

Viewpoint: American Isolationists

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American boys are not going to be sent overseas to fight and die in wars that have proven to be pointless and futile, a waste of human life. The last war made a lot of Wall Street bankers and investors very rich, and the businessmen and industrialists, the DuPont's and Morgan's, made bundles of money while American boys died in the trenches. British and Allied propaganda was a huge success in convincing Americans to go "over there," but what has been the result? American boys were told they were fighting to make the world safe for democracy, but nothing has changed.

Trouble is brewing in Europe, and once again the British and the French are hoping to pull America into their conflicts. Americans have enough problems. For the last ten years we've been in the grip of a devastating economic depression. While some folks may be living well, there are still ten million Americans unemployed. Most people agree with Roosevelt's New Deal. They like the idea that there's "Big Government" to take care of the little people. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) put a lot of young people back to work. The Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) and other laws helped the farmer because he was the hardest hit. Roosevelt's National Recovery Act (NRA) got the businessmen and the factories and industries moving again. No one will deny that FDR moved the country in the right direction and has the economy working the way it should. Even though the Supreme Court declared many of the New Deal laws unconstitutional, FDR will get his own Court appointments in soon, and that judgment will change.

What we worry about is FDR's attention shifting from domestic problems to what is happening in Europe and Asia. Charles Lindbergh, the famous aviator, believes the United States is protected by the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and there is no need for Americans to get involved in Europe's problems. Lindbergh says the Germans are a tremendous power and their Luftwaffe is unbeatable, and he warns FDR that Hitler will humble and defeat England. FDR hears the same message from Joseph Kennedy, our ambassador in London. The American-First Committee is determined to keep FDR in line, arguing that the 50-destroyer deal and the Lend-Lease Bill make the U.S.A. a co-belligerent. There are many like-minded men in Congress who will see that Roosevelt doesn't slip us into war, like George Norris of Nebraska, Gerald Nye and Lynn Frazier of North Dakota, Robert La Follette, Jr. of Wisconsin, William Borah of Idaho, and Hiram Johnson of California. They are the "progressive" Republicans, who supported FDR's legislation, but they are also implacable isolationists and they'll fight any move Roosevelt makes to get our boys into a European conflict.

Father Charles Coughlin, the radio priest, angers FDR the most, not so much because he's an isolationist but because he's an anti-Semite, a vicious Jew-baiter who uses the airwaves to rile up the people. Even a political ally like John L. Lewis, the head of the CIO and Mineworkers Union, opposes FDR because of his support for England during these dark days when the British face Hitler alone. Our fight to keep America safe and away from European conflicts has the support of Robert McCormick's *Chicago Tribune*, Joseph Patterson's *New York Daily News*, and Cissy Patterson's *Washington Times Herald*, which have vehemently opposed Lend-Lease and other administration efforts to supply England. Important industrialists like Henry Ford do not object to the prosperity or the profits they're enjoying from providing England and France with weapons and munitions, but they do object to the government's regulations and interference that come with the government contracts. Henry Ford would rather sell a million automobiles very year than build tanks and armored vehicles, and that explains his isolationist attitude. But the bottom line remains the same: "Stay out of Europe's war and keep American boys safe."