

DOES AMERICA FIRST FAVOR HITLER FIRST?

BY HARLAN R. CRIPPEN

A FAVORITE and touching plea of the appeasers is that they are poor people, discriminated against, lacking press, radio and movies, without power or influence. Somehow, despite these obstacles, they manage to be brave and carry on.

This is a very pretty picture—but considerably retouched. They lack only the movies—and for that reason they staged an anti-Semitic, political pogrom which passed under the name of an investigation of movie propaganda. As for newspapers the appeasers can claim the New York *Daily News*, the largest newspaper in the country, the Hearst chain; the Scripps-Howard chain, the Chicago *Tribune*, and a goodly number of “independent” dailies. Among magazines they have had the support of the *Saturday Evening Post*, they have the support of *Scribner's Commentator*, *Social Justice* and a few others. The radio chains have given plenty of time to America First, and radio officials are treading very gingerly for fear that they will be subjected to the same kind of frame-up that is being given the movies.

America First certainly does not lack money—the supply of industrialists and bankers who think they can profit most through cooperating with Hitler is far from exhausted. With a “liberal” front furnished by Wheeler, Nye and LaFollette, with names such as Lindbergh, with a small, but efficient, propaganda and pressure organization such as the Christian Front, America First wields considerable power.

THE UNDERLYING WEAKNESS

In a democracy, however, real power is ultimately only in the hands of the people. That is America First's weakness. The American people have made great progress within the last decade, and they ardently desire further democratic gains and reforms. There is growing realization that the anti-democratic foreign policy of America First, which is, as we have seen, not isolationist, but warlike and aggressive, must inevitably be accompanied by a domestic policy of reaction. If the United States is to get along with Hitler it will be at the price of our democratic rights. Reaction at home is simply the other side of the coin of reaction abroad.

America First is well aware of its political weakness. It has had investigators checking political trends for some time. Minnesota provides an example of the kind of bad news that America First has received. In the early part of this year America First leaders were discussing plans for Lindbergh's political future. The name Lindbergh has

meant a good deal in progressive Minnesota politics and it was hoped that “Junior” might capitalize on that. Trial balloons were released—and were promptly shot down. Lindbergh is regarded with curiosity in Minnesota but he is heartily disliked. Nazi medals do not set well with the politically influential Scandinavian element. The Farmer-Labor Association, upon which Wheeler and LaFollette have pinned much hope, is increasingly wary of America First. The major parties in Minnesota are afraid of Lindbergh and America First is afraid to risk defeat for its big name.

BUILD HOPES IN N. Y.

Prospects for America First in the midwest, although it claims overwhelming support in that section, are not over-bright. That leaves as the only considerable political success of America First the coalition in New York City which, with the very active assistance of the Hearst press, is backing Tammany's William O'Dwyer for mayor, against Fiorello LaGuardia. Even in New York, it should be noted, America First is hoping to win by keeping the issue of foreign affairs out of the election, rather than by making it the major issue which it is.

The fact that America First has not met with greater response from the voters does not make the political threat represented by the Committee any less acute or less dangerous.

The Committee and its associates have been successful in reducing the defense efficiency of the United States, by creating suspicion and distrust and by muddling important issues. A prime example of this is provided by Senator Wheeler. Wheeler, who considers himself the foremost U. S. expert on railroad problems, was asked whether or not the railroads had a supply of rolling stock sufficient for any emergency. Wheeler said they had. Today, with the defense effort only getting under way, the shortage of rolling stock is causing serious problems. If Wheeler is the expert that he pretends to be, his incorrect advice must be placed in a most unpleasant category.

Senator Gerald P. Nye who, like Wheeler, is a bastion of America First, recently performed his stint by accusing the government of selling the aluminum which had been collected during the emergency campaign. Nye's charge was shown to be a half truth, and its implication entirely false. The Army has no facilities for processing scrap

The Cold, Hard Facts About the Fascist Spearhead in America



metal and so it had to be sold out to be smelted, but the government retains control over the metal at all times. This is known to Nye, but he has not retracted his misleading statement.

'DEMOCRACY IS DEAD'

Such incidents are only the by-products of America First's major thesis—that since appeasement can't have its way, democracy is dead. Again we shall refer to the chief ideologist of the movement. "In the past," says Lindbergh, "we have gone on the assumption that our country was governed according to the will of the people. . . . But now the question arises whether we any longer have a representative system of government in this country. . . ." Lindbergh, by implication, is questioning the legality of the 1940 election. Senator Wheeler does not go that far but he speaks of "loss of faith in our government." It is no accident that Father Coughlin, who calls the government of the United States a "Jewish democracy," should mention in *Social Justice* that Wheeler and Lindbergh are "two men we applaud and revere."

It seems that America First is drawing some rotten conclusions from the fact that its program is being decisively rejected by the people in their organizations, their political parties and trade unions. Are dangerous, and possibly treasonous, expedients being considered in case the United States enters more actively upon a course of stopping Hitler? This is a question that only America First can answer. But the evidence that dangerous measures are being considered is strong.

Anyone who has observed America First closely since it was organized cannot be unaware that there is widespread talk, or wishful thinking, about the revolt which will come if the United States enters the war. In the Eastern states some America First followers have been led to believe that this revolt will be led by the farmers of the midwest. This coming revolt is pictured as a spontaneous uprising of the people against the "Eastern warmongers." The idea is expressed that the "men of the people," who have led America First, will be chosen to run the country after the "warmongers" have been cleaned out. The new government will "get along" with Hitler.

HINTS OF 'REVOLT'

It is impossible to say how much of this "talk" has been fostered by America First leaders, but they can hardly be unaware of its presence. At least certain associates of America First are on record as favoring—well, judge for yourself.

Editor George Eggleston of *Scribner's Commentator*, denies that he anticipates a revolt. "But," he admits, "others do."

According to *Life* magazine, Lindbergh has said that he expects a bloody revolution if America acts against Hitler.

If we go to war the flier believes "that the Jews will be blamed . . . and will suffer for it." Lindbergh not only has not denied these statements but has attacked American Jews in the same manner (and perhaps for the same purpose) that Hitler attacked the German Jews.

The *Chicago Tribune*, assailing the President, raves: "People have lost their independence if they cannot protest, violently if necessary, against such an idea of government."

Francis Moran, Boston Christian Front leader and America First supporter, recently told his followers to "wait until Colonel Lindbergh is ready to take over."

THEIR AIMS ARE CLEAR

America First, officially, is silent on this matter. The reticence on this delicate matter, and the reluctance with which certain phases of the program are revealed, is perhaps natural. But certain conclusions can be drawn, despite the reticence.

America First favors only one kind of isolation—isolating the United States from its potential allies. It favors an aggressive war for plunder—beside Hitler, not against him. America First serves as the organizing center for un-American groups and activities. Since America First is not likely to achieve its aims through legal means, certain people who are near or in America First seem to be considering illegal means.

America First, masks aside, looks like America Fascist.

EDDED STEEL...

BACHRACH

Stettinius has been removed from the raw materials and priorities divisions of the defense program and placed in charge of Lend-Lease administration.

The people and the government have begun to wonder whether, after all, monopolists in defense posts can be relied on to make monopolists in industry work for the national interest.



About the time Gano Dunn and Walter Towers and OPM were insisting that there was no danger of a steel shortage—and therefore no need to expand steel capacity—the Steel Workers Organizing Committee came forward with its own plan for increasing steel production and utilizing idle steel plants.

The OPM turned a deaf ear to the Murray steel plan, as it did to labor's plans for increasing auto production and aluminum production.

About that time the papers were headlining not only major strikes but even the briefest work stoppage as a threat to national defense.

In Congress, the cry of "treason" was heard. But it was striking workingmen, not Gano Dunn or Walter Towers, for whom the electric chair was urged.

The Murray plan for making more steel gathered dust on the shelves.

The Dunn-Towers plans for keeping steel production down held back the defense program for precious months. And the U. S. Steel Corp. netted a profit of \$36,559,995 in the first quarter of 1941.

This was the best quarter since 1929, despite much larger tax reserves and an additional contingent reserve of \$5,000,000. It was more than double the \$17,113,995 earned in the same period of 1940.

Iron and steel firms, exclusive of U. S. Steel, upped their profits in the same period over 100%, according to the National City Bank's tabulation of first quarter reports.

While the nation lost valuable time, while the British cried out for tools and more tools—the steel monopoly did well for itself.

The TNEC had warned us it would be that way, unless we curbed monopoly's power while there was still time:

"Monopoly impairs democracy's ability to defend itself



in time of war. National defense requires an expansion of output; monopoly seeks to augment its profits by restricting output and maintaining price. It thus obstructs the procurement of arms and supplies; increases the cost of defense, adds to the burden of debt and taxation, and undermines the national morale. When the nation is attacked, it may even turn the balance from victory to defeat."



We have still to take industrial America as we find it, to buy most from those who are geared to produce most.

But there is an alchemy in common danger, and it is beginning to work changes in American life. Independent business, big and small, labor, farmers, government itself will not permit monopoly to "turn the balance from victory to defeat." Even the giant trusts are threatened by Hitler. Some of them at least are being persuaded to risk a few millions in profit, rather than take the greater risk of becoming vassals of the Nazi economy. Those who cannot be persuaded must be coerced.

"The power of a few to manage the economic life of the nation must be diffused among the many or be transferred to the public and its democratically responsible government," the President said in 1938.

Today, from Britain, from Russia, from China, the call comes—"Give us the tools." In the interests of our own survival we must answer as befits the greatest industrial nation on earth. Not even the powerful few have power enough to break the nation's will to be free.

(In the next article of this series we shall see how business, labor and government can work together)

DUCTION AND PRODUCTION BOTTLENECKS