

mittee for the Protection of the Foreign Born, which has just ended a two-day conference in Washington, is also protecting the American born. Time and again the entering wedge for an attack on civil liberties or trade unionism has been an attack on the foreign born. This was true in the days of the Alien and Sedition Bills under John Adams as it was true in the days of the Palmer red raids, and it is true again today. United States Commissioner of Immigration Houghteling in a letter to the conference stated that only 19,398 more aliens entered than left the country from July 1, 1930, to June 30, 1939. During the same period death reduced our unnaturalized immigrant population, most of it elderly, by 900,000. The conference launched a campaign against anti-alien measures and received a message from the President implying his general support of that campaign. Mr. Roosevelt called it one of our greatest achievements that racial groups divided by hatred abroad are united and merged into a common Americanism here. He warned that "any oppression, any injustice, any hatred, is a wedge designed to attack our civilization."

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ONLY SIX OF THE STATES HAVE BUDGETS larger than the cost of relief in New York City, and two recent reports on its administration merit nation-wide attention, for both reveal conditions also existing elsewhere. William Hodson, the city's welfare commissioner, points out that arbitrary cuts in WPA have greatly increased the burden of relief on the city, and asks that the federal government again assume part of the cost of home relief. Washington has been too prone to believe that it has reduced unemployment and the need for relief when it has cut the WPA rolls. The Commissioner also objects that criticism of relief "is placed upon the act of giving and taking relief rather than upon the fact that millions of our workers who are ready and willing and able to work cannot find jobs." In 1934 New York saw disorders and mass protests over the city's refusal to deal with organizations of persons on relief. The Commissioner now reports that trouble of this kind has almost vanished since city officials and organizations have become used to negotiating problems in much the same way that these are handled by recognized and established trade unions. In this connection it is interesting to note that Colonel F. C. Harrington, WPA administrator in the city, reports that 13,000 skilled workers were discharged from WPA for striking against the abandonment of prevailing wages. Colonel Harrington also declares that work has been disrupted, morale lowered, and production costs on projects doubled by the loss of skilled workers under the new eighteen-month "furlough" law. We hope that progressives in Congress will fight for repeal of this provision.

OUR FAVORITE RED MENACER OF THE WEEK was Arthur J. W. Hilly, former corporation counsel of New York City. Mr. Hilly told the Order of Seville at a communion breakfast that subversive elements were trying to stop the Dies investigation and that united Catholic action was needed to fight this "evil influence which would tear Jesus Christ out of the very heart and soul of mankind." Mr. Hilly went on to express the hope that "the order's communion breakfast in 1941 will see a Democratic Mayor in office once again and the proud glories of Tammany Hall restored." Good old 100 per cent American Tammany!

"Plot" Against Hoover

THAT bulwark of civil liberties, the Hearst press, has sprung to the defense of J. Edgar Hoover. Black headlines screamed from the front pages of the New York *Journal-American* last week: "Plot to Smear G-Man Hoover" and "Reds 'Smear' FBI." Mr. Hoover has long been a protege of Hearst. No public figure is treated more tenderly by the Hearst newspapers than J. Edgar Hoover. The *Daily Worker*, the *New Masses*, the *New Republic*, *The Nation*, Senator Norris, and Representative Marcantonio were all linked together by the *Journal-American* as conspirators in this "red plot."

But Hearst's New York newspaper, and no doubt his papers in other cities, neglected to name some of the other participants in the "plot." The New York *Daily News*, slightly to the right of the *Daily Worker*, has been running some embarrassing stories on the chief G-man from Washington ("Hoover FBI Hunts Vice, with Major Crimes Unsolved") and from Miami ("J. Edgar Chases Nothing but Sun, Miami Mutter"). Mr. Hoover's "swanky cottage at the exclusive and expensive Nautilus Hotel" in Miami has drawn the fire of the *Daily News*, and it has asked editorially whether Congress would not be wise to investigate Mr. Hoover. The Scripps-Howard press seems to be another participant in this plot. Both Ludwell Denny and that well-known fellow-traveler, Westbrook Pegler, have been taking pot shots at the G-man. Pegler called Marcantonio a "Bolo statesman," but he coined some new Peglerisms for J. Edgar and his works. He called the G-man "a night-club fly-cop" and a publicity hound pandering to "gents'-room journalism." "He would be a great attraction," Mr. Pegler wrote, "as a keyhole columnist and log-roller, and he should be worth something at current rates, with fifteen minutes of hysterics on the air composed of unimportant and unconfirmed innuendoes about people too big and too contemptuous to talk back." Mr. Hoover had better put Mr. Pegler in that card file right away.

It happens that Mr. Hoover is a victim not of a red plot but of his own itch to publicize and dramatize him-

self. The Detroit and New York raids on Spanish veteran organizations so far overstepped the bounds of decency and legality as to make many people wonder about Mr. Hoover's trustworthiness as a law-enforcement officer. It sent them back to examine his little-publicized testimony in November and again in January before the House Appropriations Committee, and what they found indicated that he was prepared for a repetition of the Mitchell Palmer raids and roundups that disgraced the Department of Justice after the war. *The Nation* called attention to this testimony last week, and we shall have more to say of Mr. Hoover's methods later. We are glad to see that Attorney General Jackson is also alive to the danger of permitting the FBI to grow into an OGPU. "Law-enforcement officers," he said at Philadelphia the other night, "must be the first to obey the law." The secret services of both the Treasury and the Post Office seem to manage to operate with great efficiency without overstepping legality. But one never meets their directors in our niftier night spots, nor do they get their pictures in the papers.

Safe for Fascism

SINCE Sumner Welles is maintaining complete silence during his mission, we shall not know until he returns and reports to the President what impressions he has received as a result of his visits to Rome and Berlin. But calculated indiscretions in both those capitals have given us some clue to the kind of impression the Italian and German governments have tried to give him. Mussolini, it is fairly certain, talked peace and talked it with sincerity, for although Italy is deriving some economic advantages from the war, a prolonged conflict will render its position, and that of the Fascist regime, more and more precarious. Should the war spread to the Near East, the pressure on Italy to choose sides may become irresistible before it has become clear which is the safe side to choose. Geography and the sentiments of the people tend to push Italy toward the Allies, but the Duce's own inclinations and the ideological identity of his regime with Nazism make the pull of the axis strong. An early peace which recognized Hitler's right to keep his conquests would suit Mussolini's book very well. By heightening totalitarian prestige it would bolster his domestic position; by weakening that of the democracies it would help him to press his claims on Tunis, Suez, and Djibouti. In short, it would make Europe safe for fascism.

On the other hand, if unofficial but obviously inspired statements made in Berlin are to be believed, the Nazi leaders emphasized to Mr. Welles their determination to fight until Britain is smashed. The war aims they are supposed to have communicated to him are ones that could

only be realized after a total victory. They include an absolutely free hand in Eastern and Central Europe, the return of the old German colonies as a preliminary to German participation in the world's riches, economic organization of Europe in a way which would permit the "dispossessed" but virile nations to trade on equal terms with the "plutocracies," the surrender by Britain of such key positions as Gibraltar, Suez, and Singapore, together with a "freedom of the seas" which would insure Germany against any future blockade. If these modest proposals really represent Hitler's minimum terms, then clearly he is looking for a fight to a finish. It is interesting to note, however, that the German people have been told nothing of the substance of the conversations with Mr. Welles. The "high authority" talked for foreign ears only; Germans cannot be allowed to know that a possible mediator has been presented with a program which, if seriously intended, would shatter the last hope of peace by negotiation.

Under these circumstances it seems likely that this statement of war aims, like the new threats of a *Blitzkrieg* which have accompanied it, is really a move in the war of nerves and designed to persuade the Allies to talk peace. For simultaneously suggestions have been reaching London, through channels connected with Berlin, hinting at a plan of accommodation which would leave Poland and Czechoslovakia nominally independent. Once again Hitler is saying in effect: Come to terms now, or else. . . . And why not? Any peace which left him in effective control of Eastern and Central Europe, and free to cement economic ties with Russia, would give him all the fruits of victory. Europe would be safe for fascism, and a final settlement with France and Britain could await his convenience.

India in Revolt

IN ITS resolution proclaiming a campaign of civil disobedience unless Britain takes immediate steps to assure India's independence, the Executive Committee of the Indian National Congress has issued a final warning. For months the Congress leaders have been engaged in futile negotiations with the Viceroy and other British representatives. Both sides have been adamant. The British, while assuring India of their ultimate desire to grant self-government to the Indian people, have insisted that no action could be taken during the war because of the as yet unsolved problem of the Moslem and other minorities. The Congress leaders, remembering the unfulfilled promises given during the last war, have made their support in the present war conditional on immediate concessions in the direction of full independence.

To what extent the British government is sincere in maintaining that it dare not grant immediate independ-