitment:¹⁴⁵

Zionist leadership continually speculates on the persecution of Jewish people in other lands as a stimulus for immigration to Palestine. The destruction of the scourge of Fascism in Germany would hardly be welcomed by Zionist leadership, since this would stop the flow of emigrants towards Palestine.

This newest twist in the course of history was undoubtedly of great concern for the Communists as well as everyone else. But of course they had violated the class struggle line completely during the Popular Front era by trying to adopt all the Jews under their banner and had as a consequence unloosed Fascist charges that all the Jews were Communists. The situation now was even more tangled than it had been before.

"There are still a quarter of a million Jews in Germany—and they are getting out at the rate of about 200 a week," the *New Republic* reported on December 6, 1939. At the same time it announced that the Jews of Czechoslovakia, Austria and Poland were not faring so well, that it was reported that they were being moved to big concentration camps in Poland.¹⁴⁶ This was the first news of this sort to be released, and one of the few occasions when any reference at all to Central European Jewry was to be made until after the entry of the United States into hostilities. But reports even on the German scene grew sporadic, especially after the spreading of the war in the early months of 1940.

The most important, revealing and contradictory piece contributed to the liberal weeklies in 1940 on the status of Jewry in Germany was William Zukerman's "The Jews Are Not Alone" in the *Nation* on November 9, 1940. Starting out with the standard charge that Germany's Jews were being physically obliterated, it went on then to describe the incredible weakness of the Hitlerian anti-Jewish laws, the exemption of large numbers of Jews in Germany for vital military and other work, and the absence of any significant anti-Jewish feeling among the Germans as a whole, since the war had gotten under way. "The German people in all sincerity seem to have a more friendly attitude toward the Jews since the outbreak of the war,"

Zukerman observed; "Informed persons know that the rationing laws alone would have caused the death of every Jewish man, woman and child in Germany if brave and simple people among their German neighbors had not aided them with food, fuel and clothing."

Zukerman went on to recite the account of the massive violation of the anti-Jewish legislation in occupied Europe, and concluded that the main hope of the Jews was still to struggle in the national states where the nationals were favorably disposed toward them, and his main message was an attack on the idea of a Jewish national state;¹⁴⁷

The various movements for a nationalistic solution of the Jewish problem, which were so strong before the war, are now receding into the background . . . hope that the problem might be solved by the establishment of a Jewish state has of necessity faded. . . . From personal experience in war-time England I can affirm that British Jews at the moment feel more completely at one with the non-Jewish world than any Jewish community has ever felt before. And England was until the outbreak of the war the political and spiritual center of Zionism.

During the Sitzkrieg the *Nation* stepped up stories of anti-Jewish acts in Poland with the accent off the German scene once more, but apparently a steady movement of Jews from Germany was taking place. Albert Horlings' "Who Aids the Refugee?" in the *New Republic* on January 13, 1941 contained a statement that "442,000 Jews have left greater Germany in the last seven years, about 148,000 of them in 1939."¹⁴⁸ But there were no reports on the fate of the Jews in East-Central Europe, especially the millions in Russian-occupied Poland. The question by this time had become deeply enmeshed in the general problem of refugees, which in turn had become further complicated with the larger issue of Allied war aims, resulting in an embarrassing situation for the British and French leadership, as will be seen.

NOTES

1 Stone, "Chamberlain's Russo-German Pact," *Nation*, September 23, 1939, pp. 313-316. Stone referred to Duranty's assertion about Stalin and the shooting of Jews in Russia as a "cynical, shocking" sentence.

2 "Stalin Reports" the lead editorial in the *New Masses*, March 21, 1939, p. 17, disparaged the report that Stalin was edging toward an understanding with Hitler as "wilful distortion," laughed at the "Stalin-is-flirting-with-Hitler" stories of H. L. Mencken in an editorial two months later (May 16, 1939, p. 20), while in "The *Nation's* Boomerang," July 18, 1939, pp. 17-18, it suggested with a grimace of distaste, "if Krivitsky and [Isaac Don] Levine are right in charging that Stalin is about to embrace Hitler, then the *Nation* has been wrong in telling its readers that the USSR is seeking

to create an anti-aggression front." There is hardly anything as clumsy in the history of American journalism as the backing and filling of both these journals when the embrace did materialize five weeks later.

3 *Common Sense*, March, 1939, pp. 16-17; April, 1939, p. 6; June, 1939, p. 18. The editors conceded in the latter editorial that the prospects for peace were poor as long as the Poles were unwilling "to relinquish the Nazified Danzig powder-barrel," p. 18.

4 "Check to the Axis?," *Nation*, May 20, 1939, pp. 575-576; Vallance, "Behind British Conspiration," *Nation*, May 20, 1939, pp. 578-580. This Laborite journalist insisted however that the real aim of the policy of an Anglo-Russian understanding should be "to deter aggression, not merely to overcome it eventually in the ruins of Europe." "Aggression" was to be overcome eventually in the ruins of Europe.

5 "Molotov's Terms," *Nation*, June 10, 1939, pp. 659-660. A week before the editors had been very enthusiastic about the materializing of a three-power alliance with Russia, and that it would "insure peace in Europe for months to come." The reason for this confidence was the new Soviet military budget, two-thirds higher than the record appropriation of 1938. *Nation*, June 3, 1940, pp. 629-630.

6 Kirchwey, "Appeasement Or War?," *Nation*, July 8, 1939, pp. 33-34; Villard column on p. 45; Gruenfeld-Gittler article, pp. 36-41.

7 See in particular *New Masses*, June 27, 1939, p. 14, and Earl Browder, "USA and USSR: Good Neighbors," *New Masses*, July 11, 1939, pp. 9-12.

8 Sternberg in *Nation*, June 17, 1939, pp. 693-696; "That Anglo-Russian Pact," *Nation*, July 15, 1939, pp. 60-61.

9 Joesten, "Germany vs. Russia In the North," *Nation*, June 24, 1939, pp. 719-722. Joesten's zeal for the Communists cooled appreciably by December, 1940, as has been seen in Chapter 19.

10 Kirchwey, "Lull Before Appeasement," *Nation*, June 24, 1939, pp. 717-718.

11 *The Communist*, January, 1939, pp. 40-47.

12 *New Masses*, August 15, 1939, pp. 12-13. The first substantial attention to Communist military strength was Max "Werner," "How Strong Is the Red Army?," *New Masses*, May 16, 1939, pp. 3-6. He estimated it to be the largest and most formidable armed force in the world.

13 *New Republic*, August 30, 1939, pp. 88-89. In the *New Masses* for that week the readers were offered Corliss Lamont's "Why Members of the Upper Class Go Left."

14 "Why Did Russia Do It?," *New Republic*, September 6, 1939, p. 118.

15 *Nation*, September 2, 1939, pp. 232-233.

16 Dell, "France Is Ready," *Nation*, September 2, 1939, p. 235.

17 Summary of the Brailsford and Fischer interpretations in *New Republic*, September 13, 1939, pp. 148-161. For Pepper, see "Communism Liquidates Itself," *Harper's*, December, 1939, pp. 27-33. Ernest Sutherland Bates said of the *Pakt*, "It really represents a new type of treaty, half-way between a simple non-aggression agreement and a full-blown league of alliance." Bates, "Non-Aggression—Or Alliance?," *New Republic*, September 6, 1939, p. 121.

18 See note 1.

19 *New Masses*, September 5, 1939, pp. 5-6.

20 *New Republic*, November 15, 1939, p. 116.

21 Fischer, "Soviet Russia Today: Has Stalin Blundered?," *Nation*, December 30, 1939, pp. 728-732.

22 *New Republic*, July 28, 1941, p. 120.

23 *Nation*, November 5, 1938, p. 407.

24 "War Against the Jews," *Nation*, November 19, 1938, pp. 524-525.

25 *Nation*, November 19, 1939, pp. 533-535.

26 See "The Turn Of the Worm?," *Nation*, April 8, 1939, p. 391.

27 *New Republic*, April 19, 1939, pp. 292-293.

28 *Nation*, May 6, 1939, p. 513.

29 *Nation*, June 24, 1939, pp. 731-732.

30 *New Republic*, September 27, 1939, pp. 200-201.

31 "The Mystery Of Moscow," *Nation*, September 23, 1939, pp. 309-310.

32 *New Masses*, October 10, 1939, pp. 13-15; September 26, 1939, pp. 3-4.

33 *New Republic*, November 8, 1939, p. 2.

- 34 "The Polish Elections," November 1, 1939, p. 352.
 35 See note 33.
 36 "Tribute To Poland," *New Republic*, September 2, 1940, p. 291.
 37 *New Republic*, April 22, 1940, p. 522.
 38 *Nation*, August 9, 1941, pp. 101-102.
 39 *Nation*, September 30, 1939, p. 334; *New Masses*, October 3, 1939, p. 21.
 40 "Baltic and Black Sea," *Nation*, October 21, 1939, pp. 427-428. During the 22 months of coolness toward the Soviet Union between 1939 and 1941, the liberal press never referred to Mongolia and Turkestan as states which also had lost their independence due to the interference of large neighbors, though frequent catalogs of small and weak nations which had been overrun or absorbed between 1931 and 1941 were published.
 41 "Baltic Comedy," *New Republic*, October 11, 1939, p. 255.
 42 Brailsford, "The Russian Riddle," *New Republic*, October 11, 1939, pp. 263-264.
 43 *Nation*, November 11, 1939, pp. 511-512.
 44 *Nation*, December 2, 1939, p. 593.
 45 Kirchwey, "By Fire and Sword," *Nation*, December 9, 1939, pp. 639-640.
 46 *New Republic*, December 6, 1939, p. 179.
 47 *New Republic*, December 13, 1939, pp. 218-220.
 48 Fischer, "Soviet Russia Today; Foreign Policy: Geneva to Helsinki," *Nation*, January 6, 1940, pp. 7-11.
 49 *Nation*, December 23, 1939, pp. 696-697.
 50 *Nation*, January 20, 1940, p. 57.
 51 See especially editorial paragraphs in *Nation*, December 30, 1939, p. 721, and January 6, 1940, p. 1.
 52 *Nation*, February 17, 1940, pp. 243-244; February 24, 1940, p. 265; March 9, 1940, p. 321.
 53 Seldes, "Warlords Of the Press," *New Masses*, February 6, 1940, pp. 15-19. Seldes also credited Louis Lochner and a United Press investigation with "honest journalism" in refusing to support Polish claims of German atrocities in Poland in September, 1939.
 54 Dell, "Why Finland Lost," *Nation*, March 23, 1940, pp. 385-387. The editorial of the same day, "Peace Is A Weapon," p. 379, insisted, "The defeat of Finland was a German more than a Russian victory."
 55 *New Republic*, March 25, 1940, pp. 396-397.
 56 *New Republic*, April 1, 1940, pp. 427-428.
 57 *Nation*, July 31, 1935, p. 115.
 58 *Nation*, October 30, 1935, p. 495. In the 1939-1941 period it was common for the *Nation* to print caricatures of German and Italian leaders which first appeared in this French Communist paper.
 59 *New Republic*, February 5, 1936, p. 350.
 60 *Common Sense*, April, 1935, p. 5.
 61 "France Between Wars," *New Republic*, April 8, 1936, p. 238.
 62 *Nation*, April 8, 1936, pp. 448-449.
 63 M. E. Ravage, in *New Republic*, November 18, 1936, pp. 82-83.
 64 *Nation*, December 19, 1936, p. 740.
 65 Malcolm Cowley, reviewing John Gunther's *Inside Europe*, shared the ardent enthusiasm of the author for the emergence of the Popular Front in France and considered it to be the most important political event in Europe in the past five years. In his view it had stopped the advance of Fascism in France, which was good grounds for believing that it was now likely to be stopped elsewhere. *New Republic*, February 12, 1936, pp. 22-23.
 66 *Nation*, July 4, 1936, pp. 12-15.
 67 See especially Trotsky, "Revolutionary Interlude in France," and Ravage, "The Blum Government—Second Phase," *Nation*, August 8, 1936, pp. 152-155, 155-156.
 68 Frank, in *New Republic*, October 7, 1936, pp. 254-255; editorial, same issue, p. 241.
 69 *Nation*, October 31, 1936, pp. 518-519.
 70 "A New Front In France," *New Republic*, October 14, 1936, pp. 269-270.
 71 *Nation*, January 9, 1937, pp. 41-43.
 72 Considerably out of character for the *Nation* at this moment was its publication

of a severely critical review by Suzanne LaFollette of *France Today and the People's Front* by Maurice Thorez and *France Faces the Future* by Ralph Fox. She left no doubt that she considered the Communist authors sympathetic to a mismanagement of French affairs to accommodate Soviet diplomacy. *Nation*, September 26, 1936, pp. 371-373.

73 "Belgium Returns To Neutrality," *New Republic*, October 28, 1936, p. 340.

74 The *Nation* had made a far greater issue out of the suicide of Roger Salengro, the Blum regime's minister of the interior. See especially the comment of November 28, 1936, p. 618.

75 Werth, "Behind the French Crisis," *Nation*, June 26, 1937, pp. 723-724. See also the editorial of the same issue, "The Fall Of Leon Blum," pp. 719-720.

76 See letter of Bertrand de Jouvenel to *New Republic*, June 23, 1937, p. 192.

77 *Nation*, January 22, 1938, p. 88; Ravage, "France In Crisis," *Nation*, January 22, 1938, p. 90.

78 *Common Sense*, April, 1938, p. 6.

79 *Nation*, April 16, 1938, p. 425.

80 Ravage, "Behind Blum's Failure," *Nation*, April 23, 1938, pp. 462-464.

81 Tabouis, "What Can France Do?," *New Republic*, February 9, 1938, pp. 13-14. The liberal press identified her as the niece of former French ambassadors to Germany and England, Jules and Pierre Paul Cambon.

82 "French Business Heils Hitler," *New Republic*, December 7, 1938, pp. 113-114.

83 Werth, "France At Its Best," *Nation*, November 4, 1939, pp. 493-495.

84 *Nation*, February 10, 1940, pp. 194-195. Despite the economic-strangulation talk, there seemed to be some strange extenuating circumstances. See the astounding "Selling To the Enemy" by Frank Hanighen, *Harper's*, March, 1940, pp. 387-392, in the best "merchants-of-death" tradition, the theme of which was the busy traffic in coke and iron between Germany and France via Belgium and Luxembourg during the Sitzkrieg lull.

85 *New Republic*, April 1, 1940, p. 423.

86 "British Morale," *Nation*, April 6, 1940, p. 436.

87 "The War Spreads," *Nation*, April 13, 1940, p. 464.

88 "The War Begins," *New Republic*, April 15, 1940, pp. 491-492, for citation below as well.

89 *Nation*, April 20, 1940, p. 497; Kirchwey, "The Fifth Column," *Nation*, April 27, 1940, pp. 529-530; *New Republic*, April 22, 1940, p. 519; "Too Little, Too Late," *Nation*, May 11, 1940, pp. 583-584. See also the bitter criticisms by readers of the accuracy of the *Nation's* reporters on the Scandinavian fighting. Stowe and Maurice Feldman, in *Nation*, August 10, 1940, p. 119.

90 *New Republic*, April 22, 1940, pp. 525-526.

91 *Nation*, January 27, 1940, p. 85. On ruminations of possible Italian action against Yugoslavia, see "Mussolini's Margin," *Nation*, May 4, 1940, p. 556.

92 "War Unlimited," *Nation*, April 20, 1940, pp. 500-501.

93 See especially "Our Enemies Within," *Nation*, June 22, 1940, pp. 745-746.

94 "Why France Fell," *Nation*, June 22, 1940, p. 745.

95 *Nation*, June 29, 1940, p. 769.

96 *Nation*, July 13, 1940, pp. 27-30. But the editors were particularly piqued at Charles de Gaulle and his "Free French" for their blundering in attempting to take Dakar from the Vichy French forces later in the year. *Nation*, October 5, 1940, p. 285.

97 Guérard review of Pol, *Nation*, October 19, 1940, pp. 367-368.

98 Guérard review of Simone, *Nation*, September 21, 1940, pp. 247-248; Kohn review of "Cato" on pp. 249-250.

99 *Nation*, June 22, 1940, p. 741.

100 *Nation*, July 27, 1940, pp. 62-63.

101 One of the theories which flowered in the period of the Russo-German *Pakt*, was that the 1936 Anti-Comintern Pact of Germany, Italy and Japan had really been aimed at the Franco-British colonial empire system, and not Soviet Russia and its worldwide apparatus. There were several proponents of this, one of the loudest being Ralph Bates. See in particular his "The Indivisible War," *Nation*, November 23, 1940, pp. 496-500.

102 *Nation*, July 13, 1940, p. 21.

- 103 *Nation*, September 14, 1940, pp. 213-215. Greenwall described Mandel as "the sal-low, stocky little Jew who during the first World War was Clemenceau's right hand man"; he related that he had last seen Mandel while lunching at Geneviève Tabouis's.
- 104 *Nation*, August 24, 1940, p. 142.
- 105 *Nation*, November 30, 1940, pp. 517-518.
- 106 *Nation*, September 6, 1941, pp. 281-282.
- 107 *Nation*, October 18, 1941, pp. 356-357.
- 108 Dolivet, "Underground In France," *Nation*, May 10, 1941, pp. 554-556, and "Vol-cano Under Vichy," *Nation*, July 26, 1941, pp. 67-69. On Dolivet's aliases and extensive activities on behalf of the Communists in the pre-Pearl Harbor decade see *Congres-sional Record*, May 25, 1950, pp. 7806-7808.
- 109 "Munich: Act II," *Nation*, March 25, 1939, pp. 335-337. Even more aggravated was the signed Kirchwey comment, "Loving Hitler Less," on pp. 337-338.
- 110 See Villard column, *Nation*, March 25, 1939, p. 350; citation below from that in *Nation*, June 5, 1939, p. 647.
- 111 Villard quoted a passage from a letter from a German woman declaring, "while millions of Germans protest this phase or that of the Hitler regime, there is on the other hand not one German who does not have the feeling that he is being used, that he is cooperating in a great undertaking, that something is happening, that things are being done, and that is something beautiful and it gives us a feeling of security not easily described." *Nation*, March 18, 1939, p. 322.
- 112 "Hitler Answers," *New Republic*, May 10, 1939, pp. 4-5.
- 113 *Nation*, July 1, 1939, p. 2.
- 114 Niebuhr, "The British Conscience," *Nation*, August 26, 1939, p. 20.
- 115 "Blackmailer's Peace," *Nation*, October 14, 1939, pp. 401-402.
- 116 *New Masses*, February 6, 1940, pp. 5-7.
- 117 "The Great War Scandal," *New Republic*, April 8, 1940, pp. 458-459; April 29, 1940, p. 579.
- 118 *New Republic*, January 1, 1940, p. 3.
- 119 "Pope, President and Peace," *New Republic*, January 1, 1940, pp. 6-7.
- 120 *Nation*, November 25, 1939, pp. 581-582.
- 121 *Nation*, December 9, 1939, pp. 651-652.
- 122 See especially the review of Villard by Margaret Marshall in *Nation*, March 2, 1940, pp. 311-312.
- 123 *Nation*, December 2, 1939, pp. 702-705.
- 124 *New Masses*, January 9, 1940, p. 22.
- 125 *New Republic*, November 27, 1939, p. 177.
- 126 *New Republic*, December 6, 1939, pp. 189-191.
- 127 *New Republic*, March 29, 1939, pp. 211-213.
- 128 *New Republic*, May 31, 1939, p. 87.
- 129 *New Republic*, October 25, 1939, p. 349. A partial preview of this was Reimann's "Doing Business in Germany," *Harper's*, March, 1939, pp. 373-381.
- 130 *New Republic*, October 18, 1939, pp. 288-290.
- 131 *Nation*, November 25, 1939, pp. 567-568.
- 132 *New Republic*, September 9, 1940, p. 352.
- 133 *New Republic*, May 27, 1940.
- 134 *Common Sense*, September, 1940, p. 17.
- 135 Reimann reviewed by J. Raymond Walsh, *New Republic*, November 3, 1941, pp. 594-595; Miller review of "Reveille" in *Nation*, August 23, 1941, p. 163; Miller reviewed by Keith Hutchison in *Nation*, August 9, 1941, p. 120.
- 136 Höllering reviews of Rauschning in *Nation*, March 2, 1940, pp. 313-314 and August 30, 1941, pp. 184-185; his review of Thyssen in *Nation*, December 6, 1941, p. 574. Höllering was puzzled by Douglas Reed's *Nemesis*, the story of Otto Strasser, a defector from Hitler's party and a diligent antagonist from abroad; a book hostile to Hitler written by the "English eccentric and anti-Semite" bothered him. Höllering's review of Reed in *Nation*, September 14, 1940, p. 224.
- 137 Lerner, "Hitler As Medicine Man," *New Republic*, March 11, 1940, p. 350.
- 138 *Nation*, August 13, 1938, pp. 148-151; August 20, 1938, pp. 176-178.
- 139 *New Republic*, November 23, 1938, p. 60.

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- 140 Villard doubled the number of Jews remaining in Germany in his *Nation* column of November 26, 1938, p. 567.
- 141 See especially "The Refugee Puzzle," *New Republic*, November 30, 1938, p. 87, and "Pogrom Economics," *Nation*, February 25, 1939, pp. 219-220.
- 142 *Nation*, July 1, 1939, p. 2.
- 143 *Nation*, September 23, 1939, p. 307.
- 144 In particular the *Nation*; November 11, 1939, p. 510.
- 145 *The Communist*, May, 1940, pp. 463-479.
- 146 *New Republic*, December 6, 1939, p. 180.
- 147 *Nation*, November 9, 1940, pp. 443-444. The *New Republic* claimed that Erhard Milch, raised to the rank of a marshal in the German air force, had a Jewish father and mother. "Hitler's Jewish Marshal," *New Republic*, August 5, 1940, p. 172.
- 148 *New Republic*, January 13, 1941, pp. 43-45. Michael Straight contributed variety to the rumor literature about the German concentration camps with a sensational report in May, 1941, citing an unnamed "dignitary" of the Catholic Church as the authority for the claim that there were now 800,000 prisoners and that the majority of them were Catholics. Straight, "Germany Executes Her 'Unfit,'" *New Republic*, May 5, 1941, pp. 627-628.

AMERICAN LIBERALS REPORT
WORLD WAR TWO WITH THE
EMPHASIS ON ENGLAND

A MEMOIR ON THE DRIFT OF LIBERAL OPINION
ON ENGLISH FOREIGN POLICY, 1935-1939

A SUBSTANTIAL amount of comment on and interpretation of English foreign policy and relations with the United States has already been recounted in various contexts in past chapters, but a résumé of a sort is in order prior to an extended look at the change which took place once war had begun in September, 1939. Of particular concern is the stand taken on various issues from the time of the Popular Front and the days when the Germans began to shake the Versailles status quo in Europe apart, including rearmament, charges that the English government was becoming too congenial with the Hitler regime, was about to betray collective security and was edging this country into a Far East situation of some danger and other areas of conflict.

It may be recalled that cordiality toward England was not a feature of editorial policy in the decade of the 1930s nor of hardly any of its correspondents, despite the fact that such writers as H. N. Brailsford, Harold Laski and Robert Dell, among others enjoyed English citizenship, and others who wrote from England were deeply related to English connections. The issue, however, lay nearer personalities and policies than the idea of the land itself. The sudden growth of deep affection for England at war after a lengthy period of often

grievous criticism could hardly have been possible if a basic, underlying favorable pre-disposition had not been lying dormant during this spell of coolness.

The replacement of the MacDonald coalition cabinet on June 7, 1935 by one headed by Stanley Baldwin, and including a more pronounced tendency toward Tory party views, was a signal for a stepped-up rate of criticism, especially after it took the acts of the German government in stride, and instead of urging resistance to its defiance of the Versailles restraints on remilitarization, concluded a naval agreement which limited the Germans to a fleet of 35% of the total British fleet tonnage. But there were liberal voices which did not get excited over the new blandness on the part of Britain's government, and it was some while before a major issue began to be made out of this attitude; only when the policy of concessions began to gain greater emphasis in the government of Neville Chamberlain in 1937 and 1938 did it cause comprehensive excitement. Then the loudest enthusiasts for the Popular Front collective security, with generous support from the Communists, denigrated this tendency as "appeasement," in the most disgraceful sense of the word.

"Britain Veers Toward Germany," was the heading over Brailsford's July 17, 1935 *New Republic* dispatch from London. It was a discussion of the impact of a revived Germany and the tone of conciliation in Britain, colored by a sense of the wrongs of Versailles and a feeling that no more war with this enemy should ever occur.¹ The naval agreement and the subsequent sentiments Brailsford regarded as a repudiation "by the main stream of public opinion" of Winston Churchill and Austen Chamberlain and others who regarded the Versailles treaty as a truce, like the intervals in the eighteenth century wars with France. Liberals did not hesitate to censure Churchill, who was still shouting that Germany had instigated the World War, even at this time. Though the *New Republic* was still pounding away at the British for involving the United States in the Far East, where "British interests are so enormously greater than our own,"² it showed editorial pleasure over the naval agreement; its anti-collective security stand at this time was in harmony with that.

The *Nation*, committed deeply to the Popular Front idea, was not nearly so pleased. In a July 3 editorial, "England Drops Europe," it showed the main source of its irritation very soon. "No event since the announcement of Germany's rearmament program is more ominous in its implications for European security than the new Anglo-German naval accord," it announced, and deplored that "revolutionary change in policy" by the less than two-week-old Baldwin government. In their eyes it marked "a repudiation of Allied solidarity against the Third Reich," and worse still, implied "an abandonment of the principles of collective security." And it went on to reveal much

aggravation at Joachim Ribbentrop for identifying the agreement as the end of the "United Front" and "a step toward a new union of European powers against Soviet Russia."³

For similar incitatory remarks about the new British attitude on the part of like-minded liberals in America, Bertrand Russell had a censorious lecture in the *New Republic* of the same date;⁴

It is all very well for American radicals, at a safe distance, to urge Europeans to go crusading while their own country remains neutral. But for sane Europeans other considerations must be dominant. We know that war, if it comes, will destroy everything we value, however the Powers may be grouped, and whoever may enjoy "victory." . . . In these circumstances, we resent being scolded for attempting to preserve all that we care for, rather than ruin our continent to gratify the resentments of men who will remain spectators of our possibly heroic folly.

As to the general characteristics of the Baldwin government, liberal reactions ranged from cool to frosty. Oswald Garrison Villard, in his column on July 17, hoped its emergence meant that America and Britain would see "eye-to-eye" on foreign affairs, but expressed total hostility toward any idea of an alliance, and frowned on going beyond a mutual expression of "focusing of an aroused and outraged public opinion" on affairs in Asia and Europe as "the one genuine hope of escape from another bath of blood for the whole world."⁵ Laski's report in the same issue showed no sympathy with Baldwin at all, and predicted that "At all costs the government will play the businessman's game," that "The distressed areas will remain distressed, the League will remain a polite fiction, to which adequate lip-service is most scrupulously paid; doles and subsidies will be handed out to industries where support can be counted on and die-hard Tory opinion will be placated by heavy increases in armaments and the reform of the House of Lords."⁶

Frank Hanighen was along in a few weeks with a comment on one of the latter points, a detailed article on the vast expansion in production of military aircraft and airfield construction titled "Britain's Boom In War Planes." Hanighen refused to accept the explanation of this as a reaction to German rearmament; "Examination of the facts in chronological order reveals what looks suspiciously like a regulation arms scare," he reported. The catapulting of armament stocks and not the German menace was stressed at this point.⁷ Nor was there any spread of stories through the next year, the time of the great crisis with Italy over Ethiopia, about any British arms weakness. The 1939-1941 myth of a British government criminally ignoring national defense between 1934-1939 is not verified by checking the liberal press for the period. A crop of angry editorials denouncing

the big British military spending, its recruiting posters and militant newsreels ran throughout the period; the *Nation* was still battering away on this theme in August, 1936. And there were others in these times as well, inveighing against "nationalistic and isolationist" Tory sentiment as a cause.⁸

Through the Ethiopian War down to the abdication of King Edward VIII, sour notes continued to sound on overall strategy apart from the conduct of relations with Mussolini, which has been dealt with elsewhere. A new wave of comment was aroused by the reaction of the British and French to the German remilitarization of the Rhineland. "The follies and crimes of the past are working themselves out," Brailsford observed rather grimly in the *New Republic* the first week of April, 1936 in a piece titled "Britain's Peace Mud-dle." "The French, by their whole conduct since 1918, have brought this situation on themselves," he thought, and further advised, "To underwrite their security is to shoulder a perilous burden."⁹

But the emergence of Anthony Eden as foreign secretary stirred other sentiments. Jonathan Mitchell, reviewing Sir Arthur Willert's *What Next In Europe?*, noted that he was a Foreign Office spokesman and was echoing Eden's approach, the sheriff's-posse concept of the League of Nations, with no plans other than that. Mitchell suggested some re-thinking of this position;¹⁰

Europe's bad character is Germany. England and France are the two responsible citizens who—if Captain Eden can bring it about—are going to restrain him under the Covenant of the League. The Foreign Office might reflect that in the old American West the way bad characters were customarily restrained was by stringing them to the largest cottonwood tree in the vicinity. This also was what was done to Germany in 1919. It required 20,000,000 war casualties, and the consequences have not been especially gratifying.

Brailsford, discussing at length post-Ethiopian-war British and Tory party policy toward Germany in June, noted a serious split in the latter, and once more observed that "That section of the Tory Party which regards Germany as its enemy-elect" would stick to "the formation of an overwhelming ring of encirclement," again naming Churchill and Sir Austen Chamberlain as "the leaders of this school of thought." He was sure they were trying to unseat Baldwin and replace him with Neville Chamberlain, "with Mr. Churchill in charge of defense."¹¹

Again, in October, "T.R.B." commented on a drive to promote an Anglo-German understanding, because international business interests were anxious to abandon restraints on German expansion and permit the export industries to bloom again. The abandonment of the

German Colonial League was seen as the German part of the agreement, ceasing agitation for the return of their pre-1918 colonies. Montague Norman and Schacht were seen as the major figures in this, with the *New Republic's* Washington correspondent commenting, "The extreme English Tories, men like Winston Churchill and Sir Austen Chamberlain, together with the whole Labor Party, are counted on to oppose Mr. Norman."¹² The outlines of the wartime political alliance against Germany were already being described, and the strange marriage between Laborites and "extreme Tories" was about to take definite shape.

German policy did not disappear even during the boiling turmoil of the abdication crisis and the controversy with Italy growing out of conflicts related to the Spanish Civil War, ending in the naval agreement of January 2, 1937. The conciliatory attitude toward Hitler was not interpreted as weakness; on the contrary, it was immediately related to the British arms buildup, which was commented on widely. John T. Flynn mentioned John Gunther's writing in the *Saturday Evening Post*, agreeing that the English were trying to postpone war as long as possible, "to give England time to be prepared,"¹³ while the *New Republic* editors commented on January 6 that "From the standpoint of Great Britain, in particular, everything else is subordinate to gaining another year of peace, during which her own rearmament may be completed," on the grounds that the British believed "that if they can postpone war a little longer, their armed strength may then be sufficient to preserve peace indefinitely."¹⁴ And a week later, commenting on the Mediterranean agreement, they interpreted this as part of this same policy of gaining time, "as an effort to postpone conflict until her rearmament is completed, a year hence at the earliest."¹⁵ There was no talk in the early months of 1937 about either Britain or France lagging in arms production.

A March 24 editorial, in rebuttal to new British talk that the United States should enter the League, brought up the subject again:¹⁶

The English are fond of saying that if the United States would but reenter European affairs in a decisive way, peace would be preserved. The argument is open to grave question, but insofar as it may be true, it applies with far greater point to Britain herself. If England, France and Soviet Russia, all strongly armed, would present a bold and united front to Germany and Italy, at the same time acting to remedy the worst injustices clamped upon Europe in 1919, there is at least a chance that peace could be preserved.

But it was convinced that if there was no such alliance and no such rectification of the treaty, then war would come for sure.

Brailsford looked upon the abdication of the King as somewhat more than that. He saw it also as a defeat for Churchill and "the extreme Right," whom he had been trying to rally as "a party of the King's Men," "a party of youth and action, advocating an even stiffer dose of rearmament, a stronger foreign policy, and, as a sop to gentler feelings, effective help for the depressed areas." In its incipient stages, before the abdication, Brailsford said, "one saw the coming at last of the expected Fascist movement, in a wholly original shirt of Anglo-Saxon cut, with a spirited young King as its royal Führer." But the King had "disliked his uncongenial job," and "rejected the temptation to fight." Yet Brailsford still expected that this "extreme Right" would continue to "grope toward a Fascist pattern," though he thought that "its Führer can be neither the too enterprising Mr. Churchill" nor "a King over the water." And he could not complete his rumination without a commentary on the newspaper coverage of the abdication crisis. "The discipline of the English press," he observed, "was the most startling phenomenon of this crisis," adding as an unkind thrust, "No totalitarian State has a technique of censorship so subtle as this."¹⁷

The coming of Neville Chamberlain to the Prime Minister's post on May 28, 1937 upon the retirement of Baldwin in some ways accentuated American liberal attacks on England's continuing rearmament, coupled now with charges of comprehensive British efforts to undermine collective security and turn the French against Russia. Dell in the *Nation* pounded away at this latter theme, and especially concentrated on Sir Robert Vansittart, whom he attacked in long articles several times in 1936, 1937 and 1938. After Hitler, Vansittart was the evil genius of Europe to Dell. He referred to him as "the Foreign Minister of France," since Dell alleged that Vansittart had enormous if not preponderant influence there, and accused him of being the real author of the idea of giving Hitler "a free hand in Central and Eastern Europe."¹⁸ In the meantime, the Communists, such as Palme Dutt, and some of the Labor spokesmen, insisted that the rearmament of England was hypocrisy, since it was their contention that British leadership had allowed Hitler to come to the fore in the first place and were now using him as an excuse to explain the rearmament boom. Dell believed that at the core of the Chamberlain policy was "hostility to Soviet Russia and fear of Communism," and felt that the biggest sin of the Tories was that "in their hearts they prefer Fascism to Communism."¹⁹

In the latter half of 1937 there were two particular aspects to American liberal reaction to British foreign policy. The outbreak of large-scale war in Asia in July brought Far Eastern affairs back to the scene, and the agenda once more had Anglo-American relations with respect to Asia in a prominent spot. The contest between the collective se-

curity and neutrality wings of liberalism were in sharp conflict here. Probably the best statement of the latter was Quincy Howe's book *England Expects Every American To Do His Duty*, reviewed with gusto in the *New Republic* by Robert Morss Lovett, and condemned in the *Nation* as hysteria.²⁰ Since the cornerstone of the *Nation's* policy was joint action in Asia "to check the advance of Fascism," Howe's allegation that the health and vigor of the British Empire were in a serious state of decay undermined this badly among liberals. The editors and Howe had a spirited exchange of correspondence on the subject as well.²¹ The neutralists, among whom suspicion of British foreign policy had risen to the high point where it was at the time of the Nye hearings, kept battering away on this theme, and pointed out that the Hull international trade policy had failed to induce the British to sign a reciprocal trade treaty, while Mitchell's long commentary in the September 15, 1937 *New Republic*, "Roosevelt's Far Eastern Policy," dwelled far more on the British than on the United States. He was convinced that any action taken by the United States in China in the Hong Kong and Shanghai areas as well as the five northern provinces of China would be entirely a reflection of British desires, if it took place at all.²²

With respect to Germany, the British policy was similarly under fire. Bruce Bliven in October turned loose an unmerciful attack, claiming that "left to themselves the English under their present government would, I think, join the Fascist bloc." "They have small love for the French, whom they have been fighting sporadically for 800 years," he contributed gratuitously, adding that they were adamantly opposed to the Soviet, had long had an alliance with Japan, and that a hundred years before were "doing there [China] very much what Japan is doing today." The visit of Lord Halifax to Hitler on November 17 was roasted by a *New Republic* editorial on November 24, "England Woos the Fascists."²³ The continued attacks on England involved Bliven in two acrimonious exchanges with Theodore Draper and Earl Browder in the *New Masses*, now riding at the high tide of Popular Front collective security and exceedingly sensitive to anything which tended to show up its weaknesses. Bliven was especially incensed at the charge of being an Anglophobe.²⁴ The Communists were fully in agreement that the Chamberlain government was an ominous portent for collective security, but had not given up hope that some political force might emerge which would favor their conception of collective action against Germany again.

Beginning late in March and through April, 1938 an intense campaign developed in the liberal press charging the Chamberlain government with being responsible for Austria, Spain, China, and a large part of what had preceded that as well, indirectly. The British

Communists had already developed this fully. It got full airing in the *New Republic* by Frederick L. Schuman and in the *Nation* by Dell and Harold Laski. Dell accused Chamberlain of refusing to team with the French and Russians "to save Europe from Fascism," congratulated Eden for resigning from the cabinet and thus escaping "from the gang of political crooks by whom my unhappy country is at present governed," and went so far as to charge that Chamberlain had "condoned" Hitler's action in Austria, "if he did not connive at it in advance,"²⁵ a charge made several months later by Schuman relative to Czechoslovakia, it may be remembered.

Schuman's "Perfidious Albion" boiled with towering rage at "Tory treachery," and seemed to be based largely on the Communist Palme Dutt's *World Politics*. The key to the approach in Schuman's case was his topheavy concern with how Tory policy indicated endangering of the welfare of the Soviet Union, a point which readers brought up subsequently and scored heavily in the correspondence columns. But strangely enough *New Republic* editorial policy supported Schuman's view on the British "reactionaries."²⁶

Laski's loud complaint on April 9 charged Chamberlain with returning to the pre-1914 tradition, seeking to avoid war as a catastrophe and because it would be a possible "fatal threat to the existing economic interests of the empire." He particularly resented Chamberlain's unstated implication that "the residuary legatee" of the defeat of Germany, Italy and Japan "would be the Bolsheviks." Laski's appeal was a strong re-statement of the "Peace-is-indivisible" line and the "our-frontiers-are-in-Spain-and-China" approach of the Communist spokesmen which had gained wide support in Labor circles now. He favored abandoning all empire advantages and strongly urged that the Labor Party be willing to run the risk of being called the war-mongering party and that it must seek allies outside the party, such as Lloyd George, Lord Cecil and Churchill, even though these were "simply British imperialists whose anti-Fascism is much more a recognition that the dictators are a threat to the British Empire than a recognition of the bankruptcy of capitalism." And he chose to emphasize that "defense of the Soviet Union must be a pivotal principle in Socialist policy."²⁷ It was quite plain from his analysis that the combination to drive Chamberlain out of office was not on the basis of what his policies were to result in at home, but in their possible consequences to the welfare of Russia. The sinking of the Empire to achieve this latter goal was not considered a very serious price to pay for that.

An even better picture of liberal desperation was John Maynard Keynes's *New Republic* memorandum on April 13, "A British Peace Program," once more admitting that the present dolorous situation was a direct product of "the guilt of the Treaty," and of subsequent

British and French policy, but concluding with suggestions which were all away from any comprehensive facing up to the necessity for treaty revision. The core of Keynes's recommendation was the familiar British-French-Russian collaboration idea, supported by the fervent expression of hope that it would seriously hamper Hitler in any future treaty revision and that it would not provoke him into a determination to break out of their new *cordon sanitaire*.²⁸

Despair was widespread in the editorial chambers of the *Nation* in addition to being dominant in the minds of the noted British correspondents. Their May 28 statement suggested that hopes that "vigorous efforts by liberal and labor groups here and abroad might strengthen the hands of the anti-Fascist elements" had now failed, and in reply to Quincy Howe, who had written in to comment on their new anti-British attitudes, they tried to excuse themselves on the grounds that there was a great difference between September, 1937 and May, 1938, as well as suggesting bitterly that all American "isolationists" should rejoice in Chamberlain, as he was the representative of the sort of system isolation was producing.²⁹ But the editors did not suggest that the British were yet abandoning arms and defense. H. C. Engelbrecht's "Britain Arms For Profit" on July 2 discussed at length the enormous profits being made by British military aircraft producers, although he claimed that though spending at a prodigious rate, the British were still being outstripped by the Germans. And with the Labor Party out of harmony with Chamberlain's foreign policy, he predicted that the government could expect "only half-hearted support for the huge arms program" from the munitions workers, as a consequence.³⁰ It seemed appropriate to see published on the heels of this angry attack the bitter leftist criticism by Robert Briffault, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, a book which echoed the very things Howe had written a year before, and which Arthur Rosenberg called in the *Nation* "the most hostile and pitiless book on England and the English that has been written for many years."³¹

"I am trying to convince my countrymen that every patriot must be an anti-Fascist, and that every efficient anti-Fascist must be a Marxist,"³² J.B.S. Haldane wrote in the *New Masses* on February 28, 1939. There is little doubt that the most profoundly aroused liberals and the most implacable pro-war-inclined among them were those most thoroughly attached to some branch of Marxian politics in the months after the Munich crisis and into the spring of 1939. A substantial part of this tendency was derived directly from the British strain, even though this particular group of influence-makers did not monopolize the field of arguments for lining up England and America in a future showdown with the Germans.

Elmer Davis's return to the *New Republic* on February 15, 1939

after a lengthy absence with an extended essay, "Is England Worth Fighting For?" laid out a different group of arguments other than the collective security appeals of the Marxists. Davis had evolved into a pundit on foreign affairs since the Munich days on the radio, after showing tendencies of this sort for some time as a commentator on a regular basis in *Harper's*, following a position which gave far more comfort to the neutralists among liberals down to this point. But this article revealed that the prior commitment he had made personally ruled out the idea that there really was a choice in the sense that his title suggested. But some of his reasoning was ingenious. "The strongest argument for our helping England," according to Davis, was "the possibility that if we do not, the British navy will line up on the same side as Hitler—and the Japanese navy." Suggesting such a contingency as immediately possible did not make a strong supporting point for his parenthetical rhapsody about England being in his opinion "the most civilized of all the larger nations." These sentiments permeated his argument, as well as the opinion that it was to the best interests of the United States that the British and French empires should remain in their present hands, and that Americans should not resent "the bland faith of the average conservative Englishman that America is only the largest of the Dominions, under a moral obligation to come to the help of the mother country in time of need." But Davis never did get around to specifying just what American interests were being served by shoring up the world political settlement to the satisfaction of the Anglo-French colonialists.

This was a major deviation from the steady barrage of liberal criticism directed at colonialism, but Davis conditioned his detachment toward colonial practices by expressing his deep dislike for the Chamberlain government, which he felt sure would "sell us out at the next peace conference if it saw any advantage in doing so." And he was further convinced that the knowledge in Washington of French and British expectations of help as in 1916–1917 was responsible for the "Washington habit of making faces at Hitler, which only focuses German hostility on us." Torn between sentiment and unfriendliness toward the immediate British leadership, Davis ended in a dilemma; "We lose either way, whether we support England or not; the only question is which way we lose more heavily." He left the door open for enlisting his enthusiasm in a pro-British crusade however; "we might join in the resistance with some feeling that it would be worth the cost, if anybody but the Chamberlain-Hoare-Simon crowd were running England."³³ Though not as implacable as the Marxists, the genteel brand of Davis's Anglophilism pointed in the same direction, and was a very significant part of the eventual appeal once war was an accomplished fact.

Veteran antagonists on ideological lines were not anywhere near

as confused as this. Louis Fischer's *Nation* essay, "Chamberlain's Choice," late in April, suggested that the terrible dilemma for representative capitalist minds such as Chamberlain and Georges Bonnet of France was "'Shall we safeguard our empires by stopping and destroying the Fascists or safeguard our social system by avoiding a war through further concessions and further vacillations?'" ³⁴ Arthur Rosenberg brought this out even more sharply in his review of Chamberlain's *In Search Of Peace* in mid-summer, violently opposing his thesis that the peace and stability of Europe was based on the attitudes of Germany, Britain, France and Italy; "If Chamberlain were eager to preserve peace and nothing else, he must needs approach all the other big powers of Europe; in ignoring Russia he made it clear that his real goal was not peace but a quadruple alliance of the conservative and Fascist powers against Russia and the so-called 'real danger.'" ³⁵ For the Popular Front-collective security liberal, the glaring defect in Chamberlain down to the day war began was his attitude toward Russia and his reluctance to let loose war on the grounds that he knew it would be the midwife of universal social revolution. This steadfast devotion to the ideology of the Popular Front was a major factor in the growth of the intense resentment toward Stalin's understanding with Hitler Germany, a signal that he no longer cared to consider war in this light.

Even when the amazing change in the foreign policy of Chamberlain took place in the spring, these views among collective security enthusiasts continued to stand up sturdily, which partially explains why Chamberlain was held to be more responsible for the Hitler-Stalin pact than Stalin, on the grounds that he had not abandoned his determination to preserve the Empire and the social order, and that his negotiation with the Communists was not sincere. And all moves toward getting ready for substantial trouble in the interests of such unilateral goals were roundly criticized. The *Nation* found the introduction of a conscription bill in April, 1939 by the Chamberlain government to be quite revolting and out of harmony with "the whole British tradition," even though it considered the Labor Party's opposition to be not "easy to sustain," since it had been "urging the government to take a firm stand against Fascism," and now apparently did not care to have the talk supported by action.³⁶ The collective security angle cut squarely across this issue too. It represented a slight warming to the idea that a Chamberlain getting ready to fight for any reasons was a better situation for their ambitions than a Chamberlain insistent on remaining detached indefinitely. Albert Viton seemed to signal the new position late in July when he said in the *Nation*, "Everyone is aware that Britain will fight not for democracy nor for the rights of free nations but to preserve its own empire," and supported this with the new apology, "But everyone is

also aware that British imperialism has become a lesser evil.”³⁷ Not until the Anglo-Russian negotiations had fallen through and the Russo-German understanding had become reality did this attitude gain much ground.

For neutrality-minded liberals grouped in the *New Republic* and *Common Sense* this was far less acceptable both as a reason for fighting and as a war aim, as will be seen. They had never shrunk from referring to Anglo-French behavior in their colonies as “aggression,” and the logic of left-liberal thinking involved the conviction that colonialism was as doomed as capitalism. A *New Republic* editorial on January 23, 1936, commenting on the symbolic significance of the death of both Rudyard Kipling and King George V in the same week, remarked, “In truth, the captains and kings depart, and the great line of British imperialism enters remorselessly into its sunset phase.”³⁸

In the months immediately preceding the war, the attack on the Colonial Club was going on at full blast. The most effective statements of the non-involvement wing of liberalism came from Hanighen, one in particular in the *New Republic* on May 10, 1939 while feverish rumors were being voiced involving a possible reshuffling of Africa and the return to Germany of its pre-1914 holdings there. Hanighen’s impartial denunciation, “No Colonies For Anybody,” had its main thesis in the first paragraph; “on the face of the record, no one of the ‘great’ nations, either among the democracies or the totalitarian powers, is fit to have any colonies at all,” he announced; “Every last one of them, in its colonial administration, shows an almost unbroken history of cruelty, greed and stupidity sufficient to make the angels weep.”

The readers got a change of diet from Hitler, Mussolini, Spain and China as he recited the doleful story of British suppression in India, Kenya, South West Africa, Ceylon, and the West Indies; “The sun never sets on British imperial oppression,” he summarized the account. He also found place for a mention of the French tangle with the Neo-Destour independence movement in North Africa and the brutal recruitment of Senegalese for its legions on the Rhine, while also giving Dutch and Belgian excesses much space, and closing with some mention of the United States in Puerto Rico and Italy in Ethiopia. Quoting Jomo Kenyatta as declaring that “What the natives really want is their independence,” and not reform, he also brought in the views of other colonial leaders, including Nehru and Gandhi of India, and Arab spokesmen such as Bourghiba and Messali Hadj, all of whom were to draw vast attention in the post-war era.³⁹

Hanighen’s “Making the World Safe For Empire” in *Common Sense* the month the war broke out was a powerful case against Britain and France and their determination to proceed with stern anti-independence programs in their colonies, as well as an indictment of

the hypocrisy of their propaganda against Germany and the treatment of the Jews, in the face of Anglo-French savagery in Asia and Africa, and the English repressions of the Irish Republican Army. Pointing out that there was no movement in either country demanding that they stay home within their own borders, Hanighen made what was considered a significant point by the neutralist liberals in their reluctance to attach themselves emotionally to the Anglo-French cause: ⁴⁰

This is an important distinction. It throws a vivid light on the fundamental conflict of ideals which must always separate the United States from Britain and France in a so-called front of democracies against Fascism.

So war closed in on England and the American liberals, with no clear-cut idea of just what was involved. Two years of fighting did not clear the air in any comprehensive manner, but under the heat of adversity, a bond of affection did become sealed, even if American entry in December, 1941 found most of the basic areas of conflict still unresolved. American liberals, despite a sudden conversion to the British standard and an about-face from criticism of Britain to spirited support for its actions, still were in great doubt at the end of 1941 as to just what Britain expected to gain from the war, and what its fundamental war aims were, if any.

PROPAGANDA AND PARTISANSHIP GIVE LIBERAL WAR REPORTAGE A BRITISH LABOR ACCENT

The *Nation* started out the war with the largest number of on-the-spot reporters, with Laski, Niebuhr, Ernest Davies, Aylmer Vallance and Villard in England when the hostilities in Poland commenced. With Fischer and Werth in France, Dell in Switzerland and Jonathan Griffin in Rumania, it guaranteed its readers a running account of the war news with an ideological twist. But the war news was too often reported in a pathetically eager manner, and the liberal weeklies were one of the poorest sources for the period. Occasional clashes of interpretation made things worse; an example was the conflict between the reports of Villard and Fischer from London, when both of them were there in October, 1939. Their overall flavor gave one the feeling that they were impressions from two different countries.

The year of the war prior to American entry rarely saw a page of war news which was not devoted to preparing the liberals how to think on the war, with more and more editorializing in the news reports. The major tasks of war propaganda in the modern era, stressing the personalization of the enemy in the form of his political chief

of state, and the creation of the firm conviction that he and his subordinates were the incarnations of evil lying in the way of the achievement of Utopia, found ready expression among the liberals, long trained in presenting nothing but the darkest possible side of Germany because of their Russian prejudices but finding it not difficult to adopt the same approach on behalf of its new-found champion in the long-suspected and despised British. Major changes in political personnel made this transition much simpler in 1940 and 1941. The pro-war liberal press won a notable niche for its part in this formula in the Second World War, during which the propaganda of the Germans displayed the same ineptness of the Imperial German campaign of 1914–1918; they failed in 1939–1945 to equal the achievements in diabolism of their Anglo-Saxon and ultimately American opponents by a wide margin.

The Germans had no attainment comparable to the British White Book on the German concentration camps, and lacked the grisly genius of the British in not naming a bombing plane "Liberator," though the word "liberation" as a euphemism for replacing one's domination for another's in the lands of a third party was mainly a Russian Communist achievement, one with great lasting consequences. And of course the Germans suffered the staggering blow of finding the first four notes of the first movement of a symphony by one of their most famous composers used as a propaganda device by the British radio as well, the famous "V for Victory" campaign of 1941 and after, employing the opening bar of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony as a Morse code equivalent for the letter "V."

All this was taken in stride by American liberals in an increasingly jaunty manner as the war drifted into months and then years, but adverse war news and British disasters had to be reported nevertheless. For a time it was possible to claim that anything adverse about the British let loose in America was due to German propagandists who had blown it up larger than life size, but the dark record of achievement in the struggle with the Germans was immensely trying, and great efforts were required to salvage the minimum of comfort and confidence from the almost unbroken series of calamities starting in the spring of 1940, after the ineptness of the previous fall.

One of the first to form the new ideological defense lines after the *Pakt* and after hostilities had broken out was Louis Fischer. His unequivocal support for the British and French and his testiness toward the Soviet in his *Nation* report "Europe Goes To War" on September 9, 1939 was a revolution in itself, for anyone who had followed his writing in the previous fifteen years. It was in the main a hurried and chaotic piece in which he dreamed of an Allied supporting operation through Rumania into Poland, which he thought

was going to be the long, weary Belgian campaign of World War Two.⁴¹ No reporter of the war for the liberal press was prepared for the suddenness of the Polish collapse. The compensation was the building up of a heated, fervent British partisanship which seemed all the more puzzling in view of the fact that it was the hated Chamberlain who still directed overall policy, at least in a nominal sense.

The gradual approximation of the internal structure of England to that of its antagonists did not dismay most liberals now enlisted for the duration. A *Nation* editorial paragraph on September 16 admitted, "Britain is now under a wartime dictatorship almost as stringent as that of a totalitarian country," although it developed the ingenious theory that it was a consequence of popular will; the German leadership had dragged its unwilling masses into war, but in Britain, "the people coerced the government into refusing more appeasement, freely accepting the probability that the consequence would be war." And its supporting editorial "The 'Peace' Offensive" expressed the firm confidence that there was no hope of the Germans succeeding in making a peace offer on the conclusion of the Polish campaign, no matter how they tried to approach Britain and France.⁴² This adamant attitude was also a source of embarrassment, because the lack of any tangible Allied war aims weakened a case for prolonging fighting.

Jaunty predictions of eventual British victory continued to issue during the winter of 1939-1940. One of the most extensive, Albert Viton's "The Empire and The War," in the *Nation* on December 2, built up a picture of Britain with such insuperable material and manpower advantages over Germany that it was grounds for wondering why the war lasted three months. The resources of America were not even being whispered about at this stage of the conflict. But it was obvious that things were not quite as favorable as Viton claimed, especially after John Maynard Keynes's *How To Pay For The War*⁴³ came out and received liberal reviews and considerations a few months later—a fantastic scheme for compulsory savings not dissimilar to what Drucker had described a year earlier as allegedly prevailing in Germany. Keynes's sober observation that 50 per cent of the national income was already being spent on war did not get wide publicity.

The famous incidents at sea drew significant comment during these days. That of the *Nation* on September 9 on the sinking of the *Athenia* blazed with prophetic Old Testament poetic fury; "the *Athenia* disaster has merely galvanized world opinion against Berlin. But Hitler by these methods is preparing for himself one triumph; he will go out in a blaze of hatred that will make the world's feeling against the Kaiser look like mild approval; and the hottest flames will rise from Germany itself."⁴⁴ But five months later the same

editors commended the British for seizing the German ship *Altmark* in Norwegian waters, issuing loud praise to the British for combining "audacity with a willingness to wink at the law in emergencies," and admitting that "the British admiralty deliberately gave orders involving the violation of Norwegian neutrality."⁴⁵ Unfortunately it revealed that British concern for the rights of neutrals was exceptionally flimsy and largely a compensation mechanism to belabor Germans for their violations. Only the *New Masses* stressed at the time the Germans detained the United States ship *City of Flint* that by the end of November, 1939 the British had searched 580 non-British ships and detained 12, the French 5 and the Germans only 3. There was no liberal outcry over British invasion of American rights at sea now, as there had been in 1915-1916.

The political war warmed up in the American liberal press with the coming of much adversity on the military and naval level. It was obvious by the late spring of 1940 that the acceptance of British leadership as it stood in September, 1939 had been done with no particularly notable enthusiasm and as a substitute for the wrecked world of collective security. The disasters of April through June, 1940 unleashed the pent-up resentment toward the Tories which had been expressed freely since the early '30s and suppressed with the coming of the war. The *New Republic's* May 13 editorial "The Lesson of Norway" was a comprehensive assault on all the Tory leaders and a serious reflection on their ability, especially Chamberlain, Halifax, Simon, Churchill and Eden. Beginning to edge away from their traditional non-involvement now, the junior liberal weekly insisted that "important to us as is Allied success in the war, we cannot ensure it as long as the Allies are incompetently led."⁴⁶ Patricia Strauss, the wife of a Labor Member of Parliament, in a *Nation* essay "What Dunkirk Did For England," also took this approach in examining the famous British debacle in France and their precipitate withdrawal back to England. "Someone higher up had blundered,"⁴⁷ was her thesis and that of a sizable number of articulate Laborites, although at the time she wrote, the Labor Party intrusion into the war government was massive, and in time to share responsibility for the fiascos of 1941. But it was a significant statement of the "dual war" thesis which had gained great support in left-liberal circles now, the idea of the war being simultaneously against Fascism abroad and the Tories at home.

Reflections on this had been made since the war began, and found the *Nation* the best medium for their dissemination here. The growth of Labor enthusiasm for the war can be documented almost on a weekly basis. Laski, in a sizable piece of political analysis on November 11, 1939, in which he apologized for Russian expansion into the Balkans, while stressing the absence of war aims and lack of

Tory zeal for Indian self-government, reported that the rank and file of British labor and the left were utterly unzealous about the war, while asserting that at the same time there was "also a grim determination to go on until the shadow of perpetual threat" was "removed from our lives."⁴⁸ On March 2, 1940, however, the Labor M.P. and journalist Ernest Davies in his "Labor Distrusts Chamberlain" reassured the editors that the Labor Party was vociferously behind the war, if not the Prime Minister. Uneasiness over the Finnish war was at the bottom of this, for Davies made it plain that the war Labor was for prosecuting was one to smash Hitler and establish Socialism in Europe, which is what he thought the ordinary Laborite thought the war was being fought for. On the other hand he personally held no grievance against Stalin, though regretting some of his actions, but he thought that the war against Finland had not affected Russian standing among Laborites and believed that the interest in the war among Labor did not extend to war with the Communists. Said Davies in summing up corroboration for his statement, "Even Sir Walter Citrine, general secretary of the Trades Union Congress, who has always been critical of the Soviet Union, has issued a warning that the workers would not stand for a war against Russia."⁴⁹

One of Robert Dell's last pieces for the *Nation* before the spring 1940 campaigns, "Tale of Two Wars," went into a most persuasive treatment of World War Two as "a war forced by the English and the French democracies on their respective governments," a "people's war" having as its sole aim "putting an end to German aggression and rescuing its victims." It was in the format of a bitter denunciation of British Tory leadership also, helping to illustrate the steady warming of the liberal-left toward the war, after the bewilderment of the late summer of 1939.⁵⁰

Still another contribution later in the year, Ralph Bates' "The Indivisible War," a painful effort to disentangle British Labor Party foreign policy in the pre-1939 period from the sticky grasp of the Communists, went into this long-range leftist idea that the Labor Party had been for a military buildup against Hitler since 1936 and willing to go to war against him since September, 1938. Bates insisted that the main idea of the time was that an "international civil war" was in progress, copying the terminology used by Ernest Bevin in July, 1940; and Bates was for as thoroughgoing a smashing of the European social order as the North had achieved in the South in the American Civil War and after. Promised Bates,

Even if the important changes which the exuberant optimists have by anticipation proclaimed do not occur during the war, Labor and progressive opinion have already conquered such positions that the defeat of the

Axis will in itself liberate the peoples, particularly the working classes, of Europe and produce radical phenomena.

The absence of Russia from the war did not seem to dim the feeling among spokesmen such as Bates and Dell that a proletarian conquest of their own conservatives as well as those everywhere else in Europe was immediately in sight through more fighting.

It is not surprising that the *Nation* printed at the same time incendiary attacks on various personalities which were considered helpful in undermining respect for the old order in Britain, despite its sustained prestige. On July 13, 1940 an essay, "Heil Edward Windsor!" by one Ladislas Farago, blamed the almost-forgotten ex-King for being personally responsible for frustrating Litvinov when the latter had allegedly suggested a Franco-Anglo-Russian punitive expedition against Germany to drive Hitler back from the Rhine in the spring of 1936. Farago also charged him with trying to create a dictatorship in Britain, and with being the principal force working for an Anglo-German bloc against Russia, as well as a vigorous leader of pro-Hitler intrigue in England after his abdication. Similarly hit for alleged pro-Hitler views in the 1930s was Lord Lothian, shortly after the occasion of his appointment as ambassador to the United States,⁵¹ while the *Nation's* editors, commenting on the death of Chamberlain in November, 1940, asserted that "No British imperialist, except perhaps Lord North, ever did so much to undermine the British Empire."⁵² But the era of Winston Churchill had not yet become extensive enough for qualifying observations to be posed on this question.

THE REHABILITATION OF WINSTON CHURCHILL

The restoration of respectability of certain British Tories in the eyes of most American liberals as a consequence of their part in steering the British war machine had several consequences. It was a slow and gradual process, beginning after the *Anschluss*, gaining ground after Munich, and accelerating considerably once hostilities were under way. The most memorable aspect of this was the precipitous climb of the star of Winston Churchill.

It was not an unruffled process, as the neutralists clung to a picture of the Tory rebels against the policies of Chamberlain much like that which they had spent so much time publicizing in the previous decade and earlier. By far the most tenacious adherent to the earlier view was Brailsford. As late as December, 1938 he was still wary of Churchill, whom he described as "that restless in-

triguer," adding, "no one trusts this dashing free lancer, who has changed sides oftener than his great ancestor, Marlborough." It was obvious that a big mark against Churchill was his known lack of enthusiasm for the Loyalist cause in Spain.⁵³

The first substantial breakthrough was the publication of Churchill's *While England Slept*, reviewed in the *Nation* by Arthur Rosenberg on October 29 with unqualified praise, especially appreciating its anti-German tone.⁵⁴ The title was not in harmony with liberal comments on the nature of English war preparation in the previous five years, and the repeated adverse remarks on the burgeoning munitions and arms businesses. But the initiative remained in the hands of the neutralists. On November 5 Villard devoted most of his column to an adverse discussion of Churchill's dramatic transoceanic radio address, appealing to the United States to "stand by the democracies." Reverting to liberal anti-involvement type, Villard brought up Versailles again, asserting that America would need proof that "another resort to arms would not produce something even worse than Hitler or Mussolini," that Munich was just the latest in a train of British "betrayals of democracy," and that what Churchill was really asking for was for the United States "to underwrite any errors" that the British government of the moment might make in the future.⁵⁵

Brailsford had pointed out something related to this as well: ⁵⁶

But rather tardily they have seen the peril to the British Empire, if all its strategical outworks are surrendered. The Empire is their prime concern, but they inherit the instinctive power of judgment which tells them that the Empire can be defended only by an active manipulation of the European balance of power.

But Brailsford did not mention that it was a rather poor quality of judgment which did not contemplate what effect the opening of Central Europe to Russia instead of Germany would do to this precious balance of power. There was the rest of the twentieth century to ruminate over that.

Similar aspersions were cast on the sincerity and reliability of the Tory rebels by Dell in the *Nation* at about the same time, especially in a dramatic piece "Why Is Eden Coming?" prepared in America as Dell had embarked on a lecture tour over a month before Eden's famous visit took place. Dell, still on his obsessive subject of Vansittart as the author of the Hoare-Laval plan in 1935, now made room to include Eden, charging that as minister for League of Nations affairs he had initialed the telegram to the British minister in Addis Ababa instructing him to pressure the Ethiopian ruler Haile Selassie to accept the plan immediately. He went on to insist that

Eden had kept British policy unchanged after he took over from Hoare, and that there was something very weak about his resignation from the government over Italian policy, since he had never voted against the government. And now he was coming as the emissary of the authors of an agreement he refused to support earlier. "The American public will do well to be on its guard," Dell cautioned.⁵⁷

Eden's speech before the National Association of Manufacturers was disparaged editorially in the *Nation* on December 17 as "the most sustained flight into the higher platitudes ever praised by the *New York Times*." It expressed grave disappointment for his failure to excite them with "a bold lead in the defense of democracy," and termed his speech "long but completely vacuous." And even after the war was under way,⁵⁸ Dell was still pursuing Eden, referring to his winter visit in America in 1938 as "the sweetest Tory ever sold." ⁵⁹ His theory was that Chamberlain wanted "to rule the world in cooperation with Hitler," that he did now want American aid, and that influence was used in Washington to prevent "spoiling Chamberlain's little games." "Anthony Eden was probably charged with a mission to that end," Dell concluded.⁶⁰

Though this group seemed to be in great disfavor, there were constant speculations that Churchill's political fortunes were on the rise, because of the Empire issue. Esmond Romilly's *Common Sense* article "England's Next Prime Minister" in the first issue after the war was on, hardly a flattering portrait, entirely, insisted that "What pushed Churchill into the political wilderness between the two wars was the fact that there was simply no place in England for an opposition group to the right of the official Tory Party." He made much of the rival attitudes toward the League among the two Tory groups. The government looked upon it as the source for dragging them into an ideological war against Fascism, but Churchill clung to the thesis that it was "the greatest instrument ever devised for the furtherance of British Imperialism." And the consequence of this seven years' war between them was the emergence of the odd alliance of the anti-Hitler Left and the anti-Hitler Churchill set, "too right wing for even a Tory cabinet to hold in the previous years." Romilly, trying to counteract the new dictum that Churchill had turned "progressive," and that he was to become the leader of a coming British Popular Front fighting Hitler for the triumph of leftist goals, disparaged this coldly; "He may get the support of Labor, to be sure—what else can Labor do but support the man who is going to fight Hitler—but it will be on his terms and his alone." ⁶¹ The interpretation that Hitler was out to demolish the British Empire had wide acceptance in the closing months of 1939. John Chamberlain also struck the line of the new political front emerging to obstruct this in his *New Republic* review of David Low's *A Cartoon History of*

Our Times, remarking that "No Churchill, David Low can still join hands with the fundamentally reactionary Winnie on the immediate issue of keeping worse imperialists (the Nazis) from hijacking the stolen goods of their betters." ⁶²

Though the *Nation* hailed the appointment of Churchill as First Lord of the Admiralty in September, 1939,⁶³ he remained a shadowy figure until the disasters of the following spring. One of the last uncomplimentary comments on him was made by Villard in his column of May 11, 1940, blaming him for a sizable hand in the loss of Norway to the Germans.⁶⁴ It was ironic that Villard's target was already the new Prime Minister, an event hailed editorially the next week as "an immense improvement" over the regime going out, and all his appointments except Eden were praised. Especial enthusiasm was shown over the inclusion of Laborites Arthur Greenwood, Clement Attlee, A. V. Alexander and Herbert Morrison.⁶⁵ The new government's ability to repeat the mistakes of the old and shoulder responsibility for a new round of calamities was soon demonstrated.

On May 25 there was more editorial rejoicing in the *Nation* over the wholehearted participation and support of the Labor Party to the Churchill government, with sixteen posts now in their hands. Much pleasure was expressed over Attlee's denunciation at the Labor Party's annual conference of a rank and file minority statement, that "the working classes were being dragged into a conflict between rival capitalisms," as "claptrap." The political futures of this group of ambitious Labor spokesmen made it evident that there would be no use for this re-appearance of the slogans which had sufficed in 1914. And it was probably even more ironic that George Lansbury should die as his power-thirsting younger colleagues were getting their first slaking through invitation into Mr. Churchill's war government. Villard's full-page eulogy made strange contrast.⁶⁶

Churchill began to take on new dimensions from June, 1940 on; he was no longer attacked as a Tory colonialist reactionary of the deepest hue. Brailsford's June 10 "Mr. Churchill Takes Command," his report from London on the accession to the Prime Ministership, shimmered with a lyrical quality. There were none of the loud, frank references to his "Fascist" overtones, his reactionary views on the Empire and his superior qualities to Sir Oswald Mosley as the likely British Führer, favorite points made in the past. "Destiny has swooped on England like a bombing plane that dives from the clouds," the *New Republic's* British editor glowed: "The hour called for a captain rather than a premier."⁶⁷ It was one of the opening guns of a campaign which was to reverse twenty years of description of Churchill as an opportunist journalist, an amateur political bungler and the distilled essence of reaction, and elevate him to a status in English history just a shade below King Arthur.

His emergence just after a series of deep humiliations at the hands of the Germans was in time to make him the director of the fiasco in France and the mastermind of the catastrophic withdrawal from Dunkirk, advanced to the world by an astute English language propaganda mill as a great victory. But Churchill gained more prestige among liberals by supervising this frightful defeat than his opponents ever gained by displaying astuteness and competence. Undoubtedly his stubborn stand in continuing the "peoples' war" against the Germans and his adamant stand against any consideration of peace had much to do with his support from this novel quarter. And policies which would have been flayed unmercifully a year earlier were accepted calmly and with commendation. On June 1 the *Nation* hailed the government's crackdown on dissidents and the arrests and jailings of pacifists, pro-Nazis, the outspokenly anti-Jewish Mosley Union of Fascist members, Irish Republican Army elements, and, more mildly, the Communists. Also held up for admiration was the willingness of the British people to accept "a suspension of their rights" by acceding to the Emergency Powers Defense Act, although the editors were reluctant to use such strong terminology as dictatorship in describing Churchill's new role under this law. The *Nation's* consolation was that the government could still be turned out by Parliament, theoretically, but it held up as an alternative the threat that a war defeat would mean permanent dictatorship as a device to make acceptance of the emergency logical.⁶⁸

Churchill's new-found popularity among American war liberals was indeed the unexpressed awareness that he was the leader of a Britain rapidly adopting one socialist expedient after another under the stimulus of fear of military defeat, a more rapid and far less exasperating route than extended parliamentary debate and public conversion through rational conviction. And all comments on the British scene which did not dovetail with the conviction that this was an altogether good thing were now handled in an implacably hostile manner. The *Nation* rejoiced when American Ambassador to London Joseph P. Kennedy resigned late in the year. Its December 7, 1940 editorial was infuriated at a newspaper interview in which he had declared that democracy was "finished" in England and that the appointment of Laborites by Churchill "spelled national socialism" for the country even if she won the war. A signed editorial by Freda Kirchwey a week later pursued him further. "Watch Joe Kennedy!" roasted him as a rich reactionary whose pessimism toward Britain was based on his hostility toward its socialist-labor orientation in national affairs and not because of its proven military impotence.⁶⁹ And both weeklies in their post-Christmas issues tied in the appointment of Lord Halifax as ambassador to the United States as a replacement for the deceased Lothian with the Kennedy case.

The *New Republic* titled its comment "The Halifax Blunder," and was appalled that Churchill could name such a man; "The kindest comment that could be made," it said, "would be to say that it is a hideous blunder." In their view it was a gesture of reassurance to "the American appeasement circle," agitated by Kennedy's warnings that labor was getting too powerful in England. Throwing up once more Halifax's pre-war actions, neither weekly was convinced that the 1935-1940 British leadership was dispersed and liquidated, nor that policy was safely in the hands of a determined anti-German element.⁷⁰

The year 1941 found the reputation of Churchill on the upgrade, his policies approved in an increasingly vociferous manner, and the opponents under attack, even the Communists. The *Nation's* lead editorial paragraph on February 1, apologizing for the conscription of labor as just announced by Ernest Bevin, could have graced the pages of any totalitarian newspaper; the same "compelling reasons" were advanced in justification of this policy step. And there was increasing petulance over the persistence of British Communist attacks.⁷¹ There had been much resentment earlier when the Communists had compared the occupation of Iceland with the German investments of Scandinavia and the Low Countries, but the event which stimulated the most reaction was the January 13, 1941 Communist-dominated Anti-war London "Peoples' Convention." Harold Laski was particularly injured by their attitude of criticism of the Churchill government, and suggested that British Communists had to defend the Soviet Union's position on the war, but that they really were unsure about Russian leadership and fearful of what extension of the war might do to their "experiment," in addition to having to admit that if they abandoned their imperialist-war position, "the leadership in the fight against Fascist dictatorship would have, after all these years, passed from Moscow to London."⁷² The novelty of Laski attacking Communists did not obscure the fact that even he looked upon the Churchill hybrid government as a new leftist force with more dynamic capabilities than Communism itself.

The liberal sentimentalism over the British by early spring of 1941 was painfully intense, but the new image of Churchill as the friend of democracy and the common man required overlooking his much-commented-upon established traits. A commentary on both American liberalism, and the forms British politics were taking under Churchill, was their sober weighing of his March, 1941 suggestion that an opposition dare to come into existence. Bifocal liberal views which looked upon the absence of opposition elsewhere as totalitarianism saw here only the natural consequences of "unity."

On the foreign scene there was an occasional rustle of criticism of Churchill still. The most important of these was an unfriendly *New*

Republic reaction to his radio speech addressed to the Italians on December 24, 1940. The January 6, 1941 issue described it as "a major miss," and deplored that he had gone on simply to make a British case against Mussolini instead of presenting the Italian case, in the hope of stimulating an internal revolution, which it believed an early possibility.⁷³ The *Nation* five weeks later took Churchill seriously when he declared in another speech that Great Britain had no expectation of assistance from American armies. It thought this was sufficient proof to rebut the thesis of Colonel Charles Lindbergh that Britain alone could not defeat Germany. The editors here still expected a major collapse of morale in Germany, and soon.⁷⁴

On May 10, 1941 the *Nation* expressed great unhappiness with a speech made by Hitler the previous week in which he had described Churchill as "an incendiary, a fanatic, a warmonger, a criminal, and a drunkard." ⁷⁵ Churchill had just been apotheosized by Hans Kohn, who had discovered a large new group of virtues in him upon the publication of *Blood, Sweat and Tears*. In Kohn's opinion Churchill revealed in this book that he was the person to whom the Wilson leadership had been transferred, and rightly so; "in the last decade, Churchill has grown in stature," Kohn pronounced; "Intelligence and courage were always his; he has added wisdom and vision." This must have indeed been a revelation to the liberals who had rarely found a quality worth mentioning in Churchill's character in the twenty years between the wars. Kohn was so overwhelmed by the book's richness that he thought most of it worthy of quotation, and he rejoiced that it contained not the faintest breath of "narrow nationalism, of a Britain First attitude," especially prizing his proposals for common citizenship with the French and Americans. Kohn was sure Churchill had now emerged as the ultimate in democratic leaders, and unqualifiedly supported his prediction, "If we can stand up to Hitler, the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands." ⁷⁶ But, as will be seen, there were many other liberals, who, now just as awed by and worshipful of Churchill as Kohn, did not think this was a substitute for tangible war aims. However, there was no doubt that war had washed away a laboriously constructed liberal image of a politician and hastily erected an utterly contradictory monolithic figure in its place. That the latter was in considerable part a product of mass communications media in general was not relevant; the darkly negative picture of Churchill was a possession of the liberal-left, and it was the liberal-left which performed by far the greatest acrobatic feat in changing their position on him.

THE "BATTLE OF BRITAIN"

PLUMBS THE LIBERAL WELL OF EMOTIONS

American public communications has probably never known the equal of the exciting high drama served to the populace from the summer of 1940 through that of 1941, the second of the grand "battles" in which the lightning war of movement was now described. The first, the "battle of France," had ended in the promenade of the Germans through the Low Countries and beyond Paris, forcing the expulsion of the entire British forces from the Continent at Dunkirk. The second, the "battle of Britain," a much more nebulous one, began almost as soon as the British had regained their composure at home.

The sudden collapse in France unnerved the very largest part of America's professional friends of both France and England, and led to hysteria of an unmatched sort, even when compared with the subsequent hectic era when the entire planet was endangered by obliteration in a matter of minutes. The conviction ranged far and wide that an immediate invasion of England was the next step in German plans, a conviction which was embellished by a wide variety of suggested plausible ways in which it might be done. And even the sophisticated press of America's substantial liberal movement was largely carried away by this emotional detonation, even though it may have reached its irrational peak on the radio. Imaginations knew no bounds for a short while, with rumors gaining steadily purporting to describe stunning new schemes for invasion accompanied by alleged "secret" weapons, along the line which had been suggested were employed in the rapid over-running of the French. One or two calm voices spoke up in skepticism, in the atmosphere of dread. The June 10, 1940 *New Republic*, one of the most alarming exhibits of the unnerving influence of the easy German victory over an opposition hailed time and again as fully competent to handle any Teutonic threat, contained two such. One was a casual debunking by Hessel Tiltman of the chances of a German army ever landing on a British beach, which teased the shrieking with whimsical comment to the effect that, "according to some, the Germans are banking on a tank-carrying airplane, a new arsenical gas, and a new species of pro-Nazi grasshopper specially trained to eat up growing grain." His "Can England Be Blitzkrieged?" was one of the few exceptions to the reading fare of liberals in these hyperthyroid days. And William P. Mangold in the same issue urged the readers to visit two large New York City bookstores stocking German publications, in which they might see all the "secret" weapons described and pictorially represented all the way back to 1936, in great detail.

"The Battle of Britain is on," a *Nation* editorial announced on August 17, 1940, in its opinion the signal for the showdown on the future of the British Empire, as well as the determinant "whether the United States must become a great military power prepared to shoulder the final responsibility for preventing Hitler's domination of the world."⁷⁷ Only the *New Masses* stressed that the beginning of heavy bombing of Britain was the signal that another German peace overture by Hitler had been spurned, which they interpreted as an indication that Churchill had received promises of massive aid and support from America, the British situation being as desperate as it was. Liberals concentrated on a mixture of reports of bombings and invasion scares instead of this, but even here it was not entirely possible to conceal that there were two sides to this contest. In a choked discussion of the drama of the defense of England from German bombers, on August 24, a casual editorial observation was made on the ease with which the Royal Air Force was staging reprisal raids, even 1600-mile roundtrip attacks against Italian aircraft factories in Milan and Turin.⁷⁸ Two faces of the Axis airpower were constantly alternated thereafter: terror at its alleged invincibility versus realistic realization of its numerous weaknesses and over-ratings.

Again in a lead editorial paragraph on September 14 the *Nation* reported unemotionally the pounding and counter-pounding of the British and German air forces. The impression from this was quite plain that the belief that the Germans were getting just as heavy a bombing by British airpower was gaining rapidly. But at the same time the journals luxuriated with articles which often went to lugubrious extremes reporting London under attack. The sentimental assault was enough to make sympathizers out of those who had always hated the place. Laski's "London: Democracy In Action" on October 12 was one of the prime examples of this approach, expressing firm conviction that the Germans were totally to blame for the bombing of cities, without a breath concerning the powerful RAF raids on Italy, or the bombings of German cities since May, 1940.⁷⁹ The intent to stimulate sentimental thoughts of Britain was obvious, although even he could not suppress the observation that the RAF was shooting down so many German planes that the cost of the London raids was "out of all proportion to the results received." Accompanying this all summer and fall were editorial arguments that the dogged British resistance would frustrate the German invasion attempts across 26 miles of the English Channel, even though there was a parallel argument intended for those occupied entirely with American situations which simultaneously suggested that the 3000 miles of the Atlantic Ocean were a puny barrier to the "Nazi hosts"

and that they might be expected momentarily, by way of the Azores, or Dakar, in West Africa, or even Brazil.

By the end of the year, there were minority reports for liberals who searched in out of the way places. *Common Sense* in November pounded away at the line that the Germans were suffering equal damage in RAF attacks on "military objectives," and much heavier plane losses, and that furthermore the Canadian and American sources of British planes were not being subjected at attack at all. And it took a bold ironic swipe at the more aggravated emotional discussions of the air war over England in its January, 1941 editorial, "Bombs dropped on London are signs of the hideous depths of bestiality to which Nazism has reduced the Germans, while bombs dropped on Berlin are hailed as tokens of heroic achievement."⁸⁰

Of course, the *New Masses*, with its strong anti-involvement position in support of the Soviet Union, remained impressively detached during this phase of the propaganda assault on American intellectual sensibilities. It quietly reported the British bombings of Germany along with those by Germans of Britain, although it injected the proletarian issue by noting that the Communist Wedding sector of Berlin was among those places hardest hit. But it went in for no invasion or fifth-column scares such as saturated the pro-British-committed liberal weeklies, and avoided the turgid emotionalism which colored the issues of these former colleagues in ideological contests. During the 1939-1941 period prior to Russian involvement in the war, there is no evidence that Marxists of pro-Russian sympathies entertained any dread of Hitlerian influence in the Western Hemisphere in the form of physical occupation. Even as late as January 14, 1941 the *New Masses* scorched the President after his message to Congress, flaming out at him that "the whole attempt to justify waging war many thousands of miles away rests on a fundamental lie," and that "the invasion scare" was "also based on that lie."⁸¹ It preferred to print repeatedly the saying attributed to Karl Liebknecht, "Der Feind steht im eignen Lager" ("The main enemy is at home").

On November 18, 1940 the *New Republic* published Julian Huxley's "Security From the Air," which quietly announced that the Germans had been defeated in the air battle over Britain, and exuded confidence over the future British influence as a result of the long-term consequences of this, particularly the growth of British air instead of sea power, presumably making Britain ultimately more powerful in European affairs than ever before and carrying Britain far into "the interior of the European land mass," previously beyond the reach of British naval power. This was a stunning thesis for American readers to contemplate, having built up in their minds only the stereotype of a desperate Britain with back to the wall

everywhere and in hardly any position to make the faintest retaliation. Huxley stressed German air weakness, especially the tailoring of its forces to accompanying daytime movements of tanks and troops, ill suited for the nighttime British bombing chore. But the RAF, he proudly commented, with quiet satisfaction, had "from the first trained itself in the difficult technique of night flying for the attack of key objectives far behind the enemy's line," as good a description of strategic bombing as might have been seen at that time. In his view the RAF could rightly be called Britain's aerial navy, and with American and Canadian collaboration and supply, Britain, in Huxley's calmly confident report, could "extend her type of protection all over Europe, right up to the borders of Russia."⁸² The editors apparently were not reading their new British correspondent very closely, in view of their persistence in thinking still in terms of the deadly imminent threat of a Hitlerian conquest of the United States across 3000 miles of the North Atlantic. This hysteria, begun in May, was to keep its potency until December.

In January, 1941 the exploits of the British air arm started getting more attention in liberal columns, with mention of its raid in broad daylight on "invasion ports" in France across the Channel, a *New Republic* editorial on the 20th boldly advancing now that "The news that planes had machine-gunned German soldiers in coastal trenches suggested that the fear of invasion might not be confined to the English side of the Channel." Stories continued to be printed along this line, until the end of July. By this time the invasion of Britain by Germans had become a remote possibility, now that Russia was in the war, though that of the United States by the Germans seemed more likely, strangely enough. This odd contradiction blandly appeared a number of times, and a loud and serious debate went on in the *New Republic* on the plausibility of an attack on North America by Germans via Africa and South America, while British fears of such invasion were vanishing.

In the meantime, curious reports on the total effect of German bombing in Britain continued to filter out of the country. H. N. Brailsford, in a *New Republic* piece on August 11, in contradiction to the lurid editorial picture of all London in flames during the height of the Battle of Britain, declared that "It is fortunate that the [German] bombers, concentrating on the mean streets around the docks, destroyed chiefly much that had no right to survive."⁸³ And John Strachey's "Bombing Is a Quiet Business," on November 10, declared that in the summer of 1941, automobile accidents in Britain were killing many more people than were the German bombs.⁸⁴ But sentimental and melodramatic pieces on Britain at war did not cease for that reason, by any means. Yet there is no doubt that the persistent propaganda portraits of English cities in total

ruin did much to provide the public support later on for an obliteration of German urban areas on a scale which made earlier German destruction appear utterly trivial by comparison, and made it appear even more pointless by the upward trend of German war production to its high point a few weeks before the end of the war, indicating the failure of the announced objective after 1941 of this strategic bombing in Britain and the United States. The 315 tons of bombs dropped on Germany for every single ton dropped by German planes on Britain during the entire war destroyed all basis for comparison, as well as Germany's cities.

The *New Republic* editorial criticizing Churchill's Christmas, 1940 speech to the Italians had said among other things that England was "in need of creative political thinking about Italy to match her brilliant military victories," a rather breath-taking statement in view of the almost unrelieved saga of defeat which had been the British lot since the autumn of 1939. This may have been conditioned by the temporary success being won against the forces of Il Duce in North Africa, plus the tactic of praising both the Dunkirk retreat and the successful warding off of the German Luftwaffe as major victories. But there is little doubt that a great wave of false optimism began to overtake the liberal press during these days. The *Nation's* editorial position on December 28, 1940 took the position that the war was unlikely to last until 1942, but hardly much longer than the beginning of that year, if that long.⁸⁵

This thinking was reflected in repeated over-confidence in the succeeding months, when reverses suffered by their Italian enemy were rejoiced in too soon, and the beginning of new German moves was called sure to end in failure. The *Nation* in December spoke much too hastily on the occasion of the Italian defeats in Albania and North Africa, the editorial "The Italian Debacle" of the 21st claiming that these events were "the turning-point of the war."⁸⁶ German support in both areas once more carried on the train of British calamity and wrecked liberal prophecy.

And as in each of the previous cases involving British military and naval fiascos since September, 1939, the *Nation* started out its survey of Hitler's Balkan campaign and desert attack in the spring of 1941 with optimism, giving the British the full benefit of the doubt, and winding up its account of the ensuing defeats with another story of panic, with horrendous predictions of worse to come. In the issue of May 3 the lead editorial paragraph quietly announced that with the German conquest of Greece, Hitler had "ousted Britain from its last toehold on the mainland of Europe," and attention was quickly diverted to North Africa, where the new threat was materializing.

With the entry of the Russians into the war, a certain amount of squeamishness about the rights of neutrals and previous positions

disappeared from liberal columns. When British and Soviet troops drove into and occupied Iran in the late summer of 1941, the *Nation* reported, "In forcing their way into Iran the British and Soviet troops acted with a vigor and speed which have given heart to their supporters in every country," and reflected a regret that they had not invaded other neutrals before the Germans.⁸⁷ As in the bombing of cities, the "peace-loving" nations were starting to prove that given proper opportunity, they could equal or excel the "aggressor" nations at the arts of war.

And on December 13, the same editors explained the British declaration of war on Finland, the country it had so vigorously championed against Russia in 1939-1940, as a consequence of its "aiding Germany in waging aggressive war against Russia."⁸⁸ Thus, since war was indivisible, Finland was also fighting Britain and the United States. Totally ignored was the fact that the Communists not only thought peace was divisible but also war, since they were supporting this latter thesis by scrupulously avoiding conflict with Japan. Thus, the United States was now at war with Germany because Germany was fighting Russia, but Russia was not at war with Japan because the United States was, a glaring exception to the logic of martial indivisibility which was best met by silence.

The spring of 1941 was one agony after another to the *Nation*. Its editors were just faintly aware of the forces let loose in North Africa and the Near East. They appeared to think that an 1885-type colonial war was going on, and that the British and French would re-emerge with their possessions in hand, and that the placid and unruffled days of old would return once the Germans were chased out. On May 24 it published a long report by a complacent former French legal attaché at Cairo, Raoul Aglion, titled "Allah's Divided Children," which calmly predicted that Arab loyalty and submissiveness to Britain and France could be counted on and that "in the main the world-wide Moslem communities will remain loyal to the cause of the democracies."⁸⁹

But in the case of India there was much concern. Here there was much dissension over British policy, and it began to get flaming attention in the autumn of 1939. A lengthy and peevish *Nation* editorial on the failure of the British government to issue a clear war-aims statement appeared late in October, on the eve of the India Congress Party meeting. It concluded that British leaders were not intelligent enough to take advantage of the muffling of the immediate independence drive by "left-wing Congress leaders such as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru," who had also issued a heated statement declaring that the Nazis were a far greater threat to the world and to India than British imperialism. The *Nation* felt it a "colossal blunder" to miss the chance of getting the good will of India's millions by not

telling them what Britain was fighting for, and also to "hold out some definite hope of Indian freedom."⁹⁰ The Prime Minister's war aims speech of November 26 was hooted at as the presentation of a "utopian dream," with the aside that if the British were sincere they could show it by "a more liberal spirit toward India and a willingness to democratize its own empire."⁹¹ The following spring, when the Congress called for a new campaign of civil disobedience, while the British were experiencing the Scandinavian fiasco, the *Nation* returned to the subject with vehemence. The editors were repelled by the sweeping powers given the British authorities to suppress this uprising, and they surmised, "It would seem that only an unmistakable invitation of America's interest would save India from a repetition of the brutal repression used against Gandhi's previous campaign of non-violent civil disobedience," even though they were not pleased that Gandhi himself showed no particular enthusiasm for the British war cause.⁹²

When Indian passive resistance provoked the jailing of Vinoba Bhave for making pacifist speeches, followed by that of Nehru, liberal publicity intensified. The *Nation* interpreted the failure of the British to jail Gandhi as a consequence of his reconsideration that Britain should not be weakened "in its hour of danger" by a mass civil disobedience campaign, and it expressed the opinion to its readers that it was likely to take place if he joined it. But the imprisonment of Nehru, "India's leading anti-Fascist," as the editorial of November 9 described him, was the occasion for one of its rare criticisms of the wartime Churchill government.⁹³ The act was called "a loss to the progressive wing of the Congress Party, but it will serve a useful purpose if it helps to awaken Britain to the perennial folly of its Indian policy." Though Churchill had been the traditional symbol of this intransigence toward Indian freedom, for once he was exempted from personal attack; the existence of wartime politics had created an aura of immunity for him now. The safety of the Empire was an American liberal war aim, but the independence of India was an exception to this program, one of the few pre-war liberal championings still adhered to in this period of massive turn-about.

The *Nation* felt no misgivings about publishing Nehru's own explanation of Indian views on the war on February 1, 1941.⁹⁴ It was their contention that the British were missing a splendid chance to gain a much more cooperative partner in the war against Germany by not giving India its freedom and depending on men such as Nehru to mobilize the country in support of overall British ambitions. The publication on May 31 of W. E. Lucas's "Russia's Threat To India," in line with the post-Rudolf-Hess-flight-to-England think-

ing, of expecting a coming Russo-German military alliance, and a subsequent "two-pronged Nazi-Soviet drive toward the East," emphasized this with vehemence.⁹⁵ It was time to set India free, and let the pro-British-victory leaders like Nehru gather together resistance against this enemy. But this topic of Indian independence led directly and deeply into a much larger topic, that of war aims. No subject connected with the war prior to December 7, 1941 obtained more space in the liberal press, and at the same time, nothing connected with the war aroused so much liberal anxiety and unhappiness, because of the vagueness and unsatisfactory response to their pleas for a clear and simple announcement of what the French and especially the British were fighting for.

NOTES

- 1 *New Republic*, July 17, 1935, pp. 267-269.
- 2 *New Republic*, June 26, 1935, p. 177.
- 3 *Nation*, July 3, 1935, p. 5.
- 4 *New Republic*, July 3, 1935, p. 224.
- 5 Villard, "England and the United States," *Nation*, July 17, 1935, p. 63.
- 6 Laski, "The New British Cabinet," *Nation*, July 17, 1935, pp. 70-71.
- 7 *New Republic*, August 28, 1935, pp. 236-238. Two months earlier Harold Laski blamed the MacDonald government for having "immense responsibility" for the current Hitler policies and accused MacDonald's coalition regime of "torpedoing the Disarmament Conference"; "the abolition of bombing from the air would have been most certainly achieved had it not been for the refusal of the British government to forego its right to bomb recalcitrant natives in India and Iraq." Laski, "Hitler of England," *Nation*, June 5, 1935, pp. 3-4.
- 8 *Nation*, August 29, 1936, pp. 226-227. See also October 17, 1936, pp. 434-435, for a critique of the Imperial Policy Group and Kenneth de Courcy.
- 9 *New Republic*, April 8, 1936, pp. 240-241.
- 10 *New Republic*, April 1, 1936, pp. 227-228.
- 11 Brailsford, "Britain Drifts Toward Hitler," *New Republic*, June 3, 1936, pp. 92-94.
- 12 *New Republic*, October 28, 1936, p. 349.
- 13 *New Republic*, February 10, 1937, p. 18.
- 14 *New Republic*, January 6, 1937, p. 288.
- 15 *New Republic*, January 13, 1937, p. 316.
- 16 *New Republic*, March 24, 1937, p. 198.
- 17 Brailsford, "England After the Crisis," *New Republic*, January 6, 1937, pp. 294-296.
- 18 See articles in *Nation*, October 31, 1936, pp. 518-520 and July 24, 1937, pp. 93-95.
- 19 Dutt, "Why Britain Rearms," *New Masses*, March 30, 1937, pp. 3-5; Dell, "Robert Vansittart, Europe's Arbitrator," *Nation*, July 24, 1937, pp. 93-95, and "Behind Vansittart's Promotion," *Nation*, January 22, 1938, pp. 97-98.
- 20 *New Republic*, October 6, 1937, p. 248; *Nation*, September 11, 1937, pp. 253-254.
- 21 See in particular Howe's letter to editors, *Nation*, September 25, 1937, p. 331.
- 22 *New Republic*, September 15, 1937, pp. 147-149.
- 23 *New Republic*, November 24, 1937, pp. 60-61.
- 24 *New Masses*, March 15, 1938, p. 19, and April 12, 1938, pp. 19-20.
- 25 Dell, "Chamberlain's Treason," *Nation*, March 12, 1938, pp. 292-293.
- 26 Schuman, "Perfidious Albion," *New Republic*, April 20, 1938, pp. 321-323; editorial "Mussolini Wins," *New Republic*, April 27, 1938, pp. 346-347; letters to editor, *New*

Republic, May 18, 1938, p. 48. One reader responded, "The whole argument for collective security is a bloody joke. The best proof of it is Mr. Schuman's article."

27 Laski, "What British Labor Demands," *Nation*, April 9, 1938, pp. 412-413.

28 *New Republic*, April 13, 1938, pp. 295-296. A reader subsequently dismissed Keynes's suggestions as "the clichés of the war-minded." May 18, 1938, p. 48.

29 "Take Chamberlain: He's Yours," *Nation*, May 28, 1938, pp. 605-606; Howe's letter on p. 626.

30 *Nation*, July 2, 1938, pp. 8-9.

31 *Nation*, January 1, 1939, p. 40.

32 Haldane, "Hitler Woke Me Up," *New Masses*, February 28, 1939, pp. 3-4.

33 *New Republic*, February 15, 1939, pp. 35-37. Davis's switch from a strong neutralist stand was forecast in his *Harper's* article, "The Road From Munich," December, 1938, pp. 40-48, where he also suggested that America might "look at the things that make Germany strong, to see if there are not some of those qualities that we can emulate, without giving up our principles."

34 *Nation*, April 29, 1938, pp. 490-492.

35 *Nation*, August 5, 1939, p. 152.

36 *Nation*, May 6, 1939, p. 514.

37 Viton, "Britain Wins Back the Mediterranean," *Nation*, July 29, 1939, pp. 118-120.

38 *New Republic*, January 23, 1936, p. 322.

39 *New Republic*, May 10, 1939, pp. 11-13.

40 *Common Sense*, September, 1939, pp. 20-22. See also Hanighen, "England's Rigor Mortis," *Common Sense*, March, 1939, p. 2. As late as the following May, with the German armies beginning to punch through the Anglo-French allies, Rexford Guy Tugwell could declare "Never again will we risk anything for British or French imperialism; that can be put down among the decisions to be taken for granted." "Must We Draft Roosevelt?," *New Republic*, May 13, 1940, pp. 630-633.

41 *Nation*, September 9, 1939, pp. 262-263.

42 *Nation*, September 16, 1939, pp. 278, 280-281.

43 Viton, "The Empire At War," *Nation*, December 2, 1939, pp. 602-604. Keynes's book was published in the United States in the spring of 1940 by Harcourt, Brace.

44 *Nation*, September 9, 1939, p. 258.

45 *Nation*, February 24, 1940, p. 265.

46 *New Republic*, May 13, 1940, pp. 626-628.

47 "Strauss, 'What Dunkirk Did For England,'" *Nation*, November 2, 1940, pp. 415-416.

48 Laski, "On Britain's Left and Right," *Nation*, November 11, 1939, pp. 520-522.

49 *Nation*, March 2, 1940, pp. 302-304.

50 On the pre-hostilities diplomacy, Dell asserted, "On September 2, Winston Churchill, Eden and Duff Cooper saw Chamberlain and told him that if he accepted negotiations they would raise an open revolt against him in the Conservative Party. Chamberlain then climbed down and the British government declared war on Germany." *Nation*, April 6, 1940, pp. 441-444. Dell, long on the Fabian Society's executive committee, died in July. See *Nation*, July 27, 1940, p. 65.

51 The *Nation* placed a large part of the blame for Lothian's alleged ardent pro-National Socialist views in the middle 1930s upon the fact that he was a Christian Scientist, "a faith which puts a premium on unreality," *Nation*, September 9, 1939, pp. 258-259.

52 *Nation*, November 16, 1940, p. 461.

53 More sustaining was Churchill's known views on India. Brailsford referred to him as the leader of the Tory rebels, the majority "diehard imperialists of the school that followed Mr. Churchill in opposing a very moderate measure of self-government for India." This sounded like the *Nation's* editorial, "The Diehards and India," published on December 9, 1931 (p. 629); "Through the press and on the platform the perfervid Winston Churchill and his coterie of extremists" were charged with waging an intensified campaign against a liberal policy for India. Brailsford's commentary in *New Republic*, December 21, 1938, pp. 193-195, in article titled "An English People's Front."

54 *Nation*, October 29, 1938, pp. 455-456.

55 *Nation*, November 5, 1938, p. 480.

- 56 See note 53.
- 57 *Nation*, December 10, 1938, pp. 612-613.
- 58 *Nation*, December 17, 1938, pp. 649, 651.
- 59 *Nation*, April 15, 1939, pp. 451-452. Dell's critiques of British leadership while on his lecture tour of the United States beginning in November, 1938, prompted an angry lady of English extraction to write to the *Nation* and refer to him as "the lowest form of life—a man who makes money by running down his own country to foreigners." This was not a standard which the editors had applied to Germany, however.
- 60 Dell, *Nation*, February 25, 1939, pp. 227-229.
- 61 *Common Sense*, October, 1939, pp. 6-9. See also Bernard Knox, "If Not Chamberlain, Who?," *New Republic*, July 28, 1939, pp. 206-207. The author was identified as a British veteran of the fighting in the Communist International Brigades in Spain.
- 62 *New Republic*, August 23, 1939, pp. 80-81. The *Nation's* sensitiveness toward racial caricatures did not extend to Low's revival of the defamatory ape-Irishman picturizations of a century before, during a season of English-Irish quarreling in 1940. The editors printed some of them themselves; the more offensive were those of March 9, 1940, p. 336, and August 24, 1940, p. 147.
- 63 *Nation*, September 9, 1939, p. 258.
- 64 *Nation*, May 11, 1940, p. 599.
- 65 *Nation*, May 18, 1940, p. 609.
- 66 *Nation*, May 25, 1940, pp. 638-639; May 18, 1940, p. 628.
- 67 *New Republic*, June 10, 1940, pp. 787-788.
- 68 *Nation*, June 1, 1940, p. 665.
- 69 *Nation*, December 7, 1940, p. 545; December 14, 1940, pp. 593-594.
- 70 *Nation*, December 28, 1940, p. 645; *New Republic*, December 30, 1940, p. 886. The *Nation* favored the appointment of Sir Archibald Sinclair as American ambassador.
- 71 *Nation*, February 1, 1941, p. 113.
- 72 Laski, "British Communists Help Hitler," *Nation*, February 15, 1941, pp. 176-178. The *New Masses'* reaction to the sudden conversion of the liberal weeklies to vociferous championing of Britain was to reprint United States Ambassador to England Walter Hines Page's famous "hang the Irish agitators" letter to President Edwin A. Alderman of the University of Virginia on June 22, 1916.
- 73 "How Not To Make A Revolution," *New Republic*, January 6, 1941, pp. 3-4.
- 74 *Nation*, February 15, 1941, p. 169.
- 75 *Nation*, May 10, 1941, p. 542.
- 76 *Nation*, May 3, 1941, pp. 533-534.
- 77 *Nation*, August 17, 1940, p. 121.
- 78 *Nation*, August 24, 1940, p. 141.
- 79 *Nation*, September 14, 1940, p. 201; October 12, 1940, pp. 325-326.
- 80 *Common Sense*, November, 1940, p. 19; January, 1941, pp. 16-17.
- 81 "The Message To Congress," *New Masses*, January 14, 1941, p. 3.
- 82 *New Republic*, November 18, 1940, pp. 687-688.
- 83 Brailsford, "Social Changes In England," *New Republic*, August 11, 1941, pp. 180-181.
- 84 *New Republic*, November 10, 1941, pp. 617-619.
- 85 "Keep the Lines Open," *Nation*, December 28, 1940, pp. 647-648.
- 86 *Nation*, December 21, 1940, pp. 620-621.
- 87 *Nation*, August 30, 1941, p. 170.
- 88 *Nation*, December 13, 1941, p. 598.
- 89 *Nation*, May 24, 1941, pp. 607-610. See also Albert Viton, "Britain In the Near East," *New Republic*, September 16, 1940, pp. 381-382, which was darkly pessimistic. He described the prodigious growth of Pan-Arabism and the widespread coolness toward the English in the Arab world, in the absence of a new Colonel Lawrence. Freda Kirchwey's signed editorial "Which France Are We For?," in the issue for September 6, 1941, pp. 191-192, excoriated Roosevelt and the "reactionary bureaucrats" in the State Department for continuing relations with the Vichy government, and demanded withdrawal of recognition at once.
- 90 "Trouble Ahead in India," *Nation*, October 28, 1939, pp. 457-458.
- 91 *Nation*, December 2, 1939, p. 593.

- 92 *Nation*, April 27, 1940, pp. 526-527. On Gandhi's early coolness see Krishnalal Shridharani, "Gandhi Has Decided," *Nation*, May 4, 1940, pp. 564-566.
- 93 *Nation*, October 19, 1940, p. 399; November 9, 1940, p. 433.
- 94 Nehru, "India and the War," *Nation*, February 1, 1941, pp. 121-124.
- 95 *Nation*, May 31, 1941, pp. 632-633.

THE INTELLECTUAL WRESTLING
MATCH WITH THE STICKY ISSUE
OF WAR AIMS, 1939-1941

ONE of the most important keys to understanding liberal support for the Second World War was the deep conviction, acquired over a more than two-year period, that vast revolutionary forces were being, or about to be, liberated by this struggle, and if properly guided, might lead to fundamental desirable changes in the social and economic face of most of the Western world, at least, if not on a planetary level. It was not just a war to destroy Hitler from their point of view. It is one of the most important if not the most important of the reasons for the persistent calls for statements of war aims from the Allied leaders, in an effort to obtain significant concessions along these lines. Liberal spokesmen knew it was a major opportunity to advance toward their goals with great speed, dwarfing the gains made in the previous decade. Some of them sensed the irritability of the political leaders, who really did not have a program that extended beyond military victory, and who were so short-sighted that in their zeal to annihilate one totalitarian they did not object to giving the main strategic advantage to another by default, in addition to taking a few steps down the totalitarian lane themselves.

This partially explains why the editors and some of the most zealous liberal contributors disparaged the Atlantic Charter announce-

ment as a weak paraphrase of some of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points of the First World War; they were aware of the lameness of this announcement and did not conceal their disappointment. As a statement of war aims, it could hardly have been more unsatisfactory, when one examines what they did hail as significant in this area. For many, it was their hope that under cover of the war emergency, a sizable part of the economy of both the United States and Great Britain would be collectivized according to one or another brand of socialist theory, especially that current within the British Labor Party at the time, and run by the State in both instances.

Liberal enthusiasm for defending Britain and aiding it in overthrowing Hitler was far more than Anglophilia come to late bloom. The Britain they wanted to defend was one in which a particular political situation existed, namely, one where socialist Laborites were gaining power steadily, and showed striking promise of being able to effect sweeping economic and social changes in the country as well as promoting a healthy "war effort." Part of the reason for the new-found virtues in Winston Churchill after nearly two decades of insults was his use of Laborites in his government and the drastic economic controls he introduced, which were considered very opportune developments, an ideal starting point for even more comprehensive advances. The praise seemed an easy thing to bestow, since it was liberal conviction that the future contained faint promise for the survival of his values in British public affairs with the tide running the way it was.

Nevertheless, the absence of expressed war aims by the British and French governments produced a gnawing, uneasy twinge among liberals supporting them in the war. Though their guesses as to Hitler's aims and objectives in print might have covered several acres, they were matched by only a tiny trickle of complementary writing on Allied war aims, almost entirely a product of liberal imaginations in the beginning and innocent of almost any relation to the policy-making decisions of the Allied leaders, even after almost two years of war. From the war's outbreak, liberal writers and speakers experienced grave tremors of anxiety and showed increasing perturbation over the absence of expressed war aims. The myopic Churchillian goal of annihilating Europe if necessary in order to rid the world of Hitler had their approval in one sense, yet they could not suppress their vast dissatisfaction with the utterly negative Allied approach. The First World War had goals of pristine clearness compared to this new war, and there was persistent liberal unhappiness over this empty offering as far as foreign settlements were involved. Blood, sweat, toil and tears sounded magnificent, but they were unlikely materials out of which to create a viable Europe, and the liberals knew it. Thus two main areas of conflict developed on this

subject, and the reluctance of the Allies, notably the British government, to commit themselves to a program for either postwar England or postwar Europe, created a major rift in the rapport which had steadily grown between them and Anglo-American liberalism once hostilities were under way.

Although a form of tribal vengeance had captivated a significant segment of liberal thinking well in advance of the war, committing them to an implacable course ending only in the destruction of Germany, the neutralist and anti-collective security liberals were still in favor of some sort of compromise short of war well after the Munich days and during most of the period of the German-Polish crisis. The last important statement which caught their imagination on the subject was the book by Sir Arthur Salter, *Security—Can We Retrieve It?*, published in the late spring of 1939. The *New Republic*, in the midst of the backing and filling and drift before every contradictory gust of opinion at that moment, gave the proposals in this book its stamp of approval on May 31. It hailed Salter's recommendations of a world conference, the cancellation of the war guilt clause in the Versailles Treaty, plus the suggestion that the rest be dropped as soon as a replacement could be drawn up, the granting of "economic spheres of influence" to the major powers, in particular the recognition of Germany's special economic interests in Southeastern Europe, the re-allocation of colonies, British agreement to barter raw materials to Germany in exchange for manufactured goods, a new world order built around the Kellogg Pact, and the universal restriction and limitation of armament.¹

Bingham in *Common Sense* was so impressed by Salter that he devoted a four-column editorial to the book's propositions later in the year,² drawing from the book that Salter was in favor of giving up both the British and French empires "if thereby peace and democracy can be saved," and the creation of an international holding company to order these colonial areas and the foreign investments in them, "in which a peace-committed Germany would have its fair participation."

The *New Republic* credited Salter with having made "a beginning on a most important task," but then asked whether Europe had "sufficient moral resilience left to take action of this sort, or whether its paralysis has gone so far that it has neither will nor ability to seek an alternative to catastrophe." Bingham thought this program would block Hitler's power to lead Germany into a shooting war, even though he had not yet done this in 6½ years of maneuvering. But if Salter's general proposals were not going to be taken seriously, Bingham saw no positive aspect to the case of the democracies at all; in his view they were just "working for time, until their own war-machines are unquestionably superior to those of the Axis powers,"

which could do nothing more than induce Hitler to risk a war at the earliest opportunity. As the *New Republic* said on September 6,³

War in the new sense is a struggle between nations ending only when one of the contenders is destroyed as a nation. . . . The game will continue and eventually it will end in the totalitarian war that everybody—even Hitler—is hoping to avoid. It will end that way unless the British and the French surrender their empires—or Hitler is overthrown.

The conflict between the attitudes of the previous six years and their logical pointing to a no-holds-barred war to the finish against Hitler Germany, and the hopes for a situation resulting in a better peace than had prevailed since 1919, took shape at once upon the start of the Polish-German war. Talk of responsibility for the beginning of fighting was immediately joined by speculations and ruminations as to what was likely to be the nature of the subsequent state of international affairs. Freda Kirchwey's substantial signed editorial in the *Nation* on September 9 started out in almost unbelievable style: ⁴

This is a strange war. Nobody wanted it, not even Hitler. He wanted, immediately, Danzig and a slice of Poland, but not war. He wanted, ultimately, to overthrow the power of the British and French empires, but without war. . . . His claims against Poland were modest, superficially defensible, hard to oppose, obviously "not worth fighting a war over." Would nations that had acquiesced in the destruction of Czechoslovakia boggle at Danzig?

But, as to why war had come, she was not particularly helpful. The lame reply made to this question was that the "statesmen of London and Paris" had finally come to the conclusion "that Hitler couldn't be bargained with." And with this she plunged in with fiery approval of the war aim to "smash Hitlerism and to eliminate Hitler." The *Nation's* chief editor was dismayed by the "mood of fatalism and the absence of any glorification or excitement" among the French and British, and was comforted only by left solidarity in support of their respective governments.

But this initial editorial commentary on hostilities already displayed a feeling of apprehension as to the outcome, puzzlement over the calls for a "decent peace" already being made in the British press, and the admission that the defeat of Germany would only breed a new Hitler unless the Western nations were able to find a stable basis for a European society. Villard, writing from London on September 4, though an intense Allied partisan, showed his divided intellectual allegiance also by suggesting that the Anglo-

French Allies were not likely to construct "a genuine new world order" at war's end. Yet he did not hesitate a moment in placing the entire responsibility for the war on Hitler; "The Allies start with the moral initiative," he declared without any hesitation, "Theirs is the righteous cause."⁵ It was almost incredible to hear probably the toughest skeptic on the propaganda of the 1914-1918 war profoundly accepting and broadcasting that of the war of 1939. And a week later his London dispatch contained a fervent plea that the editorial policy take up "the very important movement under way over here . . . to bring about a prompt statement of Allied war aims." He approved scattered British calls for scrapping the League of Nations and building a Federal State of Europe, but he emphasized that the government was saying absolutely nothing.⁶ And as if to underline the uneasiness, the Kirchwey editorial "War in Washington" on September 30 expressed much disturbed feeling that talk was already seeping out that the Allies might win and make another "bad peace." She promised that attention to the subject of war aims, especially those of British Labor, would be fully discussed.⁷ No one suggested in these days that the initiative might be fully beyond the grasp of the Allies at the conclusion of hostilities, and the formulation of another settlement in the manner of 1919 an utter impossibility.

The *New Republic's* curious editorial on September 13, "The Responsibility For the War," exhibited the same grievous split thinking. Though rigidly against any American involvement it sided warmly with Hitler's enemies, and suggested that this question needed to be settled at once since it was "especially vital to democratic countries where the morale of the troops and of the population behind them depends so greatly on allocating the guilt." This was an amazing reason why this subject was worth knowing, the truth apparently having sunk behind as an insignificant consideration. And, like the *Nation*, it presented a relatively detached preliminary case of impartial allocation of responsibility and cancelled it all out by concluding that the Germans under Hitler were almost exclusively guilty. "In the long view, every participant in the present struggle, and several other powers, share some of the blame," it started out, charging the Poles with having accepted territory in 1919 with a preponderant German population, blaming the Soviet for its non-aggression treaty, England and France for Munich and for having in 1919 "imposed an unjust and destructive treaty on Germany, and followed it for many years by repression." It then blamed the United States for having entered the war and made the Allied victory possible, which in turn led to the unjust treaties; "If we had not entered the war in 1917, a negotiated peace based on the stalemate of exhaustion would probably soon have taken place."

But it promptly undid all this objectivity by spending twice as much space pinning exclusive guilt for the hostilities on Hitler and "a few of his associates," admitting that although the demand for the return of Danzig and the Corridor was a reasonable claim, "we know beyond all reasonable doubt" that Hitler's regime had a timetable for the conquest of all Europe, and that giving in here would just be "an invitation for asking more," though the editors missed the implication that, if this would happen, then there was more that belonged to the Germans which had not yet been returned. But the assumption that this process might be endless was put forward as the best reason for refusing to go along any longer, and therefore suggested that Hitler's antagonists were as responsible for the hostilities by their adamant stand against further rectifications as Hitler was for insisting on new concessions.⁸ Unless previously convinced that Hitler was all in the wrong, the "troops" and "population" of the Allied nations could hardly have received much psychic comfort from this tortured attempt to spread the reprehensibility for the new belligerency around in proper proportion.

Yet, it was undoubtedly a matter of the first magnitude that war responsibility be discussed as a prelude to dealing with war aims. The latter made no sense unless seen against the context of the former. And the more than two years that followed illustrated that equal to the vexation with the refusal of the Allied governments to say anything of any importance at all on the subject of war aims was a feeling of inadequacy in having presented the matter of war responsibility lucidly and plainly in the first place. The gradual assumption that the enemy was entirely to blame was little more than a convention making possible the discussion of the subject of war aims without having to reopen every time the unresolved new *Kriegsschuldfrage*.

The first substantial wave of war aims comments arrived with the peace talk which followed the close of the Polish war, in October, 1939. The *New Republic's* "The Allies' War Aims" on October 4 sensed the bankruptcy of the Anglo-French policy, and probed again to seek to discover why they were fighting and what they hoped to achieve beyond the obliteration of Germany, not yet considered a self-sufficient aim. It again brought up the secret treaties of the First World War, which had made a hash of American beliefs of "fighting for justice and democracy." To the editors, the new war seemed to be a repetition; France just wanted "victory," the British proposed "to destroy Hitlerism," with the end likely to be the crushing of Germany, another revenge-motivated reaction, and another war. "The Peace Offensive" in the following issue, upon the rejection of the German peace overtures, brought up the matter of Allied war aims again. The editors demanded that Britain and France

state what they were fighting for and let everyone, including the German people, know what they intended to do beyond fighting until the defeat of Hitler. "The sooner they do so, the better for all concerned," the editorial concluded. And still another disturbed comment came forth in the October 18 "Hitler Proposes." Although inclined to believe that the German Führer could not be trusted now, the editorial was plagued with suspicion that both Britain and France were fighting for a return to the Versailles system, and this the *New Republic* maintained was not a cause worth the lives of millions of men. "It is not enough for the British and French to reply merely that there can be no peace with the present rulers of Germany," it protested: "It is high time for them to state what kind of world they envisage and how they propose to get from here to there."⁹

The *Nation* at this stage was far less concerned with long-range goals. Both Freda Kirchwey and Louis Fischer applauded the summary rejection of all German peace overtures by the British and especially commended Churchill's radio speech. The delight in the Kirchwey editorial could not be concealed; "Churchill's radio talk set up barricades across every possible avenue of diplomatic retreat," she announced; "It was a fighting speech, and it leaves Hitler, I should think, no further alternative to the attack he has so desperately tried to avoid." She predicted the spreading of the war to Holland, Belgium and Scandinavia, and placed the stamp of approval on this determination on the part of the British. Fischer assured the readers of the *Nation* that all peace overtures were totally futile, that there would be no negotiations between Hitler and the French or British. And he looked forward to the spring of 1940, when he confidently assured all that the Allies would have "undoubted air superiority, larger fleets, more munitions," and "a million British soldiers in France." He was confident that an early Allied victory was hardly more than six months away.¹⁰

But liberal confusion over the situation growing out of the Hitler peace overtures was not helped at all by the attitude of the pro-Soviet *New Masses*, which in its October 10 issue took Hitler's peace offer very seriously and was enthusiastically for acceptance. In its view, the German political and strategic position was weaker than it had been, which was echoed by Anna Louise Strong in her article in the same issue ridiculing the idea that the Germans and Russians had an alliance; "Victorious armies do not sue for peace." The *New Masses* editorial "The Peace Offer" commented that the stock and commodity markets boomed on news of the rejection, and they added in an ominous embellishment, "Churchill turned it down, revealing thereby how sinister and thoroughgoing the war against Germany will become should Churchill come to the helm

in England." Though there was no evidence of any softness toward Hitler in this journal, the 1933-1939 terminology describing him as a "madman," "fool," "monster" and "maniac" had vanished now; Samuel Sillen, in a six-column review of Karl Billinger's *Hitler Is No Fool* in this same issue, referred to the German Führer as "an uncommonly shrewd politician." And to further discomfit those arguing for only knockout military victory over Germany, this same journal reprinted the following week the loud and angry call for tangible war aims made by George Bernard Shaw in the *New Statesman and Nation*, which had ended with the suggestion that "abolishing Churchillism" was "a proposition no less nonsensical and more easily within our reach" than the expressed determination to "abolish Hitlerism," which was all the renowned literary figure could discern as a war aim so far expressed by the British government.¹¹

Common Sense was of the opinion also that Hitler wanted no more war; "there is no doubt of the sincerity of his desire for peace once Polish resistance was ended," its November editorial asserted. It referred to his peace terms as expressed in his Reichstag speech as "reasonable and intelligent," but was convinced the British and French would never accede to the situation, and cancelled out their own case by agreeing that Hitler's word was "worthless." But at the same time they brought up the war aims question again, and suggested that if Britain was fighting to preserve their Empire and to restore Europe's small states, then these were not worth fighting for.¹² This reflected the sentiments of its earlier editorial comment, "Peace Terms Now," in October, when it had veered sharply from the alarm of the weeklies and announced that the prospect of either side winning total victory was not a particularly pleasing one, though it had not expressed panic at the thought of a possible Hitler triumph: ¹³

Something can be said for a German victory. It would mean the long-awaited unification of Europe. But a Nazi Europe, like a Communist Europe, might mean the end of those values which constitute Western civilization. Again it might not, for it is hard to imagine any enduring European empire resting on brute force.

On the other hand, it fervently hoped that there would be no more Versailles nor "a new lease on life for British and French imperialism," as a sole end of an Allied win, and much fright was evinced upon contemplation of another stalemate and war "till bestiality reigns supreme." Frank Hanighen had added his approval in a piece, "In Darkest Europe," suggesting that British announcements to extirpate "Hitlerism" were just a substitute for war aims, and he expressed difficulty in divining what the war was being fought for.¹⁴

In its call for war aims in this editorial, *Common Sense* had suggested a move toward world federation based on a settlement "of the underlying economic problems" which latter it advanced as the reason for the world clash in its interpretation of the war as an extension of that of 1914. The following month it began to explore this subject further with the publication of Paul K. Crosser's "The Eclipse of the Smaller States." Although a refugee from Germany since 1933, he was nowhere as anxious for a bloody victory over the German regime of the moment as most of his compatriots. He interpreted the war as the first stages of an eventual "organic industrial economic unit" in Europe. He remarked that ten million people lost their lives "under the banner of the independence of Serbia and Belgium," and could see no evidence that the world would have been any worse off if they had been incorporated into bigger states. As of the moment, he had the same opinion with respect to the other small states; "There is not one among them for whose independence humanity could reasonably again offer millions and millions of human lives." Crosser observed,¹⁵

The bad manners of the Nazi rulers should not be used to becloud the issue of the consolidation of the small European states, an issue which is becoming increasingly pressing. Hitler will be gone some day. With all the bad taste which his dealings leave in the matter of the consolidation of the small states, he is to be regarded as the stimulator of a historic process which has been due in Europe for at least a century. That a Hitler had to assume the role is, of course, of little credit to the historical insight of Western statesmanship.

Editorial support for Crosser accompanied his article. "In the long run a federated union of Europe is necessary for economic well-being and political stability," it declared; "The iron heel of the conquering dictators may be a poor instrument for achieving that objective, but it is better than none."¹⁶ Still another statement of this thesis came from Quincy Howe in his "War Aims—If Any," in the trembling days of May, 1940. He maintained Hitler was seeking to set up Germany as the controlling interest in "a vast economic empire east of the Rhine." Howe went on to say, "if this is a bad scheme, a good scheme will beat it. Unfortunately, however, the responsible statesmen in the Allied countries have not got a good scheme. They have not got any scheme at all."¹⁷

In truth, by late 1939, and into the early months of 1940, the largest part of the liberal writers had abandoned the hope of ordering Europe through another Anglo-French-dominated League of Nations. As an alternative to the specter of a German-dominated Europe the idea of a "Federated Europe" steadily took hold, al-

though the settlement of 1919-1921 repeated still had its allure, especially among sympathizers with the French.¹⁸ This drew the attention of the *New Republic* in its November 15 critique of the lack of Allied war aims and its insistence once more that "The destruction of Hitlerism is not enough." In trying to explain why the German people were behind Hitler in his proposal of peace on the basis of the new status quo, it warned,¹⁹

There is a strong movement in France, as there was in the last war, to remove the menace by "pulverizing" Germany, in order to render it impossible for her to fight again. Certainly the Germans will never desert Hitler if they think that is going to be their fate. . . . Again we must ask Chamberlain and Daladier, "What are we fighting for?"

For some, the solution was a compromise between comprehensive defeat of Hitler and the evolution of a federal union of European states. But after months of discussion of these war aims, the distinguishing mark of all these clamors was the absence of any starting point of any practical value in bringing this solution about. Freda Kirchwey's December 23, 1939 "The Great Debate" in the *Nation* illustrated that she was as fevered with excitement over war aims as anyone, accompanying four articles by G. D. H. Cole, Robert Dell, Rustem Vambery and Villard, who all discussed the future of Europe from various angles, and all advanced the European federal union as a post-war necessity. But she would not forget that "the first and most obvious objective" of the war was "military victory over Hitler," to be followed by a "revolution in Germany, halted somehow this side of Communist dictatorship," accompanied by the suppression of "violent nationalism," and "reactionary governments," and the initiation of "fundamental social change."²⁰ The basic assumption of most of these speculators on the new face of Europe after the war assumed that Britain and France were most eager for a pooling and dissolving of national entities in this region, despite their failure in drawing from their leaders the slightest expression of official sympathy.

The air was not entirely clear. Enough evidence existed to warrant suspicion and reserve among some of even the most friendly to the federation view. Temporarily the French case appeared to be the most disquieting. *Common Sense* scoffed at spokesmen for the Allies who talked of "defending democracy," what with France being ruled by decree by the Daladier government, with constitutional government entirely suspended.²¹ But it could not be denied that the past still exerted a considerable pull on some liberal thinking. The most alarming of these Sitzkrieg ruminations on what was likely to take place after the war was over were Dell's "The Menace of a

United Germany" and Emil Ludwig's "From A European Diary," in the same weekly, which contained a calm and confident announcement of coming German partition. He yearned for a new collection of Franco-British-dominated puppet states in the place of the existing German state, adding, "The coming partition of Germany suggests that German princes may be brought into the picture again," concluding in the style of Cato, "Ceterum censeo Germaniam esse dividendum." ²²

Probably this approach was more realistic than the idealistic talk of European federation accompanied by grim calls for a knockout military victory over Germany first. How the former was to be achieved without the latter was the weakest part of the entire approach. The *Nation's* January 6, 1940 editorial bitterly condemned any idea of a negotiated peace which began to seep into the channels of discussion around this time. This left no doubt that it put demolition of Hitler and Germany first on the agenda, as far as goals in Europe were concerned.²³ A lively controversy went on for the better part of three months on this issue, with Villard arguing vigorously in favor of the former, against a Kirchwey-Dell argument utterly to the contrary. He was completely out of harmony with war as an instrument to extirpate "Hitlerism and National Socialism," on the grounds that it sounded too much like the similar crusade to purge the Germany of the Kaiser of "militarism," which had "produced a vastly more dangerous militarism." Villard's approach now was of interest, since he insisted that Chamberlain was 40 per cent responsible for the coming of the war, while only a few weeks earlier he had insisted Hitler was completely to blame.²⁴

The Kirchwey case against Germany did not rule out mediation; it was her position that it should not be considered as long as Hitler remained in power.²⁵ But Dell, in a special letter in the *Nation* on February 24, 1940 denouncing Villard for his recommended course of action, also denied that there was any grounds for liberals believing that there was something mysterious about Anglo-French war aims; ²⁶

The war aim of the Allies has been stated again and again. It is to destroy the present German regime as the first step toward ridding Europe of the German menace. All the foreigners living in Germany that I know agree that nothing will do this but defeat of Germany in war.

But Villard continued to argue for a negotiated peace all the rest of February and March, bridling at Dell and other critics who accused him of pressing for an immediate peace on Hitler's terms, and countering with the conviction, based on his own recent visit to Germany, that the mass of Germans would not follow Hitler in

continued war if a face-saving peace all around could be constructed.

Yet all the independent talk and speculation could not hide the fact that officially the war aims situation was as unsatisfactory as it had been at the outbreak of the fighting in Poland. The *New Republic's* January 8, 1940 editorial "Toward European Federation" found space to castigate Chamberlain and the Tory government for their dilatory behavior in failing to announce war aims, now called "peace aims." From the liberal point of view, this silence was having a very adverse effect in the propaganda struggle, and in their opinion Hitler was winning this. But at the same time the editors warned Americans not to be too enthusiastic should the British government come out with a statement of "broad and generous aims," reminding them of the war of 1914 and what happened "under the banner of Wilsonian idealism," which was used as "a vehicle for the more 'realistic' aims of vindictive politicians and strategists in the victorious nations, whose design for Europe was intended to deprive the defeated Central Powers of territory, charge them with a bill impossible to pay, and keep them in subjection."²⁷ Even in this late moment of white-hot hate for Hitler, it was possible to notice another outcropping of liberal revisionism.

Still another case of this was to be seen as late as May 11 in the *Nation*, in Maxwell S. Stewart's "Looking Toward the Peace," which praised John Maynard Keynes's *Economic Consequences of the Peace* for exposing the "dangers of a peace dictated by nationalistic considerations," and because the author "accurately foresaw the dangers in the Treaty of Versailles." Stewart lamented that his "warnings were not heard amid the cries for revenge of the statesmen and the people of the Allied countries." Stewart once more expressed the liberal belief that the two worst mistakes in 1919 were the immense burden of reparations placed on Germany and the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, "now generally recognized to have been an economic blunder of the first order." After all the liberal talk about the nobility of the conception of Czechoslovakia, this did not speak too highly for their judgment, but Stewart consoled himself that out of the ruminations of the Political and Economic Planning group in London, and the Shotwell and New School outlines "for postwar reconstruction," a far better situation would eventuate.²⁸

These were not the only times that a bleak verdict had been cast on the Allied actions in the previous war, though a large part of liberals had already been mobilized behind them in a second. Rustem Vambery's "United States of the Danube" some months earlier, which had outlined for the *Nation* readers his contemplation of what a six-state federation in the Danube-Balkan region might contribute to a stabilized Europe, especially in balancing Russian and

German ambitions, had contained a sober and wise evaluation of the difficulties to a general European federation, with copious commentary on the botching of Central Europe after the previous war.²⁹ The propaganda of the new war was not capable of completely blotting out criticism of the previous one.

In the lull between the Polish and Scandinavian campaigns, those discussing the idea of European federation were reminded that earlier in 1939 they had been presented with Clarence Streit's *Union Now* proposals, at which time they had been dealt with rather severely.³⁰ A distinction had been made then, and was to be made now, between the joining of existing democracies, and the federalist ideas of emigrés and others which implied a much more Marxist flavor to a new Central European order. Still another contribution was to come forth now, the persuasive *The United States of Europe* by the editor of *Common Sense*, Alfred M. Bingham, actually previewed in that journal in smaller portions months before it appeared in book form.³¹ At the core was the idea of maintaining American neutrality, and putting "maximum pressure" on both the warring sides "to find a basis for a negotiated peace at the earliest possible moment," on the assumption that "the hope of a decent settlement will be much enhanced if we have not been in on the killing." It received impressive reviews from both Stuart Chase and Peter Drucker, Chase considering it far superior to Streit's "complicated geography," and declaring in support,³²

Whichever side wins this war, it must establish a workable federation of the continent, or Europe will become the abode of cave men. It cannot be long held together by sheer force of arms and squads of secret police. It is impossible to operate a high-energy economy on that basis. A federation designed by the Allies would undoubtedly be better than one designed by the Germans. But God help both sides if no design is made at all.

But with the officialdom of the Allies apparently favoring nothing but military victory and a return to the status quo, and with another planner, Soviet Russia, left out of the picture completely, it seemed that the same old 1919 disease was enjoying fine health; a Central Europe with no Germany or Russia in it still maintained its fatal attraction to Allied "reactionaries" and idealist liberals alike.

Major statements on this subject in both liberal weeklies in February, 1940 underlined the unhappiness prevailing upon contemplation of the persistence of faith in the success of schemes which had already broken down. The *New Republic* seemed to have published the distinguished British diplomat Harold Nicolson's "Allied War Aims" largely for the purpose of pointing up its differences with

his view. Nicolson suggested that the war was being fought just to win, and that there was no real faith in anything coming out of the war, despite the widespread yearning for some noble purpose in their fighting the Germans. About his only specific point was his tacit approval of following the French desire to break Germany up into a number of Denmark-sized states, in addition to the observation that since the United States was not in the war, it was not entitled to try to influence its outcome. The editors were in agreement with this but felt that this country was entitled to be a partner in helping to reconstruct a stable European society afterward:³³

Last time, with profound ignorance and lofty confidence, we played a major role in redrawing Europe's boundaries and made an unholy mess of the job. Then, aghast at the implications of what we had done, we withdrew our support from the unstable structure and let it fall out of plumb and collapse. We don't want to do the same thing again and intelligent Europeans don't want us to. With respect to such things as immediate and strategic considerations, national boundaries and rival imperialisms, this is a European civil war. We have no business fighting in it and we have no pertinent contribution to make in deciding its issues. Europe must end its own quarrels, or they will never be ended. It will be well if everybody on both sides of the Atlantic would accept this fact, and act on it.

Raymond Gram Swing, in a long essay a few days earlier in the *Nation* came to the conclusion that the Allies in those inactive months were simply trying to bring pressure on Hitler's followers, and by making life difficult and unpleasant, hoping that they might spark an internal revolt and unseat him. But he could not see that they were very lucid about what should follow:³⁴

In other words, the British and French policy is incitement to treason. It is an open invitation to some group to seize power in Germany. The promise to that group of a better Europe is still unformulated. It consists only of the suggestion of federalism.

Swing was most unhappy over this; he thought the Allied aims far too superficial, in addition to consisting of an invitation to other "adventurers" to replace the Hitler regime, a group which with Hitler's power would soon be just as dangerous. Swing's solution was some plan for the diffusion of power: "The Allies should know what kind of peace organization they intend to establish and they should announce that no nation can become part of it until it meets certain standards of diffused political power." And, unlike Nicolson and the editors of the *New Republic*, Swing thought that this had not been

done because the Anglo-French Allies could not promise how to establish "true peace" without having the United States cooperate with them in doing it.

The vague, amorphous federation sought for post-war Europe which resounded in calls for war aims among liberals seeking to salvage something from a war which they had watched approach and happen with either conscious approval or lack of substantial resistance, saw the light of day early in the propaganda of the British left-liberal-labor groups. As phrased by Harold Laski in his frequent *Nation* dispatches, it reached its most eloquent form, although British spokesmen for such a disposition of Europe did not separate their aspirations for foreign change from their ambitions for significant alteration of the domestic way of life. From time to time these themes were handled in a composite manner, leaving little doubt as to what was expected from the war as a midwife of comprehensive change, heretofore stifled by the resistance furnished by traditional ways of doing things.

A major statement from Laski was published as early as September 30, 1939, "Labor's War Aims," which protested that "British labor" had no quarrel with the German people and favored the "cessation of hostilities" as soon as a government existed in Germany which was willing to recognize the independence of Poland and Czechoslovakia, and "to agree that Austria must itself decide whether or not its future is to be with the German Reich." Laski asserted that the frontiers of the first two nations should be determined at a special conference "justly negotiated between equals," and that there were to be "no annexations and no punitive indemnities." And he went on to reveal the ideological matrix in which British Labor expected to fashion the new structure of Europe: ³⁵

But in the Labor view it is not enough to secure the status quo ante the aggressions of Hitler. Labor will demand therefore, as soon as such a peace is ratified, the reorganization of Europe on the basis of a federal democratic union. . . . In our view, while Hitler must be smashed, we must also prevent the recurrence of the causes which led to Hitler. That is no longer possible in a capitalist society.

Not much was left to the imagination as to what sort of political situation would exist in Europe if the views of British Labor were to be fully realized.

G. D. H. Cole outlined still another facet of the Laborite dream in December in his "British Labor's Double War." Horrified to hear the new conflict spoken of as another imperialist war, Cole told the *Nation* that Labor was hoping for a revolution within Germany soon which would bring into existence a "democratic" government with

which Britain could "hope to make peace on fair and equal terms." Everything seemed to be based on this gamble, and Cole was fully aware of what might occur if it failed to happen in precisely that manner, or of it not happening at all:³⁶

For unless the Germans do revolt against Hitler before all Western Europe has been devastated and exhausted by prolonged warfare, it looks very much as if the making of peace will be a matter neither for Mr. Chamberlain nor for British democracy nor for Hitler nor for the German people, but for Stalin, and I do not pretend even to guess what sort of peace Stalin would be likely to dictate to an exhausted Europe.

Nevertheless Cole was perfectly willing to take this risk, although the general tone of his essay carried in it a flavor of the advice of the doomed.

The vaulting of Labor to political prominence in the Churchill government the following May was the event which cut loose a long series of new statements on war aims, which began to become more specific with respect to England itself. Laski's "British Labor Expects" on May 25, 1940 expressed the exultation of having emerged into the wartime governmental leadership, admitting that the Labor Party had "no moral alternative" to supporting Churchill to the hilt because of "the responsibility it bore for the defeat of Mr. Chamberlain." "Full partnership" with Chamberlain's Tory enemies was now "inescapable."

Laski, admitting that the scene at the moment was grim, saw staggering possibilities in view, and did not flinch in the slightest from calling for dogged pursuit of a "full victory" over Hitler, "no peace of revenge," and "a new world order," which was to make aggression "impossible" and armanent "unnecessary." Labor was going to help "to organize victory," and as for the home front, "Out of that victory we shall take power to start building the first democratic socialist state in the modern world."³⁷ Churchill was to be simply a means to an end.

The most impressive statement of all these views was to be found a few months later in Laski's book *Where Do We Go From Here?*, hailed by Ralph Bates in the *Nation* on November 9 as "the best statement on the issues of the war yet to come out of Britain,"³⁸ a product of a member of the National Executive of the Labor Party, "the rising one in Britain." "To it," insisted Bates, "far more than Mr. Churchill's magnificent leadership in the great crisis of June, July and August, the visible awakening of Britain and the animation of its resistance have been due."

The *New Republic* reviewed it in a six-column editorial on Christmas Day, 1940, as evidence that "Progressives whose minds were

shocked into chaos by the war" were beginning to once more "find a comprehensive pattern in the world. . . . The essential condition, both of victory over Hitler and of establishing any permanent fruits of this victory, is fulfillment of the revolution inherent in democracy." In practical form this turned out to be a blending of New Deal and British Laborite programs which was to be applied on a vast scale, including wholesale public housing, nationalization of essential industries and many welfare-state proposals which had been on the agenda of discussion or partially realized in the previous decade and now seemed capable of comprehensive realization in this hectic moment of upheaval. This was to be a prominent part of the new order, the "genuine" revolution to replace the synthetic one sponsored by Hitler.³⁹

For many liberals, Laski's book contained the manual of war aims which Churchill knew nothing about or chose to ignore if he did. Originally enchanted by the "blood, toil, tears and sweat" formula, it was now being considered as gravely deficient, and many of them wanted it supplanted or buttressed by the tangibles such as Laski now advanced. Even Clifton Fadiman in his "A Letter to Winston Churchill" in the *New Yorker* in November, 1940 suggested that Churchill might find Laski's book a mine of material if the Prime Minister was searching for some war aims to announce.⁴⁰ But on the neutralist liberal side, only Bingham in *Common Sense* was unimpressed. He referred to Laski as "a good left-wing laborite" who was "without an adequate philosophy of history,"⁴¹ although Bingham's suggested alternative was even more nebulous than most of the others being advanced in the higher circle of proposers of war aims.

Laski's eloquent eight-column statement of what the British left-labor-liberal group expected as a postwar world published by the *Nation* on March 22, 1941 was marked by a stressing and reaffirmation of the political revolution which they thought had been effected by Labor joining Churchill; "The formation of the Churchill government was not merely the replacement of one statesman by another," he insisted; "It was also the deliberate association of the organized workers of the country with the war effort."⁴² As Bates had envisioned several months before, in the first installment of his "The Indivisible War," "A British victory very probably would not simply restore democracy but would unleash powerful revolutionary forces in Europe, forces which even a reactionary British government would have less power to restrain than it had in the past."⁴³ The emboldened Labor spokesmen discussing the subject of war aims for American liberals were losing their awe of Churchill. The possibilities were becoming almost too vast to contemplate; and what might be achieved under the auspices of their own leaders once the war was over was starting to dazzle a number of the more dedicated. Just be-

fore the March, 1941 Laski statement, the *Nation* had published a piece by a *New Statesman* journalist which dwelled upon the sterling qualities of Ernest Bevin and what his career portended for the future;⁴⁴

From this war, Bevin is confident, will come not only victory for Britain and democracy, but a new economic order based on social security for the workers. Nor will this be confined to Britain. Bevin, you see, has never forgotten his wider scheme of international control of the resources of the world, with a United States of Europe cooperating freely with the United States of America in a parliament of free men.

The slogan "Winston will win us the war. Only Ernie can save us the peace" was soon to be at large, underlining the grandeur of the new vision growing out of the war aims controversy.

To be sure, the tempo of criticism of Churchill had steadily increased, beginning in the autumn of 1940, almost entirely due to the Prime Minister's close-lipped stand on the matter of war aims statements. A major criticism was posted by the *New Republic* on October 28, which stressed that the failure of Churchill "to enlarge on Mr. Chamberlain's former statement of war aims" was actually hindering the progress of the war and solidifying Hitler's position with the German people.⁴⁵ Another loud call of this sort came in the lead editorial comment on February 10, 1941, discussing Hitler's eighth annual speech upon becoming Germany's Chancellor; the lack of official stated war aims, plus Hitler's newest reminder to the Germans of Versailles and their post-war treatment, induced the editors to use strong language once more:⁴⁶

It was chiefly these arguments that brought Hitler to power and now justify the war to the German mind. They prove again, if any proof were needed, how necessary it is for Britain to clear herself of all suspicions of imperialist designs and declare peace aims that would support those Germans who eventually must be depended upon to desert Hitler and his cause.

An even stronger comment appeared in the *Nation* twelve days later, relating to the bringing up of "peace" aims in the debate in the Senate on the Lend-Lease bill. An editorial paragraph disclosed much irritation with Churchill for "fobbing off Parliamentary questions on the subject" at home. It was not enough to announce that England was fighting for "survival" and for ultimate victory over the Hitler regime. "We do not ask for a detailed blueprint but we should like to know what kind of political and economic setup the British government is hoping to establish in Europe," the editors explained,

adding in explanation for their concern, "And particularly we should like to be assured that it is not thinking in terms of a revival of the pre-Hitler status quo." ⁴⁷ The almost arrogant confidence that Britain was once more going to have a major voice in dictating the political face of the Continent was disturbed only by the fear that the proper group of British ideologues might not have the final say.

The early spring of 1941 was a dark moment for liberals still industriously at work seeking to divine the long-range goals of the Allies, especially Britain. The *New Republic* in particular was repelled by a story cabled to the Chicago *Daily News* from London by W. H. Stoneman, which reported Churchill regarding all these requests as "a great nuisance," in addition to a declaration that Harry L. Hopkins had told the Prime Minister that nobody in the United States except "a few intellectuals" was interested in knowing British war aims. The editors responded in a hurt tone on March 3, ⁴⁸

If this report is well founded, it is bad news. Many more than "a few intellectuals" in this country want to know Britain's war aims. If Mr. Hopkins stated the contrary to Mr. Churchill, we hope he was not reflecting the administration's attitude toward one of the most important questions of today.

But there was no retraction from Hopkins, no extension of remarks by Churchill, and silence from the White House. It was a jolt to liberals, still recreating a new image of Churchill after a long period of scathing abuse, and building up the Prime Minister now as "one of the greatest orators in the world," after having charged him in more irreverent times of talking as if he had a plum in his mouth.

An answer of sorts was received at Roosevelt's press conference on February 25 when he brushed aside the entire question. The *New Republic* chided FDR gently on March 10, when it observed regretfully, "Nothing, it seems to us, could be more unfortunate than for the general public to get the impression of the existence of a comfortable understanding between the heads of the two principal democracies that plans for peace can be stated only when the fighting is over." ⁴⁹ But nothing came forward indicating that this diagnosis was anything but an exact statement of the case.

Despite loud praise of Churchill's oratorical gifts in reviewing his *Blood, Sweat and Tears* on April 21, Malcolm Cowley still was not clear as to what he was fighting for other than "victory at all costs." The 472 pages of speeches did not reveal more than that to the *New Republic's* literary critic, although in extenuation he sought to set Churchill apart from the other Tories, in that he had "always and instinctively put national interests above class interests," and Cowley confidently concluded from this that "If it seems to Churchill that

national interests require a drastic remodeling of society to the profit of the broad masses, he will end by supporting the necessary measures.”⁵⁰ So even if the Prime Minister was chary about committing himself on postwar objectives, there was still faith in him as the agent in effecting broad categories of socio-economic change under the emergencies of war. Yet growing confidence in Churchill among American liberals and a slacking off of their spirited cries for a statement on war aims by this time did not inhibit George Orwell from writing to the *New Republic* on July 14 in an essay on English writing during the war that left-wing literary circles were saying that the war was “entirely meaningless,” and referring to “our present anomalous situation—a war against Fascism, waged by reactionaries.”⁵¹

The reluctance of the Churchill government to issue war aims statements probably stimulated the production of them by unofficial but prominent Englishmen, some of whom obtained a broad hearing in the liberal weeklies, and were accompanied by editorial constructs which rivalled them in breath-taking imagination. In the fall of 1940, Julian Huxley in the *New Republic* and H. G. Wells in the *Nation* came forward with immense and somewhat brilliant schemes to outdo the revolutionary dynamic in the Hitlerian efforts, Wells with a plea for “the general control of political and economic life into a world-wide system,”⁵² Huxley with a more detailed plan suggesting ways to outdo Hitler in the field of revolutionary reorganization and suggesting that the world as a British field of endeavor was preferable to just Europe, which seemed to be the German sphere of interest. Declared Huxley, on October 28, 1940,⁵³

In 1939 the world was in a situation out of which there was no escape except by some form of revolution. The Nazi movement was one attempt at this revolutionary escape. Hitler is now completing the Nazi scheme with his plan for Europe. He at least offers some kind of political stability on the Continent, some economic security, some organization in place of chaos. He believes, possibly rightly, that people will tolerate lower standards of living and even a second-rate status in relation to the German *herrenvolk* provided they are free of the recurrent fear of war and meaningless economic depression.

“But Britain can outbid Hitler,” Huxley cheerfully suggested:

His revolution is destructive of accepted standards and the tradition of European civilization—ours can be constructive, bringing fulfilment of the promises implicit in our tradition. His is totalitarian and dictatorial; ours can be democratic, a revolution of planned freedom. His plan is con-

cerned with one not over-large land-mass; ours, thanks to our command of the sea, can involve the world and its resources.

As if in response to this challenge, the *New Republic* two days before Christmas, 1940 brought out in a ten-column editorial a majestic proposal, "The Alternative to Fascism; A Proposal For American-British Cooperation." It bluntly began by observing "It is a waste of time to argue whether the United States should enter the war. . . . We are already in the war and have been for several years." This spectacular shift of accent promptly followed with a grandiose scheme for Anglo-American global direction of the non-totalitarian world.⁵⁴

Let the United States and Great Britain jointly assume responsibility and leadership for the whole world, except that part of it at present under the heels of the totalitarians. Let these two great repositories of democracy pool their leadership in brains, vision and courage. Let them participate jointly in such economic, industrial and cultural activities as may grow out of this undertaking,

It went on to suggest that they determine and maintain "a certain minimum standard of life" accompanied by comprehensive control of all economic life. "They could, jointly, engage in organized policing of the trade routes of the planet," and harmonize the economic affairs of all nations through production, trade and price controls, on a scale which made the Russian and German programs of the day and their modest successes seem like feebleness personified by comparison. The unnamed author described this stunning plan "an application of the principles of the New Deal on a much wider scale," and its scope truly dwarfed much of the existing totalitarian theory.

Repercussions of this were felt for months. An editorial on January 6, 1941 reassured the readers that there was no chance that Britain might commandeer this and "run away with the show." The United States was definitely cast as the senior partner in this program.⁵⁵ And when Anthony Eden delivered his speech on postwar reconstruction in May, the *New Republic* found many remarkable similarities between his suggestions and those of the famous prospectus they had published seven months earlier, especially the details of a "far-reaching international economic order," administered by "Britain, the dominions and the United States." "That a responsible official of the British government should endorse it is of great moment to us all," the editorial of June 9, 1941 glowed.⁵⁶

The *Nation's* equivalent to "The Alternative To Fascism" was Harold Nicolson's "Between Two Worlds," published on December 28, 1940, an eight-column call for still another experiment in world government with full British backing and support, a rival "New

Order" to the much-despised Hitler's and presumably avoiding all the mistakes, and repeating none of the objectionable activities of the system which had emerged in the Paris suburbs after 1918.⁵⁷ The following June 2, Huxley advanced a curious proposal in the *New Republic* for an emergency "Security Club" embracing some of Nicolson's views, though this was to consist of "a group of peace-loving nations" to patrol the world after Germany had been defeated, effecting a monopoly of both heavy arms-making and raw material production, with large arsenals to be built in the United States and in the British Empire.⁵⁸ This strange mutual insurance company scheme did not once mention the Soviet Union or the Communists in any context, and came at a time of the lowest British fortunes in the European war to that time, when the Germans had just driven Britain out of the Balkans and Crete. The failure of the proposed Anglo-American partnership to become full-fledged made Huxley's vision seem even more utopian than other constructs of this kind.

The ultimate in these post-war projections in the *New Republic* for September 8, 1941 was the sixth and last of a series of extra-long editorials on the likely nature of the world in the post-hostilities era, and went somewhat beyond the memorable proposal of December 23, 1940. "A Substitute For Imperialism" suggested that the war was going to be so long and destructive that an indefinite period of chaos was bound to ensue. It therefore asserted that the United States should step into the breach providing vast economic aid of all kinds, promoting at the same time a far-reaching system of foreign investment through government agencies exclusively in "have-not" and "undeveloped" regions, creating a grand "new order in foreign trade and investment" with the British Commonwealth as partners, while hastening comprehensive industrialization of all lands still preponderantly agricultural. All this was to be carried out under the umbrella of an "international police force," to consist in the beginning of "the combined strength of the British and American navies and air forces," to which would be added "volunteer units" from other countries, while all other nations would be confined to a small internal army largely engaged in police matters.⁵⁹

The boldness, sweep and daring of these proposals was matched on the negative side only by their airy and cavalier neglect of Russia as a possible obstacle to achievement of these awesome suggestions. That they aroused widespread comment and approval goes without need for special mention, but nothing stands out so sharply as the studied neglect of the Communists, after the decade of hypersensitive concern for almost every development in the Soviet Union, and the vast mass of material advanced to illustrate the advisability or inevitability of the spread of the Russian solution to the rest of the world.

The view that the Communists might not be such a tenuous factor

in the ultimate outcome of the war was advanced but rarely. The editors of *Common Sense*, in an appeal to furnish support to those people in England calling for a statement of war aims in September, 1940, suggested one of the consequences of a myopic devotion to destruction of the Germans as an end in itself, one of the few instances of this sort, in just such a context: ⁶⁰

Should our every effort be bent to assuring a German defeat, even to the point of intervention, or should our main concern be a negotiated peace at the earliest possible moment? . . . A German defeat would be no gain if it threw all Europe into chaos, perhaps into the arms of Stalin.

But with sentimentality toward the British running at such heights, the idea that they might not be able to handle the Russians in a post-war showdown apparently was considered to be little more than cause for a snort of disbelief. A negotiated peace without victory appealed to no significant sector of America's liberal partisans of Britain either.

The *Nation* on December 14, 1940 expressed great satisfaction that the House of Commons almost unanimously rejected a compromise peace proposal brought forward by the Independent Labor Party,⁶¹ as well as on other occasions before and after. On June 14, 1941, a Kirchwey-signed editorial, "Wars and Rumors of Peace," in the June lull following the run-out of Crete and before the invasion of Russia by the Germans, also took vast comfort from the "overwhelming vote against a negotiated peace" which the Labor Party had registered at its London convention. With a new round of peace rumors taking place, she fervently hoped all this peace talk would come to naught, as before, even though she found Labor's "peace-aims resolution" as "disappointing" as the recently-announced "war-aims talk" of Eden, which latter she described as "the smooth, highminded, unrealistic sort of talk that characterized the statements of British officials throughout the years of fencing and evasion that led to war."⁶²

In actuality, pressure upon the Churchill government to place their views on the postwar period on record was subsiding. As the *New Republic* columnist "T.R.B." had observed on May 20, 1941, "Demand for a statement of British war aims and United States peace objectives is becoming less insistent, and for a good reason," the reason being that the German program was "so ugly" that "any alternative" was being advanced as preferable.⁶³ Lacking a positive policy, British propaganda for many months had been stressing the diabolical quality of the German objectives, accompanied by reckless charges of intent to apply them to the entire world. Thus the bankruptcy of their own war aims was concealed by imputing that none were needed, those of the enemy being so ineffably evil that just their defeat was aim enough. Liberals got this from Churchill himself a

few days later, and the *New Republic* featured his remarks upon the German invasion of Russia on June 22; "We have but one aim and one single, irrevocable purpose. We have resolved to destroy Hitler and every vestige of the Nazi regime. From this nothing will turn us. Nothing."

Fischer's London dispatch to the *Nation*, commenting on Churchill's embrace of Russia as an ally, asserted that his popularity was "as high as Everest," and that he had received "a mountain of congratulations" for so doing. In his view it just about spiked all the possibilities of the war ending on any kind of a negotiated basis as well.⁶⁴ And an editorial reflection on the meaning of the British-Soviet joint agreement to make no separate peace came to the conclusion that by so doing the Communists "had contracted to defend the British Empire against Hitlerite Germany," while "Britain, on the other hand, has by implication recognized the Soviet frontiers as of June 22."⁶⁵ There seemed to be no more reasons for plaintive calls upon the Churchill government now, requesting a detailed account of what was expected to come from the war. The destruction of Germany and a permanent extension of Russia across roughly forty per cent of pre-war Poland appeared to be good substitutes for the bread-and-butter considerations and the stratospheric, utopian world plans previously advanced, alike.

But for home-front Britain, the issue was still much in doubt and far from settled. Undoubtedly, the platitudes unleashed at the Atlantic Charter meeting of Churchill and Roosevelt had something to do with the increased bubbling of plans for post-war changes in several regions, yet it took several more weeks before an announcement in Britain caught the imagination and fancy of American liberal observers. It fitted admirably into the liberal vision of the war as a catalytic agent in providing a change in the locus of power and the rearrangement of society thereafter, and as expressed by the *New Republic* on October 6, 1941 in an editorial "War Aims That Matter," was never better placed on the record, though once more a compromise had to be made since the document they rejoiced in had only a semi-official character at best. In a comment once more on a news story filed to the *Chicago Daily News* from London by Stone-man "that few other American newspapers seem to have picked up," the *New Republic* added for effect that⁶⁶

a committee headed by Harold J. Laski drafted the proposal for nationalization of all banks and land, and national control over all land, air and sea transport. A similar proposal was made for health, social services, education and domestic and foreign policy. British reactionaries were firmly told that postwar Britain would be a very different place, and the workers were assured that it was the intention of the Labor Party to

reward their great efforts in war by refusing to countenance post-war unemployment and distressed areas.

And the editors promptly responded, "To our mind this candid profession of real objectives is the most valuable set of domestic war aims yet to have come out of Britain," and capping the more than two years of worried discussion over war aims with the firm conclusion, "These are the words which the conservatives both here and in England have been hoping to muffle and which all liberals have been hoping to hear." If any underscoring of this was needed, it was furnished by the publication of the book by Churchill's Minister of Labor, Bevin, *The Balance Sheet of the Future*, shortly after, wildly praised and advertised by the American liberal press and urgently recommended to American readers even by the new American Ambassador to London, John G. Winant.⁶⁷ Labor's conversion from peace to war now was fully recognized as the response to the opportunity to use the war and the coalition government headed by their one-time bitter enemy as the avenue to arrive at power to a degree hardly even dreamed of in an earlier day. American liberalism could do no more than tender its most ardent hopes for success. The war aims query had been answered now on all levels.

NOTES

- 1 *New Republic*, May 31, 1939, p. 85.
- 2 "Peace Preparedness," *Common Sense*, August, 1939.
- 3 *New Republic*, September 6, 1939, p. 113.
- 4 Kirchwey, "Munich Bears Fruit," *Nation*, September 9, 1939, p. 259.
- 5 *Nation*, September 16, 1939, pp. 293-294.
- 6 *Nation*, September 23, 1939, p. 324.
- 7 *Nation*, September 30, 1939, pp. 336-337.
- 8 *New Republic*, September 13, 1939, p. 146.
- 9 *New Republic*, October 4, 1939, p. 226; October 11, 1939, pp. 256-257; October 18, 1939, pp. 284-285.
- 10 Kirchwey, "Dictator's Dilemma," *Nation*, November 18, 1939, pp. 540-541; Fischer, "It's Germany's Move," *Nation*, October 28, 1939, pp. 460-461.
- 11 *New Masses*, October 10, 1939, p. 23; Sillen review of Billinger on pp. 24-25. Shaw quotation in *New Masses*, October 17, 1939, p. 24; Strong in *New Masses*, November 7, 1939, p. 6.
- 12 *Common Sense*, November, 1939, p. 18.
- 13 *Common Sense*, October, 1939, pp. 16-17.
- 14 *Common Sense*, November, 1939, pp. 22-23.
- 15 *Common Sense*, November, 1939, pp. 20-22.
- 16 "What Are They Fighting For?," *Common Sense*, November, 1939, pp. 16-17.
- 17 *Common Sense*, May, 1940, pp. 12-13.
- 18 See in particular Thomas Mann, "Two Visions Of Peace," *Nation*, February 10, 1940, pp. 174-177.
- 19 *New Republic*, November 15, 1939, p. 95.
- 20 *Nation*, December 23, 1939, p. 699.
- 21 "War Directions," *Common Sense*, January, 1940, pp. 18-19.

- 22 *Nation*, November 4, 1939, pp. 497-498. On Dell see Chapter 26, note 123.
- 23 "Happy New Year!", *Nation*, January 6, 1940, p. 5. The services of the Pope as a negotiator were especially denounced.
- 24 *Nation*, January 27, 1940, p. 101; February 3, 1940, p. 130; March 30, 1940, p. 423. Villard had discussed in the fall the renewed efforts of British Christian pacifists within the Peace Pledge Union, led by Dick Sheppard demanding a halt to the war. *Nation*, October 28, 1939, p. 469.
- 25 Kirchwey, "Is Mediation Possible?", *Nation*, January 27, 1940, pp. 87-88.
- 26 *Nation*, February 24, 1940, p. 290.
- 27 *New Republic*, January 8, 1940, pp. 38-39.
- 28 *Nation*, May 11, 1940, pp. 594-597.
- 29 *Nation*, December 23, 1939, pp. 705-707.
- 30 See in particular Dell's bitter criticism in his *Nation* review, April 22, 1939, pp. 474-475.
- 31 See Bingham, "Toward A United States Of Europe," *Common Sense*, March, 1940, pp. 12-15, April, 1940, pp. 13-15.
- 32 Drucker review of Bingham in *Common Sense*, May, 1940, pp. 25-27; Chase review of Bingham in *Nation*, June 1, 1940, pp. 686-687. Bingham had declared in the second of his *Common Sense* articles, "If our neutrality is not to become a sham, we ought to make our position clear; that we have no desire to see the Allies win a crushing victory any more than Germany, that we favor a negotiated peace, and that our readiness to help the Allies even with loans is limited to the possibility of imminent Allied defeat."
- 33 "War Aims and Peace Aims," *New Republic*, February 26, 1940, pp. 262-263; Nicholson, "Allied War Aims," same issue, pp. 272-274.
- 34 Swing, "Incitement To Treason," *Nation*, February 10, 1940, pp. 177-179.
- 35 *Nation*, September 30, 1939, pp. 340-341.
- 36 *Nation*, December 23, 1939, pp. 700-701.
- 37 *Nation*, May 25, 1940, p. 643.
- 38 *Nation*, November 9, 1940, p. 452.
- 39 "What the War Means," *New Republic*, December 25, 1940, pp. 710-712.
- 40 In the New York tabloid daily *PM*, Max Lerner described Laski's volume as "By all odds the most important book that has been issued from England since the outbreak of the war."
- 41 Bingham review of Laski in *Common Sense*, January, 1941, pp. 24-25.
- 42 Laski, "Revolution By Consent," *Nation*, March 22, 1941, pp. 349-352.
- 43 *Nation*, November 23, 1940, pp. 496-500.
- 44 A. Hardy, "'Big Boss' Bevin," *Nation*, March 8, 1941, pp. 260-263. Other Englishmen had other candidates than Bevin; Eric Estorick's book *Stafford Cripps: Prophetic Rebel* introduced another potential political Moses for the English Left. As *New Republic* reviewer David Petegorsky (of the London School of Economics) observed, "He knows the aspirations of the common people of Britain; always pro-Soviet, yet sympathetically critical, he understands the Soviet Union." *New Republic*, December 1, 1941, pp. 739-740.
- 45 "Peace Aims For War," *New Republic*, October 28, 1940, p. 571.
- 46 *New Republic*, February 10, 1941, p. 163.
- 47 *Nation*, February 22, 1941, pp. 197-198.
- 48 *New Republic*, March 3, 1941, p. 292.
- 49 *New Republic*, March 10, 1941, p. 325.
- 50 *New Republic*, April 21, 1941, pp. 537-538.
- 51 Orwell, "English Writing In Total War," *New Republic*, July 14, 1941, p. 58. See also the affronted reply by Geroid Tanquary Robinson, "Footnote To George Orwell: Has This War A Meaning?", *New Republic*, August 4, 1941, p. 153.
- 52 Wells, "Fight, Cheat Or Yield," *Nation*, November 16, 1940, pp. 468-472.
- 53 Huxley, "Britain's War Aims," *New Republic*, October 28, 1940, pp. 576-579.
- 54 *New Republic*, December 23, 1940, pp. 857-861.
- 55 "Why We Need Britain," *New Republic*, January 6, 1941, pp. 6-7.
- 56 *New Republic*, June 9, 1941, p. 806.
- 57 *Nation*, December 28, 1940, pp. 651-654. Nicolson wrote this from London on December 10.

- 58 Huxley, "Armaments and Security," *New Republic*, June 2, 1941, pp. 750-752.
- 59 *New Republic*, September 8, 1941, pp. 297-300. Students of postwar politics might discern here a few germs of the United Nations, UNRRA, the Marshall Plan and Point Four of the Truman Doctrine.
- 60 "The Question Of Force," *Common Sense*, September, 1940, pp. 16-17.
- 61 *Nation*, December 14, 1940, p. 589.
- 62 *Nation*, June 14, 1941, pp. 686-687.
- 63 "T.R.B.," "If Germany Wins," *New Republic*, May 20, 1941, p. 728.
- 64 Fischer, "London—First Look," *Nation*, August 9, 1941, pp. 107-108.
- 65 *Nation*, July 19, 1941, pp. 41-42.
- 66 *New Republic*, November 17, 1941, p. 682.
- 67 The *New Republic* noted that the resolutions built on the proposals in Bevin's book had been proposed by the Labor Party Recommendation Committee, and approved by a majority but that final decision to adopt them as policy by the national executive committee had been delayed. *New Republic*, November 10, 1941, p. 606.

THE WAR TREE FINALLY BEARS FRUIT
IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, 1938-1941

THE converging of the wondrously-complex Chinese, Japanese, Russian, American, British and other interests in the Far East provided an incredible arena in which American liberals could give play to their views beginning in early 1938. But, in view of the possibilities which this situation presented, the wonder is that so little confusion prevailed among them, and that their overall estimate entertained so few doubts and reservations as to what should be correct policy, and such little deviation in what was reported as the factual situation. The *Panay* bombing incident and the increasing interest of the United States and the European powers in Far Eastern, and especially Chinese, dispositions did little to dislodge the largest majority of liberal writers and observers from their already deeply-entrenched opinions. They carried on in a straight line from the re-opening of war on a massive scale in China in July, 1937.

Though there might have been much confusion among the general run of the citizenry on the China issue, there was little among the pro-Soviet and pro-Chinese Communist liberals at this moment. The idea of an independent China emerging under Chiang Kai-shek, without Communist ties, they almost never entertained for even a short interval. From their point of view, there were the alternatives

of the survival of a "pro-Fascist clique" which might "sell out" to Japan at any time or a China coming "increasingly under the influence of the Soviet Union." The key to understanding their approach had to be located in the matrix of Chinese and Russian Communist policies. The Communist line of favoring an embargo by the United States on the shipment of almost any goods to Japan, accompanied by a deep hostility toward any increase of American naval strength in the Far East and a scrupulous attitude of withdrawal from even the slightest hint of involvement, had an intimate relationship to the liberals, who supported these identical policies. Now that a major war was once more under way here, and with the Chinese Communists so much more numerous and enjoying such vitality, they seemed to sense that in the long run, a Chinese Communist victory was inevitable, aided by Russian war goods, if only the Japanese could be denied access to those of America. And having the Americans away from the scene when the Japanese were expected to collapse guaranteed the avoidance of a situation which could only provoke intense complications.

Successive issues of the liberal weeklies in the last three years before the Pearl Harbor attack underlined the political naïveté of the country's intellectuals when the readers were told alternately that the Soviet Union had a formidable investment in the Chinese Communist side of the China war and that the United States had a moral obligation to dissociate itself completely from any active economic assistance to Japan. No doubt was left in anyone's mind that if China were victorious, the Russians would swing a great weight in Chinese affairs thereafter. Still a topic for frequent reference was the persistence of bad relations between the Russians and the Japanese, with no effort made to hide the expectation of a serious all-out clash between the two as a further development in Asian conflicts. In fact, the China war in one sense was dealt with as a superficial clash hiding the greater and far more important fundamental conflict between Russia and Japan for eventual prominence in Far Eastern affairs.

The importance of this to the British, and Americans especially, could not be overlooked. On some occasions it was not concealed that Russia was already fighting the Japanese, not only in actual skirmishes in Manchuria and Mongolia, as has been noted, but by proxy in the shape of the Red Chinese leader Mao Tse-tung. Furthermore, as Oswald Garrison Villard pointed out in his column of July 8, 1939 in the *Nation*, that Stalin was supposed to be actually provoking these clashes in Mongolia between Russians and Japanese to impress the British with the likely outcome there in case no understanding was arrived at during this time between the Communists and the British; "Englishmen must know that if it comes to real war between Russia and Japan, their rights and privileges and trade in

China will go by the board whoever wins.”¹ Though the editors did not share Villard’s view on the cause for the Russo-Japanese troubles, no one questioned the outcome of a war between them to the West.

This was of great significance, despite its date, since substantially the same had been said over and over for many months after the rejuvenated Communist Chinese took the field against Japan beginning in July, 1937. A victory by Mao portended approximately the same kind of conclusion as one by Stalin. Hence the awkwardness of the position of those who took sides in the expanding Far East clash along with the forces of the Nationalists and the Communists of China against Japan as a means of keeping the Open Door in China open. Though many miles apart from the Communists in ideology, they made a major contribution to their success. It was ironic that these forces representing the traditional privileged interests in China since before the turn of the century should ally themselves with a force which closed the Open Door with a slam once the Japanese were removed from the doorway. And it was a cruel turnabout for these same Anglo-American interests who had acted as seers for a dozen years before the United States entered the Asian war, predicting the imminence of Japan swallowing China.

A curious inconsistency about Japan marked most liberal journalism. There were wild fluctuations between shudders at her possible spread-eagling of the entire Far East and casual dismissals because of desperate shortages of basic raw materials and alleged political fragility. In one sense these attitudes were a consequence of the adoption of the politics of boycotts. The deep faith in these weapons, revived in 1938, did not take into consideration the warnings of 1932 that as political pressure they were almost sure to bring about hostility on a wider scale. In this later period they were largely a reflection of Soviet-oriented Popular Front politics, which eschewed talk of actual fighting for the most part, as has been seen in other parts of the world, and stressed the approach that the enemy was basically a coward and needed only the pressure of bluff, threats and such passive operations as boycotts to knuckle under completely. Not until after the Russo-German pact in August, 1939 did any significant change take place in American liberalism’s attitudes toward the Far East war, and not until 1941 did liberals in the main reverse their traditional caution of hands-off the Far East by the United States and openly agitate for active United States intervention. But, unlike the situation in Europe, the basic favorable predisposition toward Chinese Communism did not falter during the fateful 1939-1941 period as did sympathy for the Russian variety.

The wave of pro-war talk, which reached its peak in some circles in the United States early in 1938, following the indignation felt over the *Panay* incident, found most liberals prepared with counter-argu-

ments, but within the context of Far Eastern politics and not pacifism or anti-militarism. Praise for the Chinese Communists, modest approval of Russian help for them, agitation for an American boycott on Japan, and an implacable opposition to any American military and naval gestures whatever in the Far East, were the staples of American liberal policy on Asiatic affairs. The only item which provoked an intramural dispute was the boycott proposal; the *New Republic's* neutrality leanings placed it in opposition to this now as it had been in 1931 and after on the grounds that such action would be war-provoking rather than a form of economic pressure which would hurry the internal collapse of Japan, the basic theory behind the boycott, at least on the surface. Communists may have placed just as high on the agenda the psychic contribution toward intensifying Japanese-American hatreds and guaranteeing a period of bad blood between the two for many years in the future, a matter of basic importance to Russians in the event they did go to war with Japan. In one sense the crusade by liberals and others for boycotting the Japanese began to produce grim and unexpected results along this line long before the war. A sharp upturn of brutality and hooliganism against Japanese in California was one of the first fruits of the righteous call for the economic strangulation of Japan.

THE BOYCOTT CRUSADE AND
THE CHINESE COMMUNIST
MILITARY PERFORMANCE STRIDE TOGETHER

"The Boycott Is Winning," the *Nation's* January 8, 1938 editorial leader trumpeted. The three-pronged approach of supporting the boycott, discouraging talk of increased American interference and presenting the performance of the Chinese Communists as sufficient to repel the Japanese was under way by now, often dealt with in parallel reports. This editorial gloried in the news that widespread rejection of Japanese-made goods was taking place, and even rejoiced that New York City settlement-house children had indignantly refused Japanese toys offered them at the recent Christmas season. This was all adduced as evidence of "hatred of war," and not calculated to provide emotional pressure for future ferocity. The hope was expressed that this economic pressure would stop Japan "soon."² An editorial the first week of February kept this sentiment on the move, relating that the Japanese were suffering seriously from the boycott, accompanied by a speculation that their war machine might run down even sooner than expected. Its unprecedented success was hailed again in the editorial "Widening the Boycott" the week of February 12.³

Sentiment for this boycott did not come only from centers of pro-Communist Chinese opinion. Lin Yutang lent his sophisticated weight to the "Japan-is-collapsing" theory with a modest pro-boycott proposal of his own in the *New Republic* on January 19. Lin believed the United States could support such a campaign without the slightest threat of the resulting bad relations leading the country into war with the Japanese. The editors had to disagree because of their established stand, insisting that the boycott would exacerbate the militarists in both nations, and in America it could serve the additional purpose of an excuse "to whip up the martial spirit, to create a vast and needless increase in our army and navy,"⁴ which indeed was taking place, as the *Nation* and other sources were lamenting, but with the unwillingness to relate this development to the policy which they favored for the Far East.

Boycott talk fluctuated through the spring and summer of 1938, while reports of sensational Communist military performances against the Japanese proliferated. On June 11 the *Nation's* "An Unsavory Alliance" commented with mixed emotions on the allegation that fifty per cent of Japanese war materials were still coming from the United States, and late the following month the editors added their weight for more boycott pressure, especially against the sending of raw materials to Japan, instead of stress on refusing the Japanese manufactured goods.⁵ A sharp upturn of pro-boycott agitation occurred early in September when the big Japanese drive on Hankow started to get under way. The *Nation* on September 3 remarked "Japan's new drive should created an increased sense of guilt in the United States, which continues to supply Japan with more than half of its war materials," and the following week elaborated at length on this theme in "Partnership With Japan," most of the material being drawn from *America's Share In Japan's War Guilt*, a publication of the American Committee For Non-Participation In Japanese Aggression. As was to be expected, it was the preliminary to another urgent call for a boycott on Japanese goods.⁶

There was an undoubted decline in boycott talk and a subdued enthusiasm for it as the summer ended. But at one of the low marks of interest in the program a notable shift of opinion occurred in the views of one of the most widely-printed spokesmen on Asian affairs in liberal journalism, Nathaniel Peffer. As late as November, 1937 a vigorous opponent of American interventionism in the Far East, he announced his change of heart in favor of both an American boycott and embargo on goods to Japan in the August, 1938 issue of the magazine *Amerasia*. As was to be expected, the *New Masses* paid him warm tribute for his reversal, but the *New Republic*, to which he had made numerous contributions, in its editorial "Mr. Peffer Changes His Mind" on September 14, reviewed his rigid anti-involvement and

pro-neutrality views of a year before as a prelude to discussing his about-face and vigorous recommendation of the very courses which he had condemned as likely to draw this country into war with Japan. The editors were puzzled that Peffer should use the argument that the violation of American rights and the "extreme brutality" with which Japan was conducting the war in China were now grounds for this American economic interference; "It is not clear to us what has happened that could not have been anticipated when Mr. Peffer first made up his mind," they commented. The editors of the junior liberal weekly were of the mind that Peffer's objectives could be achieved by simply invoking the May, 1937 Neutrality Act, in their conviction that its effect would do "trifling" damage to China compared to what it would do to the Japanese. In substance they were in accord with Peffer despite the seeming divergence. But they had not commented on his citing his conviction that the Japanese were deeply mired in China, suffering heavily at Communist hands, and were "immensely weakened," since it was fundamental to his thesis; ending American economic aid would help to bring about rapid defeat of Japan at exclusively Chinese hands.⁷ The absence of stress on direct aid to China implied that the latter was already obtaining what it needed from the Russians.

Peffer reopened this subject in a long and intense letter to the *New Republic* in the autumn, in which he expressed the firm conviction that Japan could not carry on its war in China another year, urging the editors to change their stand and follow his new position calling for a unilateral American campaign of economic boycott of the Japanese. He threatened that the United States was surely to be involved in a long and costly war in the future over conflicting imperialistic ambitions and would also be expelled from the mainland of Asia if it permitted the Japanese to win. In resisting the allure of Peffer's view on alleged Japanese military weakness, the editors replied, in a long statement on November 2,⁸

We are not ready to abandon hope that America can keep out of war in Europe and Asia, even if Mr. Peffer is. We are not ready to urge our government formally to take sides in the present war, and permanently to discard the only legislative precaution we have against getting into a bigger one.

The Neutrality Act remained their hope of achieving political results short of military action, although it was for the future to point out that Chinese could expel Americans and their interests from the China mainland just as effectively as could Japanese, and with an added ironic touch in that it was the erstwhile befriended group which did the expelling.

But the *Nation*, unencumbered by a policy of non-intervention in Asia or anywhere else, in their editorial "Asia For The Asiatics" ten days later, charged that the Japanese were trying to tie up Asia economically as a Japanese monopoly across the board with their "Monroe Doctrine For Asia" talk. Decrying Japanese statements of their determination for "freeing Asia from Communist influence" as "meaningless prattle," the main case of the editors was an argument for stronger American "legislative measures cutting off financial and commercial relations with Japan,"⁹ once more illustrated as "action which the *Nation* has consistently advocated." The logical consequence of the boycott agitation since 1931 began to loom up ominously in the background of this important statement; the main hope of the editors here was denunciation of the 1911 commercial treaty with Japan by the President. The unofficial campaign was on the verge of graduating to another and somewhat higher level of action.

The new approach was given sharp and dramatic underlining by the shifting of Peffer to the *Nation* and his emotional appeal "Warn Japan Now!" on January 15, 1939, calling on the Administration to apply pressure to the Japanese to forestall any alteration of the Far East status quo by them, with the suggestion that maybe the Philippine Islands might be closed to their trade as well as the threat of the denunciation of the 1911 trade treaty. In view of the Administration's lack of success in getting the Neutrality Act tailored to its desires, permitting the President to decide on the issue of which country in a dispute the United States might be neutral *against*, the attractiveness of this alternative was obvious.¹⁰ And the *Nation* had the right to be justly proud of Roosevelt's action on July 26, when denunciation was announced; no opinion-making force in America had advocated such a step so long in advance of the fact. The editorial on August 5, "How To Stop Japan," was an unbroken tender of praise, suggesting as supplementary action next the boycott on all goods which might possibly be constituted as war goods, as well as all possible efforts to keep trade with Japan down in the coming six months, in view of the fact that the rupture of trade relations was not to become effective before that time interval elapsed.¹¹ The expectable fruit of the long years of boycott talk had finally been assembled for harvest.

Not all liberals shared the *Nation*'s satisfaction. *Common Sense* in September expressed very sharp editorial disapproval, especially of the timing of the denunciation, and described the action as another of the President's "messianic retaliatory impulses." After supplying 80 percent of Japan's war materials since 1937, it alleged in the editorial "A Dangerous Gesture," this was the most risky method imaginable of trying to recoup from such a policy. "No one doubts that it

takes us a step closer to war with Japan," it felt confident in concluding.¹²

The coming of the Russo-German pact and the outbreak of war in Europe brought no change in the *Nation's* loud call for a tight embargo on the shipment of war supplies to the Japanese, though the *New Republic* persisted in its attitude of detachment and temporarily got out of the embargo-boycott controversy altogether. On January 13, 1940 the *Nation* published one of its strongest editorial appeals for comprehensive export and import embargoes on Japan as soon as the trade treaty expired, two weeks away. And it took immense comfort the following week from the statement by Henry L. Stimson in the *New York Times* which vigorously championed a total embargo on all war materials to Japan.¹³ Stimson had as allies on this policy not only pro-war liberals such as the *Nation* but also the American Communists. Despite the fact that they had become neutralists with alacrity concerning the European war, it seemed to be missed by nearly everyone that they had not changed their stance on the Far East an iota. With the tide of Red Chinese success still in and rising, it was not contradictory to see them championing pro-Communist programs such as the embarrassment of Japan in all manner of ways possible. The *Nation* and Mr. Stimson apparently did not mind their allies on this particular subject, in which they were witless promoters of Communist Chinese foreign policy by almost any standards, regardless of what other objectives they may have supported. The debilitation of Japan hardly meant the driving out of anti-Western influence and the re-opening of the Open Door *à la* 1901 once more, which seemed to be the ambition of the superannuated "Old China Hands" in sympathy with Stimson. There were plenty of Communists there to move in and keep it closed as soon as the Japanese were moved out. But faith in the triumph of a Chinese Nationalist element successful against both seemed to be at the core of this sentiment, again in the manner of the deep confidence in the ability of a canary to swallow two cats. As for the *Nation*, however, its scores of spirited tributes to the Chinese Communists and its bleak and dismal view of Chiang at almost all times hardly created any doubt as to which force it favored eventually triumphing in China. Its editorial policy found no difficulty in simultaneously insulting Communists for their attitude toward the European phase of the war and complimenting them for their seemingly contradictory yet logical attitude toward the war in Asia.

The *New Republic* continued its resistance to this method of pressuring Japan until the 1911 trade treaty officially expired. "T.R.B." in his New Year's Day, 1940 column thought it curious that the State Department was now exhuming the 1937 Brussels conference as the basis for its threatened sanctions on Japan once the trade treaty was

dead. Applying such a policy against the Japanese until her leaders abandoned the "Asia for the Asiatics" program "promises to bring us to the most critical turn in our international relations since the World War," was his evaluation. And the editors three weeks later made an open point of their disagreement with the *Nation*-Stimson forces on the issue. "While We Increase Pressures," it announced, "The *New Republic* does not favor an embargo directed expressly against Japan, because such an embargo would have to be international to be freely effective and would constitute a challenge to the Japanese military to seek essential imports by force."¹⁴ This was a chilling and realistic observation, largely unconsidered by the collective security thinkers with their deep faith in their superior bluffing powers and their even deeper conviction that the enemy was a coward everywhere.

A superb statement of this attitude was made by the *Nation* on February 10, which glowed with satisfaction that the trade treaty with Japan was finally killed, and referred to the state of relations between the United States and Japan as now having entered "a new and crucial stage." Confidently predicting that Japan would descend precipitously to a third- or fourth-class power without our economic help, "America Looks East" urged the adoption of the embargo now, as a prelude to getting from Japan a promise "to recognize America's basic rights in China." And it saw little or no need to fear provoking the Japanese to fight as a consequence of this pressure:¹⁵

The danger that Japan might resort to war against the United States cannot be wholly ignored, but it is comparatively minor risk. Japan is certainly in no position to fight a war with a major power at present. If a war did develop between Japan and the United States, the chances are that—like the present war in Europe—it would be an economic rather than a military conflict, and even this seems unlikely.

A new stage in American-Japanese relations had in truth been reached, and a large part of the boycott propaganda had to be restructured in terms of heightened tension between the two countries and the fact that a major war was now under way, in addition to the persistence of the realities of Asiatic politics which were constant since the Mukden incident. From the expiration of the 1911 trade treaty on, the blithe talk of the lack of the element of risk in economic warfare against Japan vanished, and new advisements of this sort of pressure from liberals were accompanied by auxiliary recommendations for building up and keeping dry the nation's supply of gunpowder. This will be examined subsequently, but a close look at the reportage of the China war and comments on the health and robustness of Chinese Communism after *Panay* is called for, as a supplement to boycott-embargo-trade treaty denunciation agitation,

Though the fortunes of the China war continued to be as unfavorable toward the Chinese in the period after the *Panay* bombing as at any time since the resumption of wide-scale fighting in July, 1937, there was an electric quality to the reportage on the war among American liberals rarely distinguishable before. In part this was due to the galvanization of interest in Asian affairs in the United States as a consequence of its direct involvement, making Asia newsworthy in a sense in which it had never been before. But in view of what was selected and stressed, a much more vital matter was the immense growth of Communist strength and prestige. For many months between *Panay* and Pearl Harbor it was not possible to learn from liberal sources whether any other elements still existed in China.

The capture by the Japanese of the city of Tsingtao in the Shantung province on January 10 and the subsequent drive west across Shansi toward the Yellow River hardly were to be noticed as worthy of comment. On January 15 the *Nation* was sure that "Japanese militarism has headed into an adventure from which there can be no retreat," and a week later an editorial related that Chinese resistance was stiffening in Shantung, accompanied by signs of growing "unity" among Chinese factions. It praised the extensive guerrilla tactics, and reported that supplies for the Chinese from Britain and France were now arriving.¹⁶ As for the Northwest China sector, T. A. Bisson's "Spiking Japan's Guns" on January 29 was devoted to a long tribute to the Chinese Eighth Route Red Army and its fierce fighting. In his view Japanese invasion of this area had "completely altered the situation," and had contributed to luxuriant growth of Communism there, at a time when it was tending to decline, in his opinion. Like other commentators, Bisson had unlimited acclaim for guerrilla fighting and the involvement of the entire civilian population, quoting from an interview which he had had with Chu Teh in June, 1937 that "For China this is a totalitarian war," and that "Even all of our four hundred millions are not quite enough."¹⁷

The editors did not challenge the Communist concept of an army made up mostly of *franc-tireurs*. The *Nation* editorial on April 2, "Japan Faces A New China," expressed much happiness that the Eighth Route Army seemed to have stopped the Japanese, even though they had reached the Yellow River early in March. It was alleged that they had stopped "four great Japanese drives in succession," and now had "an excellent chance of wearing Japan down."¹⁸ In their view it was licit to stimulate civilians to fight in house-to-house combat without assuming any responsibilities for subsequent reprisals if defeated. Japanese shootings of such partisans were described as "shocking massacres." Of course, no comment was made on the obvious fact that the grinding to dust of town after town in this type of war was more likely to accelerate profound social chaos and

introduce revolutionary infections than any other kind. Anna Louise Strong's "The Army That's Defeating Japan" in the *New Masses* on April 19, a rhapsodic account of the Eighth Route Army, did not emphasize this consequence of partisan warfare either.¹⁹

With the front shifting northward by small stages as well as westward, it was considered appropriate to revive once more the possibility of a Russo-Japanese war. The *New Republic* on March 23, 1938 published a major report by one Leonard Ludwin, "Mongolia Against Japan," describing the pro-Soviet flavor of this area since its absorption in 1924 as a "Red Mongolian People's Republic," with its powerful army of 200,000 "equipped with the most modern means of warfare." Ludwin, a veteran of two years' residence in Mongolia, reported that "the outstanding factor in the modernization of Outer Mongolia is the compulsory army service." There were no references to idyllic socio-economic fundamental changes and the beatitudes of Soviet socialism at work here; all emphasis was on the military efficiency which might be expected of Mongolians in a future war of the Communists against Japan.²⁰ But nothing came of this, and it was not until July and August, following the report of clashes between these two antagonists on the Korea-Manchuria-Siberia border, causing wide excitement, that the war possibility was revived. A *Nation* article on July 9 had reported in acidic style, in relation to the purge trials then going on, that a Russian general had fled to Japan with a story of a vast military and naval establishment in Russia and Siberia being held in readiness for fighting with Japan, but in a comment on the border fighting, now admitted to be but one of 2400 such incidents since 1931, the *Nation's* editors on August 6 voted to exonerate the Russians of the responsibility for inciting the clash.²¹

Though the Japanese broke out with another massive offensive in the late spring of 1938, taking Amoy, Suchow, Kaifeng and Anking in about a month, liberal journalists stressed only the advances of Communist guerrillas. It was further considered of great significance that at the congress of the Kuomintang Nationalists of Chiang in April, no resolution was introduced denouncing the Communists, which had not been done in a long time, and which was advanced as evidence that the "united front" in China was now a success.²² Though the Japanese were advancing, the *Nation* admitted, in an editorial on April 16, Red guerrilla successes against the Japanese, "aided by armed and organized peasants and even bandits" behind Japanese lines, were causing vast economic damage and loss of life, while the latter were still cast as villains of the worst sort for conducting reprisals against such elements.²³

A major report along such lines appeared on May 11 in the *New Republic*, Edgar Snow's "'Red' Greetings To Nippon." A long and enthusiastic report on the startling growth of Communist strength

in China, attributed to the spreading, intensification and continuation of the war, and full of fond hopes and wishes for their continued prosperity, it was noteworthy for its commendatory descriptions of the intensive political training imposed on the countryside population by Chu Teh's Eighth Route Army. Snow fell back on the same arguments used in 1934-1935, that there was no shortage of arms among the Communists because of their ability to fight with reconditioned captured material, and he left the impression that the Reds could handle Asia without help, that the United States or anyone else in the Far East would introduce unwanted complications. As he put it, "even the prospect of Japanese penetration of all China does not unduly alarm them, but implies the extension of mass revolutionary struggle on continental dimensions, in which they are convinced final victory will be theirs."²⁴ This assuredness of final victory on the part of the Communists, and a seeming vast understanding that the extension of death and mass destruction was one of the best ways to prepare a whole continent for acceptance of emergency collectivist rule, the first stage in the establishment of the bureaucratic state, seems to have mesmerized whole categories of liberals and others at this time. In the 1947-1949 period, after more than fifteen years of reports such as that of Snow in May 1938, Americans suddenly became aroused over Communism triumphant in China.

But it was not only Americans who failed to understand the implications. The revealing "Chinese Diary" by W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood in the *New Republic* on June 1 adequately illustrated that; their largely innocent observations of the love-feast during this stage of the "united front" underlined the growth of fatuousness at this moment over blooming Communist strength and what it portended:²⁵

As to what will happen in the event of a decisive Chinese victory, it is again impossible to be certain of anything. At the moment, men are fighting on the same side, and behaving indeed as if they were the closest personal friends, who for the past twelve years have been trying to kill each other. Take the Communists, for instance. At the moment, their military help is valuable, and not only Kuomintang officials but even Hong Kong businessmen will assure you that, after all, they are not so bad as they have been painted and that, in any case, they are not real Communists at all. But, when asked what role they think the Communists will play after the war, they become ominously vague. "It is not a question of the government working with the Communists," Madame Chiang told us. "It is a question of the Communists working with the government."

The calm and reassuring note of eventual Communist triumph at a moment when the Japanese were making major gains and organiz-

ing China politically at both Peking and Nanking might have been a cause for surprise in some circles, but it was taken in stride by American liberal publications in 1938. Japanese bombings of cities were commented on most unfavorably in a *Nation* editorial on June 18, which admitted that the Japanese offensive was succeeding against Chiang but not against the Eighth Route Army, which again had "scored several major victories over large Japanese armies." It was another occasion to implore a shutting off of all supplies to Japan and to dismiss all talk of a peace between China and Japan, on the grounds that all China was united against anything of the kind.²⁶ On July 2 another editorial expressed firm confidence in imminent Japanese collapse, but the ultimate in cheerfulness in this period, John Gunther's "Can Japan Hold Out?" on August 13, at a moment when the Japanese were sweeping everything before them, boiled with superlatives for the Chinese, and expressed the expectation of a long fight, although he confided to the readers that an unnamed source, "one of the best military men in China," had told him that "any first class European army, with proper equipment, could drive the Japanese into the sea in six months."²⁷ This kind of blithe confidence gained ground in the succeeding three years; its part in making the combat of 1941-1945 come true has never been estimated, but there were many such expressions of an easy victory over Japan in a matter of weeks from this time on to Pearl Harbor. Again it was ironic that, far from being a weakling, it was the Japanese military and naval performance against the Occidental forces in the Pacific war's various stages which contributed more than anything else to the loss of white prestige in the Orient. In August, 1938, however, the *Nation's* editors were convinced that it was Communist Russia which was about to engage the Japanese, and they were confident that the Soviet would finish them off promptly when that moment arrived.²⁸

A *New Republic* commentary on the reported Soviet-Japanese clash at the moment also expressed a view similar to this, even though in its enthusiasm in its August 10 editorial, "Siberian Dynamite," it broke ranks with the accepted legend of Communist China fighting with captured Japanese war supplies by announcing "Soviet airplanes are helping the Chinese resist the Japanese aviators."²⁹

The theme of quiet confidence quavered somewhat in October, as the Japanese took Canton on the 21st, Hankow on the 25th, followed four days later by the accession of Hachiro Arita as foreign minister of Japan. The military defeats were accompanied by spirited praise once more for Red guerrillas, whose tactics were once more acclaimed as the force which would wear Japan down. And Arita's speech in December, referred to by the *Nation* as the "formal closing of the Open Door" address, found them calling not only for an embargo on Japanese goods as a retaliation for discrimination against

American trade, but for one of the few times it urged direct help to China. Faith in subsistence on Russian help also was at a momentary crisis, despite a report late in the previous month that a new agreement had been worked out between Chiang and the Communists, permitting the latter to once more re-enter the Kuomintang party. "If verified, this would imply a complete reorientation of Chinese policy toward the Soviet Union, with prospects of greater Soviet aid," the *Nation* had breathed hopefully on November 26, while making another derisive comment on the topic of Japan's "war on Communism," a phrase always set off in quotation marks, when used in this sense. This was not verified, but the Arita speech created ammunition for a widening of the anti-Japanese campaign by making possible the emphasis on what Japan now threatened to do to traditional preserves of Western powers in China.³⁰

The liberal press had always been cool to this aspect of the Far Eastern struggle from the very days of Mukden in 1931, a large part of articulate liberalism looking upon the downfall of the colonial privileges there with equanimity. The intensification of the war increased the attractiveness of this aspect, in the same way that liberals mellowed toward the subject of munitions manufacture when the possible recipient was a political force which they favored somewhere in the world. One of the earliest of the treatments of this theme was that by Ernest O. Hauser of the research staff of the Institute of Pacific Relations in the *Nation* on January 21, 1939, "Asia For the Japanese," a one-sided picture of the clash between the Open Door and the Japanese New Order, portraying a Japanese-run Asia, with the United States and Great Britain pushed out of the Pacific entirely.³¹

Hauser, also a frequent contributor to the *New Republic* and one of the earliest and loudest advertisers of the merits of T. A. Bisson's book *Japan In China*, was at least consistent, for he did not share the easy complacency of that spectrum of the liberal observers of China who expected the Japanese to fall apart in a short time, and he had challenged Peffer on this subject several months before.³² But his concern for the survival of the Western extraterritorial privileges in China was suspect, to say the least. In like manner there was a strained note to the *Nation's* concern in the same issue which contained the Hauser essay about Japanese protests over American fortification of Guam. A few years earlier its policy had been to denounce the extension of any American arms beyond continental United States, but it now thought Guam a "part of an effective democratic front against aggression in the Far East."³³ The turgid anxiety over the Japanese blockade of the British and French concessions in Tientsin six months later had an even more artificial flavor, when viewed against the background of earlier policies. Advertised as "the

long-awaited showdown between Japan and the Western Powers in the Far East," there was an overtone which seemed to indicate that the editors were already prepared for the meek Western action which transpired.³⁴

In the meantime, as the war stretched into 1939, the reportage of Communist and guerrilla action increased, and for some periods of time was often the only news of the China war considered worthy of emphasis. Late in February a *Nation* report insisted that the Japanese were suffering severely at the hands of the Eighth Route Army in Shansi, and much was made of the assertion that Japan had won only one victory since October.³⁵ A gap had appeared in the "united front" by now, however. On January 14 Donald M. Davies in his article "Sabotage in China" had reported that since the government had retired to Chungking, following the defeat at Hankow, Chiang's troops had been guilty of much slacking off in the fight, and Davies, a China-born Associated Press correspondent at the new governmental headquarters, also accused the Chiang troops of atrocities against Red elements.³⁶ A March 11 editorial, "China Is Still Fighting," soon qualified this leader by pointing out that though the Japanese were administering serious defeats to Chiang, the Eighth Route and the recently-formed Red Fourth Route Army were still in the field, working closely with "partisan groups."³⁷ In this respect the liberals trailed the Communists in details on the growth of Communist fighting strength and disposal. In November, 1938 the *Communist* called the organization of this new Red army a matter authorized early that spring by Chiang, and said the older Eighth Route army had been "incorporated" in the Kuomintang army, and was "subject to central military command." Renamed the "Eighth National Revolutionary Army," its original political and military commanders had not been replaced.³⁸ But liberals continued to refer to it under its old name.

On April 8, 1939 the *Nation* printed Haldore Hanson's long essay "China's 50-50 Chance," in which he detailed the growth of guerrilla actions, on which he maintained China was "betting its life." He asserted that the Eighth Route Army had been "permitted" by Chiang to mobilize 300,000 "partisans" in North China, and Chiang was trying to transform 200,000 of his own troops into similar forces behind Japanese lines. This was one of the most meticulous accounts ever published in the liberal weeklies on the Red technique of transforming civilians into "conscious partisans" of supporting troops, accompanied by a description of the intricate political organization of every village, the political education of all, the mobilization of all young men into the regular armies, and the general Communist organization of the entire countryside. "The Chinese [Reds] are thinking not in terms of weeks and months but of years and even decades,"

Hanson reported, with a strong sentiment of sympathy; "The Red Army fought for ten years against Chiang Kai-shek. Its leaders feel they can equal or better that record against the Japanese."³⁹ Philip Jaffe supported this in his "Two Years of War" in the *New Masses* on July 11. "The story of guerrilla warfare, first developed to its highest art by the Eighth Route Army, is an old one to Americans," Jaffe conceded. "But what is not well known is that every man and woman in China is either being trained to become a guerrilla warrior or is regarded as a potential one."⁴⁰ Apparently there was even room for expansion, in view of the statement of the Communist Party of China, "For the Victorious Outcome of China's War of Liberation" on September 8, the most comprehensive outline and call to civil guerrilla war ever published to this time, but not made available to Americans until it appeared in the *Communist* in December.⁴¹ With the European war now a reality as well, the "resistance" movements in most of the Western sphere could never have found a better blueprint in subsequent years for their guide than this outline for the China war.

Nor did the war news through the summer reflect much of anything except the part being played by Communist forces in inflicting heavy setbacks on Japanese armies in all sectors. A Chinese spring offensive was greeted with a shout early in May, and a month later the *Nation* in its editorial "Japan Tempts Fate" asserted that six expensive organized drives against the Reds in Shansi had all been frustrated. Flanked by another report of hard fighting between Soviet Union and Japanese troops on the Mongolian border since May 11, the picture from the Communist point of view had never been better. Accepting the interpretation that all the border incidents had been instigated by local Japanese commanders, the editors urged the Russians and British to conclude their pending pact, that the latter might gain support against the Japanese in Tientsin and the Communists additional buttressing elsewhere. It was the last gesture of a Popular Front sort, for the Hitler-Stalin pact effectively ended this kind of approach.⁴²

THE HITLER-STALIN PACT AS SEEN THROUGH THE ASIATIC COMPLEX

Unlike the dark foreboding with which liberals greeted the Russo-German non-aggression treaty insofar as it involved purely European affairs, it was a topic producing widespread rejoicing in its Far Eastern aspect, because of the consternation which it caused among the Japanese. It took little effort for the liberal friends of China's Com-

munists to adopt a severely critical attitude toward the Russians for their neutralism in Europe simultaneously with a beam of approval for what they interpreted as a grave blow to Japanese hopes of buoyant promotion of their offensive in China. Consistency on the subject of Communism was the first casualty in liberal editorial ranks, but few made an issue of the fact that although a sharp and critical line soon took shape toward the Russian exponents, the warm gaze of approval on the Chinese brand was even intensified a few degrees. By this time the euphemism for Communist-controlled China which had gained wide usage was "Free China," a term which was used for a substantial time set off with quotation marks. It took some time before liberals were hardened to using it without them,⁴³ but it had gained acceptance by the end of 1938.

The liberal weeklies momentarily followed the pro-Communist approach in stressing the benefit to China coming from the *Pakt*, especially exemplified by the interpretations such as that of Philip Jaffe in the *New Masses*. He pointed up Japanese discomfiture while neglecting to indicate what the Russo-German agreement contributed in the form of encouragement to the Japanese to move southward toward more succulent fare in the form of the Anglo-Franco-Dutch colonial enclaves.⁴⁴ By the end of 1939, however, this issue was fully recognized, and glee over the *Pakt* was somewhat subdued. The *Nation* on September 2, before it had any time to comment on the outbreak of the European war, even gave vent to one of its extremely rare moments of misgiving about Russia, at a time when pique over the agreement with Germany was at an all-time high, insofar as the China situation was concerned. For the first time it expressed editorial disquiet over the possibility of a Soviet-dominated China, and declared, "In the event of a general European war, responsibility for preserving China from either Soviet or Japanese domination would fall primarily on the United States."⁴⁵ This was an odd lapse from its implacable opposition toward American involvement in China under any pretext whatever, although it might have been charged up to the unnerving experience the editors had just gone through. Another indication that their thinking processes on the Far East were scrambled was the expectation that Japanese activity would undergo a sharp decline, just on the eve of a period of Japanese expansion in Asia and the Pacific which was to make the German actions in Europe look like a mere excursion by comparison.

It was not long before the suspicion and resentment toward the Russians in Asia evaporated. On October 7, 1939 the *Nation* announced, "Chinese morale has been stiffened by the arrival of a new detachment of Soviet volunteers, an indication that Soviet aid will continue though probably not on a decisive scale." Though the Russians were now benevolently detached in Europe, they partially re-

deemed themselves for their consistency here. On November 1, the *New Republic's* editorial "Japan Is in Trouble" reaffirmed the fact of persisting Russian help by announcing, "substantial quantities of Russian airplanes, tanks and anti-aircraft guns have been supplied [to China] in the recent past," and that "As many as 500 Russian technicians are said to be aiding the Chinese."⁴⁶ The occasion was the moment of a sharp upturn in Chinese military action, which was said to have resulted, among other things, in a beating administered to the Japanese on the Mongolian border, an air raid on Japanese positions in Hankow with Soviet planes and a Chinese victory at Changsha. The *Nation* also claimed that much havoc was being wreaked on Japan by the Eighth Route Army, now referred to as "made up of former Communist units," in harmony with the new unity, as well as pointing out that the air support at Changsha had been furnished "by planes recently obtained from the Soviet Union."⁴⁷ So the last few months of 1939, though a source of unbroken gloom as far as Europe was concerned, actually were one of the brightest moments of the China war since its general spreading in July, 1937, in the pages of the American liberal weeklies. It is significant also that the only policy change brought about by the *Pakt* in the *Nation* was the decline of agitation against Western intervention or pursuit of interest in China. The "stay-out-of-Asia" position which had prevailed since 1931, despite the boycott-embargo propaganda, underwent considerable modification. In addition to vague hints that the United States might have to essay as the champion of China in the event the latter was faced by joint Soviet-Japanese domination, interventionist liberals encouraged both the French and English to take stiffer stands toward the Japanese. The *Nation* did not approve the French and British withdrawing their troops from North China, and even suggested that the British might find the Japanese a "convenient pawn" against the Russians to keep the latter from going to war on the side of Germany in Europe.⁴⁸ In the lull in the Asian war in November and December, 1939 all manner of speculations and considerations of *realpolitik* were turned over in the editorial pages. There was also talk of the Red Chinese deserting Chiang and retiring to the provinces contiguous to Mongolia and Siberia, under a Moscow protectorate. But the core of the unrest was the uncertainty of basic Russian policy toward Japan. With rumors of a new falling out between Chiang and the Red Chinese, new skirmishes between the Red and Kuomintang troops, and news that a pro-Red paper had been suppressed in Chungking, the anxiety had swelled immensely.⁴⁹

The *Nation's* recommendation to the United States had to be in harmony with steps already taken, especially the already-doomed 1911 American-Japanese trade treaty. On November 4 its editorial "Japan's Soft Answer" saw no reason for the United States getting

friendly and recognizing the puppet regimes in Manchuria and that recently formed under the nominal leadership of Wang Ching-wei. It recommended the continuation of the trade blackout, and the establishment of an embargo if the Japanese did not withdraw their troops from China "in accordance with the principles of the Nine Power Pact."⁵⁰ But this was as much a Soviet objective as a liberal one. The possibility of this taking place was another matter. It was fully recognized now that the Japanese were in a position to occupy an enormous area of China, but were not doing so. This more than ever increased the feeling of uncertainty about the Russians, temporarily still helping out the Chinese Reds, but suspected of being open to an understanding with the Japanese which might consist of a truce in the North, freeing the latter for a massive attack to the South on the Western colonies. When cluttered up with the pro-Soviet residues remaining from before August, 1939 the confusion was comprehensive.

Rumors late in November that, despite the denunciation of the trade treaty there was a segment of the American State Department in favor of accepting the Japanese position in China, on the grounds that continued opposition was likely to "throw Japan into the arms of the Soviet Union and eliminate the United States altogether from China," sparked the November 25 editorial in the *Nation*. "Why Appease Japan?" said the editors:⁵¹

The Soviets have a heavy stake in a Chinese victory. They have advanced millions of dollars worth of supplies on credit. Within the past few days negotiations have been going on looking toward a further increase of Soviet aid to China. Moscow is not likely to abandon all that it has built up unless it is confronted with a possible Allied-Japanese-American combination which menaces its security. Only such a threat would be likely to produce a Japanese-Soviet agreement which would be fatal to China.

This seemed to suggest that the United States faced elimination from China anyway, except under Russian and not Japanese auspices, since the Chinese victory under consideration here was hardly that of the Nationalists; the tender concern for the welfare of the Chinese Communists in the past years did not suggest any yearning for any other sort of outcome. And the recommendation that the United States could "avert this danger" by continuing "its traditional Far Eastern policy of standing squarely for the territorial integrity of China" and that a policy of "appeasement" toward Japan now was "both unnecessary and dangerous" was simply a recommendation that Soviet flexibility might be stopped by American rigidity. Despite the superficial annoyance with the Russians in the late summer and

early fall, by the end of the year the *Nation*, at least, was back to thinking that for the Russians to be able to maneuver and entertain alternative policy possibilities in the Far East was desirable, but that it was not so for the United States.

The *New Republic's* post-*Pakt* Far Eastern policy, expressed a number of times between November, 1939 and February, 1940, was not nearly as hard to understand. And it was entirely within the context of disengagement and relaxation of pressure on the Japanese. Its "A Policy For the Pacific" on November 22 urged abandonment of the embargo crusade, and suggested that the Western nations sign a treaty with China relinquishing all special concessions such as treaty ports and extraterritoriality, and extending governmental loans for industrial and other developmental purposes. As for Japan it recommended leaving her alone, and giving her the opportunity to back out of China without losing "face," while leaving the door open to join the Western nations in their new China policy, thus depriving her of the opportunity to justify the China action on the grounds that she was doing precisely what the West had done in the past. Said the editors, "The anomalous position of the United States in the present Asiatic war has always been that if we opposed Japan we seemed to be serving other imperialist interests, which, though for the moment they were less dangerous to China, yet were just as bad in principle."⁵² This was a call to abandon all imperialism in China, and to substitute a joint participation scheme in the development of Chinese industry and trade. In the January 22, 1940 "While We Increase the Pressure" and "The War Of Nerves In the East" on February 5 the editorial line continued evenly along this course, urging all nations to get out of China and condemning the Roosevelt Administration pressure on Japan as the main factor producing the "real danger of our becoming involved in a war nobody wants." A way out had to be found to permit the Japanese to withdraw from China without losing "face." One of the consequences of this approach was a reiteration of the pre-1937 argument that the China trade was grossly over-rated, and largely pursued because of its alleged future promise, that the United States Navy was a threat to Japan alone, and that Ambassador Joseph Grew and others were talking too strongly, putting the country where it was running the risk of a Russo-Japanese decision to create a mutual sphere of interest in the North and East of China, with the British and French gaining the South and West, and the United States being frozen out entirely.⁵³

THE ANXIOUS YEAR 1940 AND
THE THREAT OF PEACE

The last issue of the *Nation* in 1939 reported the Japanese being smashed on four different fronts,⁵⁴ and an air of optimism seemed aloft from this sector of the world to compensate the gray and forbidding European scene, since the Russo-Finnish war and the Sitzkrieg provided barren fare, especially for the liberals attuned to an Allied viewpoint and the hope of eventual American involvement on their side. The handling of the touchy issue of Communism was a revelation in journalistic diplomacy during this tremulous period. A sharp decline in news of fighting in China set in with the coming of 1940. This had an ominous shadow, even if the subdued performance of the Japanese in China was interpreted as evidence that they were no longer capable of a sustained offensive. This "stand-pat" policy, as the *Nation* referred to it, with ten of China's 18 provinces firmly in their grip and with a strong position in three others, was hardly an indication of weakness.⁵⁵ Three other topics replaced war news in the succeeding months; a new rift between Chiang and the Reds, Japanese plans for the setting up of the Wang puppet regime and repeated rumors of a growing "softness" tendency toward Japan in the United States Senate and State Department in the months after the final abrogation of the 1911 trade treaty.

This act was hailed with relief by a variety of American partisans of Chinese Communism, who insisted that Chiang-Red relations were already at a disastrous stage even in June and July, 1939, and that Roosevelt's announcement on the 26th of July had not only helped patch their differences and steel them for more fighting but was a decisive blow to a wave of peace talk which had gotten loose during the distemper. Edgar Snow's *New Republic* report "China's Precarious Unity" on January 8 examined this in detail, discussing the numerous outbreaks of violence between the troops of the superficial Chinese allies and the high tension prevailing just at the moment FDR's denunciation had been made public. According to Snow, part of the Chinese Central Government had "strongly urged a compromise with Japan" at that moment, followed by a new eruption of the Chiang-Communist war. But, he sighed with a relief,⁵⁶

American abrogation of the trade treaty with Japan came at a critical and decisive moment. Its disastrous effect on Anglo-Japanese negotiations in Tokyo, followed by greatly increased help to China from Russia, silenced much of the peace talk in Chungking.

And he was satisfied that a combination of sudden State Department toughness toward Japan and accelerated aid from Soviet Russia had

continued to squelch peace talk and had guaranteed the continuation of this vast disrupting war in Asia.

But the Finnish war had already had a dampening effect on enthusiasm for Communist Russia, and proponents of protracted fighting in China could not help but feel that it had a serious depressing carry-over value to the Asian question. Peffer, in the *Nation* on February 10, warned against American sympathies being turned away from China by "Japanese-inspired" stories of the penetration of China by Communism. He admitted that the news stories originating in the winter, coincidental with the Finnish war, that new trouble had broken out between Chiang and the Chinese Reds, could not be dismissed entirely, but he countered this by expressing his firm belief that Moscow and the Chinese Reds were not completely in agreement, and that the Russians were unlikely to induce the latter to stop fighting, should Russia negotiate the same kind of agreement with Japan as had been worked out with Germany the previous August.⁵⁷ No matter how badly things were going in Europe, spokesmen such as Peffer thought it would be a tragedy for the same kind of uneasy rumination to grow in the minds of Americans relative to the Asian situation, where the vision of moral seamlessness was yet unclouded.

Freda Utley's "Japan's Red Flirtation," published two weeks later, continued to hammer away in the effort to dissuade readers from being deflected from pursuing the embargo of Japan to its logical conclusion, out of fear that the latter might make an alliance with Russia or go to war with America. This was a curious essay which had as its central point the idea that if the United States did not continue its application of serious economic pressure on Japan, China was "likely to fall prey to Bolshevism," by which she meant Soviet Russia; "The gravest danger to China, and to the future of the Far East, is the possibility that the USSR may secure a predominant influence over the Chinese National Government." She maintained that the Chinese Reds, on instruction from the Comintern, had changed their tactics from the 1935 "class war" to that of fighting "a war of national liberation" with Chiang. Admitting that this could easily be reversed, she expressed confidence that the Chinese Communist Party was "less subservient to Moscow than the artificially-created Communist Parties of Europe and America," that it was "rooted in a peasant movement in no sense Bolshevik in its aspirations," and that "If the Chinese peasants were given the land, the whole countryside could be counted on to resist Japan as the Russian peasantry resisted Allied intervention in 1920." The Utley formula consisted simply of pressing the embargo, since the Japanese war machine was creaking, the domestic economy of Japan was about to fall apart, and their domestic progressives and liberals were clamoring for an end to the Chinese war. The American economic strangulation would be the

coup de grâce. All this was to be done in the name of insuring a "free China and the Open Door."

What might follow a Chinese victory in this "war of liberation?" A China as firmly backed by Stalin as she admitted was hardly likely to dismiss Russian influence upon driving out Japan. She had already declared that "if Stalin deserted China," and if aid from America was not forthcoming as a substitute, then there was little hope for the survival of "Chinese political and social unity." Her alternative to Japanese hegemony was discreetly buried after the split-personality treatment of the Communist issue had been paraded:⁵⁸

Account must be taken of the fact that the Comintern abandoned its democratic masquerade last August [1939]. Stalin would now have little to lose and might calculate that he had much to gain by ordering the Chinese Communists to revert to a revolutionary policy. China is one of the few countries where a revolutionary policy might succeed and where the Communist Party is not too discredited to lead it.

So the Utley tale of the deviation between the two Communisms of Russia and China at the beginning of her article conflicted entirely with her admission of their essential understanding at the end. And her subdued consideration of a likely consequence of a successful "war of liberation" was essentially what happened. Despite the confusion, and the appearance of opposition, her appeal was in essence a plea to aid in the establishment of Communism in China, since she posed no possibility of heading it off in her single-minded proposal to drive the Japanese out.

There were no more stories of internal dissension in China the rest of the year, and the diversion of the Japanese southward after the creation of the Wang Ching-wei government at Nanking tended to make such a topic of less interest since the China war cooled substantially during the Japanese "stand-pat" stage. The *Nation* noted as early as March 9 the existence of the Wang regime, even though it was not officially set up until the 30th. In its editorial of the former date, the *Nation* sought to inflame hostile reactions by declaring that its policies included the exclusion of foreign business investments in China, and that no Western nation had been consulted in the creation of this puppet regime. The editors declared that the preliminary actions confirmed their "long-standing suspicion that the Japanese invasion of China, though ostensibly directed against the Chinese, was primarily an attack on American and European interests." But this was one of the first occasions the *Nation* had ever expressed any tender concern for them since the Mukden incident of September, 1931; the fate of foreign business interests in China had not troubled it to any extent in the entire decade compared with fear for the

well-being of the Chinese Communists. But, in a time of abandonment of long-supported policies such as had been going on since August, 1939, this switch in Asia on its part was not particularly out of place. On April 6 the same weekly's editors reflected that the Wang regime and the comprehensive freezeout of American and other interests in China was Japan's answer to the denunciation of the 1911 trade treaty by Roosevelt.⁵⁹

While Europe was exploding in war in April, May and June, 1940 the Far East was relatively somnolent by comparison, and liberal concern was expressed that "the clique in the State Department favoring appeasement" had "gotten the upper hand" in making Japanese policy, since nothing was taking place in the economic sanctions area, and there had been no move since the end of the trade treaty and no response to the emergence of the Wang regime, and its economic exclusiveness programs. In addition, another round of rumors was loose that Japan was seeking a truce once more with Chiang, hoping to alleviate home discontent by levelling off their war in China and profiting from that in the West. The *Nation* on May 25 hoped that Chiang would not hesitate to continue fighting in order to consider this proposal.⁶⁰

But the desperate predicament of the Dutch, French and British in the face of the German campaign was bound to focus light on their positions in the Far East sooner or later, and concern began to be broadcast in a short time. And it soon made a hash of the policies of the *Nation* in particular with respect to what they believed the behavior of the United States should be. A quick look at the stand of two years before as expressed in its pages make a dramatic contrast to what began to be expressed in June, 1940. When all the high temper was glowing over the *Panay* bombing, Villard, in his New Year's Day, 1938 column, "Can We War On Japan?" had pronounced emphatically in the negative, maintaining that the American Army, Navy and State Department officials and the President knew so too. Once more he chose to reprint FDR's own words to this effect, as he had written them for the magazine *Asia* on July 1, 1923 and which that journal had reprinted in March, 1934. The thesis, which Villard supported, was that the distance plus the logistical problem of supply and shipping were difficulties too vast for either country to handle.⁶¹

As for the stimulus this event had given to naval expansion and the argument that a big navy was now needed for American protection, the *Nation* on February 19 in a major editorial statement, "Big Navy Stuff," expressed itself rather pointedly on the situation: "The *Nation* is flatly and unequivocally opposed to the Administration's big navy plan because it smells of militarism, because it increases the arms-race tension, because it invites war, because it is an economic waste, and because if it is aimed at stopping Fascist aggressions and

building a structure of peace it is exactly the wrong way to go about it." Its main recommendation at that moment of course involved joint economic warfare on Japan with the other "democracies" along with aid to China, hoping that the Japanese would run down after being forced to fight on the limited resources available in their home islands.⁶² And Paul Y. Anderson in his supporting essay "War Is In the Air" in the same issue declared that "Writing as one who has always rejected pacifism and now sees its folly convincingly demonstrated in the plight of China, I cannot believe that battleships contain the answer to the problem of defending this country." Though printed cheek by jowl with Villard's column of that day as well, Anderson never concealed for a moment that he was, on the contrary, the *Nation's* most vociferous pacifist. But both came to the conclusion that the big naval boom was a product of pressure to put the American navy in the Pacific as a policeman watching over British interests, while the British kept their fleet in the Atlantic and "enforced peace" there.⁶³

On April 23, 1938 Villard in another bitter attack on Secretary of State Hull and his Japanese and Far Eastern policy had heatedly charged, "the policy now being pursued does not lead toward peace but toward the constant exacerbation of public feeling in both countries; and that is the road to war, a war which there is reason to believe would not be unwelcome to certain members of the State Department who feel that we must let the Japanese know that we propose to dominate in the Pacific area."⁶⁴ Despite the ensuing tough economic policy toward Japan, no voice on the organ of liberal collective security differed from this opposition to the stretching of American naval muscles in the Far East. But the ravages of the European war soon made their appearance, and it was not long before the American fleet, once anathema to the editors, began to be recast as the sole hope of the survival of any Western influence in Asia. And beginning in the summer of 1940, United States naval readiness began to be spoken about in the same breath as, and as a supporting clause to, the sustained call for the more dexterous application of economic grips on Japan.

The collapse of the colonial powers in their war with Germany spotlighted their weakness in Asia, and the growth of Japanese interest in their properties accelerated American liberals in getting over their misgivings and reservations on the subject of United States naval strength in the same way that the military plight of these states quickly broke down the long-standing liberal hostility toward munitions manufacture. The many years of ceaseless criticism of the building of American naval power in the Pacific went by the board in a matter of weeks in June and July, 1940. And accompanying it was the faith in an unassisted economic warfare policy as the unshakable

method for bending Japan to the will of its Occidental opponents. "The chief barrier to Japanese expansion in the South Seas at the expense of the Western Powers, apart from involvement in China, is admittedly the United States," the *Nation* gratefully commented on June 1, while its highly-touted French military organization was folding in the face of German attack in a matter of days; "Although this country has made no threats and issued no clear statement of policy covering the area, the presence of the American fleet in the western Pacific speaks the language which Japan understands best."⁶⁵

From this moment the *Nation* ceased its many years of incessant barking at United States naval strength in the Pacific and swung behind it vigorously, blending it with the campaign for total economic isolation from Japan. The consequences of this were not clearly expressed, for though the "enemy-is-a-coward" thesis of collective security still lay heavily upon them, it was also well understood that one of the results of wilful economic warfare by the Roosevelt Administration upon the Japanese was bound to be advances in the direction of the colonial holdings of other nations in East Asia. The *Nation's* editorial "Don't Appease Japan" on June 22 recognized this. Vociferously against any kind of agreement with Japan, it implored the President to keep the fleet in Hawaii, hailed the coming of an embargo on oil shipments to the Japanese and felt that the complete stoppage of trade in scrap iron was "in sight." Comfort was taken in the fact that machine tools were already being withheld from Japanese trade channels. And it admitted that "The adoption of these measures will undoubtedly increase the pressure within Japan for the seizure of the Dutch East Indies." But at this moment it fell back on what it had not long before considered a worthless device, battleships, insisting that the presence of the American Asiatic fleet in Hawaii was the only likely thing to inhibit this advance.⁶⁶ By implication the *Nation* was not the least opposed to the United States going to war with Japan in June, 1940, but it is unlikely that the swift course of events in Asia making the suspected Japanese action a reality in such a short interval was anticipated. A feeling that Japan would move only after a comfortable interval seemed to prevail during the expression of security behind the Hawaiian fleet.

But the Russo-Japanese agreement on the long-disputed Siberia-Manchuria (Manchukuo) border on June 9, the sending of Japanese ships to Indo-China at the end of the month, the emergence of a new and tough Japanese regime under Prince Konoye on July 16 and the closing by the British of the Burma Road two days later—the main supply route of Chiang Kai-shek's war supplies of non-Russian origin—and followed by the withdrawal of the British troops stationed in Northern China and at Shanghai on August 9, pierced this complacency in short order. The *Nation's* July 6 editorial "Crisis In the

Far East" quickly understood the consequences. The Japanese threat to the Anglo-Franco-Dutch colonies was recast as a threat to American outposts, and to the American supply of natural rubber after years of confident feelings that only Japan stood to suffer from economic constrictions. It was one of the first expressions of awareness of the fact that economic warfare could work two ways. With a new sentiment of relative benevolence existing between the Russians and the Japanese, dependence upon the former sagged sharply and a hectic call was made in this editorial, "If Japan is to be stopped, the initiative must come from the United States."⁶⁷ The time was now past when it was safe to think that Japan was capable of being stopped by just economic pressure and Chinese Communism, and the dark hint was set loose that the risks of action were far less than inaction.

In like manner on August 10 in "Blitzkrieg In the East" the editors expressed vast alarm over both the arrival of Japanese warships at Indo-Chinese ports and the Burma Road closing, and parcelled out concern for the European colonies and the Chinese about equally. It was now suggested that Moscow was "relatively indifferent to Chinese political issues," and its material aid was all that the Chinese could expect to get if they continued to fight, and that Chiang might have to "yield to political pressure from Moscow as a price of this assistance." It was not suggested that this might take the form of permitting much-increased Chinese Communist influence in war policy, since a report that the Reds and Chiang were once more reconciled was currently circulating.⁶⁸

Without a doubt the behavior of Russian leadership was extremely puzzling. The calm faith that Russian policy toward Japan was a constant had been shattered just as rapidly as had the similar belief that Russo-German enmity was eternal. Still, the pro-Communist voices in America did not slack off a moment in their enthusiasm for the Communists in China because of the Russo-Japanese agreement on the contested Manchuria-Siberia border. Jaffe's *New Masses* tribute to Red China on July 9, 1940, "China's Great Three Year Fight," after declaring that the "greatest single factor" which had enabled the Chinese to survive was "the development and perfection of guerrilla warfare," worked both sides of the street assiduously, blaming the United States and the European colonial powers for the new Japanese drive on the colonies of the South East, while showing no averse tendencies whatever to the continuation of American pressure on Japan as a factor in the aid of China. But he did not mention the idea that the ability of the Japanese to relax in the North following the Russian agreement was a potent cause of their ability to apply such strong pressure in the South.⁶⁹ And the *New Masses* in a nine-column definitive editorial policy statement on the Far East on July 16 blandly backed the program that liberals of the *Nation* persuasion

were behind as well, calling for the suspension by the United States of all trade with Japan, and for full support for China, but adding as a separate plank "collaboration with the Soviet Union in the Far East, to limit aggression and to establish a democratic peace."⁷⁰ The Communists seemed to be in a position to enjoy the best of both positions, with a foot in both the pro- and anti-Japanese camps simultaneously, and with the promise of even greater gains, in view of the one-barrel nature of the opposition to Japan in non-Communist eyes, defeat of Japan in Asia at all costs regardless of the consequences. In 1940 as in previous years, the situation looked as though the Communists of both Russian and Chinese persuasions had little to do but cooperate with this crusade and lie around to pick up the pieces afterwards.

No better illustration of this situation and the obliviousness to likely consequences could have appeared at this time than the essay by M. Thomas Chou in the *Nation* on July 20, "No Deal With Japan!" The author, identified as a former private secretary of Chiang, placed great emphasis on the Western nations insisting on a restoration of the China status quo as around 1921, and in a six-column article on Chinese affairs he never mentioned the Communist Party of China or its armies.⁷¹ Even the *New Republic*, which down to this point, despite its weakening under the intense emotional strain of the German victory in Europe, still adhered to a non-involvement position in Asia, was mainly concerned with the idea of staying out of war. It was stated lyrically by "T.R.B." in his column of July 22 in a comment on a protest by the Japanese general Miura on the arrest of Japanese police in Shanghai by United States Marines still based there:⁷²

On the surface facts, the administration's Far East policy appears to be three parts crazy. It encourages a regiment of United States Marines, isolated half-way across the world, to defy the Japanese army. Two days after Gen. Miura spoke, it installed Mr. Stimson as Secretary of War—a man who preached a holy crusade against Japan ever since the Manchurian invasion in 1931. And a day later, General [H. H.] Arnold announced the establishment of a great chain of air bases in Alaska, within comfortable bombing range of the northernmost Japanese islands. These are steps that ought to lead to a sharp diplomatic crisis, if not a bloody war. But the administration advisers seem cheerily confident that Japan won't fight.

There was no such problem facing the *Nation*, with its parallel position of calling for approval of moves by the Administration accentuating the tension of the times, and dismay at successive Japanese moves to offset or match the strategy of Japan's various antagonists. These moved on stage at quick tempo in the summer and early fall of

1940, with the closing of the Burma Road, the Indo-Chinese invasion by Japan, the scrap iron and oil embargo announcements by Roosevelt, and the just as sensational news of the Italo-German-Japanese tripartite pact. Confusion and guessing reigned supreme. The editors were overjoyed at the preliminary announcement of the scrap iron and oil embargo, which had a future time limit of effectiveness, as had the trade treaty denunciation. Wrote the editors on August 3, "this embargo to Japan is language its militarists will understand,"⁷³ although it was just two months before that the American fleet in Hawaii was declared to be the "language" Japanese leaders would "understand." The prompt move into Indo-China was the Japanese reply, to get as much of the product they needed from this remnant of the debilitated French colonial system, now administered by the French caretaker Vichy regime. The *Nation* editorials on the Indo-China case in the second, third and fourth weeks of September glowed with indignation. The editors called for a total embargo on all imaginable trade with Japan now, and issued a powerful plea to pressure the British to re-open the Burma Road and flood supplies to succor "the last stronghold of freedom in Asia—the Republic of China."⁷⁴

Things did not look too good at that moment, with the British actually withdrawing its detachments from Tientsin and Shanghai instead of pressing forward with a program aiding Japan's enemies. The *Nation* wanted to steer Chiang to war with the Japanese in Indo-China at once, as soon as the Burma Road was reopened and sufficient supplies had been made available. When the reopening did take place, in October, accompanied by thunderous cries of approval, expressions of relief were voiced that the British had acted before their "Far Eastern possessions" had been placed in the "similar jeopardy" of those of the French and Dutch.⁷⁵ By October, 1940 there was no printed source in America as enthusiastic about the survival of European colonialism in Asia as the *Nation*. Another great opinion revolution had become an established fact.

Though the second half of 1940 was no more an occasion for expression of liberal sentiments of warmth toward the Soviet Union than the first half had been, particularly in view of what was happening in Europe, the Asian situation, with a powerful force of Communists fighting on behalf of a general cause toward which liberalism was devoted, the checkmating, diminution and eventual dispersion of Japanese strength in Asia, kept a divided attitude toward the Russians in existence. Though the agreement in June on the northern boundary question seemed to indicate that the Russians and Japanese had come to a *modus vivendi*, hope for gaining even broader Soviet support against Japan over the long haul was far from abandoned. When the British garrisons withdrew from Tientsin and Shanghai, the subsequent *Nation* editorial comment suggested that in view of

the renewal of the Russo-American trade pact and the diplomatic talk between Sumner Welles and Oumansky of roughly the same moment, the United States had not given up hope of balancing the USSR against Japan, now that the British were no longer a force in China.⁷⁶

The signing of the tripartite pact in Berlin on September 27 gave this idea a tremendous impetus among liberals, not yet fully reconciled to a permanent separation from the Soviet, despite its grievous violations of their sensibilities since August 23, 1939. Said I. F. Stone on October 5, "What steps are we taking toward a rapprochement with Russia, our natural counterpoise to Japan?" Stone was of the view that Russia might still be of vast importance in the power struggle on the diplomatic level, and hoped that we would not make the same "mistakes" in our dealings with the Soviet that he charged the British with doing in 1939.⁷⁷

But for the most part the most implacable of the liberals on the Japanese question were fully confident in the United States succeeding unilaterally in bringing the Japanese down. When the State Department issued a warning in October, 1940 to all United States citizens to leave China and the Japanese Empire, the *Nation* once more expressed its conviction, in the editorial "War In the Far East?" on the 19th, that the economic pressure was beginning to pay off. This form of warfare was sure to make the Japanese knuckle down well in advance of any possible war with this country, and she already was "far less able to resist, militarily or economically." But a subsequent comment on November 9 warned against interpreting a Japanese withdrawal from Kwangsi as evidence that their war machine was about to leave China.⁷⁸

The *Nation's* Asia experts also stood by the contention that the collapse of Japan was a matter of time, and that its entry into the tripartite Berlin pact was a sign of growing weakness. This was the approach of Freda Utley, in her "Japan's Great Bluff" on October 12, an attempt to divine the underlying pressures and impulses which had pushed that country into the Axis. Vigorously for the embargo on Japan still, and earnestly in favor of stepped-up aid to China, she suspected at this point the possibility of a wider Russo-Japanese agreement, followed by a possible partition of China with a Chinese Soviet North West Republic coming out of it and the Japanese in control elsewhere.⁷⁹ She went this one better in *Common Sense* in November, arguing the same position for American economic warfare and scoffing at all notions that the Japanese might fight. Japan was all bluster in her opinion, and there need not be the slightest fear of a shooting war, as long as Russia was immobilized by its agreement with Germany. There were complicating factors, for though Japan might not want to fight Britain and the United States for fear

of the Russians joining in and taking advantage of the strained Japanese system in such an eventuality, she was willing to suggest that there was nothing stopping the Russians from fighting Japan regardless of what the latter did, since the Japanese performance in China had "proved her to be, at best, a second rate military power."

Again the curious part of her analysis centered around her conception of Asiatic Communism. Though most liberals had poked fun at Japanese protestations of devotion to the struggle to prevent the spread of Communism since the Mukden Incident of 1931, Miss Utley did not: "the fear of Communism is real in Japan," she stated flatly,⁸⁰

for Communism in Asia is synonymous with agrarian revolution and accordingly still has dynamic force in a country with such an acute agrarian problem as Japan. And in China, both conquered and unconquered, there is always the danger that agrarian revolution may yet sweep away both Japanese "order" and Chiang Kai-shek's National government.

The puzzling thing about her analysis was that though she intensely yearned for the demolition of Japanese power in Asia, she had not the faintest idea what force might take its place to stem the conquest of Communism instead. On the face of it, Freda Utley was by default for both a Communist China and a Communist Japan in November, 1940.

Maxwell S. Stewart, also a reputed Asian expert, similarly espoused the view that the Far Eastern volcano need not overflow and scorch the United States. Sure also that the Japanese were weak and confused, he advanced the suggestion that the United States needed only to work with Britain and Australia for the joint defense of the Pacific via heavy reinforcement of the Singapore and Port Darwin bases in Malaya and Australia, respectively, since the Japanese would never dare to advance in the South Pacific with Americans in force here. As supplementary diplomatic precautions, Stewart recommended the obtaining of an understanding with Soviet Russia to prevent any possible Russo-Japanese non-aggression pact, so that the "only reliable supply route to China" might be kept open.⁸¹

CHINESE COMMUNISM CONTINUES

ITS TRIUMPHAL MARCH IN THE BOOK SECTIONS

When John Chamberlain reviewed *Inside Asia* by John Gunther in the *New Republic* on June 28, 1939 he complained that the author suffered from the same "lovable innocence" which afflicted Vincent

Sheean and Edgar Ansel Mowrer, resulting in the same kind of "basic distortion": "he sees the world divided into 'good' and 'bad' nations." Chamberlain's specific point was Gunther's treatment of Japan and China, and he scorned Gunther's handling them as exponents of feudalistic evil and democratic virtue, despite his own admittedly strong preference for China. Said Chamberlain, "no distinctions between democracy and feudalism can blink the fact that Britain and Japan, being cramped and limited island kingdoms, are very much alike as trouble-breeders; the ends of Tokyo and Whitehall statesmanship are the same, a fragmented neighboring continent." But before anyone might suspect that he had been possessed by utter objectivity, Chamberlain protested,⁸²

I want the Chinese to win. But I want them to win because they are nicer people, not because the Japanese have "broken" an international code which has never existed. It will be better for our minds and our ultimate safety as a peaceful democracy if we keep "morality" and "Christianity" out of the problem of power politics and personal preference.

Though Chamberlain took sides in the Far East war on a basis which was not a great deal sounder than that of the persons whom he was criticizing, his essay was an interesting attempt to reinforce some of the traditions of liberalism in reflecting on the merits of a foreign controversy, and to re-assert the values of relative detachment in arriving at some sober and restrained consensus on this hypothetical controversy. But in another sense, his commentary was a veritable museum piece and already irrelevant to the situation in general, and to that of the Far East in particular, for the approach he suggested had been jettisoned long ago, and a fervid sort of stratospheric moralizing substituted in a quite universal manner. It was far too late to advise liberals to use good judgment in coming to conclusions on such an affair as the war in China. In fact, on the basis of the books being written about the Sino-Japanese conflict, it already had long become a situation where a conclusion had been arrived at, and such facts as were being advanced went largely to shore up and gild the conclusion.

By 1932, the very largest part of American liberalism had chosen the anti-Japanese side as that representing an unbroken picture of seamless virtue. The increasingly larger part played on the Chinese side by Communism deepened liberals' convictions that they were behind the righteous side, and the temporary defection of Soviet Russia from the ranks of the righteous did not slacken the zeal for Chinese Communism in the slightest. By the time *Inside Asia* was published, there was an almost total saturation of the literature of the well-educated by the views of those friendly to Red China, of the various

Chinese factions and of those hostile to Japan, mainly by virtue of their antagonism to Communist Russia as well as Communist China. By 1939 a substantial segment of the interested had almost forgotten that Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalists were a part of this complex affair. And the books which liberals read, reviewed, discussed and praised did almost nothing to dissuade anyone from persisting in this view. The specific circumstances may now be brought up.

The flow of pro-Red-China books continued unabated from 1938 into 1939 and after. In the liberal weeklies they were greeted with the same unvarying cordiality, the pedigree of both authors and reviewers being so intimate that the reception accorded these volumes was predictable. If anything, the tone of the books on China grew increasingly belligerent, and an almost camp-meeting flavor permeated their treatment of the Chinese Red armies. It was indeed a remarkable change to observe such paeans of praise to Mars in journals which had established themselves as anti-militarist consciences and clearing-houses for all tendencies inclining toward peace.

In mid-March, 1939, the *New Republic* had even assigned the review of the latest tributes to the Chinese Red fighting forces to the redoubtable ex-Czarist officer Victor Yakhontoff, whose partisanship for Communist causes was long established. His stirring commentaries on *Inside Red China* by Nym Wales, the wife of Edgar Snow, James Bertram's *Unconquered* and Mowrer's *The Dragon Awakes* noted their elaborate tributes to the Red Chinese army and the confidence they radiated in Communism's ultimate victory over Japan. Yakhontoff was especially warmed by Mowrer's bristling hostility toward Italy and Germany as well as Japan, and expressed his pleasure at Mowrer's ridicule of the "anti-Communism" of these powers, and his denigration of the Communist threat in general.⁸³ The same three books had been reviewed in the *Nation* late in the previous month by T. A. Bisson. Bisson compared Miss Wales's book to Snow's *Red Star Over China*, "equally indispensable to students of the Chinese Communist movement," and lauded Bertram and Mowrer for their "sound and penetrating" studies of the Eighth Route Army.⁸⁴ But Peffer exceeded Bisson in his esteem of Bertram: "a magnificent piece of work—the best story of the war in China I have seen."⁸⁵

In the last two years before American involvement in the war in Asia, however, the most redoubtable reviewer in the *Nation* of books on China and the war with Japan was Stewart, whose former residence in China was referred to as a means of certifying his competence. His choices were all of a kind, although there were extenuating circumstances in that no American publisher dared issue a book dealing with the Far East in any detached manner in these years. On January 27, 1940, reviewing Freda Utley's *China At War* and Hal-dore Hanson's *Human Endeavor: The Story of the China War*, he se-

lected the latter for special commendation, since Hanson was one of those who had made a visit to Yen-an, "the Mecca of modern China," as it was referred to here, and the base of the Communist leader and hero Mao Tse-tung. Stewart said that Hanson had written "the most complete of all recent books on China and one of the most interesting." "No foreigner except the Snows and Agnes Smedley have spent so long a time with the Eighth Route Army," Stewart testified, "and Hanson's material is by far the most up-to-date available on the Communists."⁸⁶

Late in the fall Stewart acclaimed Major Evans Fordyce Carlson's *Twin Stars of China* for its top-heavy praise of the Chinese Communists, even though this book was partially balanced out by commendations of Chiang as well. But the military qualities of the Reds frequently were such as to make description difficult due to the shortage of superlatives.⁸⁷ Stewart's most formidable stint occurred in the *Nation* on November 2, 1940, when he reviewed nine books on the Far East issued by the Institute on Pacific Relations, selecting for special attention Carlson's *The Chinese Army* and Bisson's *American Policy In the Far East, 1931-1940*, the first because of its strong plea for the Chinese Communists and the second for its strong seconding for continuing the United States boycott of Japan.⁸⁸ But his two-column review of Snow's *The Battle For Asia* on February 22, 1941 marked a turning-point in coverage of books on China, in that the smoldering antagonism between the Reds and Chiang was again allowed to come out in the open, with Chiang coming off second best. The news columns of the day were already buzzing with stories of another serious rift between these two forces, but the weight of opinion had finally been stacked high enough on the Red side to make possible a full acceptance of their case. Though most of Stewart's review was an eager discussion of Communist military strength as described by Snow, it was set against the dark picture which he gave of the Kuomintang Nationalists of Chiang. Stewart fully subscribed to Snow's assertion that the Communists comprised "the backbone of the resistance to Japan," and he added the vigorous assertion, "If this book receives half the attention it deserves, it should help us greatly in recognizing our true interests in Asia." Stewart was much disturbed at the prospect of the United States entering the Far East war now, and which side it might ultimately support in the China struggle: the great liberal dread since Mukden seemed about to materialize. Stewart phrased his hope that the Communists would eventually gain the favor of the Americans in this manner: "The chief question is whether it [the United States] will be involved in the defense of the undemocratic concepts of empire, or whether it will take its stand with those who in China and elsewhere are seeking to build a truer democracy than any which now exists." It was his firm testa-

ment that Snow's book would play a big part in helping Americans to see how the latter path might be selected.⁸⁹

Snow's book appeared at a time in the winter of 1940-1941 when the latest and by far most unsettling eruption yet had taken place between Chiang and the Communists, and liberal sympathies were almost exclusively with the Reds now. Chiang was to get an increasingly bad press through the first seven months of 1941 as a consequence, and the Lauchlin Currie and Owen Lattimore missions to China, as will be seen, were largely interpreted by American liberals as efforts undertaken by Roosevelt and the Administration to coax Chiang into a position of compromise on their behalf, in view of the known sympathies of these two emissaries. For that matter, in retrospect, it seemed many years before that Stewart had considered Sven Hedin's biography of Chiang, *Chiang Kai-shek: Marshal of China*, a very useful book, after criticizing Hedin bitterly for ignoring the period "when Chiang was on the side of black reaction in China," and for failing to explain the reasons for Chiang's emergence as a leader of a "unified" China, in which he had "faithfully and loyally preserved the united front with the Communists against tremendous odds." Stewart obviously was referring to the allegation that Chiang owed his elevation to leadership to tacit Communist support, in accordance with the legend of the Great Kidnapping of 1936. But in view of what was to take place in the early months of 1941, it might be said that Stewart spoke too soon and too confidently about the Chiang-Communist understanding.

As for Japan, Stewart had one delightful chore, the review of Westel W. Willoughby's *Japan's Case Examined* in the *Nation* for July 27, 1940. He described it as the most devastating case against the Japanese that he had ever seen, and his joy was almost beyond bounds that such a pronounced ideological opponent as Willoughby should report that he could find no support "in fact or in law" for the Japanese contention that their intervention had anything whatever to do with "preventing Communism from gaining a stranglehold on the Asiatic mainland."⁹⁰ Had a Russian nobleman written that there was no evidence that the Bolsheviki had killed the Czar, it would have not been any more surprising than for such a pronounced conservative as Willoughby supporting the Red Chinese and pro-Red Chinese liberals so comprehensively, even if indirectly and unintentionally. The belief that Chiang could fight both with and against the Reds simultaneously, use their help to defeat the Japanese and at the same time edge them out of consideration in China, is one of the most amazing political testaments in modern times. Its only competition was the thinking of Polish nationalists who imagined that they could best both Hitler Germany and Stalin Russia simultaneously. In the final summation, however, there was virtually no evidence for

believing in the last year of American neutrality that any force but Communism was the most likely triumphal candidate in China, if the literature of the period and its reception among the spokesmen on Asiatic affairs in American liberal journalism were any criterion at all. But there was still another stormy episode in this internal struggle just ahead.

THE CHIANG-COMMUNIST FALLING-OUT OF 1941
EMPHASIZES THE NEW TREND

The *Nation's* phantom correspondent in China, "Crispian Corcoran," reappeared in its pages on December 7, 1940 with an effervescent and detailed report, "Chungking Shows The Way," relating the effectiveness of the Chinese resistance to Japan and the solid basis of the Chiang-Communist understanding. But a note of sadness on the political situation was most revealing. "The trend toward political democracy that manifested itself so hopefully at the beginning of the war has made little or no progress during the past year and a half," he lamented, "and China's war effort has thus been deprived of a great potential source of energy."⁹¹ It took some time before this was translated into plain language.

In one way it was a preliminary announcement that things were not going along as well between the Nationalists and the Communists as it was customary to suggest in this moment of "united front" propaganda. But it was several weeks before it was freely admitted that the two groups were again fighting each other more vigorously than they were the nominal common enemy. "China In Danger" was the leader on the *Nation's* January 18, 1941 editorial, which first discussed this subject at length. Very perturbed by reports of hostilities having broken out again between the two groups, the editors mentioned a few conditioning factors—the existence of the new Red Fourth Route Army and its influence in the Shanghai and Nanking areas, a towering price inflation which was reputedly 1000 per cent up over March, 1940 plus the announcement that Chiang was worried that the Reds already possessed the ability to capture control over any "peoples' congress" which he might be likely to call, and which the Communists were energetically desiring that he do. "This may be true," the editors reflected, but the deflection of the "trend toward political democracy" which their anonymous reporter from China deplored made more sense when banked against this bit of news.⁹²

On February 1 considerable editorial shock was evinced as a consequence of the report by Snow to the New York *Herald Tribune*

that bloody fighting between Chiang and the Fourth Route Army was taking place, and that the Communists had suffered vast losses. The rumors were being substantiated, and the alarm grew in a direct ratio to the stories of Communist calamity at the hands of the Nationalists. But there was still an air of mystery about the entire situation. The *New Republic* just four days before had printed Lin Yutang's "China Speaks To America," an urgent plea to the United States and Great Britain to conclude a treaty with China and abolish extraterritoriality, accompanied by the flat declaration that it would go at the end of the war anyway, regardless of the desires of these two powers. But in this six-column essay, in which he insisted that China and Britain were fighting the same war and that a "spiritual solidarity" existed between them and also the United States, Lin, in spotlighting his amazing confidence in the survival of Chiang, did not once even allude to China's Communists, let alone mention them specifically.⁹³ In view of what was happening, however, his champion was taking them far more seriously than that.

By March, concern as to what was happening had heightened noticeably, sparked in part by admissions that the Japanese were taking advantage of the situation to propose an end of the war. Said the *Nation* on March 15, "It is known that Japan has offered peace terms to China on several occasions, and it is reported that these terms have been increasingly liberal."⁹⁴ But the outbreak of peace in the Far East was not now an event which united front liberalism looked forward to in the slightest, unless it was at the end of a knockout victory over the Japanese. On March 22 a new comment was made on the Chiang-Communist affair. "Recent reports from China indicate that the dispute between right-wing Kuomintang elements and the former Red Army units is still far from settled," it announced; "The Kuomintang charges the Communists with breaking the united front agreement by seeking to establish themselves politically in the territories captured from the Japanese," which substantiated "Corcoran's" testimony earlier that much dissatisfaction had prevailed over the tardiness of the installation of "political democracy" in China. On the other hand the editors thought it essential to report the grievance of Chiang's opposition; "the Communists accuse Chungking of seeking to destroy the Fourth and Eighth Route armies, which have played such a conspicuous role in defense against Japan, and with retarding democratic progress in China."⁹⁵ Communization and democratization still enjoyed the synonymous relation of the early 1930s, despite the persistence of coolness toward Soviet Russia. And it was not long before both liberal weeklies revealed in the most open manner where their sympathies lay in this new controversy, one of a considerable string of such upheavals in which they had always taken the same side, since 1932.

The *New Republic* in its editorial "Civil War Threatens In China" on March 3, a followup to the renewed interest in the Chiang-Red struggle, strongly recommended Snow's estimate published in the April issue of *Asia* for a clear insight into the fundamental causes. The editors supported Snow's contention that Chiang was out to destroy the Communists because they were serving as "a rallying point for the democratic forces in China," and that the United States was "partly to blame" because of American contributions to Chiang's cause. As a consequence of this, Snow maintained, the Nationalists interpreted this help as evidence that America was "on the point of going to war with Japan," and therefore felt that it was "advisable to liquidate the Communists in a hurry." A closing comment left no doubt where the editors preferred to stand and be counted: ⁹⁶

Chinese Communists may be hard to deal with, but it is a fact that they have in the past shown little concern with Moscow and much more concern with repelling the invader. Division at this time plays into Nippon's hands. If we are not to see open civil war, the thing needed is a clear and vigorous statement by the American government that our interest is in helping to save a democratic China, not a Fascist one secretly allied with the enemy.

It was of great consequence that Snow's book *The Battle For Asia*, a prophetically-titled volume, which unconsciously indicated the real stakes in the Far East war, received the "required reading" stamp from T. A. Bisson in his review on April 14. This document of Communist successes and the voluminous charges of Fascist penetration of the Kuomintang was powerful intellectual fodder for the next five years, and the ripples created by its import washed up on the public opinion beach for a decade. It accompanied *New Republic* editorial policy in a congenial, close-fitting manner. ⁹⁷

A lengthy special report on the situation drew feature attention on the occasion of the March 3 editorial, written by Herrymon Maurer, just returned to the country after two years as a professor of foreign languages at the University of Nanking. His "Catechism On China" ably supplemented *New Republic* editorial disquietude, and his views elicited a special editorial comment. In his confirmation of the existence of serious trouble between "the Kuomintang, China's only legal party, and the armies of the once-Communitic guerrillas," Maurer insisted that it was an unfair contest. Supplies from the outside had "at no time gone to the Communist armies in any just proportion," and furthermore, "Pronunciamentos of Kuomintang issue have urged relentless struggle against the Communist guerrillas,"

since he thought it was beyond doubt that the Nationalists feared the Communists as much as "Japanese imperialism."

Declared Maurer, "Today, after two years, I have yet to hear a good word for the Kuomintang's social ideals." He then charged that its officials were using the war "in the way they used the peace that preceded it—to stuff their pocketbooks already well-lined." Yet he thought it pertinent to point out that the Chinese made "a great distinction between the Kuomintang and Chiang Kai-shek, about whom there is not even the suspicion of selfish interest"; "Chiang, although surrounded and at times advised by groups of an almost Fascist nature, is trying to unify China; the Kuomintang is trying to garner more wealth and to strengthen itself against a day of judgment."⁹⁸

The editorial trailer to Maurer's revelations thought them very "disturbing," and while expressing agreement with the view that the Nationalist party organization had declined sharply from its earlier days, came forth with still another testament underlining editorial convictions on what should be going on in China:⁹⁹

Actually, the one group in China that comes nearest to supporting Western ideas of democracy at present is the so-called Chinese Communists. If this seems a paradox, in view of the well-known contempt for democracy exhibited in Moscow, the explanation lies in the fact that the mass of Chinese Communists have a different aim in view. Their concern is to get rid first of the Japanese and second of landlordism and exploitation—aims that are within hailing distance of those held by our own New Deal.

This was a portentous concluding sentence, since it introduced a new topic, the interest of the Roosevelt Administration in this political disturbance. Subsequent comments in the liberal weeklies on the nature of this interest and the agents through which FDR was to deal with China further intensified the awareness of which issues had now become dominant in liberal thinking. The grim and implacable determination to see Japan defeated conclusively in China now had other referents than simply the desire to see restored in China the *status quo ante* 1900. A final victory for "democracy" in China was obviously impossible without the reduction of the field of contestants to just two: the Communists and the Kuomintang.

But for the immediate situation the *New Republic* had another kind of political balm to offer to ease the anguish of those who were the most vexed by the Chinese disturbance;

Mr. Lauchlin Currie has now gone to China as President Roosevelt's personal representative. Presumably he will be able to break through the

inner ring of Fascist-minded men who keep Chiang Kai-shek from knowing what is going on, and he can tell the Generalissimo a few wholesome truths.

A subsequent comment was made that Currie was on his way back to Washington, after having given only financial advice to Chiang, it was reported, presumably in relation to the fantastic inflation still ravaging the country.

But I. F. Stone's "Chungking To Washington" in the *Nation* on April 5 presumed to be confidant to Currie's report on China to FDR; Stone pictured Currie as "immensely impressed" with Chiang's "astuteness," and also as being not overly alarmed at the Red-Kuomintang clashes, which he interpreted as a sign of improving and not deteriorating conditions, since they had energy left over from fighting the Japanese to fight among themselves. Of course, Currie did not mention that they had been doing this since 1932, so his evaluation of conditions hardly told anyone anything. But Stone had a message of his own to read to those who sympathized with Chiang's supporters: ¹⁰⁰

China's upper crust is as resistant as our own to social and economic reforms, though the Chinese Communist program is a rural New Deal rather than Sovietism. That this is well understood in the West was reflected in the dismay voiced even by our conservative press over the split, and the comment of such papers as the *New York Times* had a good effect in Chungking.

"China's gentry must pay a price for the struggles of China's common people if China's defense is to be effective, and in this its problem is not so unlike that of the older democracies," Stone consoled. This effectively tied together the wars all over the world now; against the Axis on the foreign level, in the interests of "democratic" collectivism on the domestic level everywhere, with the awareness that the latter were utterly incapable of attainment unless the former were pushed to their fullest degree. By now it was not possible to understand why left-liberal pacifists and anti-militarists had so suddenly discovered the beauties of war unless their home-front goals everywhere were kept in mind just as fully as their professed foreign aims, since they were inseparable.

Both liberal weeklies had reiterated charges that Chiang had "starved the Communists of money and munitions," while Stone had rephrased it, "The Chinese have obtained more supplies from the Soviets than from America," which more properly designated who was getting supplies and from what sources, respectively. But things

could not have been going too badly for the Reds, for on June 7, 1941; the *Nation* reported that the Communist Eighth Route Army, no longer spoken of as consisting of "former" Communists, had administered a stunning defeat to the Japanese in an attack on the latter's "stronghold" in Shansi province.¹⁰¹ It signalled that the abyss between the Chinese factions was seemingly being bridged, if the war against Japan could resume with such vigor. Whether the Roosevelt Administration had supplied the proper means for healing the open wound between the two could only be inferred, but a report early the next month indicated that the President's interest continued, and his relations with the Chinese were still being handled by couriers whose opinions on the Chinese were hardly in doubt. On July 7 the *New Republic* in its editorial "Right Man, Right Place" greeted its readers,¹⁰²

One of the pieces of good news in a generally bad week is the announcement that Owen Lattimore has been appointed special political adviser to the Chinese government. Since he was proposed by President Roosevelt we may take it for granted that he will in fact be a liason officer between the two governments. A better man for such a post would be hard to find. He knows China and the Chinese intimately and there are no reservations in his support of the democratic way of life. He will be an effective counter-weight against those forces in the State Department which still want to appease Japan.

The clouds which had been gathering over the Communist Chinese and their future were starting to dwindle away markedly by now. Liberals everywhere were breathing easier, and news from China continued to get better. On September 20, 1941 the *Nation* issued a long and bright report on the "improvement of internal conditions" in China, accompanied by the news that the Fourth Route Army, once thought in danger of destruction at the hands of Chiang, had been reorganized "and permitted to reoccupy the territory south of the Yangtze from which it was driven" in the winter of 1940-1941. The new advice apparently was producing results, and the "democracy" which "Crispian Corcoran" had seen wavering in the balance at this earlier time now seemed well on its way to achievement, since it was a foregone conclusion that with the reoccupation of this area by the Red armies, political organization would go along with it, if what had been seen about the Communist action in the North and West of China ever since 1933 meant anything at all.¹⁰³

In truth, news about China had dropped alarmingly by the end of the summer of 1941, not only because the presumed reconciliation between Chiang and the Communists had depreciated it as worthy of the same degree of attention as when affairs were at their peak of ten-

sion. The redoubled pressure on Japan had replaced this as the major topic on Far Eastern affairs featured by American liberals and their journals. No group in American public opinion making exceeded them by now in exhortations to belligerency toward the Japanese, and, having declared war on Japan long before the Congress of the United States, Pearl Harbor came to them as an almost distinct anticlimax. In one sense it was completely inverted, since the liberal war on Japan was economic and ideological; on the basis of their words, the last thing they expected was a shooting war begun on Japanese initiative. But on the basis of what they advocated as policy, the wonder is that the Japanese waited so long to fight. The stronger and stronger advocacy of measures of the most provocative nature was always presented within the rationale of the Japanese lacking the courage to stand up and fight, allegedly a consequence of some ill defined moral weakness and basic character defect. To the very morning of Pearl Harbor, no liberal essay or editorial urging the most extreme demands on Japan by the United States government contemplated in any serious or reflective manner a Japanese stand, partially the result of having come to the comfortable conclusion month after month that a war with Japan would end in a knockout victory in less than ninety days. The last stages of this campaign of pressure on Japan will be seen in the final chapter.

NOTES

- 1 *Nation*, July 8, 1939, p. 45.
- 2 *Nation*, January 8, 1938, pp. 33-34.
- 3 *Nation*, February 5, 1938, p. 142; February 12, 1938, pp. 173-174.
- 4 Lin, "What America Could Do To Japan," *New Republic*, January 19, 1938, pp. 301-303. See also Lin's "Faith of a Cynic," *Nation*, May 6, 1939, pp. 526-530.
- 5 *Nation*, June 11, 1938, pp. 661-662. See also Eliot Janeway, "Japan's Partner," *Harper's*, June, 1938, pp. 1-8, an attack on United States material aid to Japan.
- 6 *Nation*, September 3, 1938, p. 214; September 10, 1938, pp. 235-236.
- 7 *New Masses*, August 30, 1938, p. 13; "Mr. Peffer Changes His Mind," *New Republic*, September 14, 1938, p. 143. Peffer's "China and Japan: Second Year," *Harper's*, September, 1938, pp. 337-343, deprecated talk of Red influence in China and expressed the conviction the Japanese could not possibly win.
- 8 *New Republic*, November 2, 1938, pp. 364-365, for the exchange. The change in Peffer's views on America's place in the Far East was paralleled by a similar reversal in his approach toward America and war. In his "Convulsion In the Orient," *Harper's*, December, 1937, pp. 1-9, he declared, "We are left then with no alternative but to wait and hope, letting the war take its course, in apparent callousness, but only with the kind of callousness that decrees isolation for a plague victim, to die if necessary, lest others be fatally afflicted." p. 9. But in his *Harper's* article of March, 1939, "In an Age of Unreason," pp. 337-343, he announced in an abandonment of his prior views and espousal of arms accumulations and preparation for war, "America *can* stay out of war but it won't. It won't because it will not wish to." p. 338.
- 9 *Nation*, November 12, 1938, p. 496.
- 10 *Nation*, January 15, 1939, pp. 64-66.

- 11 *Nation*, August 5, 1939, p. 136.
- 12 *Common Sense*, September, 1939, pp. 18-19.
- 13 *Nation*, January 13, 1940, p. 29; January 20, 1940, pp. 60-61.
- 14 "T.R.B.," "Sanctions Against Japan," *New Republic*, January 1, 1940, p. 21; editorial, *New Republic*, January 22, 1940, p. 101.
- 15 *Nation*, February 10, 1940, p. 151.
- 16 *Nation*, January 15, 1938, p. 58; January 22, 1938, p. 86.
- 17 Bisson in *Nation*, January 29, 1938, pp. 120-123.
- 18 *Nation*, April 2, 1938, pp. 371-372.
- 19 *New Masses*, April 19, 1938, pp. 7-9.
- 20 *New Republic*, March 23, 1938, pp. 187-189.
- 21 *Nation*, July 9, 1938, pp. 29-30; "Russia's Border Conflict," *Nation*, August, 6, 1938, pp. 140-141.
- 22 *Nation*, April 9, 1938, p. 397.
- 23 *Nation*, April 16, 1938, p. 425. See also *Common Sense*, May, 1938, p. 7.
- 24 *New Republic*, May 11, 1938, pp. 6-8.
- 25 *New Republic*, June 1, 1938, pp. 94-97.
- 26 *Nation*, June 18, 1938, pp. 686-687.
- 27 *Nation*, July 2, 1938, p. 2; Gunther in *Nation*, August 13, 1938, pp. 143-146. No point was made of the fact that Chiang had German military advisers until they withdrew in July, 1938. The *Nation* forgot its implacable anti-German position momentarily and praised the German aid, especially General von Falkenhausen, for rendering "faithful technical service to Chiang." "Europe Turns to China," *Nation*, July 9, 1938, pp. 31-32.
- 28 *Nation*, August 20, 1938, p. 166.
- 29 *New Republic*, August 10, 1938, p. 4.
- 30 *Nation*, September 24, 1938, pp. 281-282; "What Chance Has China?," *Nation*, October 29, 1938, p. 442; December 17, 1938, p. 651; "Help For China," *Nation*, December 24, 1938, p. 682; "News From China," *Nation*, November 26, 1938, p. 579.
- 31 *Nation*, January 21, 1939, pp. 90-92.
- 32 Hauser, "Will Japan Collapse?," *New Republic*, October 5, 1938, pp. 231-233.
- 33 *Nation*, January 21, 1939, pp. 78-79.
- 34 "Showdown In the East," *Nation*, June 24, 1939, pp. 715-716.
- 35 *Nation*, February 25, 1939, pp. 220-221.
- 36 *Nation*, January 14, 1939, pp. 53-54.
- 37 *Nation*, March 11, 1939, pp. 281-282.
- 38 Rudy Baker, "The Communist Party In China's War For Liberation," *The Communist*, November, 1938, pp. 1009-1018.
- 39 *Nation*, April 8, 1939, pp. 400-402.
- 40 *New Masses*, July 11, 1939, pp. 5-6.
- 41 *The Communist*, December, 1939, pp. 1150-1157.
- 42 *Nation*, May 6, 1939, p. 514; June 3, 1939, pp. 632-633; July 1, 1939, p. 1.
- 43 Maxwell S. Stewart was still using the term with quotation marks in the autumn of 1939; see his review of *Chaos In Asia* by Hallett Abend, *Nation*, November 11, 1939, p. 531.
- 44 Jaffe, "A Turning Point In History," *New Masses*, October 24, 1939, pp. 3-6. See also John Gunther, "Why the Dutch Fear Japan," *Nation*, September 24, 1938, pp. 291-293.
- 45 "The Far East," *Nation*, September 2, 1939, pp. 234-235.
- 46 *Nation*, October 7, 1939, p. 303; *New Republic*, November 1, 1939, p. 352.
- 47 *Nation*, October 14, 1939, p. 426; "Japan In China," *New Republic*, October 25, 1939, p. 324.
- 48 "Japan's Soft Answer," *Nation*, November 4, 1939, pp. 485-486; *Nation*, November 18, 1939, p. 537.
- 49 "Why Appease Japan?," *Nation*, November 25, 1939, p. 569; "The Far East," *Nation*, December 16, 1939, pp. 668-669.
- 50 See note 48.
- 51 See note 49.
- 52 "A Policy For the Pacific," *New Republic*, November 22, 1939, pp. 125-127.

- 53 *New Republic*, January 22, 1940, p. 101; February 5, 1940, p. 164.
- 54 *Nation*, December 30, 1939, pp. 722-723.
- 55 "Japan's New Strategy," *Nation*, February 24, 1940, p. 269.
- 56 *New Republic*, January 8, 1940, pp. 44-45.
- 57 Pfeffer, "War In The East: New Phase," *Nation*, February 10, 1940, pp. 180-182. See also Pfeffer's "Struggle For Power In The Far East," *Yale Review*, December, 1939, pp. 273-286, and "Our Job In the Far East," *Harper's*, April, 1940, pp. 489-497, which advanced approximately the same arguments.
- 58 *Nation*, February 24, 1940, p. 278.
- 59 *Nation*, March 9, 1940, p. 321; "Japan's Puppet," *Nation*, April 6, 1940, pp. 437-438.
- 60 *Nation*, May 11, 1940, p. 582; May 25, 1940, p. 639.
- 61 *Nation*, January 1, 1938, p. 18.
- 62 *Nation*, February 19, 1938, pp. 200-201. The *Nation's* editorial policy for the United States at this time favored surrender of all extraterritorial rights and special privileges, which presumed withdrawal from the mainland eventually but not until the Japanese had been driven out. *Nation*, January 22, 1938, p. 111.
- 63 *Nation*, February 19, 1938, pp. 202-203; Villard's column on p. 209.
- 64 *Nation*, April 23, 1938, p. 470.
- 65 *Nation*, June 1, 1940, p. 667.
- 66 *Nation*, June 22, 1940, pp. 746-747.
- 67 *Nation*, July 6, 1940, p. 4.
- 68 *Nation*, August 10, 1940, pp. 103-104.
- 69 *New Masses*, July 9, 1940, pp. 12-14.
- 70 "Who Shall Defend America?," *New Masses*, July 16, 1940, pp. 20-22; "Defending America," *New Masses*, August 6, 1940, pp. 8-9.
- 71 *Nation*, July 20, 1940, pp. 46-48.
- 72 "T.R.B.," "Rome, Berlin and Poor Butterfly," *New Republic*, July 22, 1940, pp. 116-117.
- 73 *Nation*, August 3, 1940, pp. 81-82.
- 74 *Nation*, September 14, 1940, pp. 202-203; "Our Stake in Indo-China," *Nation*, September 21, 1940, pp. 234-235; *Nation*, September 28, 1940, pp. 257-258; "China's New Victories," *Nation*, September 28, 1940, p. 261.
- 75 *Nation*, October 5, 1940, p. 290; October 12, 1940, p. 313.
- 76 *Nation*, August 17, 1940, p. 121.
- 77 Stone, "Mr. Hull and the Pact," *Nation*, October 5, 1940, pp. 291-292.
- 78 *Nation*, October 19, 1940, p. 353; November 9, 1940, p. 433.
- 79 *Nation*, October 12, 1940, pp. 320-322.
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- 81 Stewart, "We Need Not Fight In Asia," *Nation*, October 26, 1940, pp. 390-392.
- 82 *New Republic*, June 28, 1939, pp. 219-220.
- 83 *New Republic*, March 15, 1939, pp. 122-123.
- 84 *Nation*, February 25, 1939, pp. 237-238.
- 85 Pfeffer quoted in advertisement of the publisher, John Day, in *Nation*, February 25, 1939, p. 243.
- 86 *Nation*, January 27, 1940, p. 105.
- 87 *Nation*, October 5, 1940, pp. 307-308.
- 88 *Nation*, November 2, 1940, p. 429.
- 89 *Nation*, February 22, 1941, pp. 215-216.
- 90 *Nation*, July 27, 1940, p. 78.
- 91 "Corcoran," "Chungking Shows the Way," *Nation*, December 7, 1940, pp. 558-560.
- 92 *Nation*, January 18, 1941, p. 61.
- 93 *New Republic*, January 27, 1941, pp. 107-109.
- 94 "Which Way Japan?," *Nation*, March 15, 1941, pp. 285-286.
- 95 *Nation*, March 22, 1941, pp. 310-311.
- 96 *New Republic*, March 31, 1941, p. 421.
- 97 *New Republic*, April 14, 1941, pp. 506-507.
- 98 *New Republic*, March 31, 1941, pp. 301-303.

- 99 *New Republic*, March 31, 1941, p. 293, for this and following citation.
- 100 *Nation*, April 5, 1941, p. 400-401.
- 101 *Nation*, June 7, 1941, p. 654.
- 102 *New Republic*, July 7, 1941, p. 5.
- 103 *Nation*, September 20, 1941, pp. 238-239.

THE INTELLECTUAL CONVERSION OF
LIBERALISM FROM PEACE TO WAR :
III—THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WAR
RATIONALE BETWEEN THE “BATTLE
OF BRITAIN” AND PEARL HARBOR,

1940–1941

REVERBERATIONS OF THE CALL TO WAR
IN THE POST-FALL-OF-FRANCE MONTHS

THE wave of violent self-reproach that filled the books and articles of so many of America's liberals from the spring and early summer of 1940 on is one of the most amazing intellectual developments of the twentieth century. The superior tactics of Germany's armies in overrunning French and British forces in Western Europe was dealt with not as a military event but as a moral and intellectual collapse of all that democracy had built since Grecian times, and the self-flagellation that followed reached incredible heights; the self-accusations of the Communists before the Moscow purge trials were quite restrained by comparison. The hysteria of this time is quite in a class by itself; nothing of 1917–1918 even faintly approached it. All restraint vanished upon the opening of the German campaigns in the Lowlands in May; apocalyptic thundering replaced consideration of events. European civilization was now “challenged as it has not been challenged since 732 A.D.,”¹ a *Nation* editorial on May 18 bellowed. Elegant prose took the place of reporting, and it was perhaps characteristic of the moment and a preview of things to come that this editorial ended in a eulogy of Winston Churchill as a virtual modern Charles Martel, as it quoted with pulsating apprehensiveness his “blood, toil, tears and sweat” pronouncement before the Commons.

And from this time on the slogan "saving Western Civilization" became a kind of colored spiritual cellophane in which the issues were wrapped when realistic discussion was not possible, not practical or considered potentially damaging to the "Allied" cause. Liberals surrendered in large numbers to the journalistic disease of referring to nations as though they were comic strip characters, as for instance "progressive," "peaceful" Russia, "militaristic" Germany, "emotional" France, "truculent" Italy, "noble" Britain, and the like. A substantial part of the reporting of the war became little more than a form of literature of a highly refined and abstract kind. But the part of this literature which dealt with the spiritual reasons why liberal intellectuals were honor- and duty-bound to support and fight another world war was of immense importance in completing the circle performed by American liberalism between 1914 and 1941.

As has been seen, the liberal press was besieged by a two-front war in the spring and summer of 1940, the actual conflict in Western Europe on one hand and the attack within their pages by the New Belligerents, whose challenges assaulted almost every value American liberalism had boasted about in the twentieth century. The realization that they had tricked themselves for years in believing that the French had the most powerful army in Europe was bad enough, but to face the withering criticism from the vanguard of the veteran liberals who were now the spiritual recruiters for another war rationale was even worse.

As the German armies pounded toward France, and with the Allies beckoning for help and with all manner of voices urging Americans to act, the *New Republic* on May 27, 1940 confessed, "it is relatively easy to excite us," in a reference to Americans in general, "and when we are excited, we have a tendency to be as scatter-brained in action as we previously were in attention." Not as unstrung as the *Nation* as yet, its editors were appalled at the hysterical suggestions being made. And the fear was openly expressed that if the totalitarian war planning being recommended were adopted, the country might "surrender to our enemy's institutions" before we even encountered them in war situations. The hope was expressed that the war would be planned by the New Deal planning machinery and not by a subsidiary "capitalist-military oligarchy."² The incompatibility of the domestic New Deal goals and war was still not understood.

But in two long and unnerving editorials on June 3, the editors indicated their awareness of what war hysteria was capable of achieving without any planning at all; the anti-alien laws, alien registration and finger-printing, the elimination of aliens from relief rolls, the New York *Herald Tribune* recommending immediate entry into the war and the conversion of the Civilian Conservation Corps into military training units, the stepped-up campaign of spy hunts, the trans-

fer of the Immigration Bureau to the Justice Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation card index file of undesirable citizens—all these curdled their blood; “every anti-democratic force in the United States is clamoring for power to protect us,” they wailed. And a comment on the President, “The Fireside Chat,” bemoaned Roosevelt’s hedging and lack of reassurance of the preservation of civil liberties. “We seem to be ready to arrive with one jump at conditions of repression and tyranny which before took it many months of actual war to bring about,” this editorial comment complained. The speed of the reaction was frightening them, and it was against the rules that a supposedly “liberal” regime should show such “reactionary” failings in the face of a crisis.³ It was true that the war was only nine months old, but forgotten was the long buildup of opinion in preparation for it since 1933, in which the *New Republic* had played as vital a part as any, and with a substantial part yet to play once recovery had been made from the numbness and paralyzation caused by the sudden and stunning victories of the enemy. But one thing that did fit in well with these developments was the change of heart on the part of spokesmen such as Lewis Mumford, Archibald MacLeish, Waldo Frank and Reinhold Niebuhr, among others. Their sulphurous outbursts against the entire fabric of liberalism and its resistance to mobilization into another war machine made appropriate and complementary reading to the news thundering from France. Bruce Bliven had just had published a prophetic piece in the *Virginia Quarterly Review*, “The Road To Hysteria: 1940,” which anticipated to some extent what was to take place,⁴ but it is unlikely that the full force of the liberal intramural uprising caused by the development of a strong and articulate pro-war camp was anticipated by anyone.

Though Bliven and the *New Republic* capitulated to the new force themselves in a matter of weeks, the remarkable thing was the persistence of a strong strain of resistance to their arguments, although it was just as remarkable that the editors of the two weeklies continued to print the views of these objectors. By far the most provocative of all the new warriors at the moment of the “Fall of France” was MacLeish. The reverberations from his tandem of philippics in the *Nation* and *New Republic* at the height of the fighting were felt for the rest of the year. The most comprehensive rebuttal to his “The Irresponsibles” in the *Nation* was contributed by John Gould Fletcher, who charged that all of MacLeish’s main allegations were “falsehoods,” and his whole article “merely another attempt, of a sort peculiar to our times, to lower the values of knowledge before the values of action.” Asked Fletcher, “Does Mr. MacLeish recommend that we should all work ourselves up to a state of emotional frenzy in order the better to fight the frenzy loosed upon the world by Adolf Hitler?,” and “Are we, because other cultures have been regimented,

to regiment ours?"⁵ In general, however, the editors published commendations of MacLeish and his attack on the detachment of the intellectuals, although one of these, perhaps the most stirring, and embarrassing, came from Ella Winter. She agreed with him to a passionate degree that the intellectuals had not been sufficiently aggressive toward Hitler, and called to his attention the "large and distinguished list of intellectuals who have fought valiantly in organizations designed to defend culture," of which she chose to mention the various pro-Loyalist Spain and anti-Hitler committees, in particular the League of American Writers, the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League and the Motion Picture Artists Committee, the first of which she claimed to have founded. It was an awkward time to mention these Communist front groups, especially at a time when the Communist Party did not take MacLeish's jeremiad the least bit seriously and was trying to forget 1933-1938. And in view of MacLeish's own close company with the Communist sympathizers in the *New Masses*, it was not known if he himself liked to be reminded of these particular writers and scholars who had "fought more ardently for learning and culture." Miss Winter seemed to have forgotten in this moment of wild joy that the Communists were in a state of cool detachment from the war, and that the MacLeish case had tried studiously to avoid any wandering into the subject whatever, being built upon abstract arguments and not any particular and immediate political standpoint. But her case was sound in calling to mind the Communist referent of the anti-Nazi furor of the post-1933 period.⁶

The *New Republic* piece attacking the between-the-wars generation of writers for having trained a generation to abhor war drew by far the longest and most bristling criticisms, although it seemed to have had the first objective of converting the editors. Along with the Mumford and Frank critiques, the *New Republic* editors on July 1 made a public confession of error. Though their editorial "War And the New Generation" considered that they had gone too far in attacking specific liberal writers and accusing them of having robbed the younger generation of their belief in the specific virtues of fighting, they now felt that the First World War had been too much debunked. They promptly issued their own denunciation of "the men who write cynically about war and peace, reducing everything to propaganda and backstage maneuvers," and, categorically rejecting any relationship to "doctrinaire" pacifism, issued as a *mea culpa*: "If this magazine has sometimes published writing of this type, we hereby do penance for our sins."⁷ Nothing appearing in this journal in the subsequent months left so many old readers with their jaws hanging in dazed disbelief. The first major internal victory of the war-liberals in the *New Republic* had been posted.

But the tradition was so strong that the publishing of rebukes by

old-line readers and writers of repute continued for months. One of the earliest and most prompt came from John Haynes Holmes, who described his impressions as follows: ⁸

First, Mr. MacLeish is sorry that war has lost its romance and glamor, thanks to the last war and the men who told the truth about it. He wishes, now that another war has come along, that the new generation had not been deceived. Second, Mr. MacLeish is eager to restore the shams and shames of the last war, that in this new war the new generation may be deceived once more. May I register my protest against this latest betrayal of intellectual integrity and spirited honor by a man whose first business it would seem to be to guard them both.

Another correspondent wrote, "It seems to me that when men like MacLeish, Robert Sherwood and Walter Millis and magazines like the *New Republic* now repudiate their teachings expressed during this period, they are appealing from Caesar sober to Caesar drunk." ⁹ But Edmund Wilson's "Archibald MacLeish and 'The Word'" was easily the most damaging of these critiques. Defending the liberal attack on the first war doughtily, Wilson then quoted some of MacLeish's anti-war poetry from the 1932 *The Social Muse*, "the poem in which Mr. MacLeish here depicted the ignominious end of writers who went in for causes." Wilson called his list of abhorred anti-war writers the "height of absurdity," and pointed out that though MacLeish "might be trying to prepare us for a new set of political slogans, of 'declarations of moral purposes' to be let loose from the same official sources that launched the publicity of World War I, Mr. MacLeish is now an official himself, and he seems a little uneasy whether the utterances of officials will everywhere be taken quite seriously." And in a personal comment, Wilson suggested that MacLeish perhaps remembered the ideological company he sometimes kept before he removed to Washington, and wanted to dissociate himself, but this did not obscure the fact that he had "in the course of his career struck a greater variety of attitudes and been ready to repudiate them faster than perhaps any other writer of our time." ¹⁰

An index to the troubled confusion and mixed emotions which MacLeish had aroused by his attack on the literary world in the interim between the wars was Harold Laski's "Letter to MacLeish," which the *New Republic* did not publish until September, 1940, by which time MacLeish's case had grown into a book and was gaining spiritual sponsorship. Even Laski, in the war zones, was provoked into reproving MacLeish, defending both the youth and the literary people he had blamed for their spiritual decay. Laski praised Beard and Hacker for "the best work in American history being done" at the time, and maintained that part of the skepticism of the youth was

due to its suspicion that the intellectuals' enthusiasm for fighting would not be matched by their equal influence in a post-war settlement, and he cited the aftermath of 1918 as support for their case. In Laski's view, the colleges collectively were to blame for failing the undergraduates, by leaving them unarmed with any philosophy at all with which to confront the "crisis."¹¹

This attitude, shared by many of the new belligerents, was flatly contradicted a few weeks earlier by Irwin Ross, whose "College Students and the War" asserted that only two per cent of college age people favored immediate participation in the war, paralleling the "very great majority" of their elders. Ross insisted that as far as charges such as MacLeish was making, "nothing could be further from the truth,"

But with the college generation even more than with the general public, foreknowledge of the events that would promote a war hysteria proved sufficient to prevent its occurrence once those events took place. This fact points to a prime characteristic of student pacifism: it is grounded in no cynical indifference to the fate of the world and/or democracy, but rather arises from a sober analysis of all the relevant factors.

And this, Ross pointed out in a manner of almost perverse glee, was a consequence of "two decades of faithful tutelage by their formerly disillusioned elders."

Common Sense, because of its publication dating, was somewhat behind the liberal weeklies in commenting on the war, but it remained a vast gulf apart from both the vigorous pro-war *Nation* and the troubled, repentant, and distracted but sympathetic *New Republic*. Its June, 1940 position was unmoved whatever by the hysteria of the others, and it denied any imminent threat of war to this country and especially disparaged the turgid declamation about the dangers to "Western civilization." It was its position that the real threat to the world was not Hitlerian Germany but "total war" and the real danger to democracy "totalitarian nationalism," which they saw gaining ground everywhere and not just among Germans. It was also appropriate that it should bring up the trailing statements on the war calls of liberal notables made before the spring campaigns in Western Europe. An editorial which commented on a recently-publicized speech by Mussolini remarked, "some of Il Duce's thrusts at British-French shilly-shallying and at liberalism's weaknesses in general strike the mark; much of the speech, curiously, sounds exactly like Lewis Mumford."¹² But the main task of combating Mumford was taken up in this publication by the young poet Fleming MacLiesh. In the extensive attention given Mumford's book *Men Must Act* and his *New Republic* article, MacLiesh charged that

Mumford had given no basis in them to support the things he had said about liberals who did not agree with him on the immediate necessity of going to war in Europe on moral grounds. He had simply refused to admit that there was any room for doubt at all in this instance, and applied the same judgment to the dissidents as any totalitarian; ¹³

Mr. Mumford is entirely sincere in advocating that we save civilization from the totalitarians by direct warfare, The point to be understood—if the line of the deviation from liberalism is to be further clarified—is that though Mr. Mumford and his former Stalinist friends have nothing in common with the type which preaches and promotes totalitarianism, they are of the same type which succumbs to its intellectual methods.

MacLiesh did not expand on the curious situation involving Mumford's zeal to save the world from totalitarianism with the largest totalitarian state standing by in almost amused detachment, but he went to work on most of his and Waldo Frank's abstract argument, especially their denigration of reason as a mainstay of liberalism, and remarked that

The present alternative seems to be some such kind of falling back on the authority of feeling and dogmatic absolutes. Word-mongers and war-mongers are joining hands. The wild men are loose.

NEW CONVERTS AND OLD VETERANS ENLIVEN THE PRO-WAR APPEAL

In the sense in which Fleming MacLiesh used these last words, it was a comprehensive description of what was abroad among the liberal-left intellectual community. The trailing comments on the pro-war ideologues and their abstract appeals of the winter and spring of 1939–1940 were actually conflicting and competing on the same pages with a new wave of critics, some from the established figures and some coming from a more recent band of converts to the joys of war. On July 8 the *New Republic* published a broadside from Frederick L. Schuman in the form of a four-column letter to the editors, which opened, "The last hope of defending America lies in an immediate declaration of war against Germany and Italy by the Congress of the United States. Nothing less offers promise of averting the Fascist conquest of all the Western world." Plotting out a grandiose campaign on the basis of the Napoleonic wars, suggesting that the Far East be ignored and that Japan be kept neutral, Schuman showed an ata-

vistic strain by urging that we also strive to "make terms with Moscow if there is the slightest possibility of awakening the Kremlin leaders from the self-hypnosis induced by their own obsolete theology." Though impressive for its incredible over-rating of Hitler's Germany, Schuman's letter was an interesting observation in the working out of the newest aspect of the abstract war call;¹⁴

Action now requires war now. This is so because no other word possesses equal power to stir American minds and hearts. . . . Only "war" strikes fire. Americans still react to its appeal with the responses which are requisite for salvation. War means unity and devotion. War means faith. War means service and sacrifice in the common interest.

Rocked once more, the editors replied to Schuman in a tremulous editorial disagreeing with him and "the many others of distinction in this country" urging this war declaration because the vast majority of the public was against entering the war and that "to force entrance into the war against the convictions of a majority" would be a serious mistake. But they did not reject the idea that Schuman and the "others of distinction" should desist from their intellectual incendiaryism; on the contrary, they sanctioned his persistence in trying to get across his desire through the arts of appeal: "Mr. Schuman's business is to persuade the people that they must fight, not to persuade them that they must declare war in order to be able to fight."¹⁵ But it was ironic that the very next week the *New Republic* should print Ross's article on the college-age young men and the war drive, in which he pointed out that Schuman was not even being successful with his classes at Williams College. Said Ross, "Leafing through the college papers, I find the *Williams Record* denouncing Professor Frederick L. Schuman for using his classroom as a soapbox; he 'violates all the ethics of the teaching profession.' "¹⁶ Nor were the editors the only ones ready to question Schuman's wisdom. C. Hartley Grattan's "Do We Need To Go To War?" on July 29 was apparently prepared as a response to Schuman, though addressed to the whole brigade of those clamoring for war and internal "unity"; his cold-sober advice contained two aspects:¹⁷

If we rush in like fools, we may find ourselves holding a bag with which not even angels could deal to any profitable end. Wars never end with things exactly as those who promote them predict.

And for the promoters Grattan offered a prediction of his own:

It is my unshakable conviction that those who are today viewing current affairs from the apocalyptic angle are going to live to regret what they are saying and writing. In due course their stuff will look pretty silly.

Oswald Garrison Villard added his comment to Schuman's war declaration a week later; "It is a masterpiece that deserves to remain immortal and doubtless will—a masterpiece of how an ordinarily sober and sane mind can be warped by fear and panic."¹⁸

But in the meantime, other prominent *New Republic* figures were illustrating their erosion before these same forces, the most noteworthy of whom was another editor and contributor since 1915, H. N. Brailsford, life-long Socialist and pacifist as well. On June 17 his dispatch from England in the form of an open letter was an urgent request for all to join in the war and abandon search for domestic peace and reform, threatening America with the same horrendous fears of conquest familiar to all these war cries; Brailsford's vibrating essay urged, "You must harden your minds and coarsen your values if you propose, unaided, during a period of tension that might last for many years, to defend a stricken civilization against the enemy who has banished liberty and pity from Europe." And the manner in which the patriotic Englishman had triumphed over the internationalist Socialist once more was not better illumined than by his subsequent advice, contradicting the expressed views of a lifetime:¹⁹

Banish from your daily lives the values and psychology of peace. Train your young men in the whole accursed art of war. Postpone for some years, till you have won in isolation your single-handed victory, every civilized purpose, every humane ambition.

As in the case with Schuman, as with Mumford and Frank earlier, the remaining editors chose to follow up his dramatic plea with a lengthy reservation, now revealing that their prior anti-war position had always been qualified by a neutrality slanted toward England, though insisting that "There is still much to be said for the proposition that we can do more for democracy in the world remaining at peace and preparing for future world reconstruction than by becoming a belligerent," and basing the largest part of their objections to enlisting upon the absence of knowledge "concerning what is being fought for as well as against." Here they struck home, for the liberals who had joined in calling for war were marked by the fact that they were somewhat more barren of peace aims than any of the official leaders of the war in England and France, nor had any of them suggested anything except fighting for a crushing military victory and the maintenance of a virtual planetary garrison barbed wire state thereafter.

The last word was far from in on Brailsford, and the *New Republic*. When his views were extended in a 130-page book *From England To America* and published later in the summer, it was given

a three-column editorial review on September 30, by which time the editorial position had mellowed considerably toward the idea of fighting. The readers were told it deserved "wide circulation and earnest reading," but there was still a strong residue of resistance to his imploring America to declare war at once and to prepare to send to Europe a vast army for the invasion of the continent and the overthrow of Fascism. Like the other manuals of this sort, Brailsford's Europe contained no Russia, and the implication seemed to be that Stalin was going to remain perched on the East Polish rail and watch the spectacle of the invasion as if attending a soccer cup final match. But the editors admitted that they agreed with the contents of Brailsford's book deeply except for his urging of belligerent status for the United States, the central thesis of the book.²⁰ Though neither they nor the rest of the country were ready to take Brailsford's advice at this moment, his general recommendations became part of the intellectual armament over a period of eighteen months, and the "postponement" he urged was to become part of the postwar world.

Another indication of trouble in the center of the erstwhile anti-war liberals was set off by Malcolm Cowley's review of *Fighting Words*, the report of the Third American Writers' Congress held in 1939, edited by Donald Ogden Stewart. Its pro-Soviet and subsequent anti-war position was responsible for a long string of resignations from persons who went to war with Germany somewhat in advance of the nation's armed forces, including a half-dozen members of the executive board. One of the founders of the AWC in 1935 and a vice-president since, Cowley, resigned at this time, August, 1940, and his review was mainly a quotation from his letter of resignation. It was another angry reproach directed at the Stalinists for having backed out of the anti-Fascist fight, although, like most of the others, Cowley preferred not to stress that the Stalinists had begun it, and his denunciation had the same ring of indignation at having been abandoned by one's organizers. Cowley had by now joined the group which looked upon the war in Europe as a civil war, "fought to decide what class will rule the world, under what forms of government," and not as another clash of rival imperialisms, and according to this new interpretation, he insisted that the United States was "morally in the war—indeed has been in it since it began nine years ago with the invasion of Manchuria." Whether we should now oppose Germany with American troops was "strategical rather than moral."²¹ Like MacLeish, who had preceded him by a few months, Cowley had now performed a one-hundred-eighty-degree turn, and could no longer chide the Librarian of Congress for his meager efforts in behalf of inhibiting the coming of another war, as he had in 1932. Cowley was now devoting his talents in literary criticism to about the same kind of goal as MacLeish in writing his stirring denunciations

of those who still loved the ways of peace. But Cowley was still substantially removed from the Niebuhr-Mumford-Frank-Schuman school of exponents of the retread attitude toward the positive good theory of war against German Fascism, as will be seen in his wrestling with Mumford's second war call in book form, *Faith For Living*.

While new faces were appearing in the pro-war camp of American liberalism and its press, the personalities who had first made an issue out of war were far from inactive. In the mid-summer of 1940, their efforts expanded substantially. Niebuhr's "An End To Illusions" in the *Nation* on July 29 carried his assault on the neutralists and skeptics among the liberals to an intense degree. Announcing his resignation from the Socialist Party because he had been pressured for taking a pro-war stance in contradiction to the party's neutralist and "rival imperialisms" attitude, he expressed his great disgust for this view and its exponents among his late colleagues, and blurted out, "This culture does not understand historical reality clearly enough to deserve to survive." Having lived in "a fog of utopianism" since the eighteenth century, which was Frank's view of liberalism as well, he did not see how they could expect to remain afloat. Niebuhr went on to blister the Socialists for their part in "the capitulation of democracy to tyranny," and called on them to remember that "It was a Socialist Prime Minister, Paul-Henri Spaak, who contrived the unrealistic neutrality policy of Belgium which was responsible for the German break-through." After slapping Aldous Huxley, Bertrand Russell, the *New Republic*, George Bernard Shaw, J.B.S. Haldane and the Communists, he delivered himself of a furious arraignment:²²

Hitler threatens the whole world not merely because the democracies were plutocratic and betrayed by their capitalistic oligarchies. His victories thus far are partly due to the fact that the culture of the democracies was vapid. Its political instincts had become vitiated by an idealism which sought to extricate morals from politics to the degree of forgetting that all life remains a contest for power. If Hitler is defeated in the end it will be because the crisis has awakened in us the will to preserve a civilization in which justice and freedom are realities, and given us the knowledge that ambiguous methods are required for the ambiguities of history. Let those who are revolted by such ambiguities have the decency and consistency to retire to the monastery, where medieval perfectionists found their asylum.

Waldo Frank's "American Inventory" at the end of August was in this identical spirit. Having transferred to the much more sympathetic *Nation*, he mixed his latest jeremiad with political and military recommendations of a rather immediate and practical nature which set off the outlines of the ethereal metaphysics of the previous

manifestoes he had delivered. In a state of great agitation he announced that there were several steps which the country best take at once to avoid the fate of France and Britain; "We should declare a state of national emergency, help Britain till it hurts, clear out every German consulate spy nest in the land by severing relations, conscript industry (which means getting rid of the Knudsens) and only then draft an army. . . . these are mere rudimentary gestures toward sanity," he concluded. For the long range he proposed,²³

We must fight political Fascism, which means war to the hilt on Hitler. We must fight the stratified injustice of capitalism, which means social revolution. And we must recognize what most radicals and liberals ignore; that subsuming the two fronts is the third front—the upholding of the sanctity of man, the channeling of the religious energy of human growth into new democratic forms, against the dark pulls downward into infantilism which the Fascists have exploited.

But for the vision of the war as a surgical sword cutting away the dead tissue of Western culture, neither Niebuhr nor Frank were able to match the specious grandeur achieved by Mumford in his new book *Faith For Living*. The scorn for the pacifists, the isolationists, skeptic liberals, and the college generation with its vast number of conscript eligibles which he displayed here was unbounded. "A thousand years separates 1940 from 1930," he trumpeted, and declared with trembling conviction, "A life sacrificed at the right moment is a life well spent." Niebuhr reviewed it in the *Nation* on September 14 with stratospheric superlatives, lavishly praised his attack on the main targets of liberal "utopianism, perfectionism and rationalism," spoke of it as "an analysis full of robust phrases expressing robust thoughts," and announced to the readers, "such books as Mr. Mumford's are as important as the political and military measures which are now being taken to constitute the remnant of the democratic world into a final bastion of civilization."²⁴ The World War I propaganda rarely saw an achievement to compare with this, although college age liberals complained that the new tough-muscle intellectuals talked much too glibly of the sacrificing of lives, but seemed to value their own inordinately. But in view of its reception by other liberal organs and reviewers, whatever its reception by the White Committee, *Foreign Affairs*, and the burgeoning pro-war organizations of non-liberal persuasion, Mumford's *Faith For Living* was still a premature book for liberals.

Cowley's review in the *Nation* on September 9 was titled "Shipwreck," and he correctly divined its message, paying the author faint praise in his conclusions: "Dr. Goebbels often talks in the same vein, using almost the same words." Behind Mumford's "patriotic vista,"

murmured Cowley, "one can see the barbed wire of concentration camps." He was referring to Mumford's proposals for complete censorship, jail and exile for Fascist or Communist leaders, an extra hour of work for everybody daily without extra pay, one year's service in a "labor army" for everyone, no strikes and the stipulation that business submit to confiscation. Cowley, already leaning in the war direction himself, was torn badly by Mumford's appeals; he acknowledged, "The fact might as well be faced that if we are going to defend American democracy against Hitler, we shall have to borrow some of Hitler's methods, those which made it possible for his country to act rapidly and unitedly." But in his zeal to save the ship of democracy, Mumford, Cowley protested, wanted "to throw overboard not only the cargo, but the compass, the wireless set, most of the passengers with their baggage and half the crew." Despite the war fever, Cowley could still see well enough to read his own temperature as well as Mumford's.²⁵ But the editors received letters of unqualified praise for Mumford from Frank, Niebuhr and Van Wyck Brooks.

In *Common Sense* in October, the Mumford and Brailsford calls to war and donning the new democratic totalitarian wardrobe for liberals were subjected to a much fiercer critique by Richard H. Rovere.²⁶

There are of course a good many things Americans might write in reply to Mr. Brailsford, but perhaps he would understand best if we sent him Mr. Mumford. For there is no single illustration of what war might do to America more eloquent than what it has already done to this critic and scholar. Like Archibald MacLeish in *The Irresponsibles* and Waldo Frank in *A Chart For Rough Waters, Faith For Living* blames nearly everything on liberals and intellectuals. But if Frank and MacLeish seemed to overstate the case, Mumford's fevered ill-temper beggars description. His book is not an attack—it is an insult. . . . Mumford is not only anti-Fascist; he is bitterly anti-German and anti-Italian. His program for America, with the exception of a few Rousseauistic gadgets, is purely an expedient for war effort. To put it bluntly, Mumford wants a Fascist America to fight a Fascist Germany.

But it was well into the last year of American neutrality before the exhaustive critical review of Mumford by James T. Farrell saw print. Referring to the author of *Faith For Living* as "one of the leading spokesmen of the new cult of the irrational," and his book as "the bible of the War Intellectuals of the Second World War," Farrell took advantage of an intellectual environment which was bathed in studies of men of the moment and the origins of their thinking and applied the same process to Mumford. He found the latter mainly under the influence of such French mystics as De

Bonald, Le Play and De Maistre, who had had such vast influence upon the central ideas in Mumford's *The Culture of Cities*, "that classic of settlement house culture." And he mentioned mischievously that they had been revived as the leading ideologues of Pétainist France, while pointing out that Mumford was using the same kind of analogical historical reasoning which he had so furiously condemned Oswald Spengler for using previously. Considering Mumford and his allies in the new word war accompanying the new world war, Farrell was not especially impressed by their product: ²⁷

To those of us who say that this war will not solve the major problems of our society, and that it is a war for empire and world domination, the War Intellectuals reply that the Second World War is, rather than a continuation of its predecessor, on a new stage, totally different in character. The irony of their assertion resides in the fact that they are unable to find new reasons to justify this war and to rationalize America's participation in it, with all that it involves concerning our economy and the life of our youth. Thus, they are forced to justify a new kind of war by using the arguments and slogans of an old war. Mumford sets for himself the task of finding a metaphysics for the Second World War.

Unfortunately for the composure of the neutralist and non-interventionist sector of American liberalism in its moment of grave disturbance caused by the pro-war literary offensive of Mumford, Frank and others, the *New Masses* had entered the fray with immense gusto, and turned out the most spectacular denunciations and journalistic abuse of the war group. Allies from the pro-Soviet side of the arena were not especially welcome, partially a consequence of hypersensitivity on the entire question of Communism. Simultaneously the liberals in general were conducting a fierce attack on Congressman Dies and all others who were inciting incessant investigations and pressures on domestic Communists, which was causing much conflict with their own case against the Soviet Union's foreign policy. The Red back-out of the anti-Hitler jihad was still intensely resented even by those who were opposed to American participation and the help of Soviet sympathizers on questions of purely foreign nature was not particularly esteemed, but it was furnished, nevertheless.

Now referring to itself as "America's only *real* Anti-War Weekly," *New Masses* reached a peak in October, 1940. In its first three successive issues that month it ran a series of editorials and articles, the latter by Samuel Sillen, attacking Mumford, Frank, MacLeish, Cowley, Lerner, Bruce Bliven, Freda Kirchwey and others as "Gentlemen Who Never Learn" and "Authors Of Surrender." The *Nation* and *New Republic* were severely taken to task, the latter in particular, because of its late-summer somersault on the war. MacLeish, con-

temptuously referred to as "the Great Librarian" and "the repenting Magdalen of Liberalism," was treated the most harshly. A fiery piece in the issue of the first of the month, "Add 'Liberals,'" commented caustically on the sudden conversion to war of Maury Maverick, erstwhile isolationist liberal contributor to *Common Sense* and now mayor of San Antonio. Quoting him as saying he was "sick of being so damned liberal," the editorial remarked that Maverick now talked "like a cross between Martin Dies and Col. Julius Ochs Adler."²⁸

For Mumford's *Faith For Living* the *New Masses* reserved choice terms. The October 15 editorial comment was titled "Lewis Mumford's 'Mein Kampf,'" and referred to the book as "the most flagrant statement of the 'liberal' case for Fascism which the war has so far produced," charging that it brought "into sharp relief the repudiation of liberal values by Freda Kirchwey's jingoistic *Nation* and Bruce Bliven's tremulously repentant *New Republic*." "It is a faith for dying, not a faith for living," the editorial complained of its title. But the cruelest dissection of a liberal turned pro-war was Ruth McKenney's "Elementary, My Dear Sherwood," a savage combing-over of this writer of pacifist plays who in a radio address on September 10, 1940 beamed to England and Canada had reassured them that the Americans were wholeheartedly behind Churchill in the fight for "the divinity of man." She added him to the previously designated literary luminaries of the liberal weeklies and described them collectively as the "come-out-and-die-boys-the-weather's-fine literary fellows."²⁹ To this painful state of affairs the relations between Communism's closest weekly literary friend in America and this group of liberal notables had degenerated, nearly all of whom had appeared in its pages in the years just past. And the return of compatibility was to be delayed for some time longer, until the German attack on Communist Russia on June 22, 1941.

The journals of the liberal and left forces were indeed in an extended form of disarray by now, strung out in varying degrees from each other on the basis of their position toward the European war. But there was still enough residual sentiment of the period which ended with the outbreak of hostilities to bring them all together on a single project connected with the war drive and its propaganda, about the last time they were to be in concert in the remaining period of American neutrality. It concerned a veteran target, the president of Columbia University. On October 4, 1939 the *New Republic* hailed the return of Charles A. Beard to the faculty at Columbia with a special editorial, "Exile's Return." Recalling once more his resignation in 1917 because of the dismissal of two other professors "for teaching doctrines 'disloyal' to America at war," the editors fervently hoped that "his return may signify that Columbia and the rest of

America's colleges will keep their heads through the conflicts and emotions of the new holocaust." ³⁰ The reference to President Nicholas Murray Butler was unstated but might just as well have been written in headline type.

On September 16, 1940 the same weekly reviewed Butler's memoirs, *Across the Busy Years*, in a restrained and friendly manner. The scathing abuse which had been his when the journal was at the height of its anti-militarist and anti-war position was obviously missing, in view of its steady slide toward the pro-war position of the day. The season was not one for pressing too strongly the now-abandoned twenty years' campaign against the war-makers and war-preachers of the 1917 Crusade.³¹ Then came the upheaval. Butler's private declaration of war on Germany and Italy and his almost unconcealed ultimatum that any faculty members of Columbia who did not agree might as well resign reopened the situation wide, and for a moment liberals joined hands and returned in spirit to 1917. The *New Republic's* pro-war position made it inadvisable to recall Beard and Cattell again, but residual decency made it imperative that it censure Butler sharply for provoking an academic environment which it compared precisely to that of Germany and Italy. "It is the worst possible advertisement for the anti-Hitler cause when its leading proponents act as Hitler would in their places," its October 1 editorial scolded; "Democratic unity can only be disrupted by speeches like Dr. Butler's." ³²

Though the *Nation* was in full accord with all the policies which Butler had asked his faculty to support, or leave, it vigorously denounced the pressure being applied to those who were not in agreement; "In the storm that has arisen over Dr. Butler's remarks, few have taken issue with his sympathy for Britain or his support of defense measures; but the university men of Great Britain who in the midst of war may still talk as they please would be among the first to condemn his high-handed denial of academic freedom." And its grim comment closed, "We hope the storm of protest will grow." ³³ *Common Sense* greeted Butler's ultimatum to his faculty in as scornful a manner and included a reference to his nickname among liberals when all were against war in its comment, "Some of our educators may have forgotten what happened to democracy during the last war to save it, but not enough to let the Good Gray Reactionary get away with *that*." ³⁴ The *New Masses* recruited no less than H.W.L. Dana himself, and his "Nicholas Miraculous On the Rampage Again" was easily the most corrosive and damaging piece on Butler's admonition to his faculty to follow his personal foreign policy or leave the university. ³⁵

A special bit of sulphur and brimstone descended upon Butler in

John T. Flynn's column which was out of harmony with the purely defensive-of-academic-freedom position of the weekly journals: ³⁶

A British Ambassador, who is the head of the greatest fifth column in the world—the Rhodes Scholarship organization—can intrigue to draw our young men into a European war and no word is uttered against it. An American professor cannot unbutton his lips against this without feeling the boot of the Great Liberal on Morningside Heights.

To be sure, this was a most portentous comment by Flynn, for his editors were not far from applying a version of the same sort of pressure to him that Butler was threatening his unruly professors at Columbia. And to come on the heels of the separation of Oswald Garrison Villard from the *Nation* for the same reasons, the two episodes were to assume the proportions of a massive symbol of the passing of the old liberal tradition while their younger replacements were to direct the two famous weekly organs of liberal opinion into line to help drag the country's pro-war chariot into action.

THE VILLARD AND FLYNN CASES AS UNDERLINED EMPHASIS OF THE GREAT CHANGE

The German breakthrough in France and the subsequent hysteria which swept large segments of American opinion-making forces, including the articulate liberals, was productive not only of a large burst of enthusiasm for the military strength and martial virtues which they had held so long in deep disrespect. It was bound to produce some internal casualties, in view of the strong personalities and deeply held views among them. But the remarkable fact about this was the very few defections that took place, and the near-absence of "purges" of recalcitrants who refused to follow the pro-war editorial lines of June, 1940 and after. In truth, there were a number of quiet defections, various prominent contributors silently dropping by the wayside, going to such refuge as *Common Sense* or *Uncensored* provided, or joining anti-war groups of various political persuasions. But the shift to the interventionist view was a powerful and nearly noiseless operation. Only two notable clashes of gears occurred, the resignations of Oswald Garrison Villard from the *Nation* in June, and John T. Flynn's from the *New Republic*, in November, 1940.

There was nothing sudden about these two severances except in the nature of their abrupt departures; the yawning gulf of deviation from the general trend on their respective journals was a matter of record for a long time, and it may have been appropriate that a griev-

ous trauma such as the Franco-British debacle in the war with the Germans should be the spark which touched off their explosive separations. The *Nation's* editorial hysteria on the subject of defense and the prospect of America's likely invasion from Europe brought about a sharp clash with Villard, one of several which had occurred since 1937, in particular. His last two columns were printed on June 22 and June 29, in which he rang off some of the more obviously silly aspects of the national defense fright, while predicting that America would have to copy the largest part of the German and Italian systems to combat them effectively. In his column "Valedictory," on the 22nd, he brought to an end his career of 46½ years with the *Nation*, which had begun on January 11, 1894, explaining why in a plainly worded and dramatically brief statement: ³⁷

It is the differences of opinion which have arisen between myself and the present editorial board as to the relation of the United States to the catastrophe in Europe which has led me to ask for the acceptance of my resignation. I regret all the more, therefore, that my retirement has been precipitated at this time by the editors' abandonment of the *Nation's* steadfast opposition to all preparations for war, to universal military service, to a great navy, and to *all* war, for this in my judgment has been the chief glory of its great and honorable past.

Freda Kirchwey's editorial comment on Villard's resignation the following week was titled "Escape and Appeasement," and it comprehensively attacked him and all those of the same mind as living in a "dream world." Writing such as his frightened her, she asserted, and was "a danger more present than Fascism." It was followed by two columns of turgid comment on the world conflagration, including a florid tribute to the British Empire and the absolute necessity of preserving it, since its capture by Hitler would mean a subsequently easy invasion of the United States. Her dismissal was accompanied by an admission that Villard and others did not recognize this, and thus it made their position doubly wrong.³⁸

The opinion on Villard's resignation and the grim sendoff by Freda Kirchwey was about evenly divided, as printed in subsequent issues. Older readers, such as Preserved Smith, Paul Comly French, Dorothy Detzer and Josiah Willard and others regretted his leaving, and charged the *Nation* with making him a casualty of its submission to the June hysteria. Most of the younger readers were glad to be rid of a "menace"; one congratulated the Kirchwey attack especially because it "pointed sharply to the contrast between the old and the new era," but veterans such as Albert Guérard and Hendrik Willem Van Loon were beside themselves with joy that Villard would no longer be spreading his isolationism and pacifism every week. French,

on the other hand, lamented that the *Nation* ought to see that 1917 was being repeated and scorned the paper for its switch; "It is a simple business to be a liberal and a pacifist in time of peace; the real test comes when mass hysteria is aroused and when it is far from popular to go against the herd instinct." And a college-age reader responded, "To my regret the *Nation* has become simply the editorials of the *New York Times* reprinted on pink paper. It is the voice of yesterday, not of tomorrow."³⁹

Flynn's separation from the *New Republic* came later because it was not until the late summer and early fall of 1940 that its foreign affairs policy began to assume the full outlines of the pro-war school. Flynn had been at odds with the other editors on many occasions, and they had always maintained a respectful distance on such occasions, for his command over words made him a feared controversialist. But his repeated columns dwelling on the war preparations and defense-armament boom in addition to the pro-involvement propaganda got successively more extravagant in main editorial opinion, leading to a series of editorial rebukes, which got sharper in October,⁴⁰ and finally culminated with the break between the two on November 11. The editors headed Flynn's "Other People's Money" column that day "Mr. Flynn On War Hysteria," and did not bother to conceal their discontent and displeasure. It was here that a note was included announcing that his column would no longer appear in the journal, after an unbroken run beginning on May 10, 1933. The explanation to the readers was that "Lacking sufficient material for a weekly column on the original subject, Mr. Flynn has ranged far afield and has frequently collided head-on with the views of the editors, to the annoyance of some readers, the pleasure of others and the bewilderment of many," concluding with the news that he had been asked to write larger articles "on his original theme," and they hoped they would appear "often."⁴¹ Flynn's name remained for awhile on the mast-head as a contributing editor.

In truth, Flynn could no longer write exclusively about money, stocks, investments, banking and finance in general as a topic apart from the country's foreign policy. The blending of domestic and foreign affairs had blurred the distinction once possible to make, and Flynn's criticism of foreign policy was a development and recognition of this growing difficulty. With the sharp drop in domestic activity on the part of the New Deal from the fall of 1937 on providing less and less to write about on the theme of domestic economic doings, and the scope of activity in the arms and defense field ballooning, it was out of the question for a commentator on economic news to abstain from the position Flynn was increasingly taking.

In subsequent weeks the editors indirectly vindicated Flynn, especially on December 9 when criticizing the new budget proposals.

In the editorial "Divided Budget," they bitterly opposed the suggested creation of two categories of federal expenditures, one for ordinary expenditures which was to be balanced, and another for defense spending, which was to be extended by borrowing on an emergency basis. They protested that this "emergency" might last indefinitely, warning that "you can't separate the war sector of an economy from the peace sector, as you could in the good old days." "The problem of expenditure, taxation and borrowing is an indivisible whole, and all of it must be considered in the light of total defense—both military and civil."⁴² This was a highly literate way of describing the necessity of dealing with the problem from a totalitarian point of view, and for recognizing the totalitarianizing effects of moving into a war economy. For noting its aggravating and tied-hands circumstances, and for seeking to get at its core, Flynn had been pressured to desist.

Undoubtedly there were other factors responsible for the decision to drop Flynn. One surely must have been that he had become a prominent member of the America First Committee in October, and the political tendencies of too many members of this vigorous anti-involvement group affronted the war-bound sector of American liberalism. However, only the *Nation* commented noticeably about Flynn's membership, along with that of Villard, wondering how these two pacifists reconciled their association with an organization committed to arming to the teeth for domestic defense.⁴³ But his departure from the pages of the *New Republic* was kept down as an issue arousing its readers by the promise that he would remain a contributor. A few of the veteran readers were aware of the crisis between Flynn and editorial policy several weeks before the break, and one, John Haynes Holmes, had written a strong commendation for his position on October 21:⁴⁴

Since John T. Flynn is under fire, not only from some of your readers but also from your own editorial staff, I want to be counted on his side. He seems to be the only clear eye and understanding mind in your paper. Mr. Flynn is doing the same splendid work in this war that Randolph Bourne did in the last war—and with the same reward. It is my hope that Mr. Flynn may live, as Randolph Bourne did not live, to see himself vindicated and acclaimed.

But Flynn's separation from the *New Republic* was as final as that of Villard from the *Nation*. And with them passed what dissidence on foreign policy had survived the Great Conversion to the pro-war view accompanying the German victories in May and June, 1940. Flynn and the editors had two notable conflicts later, in 1941, one in which he ridiculed their immense fear of an invasion of the

United States by Hitler's legions by way of Africa and Brazil, a favorite route of amateur geopoliticians, and another in which he dispatched to them a communication which reproduced verbatim the paper's former positions on foreign affairs in order to underline the dramatic somersault which had been performed in late 1940. The editors' reply was about the weakest they had ever made to a critic, and depended mainly on the ancient subterfuge of protesting being "quoted out of context," one of the most effective devices ever invented to escape the consequences of being faced with one's past statements. Its most obvious defect was that it seemed to be written by one so recently a member of the editorial staff that he had no knowledge of what the pre-1940 stands of the *New Republic* had been.⁴⁵ But the road was now cleared ahead on both liberal weeklies for an unimpeded pro-war policy and a monolithic editorial solidarity unmarred by solitary snipers.

Hereafter in the liberal weeklies the voice of the old anti-war tradition, if heard at all, was at the sufferance of the editors, in the form of gestures of courtesy to respected veterans of the anti-militarist tradition, stray reviews of books or hostile statements which were published largely to provide an opportunity for an editorial parry-and-thrust to re-emphasize the new position. When John Haynes Holmes wrote a firm reproach to the *New Republic* in the high-flying spring days of 1941 for their increasingly belligerent tone, the editors replied politely on April 14, "We respect our old friend John Haynes Holmes for the courage he shows in sticking to his principles of non-resistance these wartime days," but left no doubt that they thought themselves correct in their stand on the ground that Hitler Germany was a real and frightening physical threat to this country.⁴⁶

Freda Kirchwey could not reject Norman Thomas despite his stubborn pacifist isolationism; the *Nation* published a warm review of his *We Have a Future* by Rose Stein on June 25, in which book Thomas rejected the class struggle as an instrument to produce a classless society, discounted as "a sentimental notion" the idea that the wage earner was "destined to become society's messiah," and in which he branded as "romantic nonsense" the idea that a "successful violent revolution" was still a twentieth century possibility. Even the fact that he entertained the darkest of views toward the idea that it was possible to "bomb people into sanity" and predicted that three or four more years of war would produce no democratic peace, but just add new hates to the old ones, drew no editorial reproach.⁴⁷

But she responded vigorously to McAlister Coleman when he wrote in the fall, charging that the editors had "deserted every fundamental principle for which the *Nation* once fought so gallantly." Coleman's letter, appearing in the issue for November 29, 1941, warned, "If at

this time, before even the actual declaration of war, you can throw overboard in hysterical panic the old cargo of tolerance, integrity, and passion for freedom which the paper carried through the years in which I used to look for its appearance with genuine eagerness, I don't like to think about what's ahead." The editorial rebuttal said of Coleman, "Some day we believe he will realize that it is he who has changed, having abandoned his internationalism for the view that we can save democracy here by throwing the workers of Europe and Asia to the wolves."⁴⁸ The Soviet Union had become a belligerent just a little more than five months before.

SOME ASPECTS OF THE NEW LIBERAL WAR RATIONALE AND THE GROPING FOR WAR AIMS

At no time before or since the 1939-1941 period has there ever been such a feeling of preparing to muster out on the contending grounds of Armageddon as there was then in the American intellectual community. An attitude of impatient watchfulness accompanied by thinly-suppressed anxiety for hostilities to involve America, for bellicosity to break out and spread everywhere, swept the liberal sector just as thoroughly as it had their erstwhile antagonists among the patrician and aristocratic Anglo-Francophile elements. In fact, the rhetorical levels achieved in this time made such demands on the emotional capacities of American liberalism that it was left exhausted by the time American participation in the war was a fact; there was neither the energy nor the inclination left to protest the atrocities and imbecilities and betrayals that were to follow and continue in a monstrous train long after the immediate war so dearly desired was past.

As Farrell pointed out in reviewing Mumford's *Faith For Living*, of desperate necessity was the formation of a new war rationale and philosophy to help ease the intellectual community into the phase of hostilities with a minimum wrench to their sensibilities, in view of the twenty and more years of viewing war in an utterly different context. It promised to be a difficult job, and never a wholly successful one. The ugly sound of clinking dollars, pounds and francs was not to be heard in this new account in the American liberal press in 1940-1941. The peak season of righteous uproar over the economic implications and complications of World War I, roughly the years 1931-1937, was now over. Liberals for war had now shriven themselves of this with the eclipse of the once-vociferously hailed Nye Committee and the coming of the new war. World War II started out being dealt with almost exclusively in terms of stupendous moral

and ideological absolutes, which collided with the remnants of the earlier thinking and produced some of the hearty disputatiousness within the confines of the liberal ranks. But thanks to the perfection of the epithet "appeaser" early in 1941, the sophisticated balancing of the causes of past wars was not to be in evidence long as a possible explanation of the newest one. By December, 1941 some of the most sophisticated balancers of the past struggles were vying with one another to see who could sponsor a more naïve and hysterical interpretation of why the new war was under way.

By the end of 1940 and into 1941, the English flavor also had to be taken into consideration. By that time both the liberal weeklies sounded as if they came from a common editorial office in London, with a mixture of Foreign Office men and Laski Laborites having a major hand in the composition of the abstract case which both were now advancing. The "all-eggs-in-Britain's-basket" formula, banking heavily on just a British victory over Germany, was omnipresent, modified, of course, as has been seen, by extensive troubled concern over war-peace aims going beyond that, and resulting in the jungle growth of beauteous but essentially insubstantial post-war prophecies in the absence of any tangible official announcements along this line.

In part this was due to the fact that once the war was on in September, 1939 it was rare to see prominent liberal writers devote themselves to matters of purely domestic importance. Even editorial staff members and contributors who had infrequently if ever concerned themselves with foreign affairs bloomed out into experts on the subject, and rarely strayed very long from war topics.⁴⁹ In no period of American literary history have so many liberal literary figures emerged as military, logistical and strategical experts as did between 1939 and 1941. Even persons who were not known to have ever published a line on war or international politics came forth with articles and even books on geopolitical themes and various grandiose schemes for winning the war. The war truly opened up a new literary frontier industry, and two decades later some of the original toilers in this vineyard of bayonets and barbed wire were still busily at work on the themes of 1937-1941, which had now expanded and reached virtual graduation to astral and even galactic levels. The Beardian remark "perpetual war for perpetual peace" seemed to be no mere ironical observation, as the outer reaches of space began to be reckoned in trillions of light years, presumably occupied by countless universes of potentially hostile societies. The new situation, growing genie-like from the concept of "defense," seemed, two decades after the beginning of the American scare about its safety, to have approximated the Jamesian "moral equivalent" of war. Classically, "defense" meant the contemplation of self-protective action within a limited situation

against a logical and probable enemy. But the expansion of the term to encompass any conceivable antagonist in any conceivable place at any conceivable time in the future was a break-through in the science of statecraft equivalent to the Einstein theory in physics. In 1939-1941 this stunning change was just under way, with rousing liberal collaboration. Those whose vision went no further than the protection of the continental boundaries of the United States became as limited as Isaac Newton.

The grandiose playing at high strategy, planetary postwar aims, comprehensive schemes for perpetual continental and global defense and other related policies was a steadily growing feature of both the liberal weeklies and many of their contributors in these critical years of 1939-1941. An increasing number of special supplements containing pretentiously-written memoranda appeared, often presuming to be special coaching to military and political leaders and the bureaucracy on matters of overall policy in these fields. Whether they were taken seriously or had effective influence, even for a time, is hard to assay. But it should have caused a shiver of anguish among the pro-war contingent of American liberals to realize that the Administration valued their support so lightly after America was in the war that it resolutely refused to accede to their wearily repeated plea for an announcement of what the long-range goals of the war were. The answer was not made until 1945-1947; there had not been any, as the frenzied scramble for position with Russia in that time amply demonstrated.

In fact, there was even in these pre-Pearl Harbor days an inverse relationship between the war plans of the liberal intellectuals and the official policy makers. The more tight-lipped the prosecutors of the war were as to their overall objectives, the more voluble and grandiose the plans emanating from the impotent. A brigade of Englishmen preceded the Americans in this and it assumed the outlines of a delightful pastime and a major occupation between 1941 and 1945, during which time it was rather difficult to expect to attain a status of prestige unless one was the author of a post-war plan. It was a collective tragedy to all their authors that none of them were adopted, but also an indication as to how superficial they were when matched with the actual situation and to what the war being fought was all about. On the whole, they revealed that far more energy was being expended to return the world to the nineteenth century than to push it ahead to the twenty-first. But these heated days were times when large numbers of persons were constantly measuring distances on globes or while kneeling on flat maps stretched out on living-room floors. And some idea of the seriousness with which the newly-arrived experts took themselves might be gathered by an examination of Malcolm Cowley. In the mid-1930s he had disclaimed competence in

anything but literature, but on May 26, 1941 he even dared to criticize at great length such an established hemisphere expert on technical military and naval matters as the New York *Times* writer Hanson Baldwin in a six-column review of the latter's book *United We Stand*.⁵⁰

From the purely ideological point of view, American war liberalism was immeasurably better prepared for the war of 1941 than it was for that of 1917. Though temporarily affronted by Soviet practical politics, there still was the 25 years of Communism to learn from, and from which to glean the dream of a social democratic world upon the war's conclusion. Thus it could give the war meaning beyond defeat of the Germans once more, as also a device to pry loose the incumbent power-holders and to make striking changes in the capitalist democracies while ostensibly fighting for their survival against a rival order they indirectly praised and imitated, by liberal admission.

As the Germans were completing the rout of France in June, 1940, Granville Hicks wrote in the *New Republic*, in his essay "New Directions On the Left," "I see a considerable section of the left lining up in support, but not in uncritical support, of Roosevelt and the Allies, and standing in general for a democratic humanitarian socialism, to be achieved if possible through gradual reform." This was really the "Old Direction" but propelled by war instead of the painfully slow process of pleas to rational conviction and demonstration through practical experiment. Hicks admitted liberals' support of the war was bound to get the opposition of the Communists now, but he did not see how the remainder of the left could act otherwise than to go along with the war and trust that it could be used to produce both the ends of victory over the Germans and the beginnings of the kind of collectivism they yearned to see established. As he put it, in admitting that their zeal for the anti-Hitler crusade was absorbed from the Comintern and in describing the anguish of abandonment by the Reds in 1939,⁵¹

But we are by and large the people who were attracted into or to the support of the Communist Party by its advocacy of collective security and the democratic front. For a time after the Pact and the war, though we were quick to reject the Party's new line, we could not see how to work for the old ends. Now we see not merely the opportunity but the necessity for a struggle, and a very desperate struggle.

Hicks outlined the new dual goal of left-liberalism in deciding that support of the war was not desertion of their integrity with an economy of words. But perhaps the more persuasive in providing the intellectual argument for proceeding in this direction was Max Ler-

ner, now fully recovered from his neutralist skepticism of the winter of 1939-1940 and fully enlisted in the fray once more. His "The Attitude of Intellectuals" in the *Nation* on August 3, 1940 was a rousing vote for their getting fully immersed in the arena of public affairs at once, rejecting the withdrawal to the ivory tower and combining their efforts with "the people" and "the common man." "The business elite is through," he announced. "It cannot be trusted to run a government for democratic purposes with any measure of success." And he came out bluntly in support of Mumford and Frank in deserting the lines established by Randolph Bourne in the First World War and for immediately swinging "into the vanguard of interventionism." It was time for the intellectuals to come to terms with the war and with the power that could be wielded through taking part in the State's conduct of it:⁵²

"War," wrote Bourne, "Is the health of the State." It is perfectly true, of course, that in war time State powers are maximized, national cohesiveness is more easily achieved, and dissident opinion is stamped out. Yet for the intellectuals to argue from this that they can never have any traffic with war or with a State in war time is for them to abdicate effective leadership at the very crisis period, when leadership is most needed. Whatever may have been true in the past, it is true today that State power can build, crush, and rebuild the elements of the world. We must face the implications of this for intellectuals, whether we have war or whether we have peace.

In the *New Republic* the following January Lerner spelled out the matter which he discussed only briefly in his *Nation* essay, extending his vision in "A Fighting Faith In Labor." "Every culture needs a fighting faith," he intoned, by which he explained he meant, "something that answers the question: who and what are there among us to keep our world going and moving forward?" He then went through and rejected in turn the various possible "leader-authority" types, once more burying in particular the business man; "They will never recover from their fall, and the class-blindness they have been showing in the past decades in Europe merely seals the coroner's verdict of death by suicide." Lerner was now ready to confide his trust in "labor," but from the context of his article he obviously meant labor leaders, spending some time in an aside lauding Walter Reuther's plan to produce 500 airplanes a day. But he left little doubt of where he wanted to go at least by announcing,⁵³

The future lies with the common man, whoever he may be; . . . These are the elites for us, for as distant a future as we can pierce. They are

democratic elites, recruited from the mass and always revitalized by the mass. Our belief in them is our fighting faith in the worker.

This view was in perfect coincidence with the "social democracy" which was expected to come out of the vast expansion of the economy spurred by the government under the imperious urges of "defense."

Lerner extended this still further in his book *Ideas For the Ice Age*, which, inexplicably, was given over to John Chamberlain for review in the *Nation* in the issue which came out the day before Pearl Harbor. His objection to Lerner's basic approach stated the case for the liberal wing still suspicious of the New Trend: ⁵⁴

At bottom, however, Mr. Lerner fails utterly to convince me that he has any compelling social or political truth by the tail. Our differences are perhaps too deep for argument, since they rest on completely opposed emotional predilections and intuitive assumptions. Mr. Lerner insists that he is a philosophical pluralist, but I don't believe him for a minute: his State theory is basically Hegelian, he has the religious urge to belong to a movement that promises to go somewhere in history, and his praise is usually reserved for the Laskis and Lenins of this world, the philosophers who have a Hegelian sense of the teleological. Mr. Lerner's root assumption so far as *Ideas For the Ice Age* is concerned, is that a "democratic socialism" or a "democratic collectivism" is both necessary and possible. He sees the "campaign of history" pushing in a collectivist direction everywhere, and he has a fondness for invoking a democratic "dynamic" that does mystical duty as a substitute for the God of the early Christians, the predestination of John Knox, or the dialectic of Marx.

Despite Chamberlain's deep probing, the fact remained that at the core of much of the new war rationale was precisely the kind of thinking seen in the Hicks and Lerner essays, a product of the nagging pressure to come up with war aims which would make this new war seem reasonable to an intellectual community which had devoted so many years and such a towering Himalaya of printed matter to proving that the previous world war and all other wars were, as Mumford had once previously described World War One, "dreary insanity." But neither Hicks nor Lerner were reading "T.R.B.", John T. Flynn and several other reporters in the liberal press who were describing in detail the advance guard coming into Washington to direct the Roosevelt war machine. Its makeup hardly supported the thesis held by Lerner that businessmen were dead, and it emphatically stated that if Lerner and his compatriots were going to back the Administration and wait for the evolution of a "democratic humanitarian socialism," then by all means it had better be that they were either young men or persons with a heredity of descent from long-lived stock if they expected to live to see it.

“BOOKS AND THE WAR”

The war for the liberal mind in America involved many fronts, and one of the most telling was the struggle on the literary one, about as broad and vital a battle ground as figured in the forging of the conviction that spiritual participation in the newest war in Europe was a categorical imperative. From the summer of 1940 until well after American involvement in the world conflict, American publishers flooded the land with an almost inexhaustible tide of war-calls in book form, increasingly strident in their appeals for belligerency. The hand of the war-bound sector of American liberalism in this side of the making of favorable opinion for United States involvement was marked, both in the production, and also in the reception and publicizing of such literature.

The brilliant style and extensive vocabulary of most of it was an indication that unlike the simple and often crudely-constructed and transparent-in-character material of the World War I period, these books were not so much aimed at a general audience with ordinary educational attainments, but addressed largely to each other, in the hope of either effecting conversions or steeling the faith of those who were converted. No other war in history has ever found the intellectual community so active in mobilizing one another for combat, albeit of a spiritual kind. But the passage of time has not treated much of this output any more kindly than the authors were wont to estimate the embarrassing curios of World War I propaganda; a large part of it is in precisely the same class for the second World War.

The publishing history of the eighteen months before Pearl Harbor was succinctly reviewed in a *New Republic* editorial five weeks before that event titled “Books and the War.” With a rash of new books capitalizing “democracy” and the “people” accompanying a new cycle of pro-involvement calls, the editors felt comfortably confident in announcing that “No matter what happens on the floor of the Senate, the isolationists have lost the battle on the literary front, just as they did in the last war.” There were some differences now, however. Most troubling was the realization that the youth were taking little or no part in the New Belligerency, and that the high spirits and feeling of “rendezvous with destiny” which pervaded the excited and boisterous times of 1917-1918 were almost entirely lacking. The editors remarked with pained concern that the vast part of the rhetorical invective and the exhortatory jeremiads urging the adoption of an aggressive psychology was emanating from a group of men safely beyond the combat age, who were finding it diplomatic now to omit reference to the fact that a substantial proportion of the

writers were also veterans of an undeclared war going all the way back to 1933, when their belligerence toward Hitler Germany had been firmly mounted within a setting of pro-Russian Marxist politics.

But the most distressing aspect of this, at the moment, was the observable disillusionment of the young writers, a *fait accompli* even before Americans were in the fighting this time, instead of a slow and steady process of emotional erosion, as it had been after the First War. The editors lamented that the youthful writers had already "turned away from social movements of every sort, and admit to nothing but a spectator's mild interest in the fate of the world."⁵⁵ But if the job had been overdone among the youthful literary aspirants and beginners, it could never be so among those among their elders who had taken the initiative, even though their mercurial changes of position and frequent somersaults since 1937 were hardly the kind of spectacles to induce loyalty and devotion to their causes among the younger generation.

In addition to the volumes published by the leading liberal enthusiasts for the extension of the war to America already examined in other contexts, there were many notable supplementary productions, a number of which might be mentioned; *Beyond German Victory* by Herbert Agar; Robert E. Sherwood's *There Shall Be No Night*; Samuel Grafton's *All Out*; *Speak Up For Democracy!* by Edward L. Bernays; Ralph Barton Perry's *Shall Not Perish From the Earth*; *The City of Man*, advertised as written by "seventeen intellectual leaders," including Mumford and Agar; Archibald MacLeish's *A Time To Speak* and *The American Cause*; Niebuhr's *The Nature and Destiny of Man*; Edward Meade Earle's *Against This Torrent*; Francis Williams' *Democracy's Battle*; Francis Hackett's *What Mein Kampf Means To America*; J. B. Priestley's *Out of the People*; and Richard B. Scandrett, Jr.'s *Divided They Fall*, were some of the inspirational titles with an obvious message which received the sponsorship of the liberal press and its reviewers in this crucial period. They were amply supplemented by a wide range of war memoirs and journalistic impressions which carried on many occasions a much more incendiary message; Otto Tolischus' *They Wanted War*; Heinz Pol's *Suicide of a Democracy*; E. N. Van Kleffens' *Juggernaut Over Holland*; Fritz Sternberg's *Five-Fold Aid To Britain*; Robert Strausz-Hupé's *Axis America: Hitler Plans Our Future*; *Berlin Diary* by William L. Shirer; Hans Habe's *A Thousand Shall Fall*; Leland Stowe's *No Other Road To Freedom*; "Thomas Reveille"'s *The Spoil of Europe*; *Pattern of Conquest* by Joseph C. Harsch; Pierre Van Paassen's *That Day Alone*; Max Werner's *Battle For the World*; Allan Nevins' *This Is England Today*; Lion Feuchtwanger's *The Devil In France*; Hans Kohn's *Not By Arms Alone*; Erika and Klaus Mann's *The Other Germany*; Frederick L. Schuman's *Night Over*

Europe, and *Zero Hour: A Summons To the Free*, a symposium including essays by Erika Mann, William L. White, McGeorge Bundy and Walter Millis. There was even an anticipation of the government this time, with the publisher Farrar and Rinehart turning out a series in emulation of the famous Red, White and Blue Books of the First War, titled "America In a World At War," beginning in the spring of 1941, including *The Future of Politics* by Agar; Henry Steele Commager's *Distortion of History*; *War Has Found Us*, by Mumford, and Millis's *A Statement of Conviction*. The superior degree of sophistication of these tracts over the material of 1917-1918 need hardly be commented upon. A comprehensive listing of the bibliography of this literature would be a study in itself, but at least an indication can be discerned as to the overall impression which was to be had from a steady reference to the literature in book form which was being made available in this struggle for the spirit and affections of intellectual and liberal America.

An increasingly strident note penetrated the reviews of most of the books of this kind, the enthusiasm and prose of the reviewer sometimes even exceeding that of the author. Reviews of each other's books took place with sufficient frequency to remind readers with good memories of the long-standing practice of this sort in respect to the literature of Russia prior to the *Pakt* and of the Far East at that same moment. The *Nation* exceeded all the others in publicizing pro-war books, both in terms of numbers and sympathetic comment. And the calls to war against Germany lying very close to the top cover of even the most abstract manuals of spiritual and philosophical reinforcement, let alone the frankly political volumes, were a policy almost universally shared and which the equally belligerent reviewers did their part to underline. The mass of such material almost repels introductory attempts to illustrate the case, but it could be seen in full frankness in such demonstrations as Mumford's review of Niebuhr's *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Niebuhr's review of Kohn's *Not By Arms Alone*, Keith Hutchison's reviews of the Harsch and Agar volumes, Ralph Bates's enthused receptions of the Shirer and Stowe recapitulations, and Kohn's almost shouting approval of the Werner, Tolischus, Grafton and Schuman books.⁵⁶ Kohn and Schuman ran a close rivalry as the most zealous members of the academic community for spreading the view that the war had best envelop America at the earliest opportunity. Cowley's review of *Night Over Europe* in the *New Republic*, though mainly commendatory, could not help make a characteristic comment on the fighting faith its author was urging for adoption:⁵⁷

. . . in short, what Schuman is proposing in the political field is not far distant from what Lewis Mumford has already proposed in the social

field and Waldo Frank has proposed in terms of religion and philosophy. If the word did not arouse such opposition one might call it a humanistic and international Fascism to fight and conquer racial Fascism. . . . All these men are trying to formulate a new faith to take the place of the Marxism that was becoming orthodox during the 1930's.

Even at this late date, the residual clouds of the era of close affection for Communism could not be completely exorcized.⁵⁸ In one way or another the subject was revived over and over again, and re-introduced and re-insinuated into the context of the new war drive and the new intellectual argument being fashioned for it as a companion-piece. There was an inescapable feeling that this fierce effort to find spiritual war-support sustenance would have been unnecessary had only the Russians stood firm and not entered into their baffling non-aggression pact with the Germans. Even among the writers of poetry this was a cardinal problem. As Babette Deutsch put it in her *New Republic* commentary a little later, "War Poetry Then and Now,"⁵⁹

Unlike their predecessors, they [the writers of war poems in 1939-1941] understand that this war is no joyous adventure, no crusade, but a dirty job, and that the winning of the war may be less difficult than the winning of the peace. The Soviet betrayal of Communism more than any other one factor appalls and disarms them, for if the socialist fatherland has begotten a dictatorship from which Nazism has pulled the disguise, in what shall they put their trust?

Two dozen nationally-known liberal luminaries were trying to produce an alternative to answer this question, within the context of supporting the new European war. The essence of their case seemed to be what Selden Rodman found so repelling in Agar's book *Beyond German Victory*; reviewing it in the December, 1940 *Common Sense*, he disparaged its "good-versus-evil" perspective and Agar's prescription of "starvation and destruction" as a cure for National Socialism.⁶⁰ It was these very elements that the war-bound contingent could not help calling for, no matter how their appeals were structured.

But just enough of an outcropping of this now largely dormant issue took place to make it evident that it would be a long time before it was forgotten. One or two cases might be cited, one involving an individual and another a whole publication. In January, 1941 *Common Sense*, still implacably opposed to American involvement in the war and calling month after month for a negotiated peace, printed Lion Feuchtwanger's "France After the Fall." In March it drew a loud retaliation from Dwight MacDonald, on the grounds that Feuchtwanger was whitewashing the French Communists in his essay-

ing as a specialist on French affairs. In the course of the critique he branded Feuchtwanger as "the number 1 world literary spokesman for the Stalin regime," and filled a column with embarrassing quotations from the Communist literary magazine *Das Wort*, when Feuchtwanger was its editor in Moscow in 1936 and 1937, especially the latter's attack on American liberals for protesting the Moscow trials. MacDonald openly criticized him as a false detester of totalitarianism, who had written in 1937, "One breathes again when one comes from this oppressive Western atmosphere of a counterfeit democracy and hypocritical humanism into the invigorating atmosphere of the Soviet Union," and now was writing pro-war tracts. MacDonald professed to be mystified why *Common Sense* had published this one, in view of its known editorial position.

The other was a more famous *cause célèbre*, a feud between Benjamin Stolberg and the two liberal weeklies in which he had been wont to appear in print in days past, which was spread out in the *Saturday Evening Post* in the winter of 1940-1941. It produced fiery responses, especially in the *New Republic*, after Stolberg charged that it was but the "liberal echo of the *New Masses*," and "in effect, a party-line organ." This unearthing of the Communist issue at the peak of the journal's massive conversion to support of the war-drive was anything but pacifying to its editors, who promptly brought out that they had never followed the Communist collective-security position down to August, 1939. To vindicate its claim to be innocent of Communist-line interests the *New Republic* indulged its own particular form of embarrassment, since the editorial position now was as fervently for collective security as its opposition to it had ever been.⁶¹ And it skirted the Communist-sympathies issue completely as far as defending Russian domestic policies and Communist politics in America were involved. The significant thing was that at even this late date, it was possible to see the subject of the liberal-Communist ties of the pre-war period being exploited and producing such amazing responses. Perhaps in February, 1941 Stolberg might have been closer to the actual situation of the moment if he had described the *New Republic* not as an "echo of the *New Masses*," which it definitely was not in the field of foreign politics (the two had exchanged stands almost exactly), but as the American liberal echo of the British Labor Party element collaborating with Churchill in prosecuting the war.

WHOSE "AMERICAN CENTURY"?

By the late winter and early spring of 1941 the liberal weekly press was no longer in the vanguard of any particular school of opinion on

the subject of the war, other than its deep faith in its serving as an engine of vast socio-economic change in the leftward social-democratic direction and tradition. As to advocacy of belligerency for the United States as such, it was getting comprehensive competition in its pro-British and anti-neutrality views from a large part of the nation's daily and weekly papers, and perhaps lacked intensity for the cause when compared to *Time* and *Life*, and the New York *Times* and *Herald Tribune*. In addition its principal spokesmen for a war-participating America trailed behind the columnists of the commercial press such as Walter Lippmann and Dorothy Thompson, although in the latter case, Burton Rascoe, in a scathing review in January in *Common Sense* of Edna St. Vincent Millay's *Make Bright the Arrows* and Clare Boothe's *Europe In the Spring*, suggested that the three were good candidates for being the American woman who could subsequently claim "sole responsibility for the event" should the United States eventually get involved in the war. But Rascoe believed that the others were sure to lose out to Miss Thompson. His review-essay was titled "The Ladies Who Want Hell."⁶² Liberals against the war, such as Rascoe, had retired largely to the pages of *Common Sense*, or into the Keep America Out of War Congress, the America First Committee, the Writers' Anti-War Bureau or the pacifist organizations, in none of which did they have access to liberal literary voices comparable to those pressing for belligerency.

But there were a few shocks still in store for the involvement sector in the field of war aims, and propaganda declarations of purpose for participation in the war. The comfortable conviction that global war was sure to unleash the social and economic forces in tune with their ideological tendencies and that they could expect little competition along such lines began to run into grave competition. Although perfectly aware of the social ideals of the pro-war agencies such as the Committee to Defend America By Aiding the Allies, which they rather effectively ignored, it appears that they were unprepared to meet another statement of intention, a frankly American imperialist plea which got its finest exposition in the Luce magazines and in the Hearst editorials in the period between March and July, 1941.

The first announcement of revulsion greeting the famous "American Century" editorial of Henry Luce was by Freda Kirchwey in the *Nation* on March 1, 1941. Titled "Luce Thinking," it first ridiculed Dorothy Thompson's hectic approval of the Luce declaration of intention, as "language that might have come straight out of a spring seed catalog," and then launched into Luce with no further introductory sparring. Angered that there were influential people who looked upon the war not only as an opportunity to aid Britain but especially to "establish the United States as the dominant power

in the world," she promptly denounced it; "The whole idea of a future order dominated by an English-speaking union dominated by the United States is deceptive as well as dangerous," she said. "You don't nourish an honest internationalism with nonsense about 'destiny' and 'Anglo-Saxon traditions' and an 'American Century,' her critique went on, saving for a final blow, "The Luce-Thompson brand of imperialism should be investigated by the Federal Trade Commission and a cease-and-desist order issued before the public mind is poisoned." ⁶³

But the magisterial reply to Luce was delivered five weeks later by Max Lerner in the *New Republic*, in a manifesto fully as grandiose and ponderous, titled "The People's Century," a distillation of the hopes and fears of the entire corps of well-wishers and seers of the anticipated social-democratic "collectivism" at war's end.⁶⁴ Warning fellow liberals that they had better not think either "capitalist imperialism" or "nationalism" dead, and citing the famous Luce declaration as his principal evidence, Lerner scored a point by noting that Luce's core thesis, that the United States and Britain form a combination to "establish its hegemony in the world, control the world sea lanes and world trade, send out technicians to develop the world and education to teach it and food cargoes to feed it and ideals to inspire it," in Lerner's way of stating it, had already been advanced ten weeks before Luce in the *New Republic's* own famous December 23, 1940 editorial "A Proposal For American-British Cooperation." Lerner found this objectionable when rephrased by Luce, because it suggested a form of international order obviously at odds with the liberal supporters of a different form of Anglo-American hegemony conceived of as an ideal society. Even the idea of Britain as a junior partner was *New Republic* material prior to the Luce statement, he added for good measure.

Liberals made their mistake, according to Lerner, in merely shouting "imperialist" and dismissing the Luce statement forthwith. There was much more to it than that, he averred, and he was not out of harmony with much of it; Luce, Lerner insisted, spoke "for a new capitalist-conscious group, most of them younger men, who do not fear the war but regard it as an opportunity," and he confessed to being far more in sympathy with Luce than with the anti-war liberals of all sorts; "I prefer him infinitely, though our purposes are as far removed as the four corners of the winds, to men like Burton Wheeler and John Flynn."

Luce and Lerner both thought the war was a splendid opportunity to make imagination-shattering changes, but the latter was not anxious to live in a world run by Anglo-American capital, "nor do I fancy the corporate muscle-men—the advertising-agency executives and high-pressure publicity people—who will form the legionaries of

the *Pax Americana* and the praetorian guard of our power in each country."

Lerner was convinced Luce had made his mistake in predicting the final outcome. He was right in calling our time "a revolutionary century," but the revolutions sweeping these nations were going on for a bigger purpose;

What will these nations be fighting for? Their own freedom and equality in an international community, or the privilege of sharing in an American Century? Mr. Luce must wear unusually dense social blinkers if he thinks they will fight for the latter.

No, Lerner countered, "Ours must be a people's century," and if it was to have leadership from Anglo-America, it would have to be that of a "democratic America and England." And he grew quite as abstractly exhortatory and lyrically mysterious as Luce in his rebutting conclusion:

It must involve democracy now, and not at some future time, in our diplomacy and foreign policy. It must involve a democratic military force and organization of the armament industries. It must involve democracy now in regional agreements with Latin America. And it must involve finally a federation of nations in which, if we are leaders, we are leaders among equals, with their consent, pooling our resources of wealth and intellect with them.

The *Nation* on June 1 came forward with a "people's century" testimonial of its own to match that of Lerner, "The Liberals' War," by Stanley High, a Roosevelt speech writer known largely for his writings in the mass-circulation commercial magazines.⁶⁵ His thesis was in full accord with the "people's war" vision of Robert Dell and others. "This is to date a little people's war," he announced; "In every country they have suffered first and most." "As between bombing and the tyranny of the evil agency behind the bombs, they have chosen to be bombed," was his summation of the war, and he especially took comfort in the English scene:

Stiffening the back of the British government, which involved the ousting of Chamberlain and the elevation of Winston Churchill, was almost wholly the work of middle-class and working-class opinion. And it is the continued and unchanged force of that opinion which has prevented the rise in England of any movement toward a negotiated peace.

High was very critical of those persons on the liberal-left who worried about what the war would do to democracy; he urged them to "take a look around" and see for themselves who was in charge:

Anyone who believes that in the event of a democratic victory democracy will be the loser has completely lost sight of the power which the democratic masses have accumulated, of their increased skill in the use of that power, and of the degree to which, using it, they forced the present showdown between democracy and totalitarianism.

However, High did not explain too thoroughly why the so-called "little people" deserved credit for authorship of World War Two because they had done the largest share of the suffering and dying, since this was true in all the major wars of history, nor did he explain the omission of Soviet Russia from the totalitarian camp, since there was no evidence that the "little people" had forced a "showdown" of any kind between the democracies and that country. With the invasion of Russia by the Germans a few days later, however, a whole new category of definitions of totalitarianism and democracy promptly was wheeled into print for the further confusion of the befuddled.

The occasion for the *Nation's* editors to become aware of still another variety of "American Century" and one which was apparently so appallingly repellent that they did not care to comment on it further, grew out of an editorial paragraph on July 5, 1941. It had announced that Reagan "Tex" McCrary had broken with William Randolph Hearst on the subject of foreign policy and was now writing torrid interventionist editorials in the isolationist-neutralist New York *Mirror*. McCrary's letter to the editors appeared on August 9, a long statement of policy in which he denied that he and Hearst were at odds, and explained why he believed a declaration of war on Germany should be made at once. McCrary then concluded with a picture of a "post-war future" which was the antithesis of everything the *Nation* claimed to stand for in the field of postwar politics:⁶⁶

When we have won the war I will become a rampant imperialist—in that I would want to see America *enforce* the peace. Disarm every other nation, including England. Build up and maintain in America a mighty air force, supported by enforced levies on other nations, precisely as a police force is maintained in a community, by taxation. No arms of any kind would be permitted in any other nation. The British navy would be scrapped, as would the Luftwaffe and the Japanese navy.

It would be a "Roman peace," and we would be the Romans. . . .

McCrary did not tell the *Nation* if or how he planned to disarm the Soviet Union, but his letter, dated July 24, with the Germans thrusting deeply into Russia at the time, probably assumed it would be done by the Germans prior to their defeat by the Anglo-American Allies. In essence, there was evidence enough for the editors and ideological leaders of American liberal journalism that their dreams

for a post-war world, rising from the ashes of another world conflagration, were going to run into savage competition.

THE FINAL STAGES AND FINISHING TOUCHES OF THE LIBERAL WAR RATIONALE

Through the spring and summer of 1941 the fabrication of the ideological juggernaut, in which American liberalism planned to ride in the train of the wagons of the Anglo-American winners, went on. A substantial spurt ahead occurred late in June, when the Soviet Union returned to the armed camp of the coalition against the Germans. A sharp decline both of resistance to the war and criticism of England promptly took place, and more troubled inquietude was resolved by this event than any other since the Russo-German pact. Despite this, the initiators of the new liberal belligerence had been going on for months adding the final embellishments to their calls for war and appeals for support from those most likely to do the physical fighting.

Niebuhr, Kolnai and MacLeish were the most effective in this. Niebuhr's reputation as an accuser of the pacifist movement as a "bogus" force reached a peak with the publication of his book *Christianity and Power Politics*, reviewed with firm approval by W. H. Auden in the *Nation*. The volume's theological trappings did not divert Auden from its basic case, nor did he want to be.⁶⁷ The essence of what might have been referred to as the New Niebuhrism was incorporated in a grim eight-column call by him in the *Nation* a short time later, "Fighting Chance For A Sick Society." Niebuhr first explained why the dominant forms of socio-political expression of the time, Communism, National Socialism, Liberalism or Socialism, were no longer trustworthy as guides for the future:⁶⁸

Life does not justify itself merely by its power any more than rational harmonies of justice establish themselves without the use of power. The illusions of a liberal world on this score have been stubborn enough to contribute to both the rise and the quick triumphs of Nazism. Marxism took an intermediary position between Nazism and liberalism. It was provisionally cynical in the use of power and ultimately utopian in its belief that all power could be transcended. Under the stress of contemporary history this compromise has disintegrated. The Socialists tend to fall back into purely liberal and pacifist illusions; the Communists extended the provisional cynicism of Marxism until it became practically identical with the more basic cynicism of the Nazis.

But Niebuhr found nothing wrong with power that could not be cured by putting it in the hands of those whom he approved of:

If these illusions go by the boards, this will be a tentative achievement. Western culture will still have to find a social philosophy which avoids the pitfalls of a rationalistic utopianism on the one hand and a cynical glorification of power on the other. No new world order can be achieved without the social organization of power in economic, political and military terms. If our fear of imperialism and political power is so great that we blindly insist on utopia as an alternative we will end by getting chaos. Neither can a just world order be achieved without providing every possible check upon central power, and every possible method of holding the vitalities of men and nations in equipoise.

There had been no better preliminary philosophical statement of the fundamental aims and ambitions of the new political force being forged by war than this *Nation* article by Niebuhr; it encompassed the intellectual core of the new totalitarianism of the center which was conceived as the answer to the unresolved conflicts among the other ideologies.

The New Belligerence suggested a form of discipline which pointed in this direction in an unashamed manner. Kolnai's turgid essay "Fate Or Freedom" in the *Nation* on May 31, 1941, another abstract call to battle, amply underlined Niebuhr. His formula was that of Mumford's; "Fascism is above all—as Lewis Mumford has simply and correctly put it—the evil work of evil men," and in his newest attack on the "narrow superstitions of pacifist ethics" advanced an approach and an imperative which must have delighted the entire pro-war group. "It is true," Kolnai testified, "that democracy must either perish or remould itself so as to be able to meet the issue," and to do that, he left no alternative; "It must become far more stern and militant, more concentrated and disciplined, more trained and certainly more ruthless."⁶⁹

A highly-sophisticated war call from a stranger to the *Nation's* pages, the drama critic of the New York *Times*, Brooks Atkinson, appeared on March 8 under the title "The Decision Is Simple."⁷⁰ The recruitment of pro-war statements from literary celebrities regardless of their major field of interest or competence was not common but growing. Nevertheless the main dependence was still upon those who had begun the drift even before the first hostilities. MacLeish's two books, *A Time To Speak* and *The American Cause*, supplied admirable new material in the spring. Niebuhr's review in the *Nation* was expectedly congenial.⁷¹ But Cowley, in an omnibus *New Republic* review May 5, moving more toward the war position and closer to a literary embrace of MacLeish by the month, still could not accept the latter's case against the American *literati* as being responsible for so much ideological evil and as being potentially so influential. Cowley's depression reproaches to MacLeish were mostly gone now, and he

excused the latter's agitation as largely due to the fact that he was "profoundly shaken by the fall of France," on the grounds that that country was more MacLeish's cultural tradition than either America or England. On the other subject Cowley professed to be mystified as to how he thought the writers and intellectuals could "save the country by their unaided efforts," for it was Cowley's conviction that "the scholars and writers as a class were politically powerless when separated from the broad public." At this point, Cowley was willing to admit that "as a political force, the intellectuals have probably been defeated for this generation,"⁷²

And today, when MacLeish exhorts them to the storming of beliefs and fortifying of convictions, he makes them think of a football coach between the halves of a disastrous game, telling his team that even if the score is forty to nothing against them they can still win the game if they go out on the field and fight.

"The team knows better," Cowley quietly concluded.

MacLeish's eloquent call to arms which appeared in the *Nation* June 21 under the title "To The Class of '41," showed that he could incorporate an understanding of what Cowley was driving at and still preserve undauntedly his zest for the cause. In this abbreviated version of his Union College commencement address of June 7, MacLeish announced that the war now raging overseas was one of purely words and ideas, and he expressed his sadness with the loss of faith by the new generation in the talk of his generation. His shaming of the college youth for this skepticism while apparently accepting the blame for it as a representative of the intellectual "irresponsibles" was a brilliant rhetorical display.⁷³ The invasion of Russia by Germany the day after it appeared in print, and the conversion of the Communists into the Eastern European allies of democracy created even more verbal difficulties than MacLeish had investigated before the graduating class at Union College; it was fortunate for him that his speech did not have to rationalize this development. As it turned out, the finding of a proper place for Communism in this re-directed crusade took several months of preparation.

In the meantime, new major conversions were taking place, including two of the most redoubtable neutralist historians, Edward Meade Earle and Walter Millis. Earle finally abandoned his stand of revisionist suspended judgment and joined the pro-war pamphleteers with his *Against This Torrent*, which now revealed an awful terror of the possibility of planetary conquest by Hitler. Almost as surprising in revealing a comprehensive shift was its review by the most caustic liberal critic of England, Quincy Howe in the *New Republic* on June 30. Howe, blending his strong commendation of Earle's

change of heart with one of his own, a vibrating call for all out aid to Britain, and, reflecting his disapproval of American laggardness in this department, uttered an impressive prophecy:⁷⁴

My private suspicion is that we in 1941—like Britain in 1940—need a Dunkirk of our own to awaken us to realities. Words of exhortation, reason, emotion or alarm simply cannot turn the trick. Nothing short of a national disaster will do.

Millis's change, far more gradual, began with the publication of his *Why Europe Fights*, in the summer of 1940. Three years earlier, as has been seen, his *Viewed Without Alarm* had carried the confident message that another European war was most unlikely, while expressing no hostility to the idea that Hitler's regime might make a viable economic and political unit out of Central Europe. The 1940 volume seemed lame when compared with this, even though it was now greeted with loud applause by Hans Kohn.⁷⁵

But on March 22, 1941 when the *Nation* printed a substantial special supplement on the war and the expectable future, Millis contributed the most sensational article, "Notes On the United States, 1950," a memoir of an imaginary isolationist politician and his rueful commentary on the course of the United States toward becoming a virtual satellite of Hitler Germany at that later date, with Hitler in complete control of the world as a result of American isolationist policies remaining unchanged in the early 1940's. Its ten lengthy columns, describing Hitler's easy planetary conquest, never mentioned Soviet Russia in any context whatever.⁷⁶ Though a plea for immediate American intervention, it brought to mind a similar piece of crystal-ball-gazing by Bruce Bliven in 1932, which envisioned a Communist saturation of the world as a consequence of a vast war which the capitalist countries had not had wisdom enough to prevent breaking out.⁷⁷ As a description of the situation in 1950, Bliven had come very much closer in 1932 than Millis in 1941. But in 1941 liberals urging the adoption of a war-involvement commitment were completely overwhelmed by the apparition of Adolf Hitler, and a substantial part of the apparition was a product of their own conjuring.

A FOOTNOTE ON THE EVOLUTION OF HITLER AS ARCH-DEMON

A vivid trait of American liberalism between the World Wars was its reiteration of its invulnerability to propaganda for another war;

sufficient references to this have already been made. Perhaps the most-often repeated story of the First World War was the account of how Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany had been converted into a veritable beast in human form, and the war made into a jihad to annihilate him personally, as a unity-producing stratagem. When he died in Holland in June, 1941 shortly before the Russo-German stage of the Second War took place, the *New Republic* found it appropriate to recall this, and in particular the tactics of Woodrow Wilson after April, 1917 in making propaganda distinguishing between the German people and their leaders. This the editors called the most successful "campaign of ideas" ever accomplished. But they did not recommend doing it again this time.

Willard Waller, discussing the various theories as to the origins of wars in his symposium *War In the Twentieth Century*, had declared "Perhaps the simplest theory, and the most widely held, is what we may call the moralistic theory," which in Waller's words was simply, "Wars are bad because bad men make them." If there was one view which an observer might have taken with confidence between 1918 and 1933, it would have been the assurance that such a sophisticated community as America's liberal intellectuals would never again become the victims of this particular theory. But by 1941 no part of the spectrum of the national populace had become more of a slave to it again than the makers of liberal and intellectual opinion. Though they had constantly deplored in the period of maximum affinity with Stalinist Russia the making of a personal devil out of Stalin among his antagonists of all kinds, they thought it unimportant to comment on their part in making out of Hitler the most immense personal devil the world has ever known. And by mid-1941 there had already taken place a frightening transfer of this opprobrium to the German people as a whole, part of the reason for the reluctance to consider another round of propaganda separating the culpable German leaders from the innocent common people. Hitler was almost the personification of the German individual by then, a composite beast rivalling some of the more nightmarish posters of World War One recruitment drives.

Some attention has been devoted to the evolution of Hitler in liberal eyes from the 1931 portrait of a ridiculous and inept caricature, taken seriously by no one, to the horrendous apparition of 1941, by which time he had acquired not only a maximum of Mephistophelean traits but something of an almost irresistible energy capable of spreading his power and control over the entire globe. The momentum of the war drive among the interventionist wing of liberalism propelled the horror image of Hitler even beyond this, and the search for more and more ingenious explanations of his rise to power and the ideological sources of his movement resulted in the ultimate in war

propaganda directed at a single individual. Nothing quite like it compared with it; the secondary stage was the fusing of Hitler and the German character and the creation of an object of such evil of such long duration that the diabolic Kaiser of the First World War emerged a relatively respectable and believable figure by comparison.

In November and December, 1939 *Common Sense* published two articles by Peter Viereck, titled "Hitler and Richard Wagner."⁷⁸ They represented the return to the theme of the ancestry of the ideology of National Socialism, and Viereck, the son of George Sylvester Viereck, adopted a relatively modest approach in going back no further in German history than the times of Jahn, Rosenberg and especially Wagner to locate the brunt of the responsibility for the beginnings of National Socialist theory. Though Viereck protested some time later he was a conservative, his articles, which bloomed into a book titled *Metapolitics: From Wagner to Hitler* about two years later, resounded with the liberal cliché "social Darwinism" and earned the plaudits of liberals without reservation for his thesis. When the first exploratory pieces were issued by *Common Sense*, they were given vivacious laudatory approval by Elmer Davis and Thomas Mann, and the book swelled Viereck's reputation immensely. There was nothing novel to liberals about the title, for Joseph Wood Krutch had applied the term "metapolitics" to Communism, especially that of Eisenstein and André Malraux, in his *Nation* series titled "How Dead Is Liberalism?" in the late summer and autumn of 1936.⁷⁹ But Viereck's exploratory efforts apparently stimulated research into much more ancient aspects of the German past. Though Viereck had gone back to the times of Luther in an attempt to locate responsibility for such things as the ceremonial book-burning in 1933, it took William M. McGovern to exploit this thoroughly in his *From Luther to Hitler*. But the temptation to work back to Ariovistus, and even to Herman the German eventually captured other writers. The English writer F. J. C. Hearnshaw produced the ultimate in the identification of the Germans with malignancy in his *Germany the Aggressor Throughout the Ages*. All three of these books were reviewed in the liberal weeklies in October, 1941, the McGovern and Hearnshaw volumes drawing disapproval on the grounds of "misuse of the historical approach,"⁸⁰ but Viereck gaining the enthusiastic sponsorship of Paul Rosenfeld in the *New Republic* and Hans Kohn in the *Nation*. Kohn was highly commendatory of Viereck's dictum that "a conclusive military defeat would have a wholesome psychological effect upon the Germans," and he declared that Viereck's book would "render a distinct service by making for a deeper understanding of Germany and of our own problems."⁸¹ It was ironic that the issue of the *New Republic* which carried the rousing review of Viereck's book also carried a pleased edi-

torial comment that Viereck's father had been arrested as an unregistered German agent after having been indicted by a grand jury.⁸²

It was obvious that from the context of the case being built against Germany, its leaders, people and history that there would be no attempt to appeal over the heads of their leaders this time; an implacable war to the finish was being prepared in the final year of American official neutrality. Probably the evolution of Hitler from a transcendent figure unlikely to weather adverse internal conditions to one of such omnipotent evil can be best seen in the respective treatments of him by Lerner three months after the war began in 1939 and by Cowley three months before American involvement in the war in 1941. In an extremely long and occasionally brilliant essay on *Mein Kampf* in the *New Republic* on November 22, 1939 Lerner had concluded,⁸³

If Hitler is ever defeated it will not be the military strength of the Western Allies that will defeat him but the intellectual strength of a humanism which embraces the revolutionary values as well as the permanent. It will not be the war but the peace afterward provided (what a big proviso!) it is a humane peace and one that does not repeat the follies of Versailles. It will not be the Chamberlains that will defeat Hitler but the Thomas Manns.

That it turned out to be neither, but Stalin's soldiers and the prodigious output of America's industrial plant, which drowned the Hitler regime, is irrelevant here; the main point was that Lerner still viewed the situation with serenity and confidence, sure that the Second World War would be fought in much the same manner as the First, but under leadership keeping all the defects of the earlier war in mind so as not to repeat them, and that the politics represented by refugees would bring Germany graciously back into good odor among the nations.

But the situation was seen in an utterly different light by Cowley. Reviewing on September 8, 1941 the Reynal and Hitchcock edition of the over-one-thousand page volume of Hitler's speeches edited by Raoul de Roussy de Sales, Cowley had lost all confidence in the ability of Hitler's enemies to resist evil simply by knowledge of being the repository of virtue, in view of the luminous malevolence which these speeches of the German Führer obviously radiated; protested Cowley,⁸⁴

We are simply not equipped to handle lies of this sort. We are taught to believe that every man is at least trying to tell the truth, and that we should try to understand his point of view. The result is that no matter

how critically we read Hitler's speeches, they are likely to leave a residue of poison in our minds. . . . And even if we escape these dangers, we are likely to emerge from our reading with a lessened faith in human nature and in the power of universal truth. For the first time we have been forced to admit that it can be outshouted and overwhelmed by universal falsehood.

Hitler was thus the only man in history whom liberal spokesmen had grown to fear so much that he was credited with the personal ability to unseat truth itself. Cowley's regret that this book had ever been published was not disguised, but his inferential conclusion, that it was too malignant to allow anyone to be exposed to it, revealed that he had finally found the back door into the barracks of a new group of book burners. Only time could reveal that Hitler's antagonists were to bring the suppression of literature to a point where the feeble gestures made in his Germany were to appear a pale and ineffective thing in retrospect.

WAR-LIBERALISM COMPLETES ITS PROGRAM
BY ENLISTING THE *New Republic*

As has been seen, the capture of the *New Republic* and its conversion into an organ supporting the pro-war position was perhaps the first item on the agenda of the determined wing of liberals who began to fashion the ideological basis for the diversion of liberalism from its between-the-wars views and traditions. Its stubborn clinging to these positions noticeably weakened in the fall of 1940, moving toward the interventionist view much more alarmingly than it had at any time before, even during the chilling disintegration of June, 1940. And the steady slide into the camp of the belligerents continued during the winter of 1940-1941. The full enlistment occurred in steady stages between April and August, 1941, from which point on the liberal weeklies were two faces of a monolith. The full turn involved the conversion of such recalcitrants as Bliven and Cowley, as well as a major editorial change of position. All these were achieved during this time.

Bliven's drift away from his skepticism and detachment of the early spring of 1940 was noticeable in mid-summer, when he began to issue testy complaints at the slowness of the American rearmament and express fears for the safety of America from German invasion. For a time his name vanished from the signed editorials for which he had become noted from the time of the Ethiopian war on, and especially after the Chicago Bridge speech. But his extended statement of senti-

ments on April 21 titled "Still A Pacifist" marked a real turning point. In a rebuttal of an unnamed correspondent who had accused him of abandoning a long-held view of international pacifism, Bliven's six-column response and statement of stands belied the title completely. It turned out to be a vehicle for one of the strongest attacks on the whole peace position up to that time. Bliven now claimed he had never been a pacifist, just a "hater of all wars," but now professed to be a supporter of Harold Laski's prescription, "It is better to die on your feet than live on your knees." As for pacifism he left no doubt that he no longer was inclined in that direction at all. And he went on to restate the *New Republic's* editorial position of all possible aid to Britain, though not for a declaration of war by the United States at that moment, for the publication of "war aims and peace terms" by the Roosevelt and Churchill governments, and a continuation of the planetary fight against Fascism on both international and national levels everywhere, "without reliance on their false friends the Communists."⁸⁵

Cowley, still reluctant to commit himself entirely to the cause even in early May, when ruminating on the increasingly provocative message in MacLeish's new books, finally crossed the divide in July, in a memorable essay, "Marginalia." Confessing his erroneous ways, and implying that his views up to the outbreak of the war had been frivolous and transparent, he eloquently admitted to conversion largely through the medium of Churchill's speeches. His denunciation of the intellectuals and the literary community matched anything MacLeish had written, at which time Cowley had been so offended and affronted. And his re-affirmation of faith in the values of "late-Victorian" times blended smoothly with the new dispensation. His estimate of Churchill's moral message in his addresses and its relation to what he had now turned his back upon was one of the masterful bits of prose published in the liberal press that year;⁸⁶

They [Churchill's speeches] seem to survive from an earlier age in which there were heroes and villains, right and wrong, peaks and bottomless chasms, instead of belonging to the gray-tinted moral-unmoral landscape in which we had been living. But we are not living there any longer. That "modern" world to which we had grown accustomed and which lasted for such a brief moment if history—that world where evil had apparently ceased to exist, where sin was explained as maladjustment and there was nothing that could not be cured by gland extracts, vitamins and psychoanalysis—that world which pervaded our private consciousness and our literary style, making us avoid writing books with heroes in them, or using words with moral connotations, while we confined ourselves as far as possible to purely operational concepts, behaviorism, semantics and word-photography—that world has been utterly destroyed by the German

invasions. Hitler's bombs and his broken promises have taught us to believe in virtue again, by restoring our faith in evil. They have even had the curious effect of making Churchill's late-Victorian style an effective instrument for expressing the mind of the day.

With this fervent testimonial of conversion Cowley fell in behind the standard-bearers of a virtue which was vaguely reminiscent of contagious communication from Cecil Rhodes and Rudyard Kipling, and marched off hand in hand with MacLeish to a variation on a theme by Julia Ward Howe. There were not too many prominent liberal writers who had not become fully enlisted in the latest of Europe's bitter civil wars by now. The majority of them demonstrated that they had really learned very little if anything from their experiences in that of 1914-1918, despite all that they had observed and denounced thereafter.

General editorial policy kept pace with the steadily-increasing pro-hostility sentiments of the stubborn remnants of the supporters of the *New Republic's* traditional views. A milestone of significance was the six-column editorial of May 19, 1941, "Five Minutes To Twelve," perhaps the most eloquent plea for supporting the war to a final victory over Germany, and "a peace won by the people, made by the people, kept by the people; a peace in which we can return gladly to the tasks which we left, knowing that for our children and their children there will be no more war." The editors were once more at the threshold of the fatuous "war to end war" rhetoric of 1917-1918.

Emphasizing their belief that "the forces of industry" were not behind the President's foreign policy, the editors once more testified to the conviction that this "time of armament" had grand possibilities not yet well understood even generally:⁸⁷

This can be a time of tremendous social advance if we will make it so. For the first time in many years we shall approach full employment in America. When we do, we shall prove that we need never endure unemployment again. The skill of all men in America is needed; therefore we may win at last equality for our Negroes. Already our government has assumed the role which many of us have seen for it in the future society; 70 per cent of all construction for defense is now either government-financed or government-owned. Our unions are steadily organizing, our Congress has as yet sacrificed no basic rights and on the whole seems resolved not to. From the democratic revolutions by which the peoples of Europe and China will finally end this war we shall draw a tremendous inspiration, and by our own example we shall add to the world's new impetus of progress.

As for their zeal for spreading the war to maximize these gains for all, they left no doubt:

The graveyards of the last war lie across the world. The whole world may be a graveyard before this war is over. We understand that, and we answer: "Never let it be said, over the grave of freedom itself, that freedom died for no reason save lack of the will to live."

No field commander had ever issued an exhortation to be willing to die to the last man more electrifying than this call from one of the world's best-known organs of opposition to militarism in times just past. But the times ahead were to result in a harvest of unmentioned and unanticipated dividends from the spreading and continuation of the war, now thought to be a veritable cornucopia of socio-economic reforms: some of them were the twelve new Communist dictatorships established in Europe and Asia shortly after the war's end.

A *New Republic* editorial on August 25 called for an immediate declaration of war on Germany and Italy, thereby erasing from its record the blot of having opposed the war drift so resolutely in 1939–1941. It also recouped the good will of resigned editors Mumford and Frank. Mumford in a congratulatory letter said in part,⁸⁸

Your editorial for a declaration of war against the Axis powers is as forthright as the present situation demands: a logical culmination of the policy you have been building up during the past year. As an opponent of the *New Republic's* earlier attitude on the issues of war and peace, permit me to congratulate you, without reserve, on your admirable statement.

In Mumford's view, the big break-through was now plainly in sight:

The word for our present state is war; and once we dare to utter it, the log-jam that has stalled our military preparations and made our diplomacy so mischievously ineffective will be broken. The *New Republic* has performed a service in putting the case with such clarity and reason.

The war camp was now completed and filled. No influential avenue for the expression of liberal opinion in opposition to the United States becoming involved in the war remained, and the drive which began as a dissentient splinter within liberalism less than three years before had triumphed; only full and official belligerent status for the country remained to bring it to complete fulfillment. What was being done in the area of practical politics and comment and recommendation on foreign policy toward achieving this goal as a parallel process may now be examined, in the same manner as has been the evolution of the ideological justification for participating once more in a world war.

NOTES

- 1 "Two Worlds At Grips," *Nation*, May 18, 1940, p. 618.
- 2 "The Way To Prepare," *New Republic*, May 27, 1940, pp. 715-716.
- 3 "The Witch Hunt Begins," "Don't Give Up the Ship," "The Fireside Chat," *New Republic*, June 3, 1940, pp. 745, 748, 749.
- 4 *Virginia Quarterly Review*, Spring, 1940, pp. 190-201.
- 5 *Nation*, June 22, 1940, p. 766.
- 6 *Nation*, July 13, 1940, p. 40.
- 7 *New Republic*, July 1, 1940, pp. 7-8.
- 8 *New Republic*, June 24, 1940, p. 860.
- 9 Letter of Josiah Willard, *New Republic*, June 24, 1940, p. 860; see also letters of Howard Hayes, same page, and Meredith Bloss, Russell Ames and Louise Davies, July 1, 1940, p. 29.
- 10 *New Republic*, July 1, 1940, pp. 30-32.
- 11 *New Republic*, September 2, 1940, pp. 299-300.
- 12 "Democracy and Blitzkrieg," and "An Unpublished Speech Of Mussolini," *Common Sense*, June, 1940, pp. 16-17, 28.
- 13 McLiesh, "The Assault On Liberalism," *Common Sense*, June, 1940, pp. 10-13, for this and following citation.
- 14 *New Republic*, July 8, 1940, pp. 55-57.
- 15 "Shall We Go To War?," *New Republic*, July 8, 1940, p. 47.
- 16 Ross went on to say that "last fall most college presidents and their faculties went to war, and they have spent the academic year vainly cajoling their students to follow them. At Harvard a 'Committee for the Recognition of Classroom Generals' made its appearance. Tin soldiers and armchair citations were sent to five interventionist instructors. Gas masked pickets paraded outside the classroom of one particularly beligerent history instructor." Ross, "College Students and the War," *New Republic*, July 15, 1940, pp. 79-80.
- 17 *New Republic*, July 29, 1940, p. 143.
- 18 *New Republic*, August 5, 1940, pp. 191-192.
- 19 Brailsford's letter and editorial response in *New Republic*, June 17, 1940, pp. 825-826.
- 20 *New Republic*, September 30, 1940, p. 434.
- 21 *New Republic*, August 12, 1940, pp. 219-220.
- 22 *Nation*, June 29, 1940, pp. 778-779.
- 23 *Nation*, August 31, 1940, pp. 169-172.
- 24 Niebuhr review of Mumford in *Nation*, September 14, 1940, pp. 221-222.
- 25 *New Republic*, September 9, 1940, pp. 357-358.
- 26 *Common Sense*, October, 1940, p. 26.
- 27 Farrell, "The Faith Of Lewis Mumford," *Southern Review* (No. 3, 1941), pp. 417-438. The liberal weeklies circulated the gist of this extended critique by Farrell.
- 28 "Add 'Liberals,'" *New Masses*, October 1, 1940, p. 10; Sillen, "Authors Of Surrender," *New Masses*, October 8, 1940, pp. 4-7. See also comment in *New Republic*, October 7, 1940, p. 481.
- 29 "Lewis Mumford's 'Mein Kampf,'" *New Masses*, October 15, 1940, pp. 8-10; McKenney, "Elementary My Dear Sherwood," *New Masses*, September 10, 1940, p. 15.
- 30 *New Republic*, October 4, 1939, p. 228.
- 31 *New Republic*, September 16, 1940, p. 391.
- 32 *New Republic*, October 14, 1940, p. 507.
- 33 *Nation*, October 12, 1940, p. 315.
- 34 *Common Sense*, November, 1940, p. 19.
- 35 *New Masses*, October 22, 1940, pp. 12-13.
- 36 *New Republic*, October 14, 1940, p. 525.
- 37 *Nation*, June 22, 1940.
- 38 *Nation*, June 29, 1940, pp. 773-774.
- 39 See especially the commentaries in *Nation*, July 20, 1940, pp. 58-60.
- 40 Especially that of October 21, 1940, p. 541, inspired by Flynn's column in the same

issue titled "Chestnuts, Rubber and Democracy" (p. 556), which stiffly attacked the idea of fighting to defend the British, French and Dutch Asian colonial empires as part of the "struggle for democracy." The editors responded with wounded feeling that they considered it all as a phase of "defending the cause of an independent China."

41 *New Republic*, November 11, 1940, p. 660.

42 *New Republic*, December 9, 1940, p. 772. The editorial "A Bad Formula For Economy" also sharply criticized FDR for announcing a cut "to the bone" in non-defense spending; the editors were still unwilling to grant that war had replaced reform. But "T.R.B.'s" column on December 2, 1940, p. 754, related, "Although members of Congress are very scary about admitting it, it is becoming blindingly clear to observers that there is only one political issue left in the country: the defeat of Hitler."

43 *Nation*, October 12, 1940, p. 314.

44 *New Republic*, October 21, 1940, p. 559.

45 See Chapter 31.

46 *New Republic*, April 14, 1941, p. 502.

47 *Nation*, June 28, 1941, p. 758.

48 *Nation*, November 29, 1941, p. 551.

49 The *New Republic* on August 25, 1941 (pp. 248-249) published a curious essay by George Britt, "Ethics For Editors," a critique of editorial integrity in general, with generous praise for editors who had resisted the insertion of material by owners which was contrary to the editors' stands. At that time, according to Edmund Wilson, writing fifteen years later, the British husband of the *New Republic's* principal financial backer was producing a large quantity of editorial copy and inserting it in the journal over the embarrassed editors' names.

50 *New Republic*, May 26, 1941, pp. 732-734.

51 *New Republic*, June 17, 1940, pp. 815-818.

52 *Nation*, August 3, 1940, pp. 88-92.

53 *New Republic*, January 13, 1941, pp. 51-52.

54 *Nation*, December 6, 1941, pp. 584-585.

55 "Books and the War," *New Republic*, October 27, 1941, pp. 527-528.

56 Niebuhr review of Kohn in *Nation*, December 7, 1940, pp. 569-570; Kohn review of Tolischus in *Nation*, August 31, 1940, p. 177; Kohn review of Grafton in *Nation*, December 14, 1940, pp. 610-611; Kohn review of Schuman in *Nation*, March 15, 1941, pp. 300-301; Bates review of Shirer in *Nation*, July 19, 1941, pp. 55-56; Bates review of Stowe and Hutchison review of Harsch in *Nation*, September 13, 1941, p. 227; Hutchison review of Agar in *Nation*, November 2, 1940, p. 424.

57 *New Republic*, February 3, 1941, pp. 153-154.

58 Edgar Ansel Mowrer, reviewing ex-Ambassador William E. Dodd's *Diary*, accepted it without a particle of reservation, and especially rejoiced at Dodd's pillorying the British Conservatives, "setting out deliberately to give Europe to the Nazis, in order, as they dumbly thought, to save it from Stalin. . . ." *Nation*, March 8, 1941, pp. 272-273.

59 *New Republic*, April 21, 1941, pp. 565-567.

60 *Common Sense*, December, 1940, pp. 25-26.

61 *New Republic*, February 24, 1941, p. 261.

62 *Common Sense*, January, 1941, pp. 54-55.

63 *Nation*, March 1, 1941, pp. 229-230.

64 *New Republic*, April 7, 1941, pp. 465-466, for citations in following five paragraphs.

65 *Nation*, June 14, 1941, pp. 691-693.

66 *Nation*, August 9, 1941, p. 128.

67 Auden review of Niebuhr in *Nation*, January 4, 1941, pp. 24-25.

68 *Nation*, March 22, 1941, pp. 357-360.

69 *Nation*, May 31, 1941, pp. 636-638.

70 *Nation*, March 8, 1941, pp. 262-265.

71 Niebuhr review of MacLeish in *Nation*, April 26, 1941, p. 506.

72 *New Republic*, May 5, 1941, pp. 639-640.

73 *Nation*, June 21, 1941, pp. 717-721.

74 *New Republic*, June 30, 1941, p. 897.

75 Kohn review of Millis in *Nation*, July 6, 1940, p. 16.

76 *Nation*, March 22, 1941.

77 Bliven's "The Second World War," in the *New Republic*, March 9, 1932, concluded, "It is a testimonial to the endurance of mankind that this conflict continued for seven years before it was brought to an end. The series of Communist revolutions began in Germany, and swept through the other chief countries in the following order: Austria, Hungary, Japan, Italy, France, the United States and Great Britain. It was not until August 12, 1940 that the convention of Paris was held to celebrate the fact that workers' republics had now been established in every important country in the world, and that peace had been restored."

78 *Common Sense*, November, 1939, pp. 3-6; December, 1939, pp. 20-22.

79 *Nation*, September 19, 1939, p. 334.

80 The reviewer was identified as a Swiss named Golo Mann, who, although very hostile to Germany, thought McGovern and Hearnshaw had gone beyond the call of duty in preparing propaganda against Hitler. *Nation*, October 4, 1941, pp. 314-315.

81 Kohn review of Viereck in *Nation*, October 11, 1941, pp. 351-352; Rosenfeld review of Viereck in *New Republic*, October 20, 1941, pp. 513-514.

82 *New Republic*, October 20, 1941, p. 506. The *Nation* also rejoiced in the arrest of Viereck's father, and hoped that his activities would "earn him a long retirement." *Nation*, October 18, 1941, p. 360.

83 *New Republic*, November 22, 1939, pp. 129-133.

84 *New Republic*, September 8, 1941, pp. 313-314.

85 *New Republic*, April 21, 1941, pp. 528-530.

86 *New Republic*, July 7, 1941, p. 25.

87 *New Republic*, May 19, 1941, pp. 683-685.

88 *New Republic*, September 8, 1941, pp. 311-312.

LIBERALS AND THE ROOSEVELT
FOREIGN POLICY : III—THE GREAT
DEBATE STAGGERS UNDER THE
IMPACT OF HOSTILITIES, 1939-1940

WAR IN EUROPE BRINGS AMERICAN NEUTRALITY
BACK ON THE AGENDA

THE *New Republic's* editorial on September 13, 1939 headed "Who Wants To Fight?" undoubtedly summed up the predicament and confusion facing American liberals as well as the general public as a consequence of the outbreak of war in Europe. It included most of the elements of the contradictions which all were trying to rationalize even if the populace as a whole was subject to criticism for being inconsistent. It did not take long for the inconsistency of the editors to become a matter of record as well. But here the issue was the type of thinking being done by Americans as reflected in the public opinion polls, almost all those questioned being against the United States participating in the war yet an almost identical number believing American involvement "inevitable." Though this was the main thesis of the collective security propaganda and had made vast inroads, the editors believed faulty thought processes at work. They were sure that these people wanted to join in the hostilities, but wanted "to blame fate for the call to arms" when they got in. The editors thought if this was not so, then the "inevitable" talk was senseless; "the obvious fact that other nations much nearer the conflict stayed out last time, and are doing so now, does not occur to those who accept these slogans."

On the other hand, they pondered, "Perhaps they do not think at all, but simply have been bulldozed by reiterated words, like those which justified our entrance into the last war as 'inevitable,' or those of the propagandists for the League of Nations and collective security, who have told us over and over again, without any real attempt to prove their argument, that if a general European war broke out, we could not help joining it." That the editors had nothing but scorn for this reasoning was still evident. But an adjoining editorial "Mobilize For Neutrality!" gave evidence that they had some mixed emotions on the subject as well, for to go on a war footing without fighting, and making a conscious propaganda case out of being neutral, was just the preliminary step toward devoting that neutrality to the benefit of one of the warring sides. It did not take long before this leaning began to assume a discernible shape.¹

In essence, neither of the two liberal weeklies was really neutral in any significant sense of the word, nor had they been for a long time. Their basic anti-German commitments were so deep and long-standing that though Russia defected from the cause and deprived them of the rallying-point of the previous decade, the transfer of their affections to Britain and France was to be achieved with very little friction, despite the bitter grievances against their governments as the war got under way. The editorial stand of the *New Republic*, ostensibly the stronger center of neutrality sentiments of the two, had been slipping since February and March, 1939, when they began to accept without protest a steady succession of quiet moves by the President resulting in involvement in the futures of Britain and France. On February 2 the editors had used the term "undeclared war" to characterize his unannounced building up of the air strength of both and his obvious promotion of their desire to resist Hitlerian moves. Frequent quiet mentions of the trade war going on in Latin America and concern with German gains at the expense of the British there had been made during these days as well, often referred to loosely as the "spread of Fascism."

The editors did not oppose the efforts of Roosevelt to furnish aerial strength to Britain and France; "there is much to be said for such a policy," the editorial of February 8 declared, even though they doubted if the Daladier and Chamberlain governments represented "faithful friends of ours." At this moment, with the Loyalists collapsing in Spain, the *New Republic* emotions were badly torn, for both these regimes were largely being blamed for the victory of Franco, and their recognition of Franco in February had been referred to editorially on the 27th as "the climax of a long history of betrayal." Editorial willingness to go along with FDR's proffer of aid to them was somewhat modified at the moment. But there was a basic commitment there nevertheless. The editors used the term "unde-

clared war" again, with reference to Roosevelt and an action injuring the Germans, in their editorial on March 29 which described the new 25% tariff being applied to all incoming German goods as "one more battle in Mr. Roosevelt's 'undeclared war.'" ² And no protest was made and no disapproval expressed; apparently this action was considered licit since it involved a unilateral step down the war avenue, and did not take place alongside one or more other powers in accord, in the approved manner of "collective security."

But in comparison to the *Nation* the *New Republic* in the closing months of 1939 was indeed a beacon of detachment. Even the pacifist Oswald Garrison Villard in the *Nation's* September 9 issue could declare casually "Of course we all want to see Germany defeated," which in many ways was the epitome of pacifism in 1939; the largest number of them were against the war as long as the Germans lost it. However, Villard's fervent Allied partisanship was conditioned by his utter opposition to American participation; "if America keeps sane and really wishes to serve humanity and civilization, it will absolutely refuse to enter a European war again on any plea whatever." Villard was convinced that the outbreak of the fighting was proof that arms races were futile as means of war prevention, and he ridiculed the idea gaining credence that the war began because France and Britain had not started the arms race earlier than they did;³ Villard's memory was too good for that, since he apparently remembered the scores of liberal editorials from 1931 on in particular denouncing the arms boom in both countries.

Villard's lapse in which he spoke confidently of a coming German defeat probably indicated other things, including the fact that liberals of all shades were so war-directed by the time of the Russo-German pact that they could not regain any real neutralist poise, or even the relatively neutralist poise of just three years before. And pacifism had been in ruins before the Reds decided to step out. When the Allies could enroll as devoted an anti-militarist as Villard, even though he had absolutely no faith whatever in their goals, by his own admission, the direction of things to come was fairly plain. A little adversity was about all that was needed to bring about serious erosion of what neutralism tended to survive the first week of September, 1939.

The editorial position of the *Nation* was utterly un-neutral in every respect, and lacked the few reservations held by Villard. It was their opinion in the editorial of September 9, "Measures 'Short Of War,'" that there was really very little real neutrality anywhere in the country, and no hope of this country remaining out at all. In this view it was now a psychological matter to be decided by the fear of the outcome. In this opinion a universal belief existed that a Hitler-dominated Europe would be hostile to American interests, but in the discussion of this possibility, Russia was left out of the picture

completely. It may well have been that the Hitler-dominant bogey would never have gotten off the ground had the war-bound opinion-makers not decided to go ahead with a panorama of Europe with no Russia in it, despite the *Pakt*.⁴

Freda Kirchwey in her editorial "What Americans Want" said about what the *New Republic* declared earlier; "What a majority of the American people want is to be as unneutral as possible without getting into war." Using the reasoning that if France and Britain were defeated by the Germans, even though there was no indication at the moment that they might ever get around to warring with each other, in view of German involvement in Poland, she was sure that American determination not to go in would vanish, and that there would soon be a great public outcry to participate. Therefore a Franco-British victory was essential to American neutrality preservation, and she was for ending the arms embargo and repealing the neutrality law at once, substituting the "cash and carry" principle, admitting them to what they could buy on American shores and committing them to bringing it back to Europe in non-American ships.⁵

The Kirchwey editorial "1939 Is Not 1914" on September 16 supplied additional material for an understanding of the situation. She took grim pleasure in the isolation of the Germans and the absence of moral support for them anywhere in the country. It was as much an indication of what had happened to the *Nation* in the intervening 25 years as it was an illumination of the change in the country's temper in the same time. The absence of dissent was now hailed as an improvement on the earlier time, nevertheless. Furthermore, it was *Nation* thinking that a future economic stake in Allied victory would not count so much this time as "fear that the alternative is a German victory," which did vast damage to all the theory which had been spun around the origins of American involvement in the First War, as well as testifying to the effectiveness with which public opinion had been diverted from any consideration of an ending to the war with neither Germany nor the favored Franco-British partisans the absolute victors.⁶

As for the temper of the President and the Administration, the two liberal weeklies stressed different aspects. The *Nation* had clung to the view of Roosevelt as an emissary of peace down to the beginning of hostilities in Poland, but it was, as might be expected, peace with a conditioning factor. Their editorial on September 2 "Roosevelt's Fight For Peace" commended his messages to the King of Italy, the Pope and Hitler, taking pride in the fact that "at the same time he made it absolutely plain that he was giving no blessing to 'appeasement.'" "Frank partisanship equated 'peace' at this aggravated moment to the *Nation*. And it followed this note by calling on

the readers to be prepared to give full sympathy to Britain and France in case of war, despite the disillusionment caused by the *Pakt*; great faith was evinced in public judgment as represented by the polls in which a majority had expressed hope of an eventual German defeat.⁷

There was no evasiveness at all from Kenneth G. Crawford, whose essay "Roosevelt Takes Sides" on September 9 expressed the view that the Administration was totally unneutral. He was confident and matter-of-fact in predicting that domestic reforms and liberalism would be among the first casualties in the event of American involvement, and that even if the United States stayed out, the war "could submerge New Deal issues, bring on a spell of national solidarity, and produce an almost irresistible demand for the President to see the country through the conflict." As he phrased the issues in answers to a series of self-posed hypothetical questions,⁸

Is the Roosevelt Administration neutral? Certainly not. Is there any chance of the United States to stay out of another World War? Practically none. Will the Roosevelt program of liberal reform go on in the event of war? It will not. Would such a war solve the country's more pressing economic problems? Temporarily, yes.

"The Administration from the President down is sympathetic to the cause of Great Britain and France," he added; "It will do everything possible 'short of war' to promote their cause." And in a revealing side-comment he noted, "Occasionally a doctrinaire isolationist within the New Deal defends the German objective of a united economically self-sufficient Central Europe, but already this is heresy." And indeed it was, for the "Germany-is-trying-to-conquer-the-world" sloganeering of 1914-1918 was already being dressed for rebroadcast, and could hardly find this compatible opposition.

In accord with the new definition of a policy of peace as that state of affairs which lent itself most effectively toward bringing about a Franco-British victory over Germany, the *Nation's* position was logical in hailing Roosevelt as a true exponent of peace and Administration steps as moves in its realization. And at the same time it made reasonable its attack on his Congressional enemies as roadblocks toward the achievement of peace. A *Nation* editorial "American Neutrality" on September 16 approved of the President's moves toward getting the Neutrality Act repealed along with the arms embargo, along with provisions for slight increases in the armed forces; "Mr. Roosevelt has cleared the ground for a realistic and vigilant foreign policy for the United States." And the following week it paid him higher tribute by far while acknowledging some of the socio-economic facts of life as the war boom began to form on the right, by declaring with pride, "Mr. Roosevelt, for all his lapses and his present

flirtation with big business, remains democracy's world spokesman, towering above both the Municheers still in power in Western Europe and the Moscow Machiavelli who suddenly found peace as divisible as the Polish plains and marshes." The scathing observation on Stalin revealed that the years of accepting the Litvinov collective security slogans were far from forgotten.⁹

Crawford's verdicts from Washington were in harmony. His "Washington in a Squirrel Cage" on the 23rd insisted that public support was behind all these moves; "As far as American public opinion is concerned, all the world's cutthroats are now in one mob, and any move by the Administration to help the international posse trying to bring them to book is certain of popular support." And his "Senatorial Follies of 1939" the following week was elated over the prospects of early and easy passage of a cash-and-carry bill to permit the British and French to buy anything here and carry such material away in their own ships, and that business pressure on Congress would be their main ally in this campaign. He further predicted that as the war economy prospered, the next step would be to demand the extension of war credits, and the disposal of the Johnson Act, while the intensification of hostility toward Hitler would effectively denature the "keep-out-war-sentiment."¹⁰

It was strange to see a journal such as the *Nation* adopting this view of accepting the help of the despised business interests in pushing along a policy which they favored for other reasons. Though editorial stands still seemed unfriendly the tone of Crawford's dispatches hardly suggested that such sympathy would be turned away in this contest now. Miss Kirchwey had said that 1914 was not 1939; but neither was 1934. The Nye Committee and the years of barking at business pressures leading to war pressures seemed never to have existed now, in view of the re-definition of peace. But just as strange as the *Nation's* appreciating business pressure to bring about American material involvement in the fortunes of the Franco-British "Allies" was its violent turning on the Borah-Nye-Clark-Bone-Vandenberg-Johnson senatorial opponents of the Administration's softening-up process on neutrality. They had been hailed as heroes so often in the past seven years that their being held up as targets for cruel abuse was somewhat bewildering. Crawford jauntily forecast their failure in trying to prevent change of neutrality policy and indicated the source of their defeat; "The lost battalion of neutrals," as he referred to them, "will not only be raked by the frontal fire of European news and propaganda as the session progresses, but will be pounded from behind by the war-born prosperity at home." Crawford could not forgive them for the stubbornness in their unwillingness to extend the embargo idea to all commodities instead of just guns and ammuni-

tion, as well as their denial that the cash-and-carry policy was really an anti-involvement insurance policy.

Although many of the same strains of opinion on the neutrality question ran through the *New Republic* during the hectic weeks after the start of the war, its situation was far from as simple as for the openly-committed *Nation*. It developed a position which was claimed to be against both the Administration and its isolationist opponents. It was for cash-and-carry provisions, in opposition to the latter, and also against the repeal of the arms embargo, as the President desired. But much of its reasoning was similar to that of the group most enthusiastically behind Roosevelt.¹¹ The editors of the *New Republic* insisted that they had a community of interest with Borah, Nye, Vandenberg and others whose aim was to keep the United States out of war, and they also agreed with these Senators as to the necessity of neutrality legislation; "The *New Republic* was a pioneer in the study and advocacy of such legislation," the editorial of September 27 frankly declared. But it now considered these men and others "misguided Senators," as the leader over the editorial described them, for their refusal to see the wisdom of getting United States ships off the sea which might carry non-munitions contraband to belligerents; the arms embargo was an unimportant side-issue to the editors compared to this.¹²

Their columnist "T.R.B." in particular examined the political situation which the debate over neutrality had resulted in during the special session of Congress. The splitting of the Republicans into a sector friendly to the Roosevelt ambitions to alter the neutrality laws and the hardening of what he called the "Peace Party Republicans" caused some afterthoughts and some not very comforting conclusions. Temporarily the editors and general policy found it impossible to go along either with the New Deal's unneutral approach or either of the two Republican factions. Commenting on the views of men such as Wadsworth and Vorys and the support for the neutrality revision among Republicans, "T.R.B." on September 13 remarked,¹³

The reasons that have brought the Republican Party to support Mr. Roosevelt's foreign policy seem to be thoroughly depressing. . . . For the future, a vote inescapably will be on whether we shall enter a foreign war or stay home. . . . The chief reason has been the financial pages of the big-city newspapers, minimizing the first shock of the outbreak of war and rapturously calculating the profits that will follow. There has been a universal chant of three-dollar wheat and a 300%-rise in common stocks, and this music has been carried to the politicians by the heavy party contributors. The sincerity of Mr. Roosevelt's wish to help England and France must be accepted, but it is the influence of prospective profiteers that will put his program through Congress.

The dilemma was how Mr. Roosevelt's program might be effected without benefiting this undesirable group, apparently. The absence of any New Dealers-for-neutrality made the case embarrassing, since the "disunity" appeared to be all on the other side, and two camps in each party would have been so much easier to examine in juxtaposition.

For the neutrality wing, the *New Republic's* columnist prepared an objection too, largely built around his unwillingness to see that it was not the arms but the non-arms part of the war trade that was the dominant issue, and their stand was faulty for failing to place this consideration first; on September 27 he wrote ¹⁴

When Messrs. Borah and Nye charge that a vote to change the Neutrality Act is a vote to put us into war, they are probably telling the truth. Among observers here, Mr. Nye's munitions investigations of 1934-1935 is accepted as the nearest thing we have to a realistic guide to the future. Most students of that investigation agree that the boom of 1915-1916 provided the psychological climate needed for our entry into the war. It is not necessary to believe silly "Merchant of Death" stories that became a fad at the time of the investigation. What was dangerous were the high farm prices, high industrial wages and profits.

Thus the fight against the traffic in finished arms was mere shadow-boxing, since that left some 86% of the total possible goods needed by the belligerents not covered by cash-and-carry provisions. And in his and the editors' opinion, Americans were so emotional that a dip in Allied fortunes would bring strong support for entering the war; "Feeling against Hitler is already so strong that Americans are not willing to stand by and see England and France run the risk of losing the war because of the lack of military airplanes and other materials which our factories are capable of supplying," the editorial of September 20 repeated, adding lamely in the next sentence, "At the same time, this country is still strongly determined to keep out of war." But if United States ships were sunk carrying non-arms materials to the belligerents, it was the opinion that Americans would be as incensed as if they had been loaded with guns.

The impression still was at large, however, that the *New Republic's* course was an into-the-war-by-stages program just as much as the *Nation's*. Kenneth Rexroth wrote to the editors suggesting that the *New Republic* was really for the war despite its line on neutrality, since providing the wherewithal to fight it was indirectly a vote to extend war and lengthen it. He voted for a drawn peace at the earliest opportunity, and queried the editors, "Is this what you want? Or do you want a long, bloody war, 'Pulaski, Here We Come!', a new Versailles, a new Weimar Republic, and a hundred new Hitlers?" If

they continued in this vein, he went on, their stand on the war was insincere;¹⁵

The *New Republic* has spent twenty years trying to forget its role in the last war. You have taken the first step toward dollar-a-year jobs for your staff—you had better reconsider before it is too late.

This note continued the following week, Rexroth suggesting, "It is about time the liberals and radicals of the country woke up to the fact that their honeymoon with the New Deal is over. This administration is Anglophile, anxious for war."¹⁶ And in his review of Raymond Moley's *After Seven Years* in the same issue, John Chamberlain declared that Moley's book impelled him to believe something of this sort;¹⁷

. . . my nerve ends have kept telegraphing me that Roosevelt has so far abandoned hope of solving our economic problems that he almost welcomes a war-production respite and a return to Old-Gang methods. . . . Is the New Deal, like the New Freedom, to be killed in war? Time alone can tell, but I wish there were a more palpable will-to-peace in Washington high places.

Nevertheless the *New Republic* doggedly stuck to fighting for cash-and-carry as a reasonable compromise between the impulse to fight, and the impulse to stay out and help out; enlisted emotionally one hundred per cent behind one side but averse to any military action, the idea of helping out without shooting seemed to be the dominant sense of the moment. The *Nation* on October 7 was in agreement on the fight against the simon-pure neutrality position and also stressed the importance of cash-and-carry as a revision on the grounds of protecting the country in future sea controversies "likely to lead to war."¹⁸

The *New Republic's* opposition to the repeal of the arms embargo did not last long. A hefty six-column editorial with this subject as a title appeared on October 18, containing its reasoning behind supporting its repeal now, as well as detailing its deep antipathy toward the Congressional opponents of repeal. They now saw a "psychological gain" in lifting this bar to the sale of arms overseas, again stressing the grave difficulty in restraining an American public presumably unable to withstand a possible Hitler victory. The novel element in this thesis involved a fundamental desertion of nearly twenty years of argument on the origins of American involvement in the war in 1917, that a growing community of economic interests with Britain and France had been the biggest impulse for United States entry. It was now argued this produced an emotional specula-

tion over the possible outcome of the war, that the growing of a close economic community produced this emotional consequence, and that therefore this intimate economic relationship was an effect and not a cause. Thus an open access to American products would do much to prevent this emotional pressure from building up. "It is fruitless to attempt to deal with them by argument that we ought to be impartial in our sympathy, or that one side is as bad as the other," it went on; "The knowledge that the Allies were deriving as much help here as they could without abandonment of our neutrality would provide a safety valve for these emotions." Congressional attempts to halt the repeal of the arms embargo, supported a few weeks before, now were subjected to criticism as a political gambit by opponents of the Administration: ¹⁹

They suspect, from many things the President has said in the past, and from his temperament, that he would ultimately rather have the United States fight than to see Hitler victorious. They know that many who support him are of the same mind, both in the government and outside it. The embargo has therefore become important to them . . . as a political symbol, as a first skirmish. . . . That is why they discuss the Administration bill as a step toward intervention.

The editors now referred to this resistance as a "miscalculation," on the grounds that only a tiny percentage of the people in favor of lifting the arms embargo were in favor of sending troops to Europe, and that in the final analysis, "There is nothing in selling arms that can automatically and inevitably involve us, so long as the people do not want to fight." The editors suggested that accompanying the repeal there should be profits and price control in the arms business and that the belligerents should be denied long-term credits. But no amount of qualifying could erase the fact that a long-standing case against the arms embargo repeal (except during the Spanish Civil War, when the *New Republic* had made an exception) as a piecemeal step toward involvement in a war had been thrown overboard in a matter of days.

The victory of the Administration and the signing of a bill by Roosevelt on November 3, 1939 lifting the arms embargo and instituting cash-and-carry was greeted by the *Nation* on November 11 with a contented comment written in a war-is-peace format; "Belatedly though it may be, a long step has been taken toward a realistic peace policy," its editorial breathed with relief; "The United States has taken a stand which, though technically neutral, is actually against Hitler." ²⁰ Now that the Roosevelt Administration was officially neutral against Germany, liberals could feel that the cause of peace for America had been strengthened.

And the secondary effects started coming in at once, greeted by groans of liberal dismay. The following week the *Nation* denounced the new Vinson bill under consideration; its terms seemed to them to indicate that "the current war will certainly make the world safe for armorplate manufacturers and shipbuilders," and that it was "made to order for the armament profiteer."²¹ The *New Republic* greeted the prompt response of the shipowning community's rapid transfer of ships from American to Panamanian registry, so as to be eligible to haul the bonanza of goods to the war zones, now that "cash and carry" put American ships out of bounds, as "a dangerous attempt to circumvent the amended neutrality law." It was a mite peculiar that the editors never contemplated such an obvious stragem in their eloquent arguments for the adoption of this new course. They recommended, in their editorial "Getting Around the Law," that all United States ships be taken off North Atlantic runs, as there was plenty for them to do elsewhere. Uneasiness continued to characterize its reaction to the new situation, and some of the breezy confidence of the autumn, while debate was still going on, evaporated. On December 6, 1939 upon the report of the sinking of neutral ships around England, the editors called out, "It remains now to make sure that those officials in Washington who are violently pro-Ally do not find ways of slipping through the loophole in the law and getting us into trouble."²² Both shipowners and the Administration were now discovered to be less interested in staying out of war-provoking situations than had been previously estimated, to their chagrin. Only *Common Sense* was in the mood at the end of the year to look at the situation without blinking away the unpleasanties:²³

The Administration is apparently far less concerned with the danger of our involvement than of Allied defeat, and is going to take advantage of all the loopholes in the Neutrality Act. It permitted many ships to be transferred to foreign registry, until the public outcry grew too loud. It has made clear that the cash and carry provisions do not bar "credit" to "private" buyers abroad—which should greatly increase the Allies' ability to purchase war materials. Its leniency toward Allied seizure of many American ships suspected of carrying contraband was in marked contrast to the violent protests that Woodrow Wilson once made against similar seizures in the last war. And public awareness of these many British seizures is markedly less than of the one spectacular German seizure of the *City of Flint*.

Here of course the subject of the Administration's successful breach of the neutrality barrier against edging into the war as an undeclared British ally had run over into a closely related subject, the new pro-British propaganda of the 1939 as opposed to the 1914 vintage. But

the significant fact in relation to the former issue and the liberals was the ease with which what had been a major battle ground among them between 1935 and 1939, American neutrality, was wiped out so suddenly with such faint squeaks of opposition.

THE BRIEF AND ABORTIVE CAMPAIGN OF CRITICISM OF ALLIED PROPAGANDA

Writing from London on September 15, Villard reported to the *Nation* that the newly appointed head of the American division of the British Ministry of Information had announced that it would be "totally unnecessary" to "convert" Americans to British views in this war, in view of the "solidly anti-Hitler" nature of American public opinion. In a sense this told the entire story of war propaganda in the Second World War; all the propaganda which amounted to anything fundamental had been made before hostilities this time, instead of having to be made while fighting was going on. Villard hoped that this would make it unnecessary for the British to "feed us atrocity stories,"²⁴ although the British government was about to unleash the major atrocity story of the war, its report on the German concentration camps and their conduct well before the war even began. In truth, the propaganda skirmishes among the warring powers which drew liberal attention were remarkably few in number, a strange consequence, in view of the fact that liberals had been brought up on a dozen or more volumes in the interim between the wars passionately critical of propaganda in the First War, on which they pridefully based their assertion to being propaganda-proof in the event of another war. It was one of the major ironies of this Second War that these same people were to become some of the most adept fabricators and transmitters of propaganda in the entire wartime period.

The basic commitment of their sympathies to the enemies of the Germans well before the start of the shooting made impossible any serious investigation of inducements to enlist spiritually, not only because they were much more shielded and sophisticated than they had been in 1914-1917, but because the work of conviction had already been done. There was no opposite side to the picture, since liberals refused even to admit that the Germans had the faintest kind of a case. The wonder is that any harshness toward Allied, and particularly British, intellectual and emotional mobilization attempts among Americans was evinced at all. The relationship to the Administration could at no time be left out of the situation. And almost all of the adverse remarks were loosed in the *New Republic* during its few early months of relative detachment.

"T.R.B." pointed up the situation in his column of September 27 with a report that "delighted New Deal aides" were spreading a story that Roosevelt had "advised" the Chamberlain government not to repeat the action of the First World War in appointing J. P. Morgan and Company as its fiscal and purchasing agents in America. The *New Republic* columnist made a not too complimentary observation on this tale: ²⁵

The advice was sensible. For the purpose of creating pro-English sentiment among the mass of voters here, the House of Morgan should be kept out of sight. But the story, and the New Dealers' pleasure in retelling it, throw a bright light on the degree of neutrality that exists in inner New Deal circles. In 1914-1917, the English government had Ambassador Page to help them influence American opinion; in this war they seem to have done much better.

Brief sallies of this type constituted almost all of the barbs thrown on the propaganda-detection salient, the one exception being the major article by Harold Lavine on November 1, "The Propagandists Open Fire." It was a remarkably restrained commentary on the rival propagandas, and dwelled especially on the aspects of 1914-1917 which were being repeated. Already pointing out the ineptness of the Germans and the success of the far-less-well-organized British in the United States, Lavine emphasized that in the first seven weeks of the war, "the most effective pro-Ally propaganda came from Americans." He even credited Roosevelt himself with carrying out a Ministry of Information "plant," comprehensively denied by all South American countries, asserting that Germany was trying to establish submarine bases in the Western Hemisphere. Lavine mentioned that a few days after this story was released by the British, the President had told a press conference that "mysterious submarines had been sighted in our waters."

Most of Lavine's account was spent puncturing Allied propaganda trying to encourage American sentimentalizing and idealizing; "Why not let the United States, which sentimentalized over Belgium in 1914, sentimentalize again?" Lavine reported that this was the Allies' reasoning. But his big point was the already intimate psychological ties between the British and American governments, rendering extra effort on the part of the British quite redundant: ²⁶

On September 26, Lord Macmillan, addressing the House of Lords, announced that it was against his policy to carry on propaganda in the United States. He didn't mean quite that, for England already is carrying on propaganda in the United States; the Ministry of Information floods the cables with stories giving England's side of the war; the censors take

care that none of the London correspondents give any other side. All he meant was that he wouldn't send any press agents over here. Why should he? England's first propaganda objective in the United States is repeal of the arms embargo, and Franklin D. Roosevelt is taking care of that far better than any British press agent could. Why should Lord Macmillan bother when the President of the United States is right in there pitching for him?

Lavine was jabbing a tender nerve here, for the editors had already switched stands on this issue themselves, but were working exclusively on the abstract aspect of the issue; no one was making the point that the British and the Roosevelt Administration were as one on the arms embargo question. As for the cruder side of the propaganda program and the building up of the ogre-image of Hitler, Lavine remarked, "Sneer, if you will, at the devil theory of war; the man on the street doesn't."

Nothing like Lavine's pioneer effort ever appeared in the *New Republic* again. And when he and James Wechsler had worked up the theme into a substantial book the following year, its reception in the *New Republic* by Max Lerner would never have indicated that it was first given a trial run in that weekly.²⁷ Late in November, an editorial comment was made on the lengthening list of prominent British civilians turning up in the States on propaganda lecture tours, at the same time rejoicing that H. G. Wells had flatly refused to repeat his World War One propaganda performance. But the occasion of criticism was tied exclusively to the subject of British war aims and not the influencing of Americans; "When Britain comes to state her war aims her first task will be to convince public opinion at home and abroad that she doesn't again intend to sell out the men of good will by a group of secret treaties incompatible with any pretension to decency and justice."²⁸

But the beginning of a critical campaign on Allied propaganda had already died in its first flush of life. There was to be no history of propaganda on the coming of the Second World War, because the propaganda of the Allied side was to become the official history of the coming of the war and the war itself, to survive for a period longer than the interim between the wars without any significant adjustment or revision. Some idea of the quick closing of the ice floe of British propaganda and pro-Allied sentiment after its brief rupture in the early weeks of the war in the fall of 1939 was the affronted comment in the *Nation* on November 25, "Isolationists are planning to blanket the country with the slogan, 'Let God Save the King.'"²⁹ It was obvious that the editors, despite their lack of zeal for monarchy, had other intentions than this in regard to the future of England and its contest with the Germans. But liberals were sufficiently

disunited on foreign policy at this moment and during the next six months to prevent a monolithic liberal front taking shape, and the martial inactivity, with the exception of the Russian war in Finland, provided the breathing space for much weighing and measuring of views and attitudes.

THE SITZKRIEG RESPITE REOPENS
THE FOREIGN POLICY DISCUSSION

The sudden success of the Germans in Poland in September, 1939 and the just as sudden decline of hostilities thereafter, followed by the German peace overtures to the French and British and a period of extended somnolence on the war scene, coincided with the American contest over neutrality law revision, in which the liberal press as a whole sided with the Roosevelt efforts to bring about change to the benefit of the enemies of the Germans. But at the same time the idea of American non-involvement itself was not neglected, especially by the *New Republic* and *Common Sense*. The editors of the latter felt that Milton Mayer's "I Think I'll Sit This One Out" in the October 7 *Saturday Evening Post* spoke for them as well. Mayer, a stubborn non-interventionist pacifist, was sure Hitler would win the war spiritually if it continued, even if he were killed and Germany flattened by a "peace" which would "make the last one look like St. Francis' sermon to the birds."

Bruce Bliven phrased things about the same on October 18 in the *New Republic* with his signed editorial "I Like A Phony War." But his was not a withdrawal in any sense except in the sense of the desire to see the Germans defeated by an Anglo-French economic strangulation rather than by military action, and without any American participation. His argument was that the Allies could win by a blockade of the Continent, although he also saw at this moment that both would lose their colonial empires, which did not perturb him in the least. And in this and his subsequent "Notes On the American Character" on November 8 he did not show the slightest fear of the possibility of European Fascism conquering America from the outside.³⁰

The task of rounding up all the threads of foreign policy attitudes as of that time was assigned to Edward Meade Earle in a special piece in the impressive 94-page twenty-fifth anniversary issue of this latter date. "The Future of Foreign Policy," a careful and calculated examination of American foreign policy since early days, ended with some somber observations, including the conviction that the balance of power game was all over for England, and that the colonial empires of the British, French and Dutch were quite likely already beyond

salvation. Earle was inclined to favor a policy of "amity and non-intervention" for the United States despite the totalitarians; he concluded that the United States had the power to pursue the balance of power struggle, as well as the power to abstain from such a course. He thought that the decision should be made in terms of which of the two courses was likely to be best for the continuation of the internal institutions and policies held most dear. But he was not frightened here by the possibility of a German victory, and he expected the Germans to have plenty of trouble with the Soviet Union afterwards should they be victorious in their contest with the Allies.³¹

It was not common at this moment to make references to Russia in connection with American foreign policy. Liberals were inclined to view the war as a contest between Britain and France versus Germany in a suspended laboratory environment unrelated to the other states of Europe. Bliven had expressed glee that Stalin was now outdoing Hitler in moving in on the Baltic countries, threatening three others on the Black Sea, as well as possibly even taking Afghanistan into "protective custody" and perhaps to move to "set India free." At the same time he thought that with Russia's silent consent the Japanese might do the same in Indo-China, the Straits, Asia and Oceania. He had not so much as uttered a word in pain at the thought of the whole European colonial system being gobbled up by Russia and Japan in his October 18 declaration in accord with the "phony war."

Not having been attached to collective security in August, 1939, Bliven did not share the rage of the *Nation* editors and staff writers and many others at the Russian understanding with Germany. The *Nation* was still uttering yelps of glee late in October, at the somersault this action produced in the American Communist press, which helped it to forget its discomfiture at the Communist heresy toward the collective security doctrine.³² But the official position of the CPUSA as announced by the National Committee gave little evidence of the turmoil that the *Nation* professed to see in Communist ranks. The lead editorial in the *Communist* in October, "Keep America out of the Imperialist War!," was more likely to arouse old emotions among *Nation* readers and editors, for they had adopted this view of the World War and other clashes among the Western powers, and had dwelled upon the rivalries and antagonisms from which their wars arose. At this moment, the American Communists saw the war as a civil war within the capitalist camp of a world of nations already divided into capitalistic and socialistic states; therefore it was simply a matter of letting the capitalist countries fight each other, for the Socialists could only gain by abstaining and waiting. So for liberals who had moved into the pro-Ally camp and had started assembling a moral case for supporting the British and

French, as well as deprecating all talk of the material issues involved in the clash with Germany, the Communist position was really a major irritation still. Only on the issue of aid to China were the estranged liberals and their late Communist associates in harmony on the eve of the Russo-Finnish war.³³

Despite almost universal sympathy with Finland, as has been seen, insofar as the war involved American foreign policy, there was no suggested military reaction on the part of this country from liberal sources, and modified recommendations for help from the Roosevelt Administration. This was contrary to much belligerent talk from aristocratic circles which had become vociferous in defense of the British and sought to make a tandem out of the two wars. The *New Republic* editors energetically cautioned against developing a war fever over this as much as they frowned on any excessive enthusiasm for war with the Germans; their editorial of December 6 accused "American conservatives" of trying to make "a great ideological crusade" out of a potential war with Stalin and especially condemned any move toward breaking diplomatic relations with the Russians; "From this it is an easy transition to genuine war incitement," the editors warned.³⁴ Ten days later the *Nation*, despite its much frostier attitude toward the Kremlin, also commended the Administration for not suspending diplomatic recognition of the Reds, as well as for extending its sympathy to Finland. Their argument for continuing diplomatic ties was not that it made war easier to contemplate without them but that "It is harder to obtain reliable information from Russia than from almost any other country in the world, and it is important that an American representative with full status should be in a position to keep the State Department fully informed of developments there."³⁵ This was a very sad commentary on the authenticity of their own news reports on Russia, especially in view of the vast amount of space which had been devoted to Soviet affairs in the previous ten years in particular, but the moment was not one for the expression of kindly words toward the Reds.

The editorial positions split on other issues dealing with the war in Finland. The *New Republic* was completely opposed to loans to Finland as out of harmony and consonance with the neutrality policy; in their view the issue of "little Finland" was too likely to become the "little Belgium" of 1940. Said the editors on January 22, "we have decided that the part of wisdom—for the world's sake as well as ours—is to remain at peace. Let's stick to our silent guns."³⁶ The following week they blazed out at Nicholas Murray Butler and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and others pressing Roosevelt to make war loans to Finland. They argued that the kind of help the Finns needed could be better supplied and more quickly by nations which were much closer to Finland than the

United States, and saw something darker and more ominous lying behind this chorus of calls for Finnish monetary aid; "It looks decidedly as if a concerted effort were being made to play on American sympathy for the Finns to get us into the war by the back door, or at least to break down our embargo on credits to belligerents."³⁷ In their view the Congress had already altered the neutrality law enough, and there was no need for breaching it further under this provocation. The *Nation* eventually came around to support the granting of credits to the Finns and pleaded with Roosevelt to do so late in January.³⁸

But it was obvious that the German and not the Russian war occupied top preference as far as American foreign policy was concerned; the localized nature of the latter and the rather swift Russian success had much to do with the dampening of attention from liberals, as well as an undefinable feeling of reluctance to exacerbate relations with the Russians, despite the chill which had set in with the *Pakt*. The first three dolorous months of 1940, with the Russians beginning to crunch through the Finns, the "Allies" inactive against the Germans and a growing wave of rumors of peace proposals reverberating across the Atlantic, were a low point for liberals with enthusiasm for the increased involvement of the United States. Freda Kirchwey even detected a subdued note in the President's message to Congress in January, and her signed editorial on January 13 expressed both pleasure and puzzlement, the latter over the slight resistance which the message encountered. She was convinced that he was sincere in his statement that the majority of the people had not abandoned hope of keeping out of both the wars going on at the moment, but felt that he had left the door open for material aid. And she reiterated the theory widely broadcast by the activists that "American involvement is less likely if continued large-scale material help is sent to the Allied countries. The best chance for preserving American neutrality lies in a quick victory for the Western powers." This argument had many uses; even after "quick victory" was utterly out of the question, it was employed as persuasively in another setting. Some idea of the conflict the aid-short-of-war thesis provoked among some of the uncommitted liberal spokesmen can be seen in Elmer Davis's response to this Kirchwey editorial. In agreement with the idea of aid to Britain, in the hope that an early overthrow of Hitler was the only way to stave off a long war and another vindictive peace, Davis shied in alarm at the idea of possible American involvement:³⁹

To sit tight, to keep the record clear, to keep out of this war so long as it—and its clear and immediate implications—keeps out of us; to do any fighting that we may be forced to do for the protection of American inter-

ests, but only to the extent that those interests may require—that seems to me a sane national policy.

In the meantime the *New Republic* continued its stand against moves toward more engagement, and spoke its mind rather bluntly. In again challenging the drive for an enlargement of the navy, its editorial "Big Navy Nightmare" on January 22 sounded the issue again, between an interventionist President and a "stay-at-home" Congress:⁴⁰

Once again it is necessary to point out that this country has no coherent foreign policy, and since this is so, we cannot possibly have a sensible naval and military plan. President Roosevelt is by nature and impulse an interventionist. He wants the United States to play a great part on a world stage and for this purpose he feels that we need the respect that comes from tremendous military strength. The country as a whole, at least for the present, is isolationist and this attitude dominates Congress. Americans wish "to keep our noses out of other peoples' business" and as a corollary they want a military establishment only large enough for defense.

And Bliven, reporting on his Washington trip of February 19 in his long account headed "The Six Washington Jitters," saw no change a month later, except perhaps an imperceptible motion by Roosevelt toward more involvement. Said Bliven, "There seems no doubt that regardless of the American people, President Roosevelt is interesting himself very actively in the European struggle and that his sympathies are wholly engaged on the side of the Allies. Recent demonstrations of the American wish for neutrality have made him discreet but have not changed his heart."⁴¹ Bliven's unhappiness with the President's bent did not need to be set in italic type to be apparent.

For the *Nation* it was a particularly unappetizing time, even though Miss Kirchwey was confident that the peace forces would make no headway, despite the doldrums which had befallen the war. Her signed editorial of February 17, "Politics and Peace," dismissed the mission of Sumner Welles to Europe and all rumors of peace talks engineered by Americans and other neutrals as part of the pre-presidential-campaign-year maneuvers; "no serious peace offensive would be launched even if the President favored it," she confided, which seemed to imply that the forces for war encompassed a group so influential that they were capable of overriding Roosevelt even if he were not on their side. She re-affirmed her lack of faith in any coming negotiated peace in another editorial statement on March 9, while receiving unsolicited support of a pesky sort from the *New Masses* on April 2 which boomed, "the Roosevelt Administration is actually

up to its ears in the intrigues of imperialist Europe. The last thing it wants is real peace.”⁴²

Undoubtedly the last few weeks of the winter and the early days of spring in 1940 were the darkest days of all for liberal interventionism, with the collapse of the boom to help Finland, the negotiated peace talk, the flourishing health of neutralists, German propaganda and Communist agitation all combining to give the elements in favor of vigorous war prosecution their worst discouragement. The latter two factors worked together with a vengeance on another occasion, at this time. The issuance by the German government of its famous *White Book*, reproducing documentary evidence of pro-war intrigue by Roosevelt diplomats in Europe, touched off an inflammatory full-page editorial in the *Nation* on April 6, questioning its authenticity and denouncing its indirect aid and comfort to United States isolationists and others trying to keep this country out of the war. Growing sensitivity toward the repeated charges that Roosevelt was inordinately interested in intervention had a prominent part to play in this display of loyalty.⁴³ The *New Masses* promptly incensed and irritated its erstwhile *Nation* friends with a special dispatch on this book ten days later, expressing its conviction that the German account was true in its main outlines;⁴⁴

The Administration and its major ambassadors in Europe have already committed this country to war. Without asking the American people, they have staked our lives and resources in the effort to keep European imperialism afloat. . . . No American can afford to dismiss the *White Book* as propaganda.

And while loudly chiding the liberals for trying to undermine its authenticity, the *New Masses* joined in the chorus with an unsolicited part, declaring itself strongly in favor of making Hull and Roosevelt talk on the subject of foreign policy; “they must not be allowed the pleasure of silence,” it cautioned.

There were other developments responsible for the reluctance of neutralists such as the *New Republic's* team of editors and writers to enroll enthusiastically in the pro-Allied cause in these days of suspended animation, despite their total commitment to the hope for eventual Franco-British victory. This was a product of irritation over the persistence of aristocrats, men of wealth and other types not in favor for socio-economic reasons in high positions, or their increased prominence, in both American and British leadership. This was evident in their editorial condemnation of Roosevelt's appointment of James Cromwell (“a rich young amateur”) as ambassador to Canada, in Malcolm Cowley's corrosive review of Sir Neville Henderson's book *Failure Of A Mission*, and the even more caustic treatment of

Joseph Alsop's and Robert Kintner's *American White Paper* by George Soule. On Cromwell, already noted for his vigorous pro-Ally speeches, the editors sniffed, "The eventual reaction is likely to be unfavorable to the Allies, since ordinary citizens of both countries may infer that if men with the status and outlook of Mr. Cromwell believe this is a war for democracy, there's something wrong about it."⁴⁵ Cowley on April 29 described Henderson's memoir as "the most damaging piece of anti-British propaganda that has so far been published," and believed it was additional evidence to support the view "that the United States can and should do nothing while the old Etonians remain in power."⁴⁶ Soule's review of the Alsop-Kintner apologia for the Administration headed "American Whitewash" declared bluntly at the outset, "Nothing is clearer than that Mr. Roosevelt's policy with regard to the European war has so far been a succession of failures," and that Roosevelt was "so remote from the sense of the people and Congress on the question of intervention that he hardened the support for legislation designed to hold him back." And he added another vote of no-confidence in overseas leadership by concluding, "For the President to show an inclination to enlist in a war for democracy under such reluctant and incompetent leaders as were carrying the banner in Western Europe was a betrayal of the progressive cause both abroad and at home."⁴⁷

Editor Soule's closing view had more than ordinary significance, coming on May 13, a week before the *New Republic's* publication of a 25-page special section, "New Deal In Review, 1936-1940," which contained a re-statement of the journal's position on foreign affairs and American involvement therein, indicating no change since the previous September. Convinced that the mass of Americans were still in favor of doing no more than supplying economic assistance to Britain and France, despite the fact that recent German successes had stirred up concern over the state of United States defenses, the editors reported, not without evidence of satisfaction, that Roosevelt was "the sulky prisoner of public opinion in regard to aiding the European democracies." And they went on, after a comment on Congressional contrariness to his leading the Allies to expect help no one was prepared to give, to issue a scolding:⁴⁸

To those who believe, as the *New Republic* does, that the firmest base for national defense is making democracy work, here at home, and solving our problems of unemployment and desperate poverty, the recent attitude of the President has been discouraging. With his position no doubt complicated by a presidential election year, he seems to feel that we cannot have both guns and butter and that it is preferable to spend our money on guns. It is often said in Washington that one of the greatest necessities of the day is to reeducate Mr. Roosevelt in New Dealism. Cer-

tainly whatever danger may exist for us overseas is greatly intensified as long as we do not take the required steps to make the United States strong through internal health.

In this insistence upon the primary importance of reform at home, on the eve of the German break-through in France, the *New Republic* was in harmony with the editors of *Common Sense* and the substance of Charles A. Beard's *The Open Door At Home*. Curiously enough, this book and Raymond Leslie Buell's *Isolated America* were reviewed in the *New Republic* by Max Lerner on June 3, who, though torn by the isolationist and interventionist arguments of the respective authors and the dismaying events in the Low Countries and France, essentially supported the editors and Beard to the hilt:⁴⁹

The dilemma is cruel, but not impossible to resolve. If we keep our eye on the main objective, which is American democratic survival, we must extend aid to the Allies if they are not already beyond the reach of aid. But in doing so we must not delude ourselves into thinking we are entering a war between Right and Wrong, or that we are likely to be successful in reorganizing the world after the war. Second, we must be fully aware of the danger to free thought, a free labor movement and progressive reform which even further economic intervention would entail. . . . Finally we must understand that for all Mr. Buell's brave blueprints for organizing peace after the war, and for all the brave talk about a federated Europe, America's real function in the world is likely to lie in the open door at home.

This was about the best, as well as the last, statement of Lerner in his neutralist period.

The editors of *Common Sense* had gone this one better in April, when they supplemented the theme of domestic reform, repeated month after month, by supporting an eloquent plea by Carleton Beals for following the British, German, Japanese and Russian moves in the direction of closed trade empires by forming one in the Western Hemisphere. Beals' "Toward A Hemisphere Economy" in one way supplemented the "continentalism" of Beard. He interpreted the wars in Asia and Europe, despite the ideological and political and social struggles they represented, as more fundamentally "part of a vast effort to control natural resources and markets," and he did not think that the destruction of Hitler, Stalin or anyone else would have any basic effect on the continuance of "totalitarian trade competition"; "A peace, based merely on the destruction of the regimes in Germany, Russia and Japan, will mean that the British and French empires (which parcelled out the loot of the last war even before the peace was signed), will be left in undisputed control of the major part of

the world's raw materials, with monopolies on many strategic products essential for the prosperity and survival of the United States."

In an extensive treatment of the United States in a world with all major countries experimenting with different exchange rates for the same currency, embargoes, currency manipulation, exchange controls and barter schemes, Beals maintained that this country was being "held up" by everyone, and urged that we do something about it in this hemisphere, and to put the wars in Europe and Asia in definite secondary position: ⁵⁰

We cannot afford to get into another European war for false sentimental reasons and the glory of the British Empire—not even to please Dorothy Thompson. We cannot afford to create huge war debt by financing a war for the privilege of being exploited economically by the British instead of the Germans. . . . We should not take much stake in the permanence of present close relationships based upon the accident of war in Europe and Asia any more than we should feel that our domestic problems are being solved by temporary war prosperity and the sale of airplanes and guns to France and England.

The policy statements of *Common Sense* and the *New Republic* in April and May, 1940 represented the distillation of liberal neutralist-non-interventionism. A large part of the argument was either washed out or repudiated in a few days following the events which struck with electric suddenness in Western Europe shortly after they had been made.

THE EVENTS OF JUNE, 1940 BEGIN

THE DEMOLITION OF LIBERAL NEUTRALISM

Ample attention has already been devoted to the profound impact upon American liberalism of the massive and abrupt German victory over the Franco-British armies in the spring of 1940 and the swift investment of France and the Low Countries. The pro-war sentiment within its ranks probably owed more of its expansion to this event than anything else related to the war before or after. In respect to American foreign policy it was the signal for a great change in the definition of the word "defense," which hereafter no longer was to mean the protection of continental United States from physical invasion. A strategic revolution occurred, stretching over a period of months, during which in steady stages the protection of America became a task involving control of specific parts of the oceans and lands of the entire world, a solitary endeavor participated in by no other

country, no matter how menaced each of them may have felt in turn. Its immediate impulse, the hysteria of May and June, 1940, gave it sufficient thrust so that the momentum was able to carry it on at increased acceleration far beyond the needs of the war era that lay just ahead. Two decades later, "defense" within the context of the new and amplified meaning had become a major industrial enterprise and also a major employer of all kinds of talent and personnel in America.

Undoubtedly the hysteria was the product of the limitless imagination of the propaganda forces which at once assumed and declared that the Germans contemplated speedy world conquest, and moreover had a plan, timetable, resources and manpower to accomplish it. Previous admitted knowledge of the modesty of German ambitions could do nothing to reverse what took place. This hysteria was the natural child of that of 1914-1917, when a facile propaganda had encouraged the world to believe that German ambitions then also encompassed planetary conquest. Originally a modest sector of American liberalism was fully cognizant and articulate on the limited nature of German objectives. But after the spring of 1940 instead of acting as a brake it acted as fuel for the dissemination of this doctrine, leaving the job of painful rumination for the post-war period when the realization that "defense" had become the reaching of the ends of the world by American armed strength aroused plaintive complaints. When some of the more ferocious of the liberals urging immediate participation in the war emerged in the role of anxious peace-makers and exponents of unilateral disarmament in the second decade after the war, another circular movement in American liberalism had taken place.

By far the most spectacular display took place on the *Nation*, which reached impressive heights of emotion between mid-May and mid-June. Though it may have been slogan-proof in 1917, it was one of the first to capitulate to those of 1940, and took up the call of "all aid short of war" with zest and in tireless repetitiveness. Miss Kirchwey's editorial on May 18, "America Is Not Neutral," found her speaking in self-chosen style for the entire population, insisting, "Americans only pretend to be neutral. The time has come to quit pretense and say clearly where our hopes lie and what we propose to do to make them real." For herself she was for the immediate shipping of everything imaginable to the Allied forces, while indignantly brushing aside isolationists of all kinds as if they were an inferior biological species. Her fears reached an even higher peak the following week, as evidenced by the turbulent editorial "Supposing Hitler Wins," but far exceeded by subsequent literary pyrotechnical displays on June 8 and 15. Her four-page signed editorial of the first of these two dates, "Saving the Front Line," contained detailed policy suggestions

as well as a firm belief in the Allied ability to easily defeat Hitler's forces; she urged the immediate dispatch of vast airplane shipments, repeal of the Johnson Act, the admission of 100,000 refugees at once and the preliminary appropriation of ten million dollars for their relief purposes.⁵¹

Her "A Democratic Program of Defense" on the 15th, on which occasion she flamed at Mussolini and vociferously applauded Roosevelt's partisan speech at the University of Virginia of June 10, in which he had referred to the Italian declaration of war on France as a stab in the back, went beyond all her previous suggestions. Now in deep fear of a physical invasion of the Atlantic coast by the Germans at an early moment, as part of their plans of "world dominion," she thought that \$4,000,000,000 was a modest sum to pay initially as a start on protection against this eventuality. It was eye-rubbing news to read this in a magazine which a few years earlier had taken a prominent part in flaying Roosevelt for spending a sum only 5% as large for building a few naval vessels. "The shift toward a war economy has begun," she announced, though somewhat anticlimactically, in view of all that had been written on the subject in the previous year, and now already irritated at having to accept as part of the package a few ingredients which she obviously did not cherish in the least.

But she drew the line at declarations of war or the dispatch of troops which were coming from liberals who were somewhat more involved in a state of hyperthyroid excitement. Those who urged America to fight at that moment she described as "unduly romantic," her own objections being based on the view that American soldiers were "not now either wanted or needed." Furthermore, she objected on the grounds that our own rearmament for such purposes would deflect the stream of materials needed overseas immediately, which would cripple the Allies indefinitely, and she believed that this suggestion was "fantastic from a practical view." She added in a sober trailing elaboration that "The consequences of war are so devastating that no nation has a right to plunge in unless all other means of resistance have failed," a stunning *non-sequitur* in view of her powerful emotional conviction that that point had long ago been passed.

In the immediate period resistance to any kind of mobilization continued as *Nation* editorial policy. On June 8, a little cooled off, it sympathized with the congressional opposition to FDR's request for authority to call the National Guard and the Army Reserve into active service "if necessary to safeguard neutrality" but without any explanation of what this meant; "If a situation exists that makes military action seem imminent or even possible in the near future, the President should tell the people and Congress what it is. If he cannot tell, he should say so and explain why."⁵²

Oswald Garrison Villard continued in his capacity as a dissenting

minority of one in the *Nation's* pages in these troubled and agitated days. In his June 1 column he expressed his admiration of Roosevelt's sense of timing in rushing through his defense appropriation bill on the wave of panic caused by the collapse of the Allies, but he was far from pleased by the half-truths used to frighten people at the imminence of attack by air from Greenland, the Cape Verde Islands or Brazil. Villard thought all this quite ludicrous, with the Germans "fighting like mad to obtain air bases in Holland and France which will be only 20 or 50 miles from England." With no bombing planes in existence capable of flying one way, let alone a round trip flight from the scene of the fighting to America, and with no German surface navy to speak of, Villard wondered how the Germans were going to accomplish what Roosevelt wished to credit them with being able to do at that moment. He went on to record his even greater displeasure over the President's announced defense plan, bridling at the inconsistencies and contradictions of his announcements, and ending with the weary sigh, "I fear that John T. Flynn is correct when he writes that it looks to him as if the President were merely throwing a smokescreen around his failure to put the unemployed to work and to restore prosperity."⁵³

The style of mobilizing for war from commencement platforms in 1940 was not established by FDR, for a number of others delivered fully as enthusiastic calls to belligerence if not more so, those of Presidents Conant and Dodds of Harvard and Princeton ranking with the most extreme. And attention has been called to that of Archibald MacLeish in another context. Yet there is little doubt that that delivered by the President at Virginia aroused American liberals most.⁵⁴ Only the *New Masses* had the obtuseness, from a pro-war liberal point of view, to call attention to his address of May 10 to the Pan-American Scientific Congress, which contained the core of the later one which included the emotional denunciation of Mussolini. In a dramatic editorial open letter on May 21 titled "Mr. Roosevelt: This Is Not Our War," the editors of this erstwhile banner-carrier of collective security now turned neutralist along with the Soviet Union, charged Roosevelt, "You have set your course toward military participation in the European war," and continued: "Your May 10 speech, like all your recent acts and utterances, was designed to overcome the opposition, to snare it with imaginary fears, to render it impotent with trickery and deceit. You deliberately appealed to blind prejudice, you incited popular passion with visions of non-existent dangers, you cunningly hinted a religious crusade in behalf of 'Christian civilization,' hypocritically describing yourself as a pacifist in order to lure the people into following your war policy."⁵⁵

Though they were no longer as earnestly interested in the views of the pro-Soviet left as before, this attitude was not too far away from

that of the *New Republic-Common Sense* neutralists, and at the time they were giving vent to expressions of criticism which contained the intent if not the phraseology of this condemnation. For that reason the somersaults performed by the editorial policies of both in about three weeks after this were much more spectacular than that of the *Nation*, which had been on the interventionist firing line from the beginning. But for the former two journals it was the beginning of a significant drift away from all evidences of detachment. The difference was of course that a great military catastrophe had befallen the Allies between these speeches of May 10 and June 10. And the *New Republic* was as numbed and shocked as any, partially a reaction to the realization that they had grossly over-rated the Franco-British military strength for a long time. "This mistake the editors of the *New Republic* shared, and they now bitterly regret it," they announced in a twitching *mea culpa* on June 17, an issue crammed with alarmed gesturing and pointing as the editorial position began the lumbering trajectory which found it wheeling and veering to a position almost identical with that of the *Nation*. The high praise conferred on the Virginia "stab-in-the-back" speech included the editorial observation that it marked "the formal change of American foreign policy from one of neutrality to one of partisan non-belligerency." This was more a description of the *New Republic* than the Roosevelt Administration, since neutralists and isolationists had been insistent for many months that this was the actual state of the New Deal regime's foreign policy from the moment hostilities commenced in September, 1939.

Of course, the debacle in France washed out all the nuances of the neutrality-cash-and-carry-arms-embargo argument from the *New Republic*. It now came out for the same kind of unconditional "all-help-to-the-Allies" position which the *Nation* had so ardently advanced, along with recommending the shipment of American war goods to them rather than "building up an independent force of our own." This they thought should be accompanied by a vast publicity campaign informing the world what America was doing, since in their view the morale factor would be "worth a lacking army or two to Churchill and Weygand," the latter being the French premier who was caught in office by the German blitz attack and whose pained broadcast plea for American help had been beamed all over the country by radio, a masterful interventionist propaganda stroke. But all the fussiness about defending only specific French and British regimes had disappeared from the *New Republic* now; its accent was upon the abstractions of England and France as fully as was that of the Anglophile and Francophile organizations in America which had long been its targets for abuse. Coming so soon after its pretentious

and detailed policy stand in the special supplement of May 20 gave its turnabout an almost night-into-day complexion.⁵⁶

Of the editors who experienced this late conversion, none was more profoundly shaken than Soule. His "Is This A World Revolution?" published the last week of June was a moral exhortation to the "democracies" to recapture the "revolutionary" initiative from Germany, whose totalitarianism was now admitted to have great vitality. After the seven years of Marxist critique, predictions of immediate decay and dark evaluations as a corrupt and tottering shambles kept from disintegration by a savage police and a greedy and rapacious capitalist slave boss class, it was a sensational event to see a person of Soule's known views delivering policy recommendations which did not stray far from encouragement to copy a great deal of the rival system. He particularly recommended doing that in the case of the German industrial and economic mobilization, while giving Churchill credit for having started out in that direction already. As Soule put it,⁵⁷

The technical strength of Hitlerism for war consists in the fact that it planned and coordinated its economic system rather than relying longer on private interest in profit. No state can survive which does not do the same. The defeat of Hitlerism in war can be accomplished only by this means.

There was no more lucid statement of the new thesis that the defeat of the enemy could be expected only by copying his system and seeking to outdo him with it. Soule and others had suddenly discovered vast differences between National Socialism and the "stupidity and decadence" of the conservative regimes of Britain and France, long considered satellites in the alleged Fascist International. Thus as the war "to save Christian Civilization" looked as if it were about to expand substantially, thanks to increased American participation, promising to bring more barbarism to more people, the newly-chastened among the recently-detached liberals looked out upon the scene without too many qualms. As "T.R.B." now put it in his column of June 24 with no show of unhappiness, "Whatever the legal niceties may be, in the eyes of the world this country has abandoned neutrality. We are openly on the side of the Allies."⁵⁸ The absence of any real reservations in that respect was also true at last as well for the *New Republic*. However, from June, 1940 on, little thrills of terror seemed to keep running through the editorial columns of the *New Republic*, fearful of being faced with accusations of pacifist or isolationist recidivism. Soule's "Bases Of Foreign Policy" on August 19 was a tortured rationalization of every major step the journal had taken between 1919 and 1939 with a view toward heading off such

criticism, supplemented with full approval of the new "utmost possible help to Britain short of war" policy.⁵⁹

But, as the *Nation* had its Oswald Garrison Villard, the *New Republic* had its John T. Flynn, unmoved in the slightest by the world events which had reduced his fellow editors to quaking retractions and Canossa-like trips over to the side of more diligent interventionism. Late in July, after watching the effects of a month of the new activist interest in the war, and commenting on the quiet drive to cripple or eliminate the anti-trust and minimum wage laws, National Labor Relations Board, Federal Trade Commission, and Securities Exchange Commission as barriers to the rearmament boom, he wrote under the heading "The Price Of Hysteria Is Reaction,"⁶⁰

The simple truth about all this is that it is logical, inevitable. We cannot eat our cake and have it. We cannot stir up a fraudulent hysteria, a fake war scare for the purpose of aiding Britain, tell the people every ten minutes on the radio of the coming Nazi hordes, of the "penetration" of South America, or the threats to our democracy, of our defenseless condition—we, who are next on the Nazi list—without stirring up also all the elements which are opposed to the measures adopted for the protection of investors, labor, savers, the public generally. . . . Maybe it is not too late now to curb this drift. The trouble is that the enemies of the President are now competing with him in stirring up the animals.

Open collisions with the new editorial position such as this put an expectable time limit on Flynn's tenure. The separation of the two awaited only a more determined interventionist advance by major editorial policy, followed by a characteristic Flynn critique. In one sense it was impressive that they remained together another three months.

The French collapse brought a change in the foreign policy position of *Common Sense* as well, with not so sweeping a reversal as the *New Republic's* and not so emotional a response as the *Nation's*. The three-and-one-half-page editorial in July, "A Foreign Policy For American Democracy," reaffirmed its former goals of aid to Britain, along with now approving the United States joining in the war only if it appeared "that our entry would assure a speedy defeat of Germany." But the editors thought that it should be made clear that Americans would be "fighting for a 'new order' ourselves, and not merely to save the old." On the other hand the editors were for settling the Far East war, cutting out war supplies to Japan but making no preparations to bolster colonialism there; "It is not our business to protect European possessions in the Far East," they maintained. The settlement they visioned in Asia needed to be "based on the concept of the autonomous regional development of the area,

ending European and American imperialism, while recognizing Japan's special interests due to her meagre resources and crowded population, but not recognizing her right to exploit China in her turn." The following month the editors announced that this editorial drew the widest reader response in its eight years of publication history, with 80% in approval. In this issue they published a letter signed by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt which declared "I was very much interested and am in substantial agreement with "A Foreign Policy For American Democracy" by the editors."⁶¹

THE SMITH ACT AND CONSCRIPTION: CASE STUDIES OF THE "NEW" LIBERALISM IN ACTION

On May 6, 1939 the *Nation* published a generously-sized article by Kenneth G. Crawford, "Open Season On Reds," a smashing attack on a bill introduced by Representative Howard W. Smith of Virginia, making it a serious crime for a citizen to advocate overthrow of the government by force or violence. It was actually in the train of measures introduced by two other Congressmen which had already been approved in the House, one of which, that sponsored by Hobbs, would also have provided detention camps for suspected subversives. Crawford's indignation boiled over as he contemplated the atmosphere prevailing in Washington and the world in general which could make such legislative proposals seem rational. "The Smith bill," he trumpeted, "is so nearly a spiritual twin of the infamous Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 that it would be regarded as either a monstrosity or a practical joke at a normal session of Congress."⁶² But having approved the substance of two other similar bills, Crawford was doubtful as to whether the progressive forces in Congress could rally and put it down. As for editorial opinion, the granitic opposition to any legislation of this kind was to be assumed as basic to the situation. Its direct contradiction to the traditions liberals professed to hold dear guaranteed a comprehensive enmity. Despite liberal dread, none of these bills became law between May, 1939 and May, 1940.

The subsequent performance of the liberal watchdogs of American civil liberties with respect to this kind of legislation under the pressure of the fifth-column hysterics of April and May, 1940 and the great wave of fear of a German invasion of the Eastern seaboard the next two months provided another revelation of the creeping decay which overtook them. The liberal press by and large swallowed the stories that Scandinavia and the Low Countries had been overrun by the German forces so quickly because they had been betrayed in-

ternally by their own citizens. This had especially ugly implications for all other countries which were still neutral, and it did not take long for an application of the situation to be made to the United States, with liberals occupying prominent positions among the brigade of Cassandras pointing the warning fingers.

In one sense this was to be expected, for they had taken a prominent part in publicizing the allegation of a vast German subversive conspiracy in the Western Hemisphere. Numerous books on the subject of the secret armies of Hitler had appeared in the years before 1939, at one time serving the partial purpose of offsetting similar books about Communist infiltrations, the latter books uniformly decried by most liberals. As late as July 8, 1939 Ludwig Lore had reviewed in the *Nation* three more such volumes, *Nazi Spies In America* by Leon G. Turrou, *Secret Agents Against America* by Richard W. Rowan and John L. Spivak's *Secret Armies*, without expressing the faintest doubt as to their full accuracy.⁶³ So it might have been assumed that no resistance existed if laws such as the Smith bill were contemplated for use against a special form of subversion such as this. It took only the high hysteria of mid-1940 to wash out adherence to traditional principles, following which the liberals watched it drift into the federal statute books with hardly a squeak of alarm; abdication by the editorial staffs of both liberal weeklies was almost total.

The total comment on the Smith Bill in the *Nation* in the month of June, 1940 was limited to a fifteen-line editorial paragraph in the issue of June 29, a quiet description of the Bill's provisions and an even quieter vote of support for the American Civil Liberties Union, which was trying to get FDR to veto it. The House of Representatives had already approved of it by a vote of 428-1. But there was not the faintest echo of displeasure when he signed it into law, ironically the day before the *Nation* gave its subdued affirmation to a call for his veto.⁶⁴ On July 8 the *New Republic* printed a total of five lines on the subject, without a word of criticism of either Congress for passing it or Roosevelt for signing it. The arm-waving alarm over an expected German invasion in the last weeks of June was all the protective coloration it needed from its nominal arch-opponents. There were no mentions of the Smith Act subsequently the rest of the year, and no articles devoted to it at all.

Only *Common Sense* saw fit to comment on the liberal abdication of their self-appointed function as tribunes in matters of this kind. Frank Hanighen's "Capital Letter" to the latter in July spoke of watching Senator Burton K. Wheeler denouncing the Smith Bill on "a practically empty Senate floor," while "Senator Norris, who had delivered a similar speech the day before, sat, a weary old man, in a nearby chair, the only faithful listener Wheeler had." What im-

pressed him even more however was that at the same time in the Supreme Court building across the street Felix Frankfurter read the decision against the members of the Jehovah's Witnesses for refusing to salute the United States flag for religious reasons. "The irony of this picture cannot be too much emphasized," Hanighen commented, in this survey of Washington hysteria; "Not only the liberal majority of the Court joined in the decision, but the most outstanding liberal on the Court read it." Hanighen could not resist adding as a post-script his impressions of Senator Claude Pepper of Florida delivering his first "war speech" in an oratorical style "of a character that recalls the fanaticism of the Ku Klux Klan." ⁶⁵

Undoubtedly the invasion threat and the feeling of ominous apprehension that Hitler's secret legions were even then silently seeping into the entire Latin American world took precedence over the long-range implications of the Smith Act. Freda Kirchwey's "Needed—An American League of Nations" on July 13 expressed her sustained fear of a Western Hemisphere in direct danger of an invasion by Hitler, and she gave her full support to the belief that a vast fifth column of local traitors were ready to cooperate with him in every country. Her suggested emergency solution was a United States-run band of states, with this country providing the power, economic, military and political unity, shaped in the form of a gigantic Western Hemisphere cartel. "Only a democratic totalitarianism—if such a phrase may be allowed—can resist the absolute totalitarian of the European continent." ⁶⁶

The *Nation* the following week continued on this theme, in a special message, "Within the Gates," signed by the editors and based on Hitler's alleged remarks as quoted in Hermann Rauschning's *The Voice Of Destruction*. They advised the readers to adopt the attitude that all German diplomatic and consular agents in the United States were actively seeking "to undermine the government and institutions of the United States," that "every German alien in this country—except refugees and those whose record proves the contrary—must be presumed to be doing everything within his power to undermine the United States," and that "all organizations which accept the Nazi 'party line' must be looked upon as agencies of Hitler's fifth column, no matter how 'American' may be their camouflage." ⁶⁷ It was probably fortunate for the composure and equanimity of the *Nation* that no attitude similar to that had been adopted toward Russia on the basis of Marx's and Lenin's statements at any time after 1917, but the issue which was not thought over here was the definition of "Nazi party line," for this attitude opened the gates not to Hitler's spies and saboteurs but to a lamentable and deplorable season of war-liberal charges of guilt by association aimed at all the individuals and groups that persisted in an anti-war, anti-involvement policy from June,

1940 onward. The utilization of the Smith Act against suspected German sympathizers had no demurrers in the liberal weeklies after June, 1940. The threat of its use against Communists and Communist sympathizers aroused much more concern, as will be seen, but no real agitation occurred until after Russia had entered the war a year later. Then the Communists became friends of the Smith Act also, and recruited liberal support for their belief that their Trotskyite enemies should be prosecuted under its provisions, as in the case of the Minneapolis teamsters, as also will be seen subsequently. But the liberal editors remained in a state of ideological somnolence on the Smith Act until the autumn of 1941. The alien registration provision of the Act was their only burden of the period of hasty legislative action, the *Nation* coming to life on that when an investigation of Harry Bridges as a possible violator took place. The *Nation* was for testing its constitutionality on that basis.

In the case of the liberals and the subject of conscription, a different kind of problem presented itself, one which, contrary to the Smith Act, was thoroughly aired in discussion prior to the adoption of the Selective Service Act. But the amazingly rapid disappearance in 1940 of the liberal's long-standing hostility toward all forms of compulsory military service is one of the mysteries of this era. Of all the views which appeared to be a permanent part of liberal ideology, that toward military service of an involuntary sort seemed the most impregnable and the least likely to be affected or altered by any change in world affairs.

Part of the reason for the capsizing of pro-war liberals on the issue of conscription was explained by the advancement of the theory that this procedure provided the country with a "people's army," which was in harmony with the slogan that the war was a "people's war." This in turn was partially a derivation of the Spanish Civil War and the International Brigades veterans. Brought to a high pitch in England, it filtered into the United States bit by bit between 1939 and 1941. Tom Wintringham, a British leader in an International Brigade, was one of its most vigorous exponents, and had access to the *Nation* with his views. In part this theory was also aimed at lessening the influence of military professionalism, which in reality had a deeper social connotation. Granted the interpretation of this new struggle as one peculiarly of the "people," the class-angled approach to compulsory military service no longer was pertinent. It now became another mechanism performing the function of a leveller of class, sex, wealth and privilege barriers, of which great things were expected in Britain. War as an agent of destruction not only of a foreign enemy but of a contemptible internal social order, and the midwife of a new dynamic democratic socialism, was more than dimly perceived by now, as the reflections on war aims disclosed. Thus com-

pulsory military service also had a hidden morale service to perform in the views of the spokesmen who professed to find hidden virtues in forced military service for all. Its "democratic" possibilities only awaited the eventuation of a "people's war," it now seemed, a phenomenon which converted all of war's ancient shortcomings into desirable characteristics.

The enthusiasm for universal military training flowered later among the liberals than among other portions of the opinion-making community in America in the war period. It unfolded with striking swiftness with the Allied fiasco in France. In the *Nation* the first exhortation came in the famous Kirchwey "Program" on June 15, in which among other things she recommended to liberals that they abandon the "old dogma" of hostility to universal military training. She warned them that a movement for it was growing, and that the Roosevelt Administration was likely to come out in favor of it soon, and pleaded, "I only hope progressives will rally to the support of universal training in time to make their influence felt." Her main aspiration was to keep it an instrument "compatible with democracy."⁶⁸ This was another case of keeping up the pose of ideological consistency by keeping the words of a position while changing the content. But it soon began to take the new shape, regardless.

The *New Republic's* first statement was a major editorial on universal military service on July 1, and was persuasive and technical enough to have been sponsored by an armed forces journal, although it went farther afield into the political consequences of clothing the nation in uniforms again. This issue contained a special "national defense" section which was almost entirely devoted to the problems of England's national defense, not that of the United States. But it did dwell upon the need for converting Americans to war attitudes, which had a direct bearing on this policy. As Fletcher Pratt put it, in the United States as of that moment, "the fundamental requirement is not for men or material, but for an entire recasting of the national mental pattern; the abandonment of that sentimental string-glove pacifism which has been so much the mark of the American people as it was of the Chamberlain government,"⁶⁹ which was indeed a strange thesis to be reading in the *New Republic* after its many heated complaints about the military expansion of Britain under Chamberlain. There was something slightly sad about the erstwhile men of peace on this journal shifting around uneasily in their new, ill-fitting intellectual field boots, writing brave memoranda to no one in particular about defense, strategy, armament, global policy, mobilization and so forth. A tortuous argument was worked out interpreting how labor was going to have to "forego" striking now while retaining the "right" to do so, with Jonathan Mitchell consoling those in deep anxiety over Britain with the thought that "if necessary, ways can be

found to circumvent the Neutrality and Johnson Acts and put dollar exchange in Britain's hands," and Max Lerner launching his call for national movement into "democratic collectivism," which amounted to "an acceptance of the proposition that democracy is compatible with the socialization of industry and that democracy is also compatible with the concentration of governmental power," a thesis he brought to a high polish in later months, as has been seen.

But of all the new material in this issue of July 1, 1940 representing the major turn-about of editorial policy, the material on the military service issue was the most eye-opening; "Just as the *New Republic* endorsed universal service during the last war, it would unhesitatingly advocate universal military training in the present effort at building up the national defense, the moment it became clear that a large army might be needed," it led off. But it was not convinced that that time was yet upon the country. Even for an army of one and a half million men it did not think universal military training was warranted, "and no wildest estimate holds that we shall need a force larger than this unless, indeed, we are preparing to challenge Hitler on the other side of the Atlantic and the Mikado on the Yangtze." Its position was "for the moment our front line is being held by Great Britain," so it was preferable to keep the country's manpower working to make supplies "until those now engaged against Hitler need men more than munitions." For this reason it expressed its disapproval of the Burke-Wadsworth Bill providing for conscription, suggesting as its choice of the moment something else which actually went far beyond it: ⁷⁰

We like much better the hints thrown out by the President, as to the sort of thing he would favor. It would apply . . . to young men only—and possibly young women as well. It would recognize that only a small part of those registered would be required for strictly military service. It would provide useful things for the others to do—and our relatively small experience with the CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] and the WPA [Works Progress Administration] shows that there is plenty of non-military work which must be done if the nation is to become sound and strong.

Coming from a liberal journal which had spent twenty years in bitter opposition to all moves to militarize the youth and to enroll them in para-military organizations, and which had poured so much scorn and abuse on the Hitler and Mussolini youth programs, this was indeed a breath-taking change of stride of the first magnitude. But its pronouncements into the month of August continued in this vein, while maintaining its stolid resistance to the Burke-Wadsworth Bill.⁷¹

Through July the *Nation* also displayed its refusal to accept the

Burke Bill for straight military conscription, preferring the Administration's multi-purpose plan now credited to the guiding hand of Sidney Hillman;⁷²

If we must defend ourselves by force, it is clear that our hope lies in a people's army, democratically controlled and democratic in spirit. The Administration's program, with its emphasis on vocational as well as military training, points in this direction.

But by mid-summer a considerable degree of confusion overtook the editors. Though the official policy was still hostile to the Burke Bill, Freda Kirchwey had vociferously come out in favor of a large universal service conscript army at once, and all arguments of American remoteness from the war zones and the protection of our navy she brushed aside as inconsequential in the face of what she diagnosed as the strong likelihood of Hitler conquering the world in a relatively short time. Though still bothered by the idea of militarism in this new army, she was sure it could be checked successfully if the left and liberals in general would only take the army seriously, and seek to keep it from the control of "reactionaries" and "bureaucrats." This was expounded in an editorial "There Is No Alternative," juxtaposed to one by Maxwell S. Stewart which was opposed to the Burke bill and every other form of conscription, Stewart placing his confidence in a two-ocean navy, an enlarged air force, and "a small but highly mobile land force." This show of minor editorial heresy, still flourishing like a wild flower in a mountain crag, was refreshing but nothing more than diversionary.⁷³ In midsummer of 1940 both major editorial stands of the *Nation* and *New Republic* were in favor of conscription, and were incidentally in agreement with the editorial position of all nine of New York City's major newspapers, probably the only time in the history of liberal journalism when they were in agreement with the entire New York press on anything.

By September, liberal editorial resistance to the Burke-Wadsworth bill had just about worn itself out. The dimming prospect of universal service along lines they had anticipated and envisioned the Administration pushing to success had much to do with their cave-in, although the spread of the view that the country was in increasing danger of imminent invasion was put forward as the reason for the newest twist of opinion. "Whether we like it or not, it is apparent that we are about to have conscription in peacetime in the United States," the *New Republic* announced on September 2; "It is with heavy hearts that the editors of the *New Republic* endorse the principles of compulsory service at this time, though rejecting many aspects of the Burke-Wadsworth Bill." The resignation apparent in this statement was qualified by their justification on the basis of impend-

ing German invasion; in fact, their entire support hinged on this thesis. But they managed to refer to the fact that the journal had "fought militarism in every form" for years, and that the editors continued to "abhor war and totally reject the theory that it has any sort of regenerating or purifying influence." And they admitted that conscription put the country in danger of creating "a home-grown Fascism of our own while trying to prevent an attack by Fascism abroad." Furthermore, they announced their intention to respect "the sincerity of many individuals who continue to oppose compulsory service," but they refused to include the Communists, in part an angry response to a raking which they had received at the hands of the *New Masses* on August 13 for favoring conscription.⁷⁴

"The Draft Bill," the Kirchwey editorial in the *Nation* on September 7, went far beyond the *New Republic* in sanctioning the conventional conscription bill about to reach a vote in Congress, another capitulation after weeks of hoping for something far more comprehensive. Her main opposition now was to its reservations, since she thought that the war against Hitler, should the United States enter it as an active belligerent, would require us "to fight it where and as we must." For that reason she scowled at its territorial stipulations:⁷⁵

I don't like the provision restricting service in the land forces to the Western Hemisphere and the possessions and territories of the United States. Suppose in the course of a struggle against Germany it became necessary to occupy Iceland?

The *Nation's* chief editor was beginning to show evidence of learning the scope of the New Defense. But she also objected to the term "peace time conscription," insisting that "It is a war measure, enacted on the assumption that active participation in the struggle cannot ultimately be avoided." The editorial the following week abandoned even these vestiges of resistance to the Burke Bill, which had passed in the House. Fervent hope was expressed that it would get speedy passage in the Senate also, unencumbered or delayed through "political calculations."⁷⁶ Perhaps in the *Nation's* view it was not being enacted one whit too early, in view of its credence in reports that Washington expected the British to lose soon, and that Hitler would attack the Western Hemisphere in the spring of 1941.⁷⁷ But the sudden chorus of support for conscription as a savior device for America took no cognizance of the fact that it had not saved France from defeat in a matter of weeks. What should have perturbed liberals far more was the feeling on the part of the vast majority of the country's male population that the threat to the continental integrity was so faint that they felt no impulse to enlist voluntarily for its protection.

Only a rear-guard action was going on among liberals unfriendly to conscription by September, 1940. *Common Sense* kept up a hostile editorial position to the end, declaring it "a measure which holds the most dangreous threats to American democracy," while publishing an acidic, muckraking piece by Hanighen, "Conscription and Blood Money," on the origins of the Burke-Wadsworth bill. It was his contention that it was kept in the public view nationally largely through the design of the *New York Times*, which ignored its own Washington bureau and made full use of the coverage afforded by the Associated Press and United Press, so as to get the story of the Bill all over the country. "By this time [September] it is generally admitted that Colonel Adler (of the *Times*) and Colonel (now Secretary) Stimson had a big part in the framing of the bill," Hanighen wrote, while pointing out that the playing down of voluntary recruiting had performed a big role in the conscription propaganda drive, and that Congressional mail was running between 3 to 1 and 9 to 1 against the measure.⁷⁸ The only other substantial source of criticism read by any possible liberal cross-section was the *New Masses*, whose fulminations against the bill and the liberal weeklies for their vigorous support were somewhat dampened and blunted by taunts from the pro-conscription liberals for their silence on conscription in Soviet Russia.⁷⁹ But in this case, consistency was on the side of the Soviet sympathizers, since they had never made an issue out of this subject even in the days of good-fellowship with the American liberals, and the latter in turn had never criticized conscription in Russia in the high-flying days of pacifism, the Popular Front, collective security and indivisible peace.

But for the ordinary readers and the likely conscriptee subscribers of the now draft-bound liberal weeklies there was no way to register dissent except to hope the editors might respond to their correspondence. A particularly long and eloquent communication to the *New Republic* on September 16, expressing resentment toward the editors for having comforted the readers that FDR in his private thoughts on universal military service contemplated it for young men only, concluded,⁸⁰

I'm betting a strong hunch that once the slogan becomes fifty-four forty and fight too, all Congressmen in the front rank and no franking for the duration, Mumford and Schuman and all the other saw-horse lancers of the vim-and-vintage type on outpost duty, two on and four off, and mud up to your, uh, waist—we will be a damn sight slower about saving democracy and the fruity sense of the whole. But if you don't think so, why don't you try it? You've had your fun and got your place in the country. The hay's all in; now up and at 'em. We'll hold your jobs open for you, in the few cases where there's any need of it. In other words, it's fine to have

an army and there's something about a soldier and into the trenches before Christmas.

But after you.

And none of this literary ambulance driving either, you hear?

The battle was about over by this stage, however, and for the editorial staffs it was now largely a matter of final rationalization of their stands and preparation for the first intellectual hurdle which conscription would pose, the problem of conscientious objection resistance. "Our Army," was the proud heading over the *New Republic's* October 21 editorial, a comment on the "millions of American young men" registering for conscription "for the first time in peace during the history of this nation," justifying its support by attesting that "the editors believe that an overwhelming majority of Americans agree with the *New Republic* in concluding from the events of the past few months that weakness is no guarantee of peace," and that "Being well armed is in the present world an essential condition of avoiding war—if it can be avoided." In two consecutive sentences the editors had repudiated two more time-tested stands, their contempt for majority opinion and rejoicing in holding the unpopular position, and their hundreds-of-times-repeated conviction that arms races, arms accumulation and military preparedness had never yet produced peace or headed off a war.⁸¹

The problem of conscientious objection was met with far less difficulty than anticipated, however. The *Nation* apparently expected a significant struggle here, and on October 12 had published a major study of the implications of the Selective Service Act by the veteran defender of military service resisters, Roger Baldwin, which strangely enough involved little or no criticism of the new law in a very moderate and restrained review of its provisions. Baldwin's extended treatment was remarkable for its tone of apology for conscientious objection as such. It was obvious from his approach that no general resistance was to be expected in the country, and the note of evident relief in the liberal editorials following registration of the country's young men signified that they had gotten over what surely would have been a bad psychological barrier, again in view of the traditional anti-military stance of liberalism.⁸²

The *Nation* on October 19 expressed editorial revulsion toward twenty Union Theological Seminary boys who had refused to register, commenting that "By taking this stand, which seems to us a form of libertarianism perilously close to anarchism, the students expose themselves to rigorous penalties."⁸³ The *New Republic's* much-softer "The First Objectors" the following week could not conceal a note of comfort and pleasure that the 17 million who had registered for the draft could be contrasted to a tiny handful who had not, "only a few

theological students and socialists in New York." It expressed the hope that the students would "change their minds and be given another chance," but laid down their new policy stand on objection to compulsory military service, another remarkable reversal: ⁸⁴

The *New Republic* favors the widest possible latitude for conscientious objectors; we hope conscription will be administered much more intelligently in this respect than in 1917. But we do not see how any court can fail to convict a person who violates the law by deliberately failing to register. What the objectors are in essence saying is not merely that the individual conscience is superior to an order to engage in war, but that the individual conscience is superior to democratic constitutional government, and that we all may choose which laws to obey. Democracy, especially when it is endangered by authoritarian aggression, cannot countenance such an extreme challenge of its sovereignty.

Another milestone had been passed in the psychical mobilization of American liberal journalism into the ranks of the new democratic totalitarianism of the center, though in this instance it shared a view so widely held in the land that it had no particular significance whatever as an expression of liberalism.

FOREIGN POLICY AND POLITICS:

THE 1940 ELECTION AS A MAJOR WATERSHED

In a long and plaintive piece in the *New Republic* during the Munich crisis of September, 1938 titled "They Still Hate Roosevelt," Marquis W. Childs wrote a concluding paragraph of considerable significance and some prescience in speculating on what might drain off the persistent stiff hostility toward the President: ⁸⁵

One thing, and one thing alone, could bring about a shift in the attitude of the hating class and that, of course, is a war. It happened with Woodrow Wilson and I see no reason to believe that it would be otherwise with Franklin Roosevelt. Reform would inevitably be suspended and those who now hold the economic controls would come to Washington with resounding proffers of cooperation and pledges of patriotism. In the face of a war, or perhaps even the threat of a war, this cooperation would under the present organization of production be essential. It is no accident that those who rail most violently against the Roosevelt domestic policies speak with grudging approval of the President's foreign policy.

Things were not quite as simple as this, as the evolution of the America First Committee proved later on, nor was there any real contem-

plation of the vigor of the liberal enemies of the foreign policy who continued to look with favor on the domestic policies, but as an indication of a possible relaxation of liberal hostility toward the "hating class" Child's piece was a leading pointer. The coming of the war was to make a hash of the political separations which existed prior to September, 1939 and result in the arrangement of some of the strangest bedfellows the country has ever known.

Childs had not concerned himself with the election of 1940, of course, but the full substance of the reconciliation which he saw dimly taking shape on the issue of foreign affairs was to have immense potential. The war which he thought might occur to help wash out the political struggle of 1938 was a fact by the latter date, for sure. The meshing into the Administration of the more vociferous of the war-minded among Roosevelt's erstwhile enemies was accepted by liberals with little comment, along with an apparent determination not to bring up all the ugliness of the past controversies with them over matters of purely domestic importance. Foreign affairs served not only to reconcile members of the "hating class;" they also performed the function of transforming some attitudes toward these "haters" within the ranks of liberalism as well.

Some attention has already been devoted to liberal press policy expressions of frigidity toward a third term for Roosevelt, but almost all of these pre-dated the outbreak of war in Europe. For some time thereafter there was dead silence on this subject, and infrequent evidence that it was an issue at all. In the period before the Allied disintegration there was a minimum of attention to the cross-party possibilities on the basis of mutual interests in American interventionism in the war and under Roosevelt as the best possible leader for such a program. The main evidence and emphasis, as has been seen, involved the movement into Washington of the forces Childs had referred to in his piece of September 14, 1938. It was an occasion of tremendous conflicts within liberal ranks, still clinging to New Deal visions of reform and a new class of power-wielders, while watching the arrival of long-abused figures from the business, commercial and financial world into the Roosevelt "defense" organization. The next stage was to see entry into the inner policy making circle itself, and under the crisis of the events of May-June, 1940, this drew far less attention and almost no adverse comment.

The third-term question and the warming and loosening attitude of Roosevelt's Republican opponents on the basis of his foreign policy stand started drawing occasional comment well before the national nominating conventions, nevertheless. Flynn found it convenient to address a searing satirical comment early in February to the liberals who reacted in an incensed tone of indignation when the celebrated union leader John L. Lewis spoke in the most emphatic

tones against a third term, evidence that a substantial weakening had already occurred toward the idea.⁸⁶ "T.R.B." also in the *New Republic*, this time on April 8, put forward the dilemma of the Republicans in a very succinct paragraph in a column dealing with Roosevelt's opposition and the foreign affairs issue. He assumed that they had already taken it for granted the Democrats would re-nominate him, and had started to worry about how to face the problem on this specific level:⁸⁷

A large number of Republicans would like to fight shy of that issue [international affairs], and for two good reasons. They think that Roosevelt's foreign-affairs policies are popular and they like those policies themselves. The traditional Republican-administration foreign attitude has favored the fullest collaboration with England and the building up of a powerful navy to safeguard American "interests." On this front, therefore, the President has a policy which commands the heartiest approval of all those who have had this traditional Republican attitude, first crystallized into a policy by John Hay and carried on right up to the time Henry L. Stimson left the State Department. It is not easy, therefore, to work up any fever about this in the Republican campaign in spite of the fact that certain Republican leaders who followed Borah's banner are bitterly opposed to our present policy.

The first important break-through on the third-term question in the liberal press was *New Republic* editor Rexford Guy Tugwell's "Must We Draft Roosevelt?" on May 13, a long and sympathetic review of FDR's tenure and a very thinly disguised plea for a third term. One of Tugwell's rare signed efforts, it drew much attention and had an undoubted large measure of influence.⁸⁸ The third-term question and the intramural controversy on foreign policy among Republicans seemed to have worked their way to a favorable point; the addition of prominent Republicans to the Roosevelt pro-involvement team was all that was needed to bring about the next stage.

The alarm and agitation over the Franco-British catastrophe produced the proper environment for a number of startling somersaults among liberals, as has been noted, but nothing topped their reaction to the recommendation by Roosevelt of Colonels Frank Knox and Henry L. Stimson as Secretaries of Navy and War in June. As early as May 25 the *Nation* had emphasized the consequences of the spreading of the war on the coming presidential election and the widening split among Republicans on foreign policy; "Headed by Col. Frank Knox, the party's vice-presidential candidate in 1936, great numbers of Republicans are stampeding toward the Roosevelt policy of giving all possible aid to the Allies short of entering the war," it announced; "Knox himself is believed ready to accept a place in the Roosevelt

cabinet as Secretary of the Navy," and "there is much talk of a "coalition cabinet." ⁸⁹ There was no yelling "reactionary" at Knox here, and the raucous abuse of the 1936 campaign was conspicuous by its absence as the homogenization of the New Deal and some of its redoubtable foes showed strong signs of becoming a fact in swift order.

In fact, the subsequent comment on the recommendation of both Knox and Stimson put the onus for making a political issue out of the matter squarely upon the Republicans. On June 29 the *Nation* commented severely, "If the appointment of Col. Knox and Col. Stimson appeared smart politics it was because the Republicans made it so," it noted; "Instead of squealing in anguish and anger the G.O.P. chieftains would have done better to applaud the President's move as proving that, in an emergency, the country could not get along without Republican aid." ⁹⁰ This generous view of the situation had not obtained early in 1933, when the removal of all Republicans as soon as possible in that "emergency" had been a basic assumption.

But in truth liberals favoring the activist line of the Administration were already beyond the partisan side in terms of traditional party responses; in the action of the Senate Military and Naval Affairs Committees for confirmation of these appointments, the liberal press ignored the party affiliation of the Senators and noted their responses as "isolationists" and as supporters of the Administration. The *Nation* was very warm in its thanks to these committees for their rapid confirmation, and praised Stimson as the most cognizant person in public life on the threat to the United States should Britain be forced to capitulate to the Germans and the European war come to an end.⁹¹ The *New Republic* showed the same amazing restraint in commenting on these appointments although in eschewing abuse of these men for their socio-economic and political views it did have a few reservations; Stimson, the editors pointed out, was 73 years old and had had no contact with the War Department since 1912; Knox had served in the army in 1898 and 1918, it was admitted, but he had no known relationship with the Navy in any capacity at all prior to now. Still the editors thought that defense of Roosevelt's action was the only proper thing to do at the moment; the appointments were "certainly better than any two routine Democratic politicians would have been," ⁹² they countered lamely in expectation of objections from readers. The assumption seemed to be that Roosevelt had nothing but run-of-the-mill partisans to consider for appointment to positions of this cardinal importance. The idea of a deliberate welding of a war political front made up of the most enthusiastic and prominent persons regardless of declared party affiliations was not considered worthy of examination.

By this time the emotional and psychological blocks which had in-

hibited most liberals from sanctioning a third term for FDR were down, and the worse the news from Europe became, the stronger the call to press for a continuance of his leadership. On June 22, Freda Kirchwey's signed *Nation* editorial "What Next?" which insisted that the United States was already at war with Germany, "and has been for years," and that the British Empire had not been defeated, despite what had happened at Dunkirk, declared in powerful tones, "the President has demonstrated more understanding of the nature of the struggle against Fascism than any other public man in America," which prompted the following imperative, "Franklin D. Roosevelt must be reelected."⁹³ On July 7, 1940 in an editorial comment on the nomination of Wendell L. Willkie the *Nation* made it evident that there would be no trouble on this question; "In picking Wendell L. Willkie as its candidate the [Republican] Convention virtually guaranteed the renomination of FDR for a third term," and not the slightest doubt was expressed that he might face a contest running against the GOP choice in the fall.⁹⁴

The *New Republic's* July 22 editorial "Reelect Roosevelt" did not use foreign policy as the chief reason for taking this position; in fact the gist of its plea for its readers taking this political choice was that FDR was the representative of the force that "looks forward to the promise of American life," a slogan recalling Herbert Croly and the journal's infancy, basing the rest of its case on his presumed superior talents at organizing the national defense.⁹⁵

It almost went without saying that there would not be unanimity on this editorial plank in view of the known sentiments of John T. Flynn. Ironically his acerbic portrait of FDR, *Country Squire In the White House*, was reviewed with overwhelming sympathy the very next week in the *New Republic* by Hamilton Basso, who congratulated Flynn for saying things that "needed saying by a liberal for a long time."⁹⁶ The July 29 issue also represented the watershed dividing Flynn from the rest of the editors with some serious degree of finality, though they undertook to defend him from readers complaining that his refusal to commit himself to full support of the "all possible aid to the Allies" position of the President made him an exponent of "defeatism."⁹⁷ From this time on most of Flynn's columns drew separate editorial comments in each issue, which grew increasingly petulant with him and strove to separate editorial policy from his views as sharply as possible; the column of August 5 drew a particularly strong editorial objection.⁹⁸ Sensitivity obviously had been enhanced by editorial sanction of the third term and Flynn's deep hostility toward it, for Flynn and editorial policy had deviated scores of times in the past, and the other editors had even been known to josh over this matter and indulge Flynn in a generous, good-natured manner. Those days were over.

Editorial sensitivity reached such levels by the end of the Democratic National Nominating Convention that they also rebuked Jonathan Mitchell for reporting his criticism of the heavy-handed, ward-heeling type of convention which re-nominated FDR. Though both weeklies had fairly smoked with indignation in 1932 and had not entirely suppressed unkind comments in 1936, the proceedings of 1940 escaped blame. But the only substantial comment made on the foreign policy issue was made by Robert Bendiner, the *Nation's* managing editor, who covered the Democratic Convention in Chicago personally. His "It Had To Be Roosevelt" commented thusly on the foreign policy plank of the party:⁹⁹

At first blush the foreign plank drafted at Chicago is less interventionist in character than its Philadelphia counterpart. The Republican statement on the war says merely that the party "is firmly opposed to involving this nation in foreign war." The Democrats state specifically, "We will not participate in foreign wars, and we will not send our army, navy, or air force to fight in foreign lands outside the Americas, except in case of attack." The rub comes in the exception, which was jammed through at the last moment by direct wire from the White House to Jimmie Byrnes, the President's faithful lieutenant.

Though this seemed to imply a measure of criticism, Bendiner obviously did not insert this comment with such an intent, for he made it plain that he was unhappy with the party's reluctant position, and reflected his preference for interventionist Republicans as allies in the coming election, no matter how "reactionary" they were on domestic issues. "I am convinced that such campaign support as Roosevelt will get from the isolationist wing of his party would be better dispensed with," he remarked disparagingly. But no editorial comment in the weeklies faintly approached the fury of Herbert Agar at the "peace-mongering" at both the national nominating conventions in July, 1940.

It became evident during the campaign that the interventionist liberals on the weeklies were going to have some serious trouble within their own ranks, for although they approached the opposition of Willkie with a bland and condescending patronization, there was genuine perturbation over the gathering of anti-involvement liberals behind the candidacy of Norman Thomas. The full circle of liberal politics in the depression decade was now fulfilled. Though Thomas was the presidential candidate of both the liberal weekly editorial staffs in 1932, they both rejoiced that he was now being deserted by most of the "independent voters of note," who in declaring their intention to vote for Roosevelt saw "more vividly the danger in the Republican alternative at home and in a Hitler victory abroad."¹⁰⁰ But

there was no doubt that both the liberal weeklies were upset by the vigorous statement of the Socialist Independent Committee for Thomas and Krueger in September, denouncing the "reaction, alien-baiting, militarist hysteria and the drive toward war," as well as their stand that Willkie and Roosevelt entertained "no material difference" in either domestic or foreign policies.¹⁰¹ The Socialists' anti-war stand was the most aggravating, and both editorial groups sought to counter their broadside by printing testimonials as to voting intentions by other well-known liberal intellectuals who announced their devotion to Roosevelt. Only a sprinkling of Thomas supporters were represented here, in the *New Republic* by Edmund Wilson, John Dewey and Richard H. Rovere. Rovere's statement printed on September 30 was probably the most succinct expression of the pro-Thomas neutralists:¹⁰²

Though pro-British (more for sentiment than because I think our fate hangs in the balance), I regard intervention as leading to almost certain native Fascism. I am against conscription. I'll not support rearmament until the Administration—not just the *New Republic*—conducts a sensible discussion of defense areas and needs. I think we must have a program of change far left of the New Deal, if we are to hope for long-range democratic survival. These convictions plus deep distrust of Roosevelt and Willkie as individuals make Thomas the only candidate I can honestly support.

The *Nation*, similarly influenced by the impressive sample of the liberal-left which had signed the September manifesto, most of whom still enjoyed the respect of their war-participationist colleagues, also sought to deflate their importance by publishing testimonials by partisans who had defected; that by Van Wyck Brooks on October 26 met the sentiments expressed by Rovere:¹⁰³

Although I am a Socialist, I am voting for President Roosevelt this year because I do not feel that Norman Thomas is realistic regarding the present world crisis. I do not see how we can hope to keep our democracy alive unless we are prepared to defend it strongly; and it seems to me that never before have we needed so much Jefferson's idea of a universal citizen army. With a powerful system of defense we may ward off war; without it we shall invite war, and we shall certainly lose that war. So I am also in favor of every possible aid to England. I admire the President's foreign policy and wish to see it continued, and it seems to me that the most convincing proof of our internal strength would be the maintenance of our present Administration.

The battering from the neutralist liberals continued, however, and the residue of memory of earlier days must have had a hand in the

printing of their views in two journals now fully committed to the opposite course, though they were usually flanked by a larger number of those who had changed. Fred Rodell, Selden Rodman and John Haynes Holmes also came out for Thomas on October 21 in the *New Republic*, Rodell's statement putting the case about as bluntly as possible for the troubled liberals who were for warmly defending and advancing the domestic New Deal but who were now breaking completely on foreign policy: "I have opposed and mistrusted from the beginning FDR's pro-war foreign policy (while favoring intelligent hemisphere defense)—and the more FDR leans toward Anglophiles like Stimson and the *New York Times*, and towards world-savers like the White Committee, the more I fear his heading inevitably if not deliberately, toward foreign war."¹⁰⁴ And a week before, Bendiner, reviewing Matthew Josephson's *The President Makers* in the *Nation*, had expressed his exasperation with Josephson's pressing the neutralist liberal position, repelled by his comparison of the pre-1917 and the then-current campaigns against American sensibilities in mobilizing them on Britain's side, his parallel of the slowdown of the New Freedom and the New Deal, and the rapid switch of attention from domestic to foreign affairs. "Is there always a war on hand just for the convenience of hamstrung reformers?"¹⁰⁵ Bendiner called out in plaintive protest.

Liberals who supported Willkie produced a much stronger reaction among the journals of liberal opinion, however. The *Nation* was incensed to find its ex-editor Villard and John L. Lewis, among others, supporting the Republican candidate.¹⁰⁶ But the thing that caused far more agitation was the bringing up of the foreign policy question. It was fully understood that Willkie was conducting an almost completely dampened campaign as far as that was involved, but there were occasions when a fulmination took place at the possibility that it might be opened up on a broad scale.

The *Nation* was furious at Arthur Krock of the *New York Times* on the occasion of the signing of the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo pact in Berlin for writing that United States policy since the quarantine speech of 1937 had "done everything possible to antagonize Japan and force it into the Axis," and for advising Republicans that political advantages were attractive possibilities from an adroit presentation of the Far East question.¹⁰⁷ And later in the month, Richard L. Neuberger in his "Willkie Sets In the West," predicting that he would lose the whole trans-Rockies region to Roosevelt as things stood on October 26, expressed fear that he still might do much damage by adopting a vigorous anti-interventionist attitude in the closing days of the campaign, since this was a position which enjoyed wide support.¹⁰⁸ On the other hand there were men such as John Chamberlain, one of the board of sponsors of the neutralist *Uncensored* of the

Writers' Anti-War Bureau, a self-professed utter isolationist and fervent opponent of collective security, who nevertheless told the *Nation* on October 19 that he was voting for Roosevelt anyway, simply on the grounds that Willkie was the candidate of a party which was built on "a distrust of the masses."¹⁰⁹

For those of its readers whose minds were not yet made up, the *New Republic* offered the ultimate in political advice in a hefty special supplement on October 7, its "Voter's Handbook," which seemed to be intended as impartial enlightenment but was as unneutral as its contributors and respondents to its question whom they were going to vote for. It probably exceeded anything put out by the Democratic National Committee by a wide margin. Of significance in the field of foreign policy was high praise of Roosevelt because of the defense expenditures of the Administration, the only item in his budget which had "grown substantially" in his second term, it was proud to announce, concluding, "we ought to have spent more and earlier for this purpose." After the scores of editorial condemnations of almost every conceivable kind of defense spending for over 10 years this was undoubtedly another major reversal.

In building a case against the Republicans now, the *New Republic* editors pointed out that they had voted heavily against higher naval appropriations in 1938, against neutrality revision in 1939 and against conscription in 1940. Ignored was the fact that the *New Republic* had bitterly opposed all of these too, as originally undertaken. Somewhat more puzzling were the facts that Republicans were responsible for the defeat of the Ludlow Amendment, so hated by FDR, and that "a dissident Democrat and a Republican" had introduced the conscription bill, but no comment was made that both parties had collaborated almost unanimously on the Smith Act, an obviously embarrassing incidental result of the war boom and hysteria now prudently ignored. Yet it was more awkward to see the *New Republic* awarding intellectual medals to the Democrats on the basis of their alleged superior wisdom in voting for the passage of bills to which just a short time before the editors had been violently in opposition. And even more eye-opening was a bland prediction, made to suppress the doubts of those in liberal ranks protesting that FDR might become a dictator, that "by no conceivable stretch of the imagination can one picture his accepting a fourth or fifth term."¹¹⁰

The victory of Roosevelt brought forth the cry for "unity" from both editorial staffs in major editorial statements in post-election numbers, but there was still time and space for a flaming moment of disunity on the *New Republic*. It was Flynn's last column in that journal, on November 11, in which he expressed the view that FDR had "dropped consideration of domestic problems and concentrated on the war" in September, 1939, when "the administration of the

President was in serious difficulties." The bulk of the column was devoted to the war scare, which he charged was now being pushed by all agencies of mass communication, especially the radio, on a non-partisan basis. He believed the President had done much to set this off, with his autumn talk of spies, reports of the sighting of mysterious submarines off our coasts, and speeches describing the ease whereby this country might be bombed by German air fleets. Flynn felt that liberals should become very concerned about protecting the radio from further use in this manner. A bracketed editorial comment bristled at the suggestion that FDR had aroused the people "about the international danger" because "the domestic program was going badly," and declared flatly that Flynn's view was "nonsense."¹¹¹ One could hardly imagine a parting of the ways taking place under less auspicious circumstances; as a sign of the end of the era, it could not have been better accompanied by a display of fireworks.

The journal's "National Unity" editorial in the same issue announced proudly, "The reelection of President Roosevelt is a piece of great good news for this country and for the cause of democracy throughout the world," insisting with great urgency that the country needed his leadership because of the "grave danger from Hitler, a danger that is only prevented from becoming immediate and desperate by the magnificent resistance Great Britain is putting up." Therefore, now was the time to have national unity behind him, even though it was "hard to forgive some of the things that were said on both sides—but especially by the Republicans." However the editors voted against unity produced "by pressure from above" as a means of suppressing sharp disagreements, ignoring the national genius for pressure from below and from all sides as the means for obtaining national unity in wartime, rather than from "above."¹¹² It was again a case of swooping high above and beyond a former stand, for the *New Republic* in discussing the propaganda of the First World War had dwelled at some length upon American capacities for self-regimentation.

There was some editorial defensiveness on account of the 22,000,000 who had voted against FDR, evidence of some hesitation about his merits, but they were consoled by the fact that Willkie had sponsored the same foreign policy, which they interpreted as being the reason Roosevelt's victory margin was not as great as in 1936. An accompanying editorial, "Roosevelt's Mandate," expressed full confidence that the defense program was a short-term project, and that the New Deal would be promptly pushed ahead once more on both domestic economic and social levels, as the only answer to Roosevelt's opponents. But here the editors were a bit perturbed as to how far to go, "for decisive as the President's majority is, it would be dangerous for slightly more than half of the people to try to govern the

other part in a way that the latter bitterly resented." In this comment, pleasure that Willkie followed the same foreign policy was once more expressed, accompanied by an admission that FDR might have been defeated on the third-term issue "easily," had it not been for the international situation. But whether it was the influence of the famous Navy Day speech of the President in Boston or healthy respect for the anti-interventionist sentiment could not be determined in seeking the source of the instrumentality which brought about its conclusion: ¹¹³

Again and again it has been demonstrated that an overwhelming majority of Americans desire not to engage in war, but is equally strongly in favor of aid to Britain, of full arming, and of no surrender to the dictators. The only way to keep out of war without abject surrender in a situation like the present, is to enable Britain to stand, and to refuse to follow the policy of appeasement in any particular. If Mr. Roosevelt does this with all the force at his command, he will be serving the purpose of those sincere Americans who voted against him on the war issue as well as that purpose can be served.

Such sentiments of compromise were not shared by Freda Kirchwey and the *Nation*. Her immediate reaction to Roosevelt's victory was a three-column open letter on November 9, "To The President-Elect," suggesting as his program what happened to be the *Nation's* views on domestic and international affairs of the moment.¹¹⁴ She followed with a blistering and belligerent "Unity For What?" on November 16, expressing her grim opposition to any national unity schemes except on terms which might be laid down by the President, and excluding a specific though unnamed group of individuals: ¹¹⁵

The only sort of unity that can be trusted to endure the strain of these coming days must emerge from a clear formulation in Washington, of the issues of the world struggle. On such a basis might be built a genuine united front of all elements that can be reasonably expected to work together. Some of these elements can doubtless be drawn from among the more liberal supporters of Wendell Willkie; there may be many a Patterson or a Stimson in the ranks of the Crusaders. But in the united front there will be no room for the reactionaries and bigots and appeasers who were with Willkie to a man. In this struggle they are to be kept on the other side of the political barricades.

In her view the election of 1940 had been an ordeal by battle on the subject of the future of the country's foreign policy, and it had been won by interventionism. From now on it was to be a case of a single-minded and determined pushing for objectives which did not have to

be presented to anyone who might be lukewarm or hostile for approval or for support. Though not quite as forceful on the subject, the editors of the *New Republic* were substantially in accord with this interpretation. But there was a major difference between the reaction to the "mandate" of 1936 and that of 1940 on the part of the liberal press as a whole. The former was interpreted as a through-pass for the socio-economic reform machine of Dr. New Deal. That of 1940 was hailed just as vociferously as a similar green light for the martial chariot of Dr. Win-the-War.

NOTES

- 1 "Who Wants To Fight?" and "Mobilize For Neutrality!", *New Republic*, September 13, 1939, pp. 142, 145-146.
- 2 *New Republic*, February 8, 1939, p. 2; March 29, 1939, p. 206.
- 3 *Nation*, September 9, 1939, p. 272.
- 4 *Nation*, September 9, 1939, pp. 260-261.
- 5 *Nation*, September 23, 1939, pp. 307-308.
- 6 *Nation*, September 16, 1939, pp. 283-284.
- 7 *Nation*, September 2, 1939, pp. 233-234.
- 8 *Nation*, September 9, 1939, pp. 264-265.
- 9 *Nation*, September 16, 1939, pp. 281-282; September 23, 1939, pp. 305-306.
- 10 *Nation*, September 23, 1939, pp. 312-313; September 30, 1939, pp. 339-340.
- 11 *New Republic*, October 4, 1939, pp. 228-229.
- 12 *New Republic*, September 27, 1939, p. 198.
- 13 *New Republic*, September 13, 1939, p. 159.
- 14 *New Republic*, September 27, 1939, pp. 213-214. H. C. Engelbrecht, in a letter to "T.R.B." (*New Republic*, October 18, 1939, p. 303), pointed out that this was a point *Merchants Of Death* had made, that 9 of the 10½ billions of dollars of sales to the Allies between 1914 and 1917 had consisted of other materials than munitions.
- 15 *New Republic*, October 4, 1939, pp. 245-246. The editors felt impelled to print part of another letter from a displeased reader later; "For years the *New Republic*, by a sharp analysis of the causes of the last war, has led the field in formulating a neutrality program for America to adopt in the event of another European conflict. Now that the fact is upon us, the *New Republic* has begun to scurry and take over." Extract from letter of Milton J. Esman, *New Republic*, November 1, 1939, pp. 371-372.
- 16 *New Republic*, October 11, 1939, p. 273.
- 17 *New Republic*, October 11, 1939, pp. 274-275.
- 18 "Embargo Battle Begins," *Nation*, October 7, 1939, p. 364.
- 19 "The Arms Embargo," *New Republic*, October 18, 1939, pp. 284-286.
- 20 *Nation*, November 11, 1939, p. 509.
- 21 *Nation*, November 18, 1939, p. 538.
- 22 *New Republic*, November 22, 1939, pp. 127-128; December 6, 1939, p. 181.
- 23 "Waging Neutrality," *Common Sense*, December, 1939, pp. 18-19.
- 24 *Nation*, September 30, 1939, p. 349.
- 25 *New Republic*, September 27, 1939, pp. 213-214.
- 26 *New Republic*, November 1, 1939, pp. 360-362.
- 27 Lerner review of *War Propaganda and the United States* in *New Republic*, August 26, 1940, pp. 281-282. It provoked a spirited exchange with Clyde Miller of the Institute of Propaganda Analysis, who concluded that Lerner did not consider anything propaganda as long as its proponents were "sincere." Lerner responded that this was not his point, that "The distinguishing mark of propaganda is the intent to manipulate the minds and beliefs of others, rather than merely to persuade." Lerner did not

- tell Miller how he was able to discern or prove "intent." *New Republic*, October 28, 1940, pp. 589-590.
- 28 *New Republic*, November 29, 1939, p. 153.
- 29 *Nation*, November 25, 1939, p. 580.
- 30 *New Republic*, October 18, 1939, pp. 291-292; November 8, 1939, pp. 66-69.
- 31 *New Republic*, November 8, 1939, pp. 86-94. Earle performed one of the most sudden and amazing acrobatic reversals on American foreign policy of all liberals; compare in particular his *Yale Review* articles, "National Security and Foreign Policy," March, 1940, pp. 444-460, and "The Threat To American Security," March, 1941, pp. 454-480.
- 32 "Dictated But Not Red," *Nation*, October 21, 1939, pp. 429-430. See also Kirchwey, "Communists and Democracy," *Nation*, October 14, 1939, pp. 399-401, in which she advanced the thesis, soon to have wide credence among liberals, that the Communists were the defectors from the Popular Front which liberals had formed.
- 33 *The Communist*, October, 1939, pp. 899-904.
- 34 *New Republic*, December 6, 1939, p. 179.
- 35 *Nation*, December 16, 1939, p. 664.
- 36 "Thunder Heads," *New Republic*, January 22, 1940, p. 100.
- 37 "Aid To Finland," *New Republic*, January 29, 1940, p. 132.
- 38 *Nation*, January 27, 1940, p. 85-86.
- 39 Kirchwey, "The President's Message," *Nation*, January 13, 1940, pp. 34-35; Davis, "The War and America," *Harper's*, April, 1940, pp. 449-462.
- 40 *New Republic*, January 22, 1940, pp. 102-103.
- 41 *New Republic*, February 19, 1940, pp. 233-236.
- 42 *Nation*, February 17, 1940, p. 242; "Safe For Fascism," *Nation*, March 9, 1940, p. 324; "The Specter Of Peace," *New Masses*, April 2, 1940, pp. 19-20.
- 43 *Nation*, April 6, 1940, pp. 435-436.
- 44 "After the Nazi White Book," *New Masses*, April 16, 1940, p. 22.
- 45 *New Republic*, April 1, 1940, p. 424.
- 46 *New Republic*, April 29, 1940, pp. 580-582.
- 47 *New Republic*, May 13, 1940, pp. 646-647.
- 48 *New Republic*, May 20, 1940, pp. 685-708 (705).
- 49 *New Republic*, June 3, 1940, pp. 765-766. Niebuhr reviewed both the Beard and Buell books in the *Nation*, May 25, 1940, pp. 656-658, making no attempt to conceal a profound preference for Buell and contempt for Beard.
- 50 *Common Sense*, April, 1940, pp. 3-5.
- 51 *Nation*, May 18, 1940, pp. 613-614; May 25, 1940, pp. 640-641; June 8, 1940, pp. 695-698.
- 52 *Nation*, June 8, 1940, p. 693; June 15, 1940, p. 721. The Kirchwey editorial appeared on p. 723 of this issue.
- 53 *Nation*, June 1, 1940, p. 683; June 8, 1940, p. 710.
- 54 Shortly after the President's address, a major non-interventionist speech was delivered on the Virginia campus by Harry Elmer Barnes, "Europe's War and America's Democracy." It was published in the *Virginia Quarterly Review*, Autumn, 1940, pp. 552-562.
- 55 *New Masses*, May 21, 1940, p. 3.
- 56 "The Way To Help the Allies," *New Republic*, June 17, 1940, pp. 813-814. See also editorials on p. 807 and p. 812.
- 57 *New Republic*, June 24, 1940, pp. 845-846.
- 58 *New Republic*, June 24, 1940, p. 856.
- 59 *New Republic*, August 19, 1940, p. 233-235.
- 60 *New Republic*, July 29, 1940, p. 141. The third from the last column Flynn wrote for the *New Republic*, "One Man Fight," published on October 28, 1940, pp. 585-586, was a powerful tribute to Thurman Arnold for his book *Bottlenecks Of Business*, declaring "I have watched with prayerful attention and ungrudging praise Mr. Thurman Arnold's persistent drive during the last two years to enforce the anti-trust laws." Flynn argued that it was unpopular with both big business and the New Deal now, in the fall of 1940, and even some labor leaders, who found it easier to deal with a few big employers than many small ones. On his own behalf Flynn testified, "My own ol-

jection to the whole policy of concentration, combination and monopoly and trade restraints was that it made the economic system unworkable. It developed the most complete barrier to new private investment that any dreamer of the capitalist catastrophe could hope for. And as private investment was and is the dynamic economic element of the system of private property in a money economy, anything that tended to check investment and even end it was economically indefensible in such a system."

61 *Common Sense*, July, 1940, pp. 3-8; August, 1940, p. 28.

62 *Nation*, May 6, 1939, pp. 519-520.

63 *Nation*, July 8, 1939, pp. 49-50.

64 *Nation*, June 29, 1940, p. 771.

65 Hanighen, "Capital Letter," *Common Sense*, July, 1940, pp. 13-15.

66 *Nation*, July 13, 1940, pp. 24-25. Although liberals had organized vigorous protests over a loyalty oath in Fascist Italy in 1932 and conscription in Germany under Hitler in 1935, they chose to ignore H. L. Ickes' order that the 45,000 employees of the Department of the Interior swear an oath of loyalty to the government and Mrs. Roosevelt's demand for compulsory military service in time of peace in June, 1940.

67 *Nation*, July 20, 1940, pp. 51-52.

68 *Nation*, June 15, 1940, p. 723.

69 *New Republic*, July 1, 1940, p. 14, for this citation, and references below.

70 "Universal Military Service," *New Republic*, July 1, 1940, pp. 6-7.

71 See "How Large An Army?", *New Republic*, August 5, 1940, p. 173, intensely critical of "our political leaders" and their lack of frankness in discussing the issue of the size and purpose of the army under consideration, and "Common-Sense On Conscription," *New Republic*, August 12, 1940, pp. 206-207; both editorials were in total opposition to the Burke-Wadsworth Bill.

72 *Nation*, July 13, 1940, p. 22. See also August 3, 1940, p. 81.

73 Kirchwey, "There Is No Alternative," *Nation*, August 31, 1940, pp. 85-86; Stewart, "Conscripting America," same issue, pp. 86-88.

74 "Do We Need Conscription?", *New Republic*, September 2, 1940, pp. 294-295. The *New Masses* ("Defeat the Draft!", August 13, 1940, p. 3) remarked with disdain, "The fact that magazines like the *Nation* and *New Republic* are endorsing a proposal which could black out all liberal thought adds a footnote to the epitaph for the kind of liberalism that they represented."

75 *Nation*, September 7, 1940, pp. 184-185.

76 *Nation*, September 14, 1940, p. 201.

77 See especially Charles Malcolmson, "Washington Expects War," *Nation*, August 31, 1940, pp. 106-107, an example of an "inside" piece purporting to relate confidential assurances from Administration officials that Britain would lose soon and that Hitler could be expected to launch an attack here the coming spring.

78 *Common Sense*, September, 1940, pp. 14-15. See also "Liberalism In the Defense Program," *Common Sense*, October, 1940, p. 20, which attacked the conscription bill as "a measure which holds the most dangerous threats to American democracy."

79 "We have taken issue with our contemporaries of the *New Republic* who only yesterday claimed hearty opposition to militarism, to war, to Fascism, foreign or native. But our liberal colleagues are, alas, not noted for standing the gaff. They have a 1917 tradition of capitulation when the brass hats bark their commands. In the relative stability of the 1920's, that publication again opposed militarism and war. But now, like the unfortunate girl in the old English song, 'once again she lost her good name.' " "We Do Not Choose Death," *New Masses*, September 10, 1940, p. 3.

80 Letter from Wadsworth Mulrooney, *New Republic*, September 16, 1940, pp. 387-388.

81 *New Republic*, October 21, 1940, p. 539.

82 Baldwin, "Conscientious Objectors," *Nation*, October 12, 1940, pp. 326-328.

83 *Nation*, October 19, 1940, pp. 350-351.

84 *New Republic*, October 28, 1940, p. 572.

85 *New Republic*, September 14, 1938, pp. 147-149.

86 "The 'liberals' will now rise and sing their hymn of hate of John L. Lewis for his attack upon the great liberal god, and particularly, for his statement that the god cannot be elected to a third term. By liberals I mean those persons—burning radicals,

former Wall Street law juniors, customers' men nursing secret philosophies, gentlemen of the payroll and the like—who define liberalism as anything that Franklin D. Roosevelt favors, even though it be militarism, patrolling the Yangtze for the Standard Oil, naming S. Clay Williams head of the NRA, or running for a third term. The theory is, of course, that well-worn gas-house district philosophy that when a politician does you a favor then you belong to him for the rest of your life." Flynn, "Lewis Plays Power Politics," *New Republic*, February 12, 1940, p. 211.

87 "T.R.B.," "The Republican Campaign Huddle," *New Republic*, April 8, 1940, p. 472.

88 *New Republic*, May 13, 1940, pp. 630-633.

89 *Nation*, May 25, 1940, p. 638.

90 *Nation*, June 29, 1940, p. 770.

91 *Nation*, July 13, 1940, p. 23.

92 *New Republic*, July 1, 1940, pp. 4-5.

93 *Nation*, June 22, 1940, pp. 743-744.

94 *Nation*, July 6, 1940, p. 3. The *Nation*, July 20, 1940, p. 53, quoted Roosevelt as saying to a guest the week before the Democratic national convention, "I am an old and tired man."

95 *New Republic*, July 22, 1940, pp. 102-103.

96 *New Republic*, July 29, 1940, pp. 146-147.

97 "John Flynn is not really like that about anything he believes in; we can assure anyone who doesn't know him that war or no war, he will be found fighting to the last gasp for progressive causes as he understands them." "Mr. Flynn and the New Deal," *New Republic*, July 29, 1940, p. 133.

98 "Flynn Again," *New Republic*, August 5, 1940, p. 173. See also comment accompanying his column of September 9, 1940, p. 337.

99 *Nation*, July 27, 1940, pp. 66-68. The *Nation* also hailed the victory of Jeannette Rankin over Rep. Jacob Thorkelson in the Republican Congressional nomination contest in Montana; Thorkelson had long been under attack for his isolationist views. It was ironic that she should be the only person in the House to vote against the declaration of war against Japan and Germany in 1941. On Agar's fury at the peace talk at the conventions see his "The Politicians Cried Peace," *Virginia Quarterly Review*, Winter, 1941, pp. 1-10.

100 *New Republic*, September 30, 1940, p. 433.

101 Among the signers of this statement were Leonard Abbott, V. F. Calverton, Sarah Cleghorn, John Dewey, Henry Pratt Fairchild, Sidney E. Goldstein, George W. Hartmann, Will Herberg, Isador Hoffman, John Haynes Holmes, Sidney Hook, B. W. Huebsch, Alfred Kazin, Milton S. Mayer, A. J. Muste, William A. Orton, Kirby Page, Burton Rascoe, A. Philip Randolph, James Rorty, Richard H. Rovere, John Nevin Sayre, Vida Scudder and Bertram D. Wolfe. See *Nation*, September 28, 1940, p. 283, for full list.

102 *New Republic*, September 30, 1940, p. 445.

103 *Nation*, October 26, 1940, p. 388.

104 *New Republic*, October 21, 1940, p. 554.

105 *Nation*, October 12, 1940, pp. 342-344.

106 *Nation*, November 2, 1940, pp. 405-406.

107 Krock was quoted as saying, ". . . if war with Japan were represented as the possible consequence of Mr. Hull's steady admonitions to Tokyo, of the Chinese loans, and of the economic sanctions of embargo, it is improbable that very many Americans would have any heart for the enterprise." *Nation*, October 5, 1940, p. 285.

108 *Nation*, October 26, 1940, pp. 384-386.

109 *Nation*, October 26, 1940, pp. 386-387.

110 "Voter's Handbook," (special supplement), *New Republic*, October 7, 1940, pp. 487-504.

111 *New Republic*, November 11, 1940, p. 660.

112 *New Republic*, November 11, 1940, p. 643.

113 *New Republic*, November 11, 1940, p. 647.

114 *Nation*, November 9, 1940, pp. 437-438.

115 *Nation*, November 16, 1940, pp. 465-466.

LIBERALS AND THE ROOSEVELT
FOREIGN POLICY : IV—INTERVEN-
TIONISM AND ENLISTMENT FOR THE
DURATION WIN THE INTRAMURAL
DEBATE IN THE LAST YEAR OF PEACE

THE "OVERAGE" DESTROYER DEAL
AS PRELUDE TO THE POLICIES OF 1941

THE hectic election campaign of 1940, as we have seen, was accompanied by a number of additional issues which divided and diverted the energies and attention of liberal America, as they did other segments of the country's opinion-making groups. By far the most significant was the immense controversy over the merits of adopting peacetime conscription. But running alongside was a somewhat quieter appeal, first given wide publicity by the intensely interventionist Committee To Defend America By Aiding The Allies. The liberal press never formally aligned with this organization, and did not often mention its activities, perhaps due to the fact that they did not share the social philosophies of many known members of this group, headed by the celebrated Kansas journalist William Allen White.¹ Its appearance in the quivering days of June, 1940 aroused a minimum of comment from even the most enthusiastically pro-British liberals,² but it obtained the sympathy and psychological support of the liberal editors on one important project, the drive to assign part of the United States Navy to the British after their disaster at Dunkirk. Though this event was spread across America as a stunning British "victory," it did seem somewhat mysterious that their naval strength should be assessed so soon after as too weak to ward off

possible German invasion of England. But the propaganda in favor of sending the British a substantial flotilla of American fighting ships was very important, as it set the style for a series of subsequent appeals for like gestures in 1941, each in its turn progressively moving the United States in the direction desired by the country's interventionists of all political faiths.

The most impressed in the liberal weeklies by the White Committee's propaganda in favor of sending the so-called "over-age" destroyers to England was Freda Kirchwey. The program in favor of this move built up rather suddenly and began to receive a stunning concerted press publicity, which the *Nation* joined on August 10 with her signed editorial "Help Britain Win." The story that a substantial number of these fighting ships were obsolete and that sixty of them should be assigned to British service was accepted without any question, and she urged that "These vessels should be released promptly, by executive order if possible, by legislation if necessary."³ There was a wealth of revelation in this Kirchwey exhortation. A weariness with parliamentary tactics and the exhausting guerrilla warfare with neutralists of all shades over neutrality since 1937, in particular, had spent her patience and that of many who shared her zeal for joining the war through the medium of "aid" to the Allied belligerents. The device of the executive agreement by-pass was a stroke of genius to suggest at this moment, with so much anxiety existing about the likely congressional and popular reaction and behavior to such a maneuver. In one sense it was as revolutionary an innovation for the purpose of directing foreign policy as the conferring of legislative power upon the executive department in the first three months of the New Deal had been for the swift effecting of changes in domestic policy.

For the *Nation* this was not the first instance of "obsolete" destroyer politics. In September, 1937 there had been a proposal to lease a number of such ships to Brazil, at a time when the Roosevelt Administration was beginning its first concerted propaganda effort aimed at embellishing its publicity on the German penetration of Latin American and particularly Brazilian trade. On that occasion the editorial response had been somewhat restrained, accompanied by an unfriendly essay by one G. Arbaiza, "The Aggressive Good Neighbor," not particularly complimentary to the United States in its drive to re-assert itself in Latin-American economic affairs.⁴ But the situation was utterly changed at this moment, three years later.

The swiftness of the achievement of this objective was hailed by the editors of both the liberal weeklies, who mixed their acclaim of the President and their indirect glowing over the virtues of acts achieved without congressional debate with snorts of abuse directed at such forces as they detected in disharmony with FDR's action.

"It is excellent news that the President has arranged to exchange fifty of our over-age destroyers for ninety-nine year leases on naval and air bases in six British possessions in this Hemisphere," the *New Republic* exulted on September 9; "We need these bases desperately to defend the Continental United States, not to mention the rest of this Hemisphere." ⁵ The *Nation* on September 14 was even more emphatic in its approval, though it seemed to think there was something slightly irregular in the United States having obtained something in exchange, thinking that the ships should have been handed over "without any *quid pro quo*." The campaign to see to it that there were no British war debts after this new war was under way, even if with a jerky start. Accompanying their acclaim was a blistering shot directed at the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* for its effrontery in denouncing Roosevelt for having "committed an act of war" and for having become "America's first dictator." The *Nation* argued vigorously that "The practical justification for ignoring Congress was the necessity for speed," ⁶ an excuse which could have been used throughout the entire history of the country to excuse the ignoring of Congress at any time any President might have wished to act without its concurrence. But it also countered that the sending of the ships to England was not an act of war unless the Germans considered it such. The denunciation of the exchange by the *New Masses*, which called it "an unmistakable act of war," achieved "behind the backs of the American people," ⁷ though much more heated, was ignored. The former fuglemen in the collective security crusade were considered beyond redemption in the autumn of 1940, after the way they had acted during the agony of the French and British in May and June. Americans interested in the advancement of the national policies of Frenchmen and Englishmen had no patience for Americans devoted to the advancement of the interests and goals of Russians. But in view of the exulting which went on in the ranks of the Committee to Defend America By Aiding the Allies, it seemed that the American liberals were going to have to share the credit for the over-age destroyer deal with overage Anglophiles. The feeling of achievement, and the horizons which this event opened, would be hard to over-estimate. It may account for the complacency and lack of excitement which greeted the formation of the Italo-German-Japanese alliance in Berlin two weeks later. For the *Nation* on October 5, 1940 it simply meant that the European and Asian wars had merged, and that for the United States, "The new pact makes it clearer than ever that our frontiers, defensively speaking, are the upper Yangtze valley as well as the English Channel." ⁸ The definition of defense had received another explosive expansion impulse.

LEND-LEASE: THE GREAT
INTERVENTIONIST BREAK-THROUGH

Despite the debunking of the "Axis-Japan pact," as this long *Nation* editorial described it, there was the now-expectable collateral position put forward along with it, the absolute necessity of America clinging to Britain for its own self-defense. With Britain we were invincible; without, we were unbelievably weak and very likely to be subject to scores of humiliating and debasing restrictions within the Western Hemisphere itself if the Germans and their allies won. But editorial policy did not favor a declaration of war and a frank joining of strength with the British in this apparent moment of emergency. The primary item on the agenda was still all-out aid to Britain, embroidered now by a call to break down the financial barrier to expansion of this aid through eliminating the Neutrality and Johnson Acts completely, and a melting down of the unpaid British war debt from the First World War. The moment was at hand to provide an environment for the expansion of aid on such a scale as to make the destroyer deal a picayune operation by comparison.

The post-election weeks saw a number of leading steps made in the direction of providing the proper setting for these moves. On November 30 the *Nation*, commenting on the financial embarrassment of the Churchill government, announced that it was reported to have already spent four of the little more than five billion dollars of United States and Canadian assets existing in September, 1939. That it was for supplementing this dwindling reserve was understood, and the editors were against taking any British possessions in exchange for new flows of cash to be made available, contingent, of course, on the repeal of the Johnson Act, which still plainly said that credits to governments in default of previous obligations were forbidden. Said the *Nation*,⁹

This is no moment for the United States to play Shylock. If Britain needs credits, we should give them on the most moderate terms possible. The least we can do is to make it possible for Britain to fight our battle for us.

The real preview to what was to be known as lend-lease came on December 14, in an editorial "Financing Britain." The *Nation* came out flatly for a program of gifts and/or subsidies, using much the same argument as before, as help to a partner already on the battlefield in our place;¹⁰

It is time for us to engage in some cool realistic thinking about the problem of financing British purchases in this country, and to do that we

must grasp the meaning to Britain of American planes, steel, and other war supplies. These goods do not represent merely an addition to a margin of safety; they are the one hope of establishing that material superiority over Germany without which British courage and will to win cannot produce victory.

And, concluded the editors, "The first item in such a program should be the repeal of the Johnson and Neutrality Acts."¹¹

Both the liberal weeklies took increased heart and courage from Roosevelt's belligerent "fireside chat" radio talk of December 29, with its tone of no compromise and the absolute ruling out of any possibility of supporting action leading to a negotiated peace. Freda Kirchwey on January 4, 1941 referred to it as "his magnificent defiance of the dictators" and "an intellectual catharsis for the nation," while the *New Republic* emphasized the all-aid-short-of-war aspect:¹²

His message to all Americans ignored the unrealities of the whole debate concerning "keeping out of war" or maintaining "neutrality." What the people want is simpler than that. They want to help Britain to the utmost, and they do not want our boys to have to fight. Mr. Roosevelt emphasized his agreement on both counts and pointed out the obvious truth that the better we do the first, the more chance we shall have of avoiding the second.

As the Kirchwey commendation put it, "At present Hitler had the initiative; at present he is ahead. The job today is to keep the war going long enough to prevent him from winning. Then we can begin to talk about defeating him."¹³

The same issues continued new and more vigorous calls for the scrapping of the Neutrality and Johnson Acts, the *Nation* predicting that the former was bound to be "either revised drastically or repealed," and that repeal seemed "the most honest and safest." As for the Johnson Act, it was conceded that its repeal might "not be necessary to carry out the President's plan of lending arms to the British," but it was "a bad law," anyway, and on that basis alone it declared flatly, "It should be repealed."¹⁴ But even more astounding in this cart-wheel maneuver of the liberal weeklies was that of the *New Republic*, fervently devoted to both pieces of legislation since even before their passage. Couched in a very angry scolding to William Allen White for his opposition to the repeal or amendment of either, the editors flamed, "Men cannot live by a neutrality act alone; it is democracy that must be saved, not any particular law on the books; has not Mr. White put a gadget of the moment above the substance of the world's struggle?"¹⁵ Great changes had indeed taken place when the editors could risk printing this pompous phrasing of the issue without fear of a fierce heckling from many readers.

A major source of inspiration however was FDR's famous "four freedoms" message to Congress on January 6. The *New Republic* hailed it on the 13th, calling attention particularly to his three-point foreign policy position of "national defense, support of those resisting aggression, and no negotiated peace with conquerors," and to his rebuke of the isolationists and those who would "clip the wings of the American eagle in order to feather their nests."¹⁶ The seeming absence of opposition had the full approval of the interventionists, though an occasional breath of comment indicated that the situation was not quite as one-sided as this. For the most part it seemed to the neutralist contingent among the liberals that the Congress was about in the mood that it had been in during the first three months of 1933, reacting to a more elusive sort of intimidation, even though there was vastly more Congressional intransigence to be displayed in this last year of non-involvement than in the beginning of the New Deal. Even the inner circle of the Administration was not thought entirely free of hesitants on the foreign policy issue. Frank Hanighen, writing in the January *Common Sense* for the knot of stubborn anti-war liberals still associated with it, declared in his "War And the New Dealers" that he was convinced such stalwarts as Thurman Arnold, Rexford Guy Tugwell and others were determined anti-interventionists, utterly out of harmony with the sentiments of the Committee To Defend America By Aiding the Allies and the Knox-Stimson school of advisers, but that they were getting fearful of pressures caused by the defense boom, anti-labor sentiments and the drive to aid Britain. In Hanighen's view the sentiments of towns with booming defense plants were quite indistinguishable from those of the Anglophile pressure groups.¹⁷

And of course there was still the *New Masses*, further infuriating their late liberal friends by referring contemptuously to FDR's radio addresses as "firebrand chats" and describing his message to the 77th Congress, which the liberal weeklies found so inspiring, as "an emotional exhortation designed to prepare public opinion for a fundamental change in the state of the union," as well as being "in spirit and by innuendo" a "commitment to war." What must have caused the most wincing however was its peevish attention to Roosevelt's attempt to "idealize" the First World War "and its iniquitous Versailles peace."¹⁸ Nothing better represented the revolution which had occurred in the ranks of the liberal-left than finding the *New Masses* taking on the traditional duty of castigating Versailles, while the long-time leader in such sentiment, the *New Republic*, was now discreetly omitting all reference to that aspect of the President's address.

But the *New Republic* policy change which must have brought gasps from veteran liberal readers was its January 20 editorial on the new budget message, which swallowed the item with hardly a blink,

though 65% of its \$17½ billions were earmarked for defense. It accepted the big rise in the national debt which it involved with quiet equanimity, and though protesting mildly over a substantial cut in civilian spending on the budget as a whole, "the real question," in their minds, was whether the appropriations were "adequate to the need."¹⁹

This issue of the *New Republic* served to illustrate an even deeper withdrawal of editorial policy from its anti-militarist traditions, with the launching of the lend-lease bill in the House of Representatives. Its proponents among the liberal press seized upon its number, 1776, as a propaganda device, seeking to relate it to historical memories in a reverse manner, although there was more than a note of truth to the ironical comment that the bill sought to reverse the decision for freedom from England in that famous year by returning the country to a constituent position in the British Empire. The editors of the *New Republic*, in their editorial comment "The Battle of 1776,"²⁰ gave the bill full support, thought it should have a two-year renewable time limit, and considered its passage necessary at once, in view of the strong likelihood of the invasion of England by German troops "in the next few months." Its passage was also expected to strengthen the President's hand, and would enable him to "speak with authority when he asks the British leaders for their war aims and their peace terms," even though there was not the slightest indication at the time that he entertained any such intention. But the editors were far more concerned with an omnibus attack on the forces gathering to oppose this measure, and they delivered themselves of a guilt-by-association masterpiece in anticipating the bill's adversaries; "Against it will rally every force opposed to the anti-Nazi cause," they predicted; "Already isolationist and appeaser, Bundist and Coughlinite, Tory Republican and Communist have united to cry "war" and "dictatorship" against the bill." For those with reservations on the idea of sending abroad vast quantities of military equipment and war resources, with all the furor about "defense" rending the air, the editors sought to calm this in advance by stressing the "lend" aspect of lend-lease, indirectly anticipating the global garrison state of the postwar period in their explanation, "However the war ends, America will have need of strong armaments in the immediate postwar years, and the lend-lease plan is a way of ensuring the return to us of at least a substantial portion of the armaments we have provided, or their equivalent." The avoidance of any ugly "war debt" wrangle was shining brightly in the psychology of the editors just below the surface of this plausible explanation.

The *Nation* was nowhere near as pleased with the way the Lend-Lease Bill had been broached. Its January 18 editorial "The President's Plan" criticized the drafting and introduction as defective, and

thought it should have been introduced by vociferous pro-British representatives in the Republican minority of the House. It also favored applying a time limit to it and a provision for keeping Congress informed as to how it was being administered, if passed, while saving special derogation for those who were hostile to it.²¹ This was the main theme of Freda Kirchwey's long signed editorial the following week, in which she selected its conservative critics such as Mark Sullivan and the publisher Roy Howard for a special flaying, particularly because they advanced doubts about sending such vast amounts of wealth to a country which was evidently becoming a Socialist state, in view of the character of those rising to power on all sides in the Churchill government. Her comment read in part like a pre-World War One street-gathering handbill: ²²

The rise to power in England of Labor men and leaders of progressive thought may have frightened Mr. Sullivan, but it has given millions of Americans reason to hope that this war will not necessarily end in another period of reaction and nationalist conflict. The growing belief that capitalism in its old forms can never be revived will create enthusiasm rather than fear in the heart of the ordinary American. He is no socialist but he is a man who read Mr. Howard's newspapers and then went out and voted for Roosevelt.

Those who survived into the post-war period had ample opportunity to watch the "capitalism in its new forms" at work in the twelve Communist dictatorships which came to fruition during the clash and immediately thereafter.

A note of petulance seeped through I.F. Stone's January 19 Washington letter to the *Nation* which appeared immediately after the main Kirchwey editorial on the 25th. "The lend lease bill circumvents the Johnson Act and the Neutrality Act, and perhaps also the national debt limitation," he told the readers, adding for good measure, "It unquestionably places war-time powers in the hands of the President." Stone was very unhappy with the pro-Administration testimony in favor of the bill by Secretaries Hull, Morgenthau, Stimson and Knox and by defense chief Knudsen; "All five put together added very little to our knowledge of the lend-lease bill, and the aggregate impression left by their testimony was not one of candor." And he left as a parting thrust the suggestion that "Both Stimson and Knox will no doubt blush in the near future over their assurances to the Committee that there is no intention under the bill to convoy merchant ships to Great Britain."²³ This was almost a breath from the *Nation* of 1931-1937, with its quizzical and skeptical flavor toward any pro-war move, which the journal had always specialized in dissecting in the past. How it managed to see the light of day with

editorial opinion so one-sidedly arrayed on the side of the Administration and its bill was unexplainable.

Of course, Stone's restraint had none of the quality of the special boxed editorial in the January 21 *New Masses*, "The Lend-Lease Dictatorship," denouncing the bill as "a dictatorial bill to get the United States into war," and "an evasion of the Neutrality and Johnson Acts and a long step toward direct military participation in the European conflict."²⁴ Utterly uncritical was the *New Republic's* denunciatory "Is Lend-Lease A Step To War?," on the 27th, which deeply resented the advancement of this idea by Senator Wheeler and Ambassador to England Joseph P. Kennedy while ignoring its sponsorship by the Marxists. Both weeklies turned white with fury at Wheeler for his accusation that by going ahead with this bill, Roosevelt was formulating the "New Deal Triple-A foreign policy—plow under every fourth American boy."²⁵ The *Nation* sympathized with Roosevelt's anger at Wheeler, but in the subsequent exchanges between the two men, the editors thought Roosevelt indiscreet, and unfair both to Wheeler and the country, and had suffered some lowering of prestige as a result.²⁶

At the same time the *Nation* played havoc with Republican opponents of the Lend-Lease Bill, flinging at them their opposition to the lifting of the arms embargo in 1939 on grounds that it would involve the United States in war, in contrast to their new profession of desire to provide both arms and loans to Great Britain, but along different lines than the President proposed; "Is this just a maneuver or does it represent a real change of heart and a confession of error in 1939?," the editorial "H.R. 1776" asked. The comment went on to rejoice over the unexpected support from Willkie, and aided the defeated Republican presidential candidate as a consequence, denouncing his detractors among the Republicans. The *Nation* now considered such an ally in the struggle as immensely useful, even though in the just-concluded election campaign propaganda it had depicted Willkie as a veritable babe in arms when it came to the subject of foreign affairs. It was willing to cite him as an authority now.²⁷

Republican inconsistencies and confusion on the subject of intervention in the war were easy to exploit at this moment of almost-incandescent propaganda and war scares in the first three months of 1941. But there were other elements which needed chastising for their reluctance and doubt as well, and the persistence of such sentiments among liberals was properly scolded by Max Lerner in the *New Republic*, recovered from this intellectual infection himself since June, 1940 and a profound interventionist now. His "Hamlet And the Presidency" revealed his impatience with all elements hesitant about extending the powers of the executive department, glori-

fied by him now as "the great instrument of majority-rule democracy." He was gravely hurt that "in the shadow of Nazism we are even more inclined to regard the reactionary Congress that we have as the bulwark of our liberty and the progressive President that we have as a potential Hitler," but even more grievously affronted by his fellow liberals, whom he charged with being frozen into the tradition of always being in the opposition; complained Lerner,²⁸

They want to see a good society created, but they dare not be in on the creation. They are most of them Villards or Flynns, whose loftiest dream stretches only to a sort of veto power over other people's actions. They are incapable in their twisted solitude of having a hand in those majority-rule revolutions that have been the glory of American history.

Lerner cast lend-lease in this category, and yearned to see liberals as a whole vigorously championing this policy. If liberal intellectuals were to have the choice in the future between being dissident stragglers on the edge of the great political battle sites and having a ride in the front wagons of the likely winners, Lerner far preferred the latter. The aroma of victory and the spoils to be divided thereafter simply had overpowered him by now. The traditional function of liberalism meant nothing when matched with the new possibilities. And he could not understand the tenacity of the old tradition, which he struggled to refrain from tagging as rank reaction.

As the lend-lease debate stretched into March, tempers among the liberal editors, eager for an end to the talk and prompt passage, rose to new levels. The tough fight of Wheeler in particular produced an infuriated *Nation* repudiation on March 8; "Those who once trusted Burton K. Wheeler as an honest liberal, whatever his differences with the Roosevelt Administration, will not soon forget the shameless demagoguery that marks his effort to defeat a measure clearly demanded by a majority in Congress and in the country." Wheeler had been bracketed for some time with Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh as an implacable opponent of the President's foreign program, and along with a handful of other persons, was now the object of a campaign of personal attacks which exceeded almost anything known in the history of liberal journalism. An example of this was I. F. Stone's "Wheeler's Cliveden Set," the following week, which verged on character assassination.²⁹

But the battle was about over, and with the issues of the third week of March and after, pleased essays of self-congratulation began to appear, the passage of lend-lease signalling the energetic taking-up of Roosevelt's call for \$7 billion to clothe the act with war-material flesh. The *Nation* editorial on March 22 commented proudly that the second week of March might "well prove to have marked the

turning point of the war," adding that the effect of the passage of lend-lease was the sharply increased aerial bombing by the British air force in Europe by new types of bombers carrying heavier loads and with a longer flying range. The editors gloated over reports of vast damage in Berlin and the Ruhr cities, and assured the readers that German retaliation was quite modest at best. And they hoped that this news would stimulate Congress at least to vote for a billion dollars a month for the next six months for lend-lease spending.³⁰

The passage of the lend-lease act and the part played by the liberal weeklies in their strenuous support of this legislation had a number of political and policy consequences of importance. Enrollment behind the President followed on a scale never seen before. Criticism of Administration moves virtually vanished, and from that time on hardly a pronouncement on the war was ever subjected to the afterthoughts and secondary ruminations which had always characterized liberal journalism acting in its critical capacity. From the adoption of lend-lease to United States entry into the war nine months later the liberal weeklies functioned primarily as part of the Administration's opinion-making apparatus, on foreign affairs issues.

While lend-lease debate was going on, the *New Republic's* Washington columnist "T.R.B." insisted that the bill had been under construction before the 1940 election and was largely pressed by Senator George of Georgia, who replaced Senator Key Pittman when the latter died, as the major agent of the Administration's will in Senate legislation consideration proceedings. He claimed that George, one of the politicians whom the President had tried to have "purged" in the congressional election in 1938, had been reconciled to the fold by Secretary of State Hull, a fast friend, and that Hull had induced him to work so hard for the bill. "T.R.B." also thought it worthy to reveal that the bill had been deliberately structured to encourage compromises rather than comprehensive frontal resistance, with Hull the mastermind; "against his unheralded, low-visibility maneuvers, Messrs. Burt Wheeler and Bennett Clark are likely to be no more than lost children," he crowed.³¹ A great revolution had occurred among the *New Republic's* writers on the subject of Congressional resistance to the Administration since the days of 1934-1938.

But the enhancement of Roosevelt himself was a concomitant of no small importance, especially when looked at in the context of the new consideration of liberalism as a camp-follower of the mighty as opposed to the tradition of independent and lonely critic, the conscience of the social order, so to speak. A three-column editorial in the *New Republic*, "Roosevelt Today," while lend-lease debate was raging, commended him for having "escaped the historic curse of the liberal, which is naïveté," in justification of the long train of compromises which he had made to remain in office. But it took even greater pleas-

ure in noting that it was during his tenure that the liberals had been invited into the court and the refectory of the highly-placed; the gratitude flowed out warmly:³²

The miracle of Mr. Roosevelt's early tenure was that he built an effective instrument out of . . . unpromising materials. He welded Southern landholders and cheap-labor industrialists, Northern machine Senators and Representatives and a few isolated liberal voices into a reform weapon which for a time, scattered all before it. Intellectual liberalism, which had gone into hiding in the colleges after the World War, and which spoke chiefly through two liberal weeklies, through scattered sociological studies unknown to the general public, and through books of limited circulation, found itself, too, in possession of the liberal's dream; the power to write the laws of the land.

Though Lerner insisted that liberals enjoyed the status of anonymous critics to the point of it being an obsession, here it seemed that being called into consultation on making national policy was as much a driving compulsion. Perhaps what was in conflict here was simply that Lerner was referring to the Old Liberalism, and the editors, in the above commentary, the New. The editors could not smother the feeling that the liberals were about to be called into the consultation chambers of the war strategists as they had been into those of the peace-time domestic reformers.

It remained for "T.R.B." on March 31 to advance the ultimate in the progress of Roosevelt in his column "FDR: President Of the World." With the Lend-Lease Act powers and the command of the appropriations coming in their train, he felt that the President could properly be called this, in as mercurial a re-estimate of Roosevelt as ever took place, in view of the *New Republic* columnist's willingness to throw him to the wolves in 1937 and 1938 as an ideological bankrupt, no longer deserving as leader of American liberalism. Now he had "a mandate to use the unrivalled productive capacity of the United States for the rescue of beleaguered world democracy," a task which cast him in the immense role of world leadership. Nor was this accidental or unanticipated, according to "T.R.B.":³³

Roosevelt has not been taken unawares by his new assignment. He knew he was inviting it when he decided to run for a third term. He has seen it coming ever since his 1936 quarantine-the-aggressor speech in Chicago, a premature bid to America for abandonment of its post World War isolationism. At the start of his first administration, when he scuttled the London Economic Conference, the President himself subscribed to the basic concepts of the isolationist doctrine. His 1934 I-hate-war speech at Chautauqua might have been delivered during the 1941 lend-lease debate by

Senator Burton K. Wheeler. But as a kind of order emerged from the chaos of the depression at home, and as his own hold on the electorate became secure, Mr. Roosevelt began preparing for the day when his domestic policies would become exportable, when they would have world relevancy.

In view of what "T.R.B." had written about Roosevelt since 1933, this was not only the most astounding interpretation of the Rooseveltian foreign policy ever sent aloft in the *New Republic*, but as magnificent a somersault as ever performed by a liberal journalist. That he did not remember the correct dates of either the Chicago Bridge or Chautauqua speeches points up how little meaning history had assumed in the policy turnabout which was now featured in the junior liberal weekly.

INVASION SCARES AND NEW GERMAN VICTORIES EXTEND LEND-LEASE IMPLICATIONS

There was a noticeable diminution of fright among the interventionist sector of American liberal journalism over a German invasion of the United States around the time of the presidential election of 1940, and for a time predictions of imminent penetration of Des Moines and points West by Storm Troopers of the Third Reich dropped out of sight. There was never any clear logic to the propaganda of invasion scares, but the growth of the sentiment among the editors of both liberal weeklies, that the United States and Britain had somehow rejoined, made an invasion of the latter tantamount to a pending penetration of the former. It was as a rule difficult to tell which was the subject when invasion predictions were the order of the day, even though there were almost weekly stories of a coming German saturation envelopment of Britain between July 1940 and June 1941.

During the lend-lease debate two months later there was a minimum of invasion stories, undoubtedly due in part to the failure of the suspected cross-Channel operation by the Germans after their spectacular successes in May and June, 1940. The accent began to be placed in part on the British capacity for offensive actions, though the proponents of lend-lease were not unaware of the sentimental impact of invasion prophecies even here, as has been seen, along the lines which had been tried out during the partisanship on behalf of the over-age destroyer assignment. But consistency had no part in this barrage of speculations, though there was for a time an almost complete disappearance of the hysterical fear of an appearance of Hitler's legions in mid-America via Brazil. On February 1, the *Nation* declared, "No

one in his senses thinks primarily of the German threat in terms of bombs over St. Louis, or even over Sandy Hook." In its view here, the danger was that "a victorious Germany would be a power stretching from Russia to the Irish coast, a power whose industries, resources, naval strength, and vast supplies of slave labor could compel this country to go Fascist without firing a shot."³⁴

The implication of course was that invasion of Britain was still very much on the German agenda, though nothing was said as to what would happen in Russia should this great German saturation eventuate, and especially if this would result in the Communists being so affected as also "to go Fascist without firing a shot." Undoubtedly the allegation of the German determination to conquer the world was being kept in reserve for this issue.

The *New Republic* was a little plainer in its clinging to the invasion thesis, arguing in a long editorial on March 17, predicting the victory of H.R. 1776, "We do not believe Hitler will make war on this nation unless he conquers Britain, no matter what we may do. It is not his habit to take on more than one adversary at a time, if he can help it." This was advanced in a very significant statement and prelude to the next step beyond lend-lease, that the United States should also provide naval convoy protection for the British merchantmen carrying lend-lease goods from here to England, should the latter suffer such personnel losses in the fighting ahead "as to necessitate a call on our manpower as well."³⁵ The editors had already assumed, as far back as February 10, however, that the President would override the limitations of the bill at once, when passed, if the occasion made it necessary to do so.³⁶

Though action of more intimately interventionist nature supplementing lend-lease was expected months before it happened, the major stimulus for the stentorian chorus of calls for American convoys for British merchantmen and the revival of the invasion fright were products of the second annual spring scare. This was produced by two things, a rumor that a German battle fleet had gotten loose in the Atlantic, and the lightning German victories in the Balkans and Mediterranean area. The first of these, coming so soon after the passage of the Lend-Lease Act, produced panic in the *Nation*, which on March 29 urged that United States ships carry goods to Halifax to cut down on the period of time they would be on the high seas in British freighters.³⁷ In one sense it was the first step in the demand for the conveying of the British ships themselves.

In April, 1941 the plea for American convoys for British merchantmen intensified, a consequence of reports of heavy sinkings by the German submarines. The *Nation's* April 19 "War of Ships" found the losses so oppressive that they urged convoys even at the risk of American involvement in the fighting; "Convoys may bring us fully

into the war, but unless the U-boats are mastered, Hitler is very likely to win a complete victory.”³⁸ Again the subsequent menace to the United States was brought out as an ominous expectable consequence. “Protect the Cargoes!,” shouted the *New Republic* in support on April 28, with almost identical reasoning;³⁹

The *New Republic* believes that the United States should immediately take whatever steps are necessary to see that our supplies reach the British people. If as a result Hitler declares war he will only be doing a little sooner what he is sure to do later if he is not defeated in the meantime. We do not believe he will declare war; but the risk is insignificant compared with the risk-to-us of a British defeat.

The editors bristled at charges that they were urging successive steps sure to bring this country into war, and retorted, “the validity of this statement depends upon what you mean by war. In one sense, we have already been at war for years.” Their argument was once more based on the assumption of the inevitability of German invasion of the United States in the event of Britain’s defeat, and the inference was that it was sure to be a successful invasion, if it happened.

Freda Kirchwey’s signed *Nation* editorial on May 3, “War Is Not the Issue,” backed the *New Republic* to the hilt; “Today we must insist that war is not the primary issue; the defeat of Hitler is the issue.” Her increased desperation over the Atlantic struggle had by now brought another point into view. She admitted that Americans warning the British of the presence of German raiders or submarines in the shipping lanes engaged in “an act so slightly short of war” that Hitler had “little more than a legalistic excuse not to fight,” and his refusal to do so was a cause of obvious disappointment in her case. Her primary irritation at the moment was Roosevelt’s failure to explain to the people the horrid alternative to adopting convoys and she offered a bit of advice:⁴⁰

We are not being led, step by step, unwittingly into war, as the isolationists claim. We know what we want, and we deserve the confidence of our leaders. They could learn a useful lesson in the propaganda value of courage and candor by studying the public speeches of Winston Churchill.

Churchill had qualified his famous “give us the tools and we will finish the job” speech by saying “I meant put them within our reach.” The liberal willingness to comply suggested that Miss Kirchwey was right, and that the movement toward war was “wittingly,” and not the contrary.

The course of the war in the Mediterranean and Africa, which re-

vealed that the British predicament was not being mended by oratory, unloosed another wave of invasion dread among liberals, bringing amateur geopolitics to its highest peak probably for the entire war. In May and June, 1941 the expected invasion of the United States via West Africa and Brazil reached flood tide, aided by stupendous predictions of an apocalyptic Armageddon to be fought in mid-America somewhere.⁴¹ This reopened the *New Republic's* private war with its late editor John T. Flynn, who had scathingly disparaged the possibility of the invasion of the United States in another periodical. The editors promptly mobilized extensive statements by George Fielding Eliot, Fletcher Pratt, Alfred Vagts, Max Werner and Stefan T. Possony which testified to the ease with which Hitler might penetrate the country. Possony's statement was the most frightening, and in the views of some of the neutralist liberals, the most fantastic. But there was little doubt in the minds of the journal's editors, from the content of their May 12 symposium "Can America Be Invaded?," that such an operation was very far away.⁴² The *Nation* was just as alarmed at the imminence of Hitlerian activity in the Western Hemisphere in May, 1941.

There was a curious contradictory byproduct and undercurrent in all the liberal propaganda relating to the danger of American invasion by the Germans and the necessity of forestalling this by more active involvement in the British cause. Though the British were so weak that they presumably could not halt the Germans from sinking a third of their merchant marine and producing such desperation that American help was urgently needed, they strangely enough were credited with being able to fasten a ferocious blockade on the European coast. Herbert Agar accused Herbert Hoover of indirectly seeking to wreck this blockade with his plans for feeding the non-combatants in the occupied countries, in a debate on the question with William Henry Chamberlin in the *Nation* on May 3. Chamberlin defended Hoover and charged Agar with imputing sinister motives to Hoover. Agar replied that Hoover was trying to defy both the British and refugee French governments, and "that many of the statesmen of the little democracies" who had fled to England did not want Hoover to feed their homelands, while suggesting that there was great danger and "possible dishonor" involved in such refugee relief, ending with the assertion that "fully informed American church leaders" did not favor it either.⁴³

This was not the first time this had been aired in the *Nation*. The previous year, a short time before Christmas, a debate had been published on the subject "Shall We Feed Hitler's Victims?" between Alice Hamilton and Stefan T. Possony, the issue being whether the United States should set up relief food missions in France, the Low Countries and Norway, as suggested by the Quakers. No better insight into the

thought processes of Americans and emigrés was provided than the contrast here. Professor Hamilton, entirely in the impulsive, charitable American tradition, backed the plan with enthusiasm. Possony, political escapee from Austria and then France, was the cold strategist thinking only of British victory, fixed on the idea of defeating the Germans, and using as his trump the suggestion that Hitler would stop all such operations and appropriate their benefits. But the churchman quoted by Agar the following spring was fully in line with Possony: "The Biblical figure is altered; men cry for freedom and are proffered bread." These words by Professor Van Dusen of the Union Theological Seminary sum up the danger and the possible dishonor of the Hoover cause," Agar pronounced with self-satisfied disdain.⁴⁴

Despite this, no contradiction was seen between the sustained British European coastal blockade and the voluminous talk of an easy invasion of North America, since the latter invariably fell back on the assumption of eventual British defeat, though much of the invasion talk did not, including the statements of the President himself. The *New Republic* had once joked editorially about the days when the Army was "frightening its appropriations out of Congress," but saw no continuation of this tactic by FDR in his rhythmic reassertions of the deadly peril of a cross-Atlantic invasion by the same Germans who could not even cross the 26 miles of the English Channel. Only the Soviet sympathizers threw up to Roosevelt his oft-quoted declaration of 1916 when he was Assistant Secretary of the Navy that an invasion of the United States would be possible only by a power which was "twice as strong as we on the seas and fifty times as strong as we on the land." In addition, the 1941 invasion talk was all based on the premise that Americans would do absolutely nothing about the invasion should it transpire, and would stand around in apathy when the hostile forces came ashore, even though we now had a conscript army in existence.

Undoubtedly, such pressure was expected to serve the purpose of increasing belligerent feelings in America, for paralleling it was a rising call for frank war participation hardly consonant with the wailings of our impotence in the face of a likely German invasion. Such editorial headings as "All Out Now!," "Now We Must Act," "Take the Aggressive!," and "Action Now!," in May and June, 1941 in the liberal weeklies probably told much more of the real intent behind the repeated invasion scare stories running along side them at the moment. The President's speech at the end of May seemed to be indication that some political fruit were going to be harvested in short order as a consequence of the planting of the crop of propaganda seed which obviously flourished in the soil of reiterated invasion threats.

By this time, the liberal weeklies were almost indistinguishable from the daily press of the large cities and a substantial number of weekly and monthly journals, on the subject of the war. In some respects they lagged slightly behind in the drive toward American involvement, and their war declarations were tardy compared to others, which talked frankly of the necessity and rightness of American involvement even before the fall. By the end of the spring the liberal press had mainly abdicated its function as critic and chose to peck away at symptoms and consequences of the steadily strengthening war monolith of which they approved. In late May and June the belligerence of both the *Nation* and *New Republic* came to match that of many of the most enthusiastic martial spirits in the land. Some idea of the distance which had been covered since Lend-Lease could be envisaged in Freda Kirchwey's "Now We Must Act" on May 24:⁴⁵

Our job is to combine today with Great Britain—and with every existing anti-Nazi element in every country—to defeat Hitler by use of the forces at our joint disposal. If this means sending an army to England or Africa we must do it. Certainly it does not mean that now. . . . But it may mean supplying warships and planes, both to protect the goods we ship to Britain and to prevent the Nazis from seizing new strategic points of attack. Specifically it may mean collaborating with the British fleet and the forces of General de Gaulle to occupy the Portuguese and French islands and the French African ports before the Germans get them.

The *New Republic* in its "Take the Aggressive!"⁴⁶ two days later listed nine acts which it recommended the Administration do, all of which were as warlike as those of the *Nation*, falling just short of forcefully supporting a comprehensive attack on German shipping and submarines by the American Navy.

On May 31, 1941 the *Nation* appeared to have gone into competition with the *Infantry Journal*, featuring for the first time a front-page editorial in striking large size type signed by Freda Kirchwey, "How To Invade Europe," a dissertation which went on for over four columns. It advanced the thesis that "Hitler must be overthrown in Europe," and that "Hitler can be defeated only by revolution." It called for a revamped strategy, including flooding the occupied countries, especially France, with money, agents and propaganda to incite resistance of every imaginable kind, and a perfected sabotage program "on a Continent-wide scale," making use of every kind of "anti-fascist" force which could be found.⁴⁷ It was a prescription for a social upheaval which could initiate chaos for generations, a general civilian warfare against an uniformed enemy. Such desperation revealed that there was no price which she was not willing to have someone pay in order to obtain the removal of the Hitler regime.

Roosevelt's aggressive speech on May 28 brought a delighted cry from the *New Republic* and a premature dedication to war. Greeting FDR's address as "undoubtedly one of the most important utterances in the history of this country," the editors in "The President Meets the Challenge" on June 2 hailed his defiance of the dictators and the extremity of his language. "His words almost certainly mean fighting within a few weeks or months, depending upon Hitler's readiness to accept the challenge," it reported confidently, and so as not to be backward or caught lagging in this followed with a major policy statement:⁴⁸

The editors of the *New Republic* believe profoundly that it is a wiser national course to use force of arms now and keep Britain in the war than to abstain a little longer and be compelled to fight alone against a Fascist-dominated world.

The editors were fully convinced that we were involved now anyway; "the President has set our feet upon a path from which there can be no turning back," while a week later "T.R.B." put it somewhat plainer: "President Roosevelt has declared war on the Axis."⁴⁹ A ten-point program on June 16 was the next of its exclamatory lead editorials urging a course of undisguised participation in the war and the placing of the country's economy on a full war footing, which it repeated the following week.⁵⁰

The *Nation's* reception of the Roosevelt speech was couched in somewhat less enthusiastic and belligerent tones, though quietly in full sympathy with its implications. The Kirchwey commentary on June 7, "Before the Battle," announced, "The speech means that the President has assumed direct executive control of the nation's defense. He will do what he considers necessary to prevent an Axis attack on this Hemisphere." But more ominous was her pointed prediction that "He will act directly and to the full extent of his emergency powers without recourse to legislation except where Congressional action is plainly called for." Her confidence in the rightness of this action and the total absence of any case against it followed shortly:⁵¹

No one who believes in swift action and if necessary in secret action can seriously oppose the President's assumption of emergency powers. No one has done so except a handful of isolationists and pacifists who profess to disbelieve in the menace of Hitler's crusade.

Skepticism as to Hitler's intention to invade North America now deserved nothing but the strongest kind of censure, in the opinion of the *Nation's* senior editor. I. F. Stone, in a companion article, felt as convinced as Miss Kirchwey did that Roosevelt meant to engage the

country in full-scale naval operations in the Atlantic at once, though remarking that a problem had been posed by this decision; "The big split in Administration circles," Stone reported from Washington, "is over what to do about the Japanese when the shooting starts in the Atlantic."⁵²

In truth, Administration actions at home during these May and June months in which the notable turn toward belligerence was occurring seemed to be fair evidence that war in the Atlantic and beyond had a strong chance for eventual precipitation. The *Nation* on May 17 loudly applauded the rounding up of German and Italian aliens who were charged with overstaying their leaves in this country, and further suggested the enlargement of this program to cover all Germans and Italians who were not "outspokenly opposed" to Hitler and Mussolini as "potentially subversive." The arrest of German representatives of the German Transoceanic News Agency was especially appreciated, and it looked forward to the expulsion of embassy and consulate personnel of these two countries as well.⁵³

On June 14 the *Nation* greeted calmly the sending of consular officers home, and the confiscation by "freezing" of German and Italian funds in the United States, as if anticipated. The editors were so at war spiritually that these steps were largely anticlimactic. But the *New Republic* greeted the news with a loud yell of approval, while reproaching the Administration for not having done it much earlier. This left "nine more actions needed," it signalled, headed by its urge to "Start the Navy shooting at once, if necessary to protect the convoys."⁵⁴ In the same issue, in the midst of the alarms of impending doom, threats of invasion from several points of the compass, and the image of a world reduced to smoldering ashes and a reign of barbarism unequalled in world history should Germany win, "T.R.B." released the following admonishment:⁵⁵

The Wheelers and the Lindberghs talk through their hats when they talk about the Administration's attempts to whip up war hysteria. There has been no hysteria and no attempt to whip it up and there probably won't be.

By the end of June and for sure by the end of July the idea of a German invasion of Britain was becoming a more and more remote possibility, and that of the United States even more so. Undoubtedly "T.R.B." was correct in assaying the situation as one in which it was becoming increasingly more difficult to arouse public support simply by the repeated voicing of alarms of imminent conquest from Europe. By July this seemed to have exhausted its possibilities, and the summer doldrums were to underline this. But the propaganda battle was just warming, rather than reaching a peak of any kind. "T.R.B.'s"

reference to Wheeler and Lindbergh was in one way a back-handed tribute to two of the toughest of the symbol-figures of the anti-war-neutralist-non-interventionist position, far stronger than it may have been convenient for the frankly war-bound liberal press to admit now. A long, exhausting fight had already gone on, and a similarly severe one lay ahead. Some idea of the arguments involved and their representation by liberal journalism is in order.

LIBERAL INTERVENTIONISM AND THE STRUGGLE WITH LINDBERGH AND "AMERICA FIRST"

The fruit of liberal depression political propaganda reached its peak of perfection in 1941, as the world ground on its way to universal war. The many strands of criticism all converged on the issue of the desirability or undesirability of United States involvement in the war during this time, and the boiling point of pro-war liberals steadily moved lower as the year moved on. A major factor was the stubborn and tenacious fight put up by the hard core of deeply convinced neutralists both in organizations and carrying on as individuals. On these the organs of liberalism turned the full force of their attack, and the extravagance of the accusations and the recklessness of the language used in systematic denunciation of these antagonists stands out impressively, a monument to the forgetfulness of the zealous pro-war liberal elements when they took to the country's platforms in protest over the heat of the anti-Communist campaign in the years after the war.

A decade without any significant, purposive and integrated conservative opposition had made American liberalism, especially that part eager for American entry into the war, somewhat confident in their approach by now, and sensing a gradual swinging of public sentiment toward rejection of any interest in examining the nature of the war in any calm and detached manner, caution and restraint steadily leaked away, a fierce either-or position triumphing. It reflected perfectly the decade's Communism-or-Fascism contest, which began to lose its appeal only with the Russo-German diplomatic understanding in August, 1939. The war fitted expertly within this ideological struggle nevertheless, and a major aspect of the liberal case for increased American involvement in the war in 1940-1941 was its imputation of hope for a German victory to those who struggled the most vigorously to inhibit United States participation.

The liberal press, with its decade of fury toward Hitler and simultaneous near-absence of criticism of Stalin, never would concede to its critics that its favorite in the foreign arena was Russian Communism.

The inference of favoritism toward the Communists and investigation of pro-Red tendencies had long been deplored as "Red-baiting." At the same time the insistence on a relationship between acts and statements in accord with Communist views had similarly warranted the slogan, "guilt by association." But in 1941 "guilt by association" was a one-chambered blow-gun, and "Red-baiting" was a term which had no opposite. Hence the liberal press felt snugly at home imputing affinity for Hitler's cause to those who fought desperately against America joining the fighting, considering it inconceivable that anyone charged with being a Fascist on grounds of a nationalist attitude toward the war might be innocent of the charge. The tender concern with the sacredness of reputation which flowered in the liberal literary gardens after 1946 and especially beginning in 1950 was an unknown species of the propaganda flora of the period just prior to the events which brought the United States into World War Two. Thus, protests against one's views as uncomfortably similar to those of the Russian Communists merited the apologia of "guilt by association," while a position against American participation in the war, sure to be consistent with the expectable German attitude of close harmony to this objective, warranted dark and sinister charges of "deadly parallels" with Hitlerian propaganda. As 1941 wore on, only neutralists and anti-war figures of the most uncompromising type with long-standing reputations could expect to escape thinly-concealed accusations of pro-Germanism.

The close ties between American liberals and Communists in the first half of the decade of the 1930s, due in large part to the exigencies and demands of the Popular Front, had much to do with the fact that their heroes and particularly their villains were the same. Undoubtedly the Popular Front played a massive part in getting across the view that the active opposition to Communism everywhere was Fascism, and vigorous hostility on the part of anyone to Communism during that time warranted the identification with Fascism with rarely any reservation. The raising of common enemies was a joint task of the liberal and pro-Communist press, and collaboration was the rule and not the exception. The attack on Rev. Charles E. Coughlin was a joint undertaking in 1934,⁵⁶ and the figures selected for denunciation by Raymond Gram Swing in his *Forerunners of American Fascism* in 1935 had full Communist approval as well, as was demonstrated in R. Palme Dutt's warm review of this book in the *New Republic* on July 10 of that year.⁵⁷

On the other hand, the Communists undertook the assault on such personalities as Ezra Pound and Henry L. Mencken in 1936, the *New Masses* taking the lead in their denunciation,⁵⁸ and Red sympathizers initiated the denigration of Charles A. Lindbergh in the summer of the same year, after his famous visit to Germany.⁵⁹ As will be seen,

a tidy amount of adverse comment on Lindbergh had already accumulated prior to his emergence as a rallier of sentiment in opposition to American involvement in the war.

In the case of others who incurred the wrath of liberals and Soviet sympathizers in the pre-war period of the 1930s, such as Herbert Agar and Lawrence Dennis, the war years of 1940–1941 were to see them reach crisis points as well, their stands on America's place in the struggle having a great deal to do with their ultimate reputation among liberals. Both incurred liberal and Communist wrath with their books in 1936; *Who Owns America?* (by the Nashville agrarians made famous in *I'll Take My Stand*), which Agar edited with Allen Tate, and *The Coming American Fascism* by Dennis. Despite much puzzlement with the complex views and ideas in these volumes, it was comfortably assumed by reviewers in the liberal weeklies that their authors were beyond redemption. Broadus Mitchell in the *Nation* whimsically brushed aside the Agar symposium as simple and naïve, its authors suffering from "the tyranny of the unread."⁶⁰ Dwight MacDonald in *Common Sense* also came to this conclusion, angered by Agar's deprecation of "left-wing intellectuals," referring to the volume as advocating a "reactionary, confused and sentimental" point of view. He was particularly puzzled by Agar, who, MacDonald pointed out, went "out of his way to state that if it is a choice between Communism and Fascism, he would choose Communism."⁶¹ Agar not long after this reiterated this stand in a *New Masses* essay on April 7, 1936, "The Ideal We Share."⁶²

While Agar was moving away from his repute of the early 1930s and his association with the *American Review*, Dennis, an esteemed contributor to the liberal press prior to 1934, was moving in the opposite direction. His book was roundly scored by Matthew Josephson and Louis Hacker in the liberal weeklies early in 1936. Similarly puzzled by his complex ideas, Josephson assumed he was a Fascist for having used the word in the title of his book, while Hacker compared Dennis to Disraeli, preparing an intellectual sell-out to American industrial and finance capitalism as Disraeli was alleged by Hacker to have done in Britain when he came to power.⁶³ MacDonald, also reviewing this book for *Common Sense*, decided that what Dennis meant by Fascism seemed to be "a kind of Technocracy and not at all what Hitler and Mussolini mean."⁶⁴ It was the war which brought liberal attention to both men in concentrated form, nevertheless, as will be seen, despite their previous history of exciting liberal attention in the purely ideological days of the pre-war decade. Dennis' part as an antagonist in the last two years of American neutrality was especially arresting.

But of somewhat greater significance was the influence of Lindbergh, who because of his international reputation was more feared

as an enemy by the war-bound sector of American liberalism. Much space and extravagantly virulent language was devoted to the task of deflating his impact on the country's thinking. As has been pointed out, the *New Masses* set the tone for the assault on Lindbergh in the Popular Front days as early as 1936. And it continued virtually unassisted until well after the Munich crisis. The basis for the guilt-by-association campaign being waged against him was his kindly comments on the quality of the German air force after his 1936 visit, and his parallel dismissal of the Russians as not being in their class. Though literary voices such as the *New Masses* repeatedly asserted their devotion to peace, and made much of their affection for demilitarization and disarmament during these days, Lindbergh quickly got under this pose with his comments in the fall of 1938. The result was a furious attack on him in that journal on November 1, illustrated by a vicious cartoon depicting him wearing a German swastika medal and surrounded by grotesquely caricatured notables of the Hitler regime applauding him. The significance of this blow at Lindbergh's credibility as an authority on aerial matters was the boasting which subsequently occurred over Russian fighting aircraft. It was also about the first article to emphasize deliberately Russian military plane strength, stressing the assertion that the Communists had trained 10,000 pilots in 1937 alone, and that the Russian planes were superior not only to the German but to those of all other nations as well. "Soviet Russia has made a big advance over all other countries in airplane construction," trumpeted author Lucien Zacharoff, and the Communists were now safely beyond vulnerability to attack from any direction.⁶⁵ Though the intent of this was to reduce the anxiety of Communist well-wishers after Munich and the German gains, it revealed the source of the anger toward Lindbergh as well.

It was not long after this that the liberal weeklies also began a concerted campaign to undermine Lindbergh's credibility. On November 26 the *Nation* sharply condemned his "sensational flights into international politics," asking rhetorically, "Is he pro-Nazi or merely naïve?"⁶⁶ And from the beginning of 1939, the attention bestowed upon him grew in volume and heated exasperation, though it was not until the war was under way that the most serious objections to his views were made. Both liberal weeklies hammered him editorially in October, 1939. The *New Republic* in a piece titled "Unlucky Lindy" on the 25th declared that it was unfortunate that he had been enticed into politics, a field in which he was "as naïve as a schoolboy." They again reproached him for his view that the German air force was formidable and the Russian inadequate, the editors now maintaining this opinion had been partially responsible for the Franco-British capitulation at Munich.⁶⁷ But his two speeches on behalf of peace since war had broken out were considered more deplorable, and he

was bracketed with Herbert Hoover as a sophist in trying to make a distinction between offensive and defensive weapons. The *Nation* hammered his peace speeches as "half-baked and puerile," on October 14,⁶⁸ while both editorial groups expressed utter horror at his racial and other views expressed in an article in the *Reader's Digest* the following month. The *Nation* promptly linked him with Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Gobineau and Arthur Rosenberg,⁶⁹ but the *New Republic* was much more repelled by his political suggestion of the desirability of an Anglo-Franco-German-American military understanding, aimed presumably in the future at Russia.⁷⁰ Though the first two were fighting Germany, and the United States and Russia were momentarily neutral, the editors could not suppress the long-acquired sensitivity toward threats to Russia.

The real animus toward Lindbergh began in the turgid May and June days of 1940, during which the liberal press and a substantial portion of their writers underwent a stirring interventionist conversion. The *Nation* on May 25 emptied the vials of wrath on him for his speech warning that the country was in danger from the actions of "a small minority of the American people," who were "meddling with affairs abroad."⁷¹ A subsequent radio address touched off a more spectacular fulmination, with both weeklies hitting him in their issues of the fourth week of June. The major issue was Lindbergh's uncompromising neutralism; his stand against help to any belligerent, including Britain, marked him as a likely leader of a total-abstention position of formidable proportions.⁷² And for that reason he assumed a top rank as an enemy of the interventionist liberal segment thereafter. From that time on, the ugly imputations of desire to see Germany win the war grew luxuriantly among Lindbergh's interventionist liberal antagonists. But apparently not all liberals were arrayed against him; Max Lerner in his *Nation* essay "America and the New World" on August 17, 1940 bracketed him with Charles A. Beard in an assault on them jointly for their fight "against an affirmative foreign policy," paying tribute to them as far more formidable opponents than any of the known German sympathizers or the native "patrioteers," as Lerner called them.⁷³ Lerner meant to describe them as serious barriers to the idea of an expanding United States in the world, as dear a hope to interventionists as defeating Hitler.

Magnanimity did not mark Lindbergh's treatment in the subsequent foreign policy controversy. On August 19 the *New Republic* printed an imaginative piece of aggravated abuse by Stanley Edgar Hyman, "The Lonely Eagle," the main intent of which was to prove that Lindbergh was a sympathizer of Adolf Hitler and that he was in his speeches and writings a plagiarizer of the latter's *Mein Kampf*.⁷⁴ It marked Lindbergh as the first important guilt-by-association figure in the anti-war camp in the post-Dunkirk period. Though the

Communists also opposed the war at this time and actually had a diplomatic understanding with the Germans, no Communists were subjected to this form of character assassination. There were others to come, of course, ranging all the way from Hamilton Fish to Norman Thomas, but at the moment Lindbergh drew the main fire. A lead editorial paragraph in the *Nation* on August 10, a blistering commentary on the latest Lindbergh speech, sounded the note in remarking "The fifth column is forming on the right."⁷⁵ Meanwhile the image of the celebrated American flier fastened itself more firmly upon the liberals in the involvement camp. A few weeks later, when *Neutrality For the United States*, first published and extravagantly praised in 1937, was reviewed in the *Nation* on the occasion of its reissue, though one of its authors, Edwin Borchard, had once been a highly respected figure in the liberal press, it was now greeted with a contemptuous bark, "This is isolationism of the stratospheric or 'Lone Eagle' variety."⁷⁶

The growing intolerance of the liberal editorial stands toward any criticism of foreign policy as being conducted by Roosevelt had much to do with the intensification of the denunciation of Lindbergh beginning early in 1941, joining his name to that of Senator Wheeler and thereby admitting the effectiveness of both in their separate critical capacities. From the amount of space devoted to attacking Lindbergh personally, the liberal weeklies appeared to have cast him in the role of the symbolic "isolationist-negotiated peace-appeaser," and a most likely unity figure for all the elements opposed to the pro-war group, on the basis of his national reputation alone. For sure, he was the best-known of all the figures in the controversy, and to ignore him was to lose the initiative in the struggle for popular support for the Administration's moves. Hence little was spared in the attack on him, and it is to the permanent discredit of some of his liberal enemies that they ultimately went to the extreme of attempting to destroy him personally in trying to combat his views, although in itself this campaign was a tribute to the fright which he produced among them. While the early tack consisted of the contention that he was a mere amateur in the field of policy, strategy and international affairs, and that he ought to confine himself to his technical specialty of aviation, as time went on he emerged as a virtual German agent, which indirectly cast a shadow on the whole anti-involvement position except that taken temporarily by the Communists.

The rage which was building up against Lindbergh could be discerned without any trouble in the editorials of both the *Nation* and *New Republic* in the first week of February, 1941. The occasion was a comment on his testimony in Congress in opposition to the Lend-Lease Bill, which more than anything else revealed the nature of the basic struggle at hand. Lindbergh was against aid to Britain as such,

avored a negotiated peace and hoped neither side would win.⁷⁷ With many even of the bill's enemies in favor of helping Britain, it was possible for the *Nation*, for example, to exult that the bill's chances had "scarcely been singed," while crowing that "the isolationists are fighting a rear-guard action." But the conversion of nearly all to the idea of aid to Britain hardly suggested that the proper term was "isolationists"; perhaps some should have been referred to as "reluctant interventionists," as opposed to "enthusiastic immediate interventionists." Therefore the demolition of Lindbergh assumed a necessity of great emergency, since he represented the real opposition in clinging to the opposite of aid, which was not aid later on, or aid under a multitude of reservations, but no aid at all. Hence the increasing virulence of the weekly attacks on Lindbergh, as liberals sensed that even the formidable America First Committee was largely populated by persons quite in accord with the idea of all aid to Britain short of war, and that the real danger to an interventionist foreign policy would be a public significantly infiltrated with the idea of genuine neutrality.

Though Lend-Lease passed, the denunciation of Lindbergh did not stop. Freda Kirchwey addressed a major editorial attack on him on May 10, and disparaged his description of a post-negotiated peace Europe as one in which it was impossible to believe. She considered all talk of living in a world in which a German-dominated Western Europe was a part as "dangerous nonsense."⁷⁸ And the issue of June 21 reported without any protest or adverse comment the story that the Toronto and Ottawa libraries had removed and destroyed books by and about Lindbergh, as well as a plan to burn them publicly in connection with a Canadian Victory Loan Drive.⁷⁹ After the near-apoplexy over the German ceremonial bookburning in 1933, the failure to lodge a protest with the Canadian government was a lame anti-climax to liberal protestations over the freedom to read. At the moment the hatred of Lindbergh surpassed all principles connected with the liberal tradition.

The little restraint still in evidence concerning the treatment of Lindbergh in print vanished after his September, 1941 speech at Des Moines, in which he declared that Jews, the British and the Administration were the most active exponents of American involvement in the war. He was promptly denounced as pro-Hitler and anti-Jewish, with both weeklies vying for top honors in vilification, accompanied by joint calls for an investigation of the America First Committee by Congress.⁸⁰ The *New Republic* also suggested that Lindbergh's future speeches should be censored by the National Association of Broadcasters. The following month he provoked a veritable editorial lava flow by hinting that there might not be an election in 1942 if FDR were to declare a state of national emer-

gency before then. The *New Republic* bluntly compared him to Hitler and Goebbels for this. The *Nation* shared its anger, but it thought that he was "becoming a major liability to the isolationists" by such remarks.⁸¹ This was debatable, but there was no doubt that he had become the major individual adversary to the liberal interventionists. His treatment in the post-Pearl Harbor era was evidence of the animosity he had generated in the two years preceding it. But there was more than a suspicion that a substantial part of Lindbergh's offensiveness in liberal eyes was not his lack of loyalty to the United States, but his absence of faith in Russia prior to August, 1939 and his similar attitude toward Britain and France in the period thereafter.

As the rancor toward Lindbergh lowered the pro-war liberal boiling point during 1941, the animosity toward the America First Committee seemed to taper off. There was a feeling that the AFC was being consistently outmaneuvered, since it at least partially subscribed to the threat of German invasion of the country. From some pro-war liberal points of view, the AFC and other neutralist-isolationist groups were for war, but later and under different circumstances. The most telling indication of this was an almost universal support for the aid-to-Britain program. The absence of any well thought-out position for opposing the drift toward war and the substantial acceptance of the left-interventionist theory of the origins of the war and why it was still going on were the major weakness of organized isolation; their differences from the active interventionists were more of degree than kind. Even the pacifists were starting to show strong affection for the "Allied" cause by the time the attack on Lindbergh reached its peak.

The no-aid position of men such as Lindbergh and Dennis was shared by many of the neutralist liberal camp, however, and the most inflammatory aspect of the America First Committee to pro-war liberals was its recruitment of liberals of high repute. The Madison Square Garden rally of the AFC late in May, 1941 touched off a major fulmination in the liberal weeklies. Though the *Nation* was able to ridicule their contradictory insistence on British victory and simultaneous American abstention, it was well understood that the ranks of the AFC harbored substantial individuals who stood far closer to the personal position of Lindbergh than this general stand. Both weeklies were angered by the prominence of Flynn, Norman Thomas and Senator Wheeler at this demonstration, as well as Lindbergh. The *Nation* was deeply affronted by the latter's assertion that the 1940 election had given Americans about as much choice between FDR and Willkie as the Germans might have had in a campaign featuring Hitler running against Hermann Göring.⁸² The *New*

Republic used much stronger language in expressing its revulsion for the presence of liberals in the AFC top circles: ⁸³

We are aware that politics makes strange bedfellows on both sides of the argument. We understand the sincerity as well as the intensity of the opposition on the Left to American entrance into the war. But the America First Committee is the most powerful single potential Fascist group in this country today—the group that is polarizing every Fascist force among us. It knows much better where it is going than innocents like Messrs. Thomas and Flynn. To cooperate with them is the formula for suicide, not only for the Left but for the country as a whole.

‘‘THE APPEASEMENT TROPISM’’

In actuality, the ideological combat being waged against Lindbergh and America First had blended into a more general offensive against a broad bloc of adversaries referred to generically as “appeasers,” starting around the beginning of 1941. This unfortunate word of Neville Chamberlain had a separate season of use in an invidious sense, largely Communist-directed, between the Czech crisis of September, 1938 until the time of the Hitler-Stalin *Pakt* of August, 1939. The word “compromise” disappeared from this time on, and actually acquired a disgraceful and cowardly connotation, as all suggestions for settling national conflicts of interest from Munich on short of by warfare were immediately labeled “appeasement.” With the coming of the war and the sudden defection of the Communists everywhere from the ranks of the loudest callers for war, there was a momentary decline in the use of this term. But as the temperature of the conflict over American foreign policy went up after June, 1940 it returned with a vengeance, and from January, 1941, on, it was used with such frequency and universality that it became American liberalism’s first-rated verbal reflex. It may be for the reason that they had done such immense work in getting the expression “appeaser” widely used that the Communists were not themselves called this by the war-bound sector of American liberalism between August, 1939 and June, 1941. Despite their bitter attack on interventionism, the Communists were treated with circumspection in this fierce verbal battle throughout the period of Russian diplomatic understanding with Germany. Though subject to an intense assault during the Finnish war, the Communists were never considered allies of Hitler, and during the existence of the *Pakt*, the liberal press never once gave its approval to an investigation of Communists in the United States.⁸⁴ In the meantime, such organizations as Richard Rollins’s “Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League” and L. M. Birkhead’s “Friends of

Democracy" kept up a ceaseless drumfire seeking a comprehensive investigation of any and all individuals and groups suspected of superficial sympathy to "Hitlerism," whatever may have been meant by this term.⁸⁶ "Witch-hunts," as before, were only anti-Communist efforts.

Especially in the last eighteen months of American non-involvement in the war the interventionist liberals grinned at the discomfiture of the anti-war liberals and pacifists in their task of trying to tread between the Communists, the "rightists" and "reactionaries," and those who earnestly looked forward to a German victory. On one occasion the *Nation* did list ten anti-war liberal groups against which it claimed to harbor no hostility,⁸⁶ but in view of what it had printed attacking their views in the period since Munich, there was some doubt about their real feeling here. However, starting around January, 1941 there was somewhat less concern felt for the sensibilities of anyone actively participating in anti-involvement organizations, regardless of their individual distinguishing characteristics. The term "appeaser" was applied as a comprehensive identification, and the subtleties of motivation and intent were summarily lopped off.

Obvious targets were personalities such as Senators Wheeler and Clark, subjected to a particularly venomous attack by "T.R.B." on January 13, without the slightest hint that they had been held in high esteem not many years before, and now clothed in an ugly insinuation of pro-Hitlerian ties in the *New Republic* columnist's "Appeasement Bloc." Albert Horlings' "Who Are the Appeasers?," two weeks later, was an omnibus denunciation of a package of pacifist and anti-militarist groups of long standing, as well as the AFC, the No Foreign War Committee and recent anti-war isolationist groups. Horlings gave no quarter in implying their contribution to the welfare of the Hitler regime.⁸⁷

No one escaped who took an anti-Administration point of view in foreign policy now, and the insinuation was universally applied to these critics; an opponent of the war-drift was deprived first of all of all claim to sincerity and good faith, and identified as closely as possible with the enemy. By the spring of 1941 "appeaser" and enemy agent were practically synonyms. One of the most cruelly flayed was Robert M. Hutchins, on the occasion of his outspoken break on the matter of national policy. The *New Republic* commented,⁸⁸

it is worth noting that, whatever their other differences, it is the absolutist philosophies of our time that are united for isolation and appeasement. The Communists and the dogmatic socialists of the Norman Thomas stripe; the pacifists; the Nazis; the liberal absolutists of the Flynn type; and now the Hutchins brand of neo-Thomas [sic] absolutism that speaks and thinks in terms of frozen moral categories.

The editorial contrasted with these disparate elements such forces as themselves, who were labeled "instrumentalists," those "who know we can use only the instruments at our command, and who are determined to use them in the unending struggle to come closer to a decent world." The "instruments" alluded to sounded suspiciously like those already being used by the warring sides in Europe and Asia. But it was unlikely that anyone could dissuade them at this time from their belief in more dynamite as the main hope of fashioning a future "decent world."

A major attempt to explain the motivation of "appeasers" was that of Samuel Grafton, in his *New Republic* essay "The Appeasement Tropism." Grafton, some years before a *Nation* contributor, was recruited from the *New York Post*, where his column "I'd Rather Be Right" was gaining him a vast reputation as the true voice of the New Liberalism. Grafton's was a major shot at persons of note in the AFC and others who were hoping for an end to the war through negotiation or some way short of spreading it all over the world, and at the moment there was no figure in the liberal world more anxious to see the war spread than Grafton. He interpreted these people as motivated by an intense dread of the vast and surely beneficial socio-economic changes which were to follow in the train of planetary war;⁸⁹

If we look for traitors, we shall not find the real appeasers. We must seek, instead, for those men and women who are afraid of social change and social planning, afraid of the political power of labor, afraid of the logical evolution of the democratic process, afraid, in a word, of the future. . . .

Grafton singled out for derision and abuse John L. Lewis, Ford, General Hugh S. Johnson, Villard, Flynn, Alice Roosevelt Longworth, Senator Wheeler and Thomas N. McCarter of the Public Service Company of New Jersey as representatives of this "true social tropism," and he traced it to its clearly-illuminated origin, in his estimation; "It springs from just this desire to maintain a theoretical status quo, which might go up in smoke in the fires of war, or, conceivably, in the fires of too large and too costly a defense program."

This was a momentous confirmation of the new liberal war thesis, which saw the spreading of the war a means not only of erasing Hitler from the scene but of effecting the tremendous shift of power to collectivist forces which peacetime talk and piecemeal reform tinkering had utterly failed to do. It was not hard to understand why the enthusiasts for this staggering program saw the limited war and negotiated peace protagonists in such an invidious manner, and why as much invective was poured upon them as upon the enemy of the moment.

The *Nation's* counterpart to Grafton was Herbert Agar, now fully rehabilitated in liberal war circles because of his intense desire for American immersion in hostilities and no longer baited for his "Fascist" views of the days of the *American Review*. His March 22 essay, "Who Are the Appeasers?," went somewhat beyond Grafton in delineation of the "appeasement tropism," and took the frank stand that anyone who was not firmly behind an all-out aid to Britain position was a supporter of Hitler. "I want to repudiate the theory that it is unfair to ascribe motives to one's fellow-citizens in the midst of a life-and-death debate," was Agar's basic premise. Agar was to see this in a greatly different light when the Cold War "life-and-death" debate over Communist affiliation and support replaced this contest ten years later, however.

But here Agar went into exhaustive detail in listing his villain types, all of whom he denounced in colorful language. In his first category, believers in appeasement "as a way out of the world's trouble," he listed Senators Taft and Vandenberg, and William R. Castle, as the best known types. His second, "professional peacemongers," cited Senator Wheeler as the example, and his third, "rabble-rousers," Father Coughlin. His fourth, "a section of the Catholic Church," saw the citation of the Brooklyn *Tablet* and Rev. James M. Gillis, with special mention of the Irish, whom Agar advised to forget their "ancient undying grievances" against Britain. His fifth grouping was described as "men who are defeatist by temperament," selecting for the best examples here Lawrence Dennis and Robert M. Hutchins. Agar maintained that of the two, Hutchins was "more dangerous to our democracy" than Dennis. And for the sixth and final subdivision of the appeasement camp, Agar created a special one occupied only by Henry Ford and ex-President Herbert Hoover. Of Hoover Agar said, "Hitler has no more stubborn helper in all the world." And he concluded this impressive preliminary essay in reputation assassination with a vigorous flourish:⁹⁰

. . . since the war in Britain became a people's war, Britain has become the world's marvel. We too can rise to greatness, can rise above our appeasers, but only at the price of carrying on two struggles at once: a struggle at home to show we mean democracy, and a struggle abroad to resist the murderers of freedom.

Though Agar had named some formidable figures in the hated and despised "appeasement" circles, some *Nation* sympathizers with his convictions thought he had been inordinately delicate with Dennis, who had aroused more interventionist ire in recent months than anyone except Lindbergh, whom Agar had strangely enough failed to mention at all. Dennis, as a consequence of his starkly-written

book *The Dynamics Of War And Revolution*, and an astringent weekly mimeographed commentary titled *Weekly Foreign Letter*, had made interventionist hackles rise for many months. And he had just concluded a recent round of bruising *Nation* readers as a consequence of an electrifying exchange of correspondence with Frederick L. Schuman and Max Lerner, probably as dramatic a presentation as the readers had been exposed to in the entire pre-Pearl Harbor decade. The most repelling part of Dennis' thesis to the war-liberal camp was his declaration that Fascism was a form of Socialism. It had stimulated a towering rage among the Marxist-inclined, including a 33-column attack on his book by William Z. Foster in the *Communist*, perhaps the longest unfavorable book review ever published in an American periodical.⁹¹ Of the liberal commentators, only Freda Utey in *Common Sense* had urgently recommended that it be read, a book of "first class importance," in her opinion.⁹²

The three-way correspondence with Schuman and Lerner had filled 17 columns of the *Nation* in various issues in January and February, 1941, under the general heading "Who Owns The Future?" a remarkable journalistic exploit, and the only occasion in the 1939-1941 era when it opened its pages to diametrically opposed views on the world scene on such a scale. Unfortunately, neither Schuman nor Lerner fared very well in countering Dennis, and the former even seemed to drift toward the Dennis position. In a fit of pessimism he was quoted as saying to Dennis,⁹³

My job under these conditions is no longer to try to get America into a war which is probably already lost and which Americans wouldn't get into even if it weren't, and your job is no longer to keep Americans out of such a war, since the pacifist and isolationist idiots are doing this job for you.

Nevertheless, the editorial offensive against the "appeasement tropism" was sustained during the spring. A strong drive was made the first week of May against Lindbergh once more, in addition to the New York *Daily News*, Senator Wheeler and Dr. Felix Morley, then president of Haverford College. Morley's essay in the *Wall Street Journal*, suggesting that Americans accept "the fact of German supremacy on the continent of Europe" and work for a negotiated peace, drew the hottest abuse this time around.⁹⁴ The editors were momentarily subdued at this point by a Gallup poll which indicated that 83% of the people in the United States would vote against a declaration of war if given the opportunity, but they were still convinced that the American public would take the risk of war "to help England win."

To be sure, a liberal minority protest against the "appeasement" charge made itself heard in *Common Sense* during these early months

of 1941. A January editorial under this heading denounced the weeklies for describing negotiated peace efforts thus, calling it a "smear word." Its comment pointed out testily,⁹⁵

Perhaps no country as a whole can think in terms both critical and constructive. It is all the more important then for intelligent liberals to do so, and with a conscious sense of responsibility. It should be the task of our journals of opinion as of our universities, of commentators and moulders of thought, to keep alive these standards of both honesty and charity which are the first victims of public passion. Yet too often it is they who are whipping up the passions.

It concluded that the country's whole policy was "meaningless" "unless we are preparing for prompt action as mediator and peacemaker the moment opportunity offers," and added, "This journal believes in leaving mobilization of men and emotion to the military, and in bending its own energies to determining what is worth fighting for."

Hanighen's Washington commentary on the lend-lease debate the next month referred to "appeasement" as a "sort of yell" which had become "a rather formidable weapon"; "It has shut the mouth, in my opinion, of more than one high government official who criticized the Administration's foreign policy." He went on to describe a new pattern of intimidation which lacked the flamboyance of World War One but which was far more effective due to the ramified Federal Government operations. He cited the Midwest farmers as an example of a group almost universally opposed to "the President's policy, to the defense program and to conscription," but silenced through fear of retaliation "from the Federal bureaucracy which plays so big a part in their lives today."⁹⁶

In his March dispatch, "The 'Appeasers' Present Their Case," Hanighen displayed additional hostility toward lend-lease, praised Senator Nye extravagantly for his expert deflation of Secretary Knox's defense of "the bugaboo of 'invasion,'" while finding most objectionable the part of the bill which empowered the President to aid any country whose defense he might construe as essential to the defense of America. Queried Hanighen rhetorically,⁹⁷

Doesn't this . . . mean that our continued national existence depends on the defense of foreign countries? And when have we ever admitted that before in our history? And why, with our immense resources and superb geographical position, should we admit such a premise?

Indeed, the *Common Sense* Washington columnist of the moment had posed a very critical series of vital questions, but the immense significance of the extrapolated consequences of these bland policy

changes was lost in the hubbub and confusion of the moment. It was at the very core of the striking new concept of "defense."⁹⁸

From the summer of 1941 on, liberal interventionists began to smell impending victory. There was a self-confident resourcefulness reflected in much of their comment, and a sharpened up-tempo in their assault on non-interventionist forces, to whom were imputed some of the blackest subterranean motives ever committed to print about anyone. There seemed to be no real anti-involvement organization, as such; the all-aid-to-Britain position had committed all organized forces to eventual war, and timing seemed to be the only real issue in dispute. Despite Schuman's despair of the late winter, the situation was one in which, from an organizational point of view, some merely wished to fight in advance of others. But there was the great unorganized general public to contend with, still most reluctant to commit itself on the naked issue of war participation.

Stanley High's celebrated *Nation* contribution on June 14, "The Liberals' War,"⁹⁹ expanded the "appeasement tropism" theme and carried it to a new and dangerous level. In his expression of disgust with isolationist liberals, he chose to bring under particular condemnation their spiritual alliance with conservatives, resulting in "a left-right coalition," "the first joint job of its kind in our history." He heaped special derogation on Lewis, Thomas, Hutchins and the LaFollettes, with glancing side-blows at the Communists and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

But what High had done was merely to describe one side of a political quadratic equation; he was part of a "left-right coalition" as well, as were all the liberal interventionists. Though High had mobilized the "people" on the side of the warriors, he left out an array of aristocrat Anglophiles and Francophiles, plus big business and financial figures far more impressive in total numbers than those represented by isolation and the America First Committee. The war-left-liberals, dazzled by fantasies of a post-war period in which their impact and influence were presumably to be immense, did not seem to think that it was important to describe their allies or even admit they existed, and High was particularly delinquent here. It remained for Senator Robert A. Taft to express the situation in blunt language.

The occasion grew out of Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s maiden essay in the *Nation*, published on December 6, 1941. In "Can Willkie Save His Party?"¹⁰⁰ Schlesinger, in a rather sophomoric piece of analogous comparison, tried hard to predict the disintegration of the Republican Party over its alleged unwillingness to go all out for FDR's pro-involvement foreign policy, in the manner in which the Whigs had fallen apart in 1852 and thereafter over the slavery issue. He maintained that the situations were identical, and that neutrality

was as impossible in 1941 as it had been in 1858. The business community was Schlesinger's *bête noire*; in the earlier time businessmen had refused to commit themselves wholeheartedly in condemnation of slavery, and in the present moment their hostility "to an aggressive policy toward Hitler" was their chief sin, in his view.

The editors asked Willkie, Harold E. Stassen, and Senators Vandenberg and Taft to comment on the Schlesinger thesis. Though the former two were interventionists, all four sharply disagreed that the GOP was about to collapse, but Taft denied that the basic premise had any validity at all in referring to the contemporary scene and the struggle over foreign policy. Retorted Taft,¹⁰¹

Nor is Mr. Schlesinger correct in attributing the position of the majority of Republicans to their conservatism. The most conservative members of the party—the Wall Street bankers, the society group, nine-tenths of the plutocratic newspapers, and most of the party's financial contributors—are the ones who favor intervention in Europe. Mr. Schlesinger's statement that the business community in general had tended to favor appeasing Hitler is simply untrue. I have received thousands of letters on both sides of the question, and I should say without question that it is the average man and woman—the farmer, the workman, except for a few pro-British labor leaders, and the small business man—who are opposed to war. The war party is made up of the business community of the cities, the newspaper and magazine writers, the radio and movie commentators, the Communists, and the university intelligentsia.

This was the part of the picture that Grafton, Agar, High and others had systematically left out. The war liberals may have thought they had the "people" on their side, but they had left out naming the substantial contingents of the mighty and well-placed with whom they were in unity in urging more aggressive foreign policy commitments. And the mobilization of the public-opinion making and taste-influencing sector of the country, to which belonged the liberal press, was the most ominous part of Taft's analysis. However, the Japanese bombs on Hawaii the day after this rebuttal of Schlesinger appeared ended the debate.

WAR WITH GERMANY BRINGS RUSSIA BACK INTO LIBERAL GOOD FAVOR

A week after Stanley High had numbered the Communists in the ranks of the despised "appeasers" in America, the Armageddon-like Russo-German war was launched, an event which only the Japanese

bombing of Pearl Harbor matched for dramatic effect on the world. And it immediately washed out of United States public affairs the entire Communist issue insofar as it involved non-cooperation in efforts to steer the country into the European conflagration. To be sure, it had been impossible to see the Communists subjected to abuse in the liberal weeklies as "appeasers," despite their utterly detached attitude toward the war. And not much had been said about the subject from the summer of 1940 on. It probably was thought to be a little incongruous to denounce them as "isolationists" now, after all they had done to attach opprobrium to the non-believers in collective security in the 1934-1939 period. In fact, it was extremely difficult to determine interventionist liberal policy toward the Communists in the year between the German invasions of France and Russia. But there was much uneasiness during this span of time.

There was a brief flurry of hope that the Russians would attack Germany during the height of the Franco-German campaigns, and a general troubled air about, that a major advantage was being overlooked in the maintenance of aloofness toward the Soviet.¹⁰² In mid-August, 1940, Max Lerner in the *Nation*, expressed this unhappiness over the Administration's Russian policy which he called one of "frigid hostility." He thought that the United States and England were running a grave risk of "throwing Stalin completely into the arms of Hitler," which meant that the survival of the "democratic effort" would be possible "only after generations of protracted war and chaos":¹⁰³

If we make our plans without Russia we shall find it in the end against us. If we followed our vision and not our blindness there would be today in Moscow side by side with Stafford Cripps an American envoy who could talk the language the Soviet ruling group would understand, and would lead the way in sinking mutual distrust in the common danger.

Nothing came of this then, or later, and the grim winter of 1940-1941 found enthusiasm over the Communists at a low ebb among the liberal editors, and consequently policy toward the Soviet, at a high point of editorial realism. In a speculation in the *New Republic* on February 10 concerning American and English diplomatic pressure and tactics being used to keep Russia from tying up too closely with Hitler Germany, it remarked, "The one thing that is certain in the whole matter is that Stalin will take no action of any kind that is designed to help either Germany or England unless it is also intended to help Russia," and it suggested that "Efforts to make him a friend will fail if they are based on anything else than sharply practical considerations."¹⁰⁴

The sensational solo flight of Hitler's chief lieutenant Rudolf Hess

to Scotland in May, 1941 unleashed a torrent of new speculation on the state of Russo-German relations, among other things, followed by some absurdly bad guessing, some of the worst being unfurled in the *Nation* by William L. Shirer and Joachim Joesten on May 24. Joesten firmly believed that Hess's mission was the last overture of "peace in the West," and a warning of war in the East, except that he expected a quick military alliance between Hitler and Stalin; "The great unholy alliance between Nazi Germany and Communist Russia" was next, "undoubtedly."¹⁰⁵ Two days later a *New Republic* editorial took this same slant: "It begins to appear," it announced, "that the Soviet Union is rapidly drifting into full partnership with the Axis," and exuded gloom as to the chances of a Russo-German collision before they had dismembered the British Empire.¹⁰⁶

In truth, there had been a sheaf of comments on the massing of troops on the Russo-German frontier in divided Poland in March and April, and the interpretation that it predicated joint operations dominated liberal speculation. In a fiercely critical piece on Stalin in the *Nation* on May 17, Louis Fischer was not fully sure, however, since he was of the view that Stalin had been urging the Yugoslavs to attack Hitler.¹⁰⁷ The editors did not share this disquietude; on June 21, the day before the German attack on the Communists, the *Nation* stated "a clash between Germany and Russia seems unlikely," though admitting the possibility that it might occur if Hitler made unreasonable demands on Stalin.¹⁰⁸ The likelihood of the reverse was not alluded to. In the case of the *New Republic*, its record as a prophet was worse. Its issue of the moment was dated June 23, and it flatly declared, "On the face of events, the predictions of a Nazi-Soviet war are incredible."¹⁰⁹ The war was already a day old.

The Communists in America were even less prepared, from the appearance of their official monthly organ. The big domestic issue of the moment was the strike in the West Coast aircraft plants, popularly attributed to the Communists. Freda Kirchwey had approved the President's employment of troops to break up the strike in the plant of North American Aviation. Her signed editorial on June 21 praised this action, and favored it again if a strike involved a defense factory, although she was deeply troubled by the unfavorable publicity being reflected on the Reds. Her "Keep Cool On Labor" deprecated estimates of Red influence and radiated great concern,¹¹⁰ but all her troubles were over the next day, for from this moment on labor troubles melted and the domestic Reds were the most enthusiastic supporters of production of war supplies.

The June, 1941 issue of the *Communist*, the "Browder 50th Birthday Number," was devoted almost entirely to acclaim of their leader, reposing at that moment in Atlanta penitentiary. Not the

faintest hint of the approaching turn-about was to be found in it, although it did contain some of the bitterest condemnations of President Roosevelt ever published during the 22 months of Soviet neutrality in World War Two. The change between that of June and July dwarfed that which had occurred between the September and October, 1939 issues, resulting in an almost unmatched political *renversement*. Its lead article in July flamed out, "Support the U.S.S.R. In Its Fight Against The Nazi War," and cast all restraint away in subsequent issues, the peak contribution of which was probably V. J. Jerome's "The Red Army—Spearhead of Humanity," in August.¹¹¹

The invasion of Russia by Germany produced about the same volume of mixed emotions among American liberals as had their famous diplomatic understanding of 1939.¹¹² The *Nation* accepted the news with calm, despite its prior expression of doubt that it would happen, although it had been describing various aspects of the growing Russian coolness toward the Germans for nine months, without following through on their implications. The Red intrigues in the Balkans and their maneuvering with the Turks as well as other anti-Hitler moves had all been noted during this time.¹¹³ Still, the first comment on the new war, on June 28, was comparatively distant, although it was admitted that it was "a grand opportunity" for the British to batter Germany by air while the Luftwaffe was diverted eastward, and that the United States could "help them make the best of it by sending them immediately every available bomber."

The Kirchwey editorial "We Have But One Aim" sensed the propaganda difficulty in selling this new phase of the war to the American people, but adhered to her rigid devotion to the single aim of destroying Hitler regardless of how it was achieved. She cited for moral support on her own behalf Churchill's unconditional pledge of aid to the Communists, and hoped that America would set aside the Communist issue and continue "our growing intervention," for "Russia's war is democracy's opportunity, perhaps its last for a long time to come." Louis Fischer and Norman Angell expressed similar sentiments, while taking grim pleasure at the writhing of the American Communists.¹¹⁴ Alarmed at isolationist incitement of still more antipathy to participation in the war on the grounds of the new possible bedfellows, they tried to induce embarrassment by reminding them the Reds had been their spiritual allies in the period ending June 22, and not a great deal had been said about them before then. It was an awkward period of readjustment for both sides, actually, and the pose of interventionist detachment and unconcern as to Russian participation was quite insincere; there was great difficulty in the succeeding weeks in smothering expressions of delight at gaining so formidable a partner.¹¹⁵

The *New Republic's* "The Day That Shook The World" on June 30 expressed full support for Churchill and his commitment of Britain's and the Empire's resources to the aid of the Communists without hesitation or *quid pro quo*. This hasty wartime marriage of Hitler's enemies had no interventionist liberal critics; in fact, the *New Republic* was so elated by the new developments that this was the occasion for the editors' first open recommendation of a declaration of war upon Germany, Italy and Japan by the United States.¹¹⁶ But for the next three months it heaped abuse on the American Communists, and fairly quivered with pleasure at their creaking somersault on the war and total reversal of all stands which had been used so mischievously at the expense of the war-committed liberals; for once the liberals did not have to go through it with them. But this did not keep the liberal weeklies from enlisting in the drive to support the Russians to the fullest extent, castigating Hoover for a strong anti-Soviet broadcast, while calling their readers to be especially watchful and wary over the possible revival of the Communist "Popular Front" tactics.¹¹⁷ This dichotomy in the Communist front was an essential element in the interventionist arguments for Russian support until the early fall of 1941. The consequences of a massive Russian triumph were neither discussed nor speculated upon, as editorial policy, but, as will be seen, were quickly examined by contributors. Nevertheless, the *Nation* was repelled by a comment by Colonel Moore-Brabizon, the British Minister of Aircraft Production, when he hoped that Germany and Russia would destroy one another, leaving England the dominant power on the Continent. The *New Republic* issued a similar scathing remark on June 30; "The pearl of thought for the seven days of hard intellectual labor was produced by Senator Harry S. Truman of Independence, Missouri, who figured out that the safety of his country could best be advanced by having it aid either Germany or Russia, according to which was losing."¹¹⁸ Its scorn was understandable, since all its counsels of the moment were directed at how the United States might help, support, aid and strengthen Communist Russia.

The idea that the only likely winner of a protracted European war would be Stalin and the Russian Communists rarely appeared in the liberal press in the entire decade before American entry into that war. Why this possibility, so terrifyingly vindicated by subsequent events, was not entertained more often or even regularly, remains largely obscure. To be sure, if this proposition had been taken seriously by any number of liberals, it would have involved a longer period of gestation than that allowed between August, 1939 and June, 1941, the interlude for the expression of extreme unhappiness with the Reds. The sharp transition from the Popular Front comradeship was too sudden. Furthermore, such judicial weighing of the

probabilities would have impinged sharply on the bottomless hate of Hitler in liberal ranks. This was, even more than the sentimental image of a beleaguered Britain, the motive power behind liberal impulses to war. And a weakening of this hate would ultimately have had a deteriorative effect on the simple goal of destroying him and his lieutenants. Contemplating the consequences was not a part of the anti-Hitler crusade. In addition, there was the guilt-by-association possibility of linkage to the hated Tories of England and France, who were universally execrated in liberal circles and popularly credited with laxness toward meeting Hitler in warfare for the reason that the envelopment of Europe by Communism might be a likely eventuality. Therefore, when the view was expressed by liberals that turning Hitler against Stalin and thus blunting his power was a more easily realized goal than Britain's defeat of Hitler by mobilizing the rest of the world in her aid, it was subjected to scornful invective. And, at bottom, there was undoubtedly an unconscious but unexpressed feeling that a Stalin-dominated Europe might not be entirely unacceptable. Evidence of this leaked out on a number of occasions, and was especially evident in the subdued comment on Soviet activities in the occupied portions of Eastern Europe between the *Pakt* and June, 1941. A note of hope and approval ran through reports of Soviet absorption and "reorganization" of these regions.

A case in point was the reception given Freda Utley's book *The Dream We Lost* by Richard H. Rovere in the *New Republic* in the autumn of 1940. Rovere, separated from the *New Masses*, was sympathetic with her comprehensive and destructive criticism of Russian Communism, but was noticeably shaken by her taking up the question of realistic alternatives in Europe, as a change from the frequent sentimental discourses in which the hope of the emergence of mild Social Democrat regimes was the usual end-product. Her urging liberals to recognize that the Hitlerian system was "infinitely superior to the Soviet system," as Rovere described her position, aroused ceremonial expressions of disgust, as did her views on the turning of Hitler eastward, so that the Germans might make Central Europe a "unified and productive" region, an objective Walter Millis had not found repulsive in 1937 in his book *Viewed Without Alarm*. Her conviction that the mass of Russians in any event could not possibly be worse off under the Germans, and her alternative, "a Europe decimated by war, over which Stalin, who is spoiling for the chance, will spread his regimen of equal cruelty and greater chaos," roused Rovere to describe as "the very apotheosis of Mr. Chamberlain's appeasement," and "hardly better than that of the Tories who invented it."¹¹⁹

It was quite evident from this and many other signs that the liberals were not going to be deflected from their war with Hitler Germany, no matter what the consequences, the least of which troubling

them being the possibility of Stalin hovering over all of Europe at the end. The dishonest part of the matter was the post-war surprise, indignation and pose of betrayal in liberal and non-liberal ranks alike upon seeing the prediction of Freda Utey and the pre-war Tories materialize. No sentiments were expressed by the warriors in the post-war era akin to those of Woodrow Wilson, for example, in ultimately making public an opinion that the First World War's origin was precisely that charged by his war-time political persecutee, Eugene Debs.

It is certain that no dwelling on the likely outcome of the war took place among the liberal editors once the German invasion of Russian-occupied Poland took place. The prompt urging of all-out aid to Russia with no strings attached involved no uncertainty that the pushing of the war in Central-East Europe to a knockout finish obviously was going to decide the state of affairs there for a long time to come. Expressions of distaste for both totalitarian systems sounded flat when the makers of such expressions simultaneously favored full military aid to one of them. It may have been that most of these persons imagined a Russian victory, followed by a subdued retirement behind its post-World War One frontiers. But the territorial dispositions of 1939-1941 alone should have been a forecast of the future behavior of the Soviet to liberal enthusiasts. And the very idea of full and unconditional aid to Russia, begun by Churchill, carried with it the fully committed hope for a comprehensive final Russian victory. It acknowledged absence of any restraints on Russian actions. But, after having given the Soviet a signed blank power-check, an uproar was made in 1945 and thereafter when the Reds filled in a figure equal to the total amount of all Allied political resources in the regions contiguous to Russia. It was indeed a terrible blow to all dreamers of a new post-war Central Europe consisting once more of a carpet of jerry-built ramshackle states supported by British money and French bayonets. Unconditional aid to Russia built a barrier a mile high against any future Franco-British political influence-wielding in the much botched Central European arena.

As to the survival of the older benevolent image of Soviet Russia, and the newer view of a Communist empire seeking to extend its dominions, there was no better example of the descriptions of both than those which appeared in successive issues of the *New Republic* in the first half of July by Max Lerner and Samuel Grafton. Lerner, alarmed by the "conservative" idea of standing aside while Germany and Russia whittled each other down, asserted the now-revived estimation of Russia as a collective security ally. Russian resistance was what was to "save" Britain, now, as well as this country, and set the stage for the "liberation of Europe." And there should be no grounds for apprehension;¹²⁰

Even the conservatives who have been fearing a long war of attrition between the democracies and Hitler on the ground that Stalin would be the residual legatee, can now forget their fears. For now that Russia has been drawn into the war on England's side, even if she survives she will be a responsible partner in a common peace.

From Lerner's point of view, this was now a "left" war, and if the anti-Hitler conservatives did not intend to commit themselves to it wholeheartedly, and abandon their hostility to Russia, the conflict was sure to be the "end of conservative man," a term he credited to Guenter Reimann.

Grafton did not share this vision of a tame bear acting as a supporting cast to another impossible post-war division of the world. He was one of the few blunt enough to say that should Russia win, they were going to be the residuary legatees anyway, and that people everywhere should be preparing themselves to accept this end product. Said Grafton calmly,¹²¹

The foreign policy of the West is based on the hope that Stalin will defeat Hitler without collecting the fruits of victory. It is based, in short, on the hope that the moon is made of green cheese. The West also hopes that Hitler will be defeated by the Soviet Union without suffering the natural consequences of defeat, Soviet invasion and Soviet suzerainty. Again, this is the hope that water will run backward and uphill after it has cleared the falls. In other words, the policy of the West is realism itself up to the point at which it decides to help the Soviet Union; beyond that point it is fantasy, evasion and opportunism. A stubborn mental block operates in the premises. We do not dare to look beyond the physical battle on the Eastern front. We want the victory of Communism over Fascism without the spread of Communism; we plead for a major demonstration of Soviet might, without extension of that might over Europe. Our approach is unhistorical, haphazard and dreamlike.

However, Grafton's sensing of the real logic of the Soviet joining the war was not especially influential for the moment, not only because of the persistence of views such as Lerner's, with its vision of a gentle, cooperative Stalin. There was the actual warfare itself, and things were not going too well for the Communists at that particular interval. "Create A Second Front!," a *New Republic* editorial exclaimed on July 7. "In this great crisis in history the *New Republic* suggests that there should immediately be Anglo-American military and naval discussions looking to the creation of a second front," and suggested an invasion of France through the Brittany coast or North Africa.¹²² Little shivers of terror had been running through the streams of articles on the Russian military performances against the

Germans, and fear of a partial victory for the latter and a negotiated peace was the most dreaded result. This was one of the main reasons for the hysteria of some of the observers, and lying behind their impulsive suggestions for all-out aid to forestall the Reds from contemplating such a conclusion.¹²³ Thus a policy which called for continued abuse of the domestic Communists and at the same time unlimited help to the Russian species demanded great editorial agility and self-control. But there was little doubt that the military urgency of the Soviet contributed no little bit to the rehabilitation of the Communists in general.

For the most part it was thought prudent to forget the period of the *Pakt*, although the *Nation* did publish Reinhold Niebuhr's "New Allies, Old Issues" on July 19, a flabby and unconvincing apologia for the amazing somersaults of the Soviets in the previous two years, while ostensibly criticizing world Communism. Though bitterly critical of the Hitlerians for their "unprincipled freedom of strategy," Niebuhr chose not to discuss the Russian behavior, or even Churchill's astounding turnabout and leap to the aid of the Communists, after twenty years of ferocious hostility toward them, except as part of a grand cosmic tendency of "strategic flexibility" peculiar to a world view bending history "to a dominant political and moral purpose."¹²⁴ Niebuhr's formidable talent for double-talk was impressively demonstrated here.

On the whole, however, the issues were kept much closer to practical considerations than this. In the summer a new tack was adopted in an effort to break down anti-Communist views and hostility toward providing aid, by suggesting shipments westward to Vladivostok, the diversion being undertaken to create an image of Russia as the sole barrier between the Germans and their eventual attainment of a perch in Alaska, from whence to take up the allegedly long-preached invasion of North America.¹²⁵ Another argument for massive aid to the Communists was built around the thesis that Stalin would gain immense world-wide prestige if the Russians defeated Hitler alone, which could then be advanced to the rest of the world as evidence that the Communist system was superior to others. Therefore, aid in volume to the Soviet would help "establish the moral credit of democracy" and limit Soviet claims upon victory.¹²⁶ It was unfortunate that the Communists got the aid and made stentorian claims of superiority anyway.

These views were launched in the *New Republic*, but the *Nation* was no less reluctant to press for the same program. Two major editorials on September 27 lauded the Beaverbrook-W. Averell Harri-man delegation to Moscow, and noisily urged wide backing for FDR's request for nearly \$6 billions more for Lend-Lease appropriations, on top of the \$7 billions provided in the spring; "it is essential that

America and Britain pour into Russia all the material which can possibly be scraped together.”¹²⁷ Fischer, now diverted from his corrosive attacks on the Communists which had gone on for weeks after June 22, suggested that we should listen to Lloyd George and others in Britain who suggested that America might produce more war goods if we declared war. And he ingeniously suggested that it would be possible to get over the objections of millions of Americans to sending fighting men overseas by sending all our arms there first; “then we shouldn’t have any army equipped to send overseas,” he brightly pointed out.¹²⁸

There were still moments when Russian actions caused momentary flutterings here and there, but equilibrium was easily attained in these days of Communist anxiety. Though the deportations and relocations of population by Hitler’s regime had been relentlessly and thunderously attacked, the *Nation* greeted with unruffled composure the news that the Reds had begun deporting nearly 400,000 persons of German origin from the Volga basin to Siberia.¹²⁹ It was regarded as the removal of a treacherous threat to the homeland, and, indeed, national patriotism was undergoing a resurgence in the land of alleged anti-nationalistic planetary stateless socialism.

For the element which was still uneasy about the Communists as late as October, the *Nation* held up their endorsement of the Atlantic Charter as of tremendous significance. It was thought of particular consequence in deflating the prophecies of Hitler to the German people that they could expect another Versailles and more territorial loppings if they lost. “The Charter, and the development now being given it, will help to debunk that theme,” its editorial of October 4 promised. It was silly for the Germans to expect to be “strangled economically,” and additionally dismembered territorially, in view of the nobility of the post-war promise contained in this profession of intent.¹³⁰

One serious weakness in reporting the war can be laid at the door of the liberal press and its zealous ideological excesses growing out of the entry of the Communists in the war. Because the enemy was Hitler it persisted in asserting as it did in the case of China that an armed civilian resistance might indulge in any number of incidents with the uniformed German troops with impunity. It reported the execution of such “irregulars” as great atrocities and further heightened the head of steam of propaganda against Germany. The universal behavior of uniformed troops against armed civilians went by the board in this effort to demonstrate the unique evil of the Germans. And this campaign made an incalculable contribution to the chaos and disorder of 1941–1945 and the establishment of the *franc-tireur* mentality in post-war politics of the “liberated” countries. Freda Kirchwey’s “The People’s Offensive” on October 11 was one

of the more earnest pleas to refuse to see the hand of the Communists in the vast wave of ferocious fighting by these un-uniformed irregulars in all the occupied countries immediately after the invasion of Russia. "The rebellions are clearly not Communist," she declared,¹³¹ though the fact that they were was one of the most immovable realities of the entire war. She gloried in the destruction of property and the series of killings of German occupiers, yet flamed at German reprisals. No one was able to explain then or later how the inhabitants of the occupied lands were able to benefit from the incredible property destruction being noted; but it was obvious that the Communists were achieving two goals at once.

The Russian eclipse in the liberal press was ended for sure by October, 1941. The two years of uneasiness were ended, and the sun was shining once more, melting the anti-Soviet glacier that had extended itself substantially in the cool and shady months of 1939-1941. The two years had been full of anguish for the liberal editors; during this time they had spoken many hollow words of hostility toward Russia, which had created grave unrest among the readers, and scores of angry letters had been wholly or partially published, loudly criticizing this sudden reversal of form. But Hitler provided the dynamite that blasted through the separating partitions, and liberalism and Communism flowed together once more, warmed by the common cause and the support of the Soviet's military struggle against Germany.

Once again the liberal journals sprouted with the advertisements and announcements of pro-Communist groups, meetings, commissions, relief and benefit gatherings, and publications. And the concessions of the moment which had cluttered the liberal columns on Russia quickly sedimented out. The way was clear for a full return to the fixations of the 1930s, raised several degrees in temperature by the exigencies of the showdown in the East. The coming of a Russianized Central and Eastern Europe was hailed with loud acclaim.

As the Germans ground their way into Kiev, the *New Republic* issued another intense call for all-out aid to the Communists, and even temporarily silenced its similar appeal for Britain, on the basis of the new priority. "Russia is our ally in all but name," it called; "The risks of aiding Russia are smaller than they are commonly reported; but whatever they are, they should be run."¹³² A week later, the second wave of second-front trumpet calls began to be heard, and it was still sounding on the day of the Pearl Harbor attack. The *New Republic* was totally enlisted behind it:¹³³

There is general agreement, however, that a landing ought to be attempted, perhaps in Norway, perhaps in the south of France, at the very earliest moment that such a thing is possible. The *New Republic*, which

believes that America should have declared war long ago on the entire Axis, naturally believes that this country should participate in such an effort to the maximum possible extent, taking equipment from our own defensive stores if necessary.

For a time there was support for a putative British-formed second front in the Caucasus, and the liberals actually believed the Russians would permit such an action. Max Werner, one-time *New Masses* commentator on Communist armed strength and a newly-recruited expert on the subject for the liberal weeklies, thought the Caucasus adventure silly and recommended an immediate invasion via Spain or unoccupied Vichy France, again with the object of spreading the war and forcing the Germans to extend themselves over more territory at further cost to their Eastern campaign.¹³⁴ Werner wanted to repeat the Napoleonic Wars of 1807–1812. Yet even as late as the end of November, 1941, Michael Straight believed the British would attempt the Caucasus adventure, and that the Communists would welcome it.¹³⁵

The *Nation* reportage on the Russo-German war, which began with cool, antiseptic paragraphs in June, was using language reminiscent of the turgid Battle-of-Britain style by October. It also noted that British Reds and fellow travellers were screaming for a second front, but in this instance the editors were convinced that Churchill would hold off “until that venture can be mounted on such a scale as to insure against another Dunkirk.”¹³⁶ It apparently was late enough in the season now to end the posturing that Dunkirk had been a great victory.

There were mixed editorial emotions in the comment on the President’s move to utilize the granting of aid to Russia as a lever for obtaining guarantees of religious freedom in the Soviet Union. They called it “wise statesmanship,” but were obviously of the mood to consider it folly to tie reservations to aid to Russia or anyone else. As in the case of the activities of the Comintern, the *Nation* considered that a verbal promise should be sufficient evidence of good faith, concluding, “Those who refuse now to help Russia because they fear its Communism and irreligion are quite certainly the enemies of both religion and freedom.”¹³⁷

The Russian campaign added an element of complexity to liberal reportage on the war, as some serious disagreements now began to appear. The feared avalanche-like conquest of the world by Hitler which had been standard fare since May, 1940, and which had been exploited for a full year prior to Russian entry into the war, now began to subside. Though the Reds were not doing too well, there were prognosticators such as Werner even predicting a quick Communist victory, and oozing confidence on the basis of the “war resources of

the Anglo-Russian coalition, aided by America," clearly "infinitely superior to the resources of the Third Reich."¹³⁸ Thus it was possible to see on September 1 in the *New Republic* an editorial shuddering over the likelihood of a Hitlerized world, backed by an article by John Scott, Moscow correspondent of the *London News-Chronicle*, titled "Germany Is Losing The War."¹³⁹

But the undeniable contribution of the Communists was to heighten the morale to the veteran liberal warriors, whatever their military performance may have been in the late autumn. Norman Angell issued a loud testimonial in the *Nation* on November 15 on behalf of the validity of collective security once more, assuring all that Britain was safer now for helping Russia and China against Germany and Japan; "We see quite simply and clearly now, that the fight for freedom is indivisible, that the defense of other victims of violence is our defense."¹⁴⁰ Upton Sinclair, in a telegram to the Communist (Tass) news agency in New York for publication upon the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, displayed the same lack of ability to extend his vision an inch beyond military victory. As published in the *Nation* it read,¹⁴¹

Hitlerism is the wickedest force which has ever appeared in the world; the more dangerous because it possesses all the tools of modern science. It must not and shall not be permitted to prevail. With its defeat the pathway to a free, enlightened, and cooperative world will be open to all peoples of the earth.

A little more than four years later the world heard Winston Churchill describe Russia in not much different language while making approximately the same promises and predictions as to the future of mankind after still another war.

THE LIBERAL EDITORS DECLARE WAR ON GERMANY

It has been seen that editorial belligerence was already running at near top speed in the days just prior to the extension of the war into Eastern Europe in the fourth week of June. A combination of this and a number of new Administration actions and events, mainly at sea, plus the persistence of vigorous home-front resistance, finally brought the liberal weeklies to the point of private declarations of war on Hitler which were somewhat in advance of that made by the New Deal government.

Early in June, as has been seen, it was the conviction of such *Nation* stalwarts as Freda Kirchwey and I. F. Stone, and the *New Republic's* transfigured Washington columnist "T.R.B.," that FDR meant to

become engaged in full-scale naval operations in the Atlantic. Stone said that all that remained unsolved was "what to do about the Japanese when the shooting starts in the Atlantic." It was apparently to be an unofficial war, carrying within it the possibilities of substantial political fireworks, although the way was presumably cleared by the sinking of the ship *Robin Moor*, and the President's order for a shooting war with German submarines far out in the Atlantic, a little later. As "T.R.B." complacently explained, as commander-in-chief of the Navy, FDR had full authority "to proceed against pirates," and therefore¹⁴²

The pattern of Pres. Roosevelt's war policy becomes clearer every day. The shooting may have started by the time this is printed; it may not start for a long time to come. When it does come there will be no reason to inquire what the shooting is about. It will be about piracy on the high seas.

This seemed to be an ingenious solution to the problem of effecting naval warfare by bypassing Congress, yet keeping the legislative branch informed of every move, while still not changing the nation's status as a "technical neutral."

A new wave of impatience got loose after the German invasion, in recognition that Hitler was even more deeply involved. The *Nation* accorded full support to Secretary of the Navy Knox's advocating that the navy "clear the Atlantic" "to insure safe delivery of war goods to Britain." The *Nation* clung to the buccaneer thesis also by remarking "That such action means war, declared or undeclared, no honest man would deny. But so did the famous raid on the Barbary pirates."¹⁴³ The event that did the most to perk up interventionist spirits in the weeks following the Russo-German fighting was FDR's ordering the navy to occupy Iceland, "after an invitation from the government of the island," the *Nation* was careful to point out on July 12. It was hailed as "a very positive step toward winning the Battle of the Atlantic," and sure to ease the pressure on the England-bound convoys. Along with this there was swift and enthusiastic support for General George Marshall's request that the laws restricting the field of operation of the National Guard and Selective Service soldiers be repealed, and that the service period of the latter be extended beyond the statutory one year. The logic was plain: if the Navy was going to Iceland, the Army ought to go also. The absence of any apparent public hostility to the Iceland action was received with relief; the editors were sure this was the sign that a big turn-about in public opinion could be expected shortly.¹⁴⁴

The *New Republic* was no less elated, but chose to issue an intense attack on Senator Wheeler for a speech in which he announced that

American soldiers were going to Iceland. An editorial on July 14 declared that it was fortunate for him that the troop ships were not sunk by German submarines;¹⁴⁵

We disagree heartily with Senator Wheeler about the war, but he is too valuable a liberal in a country in which all liberals are needed, to be lost by political suicide. We trust that Senator Wheeler will not be so reckless in the future with the safety of American soldiers or with that of his country. It is one thing to oppose a war by legitimate debate, quite another to reveal military secrets to the enemy.

For the *New Republic*, formal hostilities were already under way, and the absence of a declaration of war was an incidental bagatelle. Wheeler was quite within his rights to criticize the war before we were in it, but now that it was already on, it thought he should confine himself to saying that we should not have gotten into it.

The editorial policies of the liberal weeklies went to war against Germany in different ways in the late summer of 1941, the *New Republic* by formal declaration, the *Nation* through a profound spiritual commitment which was not a particle less straightforward. The circumstances involved impatience with the President's hesitant moves, after expecting much quicker warlike actions, along with burning resentment at the continued vitality of anti-involvement sentiment and persistent Congressional criticism, as well as deep apprehension over the state of national morale.

A foreign policy editorial in the New York *Post* in mid-July, urging an immediate declaration of war on Germany, stimulated major statements in both liberal weeklies. The *New Republic* had declared on June 30, "The time has come, in our judgment, when the United States should immediately go to war with the Axis."¹⁴⁶ Elation over the Russians entering the war against Germany obviously played a good part in this impulsive gesture. On July 21, it had changed its mind. Though sorely vexed by isolationist diligence and Presidential dilatoriness, and of the opinion that a majority of the people were not trying to avoid getting into war, it still believed that this same majority, curiously enough, was not "psychologically ready" for a formal declaration of hostilities, and such an act would surely precipitate a fierce debate and vast internal dissension. The thing to do, it suggested, was to continue an aggressive course and say nothing; "The American people have repeatedly shown that they are ready for deeds of war even if they are not prepared for words of war," it declared; "We are already committed in dozens of ways to shooting when necessary; let us take the actions that are needed and let Hitler choose between swallowing them and attempting reprisals."¹⁴⁷

The Kirchwey editorial on July 26 also admitted that the country

would be thrown into an uproar of furious controversy by such an act. Serenely confident that we were already at war, she saw no need to formalize it. She also was for more piecemeal economic and diplomatic warlike acts, and praised all those so far undertaken, convinced that this was the correct strategy for paralyzing the isolationists, most of whom were not out of harmony with these acts anyway when they were advanced as steps in aid of Britain. FDR was wiser to follow this course than that recommended by the *Post* and the more impetuous pro-war partisans; "A declaration of war is not what this country needs," she declaimed.¹⁴⁸

The failure of swift moves on the part of the President in the weeks following the outbreak of war in Eastern Europe provoked considerable vexation among the war-bound editors, however, and on August 9 she declared,¹⁴⁹

It is possible that nothing short of a declaration of war will awaken the country to an understanding that we are in any case involved in war, and, as surely as Britain, face victory or defeat. If this is so, then a campaign should be undertaken to bring truth home to the people.

Both liberal weeklies chafed with impatience, and insisted Roosevelt was going much too slow, in actuality trailing instead of in advance of public opinion. Polls which showed public resistance to war moves were deprecated as not "right." On July 21 the *New Republic* had asserted: "There are times when the executive may safely wait for the people to lead him, but this is not one of them. The people know, for the most part, what this war is about, and are waiting for the President to lead them."¹⁵⁰ Miss Kirchwey was of the same mind. Unhappy with Roosevelt's inaction, she pleaded that he "buttress his acts with the sort of courageous honesty that has made Churchill's leadership a work of genius." The people had supported every major step he had already taken; "I believe he could go much farther and faster without losing that support."¹⁵¹

But the action was not forthcoming; increasing governmental inactivity and swelling public apathy were what were detected as the summer wore into the end of August. The success of the America First Committee and others in presenting isolationist and pacifist positions was admitted. The *New Republic* blamed the President and "all others responsible for the creation of public opinion" for having failed in this campaign to stir up public enthusiasm for fighting, FDR's statements on the war especially lacking "the sense of utter sincerity and candor" found in Churchill's speeches, in their opinion, as well as having "rather ineptly" handled the theme of what might happen to this country if it "might fall into hostile hands."¹⁵²

"T.R.B." supported the tone of this complaint by describing the

bored response in Washington to the sensational Roosevelt-Churchill meeting on shipboard out in the Atlantic in the third week of August. He considered the general reaction "curiously lethargic," and remarked acidly, "Political leaders on both sides seemed to agree that the performance insofar as it was intended to be an inspirational demonstration of democratic solidarity, was what Broadway would call a 'turkey.'" He dismissed their announcement of war and peace aims as "an uninspired plagiarism of Wilson's Fourteen Points," agreeing with London critics who wondered why America already had "peace" aims when they were not even in the war.¹⁵³

The deep summer funk incited Bruce Bliven to publish a two-page signed editorial on September 1.¹⁵⁴ This was the season of OHIO ("Over the Hill in October") in the army camps, as well as other evidences of apathy which even provoked a Presidential comment. Bliven was unhappy with the behavior of the conscripts and their threats to go home if attempts were made to extend their service period beyond the year specified by the Selective Service Act. Their unwillingness to recognize the serious "national emergency" appalled him, and Villard's 2000-word letter to the *New York Times* in which he stated that he did not "for one moment believe" the country was in grave danger, repelled Bliven even more. It was considered a deep affront that "a man as intelligent as Mr. Villard" could be so confident about this matter.¹⁵⁵ But in Bliven's opinion "the worst morale of all" was exhibited by Congress, and by "the Republicans in particular." He was still stung by the one-vote margin by which the draft had been extended another year, and heaped abuse on both Congress and the youth for this; in the case of the latter he not only deplored their scoffing at the declaration that the country was in mortal peril, but also for treating the almost-universal interventionist foreign news in the papers as propaganda and praising the America First meetings, sins of just as high order.

"What is wrong with our country?" Bliven querulously inquired. The sullen unwillingness to become enthused over the prospects of fighting he wrote off as evidence of "sickness of soul," and blasted the business and educational systems for having been delinquent in failing to promote the proper "indoctrination for democracy."

Bliven's violent denunciation of America's poor war morale followed the *New Republic's* second call for a war declaration, set forth on August 25 in a sensational front-page cover statement in large type, which was followed by a four-page supporting editorial. The essence of their newest demand for formal hostilities read: ¹⁵⁶

Can America rise to the level of the greatest crisis our civilization has ever known? It is our privilege to make the history that will furnish the reply. The time is here, the occasion is at hand. The *New Republic* be-

believes that the United States should declare war on the Axis. We urge the President to ask Congress for this step. We urge Congress to adopt immediately the necessary joint resolution. We urge the American people to indicate clearly to their representatives in Washington that this is their will.

The June 30 call for a war declaration had been followed by near-silence. That of August 25, which followed a mysterious trial-balloon unsigned letter the week before suggesting a new war declaration, aroused more support, including a vigorous vote of approval by a majority of the contributors who had appeared in the *New Republic* since January 1, 1941. But by admission, in figures subsequently printed, a majority of the contributors and readers still disapproved of the editorial stand, or were uncertain that it was correct.¹⁵⁷

In actuality, there were distressing secondary issues growing out of the nation's war-drift which were distracting liberals at the moment, which may have played a part in taking full emphasis and attention from the call for formal war footing. One of these was the indictment of 29 members of a Minneapolis teamsters' union for sedition under the Smith Act. As members of the Trotskyite Socialist Workers Party, they were ferociously attacked by the Communists at this moment, no interest group in the country exceeding the latter in their desire to have the defendants convicted as charged.¹⁵⁸ The *New Republic* and the *Nation* were both immensely embarrassed by the Administration's prosecution of these men, and the former's comment on their eventual conviction, ironically enough in the issue of December 8, 1941, announced, "For the first time since 1789, Americans have been convicted of sedition on the basis of opinions," adding, "The precedent of conviction for opinion in print is a most disturbing and unfortunate one, as the country stands on the verge of war and wartime emotions and intolerance mounts."¹⁵⁹

The bitter fruits of war hysteria, which the liberals had done such mighty deeds to help develop, were not too much esteemed. Venting of displeasure on native recalcitrants in the absence of handier enemies, one of its forms, was reminiscent of 1917-1918. But in view of the bill proposed by Rep. Sam Hobbs of Alabama to create concentration camps for enemy aliens, and the reporting of a bill by the House Judiciary Committee providing for the death penalty for industrial sabotage and the possible sending of strikers in defense industries to the electric chair, the SWP convictions were mild.¹⁶⁰ What had appalled liberals was that both Attorneys-General Francis Biddle and Robert H. Jackson had in turn favored the Hobbs bill, and they had separately chastised Jackson in the spring of 1941 for favoring a federal wire-tapping law.¹⁶¹ War liberals were still hopeful of a garrison state without the barbed wire.

In the case of conscription, the liberals had a far greater and more grievous issue to juggle than the Smith Act convictions, due to its universality. From the June, 1940 beginnings there had always been a substantial liberal group which frowned on selective service, but it gained less and less access to print, while more and more attention was bestowed on behalf of establishing this towering break with American traditions. While lend-lease was being debated, in the spring of 1941, Jonathan Mitchell, one-time vociferous defender of the Nye Committee and execrator of the "merchants for death," produced a major report for the *New Republic*, "The Citizen Army," reassuring queasy liberals of the validity of the new conscription venture. Mitchell explained,¹⁶²

After the great reforms of Mr. Roosevelt's first two administrations, many liberals, inside and outside the New Deal, believe the army ought to be not merely a replica of the socially unplanned draft of 1917—out of which came, among other things, the American Legion, the vigilantes and the Kluxers of the early twenties. They would like to see the army do something for the men in it, and for the country. Often you meet the feeling that the new army ought to have the qualities of Washington's troops of 1776-1783. The men who endured those seven tremendous years were made into able, devoted citizens, and they ran the infant country for fifty years thereafter.

Old-line anti-militarist and pacifist liberals were entitled to rub their eyes in disbelief upon seeing something like this in a journal which had prided itself so long on its hostility to a sustained war machine.

Coming on the heels of Dorothy Dunbar Bromley's "They're In the Army Now,"¹⁶³ Mitchell's report on the more "democratized" army was not very convincing, for running through both stories was a nervous concern for using this conscripted service for other purposes than just military training. The earlier rumblings of projected vast educational, cultural and social programs to promote the "fostering of a democratic spirit" persisted; the hangover of the reform spirit of 1933-1939 was still trying to exert itself even in close-order drill and rifle-bearing. But there were other factors, which required a much more exacting about-face, which Mitchell and other liberals were psychologically well-armed for. There was no talk of home defense now; this was a Roman army being groomed for service in the Provinces; as Mitchell put it,¹⁶⁴

It is worth pointing out that, no matter how the present emergency ends, the army is likely to have an increased national influence in the future. With the Atlantic bases acquired from England, and the Alaskan and mid-Pacific islands that are being fortified, we shall need to maintain

permanent overseas garrisons that, including the Panama Canal force, will total about 200,000 men. Almost inevitably we shall have a much stronger air corps. Where the army was below 100,000 at the beginning of the New Deal, we must expect it to have a minimum of 500,000 henceforth. If conscription is continued into a future peace, as Mr. Roosevelt seems to intend, the army's weight will be correspondingly greater.

However, Mitchell reassured everyone in his final paragraph, there needed to be no concern about this new long-term conscript army; "From the very circumstance that Mr. Roosevelt is still leader of the nation, that the army's ranking officers are his personal appointees, it is bound to reflect a certain degree of New Deal democracy." The eyes of anyone familiar with Mitchell's writing of a few years before must surely have been bulging out with incredulity at this point.

But by the end of July, with the idea of a German invasion becoming a more and more remote possibility, support for the extension of conscription was running into much resistance. The new draft army was getting restless, loud public criticism floated about, adamant against keeping these young men longer than a year, and Congress was showing distinct signs of unwillingness to approve the President's request for this extension of service. The *New Republic* however backed him vociferously; with "danger stalking the world" for us, they favored extension and expansion of conscription at once.¹⁶⁵

As if things were not difficult enough in the promotion of pro-conscription opinion, the *Nation* for some reason published early in August Roger Baldwin's "Conscience Under the Draft." In a cautious and subdued manner, Baldwin complained bitterly of the Roosevelt Administration's treating of conscientious objectors as "felons," and sending some of them to jail for five years, claiming that in war-scarred England no one had been imprisoned for such a stand yet. Despite the absence of World War One's whooping hysteria, Baldwin admitted that social pressure for unity and conformity in 1940-1941 far exceeded that of the earlier period. The New Deal's famed liberalism did not extend to those who did not take its defense drive seriously, grieved Baldwin;¹⁶⁶

In the World War no man lost his right of citizenship through a conviction in the courts for violation of the draft act, since this was only a misdemeanor, with the maximum penalty of a year. Now, in days more intolerant of dissent and more fearful of non-conformity it has been raised to the status of a major crime.

Baldwin sounded like one of the chastened liberals of this era speaking ten years later, complaining of intolerance of dissent and fear of

non-conformity involving views very much dearer to their hearts than the issues perturbing him in 1941.

The interventionist liberals adroitly dodged the 203-202 vote in the House extending the draft late in August, with every known "progressive" member voting in the opposition, and with the rabidly-pro-war *New York Times* poll of army privates showing only 2 out of 400 interested in an army career and only 5 in 400 believing Roosevelt's insistence that the country was in serious danger. Only *Common Sense* blared away on these matters, in a rousing full-page editorial in September.¹⁶⁷

Attention was devoted instead to the Roosevelt-Churchill meeting and the "Atlantic Charter," which Freda Kirchwey concluded could only mean that it was "an absolute commitment on the part of the President of the United States that this country will go as much farther than it had gone in support of the struggle against Hitler as may be necessary to win."¹⁶⁸ Newly-recruited J. Alvarez del Vayo contributed his pleased report in harmony with the rehabilitated Russian vision, "It was encouraging to see President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill not only setting forth the principles of victory but moving directly into action by initiating the joint conference to take place at Moscow."¹⁶⁹ The minority report came from *Common Sense*, completely repelled by the Charter's commitment to total defeat and disarmament of Germany, looking upon it as a repudiation of Sumner Welles's speech of July 22 warning against a second Versailles policy of revenge and dismemberment. Its comment on the implications of this decision might have been read with profit by a legion of policy makers who stood around open-mouthed in 1948, wondering what had happened:¹⁷⁰

As the Red Army marches across Europe, and the German regime crumbles, perhaps permitting Britain belatedly to help in the "liberation" of France and the Low Countries, it will be Communism that will write the peace and unite Europe rather than Democracy. Will our institutions be much more secure if Moscow rather than Berlin dictates the peace?

It tenaciously put forward the idea of a negotiated peace once again, convinced that Germany was sick of the war and that the Germans were not impressed by the war cult at all, yet inclined to be passive because of the alternative facing them, with their national existence as threatened as anyone else's.

The hesitations, temporizations, second thoughts and troubled backward glances of the summer funk were soon memories, as things began to quicken after the attempted torpedoing of the destroyer *Greer* on its way to Iceland early in September. The President's

prompt "shoot on sight," or "rattlesnake" speech (as a consequence of his reference to the German submarines as the "rattlesnakes of the Atlantic") was the tonic the wearied and frustrated liberal interventionists needed. The *New Republic* gave it full approval, and was disappointed "because he did not go farther," a consequence of its standing commitment for an immediate declaration of war. In its opinion the speech was "historic," "not as the end of anything but as the beginning of something whose end no man can see."¹⁷¹ This was indeed an oracular pronouncement of high quality, for a change, for the end was nowhere in sight, even two decades later. "T.R.B." enthused additionally because he felt that it sobered the isolationist senators, who were at home when the speech was made, and who were thus made aware that there was no serious public resistance to this latest in the series of gropings for the blunderbuss hanging over the national mantel.

The *Nation* spoke through Miss Kirchwey, and she was resentful that FDR had not put the war issue frankly and boldly before the people. In her view he was no longer able to retreat from the obligations implicit in the Lend-Lease Act and a score of official pronouncements "without sacrificing the whole policy upon which our future depends." "What one can wish, with passionate regret," she declared, "is that the President had prepared the American people for the war that will sooner or later emerge from the policy to which the country is now committed." She was completely convinced that war would soon "be in progress, whether or not it has been 'declared,'" and she resented that "the American people, misled by the President's step-by-step tactics and by his attempts to limit discussion of American policy to the question of our safety and our rights as a neutral," was ignoring the more fundamental moral and ideological reasons why we should be fully at war with Hitler.¹⁷²

Liberal sights were soon levelled on a prize quarry, as an immense agitation developed a few days after the "rattlesnake" speech for the repeal of the Neutrality Act.¹⁷³ Both liberal weeklies strongly supported this move and conducted extravagant editorial abuse of it now. The *Nation*, hopeful that open repeal would contribute to stiffening public opinion for more belligerency, referred to the Act as a "misbegotten child of political scheming and national schizophrenia," Miss Kirchwey insisting it was "an act no balanced, adult nation could commit." It was blamed for everything that had gone wrong in international affairs since 1935, and hope was expressed that a rising fever to help beat Hitler would soon wash out this "hypocrisy of legal neutrality."¹⁷⁴ And again FDR was hit for his failure to "dare" to ask the Congress to repeal this law. "He plays safe when he should be bold," Miss Kirchwey complained on October 18; "He is too good a politician to be as good a leader as he should be."¹⁷⁵

The final epitaph on the long struggle of the *New Republic* to promote neutrality was its total repudiation of the entire idea on October 6 as a minuscule trifle that hardly had deserved the energy devoted to it. "The *New Republic* is in favor of going to war, and regards repeal of the Neutrality Act at this time as a comparatively unimportant preliminary," it announced, and the following week expressed the hope that the act would be "scrapped at the earliest possible moment."¹⁷⁶

Things picked up two weeks later, the *Nation* commending FDR for his "bold fighting talk" of October 27 on the eve of the opening of debate on the Neutrality Act amendments to permit the arming of merchant ships; the editorial comment of November 1 observed,¹⁷⁷

Isolationist Senators are already asserting . . . that the speech was virtually a declaration of war and that the changes in the Act demanded by the Administration will effectually put us into it. This of course is true, and it is to be hoped that the Administration forces will not try to soft-pedal these obvious and fateful implications.

Miss Kirchwey greeted the amending of the Act with a shout of triumph on November 22, "a declaration of naval war against the Axis powers," which had at last "wiped out the pretense that it [the United States] is a neutral in this war."¹⁷⁸ "T.R.B." in the *New Republic* two days later was far from as cheerful as this. He noted that the margin in favor had been a mere 18 votes, and on the heels of the one-vote victory extending the draft, he thought that "It was a triumph by so narrow a margin that it constituted a moral defeat"; in his mind "The vote gave the isolationists more encouragement than they had any right to expect and invited further obstruction."

What had been expected to be a rout turned out to be a fight between forces so evenly divided that the outcome was in doubt right up to the time the roll call started. As "T.R.B." put it,¹⁷⁹

Realizing that defeat would have had an extremely bad effect on the morale of the anti-Axis countries and would have forced modification of the President's foreign policy all along the line, Administration leaders turned on every kind of heat to win over doubtful votes. They promised, cajoled and threatened. Their combined effort finally turned the trick.

While the debate had gone on over Neutrality amendment, editorial impatience had boiled. FDR's 1941 Navy Day speech was interpreted by the *New Republic* as the signal that undeclared war was on in advance of the amending of the Act, on the basis of his remark that the shooting war had started.¹⁸⁰ "What Are We Waiting For?" asked the latest of the dramatic front-page spreads, this one inspired by the sink-

ing of the *Reuben James*. It contained another call for formal hostilities; "In this situation the *New Republic* urgently reiterates its plea that the United States should immediately declare war on the Axis." It expressed the confidence that Japan could be beaten in six months, and that an almost immediate second front could be initiated with the British in Spain and Southern France.¹⁸¹

But negotiated peace talk was still vigorous, and disturbing issues, such as the ominous decay of civil liberties, growth of anti-union labor sentiment, hostility toward aliens and radicals, and the presence of distressingly large numbers of "reactionaries" in high posts here and in England, provided grounds for occasional rumination in the late weeks of November.¹⁸² The *Nation* resounded with alarmed calls to ignore all peace talk and keep attention fixed on the war-to-the-end position;¹⁸³ the Kirchwey editorial of November 15 expressed the inclination to agree with the sentiments of Stalin in his Red Square October Revolution anniversary speech in which he predicted Hitler would be overthrown before the fall of 1942.¹⁸⁴ Liberal zeal for fighting undoubtedly was due in large part to the view that both the Germans and Japanese would be utterly crushed in less than a year, expressed over and over again in the 1940-1941 period.

While the pro-war liberals growled as the Administration proceeded in its demure edging toward war, and while the storms of adverse public opinion and peace talk persisted in holding up the forthright sailing off to war on a totally-committed basis, one development was evident, the widening of the gap in the liberal community to a point where no possible reconciliation could ever have been considered. The assault on Senator La Follette by Michael Straight in the *New Republic* on November 10 was also a concise summing up of the differences between the two camps. Straight separated La Follette from Senators Nye, Wheeler and Clark, for whom his contempt was almost beyond words, but he saved choice abuse for LaFollette as well. Repelled by his continual reference to the "war party" in a Senate speech on the Neutrality Act revision, Straight referred to his arguments as "the last weapon of the appeasers," while supplying in a single sentence about the best description of what left-wing collectivist politics had done to the liberal and anti-militarist traditions between the wars. Said Straight with heated emphasis,¹⁸⁵

no single instance can better illustrate the profound contrast between this war and the last, than the way in which the pacifist tradition has sunk from the leadership of a progressive movement in 1916 to the tail end of reaction in 1941.

From the way in which Straight undertook the demolition of La Follette, it was evident that everything that he and any other anti-war

liberals had ever done, both in domestic and foreign matters, had been consigned to the incinerator of the European war.

Nevertheless, as the end of November approached, the dearly desired comprehensive hostilities had not been realized, despite all the mass of time and energy which had been expended to that end. A serious feeling was gnawing that popular support still was defective, despite all the loud denunciations of public opinion polls as untrue representations of popular sentiment. They thought that enough had not been done in this end. As "T.R.B." put it,¹⁸⁶

Administration leaders are doing a lot of thinking and talking about the propaganda problem. Most of them are ready to acknowledge that the government's effort to tell the people of this country and of the world what the United States is up to has been a monumental flop.

The title of his column was "Wanted: A Ministry Of Information."

PEARL HARBOR PUNCTUATES THE LIBERAL CALL FOR INCREASED PRESSURE ON JAPAN

Like the Administration, the war-minded liberals were far more effective in getting across their views on what they were against than on what they were for, in the field of foreign policy. There was a notable exception in the picture, however, which deserves attention, in the midst of the tribulations over the draft, aid to Britain, intensified belligerency at sea toward the Germans, and the dearly-sought state of formal warfare with the Hitler regime. This involved Japan. The frustrations in the areas having to do with the European phases of the war and the alarming sag of the summer and early fall which produced such consternation in the interventionist sector were balanced by a much more cheering prospect in East Asian affairs. Plotted out as a graph, there might have been discerned an inverse relationship between the muffling of the war drive in the Atlantic and its blooming in the Pacific in the period between August and December, 1941. During this time the campaign of economic warfare which a portion of the collective-security minded liberal enthusiasts clamored for between September and December, 1931 finally materialized.

It may be remembered that an economic squeeze of formidable proportions had been in progress since mid-October, 1940, with the British, French and Dutch collaborating with the United States. At the same time the British were at work on a massive blockade of Germany, and both programs were producing their slow effects all during the winter of 1940-1941. Pro-war liberalism was heartily in accord with both of these policies, for quite different reasons, as has been

seen. But the former excited the most direct interest because the United States and Britain were both at peace with Japan, as were the Franco-Dutch empires, and the pressure was part of a strategy aiming at changing that country's Far Eastern ambitions and current actions.

The Soviet Union figured into both sides of this economic war as well, fear existing that it was the flow of goods into Siberia via Vladivostok which was the big gap in the squeeze on Germany, and Russian amicability with Japan which undermined the campaign against the latter. Liberals were much mystified by the Reds' ability to deal with both Germany and Japan while helping out the Chinese Communists at the same time. So in January and February, 1941 liberal interventionist pundits who had just a few months before ended their paeans of praise of the Communists were now diligently urging that the United States keep a frosty attitude toward Russia and inhibit trade in strategic materials with both the Soviet and Japan simultaneously. The reason given for this was that such a policy would slow down a suspected major understanding being worked out between the Russians and Japan which might result in the end of the Sino-Japanese war, the establishment of a Soviet hegemony over the Red-dominated Chinese provinces next to Siberia and Mongolia, and lead to a major diversion of the Japanese southward into the Anglo-Franco-Dutch colonies.¹⁸⁷

It was the persistence of economic relations with Japan that incensed the editorial groups the most. An angry *Nation* comment on January 4, 1941 said it in the fewest words;¹⁸⁸

We are spending billions to prepare ourselves for war. One of our possible enemies in that war is Japan, which has already bound itself to intervene in the Pacific if we become engaged in the Atlantic. . . . How much longer is our government going to confront Japanese aggression with strong words—while winking at the profitable back-door business of supplying the weapons of that aggression?

The late winter and spring saw repeated uneasy speculations as to whether the Japanese were about to begin their move, accompanied usually by exhortations to the Administration to cling to a "firm uncompromising policy" as the surest deterrent to Japanese penetration into this region.¹⁸⁹ An extended *New Republic* editorial on March 3, "Getting Tough In Asia," summarized the liberal warrior views of several months, expressing the confidence that the combined weight of the Anglo-Franco-Dutch-American interests in the South Pacific and South East Asia were quite sufficient to keep Japan at bay, predicting that the economic squeeze would soon "end all hope of Japan to continue as a major naval power." But, the editors observed,¹⁹⁰

There are some in this country, however, who would like to see Japan force war upon us now, on the theory that this is our golden opportunity to cripple her fleet, end the necessity for competitive building in the future, liquidate the "China incident," and free all our resources for aid to the democracies in Europe.

On this they frowned darkly; "Any aggressive action against Japan would be as ill-advised from a purely military point of view as such action by her." Though a recipe for making Asia a Communist stronghold, the editors did not criticize this thinking on that account; they were much disturbed by British, French and Dutch colonial mismanagement, and wanted some idea of "peace aims" possibly "embodying a new order" made public at the earliest opportunity, in order to help "dissipate the poisonous fumes that have arisen out of the witches' cauldron brewed in large part by the Western nations themselves."

But as the spring wore on, it appeared that it was neither war nor peace aims that were likely to be dealt with but a diplomatic agreement. The *Nation* commented harshly late in May on the delicate way in which the trade question was being handled, and on June 9 the *New Republic* issued another lengthy editorial comment on Japanese relations, greatly perturbed by rumors of three weeks' standing that an understanding was pending; "The winds of appeasement are blowing heavily now from Washington to Tokyo," it reported with distaste.¹⁹¹ Among other things it touched off a ferocious attack on the State Department which went on until early August, by which time Administration moves against Japan were sufficiently aggressive to convince the martial liberals they had no need any longer to fear the outbreak of peace.

The editors were sure that the State Department was up to something, and were further disconcerted by FDR's failure to mention Japan in a hot speech on May 28. They proceeded to ridicule all three cases being made for arriving at an understanding with Japan: 1) that the United States was in no position to prevent a Japanese mop-up of the Anglo-Franco-Dutch colonies; 2) that defeat of Japan might produce a victorious China that might in turn become a supporter of the Soviet Union "or itself be subject to a Communist revolution," and 3) that a conciliatory policy might strengthen Japanese moderates, as "the arguments which have been used by the appeasers for a decade." The *New Republic* did not care to quote the "appeasers," however, when the Communist grab of China became a reality a few years later precisely as predicted.

Instead of these the editors recommended freezing Japanese funds, stopping the shipment of every last bit of strategic goods, oil and metals, and the steep increase of military aid to China. Following this they added a demure *non-sequitur*, "There is no reason why we

should assume an unnecessarily provocative attitude toward Japan," since they were sure the Japanese would understand as long as this was explained as part of the American China policy. The *Nation* the same week was not so delicate; to discourage the Japanese trade delegation demanding a share of the oil, rubber and tin in negotiations with the Dutch East Indies, the editors recommended to Mr. Roosevelt that he send six large battleships to the Far Eastern fleet at once. If done, "it is probable that Japan's threat to the Dutch East Indies would be quickly abandoned." The enemy-is-a-coward theory still maintained its vigor.¹⁹²

The *Nation* had been much gratified by the appointment of Dean Acheson as Assistant Secretary of State in January,¹⁹³ but they were not so pleased in June, when he and Brig. Gen. Russell L. Maxwell, of the administration of Export Control, appeared before the House Rules Committee to testify on the Gillette-Coffee resolution to investigate the leak of war supplies to Germany and Japan. Acheson's unfriendly attitude and his declaration that the passage of the resolution would be "disastrous" on the grounds that it was mainly aimed at oil shipments to Japan, these being necessary if the Dutch East Indies were to remain unmolested, especially antagonized the *New Republic*¹⁹⁴ and I. F. Stone. Stone noted at once that Acheson had the year before appeared before the Supreme Court as counsel for the Ethyl Corporation, jointly owned by Dupont and the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, both of whom Stone declared were very hostile to the Coffee resolution. And he commented sourly that it would be "improper for him to appear before the Rules Committee in opposition to a measure that would hurt important clients he had served in private life."¹⁹⁵

The liberal editorial staffs, aware from the testimony that the Administration was fully cognizant of the fact that pressure on Japan meant serious danger for all the Anglo-Franco-Dutch colonies in South East Asia, chose to ignore the subject, as it was in complete conflict with their cheerful line that economic pressure on Japan would not make the Japanese the least bit active but would result in their meek collapse in a short while. They chose instead to mount a fierce attack on the State Department, which went on for two months. In a sense their assault sounded like the destructive *Inside the State Department* by Bertram D. Hulén, which had been reviewed with such gusto by Eliot Janeway in the *Nation* in October, 1939. On that occasion Hulén denounced every prominent personality connected with the Department except Stanley K. Hornbeck, political adviser to the Far Eastern Division, whose molten hate of Japan made him a favorite with author and reviewer as well. Hulén had charged that the State Department had had "no more participation in the New Deal experience than the Smithsonian Institution,"¹⁹⁶ and now, in mid-

1941, the interventionist liberals were willing to add in the Administration's expanding pro-war foreign policy as well.

"Give the State Department back to the people," the *New Republic* exhorted; "Force the resignation of those members of the Visa Department and those persons higher up who are still plotting appeasement in Europe and the Far East." Stone had referred to Acheson as having "turned up neatly garroted in the old school tie" at the hearings, and the attack for some time was built around the theme of the Department's alleged aristocratic and exclusive pretensions. And with the event of the German invasion of Russia, a sharp upturn both in belligerence toward Japan and in pique toward the State Department followed among interventionist liberals.¹⁹⁷ Coupled with this were accusations of close friendship with the German and Italian regimes, of being anti-Jewish and other serious charges. The *New Republic's* "State Department Appeasers" on July 28 covered the same ground as Hulen's two-year-old book, and oddly enough also excepted only Hornbeck from its list of condemned personnel which included Sumner Welles, Alexander Weddell, Kennedy, James C. Dunn, Hugh Wilson, Adolph A. Berle, Jr., Maxwell Hamilton (chief of the Far Eastern Division), Avra Warren (head of the Visa Department) and Acheson once more.¹⁹⁸ Its call for FDR to "clean house" as well as an appeal for a comprehensive congressional investigation of the Department, to be followed by the creation of a drastically reorganized "New Deal Department" with new personnel and a greatly increased appropriation, was echoed by the *Nation*, in its parallel attack:¹⁹⁹

Its spirit is un-American, its atmosphere is pseudo-aristocratic, its ways are secretive. A large section of its permanent bureaucracy and high officials are, if not sympathetic to Fascism, at least unsympathetic to democracy. There is nothing much we can do about it until the President decided to shake up its staff and bring the Department into line with the New Deal. Why he has waited so long is as much a mystery to us as it may be to you.

The policy toward Japan was about to take a dramatic turn, however, one so obviously truculent that no war liberal could henceforth charge that the Administration and its State Department were not sufficiently provocative toward the Japanese. The order of the President of July 26, 1941 freezing Japanese funds in the United States, followed by similar actions by the European colonial powers in East Asia, put the emphasis upon the Western economic war on Japan that interventionists had long pleaded for.

One of the favorite diversions of the liberal press in the early years of the war tended to follow the Sunday newspaper supplements,

printing blithe estimates of the fighting potential of the rival nations based on a tabulation of their resources from almanacs and the like. The usual outcome was a cheerful, reassuring conclusion that the enemies of the "Allies" (later buttressed by the presence of Russia and always assumed to have access to the United States) were bound to collapse at the earliest occasion from economic strangulation. The factor of desperate action following the experience of dire need was not capable of statistical representation. So it was not considered that the long war that ensued proved that an enemy's fighting power could not be plotted out from encyclopedias. Economic inferiority had not headed off Hitler or Mussolini in 1933-1939; yet faith in this approach remained undiminished.

It was revived with a flourish in August, 1941 with reference to Japan, after the multiple action to reduce its foreign trade to a shadow. The *New Republic*, an unyielding antagonist to such programs in 1931, was so enthralled by them in 1941 that it forgot the past and blandly stated that such schemes would have "stopped the Japanese in their tracks" had they been adopted at any time from 1931 on.²⁰⁰ The invasion of French Indo-China by the Japanese gave them a tip as to what this economic gesture might be expected to produce. But there was even pleasant salvage to be made from this. "T.R.B." in the *New Republic* on August 4 thought it was fortunate that the Japanese invasion there had occurred when it did:

If President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill needed an excuse for pinning back the big ears of the Orient's truculent little men, this was it.

He went on to reveal to the readers that the freezing order had been prepared by the Treasury Department for weeks, "and awaited only a propitious moment for promulgation." The article exuded confidence in the Administration's "naval experts," whom he cited as the authorities, saying that now, should the Japanese move to take the Dutch East Indies, they "would lose in sixty days." But he stressed the internal propaganda value of stirring up anti-Japanese feeling at this moment. "T.R.B." credited this as "unquestionably responsible" for the total collapse of opposition to the President's bill for extending the service time for draft selectees;²⁰¹

Hitler may still be, as the President insists, the most serious menace to American security. But he and all his European armies, U-Boats and diplomats are a menace that is harder to sell the American people than the Japanese admirals who threaten to acquire possession of our tin and rubber supplies in the Dutch East Indies.

Public bristling toward Japan was a revelation to liberals, almost open-mouthed with wonder at this development achieved with no help from them. Freda Kirchwey was convinced now that FDR could get a declaration of war against Japan from Congress on almost any pretext, and she was irked that Americans should "respond with greater pugnacity to the lesser threat of Japan" and that we "were ready to fight Japan and unready to fight Hitler," which she dearly preferred;²⁰²

The answer is an easy one. Asia is an old American hunting ground. . . . The imperialism of the United States in Asia has never been grandiose or very aggressive, but it has been remunerative. . . . We will fight for tin and rubber and oil.

This smacked of the interpretations of World War One in the 1920s and 1930s, and utterly contradicted the simultaneous interpretations of the war with Hitler and Mussolini, almost entirely cloaked in the form of moral absolutes and in ethereal, ethical and moral imperatives unsoiled by the dross of economic stakes.

Miss Kirchwey returned to the subject with emphasis and in extended discussion in her three-column editorial "We Move Into War" on October 25, delineating the factors which pointed to early American hostilities with Japan instead of Germany:²⁰³

Whatever action Japan takes will sooner or later tip it into war with the United States. People who insist that we can never be brought to "fight for Siberia" or for Siam or for our right to navigate the Japanese sea fail to realize how little popular objection there is to war with Japan. First of all, it would be chiefly a naval war, and American pacifist sentiment is mainly directed against dispatching a mass expeditionary force to foreign shores. Second, it would be a war in support of American "interests" in the Far East, and even the ordinary citizen who has nothing direct to gain from such interests bristles at the notion of forfeiting them to a grasping neighbor. Third, as a people we don't like the Japanese, while popular sympathy for their Chinese victims is universal; and no important Japanese element exists in our population as a whole to serve as a focus of anti-Chinese propaganda. Fourth, several of our most influential isolationist Senators and Congressmen are strongly anti-Japanese and today would back vigorous action against Japan at the first rumor of an incident while they would ignore it if it were created by Nazi Germany.

In summation, she stated without qualification, "Given the slightest provocation, the Administration can lead the country into war with Japan as soon as it pleases. Given serious provocation, the Adminis-

tration will be driven into war with Japan by pressure of public opinion."

Despite grim recitals of such factors as these indicating the likelihood of war, there were no noticeable interventionist moves to slow down the propaganda, to urge caution, reserve, and allied states of mind. On the contrary, with the war clouds boiling up in the sky in the Pacific, the editors and specialists on Asian affairs to a man urged the adoption of more incendiary policies by the week; *Nation* and *New Republic* heads shouting "Don't Appease Japan!," "Squeeze Japan Now!," "Call Japan's Bluff," "For An Ultimatum To Japan," "Stay Tough With Japan," rang through their pages in the last few months of technical peace. Except for a brief, panicky spell in September²⁰⁴ when a rumor that a settlement was in the process of being worked out by the diplomats, there was a monotonous sameness to the editorial exhortations in this period of ever-thickening martial gloom. Nathaniel Peffer, Stone and others wrote articles which rippled with confidence in the power to cow the Japanese into inaction by economic garroting alone,²⁰⁵ while the *Nation* and *New Republic* editorials echoed these sentiments in close formation. Continued provocation was unlikely to invite response; "There is not the slightest evidence that if these supplies were stopped, Japan would go berserk and provoke a war with the United States," the *Nation* complacently observed after the credit freeze was three weeks old.²⁰⁶ And throughout this period and September the *New Republic* pounded for tougher measures, even hazarding the suggestion that even if war did occur, it was sure to be a very short and successful one; its September 8 statement on Far East policy insisted,²⁰⁷

This is the time for the concert of anti-Axis powers to present a joint ultimatum to Japan. She should be told she must leave the Axis at once, withdraw from Indo-China, make peace with Chungking and get out of China, renounce her ambitions in Siberia. The alternative to immediate acceptance of these terms should be war—a war which all competent military authorities agree would certainly end before many months in a crushing defeat for Japan which would reduce her from her present status as a second-class power to a fourth-class power for generations to come.

The following week the editors declared calmly,²⁰⁸

We hope our government will not only stay tough with Japan, but get tougher. She should be given her choice between an immediate complete blockade and making peace with her neighbors, which involves giving up all the territory she has seized. If she is good, she should be promised the utmost economic cooperation; if she is bad, she should be promised economic strangulation.

Again on October 27 the *New Republic* declared with the same easy confidence,²⁰⁹

We believe that Great Britain and the United States should immediately threaten Japan with a shooting war unless she instantly and completely comes over to the side of the democracies, gets out of China and Indo-China and gives effective guarantees against any further aggression. Highly competent naval authorities believe that such a war would end in a quick Japanese defeat, which incidentally would result in making available to the democracies millions of tons of badly-needed Japanese merchant ships.

This was essentially the position T. A. Bisson recommended in his article the following week, except that he wanted to include Communist Russia in "a joint Anglo-American-Soviet demarche."²¹⁰ Neither Bisson nor any editor of either liberal weekly cared to comment in the entire period on what the Far East would look like with Japan completely shattered.

There probably was no time in the pre-Pearl Harbor decade when the liberal spokesmen for an obdurate and non-compromising policy of economic warfare on Japan thought they were closer to success than in the six weeks before the bombs started to fall on the American fleet on December 7, 1941. The emergence of the regime of Hideki Tojo as a replacement of that of Prince Konoye was deeply relished by the *Nation*, which interpreted it as evidence that the economic squeeze was producing desperate shortages in the land of the Rising Sun. The editorial of October 25 urged that he be issued a blunt warning to capitulate to Western demands, fully confident that it would make him hesitate and be conciliatory.²¹¹ And even more evidence that the embargo and the absence of a trade treaty were creating a frightful economic crisis was the dispatch of Japan's "ace negotiator" (as the *Nation* described him), Saburo Kuru, former ambassador to Germany, to Washington.²¹² But the editors were utterly hostile to the Kuru mission, and maintained that there was nothing to talk about. "Appeasement is dead," the editorial of November 22 grated; unless the Japanese were willing to give up unilaterally all the gains they had made in a decade, there was no hope of relief from the economic choking going on.²¹³ The *New Republic* was of identical mind; its editorial head on November 24 was "To Japan: The Answer Is 'No.'" It predicted that the Japanese would crumble instead of fight when told to leave the Axis, withdraw from all occupied areas and "behave like a civilized nation." The editors upbraided the Administration for not having sent a diplomat to Tokyo at the same time "with final and drastic American terms and a demand for an immediate decision."²¹⁴ As Michael Straight put it on

December 1, in his grim, pleasurable recital of the economic scissors being applied to Japan, "Our policy can only be: no compromise in China; no relaxation of the blockade; no agreement of any kind that is not fully supported by Russia as well as Britain; no smile on the face of Kurusu." Japan was beaten, Straight thought. He was for running the full risk of war, because he was sure Kurusu was bluffing; "Japan cannot undertake war against us unless the French navy engages the British in the Mediterranean and the Russian armies collapse."²¹⁵ A separate editorial complained that Secretary of State Hull had failed to consult with the Communist diplomats of Russia while discussing matters with Kurusu. The omission of Russia was considered "strange" since they were assumed to be opposed to the Japanese too.²¹⁶

The lead sentence of the *Nation's* editorial on Japan in their issue for December 6 read, "It looks as if the United States had called Japan's bluff." It praised Hull's ultimatum to the Japanese delegates Nomura and Kurusu and expressed the belief that he was "speaking for the great mass of the American people" in demanding unilateral Japanese withdrawal from the mainland of Asia prior to discussion of a Pacific settlement. Professing to be puzzled that the United States had waited since September, 1931 to apply this combination of economic and diplomatic pressure, the editors were sure that Japan would buckle now.²¹⁷

The *New Republic's* issue came out December 8, and in the editorial "Will Japan Fight?" answered the query with calm confidence, "Unless there is some unlikely error in our information about the naval situation, sane strategists would never permit Japan to start such a hopeless war."²¹⁸

Anyone beginning his subscription to the two American liberal weekly magazines with their first post-Pearl Harbor attack issues would never have been able to divine from their quiet, almost reverent composure what they had advocated to the very hour of the disastrous Japanese attack on this Hawaiian air and naval base. A foretaste of the *Nation's* reliability might have been gleaned from its lead editorial paragraph, however. It expressed the sure confidence that Japanese claims of damage there were ridiculous, and reflected the same confidence that major American raids on Formosa and Hainan Islands would soon follow, although an immediate attack on Tokyo from Manila in the Philippines could not be expected too surely, since distance "probably" precluded this. The British were reported to be casually "mopping up" Japanese troops which had tried to take Malaya and Singapore, and were commended by the editors; "in general they seem to have been more alert than we were," they commented blandly. But the fire and brimstone rained down from the podium of the chief editor, Freda Kirchwey, who somehow was able

to see in the debacle "the penalty for our old sins in the democratic faith," and fervently called for a saturation world war, "not an isolationist Pacific war."²¹⁹

A much better insight into the course of American liberalism over the previous decade could have been gained simply by reading the heading over the *New Republic's* main editorial in its issue two days later; in the enormous type usually reserved for the setting of the journal's name it read "Our War."

NOTES

- 1 One of the few occasions of the mention of the White Committee in the *Nation* was that of June 1, 1940, p. 666.
- 2 The *New Masses* charged White with trying to become the George Creel of the Second World War, and praised Senator Rush Holt of West Virginia for his efforts in uncovering the forces which had stimulated White into action. *New Masses*, June 25, 1940, p. 23.
- 3 *Nation*, August 10, 1940, pp. 105-106. She claimed there were 162 "overage" destroyers.
- 4 *Nation*, September 18, 1937, pp. 85-87.
- 5 *New Republic*, September 9, 1940, p. 335.
- 6 "Isolationist Hysterics," *Nation*, September 14, 1940, pp. 203-204.
- 7 "FDR's Coup d'Etat," *New Masses*, September 10, 1940, pp. 3-5.
- 8 "America and the 'New World Order,'" *Nation*, October 5, 1940, pp. 288-290.
- 9 *Nation*, November 30, 1940, p. 517.
- 10 *Nation*, December 14, 1940, p. 591.
- 11 In September the *New Masses* returned to praise of the Neutrality Act and castigated Roosevelt for abandoning "those safeguards which were intended to help us keep out of another conflict." "Zero Hour," *New Masses*, September 3, 1940, pp. 3-4.
- 12 "Mr. Roosevelt Says Go," *New Republic*, January 6, 1941, p. 6.
- 13 Kirchwey, "Order Of the Year," *Nation*, January 4, 1941, p. 6.
- 14 "Tasks Before Congress," *Nation*, January 4, 1941, p. 3.
- 15 "Can Mr. White Outguess Hitler?," *New Republic*, January 6, 1941, p. 3.
- 16 "Fine Words," *New Republic*, January 13, 1941, p. 35.
- 17 Hanighen, "The War and the New Dealers," *Common Sense*, January, 1941, pp. 20-21.
- 18 "The Message To Congress," *New Masses*, January 14, 1941, p. 3.
- 19 "Brass Tacks," *New Republic*, January 20, 1941, pp. 70-71.
- 20 *New Republic*, January 20, 1941, pp. 69-70, for all citations in this paragraph.
- 21 *Nation*, January 18, 1941, pp. 59-60.
- 22 Kirchwey, "The Loyal Opposition," *Nation*, January 25, 1941, pp. 89-90.
- 23 Stone, "A Time For Candor," *Nation*, January 25, 1941, pp. 91-92.
- 24 *New Masses*, January 21, 1941, p. 18.
- 25 *New Republic*, January 27, 1941, pp. 103-104. The editors rejoiced in the replacement of Kennedy by John G. Winant, the latest of a series of cross-over appointments by FDR involving a preference for wealthy interventionist Republicans over wealthy isolationist Democrats. "We Have An Ambassador," *New Republic*, January 27, 1941, p. 100.
- 26 *Nation*, February 15, 1941, p. 169.
- 27 *Nation*, February 15, 1941, pp. 172-173.
- 28 Lerner, "Hamlet and the Presidency," *New Republic*, January 27, 1941, p. 114.
- 29 *Nation*, March 8, 1941, p. 253; March 15, 1941, pp. 287-288.
- 30 *Nation*, March 22, 1941, pp. 309-310; "Speed British Aid," same issue, pp. 311-312.

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- 31 *New Republic*, January 27, 1941, p. 115.
- 32 *New Republic*, January 27, 1941, pp. 102-103.
- 33 *New Republic*, March 31, 1941, p. 434.
- 34 "A Lindbergh Peace," *Nation*, February 1, 1941, pp. 115-116.
- 35 "If America Stands Alone," *New Republic*, March 17, 1941, pp. 361-363.
- 36 "Lease-Lend Revisions," *New Republic*, February 10, 1941, pp. 166-167.
- 37 "The War At Sea," *Nation*, March 29, 1941, pp. 369-370.
- 38 *Nation*, April 19, 1941, pp. 459-460.
- 39 *New Republic*, April 28, 1941, pp. 586-587.
- 40 *Nation*, May 3, 1941, p. 518. See also *Nation* editorial of April 26, 1941, p. 485, pleading with him to "talk to the American people frankly and directly," and thus help them resolve their doubts about the Administration's foreign policy.
- 41 See Alfred Vagts, "German Strategy, 1914 and 1941," *Nation*, May 17, 1941, pp. 581-584, for a view utterly at variance with the editors on the likelihood of German action in the Western Hemisphere. Said Vagts, though bitterly hostile to Germany, "As compared with 1914-1917, Germany since 1939 has invoked international law much less often and used infinitely less propaganda and sabotage against the United States. This indicates no higher moral standards on its part but rather a determination to use more caution, more self-restraint, and give less provocation for America's entry into the war on the side of Germany's enemies."
- 42 *New Republic*, May 12, 1941, pp. 667-669. Flynn's main support was derived from Hanson Baldwin's book *United We Stand*, in which the *New York Times* military expert stated that he did not know a single responsible military or naval officer or government official who believed that the United States was threatened with direct invasion even if Hitler won the war in Europe.
- 43 *Nation*, May 3, 1941, pp. 539-540.
- 44 "Shall We Feed Hitler's Victims?" *Nation*, December 14, 1940, pp. 596-598. Possony was identified by the liberal press in 1941 as located at the Princeton University Institute for Advanced Study, a former resident of Austria, and after that an employee of the French Ministry of Information prior to flight to the United States, as well as the author of *Die Wehrwirtschaft des totalen Krieges* (Vienna, 1938).
- 45 *Nation*, May 24, 1941, pp. 600-602. See also "All Out Now!" and "Repel The Real Invasion," *New Republic*, May 5, 1941, pp. 618-619, and May 12, 1941, pp. 652-653.
- 46 *New Republic*, May 26, 1941, p. 715.
- 47 *Nation*, May 31, 1941, pp. 624-626.
- 48 *New Republic*, June 2, 1941, p. 743.
- 49 *New Republic*, June 9, 1941, p. 792.
- 50 "Action Now!," *New Republic*, June 16, 1941, p. 807; *New Republic*, June 2, 1941, p. 839.
- 51 *Nation*, June 7, 1941, p. 658.
- 52 Stone, "A Tale Of Two Oceans," *Nation*, June 7, 1941, pp. 659-660.
- 53 *Nation*, May 17, 1941, p. 571. There was also considerable glee shown when FDR ordered the seizure of German and Italian ships in American ports the month before. "Apparently the President wanted to test the temper of the American people with an unmistakable suggestion that this nation's policy involves more than a remote risk of war," wrote "T.R.B." in his commendatory "The State Department Gets Tough," *New Republic*, April 14, 1941, p. 498.
- 54 *Nation*, June 14, 1941, p. 710; *New Republic*, June 2, 1941, p. 839.
- 55 *New Republic*, June 2, 1941, p. 857.
- 56 "Every intelligent organ of opinion in the country should be turned against the insidious influence of the Radio League of the Little Flower," the *Nation* declared editorially on May 9, 1934, p. 522.
- 57 *New Republic*, July 10, 1935, p. 256.
- 58 See "Ezra Pound, Silver Shirt," *New Masses*, March 17, 1936, pp. 15-16, Isador Schneider's article on Mencken, September 29, 1936, and comment by Michael Quin on Mencken, November 17, 1936, p. 19. Pound's most infuriating view in the opinion of the *New Masses* was his reference to the London School of Economics as one with a faculty made up mostly of Central European Jews, "of immense influence and *thoroughly wrong*." (Pound's italics, as quoted.)

- 59 Leslie Reade, "Lindbergh In Naziland," *New Masses*, August 11, 1936, p. 7.
- 60 *Nation*, June 24, 1936, pp. 813-814.
- 61 *Common Sense*, August, 1936, pp. 26-27.
- 62 Agar, "The Ideal We Share," *New Masses*, April 7, 1936, p. 27. See also comment on Agar in *New Republic*, April 8, 1936, p. 258.
- 63 Josephson review of Dennis in *New Republic*, March 4, 1936, pp. 118-119; Hacker review of Dennis in *Nation*, February 12, 1936, p. 196. Twenty years later, Elmer Davis, in an address while accepting the Stephen S. Wise Award, mentioned that he had recently re-read *The Coming American Fascism* with much interest, and commended it, according to the *Nation*.
- 64 *Common Sense*, February, 1936, pp. 26-27.
- 65 Lucien Zacharoff, "The Experts Versus Lindbergh," *New Masses*, November 1, 1938, pp. 6-7.
- 66 *Nation*, November 26, 1938, p. 552.
- 67 *New Republic*, October 25, 1939, p. 325.
- 68 *Nation*, October 14, 1939, p. 425.
- 69 *Nation*, November 11, 1939, pp. 509-510.
- 70 "Lindbergh and the Nazis," *New Republic*, January 15, 1940, p. 100.
- 71 *Nation*, May 25, 1940, pp. 637-638.
- 72 *Nation*, June 22, 1940, pp. 741-742; *New Republic*, June 24, 1940, p. 841.
- 73 *Nation*, August 17, 1940, pp. 129-132.
- 74 *New Republic*, August 19, 1940, pp. 237-239.
- 75 *Nation*, August 10, 1940, p. 101.
- 76 *Nation*, August 31, 1940, p. 178.
- 77 "A Lindbergh Peace," *Nation*, February 1, 1941, pp. 115-116; "Colonel Lindbergh's World," *New Republic*, February 3, 1941, pp. 134-135.
- 78 Kirchwey, "If Lindbergh Is Right," *Nation*, May 10, 1941, pp. 546-547.
- 79 *Nation*, June 21, 1941, p. 724.
- 80 *Nation*, September 20, 1941, p. 238; editorial, "Lindbergh's Nazi Pattern," Michael Straight, "The Anti-Semitic Conspiracy," Samuel Grafton, "The America First Party," in *New Republic*, September 22, 1941, pp. 360-361; 362-363; 368-369, respectively; "Smoke Out America First!," *New Republic*, October 6, 1941, pp. 422-423.
- 81 "Lindbergh and the Big Lie," *New Republic*, October 13, 1941, p. 453; *Nation*, October 11, pp. 321-322.
- 82 *Nation*, May 31, 1941, p. 628. In the same issue, p. 641, circulation was given a rumor that Flynn was about to be removed as chairman of the New York City chapter of AFC on the grounds of "his liberalism in domestic affairs and his close association with Norman Thomas."
- 83 "America First and the Left," *New Republic*, June 2, 1941, p. 744.
- 84 The *Nation* was slightly irritated by the Communists' "Yanks Are Not Coming Committee," which put on spectacular isolationist rallies and distributed effective literature.
- 85 The *Nation* urgently suggested a House of Representatives investigation of "Nazi activities in America" in their issue of April 10, 1937, p. 394.
- 86 These were the National Council For the Prevention of War, The Women's International League For Peace and Freedom, The Keep America Out Of War Congress, World Peaceways, Inc., Youth Committee Against War, The Fellowship Of Reconciliation, the War Resisters' League, The Committee To Defend America By Waging Peace, Student Peace Service and the Writers' Anti-War Bureau.
- 87 *New Republic*, January 13, 1941, p. 53; January 27, 1941, pp. 110-112.
- 88 "Hutchins and the Absolute," *New Republic*, February 3, 1941, p. 132.
- 89 *New Republic*, January 6, 1941, p. 18. Grafton's first piece in the *Nation*, "The Red Scare," April 24, 1935, pp. 476-478, denounced investigations of Communists and the schools and government agencies.
- 90 Agar, "Who Are the Appeasers?," *Nation*, March 22, 1941, pp. 316-318. The *New Republic's* special section, "Britain: Dunkirk To Moscow," in their issue of October 13, 1941, pp. 457-466, consisted of contributions from all-English writers, and had an introduction by Agar which declared, "Great changes have come over British life. If our side wins, these changes will go wider and deeper, and they will never be undone."

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The Britain of the future, if our side wins, will be better educated, healthier, more equal, perhaps poorer and certainly tougher. The people of England, who have saved England, will be heard from now on."

91 *The Communist*, April, 1941, pp. 333-349.

92 *Common Sense*, September, 1940, pp. 23-24. See also review of Dennis by Charles R. Walker in *New Republic*, November 25, 1940, pp. 728-729.

93 *Nation*, January 11, 1941, pp. 36-44. This exchange was carried on further in the issue of January 25, 1941, pp. 111-112. See also the comment of Freda Uteley in *Nation*, February 8, 1941, p. 167.

94 "Croaking Chorus," *Nation*, May 3, 1941, p. 516.

95 "'Appeasement'," *Common Sense*, January, 1941, pp. 16-17.

96 Hanighen, "Minority Report On Lend-Lease Bill," *Common Sense*, February, 1941, pp. 52-53.

97 *Common Sense*, March, 1941, pp. 84-85.

98 In February the editors of *Common Sense* noted the departure of William Allen White from the Committee To Defend America By Aiding the Allies as the signal that the group who meant aid "short of war" had left, making way for the ascendancy of the group which did not; "Eastern Anglophiles, both great and small, liberal internationalists, like Clark Eichelberger, long promoter of the League of Nations Association." *Common Sense*, February, 1941, pp. 50-51.

99 *Nation*, June 14, 1941, pp. 691-693.

100 *Nation*, December 6, 1941, pp. 561-564.

101 *Nation*, December 13, 1941, pp. 609-612. Speaking strictly of the journalists, John Chamberlain had said, "It is no accident that the foreign correspondents who have learned to think of Vienna as home are the most warlike among us." "Looking Ahead," *Yale Review*, September, 1941, pp. 9-23.

102 See especially "Will Stalin Change Sides?," *New Republic*, July 1, 1940, p. 45.

103 Lerner, "America and the New World," *Nation*, August 17, 1940, pp. 129-132.

104 *New Republic*, February 10, 1941, p. 165.

105 "The Mystery Of Rudolf Hess," *Nation*, May 24, 1941, pp. 604-607.

106 "The Soviet-Nazi Partnership," *New Republic*, May 26, 1941, pp. 715-716.

107 Fischer, "Stalin Gets A New Job," *Nation*, May 17, 1941, pp. 573-574.

108 *Nation*, June 21, 1941, p. 710.

109 *New Republic*, June 23, 1941, p. 844.

110 *Nation*, June 21, 1941, pp. 713-714.

111 *The Communist*, August, 1941, pp. 724-736.

112 Prior to the invasion Ralph Bates reviewed Max Werner's *Battle For the World*, in *Nation*, May 31, 1941, pp. 645-646, and referred to it as "a *Nation* reader's manual of the war," and a military scholar's contribution for "the left-wing supporters of Britain." There was some backing and filling here because Werner was pro-Soviet but purportedly anti-Stalin.

113 See for instance *Nation*, March 29, 1941, p. 365.

114 Fischer, "Hitler Marches East"; Angell, "The Chance Of the West," *Nation*, June 28, 1941, pp. 743-744, 744-745.

115 Kirchwey, "Hitler's Political Front," *Nation*, July 5, 1941, pp. 4-5; Fischer, "Litvinov Answers Stalin," *Nation*, July 19, 1941, p. 47-48; Angell, "Crisis and Confusion," *Nation*, July 5, 1941, pp. 8-10.

116 *New Republic*, June 30, 1941, pp. 871-872.

117 "Party Zig-Zag," *New Republic*, July 7, 1941, p. 4; "No More United Front," *New Republic*, September 14, 1941, p. 268.

118 *New Republic*, June 30, 1941, p. 874. Truman was rehabilitated among the liberal editors in the fall of 1941 as a consequence of the report made by the committee of which he was chairman investigating defense contracts.

119 Rover review of Uteley in *New Republic*, September 23, 1940, p. 424.

120 Lerner, "Russia and the War Of Ideas," *New Republic*, July 7, 1941, pp. 17-18.

121 Grafton, "The Uneasy Collaboration," *New Republic*, July 14, 1941, pp. 52-53.

122 *New Republic*, July 7, 1941, p. 7.

123 See especially "If the Red Army Loses," *New Republic*, July 28, 1941, pp. 114-115.

124 *Nation*, July 19, 1941, pp. 50-52.

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- 125 See "T.R.B.," "The Strategy of Defense," *New Republic*, September 1, 1941, p. 277.
- 126 *New Republic*, September 22, 1941, pp. 355-356.
- 127 "Strategy and Supplies," *Nation*, September 27, 1941, pp. 268-270.
- 128 Fischer, "Supplying the Soviets," *Nation*, October 4, 1941, pp. 301-302.
- 129 *Nation*, September 13, 1941, pp. 209-210.
- 130 "The New Charter and Allied Morale," *Nation*, October 4, 1941, pp. 296-297.
- 131 *Nation*, October 11, 1941, pp. 323-324.
- 132 "Russia Is Our Ally," *New Republic*, September 29, 1941, pp. 391-392.
- 133 "Revolt In Europe," *New Republic*, October 6, 1941, p. 425.
- 134 Werner, "A Second Front Is Possible," *New Republic*, November 10, 1941, pp. 611-612.
- 135 Straight, "America and A Second Front," *New Republic*, November 24, 1941, pp. 689-690.
- 136 *Nation*, October 25, 1941, p. 385.
- 137 "Ethics Of Aid To Russia," *Nation*, October 11, 1941, pp. 325-326. Discussing the Administration's propaganda techniques a month later, "T.R.B." declared that the "worst fiasco" of the war period thus far was "FDR's attempt to sell the idea that religious freedom was permitted in the Soviet Union." *New Republic*, November 10, 1941, p. 620.
- 138 *New Republic*, August 25, 1941, p. 244.
- 139 "The Nature of the Crisis"; Scott, "Germany Is Losing the War," *New Republic*, September 1, 1941, pp. 270-271, 272-273.
- 140 Angell, "Federation Is Not Enough," *Nation*, November 15, 1941, pp. 473-474.
- 141 *Nation*, November 15, 1941, p. 496.
- 142 "T.R.B.," "Orders To Shoot," *New Republic*, June 30, 1941, p. 886.
- 143 *Nation*, July 5, 1941, p. 1.
- 144 *Nation*, July 12, 1941, p. 21; July 19, 1941, p. 44.
- 145 "A Senator's Narrow Escape," *New Republic*, July 14, 1941, p. 36. On the other hand, "T.R.B." in his column "Fuzzy-Wuzzy and Mr. Wheeler," *New Republic*, August 11, 1941, p. 188, combed Wheeler with cold fury for his opposition to FDR's foreign policy, repudiated Wheeler's liberal reputation and insisted that his real motivation was "a burning ambition to occupy the White House himself."
- 146 "One Day That Shook The World," *New Republic*, June 30, 1941, pp. 871-872.
- 147 "Should We Declare War?," *New Republic*, July 21, 1941, pp. 72-73.
- 148 Kirchwey, "Shall We Declare War?," *Nation*, July 26, 1941, pp. 64-65.
- 149 Kirchwey, "In Rising Wrath," *Nation*, August 9, 1941, pp. 104-105.
- 150 "Democracy Can Act," *New Republic*, July 21, 1941, pp. 71-72.
- 151 See note 149.
- 152 "Confusion About the War," *New Republic*, August 18, 1941, pp. 206-207.
- 153 "T.R.B.," "Small Splash On the Potomac," *New Republic*, August 25, 1941, p. 250.
- 154 Bliven, "Russia's Morale—And Ours," *New Republic*, September 1, 1941, pp. 273-275.
- 155 *New Republic*, September 1, 1941, pp. 269-270.
- 156 "For A Declaration Of War," *New Republic*, August 25, 1941, p. 233.
- 157 The unsigned letter appeared in the issue of August 18, 1941, p. 223. The figures resulting from the polls on the war declaration were: contributors; yes, 35; no, 28; undecided 37: readers; yes, 48; no, 35; undecided, 17. In the poll of contributors only since January 1, 1941, those voting for the declaration of war were Van Wyck Brooks, Bergen Evans, Gerald W. Johnson, Stefan Possony, Fletcher Pratt, Geroid Tanquary Robinson, Lewis Mumford and Agnes Smedley; those voting against the declaration of war were Dorothy Dunbar Bromley, Babette Deutsch, Carey McWilliams and Robert Morss Lovett.
- 158 See "Civil Liberties In Minneapolis," *New Republic*, July 28, 1941, pp. 103-104; I. F. Stone, "The G-String Conspiracy," *Nation*, July 26, 1941, pp. 66-67; Daniel Eastman, "Sedition In Minneapolis," *New Republic*, October 25, 1941, pp. 503-504.
- 159 "Opinion and Sedition," *New Republic*, December 8, 1941, p. 748.
- 160 See comment of "T.R.B.," *New Republic*, November 24, 1941, p. 700.
- 161 "The Attorney General On Civil Liberties," *New Republic*, May 19, 1941, p. 681; *Nation*, June 7, 1941, p. 655; November 29, 1941, p. 526.
- 162 Mitchell, "The Citizen Army," *New Republic*, March 17, 1941, pp. 364-366.

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- 163 *New Republic*, January 6, 1941, pp. 13-15.
- 164 See note 162.
- 165 "Common Sense About the Army," *New Republic*, July 28, 1941, pp. 102-103.
- 166 *Nation*, August 9, 1941, pp. 114-116.
- 167 *Common Sense*, September, 1941, p. 275. Easily the most spectacular reversal on conscription in 1941 was that undertaken by the Communists. John Gates, in his "The Army and the People," *The Communist*, November, 1941, pp. 997-1010, praised the American Legion's resolution urging the lifting of the ban on sending an AEF outside the Western Hemisphere, and supported the calls for war declarations made by the *Nation*, *New Republic*, the *New York Post*, *PM* and the organizations Fight For Freedom, Inc., and the Associated Leagues For A Declared War, but he thought these journals and organizations were moving "far too slow." He exceeded in praise of the American military tradition and armed might anything written by an admirer of American militarism subjected to attack by the Reds before June 22, 1941, and referred to pacifism as Hitler's "best ally", that it ran "contrary to the interests of the working class and the nation," insisting that "its poisonous influence" had to be "ruthlessly combated and rooted out of the ranks of the American people as inimical to the defense of our country." Gates did not specify which country he meant in the concluding remark quoted above.
- 168 Kirchwey, "Prelude To Action," *Nation*, August 23, 1941, pp. 152-153.
- 169 del Vayo, "A Strategy For Victory," *Nation*, August 23, 1941, pp. 156-159.
- 170 "The Aim Is Peace," *Common Sense*, September, 1941, pp. 272-273.
- 171 "Shoot On Sight," *New Republic*, September 22, 1941, pp. 359-360. See also "Shooting Without War," *New Republic*, September 15, 1941, pp. 327-328.
- 172 Kirchwey, "The Roosevelt Strategy," *Nation*, September 20, 1941, pp. 242-243.
- 173 *Nation*, September 27, 1941, p. 265. The editors argued here that the Executive and State Department interpretations of the Act had rendered it useless already anyway.
- 174 Kirchwey, "Neutrality Is A Sham," *Nation*, October 4, 1941, pp. 297-298.
- 175 Kirchwey, "Congress and Russia," *Nation*, October 18, 1941, pp. 361-362.
- 176 *New Republic*, October 6, 1941, p. 419; October 13, 1941, p. 452.
- 177 *Nation*, November 1, 1941, p. 413.
- 178 Kirchwey, "End Of A Myth," *Nation*, November 22, 1941, pp. 502-503.
- 179 "T.R.B.," "No Cause For Cheers," *New Republic*, November 24, 1941, p. 700.
- 180 "Undeclared War Has Begun," *New Republic*, November 3, 1941, p. 574.
- 181 *New Republic*, November 10, 1941, pp. 603-604.
- 182 See in particular "The Home Fires, Too," *New Republic*, November 17, 1941, pp. 638-639.
- 183 "The American Defeatists," *Nation*, November 8, 1941, pp. 445-446; "Thomas Reveille," "'Peace' This Winter," *Nation*, November 8, 1941, pp. 448-451.
- 184 Kirchwey, "Hitler's Double-Talk," *Nation*, November 15, 1941, pp. 472-473.
- 185 Straight, "Dear Senator LaFollette," *New Republic*, November 10, 1941, p. 609.
- 186 *New Republic*, November 10, 1941, p. 620. See comments in *Nation* editorial, September 20, 1941, pp. 239-240 and by I. F. Stone, *Nation*, November 15, 1941, pp. 475-476, on beginnings of a board assigned by Col. William J. Donovan, Coordinator of Defense Information, "to the task of testing the accuracy of news reaching this country from foreign sources," and the activities of the short wave propaganda division under Col. Donovan in softening up Finnish attitudes toward Russia now that the latter was at war with Germany.
- 187 "Close the Blockade," *Nation*, February 8, 1941, p. 144; Fischer, "The Moral Embargo," *Nation*, February 8, 1941, p. 146.
- 188 "Still Partners With Japan," *Nation*, January 4, 1941, p. 4.
- 189 *Nation*, January 4, 1941, p. 2; January 18, 1941, p. 58; "The Far East," *Nation*, February 22, 1941, pp. 200-201; "Will Japan Move South?," *Nation*, April 26, 1941, p. 488.
- 190 *New Republic*, March 3, 1941, pp. 295-296.
- 191 "Tokyo As Munich," *New Republic*, June 9, 1941, pp. 780-781, for citations in this and following paragraph.
- 192 *Nation*, June 7, 1941, pp. 682-683.
- 193 *Nation*, February 1, 1941, p. 115.

- 194 "The Dead Cat In Foreign Policy," *New Republic*, June 16, 1941, p. 808. See also "No Herbane For Japan?," *Nation*, May 17, 1941, pp. 572-573, a satiric article on the ludicrous nature of the articles placed under an export licensing system.
- 195 Stone, "Snub-and-Sell Diplomacy," *Nation*, June 14, 1941, pp. 687-688. See also the *Nation*, April 19, 1941, pp. 459-460, commending John D. Rockefeller, Jr's vigorous letter to Arthur Hays Sulzberger of the *New York Times* advocating the use of convoys on shipments to Britain and simultaneously chastising him for permitting oil shipments to Japan.
- 196 Janeway review of Hulen in *Nation*, October 28, 1939, pp. 470-471. Janeway's closing sentence read, "This reviewer regrets the lack of space in which to discuss the recommendation of the Department, and of its economist, Dr. Herbert Feis, against the accumulation of a stock of strategic imports in anticipation of precisely such an emergency as the present one." See "Don't Appease Japan!," *New Republic*, July 23, 1941, p. 843.
- 197 See H. N. Brailsford, "Why Japan Hesitates," *New Republic*, June 30, 1941, pp. 884-885 and editorial "Get Tougher With Japan," same issue, p. 877.
- 198 *New Republic*, July 28, 1941, pp. 105-106.
- 199 "Memo To Britons," *Nation*, July 12, 1941, pp. 24-25. See also Freda Kirchwey, "A Scandal In the State Department," *Nation*, July 19, 1941, pp. 45-46, a scorching attack on the Visa Division, "headed by one of the most reactionary, Fascist-minded members of the Department, Avra M. Warren."
- 200 "Must We Fight Japan," *New Republic*, August 4, 1941, pp. 135-137. See also *Nation*, August 2, 1941, pp. 81-82.
- 201 "T.R.B.," "Making It Tough For Japan," *New Republic*, August 4, 1941, p. 154.
- 202 Kirchwey, "What War Is Our War?," *Nation*, August 30, 1941, pp. 172-173.
- 203 *Nation*, October 25, 1941, pp. 388-389.
- 204 See in particular "Settlement with Japan?," *Nation*, September 6, 1941, pp. 192-193, and "Japan Behind the Headlines," *Nation*, September 20, 1941, pp. 240-241.
- 205 Peffer, "Squeeze Japan Now!," *Nation*, August 2, 1941, pp. 87-89; Stone, "Oil On the Pacific," *Nation*, August 9, 1941, pp. 109-110. Peffer's "Japan's Dilemma," *Yale Review*, December, 1941, pp. 336-349, was a frank call for war on Japan.
- 206 "Call Japan's Bluff," *Nation*, August 9, 1941, pp. 109-110.
- 207 "For An Ultimatum To Japan," *New Republic*, September 8, 1941, p. 295. One of the major factors in the sudden increase of hostility to Japan was their unfriendliness toward the idea of American tankers steaming to Siberia with oil for the Communists. Stone, in his "Memo On Japan," *Nation*, September 13, 1941, p. 217, announced, "Japan's failure to interfere with the oil shipments to Vladivostok shows its bluff can be called."
- 208 "Stay Tough With Japan," *New Republic*, September 15, 1941, p. 323.
- 209 "America In the World Crisis," *New Republic*, October 27, 1941, pp. 526-527.
- 210 Bisson, "Call Japan's Bluff!," *New Republic*, November 3, 1941, pp. 579-581.
- 211 "Tokyo's Choice," *Nation*, October 25, 1941, p. 389.
- 212 *Nation*, November 15, 1941, p. 469.
- 213 *Nation*, November 22, 1941, pp. 497-498.
- 214 *New Republic*, November 24, 1941, p. 685. The *Nation* was still fearful that Hull was insisting that the Japanese evacuate only part of China. "Japan's Terms," *Nation*, November 29, 1941, p. 529.
- 215 Straight, "Mr. Kurusu Smiled," *New Republic*, December 1, 1941, pp. 721-722.
- 216 "Not An 'R' Month?," *New Republic*, December 1, 1941, p. 715.
- 217 "Calling Japan's Bluff," *Nation*, December 6, 1941, pp. 556-557.
- 218 "What Next In Asia?," *New Republic*, December 8, 1941, pp. 750-751.
- 219 *Nation*, December 13, 1941, p. 597; Kirchwey, "Fruits Of Appeasement," *Nation*, December 13, 1941, pp. 599-600. The new-found patriotism of the Communists was best expressed by Robert Minor, "As We Fight," an address to the Communist Party at a plenary meeting of the national committee of the CPUSA, meeting in New York on December 7, 1941, in *The Communist*, December, 1941, pp. 1045-1050. Minor denounced all efforts to keep the war confined to the Far East; the Communists argued that Japan's attack sent the U.S. to war with Hitler. It did not affect USSR's relation with Japan.

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