Weekly News Review

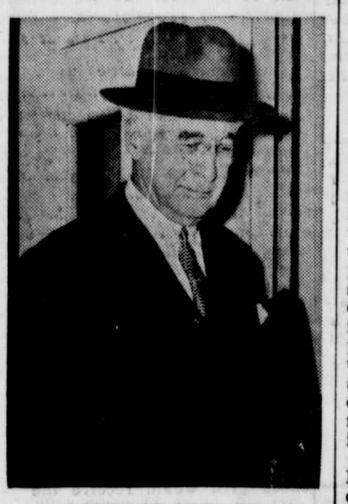
Huge U. S. Armament Program Offered as Peace Safeguard

By Joseph W. La Bine

Defense

Though the Munich agreement was aimed to preserve Europe's peace, its immediate result has been feverish rearmament. Great Britain has made plans for conscription and new airplane factories; France has appropriated 1,320,000,000 francs for military spending and 887,000,000 more for her navy; Germany is rushing fortification of her Belgian frontier; Italy speeds barriers in the Alps.

Few Americans have hoped that the U. S. can avoid similar preparations. Loudest persuasion of all has come from Britain's Winston Churchill, whose short wave broadcast urged the U. S. to take a commanding lead against dictators, to join Britain in stopping "isms" before it is too late. Added impetus has come from current U. S. espionage investigations *(see DOMESTIC)*.



BERNARD BARUCH
He wanted billions for defense.

Growing louder, this voice finally reached White House ears, coincidentally bringing comment from Capitalist Bernard Baruch who chairmaned the war industries board in 1917.

Emerging from a White House conference, Mr. Baruch started observers thinking by warning that U. S. defenses were inadequate. Though most Americans regard "defense" as successful repulsion of a North American invasion, a broader conception calls for protection of the entire Western hemisphere. Mr. Baruch's defense program includes: (1) immediate construction of a "two ocean navy"; (2) increased air power; (3) better equipment for 400,000 regular soldiers and the national guard; (4) subsidies to protect U. S. trade interests in South America; (5) industrial and military mobilization law; (6) a special tax to pay for these expenses.

Though it lacks official confirmation, President Roosevelt plainly favors the Baruch program. The suggested tax boost comes dangerously near election time, but administration leaders minimize this political hazard because: (1) most Americans regard democracy's security as more important than financial security or political partisanship; (2) a speeded-up military and naval program, financed by special tax, would decrease relief rolls and possibly create what Germany has been facing, an actual shortage of labor. Thus WPA and PWA costs could be slashed and the budget balanced.

War

Japan's invasion of South China has three purposes: (1) to force withdrawal of Cantonese troops from the Hankow battle front; (2) to capture Canton or force that province into an independent peace; (3) to cut the Hankow-Canton railroad over which war supplies have traveled to sorely troubled Chinese troops. But since China has already established four other communication lines between the outer world and her army, the South China invasion becomes less important to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.

Far more important is the fact that Japan has labeled herself the No. 1 Far East power, invading Great Britain's South China interests and defying the British lion to do anything about it. Canton lies a scant 75 miles from the crown colony of Hongkong, whose rail connection with Canton has already been broken. Since Hongkong's prosperity depends largely on trade with Canton, the British have reason to worry.

Closer home, U. S. officials are also worried because most American-Chinese trade is now routed through Hongkong. Though U. S. trade with Hongkong has jumped from $6,500,000 to $15,000,000 this year, largely because of the Canton gateway, total exports to China have dropped from $42,000,000 to $26,000,000. The American Philippines are also suffering, since Philippine-Canton trade has been heavy. Moreover, the U. S. will be unable to re-point much of its Chinese trade through the new gateways, two of them through Indo-China, one through Burma and a fourth through Russia.

Her ambitions and confidence fattened by Great Britain's capitulation at Munich, Japan marches forward to what she hopes will be domination of the Pacific.

● Two fighting tigers will join forces to kill a common enemy. In much the same fashion, Loyalist and Insurgent Spain have protested the whispered proposal that Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany join in stopping her civil war. To Loyalist Premier Juan Negrin this is a particularly righteous attitude, for settlement of the war would almost certainly give his government the beggar's lot. Friendly with dominant Italy and Germany, Rebel Generalissimo Francisco Franco would get the lion's share of Spain. Nevertheless, despite their belligerent attitudes, both sides have co-operated in ridding the war of foreign nationals. Ever since the Munich agreement, Italian troops have been slowly withdrawn, while all Loyalist foreigners are already gone. Thus isolated and warring without the active blessing of any outside power, Spain's civil war will probably blow up in a few months, ended by a sudden decision that the long struggle has been quite futile after all.

Domestic

Inescapably connected with the government's new emphasis on military defense against Nazi-Fascist world powers is President Roosevelt's interest in espionage. For 20 years the U. S. has disregarded spies, though the increasing frequency of arrests has made Americans fearful of Germany, Italy, Japan and Russia. Heightening the tension have been: (1) the Munich agreement which placed democracies on the defensive; (2) arrest in mid-October of four Germans taking photographs in the Canal Zone; (3) trial in New York of four alleged Nazi agents, with coincident efforts to prove indictments against 14 others who escaped the spy net and fled to Germany.

Greatest interest in the espionage trial lies in red-haired, 26-year-old Johanna Hoffman, who reportedly transported spy messages from New York to Germany while serving as hairdresser on the liner Europa. Second interest lies in Guenther Gustav Rumrich, former U. S. army sergeant who deserted and made a blundering attempt to secure 35 passport blanks last June. Legitimacy of U. S. fears was verified when Rumrich pleaded guilty and turned state's witness.

Though New York's spy trial appears commonplace, its significance is tremendous. Not only does it mark an emboldened U. S. defense attitude, but legal experts also explain it is the first time America has named a supposedly friendly power (Germany) in direct charges. Since indictments are filed against heads of the German secret service and naval intelligence, the trial is a potential international dynamite keg.

It may be predicted that next winter's congress will co-ordinate and tighten the government's outmoded

JOHANNA HOFFMAN
Was hairdressing a sideline?

anti-spy regulations, including the espionage act of 1917 which applies only to individuals and carries no teeth against spy-inspiring organizations. Although the U. S. has never indulged in peacetime spy activities, there is speculation whether congress may adopt this activity which has been an important European governmental function for 300 years.

'Quotes'

MAHATMA GANDHI, Indian home rule leader, on Czechoslovakia: "It is clear that small nations must come, or be ready to come, under the protection of dictators or be a constant menace to European peace."

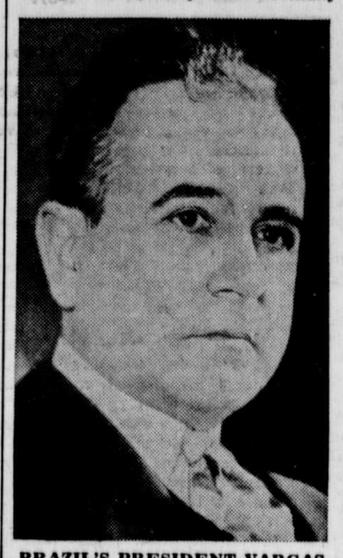
DR. STANLEY HIGH, publicist, on a Roosevelt third term: "Nobody ever in the White House, with the exception perhaps of Theodore Roosevelt, enjoyed it so much."

MARY PICKFORD, onetime actress, on new upswept hairdress: "One must marry a hairdresser to keep the new high coiffure in perfect order."

International

The U. S. has long maintained splendid trade relations with Western hemisphere nations, has moreover done this without resorting to heavy armaments. Until five years ago the U. S. was similarly strong in China. Reason: European and Asiatic nations have always been busy at home, not daring to risk invasion of the Western hemisphere.

But since Japan became supreme in the Far East, the U. S. has been forced to expand her Pacific fleet. If this was cause for worry, a much greater cause is the Munich pact which sheared friendly France and Britain of their power. Dominant in Europe, anxious to increase their foreign trade, Italy and Germany



BRAZIL'S PRESIDENT VARGAS
His door is closed to Germany.

can now be regarded as a serious threat to U. S. commerce. Of the two, Germany will be a greater threat because she has adopted an aggressive foreign expansion program, moreover because her new Sudeten territorial acquisitions bring glassware, leather and textiles into the Reich for export sale.

Focal point of German expansion will be Latin America, which last year gave the Reich 14 per cent of its trade, compared with 34.7 per cent to the U. S. In this trade war, it has become apparent the U. S. will attempt to sell South Americans on democracy, while Germany sells them Naziism. Today, as the war gets under way, the U. S. appears to hold an upper hand.

Long favored in South America through her Monroe doctrine, the U. S. has just helped preserve Western hemisphere peace by joining in settlement of the 100-year-old Chaco dispute between Paraguay and Bolivia. Indirectly, the U. S. could place another feather in her cap when Brazil called home its ambassador to Berlin, apparently breaking off diplomatic relations with the Reich. This is President Getulio Vargas' answer to Chancellor Hitler's efforts for Brazilian Nazification.

Aiding the U. S. will be increased domestic desire to woo South America. Already a campaign is under way to boost our consumption of South American goods.

A natural result of this activity has been growing American disinclination to complete the long-pending U. S.-British trade pact, a sentiment resulting from the rebirth of isolationism which followed Munich's peace treaty. The greatest stumbling block is that isolationism calls for strengthened trade relations with Canada, a plan blocked by Great Britain's renewed efforts to tighten her dominion bonds. A U. S.-Canadian trade treaty is bound to hurt American agriculture; a U. S.-British treaty will hurt American manufacture. Therefore economists are betting the "most favored nation" agreements now pending with Canada and Britain will never be consummated.

Meanwhile, Germany is cocksure of her position. Busily flitting from one European capital to another, Economics Minister Walter Funk has completed bilateral accords based on barter of goods with several Balkan states. In this way the Reich hopes to increase its economic orbit. But when Minister Funk optimistically announced he would next attempt a barter treaty with the U. S., state department officials made it clear that optimism is unfounded.

Races

Though Arabs hoped Great Britain would give them Palestine for helping defeat Turkey in the World war, Lord Balfour's declaration ended in establishment of a national home for Jews in the Holy Land. Bitter Arab-Jewish strife has resulted since 1923, while world Jewry has invested $385,000,000 and sent home 400,000 Hebrews to the "promised land." Today, encouraged by Franco-British weakness in the face of Jew-hating Germany and Italy, Arabs are rising again. Determined to settle the problem, Britain's Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain is reportedly considering restriction of Jewish migration to the Holy Land, or even complete return of Palestine to the Arabs. If Britain does either, she will arouse world protest, which is already rising among influential U. S. and British Jews. Before Britain can vacate the Balfour declaration, she should get U. S. assent, which is not apt to be forthcoming. To go ahead without that nod of approval would mean a serious strain of U. S.-British friendship, something which England needs badly right now.

Bruckart's Washington Digest

Wallace Proposes Two-Price Plan To Market Agricultural Surplus

System Would Create Class Distinction in This Country and Open Road to More Graft and Corruption; Farmers Rebel as Various Schemes Prove Unworkable.

By WILLIAM BRUCKART
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WASHINGTON. — I just cannot help wondering what the verdict of history is going to be, say 50 years in the future, concerning the present secretary of agriculture, Mr. Henry A. Wallace. From a current perspective, it appears that Mr. Wallace can get out on more limbs —'way out on them—than any man who ever has helped bungle governmental policies. He seems to have a penchant for jumping from a frying pan into the fire, as we see the thing as of today.

This capacity for jumping here and there has placed the head of the department of agriculture out on another limb. This time, as has been announced, Mr. Wallace is giving serious consideration to a program that seems certain to create a new mess. Having made what appears to be a terrifically bad job—at least that is what tens of thousands of farmers think—of efforts to rehabilitate the agriculture industry, Mr. Wallace is now proposing to enter the consumers' field.

He and his window box farmer-aides are seriously considering establishment of a two-price system in this country. That is, they are proposing that agricultural surpluses should be sold to "ordinary" consumers at one price and that the same commodities should be sold to "lower income" persons at a lower price. The federal government would make up the difference where losses occur in the sale of farm products to the lower income groups, swallowing that loss as a subsidy disguised under the fine words "maintaining a sound market for American producers."

Opens the Road to More Graft and Corruption

The thing is so cock-eyed that it seems strange it would be given a serious thought anywhere. It opens the road to more graft and corruption than can be measured, more governmental pressure and regimentation of people, more vote buying. But my objection goes deeper. I object, and I think the plan ought to be laughed out of the window, because it is proposing to destroy the very reasons for establishment of the United States as a free nation. Everyone knows that the earliest settlers fled England because of the oppression resulting from the class system. Other reasons expanded the desire for freedom, but fundamentally the motivating force that brought colonists to American shores was the class system and the damages done to the lower classes and untitled persons. The current thought, advanced by Mr. Wallace, will create class distinction in this country—and no one can tell where that will lead.

I suspect this new limb on to which Mr. Wallace and his crew have climbed sprouted from the failure of some of the other visionary schemes tried by the professional farm planners. It is unnecessary for me to recount the numerous plans that brought, first, the scarcity plan for raising prices; that brought, next, such sweet refrains as "the more abundant life" and that brought various and sundry delightful outlooks. Rain clouds blew up, however, and the schemes that were to solve the farm problems were like the letters in a leaky mail box after a downpour. But always there were checks, government checks, and I never would blame anyone for taking them. I believe surely, however, that it was only the existence of those checks that kept the farmers from moving en masse upon the beautiful grounds of the department of agriculture, demanding fair treatment.

Farmers Raise Voices as Schemes Prove Unworkable

As the latest schemes from the department have proved unworkable, the farmers with their better knowledge of what is good for the industry have raised their voices in objection, notwithstanding the checks. Mr. Wallace and his theorists have had to look quickly for something new. They have hit upon the two-price system, largely in a hope that they can stall off a general farm uprising, but also because the idea of governmental purchase of farm crops has piled up such tremendous stocks that the boys are afraid their lives will be snuffed out by cave-ins. In other words, the small houses they were building have turned out to be skyscrapers.

It is not only my conclusion that such things as the recently tried export subsidy idea have failed. Another, and very important, agency of the government apparently has reached the same conclusion. Only recently, the department of state took a slap at the Wallace policies on export subsidies. Assistant Secretary Francis B. Sayre was the voice of the department of state in this instance, and he said in a New York speech:

"In many minds, export subsidies offer a plausible solution; but such a method is as unsound at bottom as it is plausible on its face. Practical experiences in numerous countries have shown that this method creates more problems than it solves. Export subsidies are powerless to move exports in the face of foreign quota restrictions, licenses, etc."

And so forth. Now Mr. Wallace said that quotas, licenses and that sort of thing had forced the export subsidies, but apparently the department of state thinks it is the other way 'round. Mr. Sayre, of course, was supporting the reciprocal trade agreement program that is fostered by Secretary Hull, and whether you believe in that idea or not, you can hardly dodge the fact that trade treaties at least seek to put a stop to the building of more trade restrictions. Mr. Wallace's export subsidies invite new action against our shipments. Department of state plans consider the world market and hope for American entry into them; Mr. Wallace apparently is willing to destroy them by using up our resources to undersell the others, thus giving foreigners the benefit of low prices which consumers of America cannot have.

Buying Surplus Products To Care for Destitute

Again, assuming that it is necessary to care for the destitute—and nobody can deny that either the states or the federal government must do so—why is it necessary to further complicate the present problem of feeding the poor by this half-baked scheme? The surplus commodity corporation has been buying surpluses from the open market. The purpose was to take off a price depressing influence. It was designed to make a price for the farmer somewhat higher than would have obtained, whether it has accomplished that end or not. In any event, the surplus products that were used to feed the poor were given to them and that action has had very little effect upon the stability of prices.

But Mr. Wallace is not satisfied with that arrangement. Why? Well, apparently, he is getting afraid of the huge piles of government-owned products, acquired because of the fuzzy character of his earlier promises to make agriculture safe for democracy, or the New Deal, or something.

Mr. Wallace's experts have just concluded a survey which leads to the conclusion that if everyone in the United States had an "adequate diet," this country would consume all that is produced on farms annually, and in addition would require the production of two additional states of the size of Iowa. We must assume that their findings are correct, but questions will occur to everyone about them. First, what is an adequate diet? People have different ideas about that, especially the fat man or the fat woman who wants to hold the belt line within reason. But the more important question is: if there is that additional production needed to insure an adequate diet, why does Mr. Wallace still cling to crop control, to a scheme for cutting down production? The two systems do not rhyme in my humble mind.

How Will History Regard Policies of Wallace?

So, when we see Mr. Wallace's own policies doing a contradictory loop-the-loop; when we find him trying to promote foreign trade by killing the goose that laid the golden egg, and when we find him turning to the development—or, consideration, at least,—of a scheme to create class feelings within our own population, I wonder what the end will be. To repeat, I cannot help wondering how history will regard him and the policies he is now seeking to carry through.

Mr. Wallace made a speech to a group of Washington women the other day, in which he said that the Democrats were now paying off the debt to the population which the Republicans had created. The farm benefits that are being paid out under the New Deal were held to be liquidation of obligations which the Republicans caused to be established by their administrative failures.

The Republicans were in power for 12 years preceding the New Deal. I had the privilege of watching them ball up the farm problem. They played politics with it, too. I think that probably about the only difference in the situation, by and large, is that the Republicans spent only about 15 per cent as much out of the treasury as Mr. Wallace has done and they did not try as many assinine schemes.

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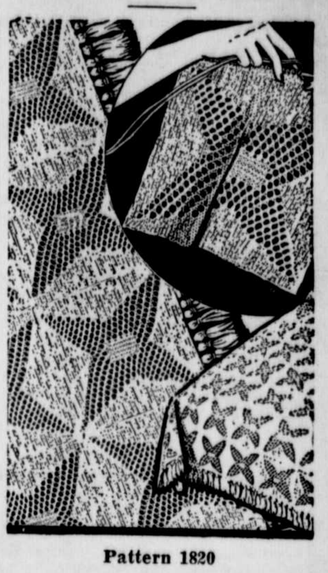

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