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The Big Bomb Plot

With considerable clamor and beating of drums, J. Edgar Hoover's FBI has arrested 17 nondescript and dreamy-eyed young men for plotting to overthrow the Government, exterminate the Jews, and set up a Hitler-type dictatorship in this country. We may be pardoned for feeling, like Mayor LaGuardia, of New York, that the United States isn't in any great danger from these particular 17 guys.

The FBI's arrests do reflect, perhaps, a growing feeling of anti-Semitism that has been profitably and enthusiastically promoted by such soap-boxers as Father Coughlin. If, in proportion to the total population of the country, these peculiar young men do represent a movement for militant action against those whose racial or religious affiliations they dislike, then this movement should naturally be checked before it spreads. If this country loses its tolerance or its religious freedom, it loses something most precious. Without tolerance, the name and purpose of America are worthless.

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Anti-Semitism in this country is not due so much to the actions of the Jews here as to their natural sympathy for their persecuted racial kinfolk in Europe. This has created an instinctive fear by certain Americans that such sympathy may result in the United States being dragged into the war. Sympathies, such as Hitler's persecutions have caused, are not new in the history of this country. Certainly, until the establishment of Eire, patriotic Irish-Americans felt that Great Britain's misrule of Ireland was wicked and vicious and should be stopped.

Irish-Americans did what they could to embroil our relations with the English. The so-called upper (banking) classes simultaneously did their best to enlist American sympathy on the English side.

Tug-of-War:

This group of aristocrats has always loved England, as well it may.

With Hyphens

Its members have been welcome in England to mingle with high society there, to shoot grouse, to sail in regattas and—most important—to let their well-financed daughters marry Earls and Dukes. A very Anglophile party did what it could to promote us into the last war.

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Of course, the first Americans came over to get away from the English. They fought two wars with England, in 1776 and 1812, and very nearly fought a few more times thereafter. Ever since this country came into being, little groups of immigrants have been divided in their sympathies.

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So the hyphen problem is not at all new. In the last war, some of our much-respected German-Americans were praying that Germany would win, and exercising all their influence to cut off the supply of munitions to the Allies.

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We have all come from Europe so recently that we can't expect to escape the hyphen problem. We can say that people ought not to sympathize with their blood

The Melting Pot

Still Bubbles

relatives abroad, but they will continue to do so. Yet, on the whole, the Melting Pot works. The grandchildren of immigrants are practically 100 per cent Americans. Our high schools, where boys and girls of different races sit side by side, have brought about many intermarriages.

When hyphenation and pro-alien sympathies get beyond the passive point, however, no one whose first loyalty is to this country can countenance them. We cannot divide this country into little blocs sympathizing with and working for the various European factions. It is against our whole purpose of being. It then becomes allegiance to another country—somewhat the feeling of the Communists here toward Russia, which they regard as their motherland. The Communists frankly admit that, if they had the chance, they'd overthrow the Government and substitute "the rule of the working class," which means the rule of the Communist Party.

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This country hasn't really rocked much off its foundations since the Civil War. We doubt if Mr. Hoover's 17 terrorists, with their pitiable little arsenal of pilfered guns and purloined bullets, could actually do much damage to a country as basically sensible and as basically tolerant as the United States. That's why we lift our eyebrows at the detective-thriller publicity which Mr. Hoover is issuing.

We do say, however, that the man who tries to promote disunion here; who influences weak-minded individuals like these 17 from Brooklyn, the Bronx, and elsewhere, is not a good American; is not a loyal American; and has no claim on the name of American.

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