

The

Price of Peace

by

Royal Lee

THE RUSSIAN VIEWPOINT OF OUR TARIFF

Now, after World War II, we are faced with war with Russia. This is exactly the same kind of a situation as the Civil War. Here is the comment of a traveler in Russia 20 years ago, showing how this barbaric principle works--for Russia may soon be in a position to out-do us at our own game of neighbor-robbing. This is a quotation by Maurice Hindus, from his book Red Bread (Devin-Adair Company, 1931, pages 83-85):

When one sees in Moscow's streets the multitudes waiting in queues for food, the spell cast by Revolutionary rhetoric fades, and one faces the sinister force behind it--the brutal intolerance of differing opinion that has banished hundreds of honest doubters and non-conformists to far-away parts of the land, or to fates even worse. Then the bright promise of tomorrow fails to lighten the gloom of today, and one asks himself again and again, Why this haste? Why the five-year plan in four? Why not in six, in seven, in ten? What nation ever had sought to achieve so ambitious a program under such crucial circumstances in so short a time? Why this relentless drive of a people who never had known speed, who are only now discovering the machine, and who need time to familiarize themselves with it and to attain mastery over its intricate workings? Why not a more leisurely pace, instead of this breath-taking forced march to the socialist land of promise?

I turned for enlightenment to persons of importance. I shall relate my conversation with one of them, who voiced the sentiments of the group that is at present in power.

"Every animal," he began, "has its sense of smell which warns it of dangers ahead. We have our sense of smell, our class-consciousness, which warns us of dangers ahead."

"Just what dangers?" I demanded.

"First, boycott. The attempt to stop our exports tells its own story. There can be no double meaning to this attempt. If we cannot sell, we cannot buy, can we? That is the simplest law of economics, and the time may come when we shall be barred not only from selling but from buying in the outside world. Yes, even America may not want to sell us anything--not an engine, not a

(Continued on inside of back cover)

THE PRICE OF PEACE



1944

TODAY we as a nation are meeting on far-flung battlefields—enemies who have sworn that this planet is too small for us both. We are confronted with the problem of how to deal with them after we have conquered them. To judge from past experience, we must exterminate them completely, to guarantee our future freedom from attack.

This is no new dilemma that we, as a nation, find ourselves confronted with. It is as old as the human race. It is the same problem that every nation small or large, has had to consider since the beginning of time. The reason it involves the entire globe is merely because man has so conquered space that the world has now become small. The solution to this age-old problem was offered us long ago by a man whom we remember as the Prince of Peace.

Most of us know too little of this man and His teachings. We think we do, individually and personally; but collectively and as a nation, we have assiduously ignored Him.

As a nation, we have developed a policy of selfishness, instead of a policy of goodwill.

We have said to ourselves—"We must limit our trade with our poor and less fortunate neighbors.

We might undermine our high standards of living if we allow them to buy our surplus food and raw materials. We have more in the goods of the world, and we intend to continue to maintain this economic superiority, regardless of what our neighbors do. To accomplish this, we must have a protective tariff, to stop those neighbors from dumping into our country goods made by coolie labor. We cannot permit our producers of goods to be harassed by such competition."

For the sake of argument, let us accept those premises that are born of selfishness.

First, do we WANT to enjoy a prosperity based upon a neighbor's hardships! If we do, we **deserve** defeat at the hands of our enemies.

Second, CAN we enjoy a prosperity based upon a neighbor's hardships? Yes—if we want to be a racketeer, a robber, a bully; and only while it lasts. No—if we desire to earn our way and impose on no man.

As individuals, we ask nothing better than an opportunity to earn our way. But our politicians have, by their smooth arguments, told us that we must be "protected." We have permitted them to so manage the affairs of the nation that no neighbor nation can do business with us without paying tribute to the tax collector. We have actually permitted pressure groups to put a bill through Congress to disown and cast off territories that depend upon us for protection, and set them up as a separate nation—(the Philippines) so that by "tariff protection" we can be rid of their "competition" in making a living.

It is nothing new for the issue of "tariff protection" to end in a terrible war. The Civil War was fought over this identical proposition. The South believed in its basic right to trade its surplus farm products for foreign goods. Our "Manufacturing North" be-

lieved in its "right" to monopolize that so-called Southern Market, regardless of its inability to take all the farm products available. It went to war to enforce "tariff protection" on an unwilling South. The prosperity of the pre-war South has never returned. The real issue of the Civil War was hidden by the concomitant argument over Slavery.

The trouble between England and Ireland has had the same basis of dispute over economic freedom. Benjamin Franklin in 1785 stated his opinion of this dispute as follows :

"We see much in parliamentary proceedings, and in papers and pamphlets, of the injury the concessions to Ireland will do to the **manufacturers** of England, while the **people** of England seem to be forgotten, as if quite out of the question. If the Irish can manufacture cottons, and stuffs, and silks, and linens, and cutlery, and toys, and books, etc., etc., so as to sell them cheaper in England than the **manufacturers** of England sell them, is not this good for the **people** of England, who are not manufacturers. And will not even the manufacturers themselves share the benefit. Since if cottons are cheaper, all the other manufacturers who wear cottons will save in that article; and so of the rest. If books can be had much cheaper from Ireland, (which I believe, for I bought Blackstone there for twenty-four shillings, when it was sold in England at four guineas), is not this an advantage, not to English booksellers, indeed, but to English readers, and to learning. . . ."

"It is wonderful how preposterously the affairs of this world are managed. Naturally one would imagine, that the interest of a few individuals should give way to general interest; but individuals manage their affairs with so much more application, industry, and address, than the public do theirs, that general interest most commonly gives way to particular. We assemble parliaments and councils, to have the benefit of their collected wisdom; but we necessarily have, at the same time, the inconvenience of their collected passions, prejudices, and private

interests. By the help of these, artful men overpower their wisdom, and dupe its possessors; and if we may judge by the acts, arrets, and edicts, all the world over, for regulating commerce, an assembly of great men is the greatest fool upon earth."

(From BIGELOW, John, The Life of Benjamin Franklin, VOL. III, J. B. Lippincott and Company, Philadelphia, 1875, pages 292, 274.)

Now, we face the end result of a continuation of that same policy of selfishness. The nations we are fighting started the war to GET FOODSTUFFS AND RAW MATERIALS; the VERY SAME things that we normally have such burdensome surpluses of. Now we are at WAR—TOTAL WAR—TO DEFEND OUR RIGHT TO KEEP AND DESTROY THOSE SURPLUSES. For we have actually had such surpluses of food materials that our political leaders told us we must destroy them to prevent our own people from starving,—(really not starving, but to prevent the owners of those surpluses from suffering from "too low a price"). What do **you** think the Prince of Peace thinks of this picture?

Has a protective tariff that stopped our owners of bloated stocks of foodstuffs from selling their property to foreigners really insured their prosperity? Is not that tariff the very thing that caused their distress! Certainly, it is the one thing that caused distress among those foreign countries that wanted those foodstuffs and had other goods to trade for it.

In this new World War the sides are lined up in terms of who have the facilities to produce foods and raw materials and those who have not. You and I have not had the opportunity to realize how the tariff-protected nations prevented the present enemy nations from getting the necessities of life. We have always enjoyed such a surplus that we never knew what it was to be so harassed. Only the resident of

the desert appreciates the luxury of a reliable water supply that the rest of us take for granted.

When the time comes to talk peace terms, what is to be our attitude? Shall we continue to insist on a tariff? If so, we might as well forget peace. We shall be continually at war until we exterminate our enemies, or they exterminate us. They have already concluded that that is to be the issue. We have never relented one iota on our tariff policy in connection with these enemy countries. Rather, we have constantly increased the height of the trade barrier.

Small wonder then that they have decided that they are cornered, and must fight to the death.

HOW CAN WE NOW, AT THIS LATE DATE, APPLY THE GOLDEN RULE?

First, we must adopt a national policy of FREE TRADE. That is a bitter pill, but only for those who have been enjoying a special privilege that has no place in a democracy. When we adopted a tariff, we destroyed the industries of our neighbors, and built our own, but at the expense of our own consumers. When we remove the tariff, we destroy those industries, our neighbors build up theirs, and our consumers get lower prices. We have to increase production on other lines of goods that are to be traded for the incoming goods, dollar for dollar. The end result is benefit for both our neighbor and us, for the basic principle of any commercial transaction is benefit for both parties. But we have dislocated business by putting on tariffs, and dislocations are inevitable in taking them off.

Such a measure will offer a square deal to our South American friends, who otherwise are perfectly justified in looking at us with suspicion, for our relations with them have been based upon our selfish policy of "one way commerce"—their gold

for our goods. Gold that we cannot use, that really means a refusal to sell at all, for we refuse to again part with the gold money we get. Such a miserly national policy is incredible; it is exactly what Shakespeare had in mind when he created the character of Shylock. It is the absolute antithesis of the principle Jesus Christ gave the world.

Our failure to do this means that we fail to have faith in the practicability of the Golden Rule. And when Christ said we must have faith to be saved, I think He meant that we must have faith in His principles—**faith enough to put them into practice.** And our failure to have that faith, and to actually put it into practice, is the reason we are faced with Hell today. For it is certainly Hell to have to concentrate our whole civilized power to the destruction of human beings who individually would far rather be friends than enemies.

It will not excuse us to say that those enemies are militaristic monsters that must be destroyed to save our "way of life." We **FIRST** set up a **MONSTROUS ECONOMIC POLICY** that caused the economic oppression of those people who are now indifferent to our problems, like the Irish, who refuse to join in the war, or which incited the enemy peoples to desperate measures that have resulted in their acceptance of that monstrous military program of destruction that we are now turning against them in self-defense.

When we make peace, it cannot possibly be permanent unless we are able to put into practice in that peace agreement the "Price of Peace"—terms that give us all the same opportunity to live and do business with each other. These principles of free trade have always been supported by such unselfish patriots as Benjamin Franklin and Cordell Hull.

But the indifference of the people—and that means you and I—permitted their influence to be lost among the clamors of the selfish to get their special privileges protected by the tariffs that WE ALL now must defend with blood, sweat and tears.

If you want to have faith in Christ and His principles of common justice, it is not enough to just think about it and accept their truth. No, not while the forces of evil—the forces of selfishness—are actively lobbying in the Nation's Capitol, even lobbying in each state to destroy the Constitutional prohibition of restraints against interstate trade. You can see that, once accepting the wisdom and fairness of free trade, it will be necessary to fight without compromise until we have regained our self respect. For we, by our indifference, are almost as guilty of the sins of economic oppression as the misguided planners and promoters of the tariff schemes to become prosperous at our neighbors' expense.

Cordell Hull, as I recall, said some years ago that the choice of the American voter between high tariff and free trade was an intelligence test that would determine his future welfare. He made the choice, and lost. Maybe it is unfair to say that he had a chance to make the choice, in view of the misrepresentations made by the smooth politicians, but he certainly lost, and is now scheduled to pay the price.

The voices of the gentlemen who profited were very strong then, in contrast to those who, like Hull, saw the danger and the injustice. Maybe, today, we can arouse enough of our citizens to action, for PEACE now seems worth something, worth some kind of a sacrifice. The tragedy is, we can have peace for less than nothing. High tariffs have not only cost our foreign friends their opportunity to live, but also raised our own **collective** cost of living, to benefit the few.

We have looked to our teachers of moral principles for guidance, to our churches, our ministers, priests and rabbis. They, too, are human. They have been in the main overcome by the specious arguments of the selfish. They have dodged controversial issues that they should have settled by the applications of principles available to them. But they preferred to discuss hair splitting matters of theological theory, and let the more "practical" politicians handle the practical applications of the teachings of Christ.

We need no organization of laymen to lead us back to political sanity, if the clergy will wake up. Will they? If not, it is time to start a new denomination for those who desire to actually apply and practice the teachings and principles of the "Prince of Peace." There are a remarkably few persons who are really hell bent on taking advantage of their fellow men. All the rest are potential prospects for such a movement.

*A contribution to the "Council for Permanent
Peace" Inc. by Royal Lee.*

1944

— 10 —

bolt, not a nail! That's why we must hurry, buy while the buying is good and build as fast as we can, no matter what the sacrifice! Do you suppose we are ascetics? Of course not. We believe in ample living. We'd like to keep for ourselves the caviar, the butter, the eggs, the cheese, the jams, the canned fish that we have been exporting. But we dare not. Everything that can fetch a price abroad must be sent out, if we can scrape along without it--everything. Every scrap of iron that we import from a foreign land is so much gain, so much triumph. Tomorrow the bars may be up and no more goods offered us on the international market; instead, the thunder of guns may be crashing down upon us."

Hearing words like these, one is at first amused, then dismayed and terror-struck as he realizes with an overwhelming shock how earnestly Moscow believes them. It is well enough to reason that, in view of the economic slump world over, the deliberate repudiation of Russian trade is unthinkable, and the possibility of an armed crusade against the Soviets even more remote. But Moscow, with its hypertrophied class-consciousness, cannot and will not read any other meaning into the efforts to stop imports of Russian coal and lumber to America, and into the world-wide cry of alarm over Russian dumping. Deep down in their hearts perhaps the Moscow Communists do not regret this outbreak of ill will against the Soviet Union, for it confirms them in their pet obsession that the capitalist world wants to draw Russia into combat--that it is only awaiting a favorable hour to strike the first blow.

Form RA 100

For additional copies of "The Price of Peace" write Dr. Royal Lee, Box 267, Elm Grove, Wis.