Editorial Page of The Birmingham Eccentric

A free, responsible and aggressive Press is democracy's first line of defense

Knocking on Wood

with JOHN H. HARWOOD

"TOTAL DEFENSE"

WITH so many of our citizenry spending so much of their time these days glaring at each other across picket lines and conference tables, the other 125 millions are wondering impatiently just when the combatants are going to get wise and get together. I think that one big trouble is that the disputants in labor and industry don't know HOW to reconcile the hard feeling between them. They would do well to look into "moral-armament" as it was explained in Birmingham last week.

Many of the people behind this "moral re-armament" are members of the Oxford Group, the movement started by Frank Buchman.

Yet, a local Buchmanite assured me last Friday afternoon, "moral re-armament" is larger than the Oxford Group and members among its supporters people who have never heard of the Oxford Group. The "moral re-armers" have put out a booklet, "You Can Defend America," and I understand it is on sale for 10 cents at various drug stores and news stands throughout the country. In this booklet the whole idea is explained.

In it is a foreword written by General John J. Pershing, once Commander of the A. E. F. He, and many other leaders, such as Phillip Murray, head of the C. I. O., William Green, head of the A. F. L., many industrialists, and public officials like Gov. Van Wagoner, have endorsed the ideas set forth.

I will let the booklet speak for itself, as much as I have space for. If you don't think it is common sense, I will be much surprised.

YOU CAN DEFEND AMERICA

Once China built a wall. She lived behind it. She laughed at her enemies. She felt secure. Soon an invader came from the north. Three times China found the enemy inside her gates. They did not storm the wall. They did not go around it. They simply bribed the gate-keepers.

Yesterday France built a wall. The Maginot Line. She felt safe. She felt secure behind it. She put her faith in it. Yet France fell. Why?

Something was missing. There was a gap through which an invader came. That gap was not only in the wall. It was in the spirit of the people.

TODAY America builds a wall around a ring of steel. Ships and planes and guns. But is this enough? Does America have what China lacked? What France lacked? Does she have *total* defense?

She builds her walls. Does she build 'character'? Spirit? The will to sacrifice? Does she build men? Men who build together?

Before our very eyes the world changes. Nations collapse. We in America ask: "What can I do?" What can 130 million Americans do?

Plenty!

Behind ships, planes and guns stand three lines of defense: Sound Homes, Teamwork in Industry, a United Nation. They fill the gap, they must be manned.

[At this point the argument may not sound at all original to you. But go on; truth is never original, but there are new ways of expressing it.—J. H. H.]

The First Line of Defense—Sound Homes

Why don't the nations get along like one big family? A humorist answers, "The troublers, they do!"

Homes are the cement of the national life. The place where the nation learns how to live together. The non-stop assembly line of character which is the heart of national morale. If homes crack, the nation cracks.

Family life once made America great. Home building was an art. But it went out with the horse and buggy. For millions today, home means only a filling station by day and a parking place at night. Divorce is rapidly becoming part of the American way. And the Mirthute continues to go down.

Many of us would willingly die for our family, but sometimes find it pretty tough to have to live with them. So Father pays the bills, Mother worries. The children do as they please. We like to sing "Home Sweet Home"—when we're away from home.

To defend America we need sound homes. Where the family hide nothing from one another and help one another to give their best. Where there is plenty of laughter and love. Where meals are not just gulp and go, but where company and the conversation are as good as the food. Where the welcome sign is always out. Where neighbors can drop in to borrow a cup of flour and find real friendship. And courage when times are hard.

Homes that pull together, pull the town together. And unite the nation.

[Space does not permit my quoting it all verbatim, but the message continues, pointing out that the second line of defense is team work in industry.]

"The defense of the nation demands that all rise above self-interest. It means each faces up to his own mistakes. It means we join forces for the common good."

The Third Line of Defense . . A United Nation . .

America does not need to be divided and quarreling at home just to prove she is a democracy—any more than husband and wife need to get into an argument just to prove they have minds of their own.

Unity is more than agreeing on what we like or whom we hate. Team-work cannot be built by high talking and low living. By find ideals and selfish lives.

It means working together for America. Honest team-work between government and business, labor and management, union and union, republican and democrat, city and farm.

A united people will build the new America. A nation set free from fear, hate and greed. A nation that holds the secret of the new world.

("Well, so what?" you say. "What can I do about it? People have been trying to sell a sort of thing for thousands of years and have gotten nowhere." But, there is the answer. . . .)

Human nature is the bottleneck in the production of national morale. We need a new spirit in the country. But to get it we must start with a new spirit in every citizen. And that means *you.*

Either you sacrifice your personal selfishness for the nation—or you sacrifice the nation for your personal selfishness. America needs a change of heart. We must *live* the American way.

Americans are honest, unselfish, neighborly, clean and free. Or are they? Always? Are you? All the time? If not, what can you do about it? . . .

The first step is to face the facts. The facts about yourself. Home? Unselfish? Neighborly? Clean? Free? At home? In industry? In politics?

Our fathers looked to God for their direction. We've looked about everyplace else . . . William Penn said, "Men must be governed by God, or they will be ruled by tyrants."

What are you governed by? Your wife? Your husband? Your desires? Your pocketbook? Fear of losing your job? Personal ambition?

Make a note of the thoughts you get. Test them. Are they honest? Unselfish? Neighborly? Clean? Then put them to work . . .

[I do not have space to quote

(Continued on Page 5, Part 2)

A War of Machines, Not Men

About fifteen hundred years ago, a swarm of barbarian horsemen trampled upon the legions of Rome and the reign of the foot soldier came to an end.

For approximately a thousand years, the armed knight on horse-back represented the military power of the world, but when sturdy English yoemen, armed with their long bows met the knights in battle, the foot-soldier re-established his supremacy as a fighting instrument.

The importance of infantrymen continued for five hundred years, until 1940, when the erman military machine, skillfully coordinating the newly-developed tank and airplane, once more swept into oblivion the foot-soldier, presenting the world with a new era in military affairs and making obsolete huge standing armies equipped with modern weapons of destruction.

German airplanes and tanks, working together against a common enemy, have been able to decimate the armies of opponents. When they have finished their work, the German infantry follows in their stead as an army of occupation. The business fighting, it appears, once more rests upon the work of a comparatively few fighting men.

This new development of warfare opens the way for Great Britain to defeat Germany without the loss of hundreds of thousands of men and makes more important than ever the industrial plants which supply the tanks and aircraft which must be used to defeat an enemy. When the soldiers of the British Empire have equipment superior in quality and decisive in numbers, the boasted superiority of Nazi soldiers will become a thing of the past.

While the new development opens a way for the British to win the war, it also presents Hitler with an opportunity to use the conquered people of Europe as slaves in a gigantic workshop, designed to produce the fighting machines that multiply the power of individual German soldiers.

Consequently the war in Europe today is largely a contest between the productive capacity of Great Britain and the United States and the productive capacity of all Europe, organized and controlled by the German dictator.

Ludwig's Privilege

It is worth noting that Emil Ludwig, the great German historian, now living in the United States, has volunteered his services to the government of the United States at $1 per year.

He will do special work among foreign-language groups in connection with the defense savings program.

Mr. Ludwig says that "when one realizes what a tremendous privilege it is to be a citizen of the United States, it is a small matter for an individual to offer his very best to any cause which is devoted to the defense of democratic ideals."

It might be a good idea for some Americans to understand the privilege that Mr. Ludwig praises and for which he is willing to volunteer his services.

COMPARATIVE TAX RATES of Michigan cities, as obtained by Supt. of Schools Howard D. Crull last week, show that Birmingham gets above the average for carrying on its municipal government. Which is but another proof that "economy back home" is a practical means of reducing the debt load on the average income.

MORE POWER to the recently expressed thought of City Commissioner Harry E. Bissett, who last week said at a Commission meeting: "I don't think most people realize how heavy these new federal taxes are going to be. I think we ought to discourage new projects for special assessments." By this time next year Com. Bissett's words may be understood better—when the nation gets the defense tax program.

United States' 'Secret Weapon'

Time and again during the past year the Nazis have hinted about a new and secret weapon, an engine of destruction like nothing imagined before, with which they would crush democracy. The world waited for it. They are still hinting and the world is still waiting. But there is no such weapon. It is just a bogeyman and we refuse to be scared by it because we were on to that trick of Nazi propaganda.

However, America has a secret weapon which isn't a bogeyman. It is a secret weapon because the dictators don't seem to realize how powerful it is. They laugh and call it names. But this weapon of America will have the last laugh.

The weapon is democracy.

Democracy is the strongest idea the world has ever known. Democracy has fought tyrants before—a long list of tyrants since the beginning of history. Democracy will continue to fight tyrants as long as free man is alive and kicking on this earth.

It always wins in the end. It has had a lot of practice in defending itself. And it wins in the end because it is made up of ideals of liberty, of faith in the essential decency of man, of man's respect for himself and his neighbors. It wins against dictators because a powerful idea lasts forever while dictators are here today and gone tomorrow.

Democracy, our secret weapon, has gone through the crucible many times and come out a better piece of steel each time.

And now we must temper and weld it once again, forge it into a better weapon than ever before. This means welding ourselves into a single and indestructible unit; 130,000,000 of us, Americans all, working for defense of our right to be free.

It is time to forget the dispensable luxuries of peacetime. It is time to forget our differences, that we are Republicans, Democrats or Socialists, Catholics, Protestants or Jews. It is time to remember only one thing, upon which we can all agree: That we are Americans born to freedom, and free Americans we *shall* remain.

OF COURSE IT IS TOUGH for a chap like Hank Greenberg to have to give up a nice baseball job for the army; peace-loving folks extend him every sympathy. It's equally tough on any young chap, whether he drives a truck or is the American League's most valuable player, to have to enlist for a year of military service; but that is the price of liberty in a world now overrun with killers. Pondered thoughtfully, it's a cheap price, too—don't you think?

WHEN AN 11-TON LOAD of fresh hams in a truck scooting over a Wisconsin road overturned one day last week, fire broke out and the hams were cooked to varying degrees of well-doneness; nearby residents, armed with big knives and long forks, got themselves plenty of the unexpected barbecued pig. That's what one may call "roadside service."

HAROLD D. SMITH, federal budget director, not so long ago served in the same capacity for the State of Michigan. From Washington last week he said that "State, county, and city governments must cut expenses so that the taxpayers will have enough money left to meet the growing federal taxes for military defense." That is a patriotic statement, of course; but it will not be needed very much "back home," is our guess.

CONGRATULATIONS TO BIRMINGHAM LUTHERANS for their intention to build a new church here, costing $45,000. Rev. Theodore Wuggazer, pastor, and his congregation are thus offering tangible evidence of their zeal for and interest in an institution that brings them closer to their concept of Christianity and the brotherhood of man upon earth.

TAXPAYERS IN SEABRY BLOOMFIELD HILLS, during 1940, paid their taxes nearly 100 per cent; the exact figure, given out by its City Manager, Harry S. Starr, is 95.3 per cent. If every community in Michigan had the same enviable record, how much easier would be the life of those administering local governmental services. (Incidentally, it may be said that Manager Starr operates his office with extreme frugality, too.)

TO PAVE EVERY BIRMINGHAM STREET with concrete is, of course, financially impossible; but to develop existing gravel roads with treatment of oil, is, in the opinion of City Manager Donald C. Egbert, a start in the right direction. If you want your street thus developed, get in touch with the Manager's office; the cost is very little, considering the benefits you receive.

Armchair Philosopher

"EAVESDROPPING ON AMERICA"

Scene: The Dog dining room in Every Town, U. S. A. John Doe, Jane and Johnny, over the apple pie.

Time: Tonight.

Jane Doe: Everybody else ducks out of jury duty, why can't you?

John Doe: If everybody ducked out, we wouldn't have an jurors! If there weren't plenty of guys like me who think the free government we've got is swell, who don't mind chores like jury duty, what would happen? They want me and I got to go. That's the way democracy works.

Johnny: Gee whittakers, Dad, maybe it'll be a murder trial, maybe you'll send up a gunman for sticking up a bank!

John Doe: Still hunting "public enemies," son? Guess maybe you'd learn something if you dropped in at the courthouse.

Johnny: Gee—can kids go?

John Doe: Sure. Better learn that right now—trials are public, everybody can listen in, nobody can put anything over.

Jane Doe: All the same, it's a nuisance. The spring rush on! And the pay certainly won't make up for the business you lose.

John Doe: Sure it's a nuisance. Sure I'll lose business. And the pay isn't anything to write home about. But how would you like to live in a country where they chucked you into a concentration camp? Mom doesn't mean it, son. Bet if they called you, Jane, you'd be darned proud!

Jane Doe: Well . . .

John Doe: And how! Nothing like sitting in a jury-box, except voting on election day, to make you feel you're Mr. John Citizen. You kinda forget. But when you hear about countries where it's Mr. John Slave, you get hep to what you've got. Do you good to drop in tomorrow, too, Jane!

Jane Doe: It's wash-day . . . Funny, they don't call me for the jury.

John Doe: Kinda anxious? They'll get around to it, and you'll forget about wash-day! See, Johnny, Mom's heart is in the right place, only sometimes she likes to grumble, and that's another swell thing about the old U. S. A.—if you feel like grumbling, nobody's going to try and stop you. (CFD)

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NOTE: The Eccentric invites contributions of events which have news value and which are written by persons not connected with the editorial staff of the paper. All copy must be pre-edited before goes on Wednesday. The right is reserved, however, to make such editorial changes in the copy submitted as are necessary to the style of the paper and as are required by laws of the state. Because of a lack of space, it is impossible in the composing room, headlines written by persons other than members of the staff cannot be used. Any erroneous reflection upon the character, standing or reputation of any person, firm or corporation which may appear in the columns of The Eccentric will be gladly corrected upon being brought to the attention of the publisher.

America—Vacation Paradise

PEOPLE'S COLUMN

The Eccentric is pleased to receive communications for this column. All communications must be signed, but signatures will be kept confidential upon request. Letters must be limited to 500 words, and must be in the office by Tuesday noon for publication the following Thursday.

Two Letters Favor Mill Tax Boost

Editor, The Eccentric:

Whenever we hear of a community whose scale of pay for its teachers is lower than average, our first thought is: "No doubt a poor school system is the cause of poverty or indifference of the parents!"

In spite of a very limited budget, Supt. Crull and the school board have done a splendid job with our schools. Most of us feel that none of the fundamentals has been slighted, even if a good many frills (considered extravagant by some) have been eliminated.

However, many people who are considering this community as a future home expect—and have a right to expect—that a high class residential town should offer their children all of the modern educational extras, including well equipped buildings, up to date athletic facilities, etc.

If our schools do not meet with their approval they will go elsewhere. If that happens too much, property values will drop sharply. That would be much more serious than a small raise in taxes.

More towns are judged by the reputation of their schools than the average property owner dreams of.

In consideration of these facts, it appears to us that we should lend a helping hand in assisting the movement to pass the proposed one-mill tax for the general betterment of a school system of which we are justly proud.

MRS. JOHN F. DUNN
President Holy Name P. T. A.

Editor, The Eccentric:

These days when one is inclined to be in a bad mood, the subject of taxes would not seem to be the best one to select altogether cheerfully. We feel we are so heavily taxed that we should not be asked for further expense. However we will cut our values and incomes to increase, never realizing that to receive we must give. Birmingham is fortunate in having these loyal teachers who are sincerely interested in the welfare of our children, and I hoped that we can show them our appreciation by supporting the two-mill tax increase.

MRS. CLIFFORD B. GOULD
Adams P.T.A.

Glad To Hear Of County Library

Editor, The Eccentric:

Not long ago I received a list of books through our extension service compiled by Mrs. Lola Dudgeon, Flint, who has been reading publications on current events which a busy citizen would like to read to keep informed on happenings of a fast changing world.

However, the main difficulty in obtaining the books is that those living outside of the city limits must travel some distance to public libraries and also are required to pay a fee of $1, which is the charge for non-residents.

This inconvenience has brought forcibly to mind the fact that our rural citizens of Oakland County have no free public libraries. In days gone by when all of us would like to be better informed, to keep intelligently alert, and to understand more about our democracy, we have no place to get the books which would help us. For this reason, I have been glad to hear of the proposed County Library, and I am sure I speak for many of my friends. This library would provide free county-wide service by bookmobile, with collections of current books left at convenient places such as schools, local stores, etc., where rural people might call for them. The State Legislature will give the first necessary support to this library if it passes. The bill is being considered in the Senate now, and it is important that local citizens express their desire to support it to their Senator, George McCallum, or their Representatives, George Higgins and Chas. Adams at once. A letter to them, mailed today, would remind them of the desire of the citizens they represent to have free library service brought to rural areas.

MRS. LYNN EVERETT
Southfield Township.

Editor, The Eccentric:

The P. T. A. Recreation Committee of the Birmingham schools wished to thank you most sincerely for your splendid cooperation and assistance in making the May Party such a satisfactory success. The stories written by Miss Umphrey not across our messages in an excellent manner, and we feel we owe her especial thanks.

MRS. ALLEN THORSON,
Chairman.

Says War Entrance Would Be Suicide

To the Editor:

I see by your own column that you offer to print letters for and against this cannon fodder business free of charge. This is a real opportunity, folks, to get something free. If almost nuts in the same class with the Congressmen. Only they get paid for talking. And when their buddies threaten mayhem to quiet them, why, all their little speeches which were nipped in the bud, or they bombs burned without exploding, get themselves printed in the Congressional Record as speeches!

Now, about the argument across the pond, I feel as bad as anyone. But they say we are mostly of English descent; at least our ideas are. I think they meant to say BRISH not ENGLISH. It was two Irishmen who asked, "Is this a private fight, or can anyone get into it?" We act like a little boy ready to do battle with his neighbor; he edges nearer and nearer his lot line; he toes the edge; he calls names; then, suddenly—Whew, what a scrap. And Papa Roosevelt is the referee!

The Admirals down in Washington say, "Double the navy!" Put one in each ocean; then Adolf can't get nearer to us than studying a map. The Admirals know their business; it took them half a lifetime to get where they are. But we don't doubtedly we have the Navy. We send the rest to the English cousins. Now our duty is to our children; after they are safe, we can look out for our cousins. Only it is customary to ask for security, outside of the family, as it were. Then if we have to defend England's Atlantic possessions, let her give us a first mortgage on them. On her navy, too. Lend-lease! What will Papa Roosevelt and the gentlemen of the Congress do with bombing planes after the war is over? What will we do with butter when our dairy farmers are failing now? We have a hard time competing with European products all dressed up with a price tag and duty. What will happen to our industries when we have all these lend-lease products dumped on our shelves?

Some people think that if Hitler wins this war, we will lose the frosting on our cake. I like frosting, too, but it has been getting thinner for the last few years anyway. We just couldn't get away with it forever, buying cheap and selling dear. When Henry Ford and some more of the world citizens built factories over there and educated Europe into the intricies of mass production, a la America, the jig was up. Those people just got smart, and now, whether or not Hitler wins this war, we will have to take our chances with the rest of the world, unless we get smart and let this technology thing give us bacon and eggs too, and two automobiles per family, health for everybody, and enough leisure. And why not? Now this argument is not personal. My son may or may not get into the war (if we enter it); if it is a long war, he may be old enough to enlist. His father en-

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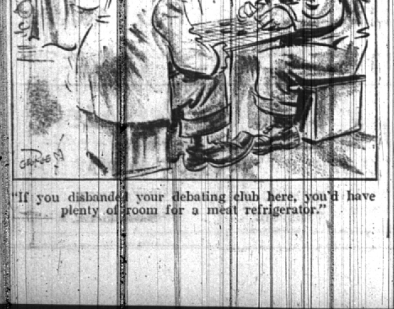
THE AMERICAN FAMILY . . By George



"If you disbanded your debating club here, you'd have plenty of room for a meat refrigerator."

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