

The Birmingham Eccentric

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GEORGE R. AYLER, Editor and Publisher
PAUL NEAL, Business Manager
HARVEY W. WALKER, Advertising Manager
ARTHUR N. WINGENDER, Production Manager
CLAUDE E. WALKER, Circulation Manager

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NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish stories of events which have news value and which are written by persons not connected with the office. The right is reserved to reject any material which is not considered to be of sufficient interest to the general public. The right is also reserved to edit any material for clarity and brevity. All news items and advertising copy must be in the Eccentric office by Wednesday noon to obtain insertion for that week.

The subject of the editorial, entitled "My Country 'Tis of Thee," appearing in the Portland Oregonian, was addressed to the Editor of the Eccentric by the author, a member of the Oregonian staff. The author is Ronald G. Callvert, associate editor of the Oregonian. In this land of ours, this America, the man we choose as leader dons at no time uniform or insignia to denote his position as commander-in-chief of armed forces. No member of his cabinet, no civil subordinate, ever attires himself in garments significant of military authority.

In this land of ours, this America, the average citizen sees so little of the Army that he has not learned to distinguish between a major and a lieutenant from his shoulder strap. When the Chief Executive addresses his fellow countrymen they gather about him as a civilian, not as a military leader. In this land of ours, this America, no youth is conscripted to labor on devices of defense; military training he may take or leave at his pleasure. There is no armed force consistent with a policy of aggression. The Navy maintains no menace from the Western Hemisphere, but wholly for defense against Europe or Asia.

In this land of ours, this America, no third of the population is foreign born, no national born of foreign or mixed parentage. Our numerous "minorities" come from 14 nations. The native born, whatever his descent, has all political and other rights possessed by him who was the ancestor of our founding fathers. The foreign born races that are assimilated are admitted to all these privileges if they want them. We have "minorities" but no minority problem.

In this land of ours, this America, the common citizen may criticize without restraint the policies of his government or the aims of the Chief Executive. He may vote as his judgment of his conscience advises and not as a ruler dictates.

In this land of ours, this America, our songs are dedicated to love and romance, the blue of the night, sails in the sunset, and not to martyrdom to political cause. Our national anthem has martial words; difficult air. But you want to hear the organ roll give the people its companion "America... of Three I sing." In lighter patriotism we are nationally cosmopolitan. Unitedly we sing of Dixie or of Iowa, where the tall corn grows of springtime in the Rockies, or of California, here I come, where you want to hear the organ roll give the people its companion "America... of Three I sing."

In this land of ours, this America, our troubles, present or prospective, come from within—come from our own mistakes, and injure us alone. Our pledges of peace toward our neighbors are stronger than ruler's promise or written treaty. We guarantee peace by devoting our resources, greater than the rest of the world, to upbuilding the industries of peace. We strut no armed might that could be ours. We care no nation in our half of the earth. We fear us. None does fear us, nor arm against us.

In this land of ours, this America, we have illuminated the true road to permanent peace. But that is not the sole moral sought herein to be drawn. Rather it is that the blessings of liberty and equality and peace that have been herein recounted are possessed nowhere in the same measure in Europe and Asia and wane or disappear as one nears or enters a land of dictatorship of whatever brand. This liberty, this equality and peace are embedded in the American form of government. We shall never retain them if foreign spies would dig them out and destroy them are barred from our shores. If you cherish this liberty, this equality, this peace material and peace spiritual—then defend with all your might the American ideal of government.

1940 IS AN ELECTION YEAR—please remember that an unnaturally large crop of candidates is to be allowed under whose primaries take place. Also please remember that every candidate promised everything that Heaven can bring by every candidate. Have you, as a Taxpayer, learned how much to discount political promises?

Under the guise of protecting the nation, many persons and organizations have proposed various Force May Be Necessary

Just what is meant by "subversive" depends upon the phobia of the individual giving the definition. With "some," it is "communism," with others it is "fascism," and with almost anybody it is something or other that the individual does not like.

For example, the House recently passed the Smith Anti-Allen bill, which among its provisions forbids the printing or publishing of books or papers advocating violent overthrow of the government, or the defending or justifying of any such forbidden action.

In general terms, such measures may contain provisions, justified as a defense against real dangers, but which themselves endanger traditional liberties. Whenever anybody proposes restrictive laws of the kind which go beyond the legislation now on the books, the proposals should be zealously scrutinized to ascertain the reasons for new restrictions to our freedom of speech.

The liberties of human beings in the world have been won, almost without exception, by those who not only advocated, but used force against the government that denied freedom. In the United States, so far as we can tell at this time, there would seem to be no necessity for the use of force to overthrow any future government, provided persons are not prevented from the people from expressing themselves at the polls.

Just the same, fifty or a hundred years from now, a situation may arise, where the will of the people will be flouted and no fair opportunity given the voters to change governments by popular elections. In other words, it is not without the bounds of possibility, that some administration may, some day, seek to perpetuate itself in office. If that day comes, it is conceivable that many patriots will advocate the overthrow of the government by force.

The fact is that, if such an emergency arises, patriots will not pay any attention to any musty statute that forbids the advocacy of the use of force to overthrow a pernicious government.

Jitterbug

The jitterbug is a perfect example of what has happened many, many times in the history of mankind," Douglas Kennedy, national president of the English Folk Song and Dance Society, told a Birmingham audience, here two weeks ago. "We look upon this jitterbug as shagging an animal, but I say that it is organically perfect. A live organism is always in motion, and, as health is a musical activity, so dancing is its outlet." Well, that's putting critics of jitterbug in their place. All right, beside a dance hall, let's hope that jitterbugs acquire the practical stride of life, and then nobody ought to kick.

It seems to be one of the traits of human nature, as men grow older, to look backward into the past and to associate certain virtues and asperities to those who directed events in the years that are gone.

Along this line comes Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University, to note that American political life is suffering from lack of distinction in leadership and to lament that "there are in sight no successors to the great names of years that are past." Dr. Butler is correct in his assertion or whether he is enjoying an old man's reverie in connection with past events.

PLEASANT, BUT NOT PERMANENT



People's Column

The Eccentric is pleased to receive contributions to this column. All communications must be signed, but signatures will be kept confidential upon request. Letters must be in the office by Tuesday (Thursday) publication the following Thursday.

To the Editor:
For many years the Methodist Church has been trying to teach young people that war is wrong and that as followers of Jesus Christ, they cannot engage in it. Many of them have taken a definite stand for peace and believe that they must object on grounds of conscience to compulsory military service anywhere at any time.

From the looks of things this status may be tested and our leaders, we would like these young people and the world at large to know that the reputation of the Methodist Church is suffering from their stand. Enclosed is a copy of a resolution adopted by the Flint District Ministers' Association.

The Flint District Confirms Methodist's Repudiation of War
The United Methodist Church in the month of May, 1939, declared in part, "We stand for the reputation of war and for the discovery and development of all reasonable methods to attain peace. We insist that the agencies of the church shall not be used in the preparation for war, but in the promulgation of the ideals of Christ. We stand upon this ground, that the Methodist Church as an institution cannot endorse war nor support or participate in it."

Jesus in Infancy

and around Bethlehem under two years of age.

It was these circumstances that Joseph took Mary and the child and fled into Egypt, to remain there until after Herod's death when they returned to the homeland and dwelt in the city called Nazareth. It was from this that Jesus was to be known as "the Nazarene." Nazareth was the birth home for a future Messiah, situated as it was on the brow of a great hill where the very location suggested vision, and near enough to the great lanes of trade for contact with the teeming world of business, industry and commerce.

We shall study this kingdom of God for which we daily pray in the words that Jesus taught his disciples, "Thy kingdom come." The petition for the coming of the kingdom is inextricably associated with the petition that follows it: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

Happenings of Long Ago

Bits of News Gleaned From Old Files Of The Eccentric. The Items That Make Up The Historical Background Of The Birmingham Of Today.

Fifty Years Ago

Oct. 3, 1889
Have you seen the Misses Beslow Merrell and Bertha Bigelow riding around in their dog cart hitched behind their automobile pony? It is a sight that would make a Pilgrim smile clear back of his ears.

Parents, if you have any desire to have your young boys grow up as they should, look to them if you allow them to go on as they please they may turn out to be thieves and burglars. You may think they are all right, but the time may come when you will regret that you did not draw the reins a little closer.

Married, at the residence of the bridegroom in Troy, Wednesday, Sept. 25, 1889, by the Rev. R. Bird, Mr. Thomas H. Power of the firm of the Bloomfield and Geneva, Flora E. Perkins. A very pleasant party of near relatives and friends from the happy bride and groom were present, and after partaking of a sumptuous repast the happy couple took in the train for Detroit to take in the great exposition and other interesting sights in the city.

Random Remarks

Robert A. Taft, U. S. Senator from Ohio:
"I favor repealing the embargo on arms, ammunition and implements of war."
Yates Stirling, Jr., Rear-Admiral, U. S. N., Retired:
"Our security depends upon defeating the dictators when the war starts."
Franklin D. Roosevelt, before the war began:
"The rank and file of the population of every nation, large and small, wants peace."
Fred R. Adams, doctor, in a magazine:
"Every major dental operation can be performed without the least pain to the patient."
Richard Niebuhr, of the Yale Divinity School:
"If religious liberty is ever lost in America, it will be lost to some movement which makes religious liberty its war-cry."
Report, House Committee investigating U. S. Americanism:
"In these times, when democracy is harassed on many sides, because of its assisting preachers, and would-be Caesars, have arisen in our midst."
Arthur H. Compton, physicist and Nobel Prize winner:
"As a guide for assessing the jumpy path, neither history nor a study of modern society shows any agency comparable with religion."
John L. Sarg, associate-editor, American Catholic weekly:
"In a just war, killing is not necessarily murder."
Henry J. Reilly, Brigadier-General, U. S. A., Reserve Officers' Corps:
"Man has more powerful machines than he had in the last war, but they are dependent, not only for their efficient use, but for their very existence, on man."
Charles A. Beardley, president, American Bar Association:
"The American people never were in greater need of an intelligent, well-trained, independent and fearless bench and bar."
Stanley Baldwin, former British Prime Minister:
"A democrat should work for and be prepared to stand for his constituents."
Robert H. Jackson, Solicitor-General of the United States, defending Supreme Court liberalism:
"The fact is that constitutional law has become, not the law of the Constitution, but the law about the Constitution."

Twenty-five Year Ago

Oct. 2, 1914
The European War at a glance: The Dardanelles have been closed to navigation. The duration of the closure is not stated. Russia is said to be ready to declare war on Turkey.

Congressional Comment

by Representative George A. Donnelly
1912 \$1,882,000,000
1922 2,338,000,000
1923 2,702,000,000
1924 3,323,000,000
1925 4,100,000,000
1926 4,887,000,000
1927 5,391,000,000
1928 6,060,000,000
1929 6,819,000,000
1930 4,944,000,000
1931 1,768,000,000
1932 1,225,000,000
1933 161,000,000
1934 1,776,000,000
1935 404,000,000
1936 1,210,000,000
1937 1,159,000,000
1938 828,000,000
1939 179,000,000

First five months of 1939 - These figures clearly indicate that investors are unwilling to take a chance in industrial corporations. Added tax burden, increased restrictive regulations and unsettled labor conditions have been contributing factors to this situation.

According to Federal Reserve Board figures, the average yield on utility bonds dropped from 7.49% to 3.87% in the years 1928 and 1938; from 7.12% to 5.12% on railroad bonds; and from 9.4% to 3.5% on bonds of industrial corporations.

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