THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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Back To Normalcy And Isolation

WITH THE opening today of the 80th Congress in second regular session, we are going to get another Taft Plan. It will be the Republican Senate leader's substitute for the Marshall Plan for European recovery and it will have the same New Look or odd look we find in the Taft Plan for inflation control, which was enacted at the recent special session as the Republican substitute for the 10-point Truman program.

Both Taft Plans are the essence of simplicity, the point being that we will get neither inflation control nor European recovery with the machinery devised or projected by the Republican policymaker. His substitutes are necessitated by the fact that he started running for President back in 1946 with the happy thought that the time had come for America to return to Normalcy and Isolationism. In the interval, the economic and political crisis abroad and American inflation reared their ugly heads and found Mr. Taft without policies or ideas capable of dealing with them. If he now admits the existence of those emergencies, he must reverse his stands, confess he was horribly mistaken and retire in confusion from the Presidential picture, and that is something which the late President William Howard Taft's ambitious and stubborn son has no intention of doing.

While Congress takes up the task of formulating Taft Plan No. 2, the Administration is attempting to put in operation Taft Plan No. 1, which calls for voluntary agreements on prices, allocations and conservation measures in place of the compulsory wage-price controls and rationing requested by President Truman. The impression the Taft inflation program will produce little except more confusion hasn't altered since the President conservatively described it as "pitifully inadequate." No one except the Senator and a few of his followers in the GOP believe that. It is predicted that the GOP voluntary system will check the price spiral or produce a more equitable and economic distribution of scarce items.

Just as it is now clear that the Taft leadership wants continued inflation, it is plain that the same element in the GOP means to have as much American isolation as it can get. Mr. Taft returns to Congress reenforced in his conviction that it is dangerous for America to extend itself in cooperation with European countries for world economic revival. During the brief Congressional adjournment, the Senator took a swing over the Middle Western stronghold of Republican isolationism and came back full of his old bounce.

Strategy of the Taftian standpatters has been made clear in this period. First, there will be a drive to cut the amount of funds appropriated to a point where the outlay will be painless to America and completely discouraging to the sixteen European nations depending on this program for survival. Second, there will be an effort to attach strings to the project which will make it unacceptable to the foreign governments or open the way for American political meddling which will antagonize European peoples. Third, a move to divorce direction of the Plan from the State Department and the Truman Administration so that the Republicans may have more control over American foreign policy and appropriate whatever political credit there is for this undertaking. All three operations seem to have a large chance of success and all three patently are designed to sabotage, not to strengthen, the Marshall Plan.

The Truman Administration will, of course, make a determined effort to save the European Recovery Program. Senator Vandenberg, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, will be in there fighting for it. A group of Republican progressives in Congress gave signs of revolt against the Taft leadership in the special session and they may be heard from again, but Ohio's Presidential candidate was able to control them in 1947 and probably will outsmart them in 1948. The world is out of step with Robert A. Taft and, by cracky, it is just too bad for the world.

The Drama Of Mecklenburg

ANNOUNCEMENT that plans for a historical drama commemorating the signing of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence on May 20, 1775, will be initiated at a meeting tomorrow indicates that Charlotte is on the way to another worthwhile civic accomplishment this year.

No section of the country has finer traditions or is richer in history than our own section of the Carolinas and there will be no dearth of material from which to build the dramatic presentation.

Clarence Kuester recalls a conversation with President Hoover in 1930 when Mr. Hoover commented, "Your section of the Carolinas is very rich in history—you ought to make the most of these, among your most cherished and valued assets."

Mr. Kuester, turning from a busy career as Chamber of Commerce executive, has interested himself in the proposed drama and that in itself is an assurance of success. Mr. Kuester is a native of Mecklenburg and his love for his county and its great past has grown with the years. His energy and zeal will furnish the motive power to get the project into being and on its way to success.

Residents who were here in 1925 will recall the imposing pageant during the week of May 20 in Independence Park. The pageant, marking the 150th anniversary of the Mecklenburg Declaration, attracted thousands not only from Charlotte and this County but from surrounding communities.

Preliminary plans for this year's drama project it on a much large scale, one of the most ambitious events of its kind ever undertaken in the South. Much research work has been done by Legette Blythe, Charlotte writer and historian, and Lamar Stringfield, nationally known composer. Paul Green, Chapel Hill's famous dramatist, has expressed his interest and there is every reason to believe that Charlotte can stage a show that will reflect real credit upon the community.

Mr. Kuester points out that 100,000 attended the Kings Mountain celebration in 1930, with another 75,000 to 100,000 in the town of Kings Mountain. At the same time he says "I am convinced that 1948 and 1949 will be outstanding years for Charlotte. So, I think the time has come to do what President Hoover suggested to me in 1930 when he attended the celebration at Kings Mountain Battlefield."

The drama will serve a large purpose in reminding our people of the accomplishments of the men and women who established this community. Newcomers to the Carolinas and to Charlotte will have an opportunity to look upon the living pages of history and behold the deeds that have given Mecklenburg its high place in the annals of our nation.

Continuing success of "The Lost Colony" at Manteo has shown the popularity of dramas based upon the great days and the great deeds of the past. The Mecklenburg movement deserves the special support of the various patriotic groups as well as the backing of our people as a whole. It is truly a worthwhile undertaking.

More Inflation As A 'Cure'

THAT OLD inflationist, Senator Elmer Thomas of Oklahoma, Democrat, may be said to have settled the argument over what to do about inflation—or rather what will be done about it.

What we need is not less but more inflation, says the Senator, and that obviously is what we are getting. Prices "must go even higher" to assure a stable economy, he declares.

"I feel that in my State of Oklahoma, for example, the majority of people would suffer anything at this time rather than go back to price control and rationing," he told a Washington reporter. The Senator obviously has consulted only those of his people who are made giddy by the profits they are coining on the price spiral. It doesn't seem likely that he has consulted with hospital officials and health authorities to see the latest figures on the increase in malnutrition among children of low-income families who know there are worse things than price control and rationing.

In this, the Oklahoma Senator is no more callous to the plight of consumers who are carrying the burden of high prices, and no more devoted to the interests of the profitmakers than are the majority of our lawmakers in Washington. His statement has the merit of a candid confession that the opposition to price regulation comes from a desire to prolong the boom and not from an honest conviction that price controls will not work.

Our politicians and the National Association of Manufacturers have exhausted the argument that it is useless to experiment with measures of the OPA type, contending that such curbs merely attack the symptoms and not the causes of inflation. Everyone knows the inflation has its roots in maladjustment of supply and demand and that the emergency will not be passed until increased production restores the balance, or a deflation cuts the money supply. But everyone also knows that Government controls can equalize the burden for the whole population and prevent inflation from wrecking the economy during the period when production is straining to catch up. However, it is obvious that the Boom and Bust men need no longer seek to justify their position by attacking the practicability of price curbs. Inflation has passed beyond any chance of control when our eminent statesmen begin telling us the remedy lies in another spurt in the price jag.

The Red And The Black

WHERE is there least religious freedom today? Behind the iron curtain? The bishop in charge of Methodist work in twelve European nations declares:

From three years of experience, I feel that the real threat to religious freedom is from reactionary political regimes, such as the Franco regime in Spain, where Protestantism is not granted religious freedom.

On the other hand, Methodist work in countries behind the iron curtain has been carried on without interference. There is, of course, no guarantee that this always will be so. But it serves as a reminder that intolerance flies a black flag as well as a red one.—*Christian Science Monitor.*

'You Mean You Still Want A Real, Live Pony?'

There's Too Much At Stake

Italy Must Not Go Communist

By SUMNER WELLES
Former Under Secretary of State

NEW YORK

INTERNAL developments in Italy justify continued optimism.

A Republican constitution has finally been adopted. The government has been greatly strengthened by the inclusion of the right-wing Socialists and the Republicans. The democratic coalition which Prime Minister de Gasperi now heads has an absolute majority in the National Assembly. The Cabinet is politically far stronger than the Schuman Cabinet in France, since it need not depend for support upon the extreme right. It has public opinion behind it. There is no doubt that the democratic parties could secure an overwhelming victory in fair national elections.

It was because of the Government's popular strength that the revolutionary strikes called by the Communist Party failed so abjectly. The Government acted with vigor and despatch. The police and the army, which had not previously been tested, obeyed enthusiastically their instructions to maintain order. And most of the Italian workers, members though they are of Communist-dominated trade unions, were so desperately tired of Communist agitation and so anxious to work, that they refused to strike.

IMPROVEMENTS SHOWING UP

The chief cause for public confidence is that the de Gasperi Cabinet is getting things done. Minister Einaudi's financial and economic program is succeeding. Inflation is being controlled. The prices of basic necessities have actually gone down. The devaluation of the lira has stimulated Italy's export trade. Employment is slowly increasing.

Italy is receiving about 750,000 tons of coal a month from the United States. 200,000 tons more than and some 60,000 tons of steel. Industry can consequently operate at a satisfactory level. American stop-gap relief will prevent acute distress until the end of March. If Italy can obtain the 400,000 tons of wheat from Argentina due under the recent credit, there need be no food crisis before next June.

Yet with all of this encouraging progress the situation of Italy is becoming increasingly precarious.

The creation of a Moscow-dominated Balkan federation is under way. The establishment of the Communist Greek guerrilla "government" is the long-expected sign that the Soviet Union will stop at nothing short of actual hostilities in order to dominate the Mediterranean. If Greece is brought under Russian control Italy would inevitably become the next scene in the struggle.

TROUBLE ON THE ADRIATIC

There have as yet been only minor clashes along the new frontier between Italy and Yugoslavia. But Yugoslav provocations in the Adriatic have now commenced. The Yugoslavs lately seized twenty-five Italian fishing boats within sight of the Italian coast on the ground that they had invaded Yugoslav waters. Feeling is beginning to run high. The unsettled status of Trieste invites a major "incident."

The next crisis will probably come during the Italian national elections. The tactics of the Communists are already foreshadowed. The Communist party, which, notwithstanding Togliatti's self-incriminating denials, is lavishly financed from Soviet-controlled sources outside Italy, and which has by far the largest campaign chest of any Italian party, will use its funds lavishly to cut down the showing of the democratic parties.

On election day, the Communists will provoke local riots in order to prevent their opponents, and particularly the Italian women, from going to the polls. If the Communist leaders see that there is a democratic sweep which neither corruption, fraud, nor subversive activities can arrest, they will immediately claim that Communism has been cheated. That will be the moment for revolution, provided Moscow believes the time to be then ripe for violence.

Yet the tide against Communism is today so strong that, unless the Soviet Government is prepared to support an armed rebellion by force, a coup d' etat would undoubtedly fail. Even were the Communist leaders to follow the example now set on Greece's borders, and establish a rebel "government" in some frontier city like Gorizia, such a government could not maintain itself save with Russian or Yugoslav military assistance.

PEOPLE OPPOSE COMMUNISM

The Italian people, in their great majority, will resist any attempt to impose a Communist dictatorship upon them.

Because of the help given them by the United States, the Italians are able to stage a magnificent comeback. If they were freed from the crushing threat of Soviet intervention they could recover more rapidly than any other major nation of Western Europe.

Winston Churchill has rendered democracy no greater service than his salutary warning last year that the Soviet rulers respect only force. In a world in which force is rampant, Soviet power can only be restrained by the Kremlin's knowledge that there exists a superior power, prepared and able to restrain it.

Where so many of our own political leaders are making their fundamental mistake is in their comforting, but wholly unrealistic, assumption that loans and relief alone can keep Europe free.

It is true that the only hope for European economic reconstruction lies in that form of co-operative undertaking which the European Recovery Program can bring into being. But of what value to the American people would such a start toward recovery prove to be if the Soviet Union is able, like Hitler, to crush democracy in one western European country after the other?

If Europe is to be saved the European Recovery Program is indispensable. But what is equally urgent is that the Congress of the United States—whose voice is the only American voice that the Kremlin will heed in this Presidential election year—declare that American force will, if necessary, be made available to enforce the provisions of the United Nations Charter, and to guarantee the independence of those European democracies like Italy, whose freedom has today become essential to American security.

Quote, Unquote

It does seem to us that within the range of our observation we have never seen a woman pass who did not serenely believe that the fellow she is related to by friendship or marriage had "improved" under her tutelage. The jagged truth of the matter is, of course, expressed by Oscar Wilde, who testified: "The only way a woman can ever reform a man is by boring him so completely that he loses all possible interest in life."—**Montgomery (Ala.) Advertiser.**

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

Greece And Trieste Tinder-Box For War

TRIESTE

IF WAR comes during the year 1948, there are just two places where the explosion could occur. One is Greece, where a U. S. military mission is now face to face with Moscow's puppet Greek republic. The second is Trieste, where 5,000 U. S. troops of the 88th Division are separated by only a thin, vague line from the roughest, toughest Yugoslav fighters Tito can muster.

Of these two spots, Trieste is by far the more dangerous. For, just opposite the scarcely charted border between Yugoslavia and the free city of Trieste are 100,000 Yugoslav troops equipped with the latest arms Moscow can manufacture. They could wade through the handful of 5,000 U. S. troops—good as they are—in short order.

The great danger here is that Moscow might be successful in establishing a puppet Soviet government in northern Italy, many of whose cities already have Communist-dominated municipal councils. In this case the Soviet puppet in Northern Italy would "immediately invite" Tito to send his army into that area.

Many diplomats who read the uncensored cables in Rome expect Moscow to move in this direction before next Spring. One factor which appears to back them up is a secret military report just prepared by U. S. Central Intelligence showing that all Yugoslav troops opposite Trieste have been carefully selected for offensive combat, not mere guard duty. This column has been able to obtain a copy of this U. S. intelligence report and pertinent portions of it follow:

"All of these Yugoslav divisions are parts of the 4th Army and are composed of veterans, some of whom have been with the partisans since 1941. Sixty per cent of them are members of the Communist party of Yugoslavia. The arms and equipment are of the latest type, all Soviet made, from bullets to tanks, with few insignificant exceptions."

The report then proceeds to list in considerable detail the offensive units stationed opposite Trieste, including the "proletarian division" commanded by Col. Gajo Vojvodich, which is made up of the 1st Serbian proletarist brigade, the 3rd Krajiska proletarist brigade, the 13th Croatian proletarist brigade and an artillery brigade. Also in the Trieste army are the 7th Banjska offensive division under Colonel Gruber, the 26th Dalmatian offensive division under Col. Rade Ilich, the 27th Slavonian shock division under Col. Radojica Nenezich and the 23rd Krajiska shock division under Colonel Lisull, plus the first cavalry division under Colonel Stupar. In addition to these 100,000 men just across the border from Trieste, Yugoslavia is permitted 5,000 men as guards inside the free territory of Trieste.

"These men," comments the secret military report, "have the most modern arms and equipment, all of Soviet make and fully motorized. They represent the best material which the Soviet-Tito General Staff has at its disposal. All the men are members of the Communist party and formerly belonged to the 1st proletarist division."

NOTE—Despite the size and nature of the Yugoslav army, though, hard-hitting Gen. Clarence Moore, commander of the 88th Division, has a far better trained, better equipped and tougher bunch of men. In fact, the 88th rates as one of the best divisions in the Army. They are only 5,000 men, however, against 100,000.

Hard-Working Caffery

SENATOR STYLES BRIDGES of New Hampshire and his wife were being entertained in Paris on their recent visit to Europe by hard-working U. S. Ambassador Jefferson Caffery. To meet the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Caffery had invited Foreign Minister Bidault, who sat on Mrs. Caffery's right. On the other side of Bidault sat Mrs. Bridges.

During the dinner Mrs. Bridges asked the Foreign Minister why it was that the French people did not realize how much food the United States was sending to France.

"It's because the Ambassador doesn't go down to meet the American food ships when they come in," replied Bidault, in French. Mrs. Caffery, who was acting as interpreter, conscientiously translated Bidault's reply, even though it was critical of her husband. Whereupon Mrs. Bridges shot back: "If the Ambassador met all the American food ships unloading in France he would be so busy he would have no time for anything else."

NOTE—This dinner occurred before the Friendship Train. Ambassador Caffery not only met the Friendship Ship when it arrived at Le Havre but worked out reception arrangements with French officials so that the French people would be sure to know the full story of the Friendship Train. Nine other French ships followed with smaller size arm now being run to different cities of France.

Merry-Go-Round

EDITORIALS praising the Friendship Train are still coming in from the French press. Here are some from Marseilles, the most Communist city of France and where the Russians staged their triumphant wheat parade last year . . . Le Midi Libre: "This modest convoy from it left Los Angeles but it accumulated all sorts of gifts en route as a result of fervent American friendship. Who sent these gifts? It was individuals, the modest citizens, the brotherhood of all the American people, who sent the gifts themselves without official pomp. The French understand the symbol of collective action by Americans and will not forget its profound significance." . . . Le Provencial, with the largest circulation in Marseilles: "It is not a question of official aid but a friendly gesture from American people. Our friends in America do not forget us. We do not forget them, either. Twice in thirty years they have come to offer their blood to help us regain our liberty. Today they are thinking of our children. Without any language and big words, Marseilles says to them from the bottom of its heart, 'Thanks, friends'" . . . Le Meridional, second largest Marseilles paper, left-wing Republican: "A spectacular manifestation of the solidarity of the American people and their solicitude for the countries ravaged by the war is the arrival of the Friend Ship, which is the culmination of the Friendship Train which crossed the entire United States, bringing more than 4,000 tons of food given by all categories of American citizens to the French and Italians. This food came from great cities and small towns, from the country and even from villages isolated in the great plains or in the mountains. How our peoples and those of Italy will be touched by these spontaneous, disinterested evidences of spirit, international co-operation, and Christian fellowship!"

Samuel Grafton

Snow In The Face

NEW YORK

I THINK almost everybody has enjoyed the Eastern storms in one way, as a holiday from politics. With the sting of sleet in one's face, one necessarily takes time out from doctrinal thinking. That is reality, dribbling down the back of your neck. One of the things about New York on the night of the 25-inch fall was how nice everybody was. They left the apartments in which they had sat hating each other, and thinking soft, round, steam-heated thoughts, and they waved and offered arms in the black and dark night.

Some of the papers became too excited I read one headline about a "food and fuel crisis" on my way home from the grocer's with a loaf of bread. My milk had been delivered that morning, the worst part of the first storm. It was almost as if there were some who rather relished a physical crisis. A counter-irritant, perhaps, a pain of another sort in a jangled year? That queer, holiday spirit that flares up during a civic emergency made its appearance. The world had knocked on all our doors, and we were part of it, and perhaps our exhilaration was based on this temporary reunion with reality I know some in New York suffered, but for most it was a little miniature crisis, like a gadget to be worn on a watch-chain. The "bread shortage" meant you had to take pumpernickel.

As it happens, I've had more than I like of this kind of contact with the physical world, though my chief concern is with the political. I was in England and France during the blizzards of February, last year, so I've had them on both sides. It was a little different over there. It was snow without hot baths afterward, and without meat meals. Order yourself in a London restaurant, and you have to omit soup or dessert. A little snow on one's bread isn't bad, but just plain snow without bread is thin.

Things happened there which don't seem to happen here, like thousands of head of livestock dying in snowy fields for lack of food. Or people marooned on the roads for four, five days. Or villages cut off for a week. You could see how much poorer England and France are than we, by how much more happened when the snow struck. It knocked them sideways; it was like the disastrous difference between the way illness strikes at a poor family, or a well-to-do one.

They were very good about it. I remember one day in London I fell asleep in my hotel room in my clothes, with a blazing coal fire, forgetting an evening date. The door bell rang; it was the man I was supposed to dine with. He had tripped in from the suburbs to tell me not to come. His pipes were burst.

We went to his club. "Let's sit by the fire," he said. This turned out to be merely the shell of a quaint old custom for nothing was burning in the fireplace. We sat by it anyway.

We then went upstairs, into a cold dining room, lined with portraits. It was so cold it produced a kind of dimming effect; I felt as if there wasn't enough light in the room. The soup arrived, also cold, so as not to clash with the surroundings.

I reached for a cigarette, wanting one small token flame to burn, somewhere in the world, but my friend stayed my hand.

"Sorry," he said. "We don't smoke in this room. An old tradition." That's the coldest I've ever been.

And when Americans sit in warm rooms and speak against the Marshall Plan, it seems to me maybe they just haven't had enough snow in their faces. Not enough reality. It doesn't matter very much whether they come out against the Plan for leftist reasons, or for rightist reasons. In either case, they illustrate the way in which good, decent people in our time are increasingly being led into inhumanity along some doctrinal path. Whether it's a proposal to feed a screen writer or a radical, "to save our system" or a proposal to starve England and France to "end American imperialism", the pattern is the same; right or left, it's the same, an inhuman end reached via a doctrinal road. But if you don't start with the human situation, you won't go anywhere. More snow in the face; the antidote for round, soft, steam-heated, indoor thoughts.

Joseph & Stewart Alsop

The Choice In Greece

WASHINGTON

IF ANY further proof is needed that the world is now in the zone of war, it is only necessary to consider the possible American responses to a Soviet recognition of the "government" of General Markos Vitiades. Already, of course, the Markos drive on Greece is based squarely on support from the Soviet satellites. The main military base for the Communist generals is unsuccessful drive on Koniska, across the Albanian border five miles away. His propaganda broadcasts, it has been learned, emanate from a mobile railway car across the Yugoslav frontier. But this sort of thing is still unofficial, unadmitted.

The Soviet bloc is thus as yet not finally committed. But the expected official recognition of the Markos regime will commit the Soviets to open aggression against the Greek Government. The nature of the decision of which such a Soviet challenge will confront the United States can be understood from the fact that one response now being seriously considered is the establishment of a great Anglo-American base in the southern Mediterranean.

THREE COURSES

Three main alternative courses of action will in fact be open to the United States if the Soviet bloc recognizes and gives armed support to the Markos Government. These three alternatives are now being anxiously debated by the American policy makers.

The first is simply more of the same—more aid to the Greek Government, with added emphasis on building up the Greek armed forces. It is argued that if the Greek Army were enlarged from its present strength of 150,000 to its wartime strength of 400,000 men, and if it were completely equipped with American arms, the Greeks would then be able to withstand on their own anything short of an open, all-out Soviet-sponsored assault. On the other hand, such an army would constitute an intolerable drain on Greek manpower, and on the inflation-riddled Greek economy. Greek economic stability, without which Greek political stability is impossible, would be indefinitely delayed.

The second alternative is to send American troops to Greece. Both Greek Foreign Minister Constantin Tsaldaris, on his visit to Washington, and Greek Ambassador Vassili Dendramis, are reported unofficially to have requested American troops. There is some support for this proposal both in the State Department and in the Pentagon Building. It is argued that to send even a regimental combat team of 3,000 men would serve to stiffen the backs of the Greeks and would be a token of American determination to fight for the Greek part of the Balkan peninsula south.

MUCH OPPOSITION

Yet there appears to be a growing body of opinion against such a move. There are cogent arguments that to commit American troops to Greece would be merely to fall into a trap designed by the Politburo. A small force would be useless, except for morale purposes. A few thousand Americans could not crush the guerrillas. Within 150 000 Greeks have failed, and as soon as this became clear any morale value from the presence of American troops in Greece would disappear. The only really effective American military action in Greece would be the sealing off of the Greek borders. If this could be done at all, it would require several divisions.

Thus an important segment of American military force would be concentrated on one small point on the Soviet perimeter, leaving the Soviets free to shift their main expansionist drive elsewhere: to Italy, or to Persia, or to Australia, or to Turkey.

That is why an entirely new approach to the problem of containing the Soviet push south is being seriously considered, both in Washington and in London. This approach would call for an all-out effort, both in the United Nations and through normal diplomatic channels, to persuade the Kremlin that its Greek game is not worth the candle. It would be made clear to the Kremlin that the end result of an all-out Soviet drive on Greece would be the establishment of a great Anglo-American military base within striking distance of the whole Soviet zone. Such a base might be in the Bengasi region in Africa, now held by the British by right of conquest.