



WIDE WORLD

Citizens of Decatur, Ill., vote on primary day. Decatur is in the heart of the Midwestern area where reporter Lubell made his survey.

A lot of people are ready to punch Stalin in the nose if he gets tough, but see no sense in what they consider an uncalled-for, halfhearted war away off in Korea. Here is what ordinary citizens told the reporter with a big question on his mind:

Is America Going Isolationist Again?

By SAMUEL LUBELL

ON that Saturday, Earl Larson was working the late shift in the composing room of the Telegraph-Herald in Dubuque, Iowa. He had just finished making up the front page of the last edition and was ready to lock the form when the night editor burst in, shouting, "Bust open Page One! War's broken out in Korea!"

Annoyed, Larson protested, "Why go to all that trouble? Let's slap in a short story and let it go. Where is Korea anyway?"

A year later Larson's knowledge of the location of Korea had improved dramatically—if ironically. Larson, in fact, found himself with the 1st Cavalry Division around Chorwon. In one engagement a shell fragment tore through his leg. Five days later

he was hit twice, in the arm and in the hip. Nursing these wounds in Walter Reed Hospital in Washington recently, Larson laughingly conceded, "I sure learned where Korea was the hard way."

The Korean war, of course, has been a painful lesson in geography for the whole country. When Stalin's North Korean satellites blitzed across the thirty-eighth parallel, it seemed at first a simple test of whether the United States and other members of the United Nations would stand by and allow aggression to go unchecked. But the bloody, wearisome stalemate which followed the intervention of the Chinese communists has brought another kind of test—of the willingness and capacity of the American people to see through our role of world leader-

ship and the seemingly endless attrition which it apparently entails. It is a test, moreover, which will continue, regardless of the outcome of the Korean truce negotiations and may even grow more acute in the face of the newest Soviet peace offensive.

Already the unpopularity and costs of what President Harry Truman described as "a police action," not a war, have slowed the tempo of our whole peacemaking program. With taxes taking nearly a third of the national income, we are pressed hard against the political—if not economic—limits of taxation. Largely to keep down the budget deficit, the timetable of United States aircraft production has been throttled down. The same lag has been noted in the defensive efforts of our overseas allies—and this at

a time of rising dissatisfaction with the slowness of Western Europe's rearmament. In Congress the program for foreign economic aid has been undergoing hazardous passage; pressures for lifting price, wage and other mobilization controls have been swelling, along with demands for a re-examination of our foreign policy. Universal military training, which seemed assured only a year ago, now has been shelved.

What is stirring behind these agitations? Is it evidence of a resurgence of our old isolationism? This would be a world-shaking development indeed, considering that we are the only power capable of blocking Soviet aggression. And if not, how are we to explain the abrupt revival in the last two years of so many of the old doubts and dissensions over America's role in world affairs?

In the hope of answering that question, which could prove the decisive issue in the presidential campaign, I spent several weeks recently traveling around the country. I talked to people at every level—workers, farmers and editors, housewives, businessmen and returned veterans from Korea. Any such survey necessarily has to be rough-edged and impressionistic. Still the prevailing mood of the American public comes through clearly—and ominously—enough.

"Frustration" is the word which best describes the current American temper. It is a restless, seething frustration, which is seeking release upon something or someone. The gathering storm of disillusionment and popular anger may be blown safely out to sea by a happy shift of events. But it could also break with unpredictable consequences for our foreign policy.

This prevailing cold front of frustration is the product of varied emotional crosscurrents. A majority of the people I interviewed were inclined to agree with Sen. Robert A. Taft's description of the Korean war as "an utterly useless" struggle. The March winds of stinging taxes have also blown alive the uneasy feelings that we have undertaken too much, with our allies doing too little in proportion.

Aggravating these specific resistances to our foreign policy are the economic disappointments of those who have failed to share in the Korean war boom, the widespread suspicions that communist treachery still has a haven inside the Government, and anger



"We should end the war in Korea and come back home," insists Fayne Fuhrman, who operates a farm in Buchanan County, Iowa. "China has never been conquered over the centuries. We shouldn't try."

over governmental scandals in Washington. In one Iowa county, a lawyer who fills out income-tax returns as a side specialty, told me, "I never had so many people want to cheat on their returns as this year. After their tax was figured, many persons told me flatly to cut it down and let the Government try to find out."

Significantly, the complaint, "I don't know why we are in Korea" was voiced most often by persons who had sons, husbands or brothers in the Far East or in the draft. At first it appeared strange that those most intimately concerned should seem most poorly informed on our Korean objectives. But after talking to a number of heartsick parents and wives, I realized the problem was not a lack of information at all. Those with loved ones in the service were so involved emotionally that it was difficult for them even to listen to the coldly abstract explanations of why Soviet-inspired aggression had to be halted. Worry, grief and anger, in effect, had stopped up their ears. By the same tokens, I found it was relatively easy for persons with no one close to them in the armed forces to speak calmly and objectively about Korea and the draft.

In Detroit, for example, I spent one morning in an unemployment-compensation office, talking to jobless workers. Two young men came in together. While the older one went to collect his check, the younger youth sat down to wait. Twenty years old, he expected to be drafted soon. "I don't see any point to the fighting in Korea," he grumbled. "We've got enough land. What do we need Korea for?"

His friend came up. Twenty-six, he had fought in Europe during the last war, was married and had a child. Asked how he felt about our going into Korea, he replied, "It was absolutely essential. If we hadn't stopped the Russians there, they would have moved in somewhere else. We had to show them they couldn't get away with it."

Was this older man so much better informed, I wondered, or was it because he was calmly beyond reach of the draft, whereas his younger friend was not?

Again, in an Illinois farm county the local Grange put itself on record against universal military training. Soon after, the leading women's club in the county met and voted to endorse UMT.

"It seemed funny having the women for military training and the men against it," recalled the county agent. "I asked my wife about it. Her explanation was simple. She was at the meeting at which the resolution approving UMT was adopted. Most of the women present were older women—they had no children who would be affected."

How uneven and unjust has been the impact of the cold war was one of the more striking—and dismaying—impressions left on me as I traveled about. During World War II a "we're all in this together" spirit prevailed in the whole nation. Today the solace of common sacrifice is sorely lacking. If to some persons the "police action" in Korea has been every bit as much of a war as was the struggle against Germany and Japan, a far larger proportion of the public has been acting as if it hardly knew a war was going on.

On one St. Louis street I stopped two women, a few minutes apart. The first one almost burst into tears as she told me that her only son had left for the Army that very morning. The second woman was casual and undisturbed. Before the Korean outbreak her husband had been employed in a brewery, but, unable to get into the union, had worked only irregularly. Now he was employed in an aircraft plant, full time, which improved his earnings. Significantly, this woman intended to vote Democratic in November, while the mother whose son had been drafted was determined to vote for any Republican for President.



Rep. Graham Barden, of North Carolina: "We should declare war . . . or bring our troops home."



Mrs. George Favre, whose husband is in the Army, lives in Mt. Olive, a tiny Illinois town where 40 vets were recalled to duty after the Korean war began.



An insurance man, a railroad man, a school principal, a manufacturer and an editor of Mt. Olive. The townspeople are bitter about the Korean war.

Or take two downstate Illinois communities, Breese and Mt. Olive, each with roughly 2200 population and hardly an hour's driving apart. The farmers around Breese have had good crops. Then, Breese is not far from Scott Air Force Base, which has been booming with construction activity. Everyone in Breese, of course, wanted the war ended. But of more than a score of persons I talked with, only one seemed really bitter, and he had three sons in the service.

Going to Mt. Olive the next day was like passing from spring to winter. A few weeks after the Korean outbreak, the local National Guard unit was called up. Its activation left an ugly wound, still unhealed. As one of the town's barbers related the story, "Almost all the men were veterans of the last war. They joined the National Guard thinking it was an easy way to get spending money. They didn't think they would be called to duty unless there was an all-out war, in which case they would have had to go anyway."

"The men were sent to Germany, which isn't so bad," the barber went on. "But most of them were married and had kids. The wives bring the kids in here for haircuts, and I know how hard it has been on them. Then, when you take forty young men out of a town this size, the whole community slows up."

The bitterness among Mt. Olive's townspeople might not be so deep if economic conditions were not so bad. About an hour south of Springfield, Mt. Olive is located in one of our oldest coalfields. During the last war the demand for coal boomed Mt. Olive to unprecedented prosperity. Over the last two years, first one and then another of Mt. Olive's mines has shut down, apparently for good. I found the community sunk in despairing contemplation of the prospect of becoming a ghost town.

"They closed our last mine only a few days ago," lamented the barber mournfully. "Our movie house

has shut down. We'll never get a new gym now for our basketball team. Stores are closing and merchants are moving out. Guess I'm going to pull out myself."

Later I talked with several of the wives whose husbands were in the activated National Guard unit. "My husband fought four years in Europe," one complained. "I don't see why they didn't call on younger men for this war. Besides, I don't see any point in it. What are we getting out of it? Korea is only a few rice fields."

Another woman was not quite so bitter. She and her husband had been living in a newly built home for two weeks when the Guard call came. "I've kept up with the payments by going to work," said the wife. "The men couldn't really complain, since they went into the Guard willingly. What I'm angry about is that a couple of them were deferred. There shouldn't have been any exceptions. If the unit had to go, everyone in it should have gone together." Some of the wives felt so strongly on this score that they were boycotting socially the deferred men.

War's Impacts on the Home Front

THERE never can be complete equality of sacrifice, of course, in any war. Still, the fact that we have been fighting only a limited war has aggravated its injustices. During the last war, more than 16,000,000 men and women passed through the armed services, half of the nation's productive capacity went into turning out food and munitions for the fighting fronts, while the rest of the economy was fully utilized to support the home front. The very scale of this effort imposed its own unifying disciplines.

Currently, in contrast, only about 3,500,000 men and women have been drawn into the armed services. Military needs are taking only about a fifth of the national production, with many factories and

workers idle. While some parts of the economy flourish in a cost-plus atmosphere, others are sunk in recession or virtual depression. The plight of the workers, farmers and businessmen suffering economic doldrums is aggravated, of course, by the inflationary increases in living costs, taxes and business expenses since the summer of 1950.

Opposition to the Administration's foreign policy runs noticeably stronger in economically unfortunate communities than in prospering ones. The long-run implications of that fact are worth pondering. As part of their current peace offensive, the Soviets are trying to picture Russia as an attractive market for Western manufactured goods. The Soviet "trade offers" are 99 per cent propaganda, of course, since Russia can export so little in payment and could absorb large quantities of goods only if they were given to her for nothing. The list of items which the Soviets have "offered" to buy shows clearly that the Kremlin is striving to exploit whatever economic discontents may exist among the Western nations—a strategy which would be stepped up if unemployment deepened.

Moreover, the wider the disparity between various segments of the economy the more difficult it is to operate any system of mobilization controls. Tax rates high enough to reduce profits in defense industries can be prohibitive for civilian businesses, which are barely scraping along. It becomes more difficult to balance the interests of business, farmers and workers with one another and with those of the unorganized public. The resulting antagonisms and disunity are bound to weaken the public determination behind whatever foreign policy is adopted.

In Buchanan County, Iowa, for example, the corn crop was bad. The price of hogs—\$16.80 a hundredweight the day I was there—has been too low, the farmers contend, to cover rising operating costs. The bitterness over (Continued on Page 48)

Says Leo Durocher:

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IS AMERICA GOING ISOLATIONIST AGAIN?

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Korea was particularly explosive in this county. Of ten farmers who voted for Truman in 1948, only two said they would still vote Democratic in November. The others were prepared to back any Republican for President.

"I tell you we farmers can't stand these taxes!" was the shrill plaint of Fayne Fuhrman, who operates a farm outside of Independence. "We should end the war in Korea and come back home. China has never been conquered over the centuries. We shouldn't try."

Some of his neighbors, on the other hand, were ready to declare war on Russia. "You know what irritates me most about Korea?" asked Lloyd Dage. "It's why they don't call it a war. Who are we fooling with this double-talk? If it's a war, let's fight it and get it over with. If it's not a war, why draft all these soldiers and pay these taxes?"

This last year, Dage said, was the first since 1938 in which he had made no money. "The way I figure it, the depression has already begun for the farmer," he explained. "We had our big jump in farm prices during the last war. Now other groups are getting their inflation and the farmer is being squeezed. We're all living too high. We've forgotten what the word 'economy' means. I want a change in Wash-

ington," he concluded. "Labor is too strong in this Administration."

In Western European countries, observers agree, economic inequalities stir strong resistances to rearming. The United States, perhaps, is not too different. Certainly, one of the major forces contributing to the resurgence of so-called isolationism in the last two years has been the failure to distribute the costs of the cold war equitably among the American people.

This failure also helps explain something that has puzzled Washington. Before I started on my cross-country tour, one high Government official suggested, "See if you can learn why so many families with sons in Korea favor General Douglas MacArthur's proposals to bomb the Manchurian air bases and blockade the China coast. I would have expected these families to be against these measures, since they would enlarge the war. But the mail we have been getting doesn't show that."

One main reason is a widespread feeling that the men in Korea have been let down on the home front. "As long as people don't have anyone in the service, war is just a time to make money," was the harsh observation of an Iowa woman whose husband is overseas. A veteran, recently back from Korea, bridled with anger when I referred to Korea as "a little war."

"We used to get the newspapers from home," he recalled. "How it burned us up to see the Korean news buried inside.

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"Now, that's what I call a sensible dress!"

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When I got back home, my sister invited me to dinner. My brother-in-law made some remark about the whole Korean business being phony. I sure blew my top and let him have it. I told him how tough it was fighting those Chinese, and that it was time the people back home knew what we were up against."

Paradoxically, perhaps, one gets the impression that the public would be readier to support an all-out defense effort than the current, partial mobilization. The inconsistencies and contradictions of fighting a foreign enemy with, figuratively, one hand tied behind one's back exasperate many persons. Some will jerk out newspaper clippings telling of trade still going on with Red China, and exclaim, "Read that! How can we continue trading with people who are killing our boys?" Others want to "round up all the communists in the country, like we did the Japs in the last war."

This mounting indignation over American communists is being fanned by the abuse and vilification of the United States unloosed periodically by Soviet representatives before the United Nations. "We ought to show those Russians where they get off when they say those things about us," is a frequently expressed desire. No one appears to know how to go about "showing the Russians." Still one senses that many Americans are searching for some way of giving dramatic and forceful expression to their own love of America. That is another of the more important subsurface factors in the prevailing mood of frustration. The cold war has stirred deep feelings of patriotism which have found no satisfactory emotional outlet.

How long can this mounting tension continue without exploding? No one can say, but it does seem questionable whether the American people would put up with this "war of nerves" for a whole generation—a prospect envisioned by some of our foreign-policy makers. In the fall of 1950 I traveled through the country interviewing people. I was struck by how much more angry and tense people have become in less than two years.

Several months ago Rep. Graham Barden, of North Carolina, announced, "We should declare war on somebody or bring our troops back home!" Many newspapers criticized Barden for an "irrational, emotional outburst." Yet it accurately reflects how a rather large number of Americans feel. Again and again, I was told, "If we must fight a war, let us fight it 100 per cent; if not, send our boys back home," or "Let's clean it up or clear out."

This impatience, of course, largely reflected disillusionment over the Korean truce negotiations. By early spring most persons felt that the Chinese communists did not really want a settlement. Many even suspected the sincerity of our own Government. "Maybe we're keeping the war going to avoid a depression," was a commonly voiced view.

A successful truce could be expected to reduce this tension, while prolongation of the Korean stalemate would swell the public clamor for more strenuous military action. Still, the "let's-fight-it-all-out-or-get-out" attitude goes deeper than merely Korea. It really cuts to the heart of our whole foreign policy and raises a problem which, if long ignored, could produce disastrous consequences.

Throughout the country one senses a growing alarm over "Where will it all

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Ben Martin

The Perfect Squelch

IT was almost closing time when Mrs. Rooters came into the store to look for a child's rocking chair, but she wasn't at all hurried. She took time to criticize everything about the chair she was shown, its color, its construction, even the length of the rockers.

She wondered if the finish would stand up, and how soon a four-year-old would grow out of

it. Finally she poked critically at the woven material of the seat and shook her head. "It seems to me this seat might be inflammable," she said. "Suppose a spark falls on it?"

The clerk thought a moment, then answered, "Well, madam, all I can say is, a child that young has no business smoking."

—NATHAN DYSKEN.

The Post will pay \$100 for authentic, unpublished squelch anecdotes. Manuscripts must be typewritten. Those not acknowledged in about a month should be regarded as declined. The Post cannot undertake to return unaccepted ones.



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end?" No one believes that Korea will be the last act of Soviet aggression. Other fronts are expected to explode, perhaps in Asia, in Europe or in the Middle East. Are we to undertake "police actions" similar to that in Korea whenever and wherever the Soviets or their satellites rear the ugly head of aggression?

If that is what our foreign-policy makers mean by "containment" of Soviet Russia, they would be well-advised to re-examine their policy. My talks with people around the country raise serious doubts whether public opinion would support a policy which commits us to policing the world indefinitely—particularly if American troops bear the brunt of the policing. Faced with such a prospect, some people would prefer to pull back to our own homeland and nearby areas readily defended by sea and air power. Others would prefer to make the fateful plunge into a war they feel is bound to come.

This emotional cross-tugging between pulling back or plunging on to the limit is neatly illustrated by two letters written not long ago to Warren Austin, the United States representative to the United Nations. On returning from my survey, I arranged to examine the mail which Austin has been getting, feeling that it would provide a valuable cross-check for the reactions I had gathered. In one folder I found these two eloquent pleas, reflecting a growing anxiety over what our foreign policy is committing us to.

Wrote one mother: "I first thought it wise when our boys were sent into Korea to show Russia we meant to stop aggression. . . . But I have a son twelve years old. . . . Is this product of my every heartbeats to find his future only in the unspeakable filth of war? . . . We at home do not think we are able to police the world. We want our boys back home, Mr. Austin. . . . We will support any measures to protect our homeland, but we do not have the moral right to force our protection on every land in the world. . . . Let us put our own house in order and other nations will have a true guide to emulate."

Wrote the second mother: "No longer can our youth look forward to the future with any certainty or hope. Let's arrive at some positive solution to our present confusion and uncer-

tainty. . . . Nothing but all-out war or all-out peace will solve the question."

If there is a new spirit of "isolationism" in the country today, I believe it centers around this mounting impatience with a state of neither war nor peace—a condition which many feel is producing only trifling results for such heavy costs. Unlike the isolationism of the late 1930's, this impatience is not turning to any concept of "neutrality." Most of the criticism of European nations that one hears centers on the reluctance with which they have taken their places by our side. Far from feeling that we can remain aloof from the rest of the world, the new "isolationists," if they can be given that label, seem to dread that we already are so hopelessly entangled that only the most drastic action can cut the Gordian knot.

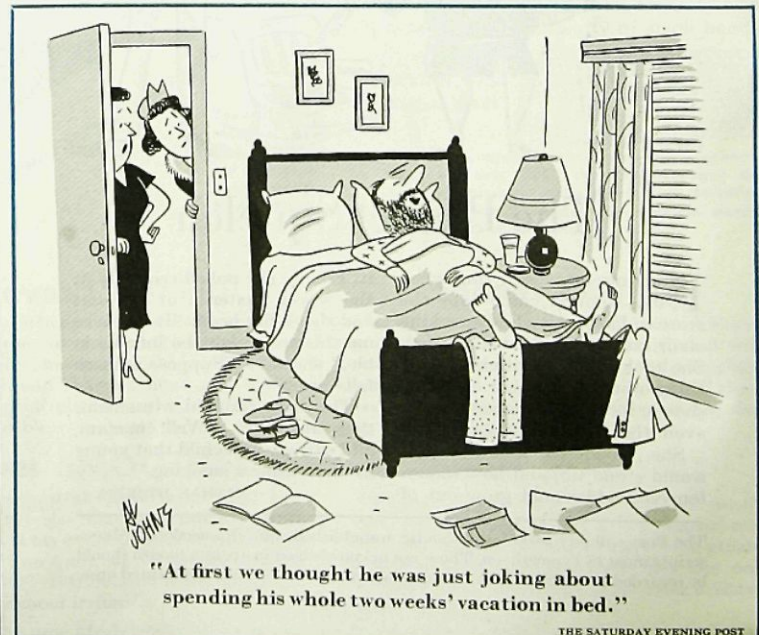
Repeatedly, I heard people denounce giving aid to Europe and, in the next breath, say, "We should arm and get ready to fight Russia alone." Clearly, this opposition to helping Europe does not mirror the old-fashioned concept of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans as unbridgeable moats. Almost it seems to reflect a belief, not that America should stand alone, but that our allies may prove unreliable and we may have to stand alone.

Perhaps the difference between the old and new isolationism can be captured in this way: The old feeling was largely one of insulated detachment. The new feeling is one of being trapped.

That this new "isolationism" is no mere repetition of the past is confirmed if one visits some of the main centers of former isolationist agitation. To find these places I took the counties and wards where President Roosevelt's vote dropped most heavily in 1940, which was after war had broken out in Europe, but before the Japs kicked us in. Of course, many people who voted Republican that year were outraged by the third term and the New Deal. However, in fifty-five counties the Democratic vote dropped 25 to 48 percentage points—three to seven times the national average—while in another 101 counties it fell 20 to 24 per cent.

Searching for what these areas had in common, I found that all but a few were strongly German-American in background. About a fifth of these

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"At first we thought he was just joking about spending his whole two weeks' vacation in bed."

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IN THE WORLD

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counties were predominantly Catholic and showed a high vote for William Lemke, who was Father Charles E. Coughlin's candidate for President in 1936. It was in these same counties, where the Democrats lost most heavily in 1940, that President Truman scored his greatest gains in 1948. With the war's end and Roosevelt's passing, many isolationists returned to the Democratic fold.

Much of our past isolationism, in short, was rooted in pro-German and, among persons of Irish-American extraction, anti-British feeling. During the war these groups were as patriotic as any other Americans, but prior to Pearl Harbor they were ranged emotionally against aiding Britain in a war with Germany.

Visiting these onetime isolationist areas today, one finds the same dramatic emotional struggle going on among so many people. On one hand, many former isolationists feel more strongly than ever that they were right in opposing our intervention in the last war, and yet, because of their ethnic and religious background, they are also apt to be more strongly opposed to Russia and "atheistic communism" than the country as a whole. They are squeezed by two conflicting emotions—the feeling that their old isolationism has been vindicated, but that we can no longer cling to a policy of withdrawal from world affairs, in view of the need to "take a stand against communism."

"I'm not against the war in Korea, but I'm against all the mistakes that got us there" was a common reaction I got in these old centers of isolationism. The "mistakes" of Teheran and Yalta are often brought up by persons who will go on to complain, "We're being too soft with the Russians."

In many communities, anti-British feeling does not seem to have abated much since 1939. Today, however, it is likely to be directed against Britain's recognition of Red China or her proportionately small contribution to the fighting forces in Korea. Recently, for example, Monsignor Mathias Hoffman, of Dyersville, Iowa, a heavily German Catholic community near Dubuque, Iowa, publicly criticized the newspapers for devoting so much space to the death of King George, while ignoring the American soldiers who died in Korea on the same day.

What these onetime isolationists really yearn for, of course, is to roll back history for fifteen or even forty years. But rollbacks of history are even more difficult than price or wage rollbacks. And so, the onetime isolationists move into the future, but with a special grievance—that our troubles could have been avoided if their counsel had prevailed in the past. It is this grievance which makes them a political force still to be reckoned with—not that they agree on the kind of foreign policy we should pursue in the future, but that they share a somewhat vengeful memory of having opposed the last war.

This lack of agreement on any substitute for our present foreign policy holds, as well, for the whole of what might be called the "new American isolationism." Primarily, this "new isolationism" is an expression of disillusionment—really, as we have seen, of many different disillusionments.

Is this disillusionment strong enough to force a drastic change in our foreign policy? Angry persons talk more loudly than contented ones and opposition to our foreign policy probably registers

more strongly than does support for it. Criticism is also far hotter among Republican than Democratic voters, which indicates that much of it is politically inspired. Still, the disillusionment is sufficiently intense among former Roosevelt and Truman supporters so that it could mean the difference between victory and defeat in an otherwise close election.

Whatever the election outcome, though, it is my own judgment that there is slight chance of the United States reverting to the isolationism of the 1920's. The Korean war has strengthened the always-powerful American desire for a foreign policy which can be implemented without large numbers of soldiers. Proposals to rely on air and sea power may be particularly well received in farm areas, where resentment against the draft runs stronger than in the cities. In one Iowa county, about one third rural, I was told that eight times as many requests for draft deferments have come from farmers as from city dwellers. One reason is that the draft tends to disrupt the working routine on family-sized farms, which usually are operated by father and son.

Despite these and other yearnings for some change in the conduct of foreign affairs, the bulk of Americans still



CAUSE FOR ALARM

By *Georgie Starbuck Galbraith*

Committees for Improvement
Or Legions Pledged to Ban
Need only start a movement
And she is in the van.

Her passion for all Causes
Is such that one suspects
She never, never pauses
To ponder on Effects!



support the goal of building a common front against Soviet aggression among the free nations. Still, the barometers of patience in the country have been falling and neither we nor our allies should ignore the warnings that the frustrations of the cold war are becoming less tolerable to the American people. An increasing proportion of the public is coming to feel that we cannot continue indefinitely with the present stalemate, that we must either slash our commitments drastically or have a showdown with the Soviets, even at risk of war.

To judge how wise or unwise our foreign policy may be is not within the province of this article. But this conclusion seems warranted: If we are to carry through our present policy, two actions are imperative. Abroad, the alliance of free peoples must be brought to effective reality all the more quickly so the burdens of resisting aggression can be shared more equitably. At home, we must do a better job of sharing the burden this country is bearing, if we are to be united for the tasks ahead.

Both actions require a higher level of leadership and clearer goals than we have had up to now. They also require a greater measure of discipline and self-denial than we have yet demonstrated. The very scale of an all-out war decrees the battle stations each must man. In a state of undeclared, limited warfare, it is only too easy to slip into the attitude of every man for himself, with the nation taking the hindmost. THE END

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