

Humanity's Cause and the War

THOSE FEW AMERICANS who think in terms of human happiness have no political home. The two dominant schools of political thought in this country, labelled isolationist and interventionist, rest their respective cases on the same premise: national fear. And their programs are identical in insistence upon martial measures.

The point of divergence between them is the expedient way to safeguard our political existence; one believes that our first line of defense is somewhere near the Greenwich meridian, or further east, while the other contends that it is militarily wiser to do whatever fighting must be done a few miles off New York or Miami.

Neither group seems to realize that foreign policies are necessarily an outgrowth of domestic conditions, that war is a consequence of internal decay.

This war, like all its predecessors, began when the first man was enslaved, when the first oasis was fenced in and called "mine." There is no armor so thick, no force so brutal, no political tradition so finely spun as to prevent the outbreak of hostilities between men who are deprived of the right to live and to grow.

This war, like all its predecessors, comes upon us from the iniquities of the past. Given the poverty economies that have prevailed in all countries, democratic as well as totalitarian, and only the spark of a propitious occasion and the lung-power of demagoguery determines the time of conflagration.

No power on earth, save human intelligence and courage to attack the cause, could have prevented this war; no power on earth, save the same intelligence and the same courage, can stop its course toward the economic and physical exhaustion of the peoples engaged; no power on earth, save the same heretofore lacking intelligence and courage, can prevent a recurrence of the economic maladjustments which will lead to further wars.

Neither the isolationists nor the interventionists seem to be in the least cognizant of this truth.

The isolationist position is buttressed with protectionist arguments, and nothing was more conducive to the outbreak of war than the inhuman restriction of trade, through tariffs and quotas, in which the world has wallowed since the last war.

The interventionist looks upon trade barriers and embargoes as instruments of coercion.

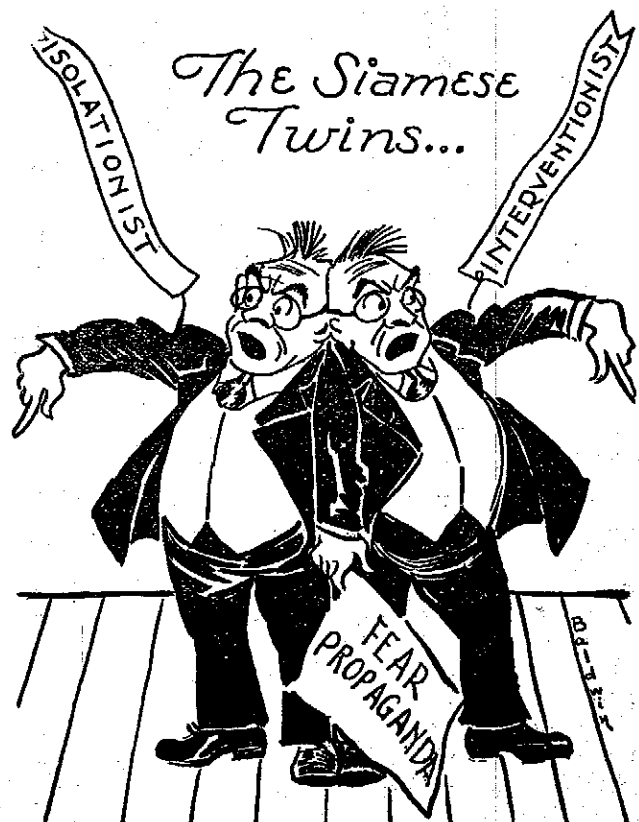
To one, trade is like the oyster's hard shell of refuge; to the other it is a tiger's fangs. Neither seems to recognize in the free exchange of goods that mu-

tuality of interests which leads to understanding and peace.

Curiously, an isolationist leader takes the point of view that international relationships are based on relative national military strengths, that economic, social and political alignments are determined by weapons. Economic interests, apparently, have nothing to do with treaties.

But is this not also true of the arguments of the interventionists? Do they not also say that our sources of supply must be safeguarded by force? Do they differ from their opponents and say that we should buy, not fight for, our materials?

The interventionists very definitely admit that to fight Hitler successfully we must out-Hitler him. We must abandon all our hard-won personal freedoms, completely subjugate ourselves, our lives and our fortunes, to an imperialism. Some of them say this is an evil which we shall rectify as soon as the need for it is over. From semi-official statements, never officially denied, it is clear that many interventionists look hopefully upon this emergency regi-

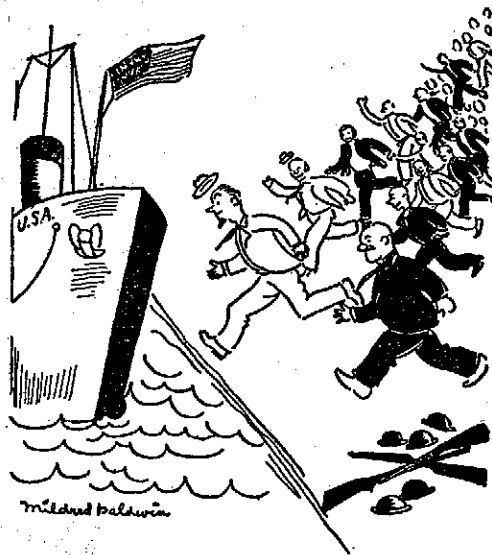


mentation as an introduction to a controlled economy after the war.

Some isolationists point to this threat, others have made statements that are as hopefully fascist; none of them has offered a social plan based on economic freedom which is the only safeguard against a collectivized America, war or no war.

Besides, the all-out defense program of the isolationists entails a tax burden no less than the giving of munitions to Britain, the same taking over of industry, the same regimentation of labor. Centralized power is essential to both isolationist and interventionist programs.

The isolationist begins his argument with an acceptance of Hitler's conquest of Europe, and goes on from there with an economic and military plan to meet that condition. The interventionist merely reverses the process by using the same costly economic and military measures to prevent the further spread of Hitler's conquest.



The ultimate result to our political and social structure must be identical; the difference is in timing only. Neither side seems to recognize the possibility of destroying Hitler by democratic measures, by making this country a model of prosperity, through the abolition of internal privileges, through the breakdown of our stupid barriers to the immigration of labor and of capital, through the opening of our vast mineral resources, our agrarian storehouse, our rich city lots. No one will fight when he can get a good job.

The isolationists accuse the interventionists of having brought on the crisis; the interventionists say that the isolationists by creating dissension within the country have given encouragement to Hitler.

Neither group recognizes the fact that political events arise out of economic conditions over which the personalities involved have no control. Both sides disregard principle; both argue their cases from the viewpoint of expediency, which leads only to futile acrimony.

The isolationist takes the impossible position that this country is capable of economic and cultural self-sufficiency, and proposes to build a "Chinese Wall" at our borders. A policy built on that position leads to low standards of living, a decadent culture, and to international suspicions and hatreds that break out into war. Russia, Italy and Germany are the products of isolationism; every subject country, like India or Manchuria, is isolationist.

The interventionist is an internationalist only in the sense that he proposes political alignments between dominant States for the purpose of establishing a modus vivendi between all political units; with, perhaps, the dominant States controlling the purse strings of the world.

True internationalism, to which the advocate of freedom subscribes, consists of permitting individuals of all races and citizenship to move themselves, their goods and their ideas across borders without let or hindrance. It recognizes no limits to civilization, no innate differences between men.

It is evident, then, that essentially the isolationist and the interventionist are two of a kind, and that those of us who plead the cause of humanity must go our own way. Nor must we permit ourselves to be turned from our course by the din and passions of the moment, for the only hope for a free America, a free world, is in our steadfastness of purpose, in our courage.

Shades of Hammurabi

EARLIEST RECORDED PRICE REGULATOR was Hammurabi, King of Babylon, more than 2000 years B.C. He cut into stone laws establishing compulsory prices which could not be exceeded nor undersold. The stone remains.

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