

LYRICISM GONE MAD

"Peace and War, United States Foreign Policy, 1931-1941." Publication 1853, by the Department of State. For sale by Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. 25c.

Not all of us have the patience to wait—as our elder statesmen advise us to do—for history to show the genesis of this war, and the wisdom of our leaders' acts. History moves slowly, waiting for death-bed confessions, so to speak, of some of our leaders. And too often, the matter is not even settled then. We still have questions about the last war.

We are the living; we are history. Moreover, we are free men, and have the right to know what our leaders' acts have been—and their motives. We have been shushed too long. Let us be a little less respectful, and speak plainly. We must lay our hands on all the facts we can, and reason from them. Did not Henry George say that any man of ordinary intelligence could grasp the essentials of economics because he is immersed in them? We are immersed in ideas, motives, and war, and since human beings are involved we should be able to understand some elementary things.

One of these elementary things is *words*—when words are valuable, when they are valueless. When they are plain and honest, like "danger," "act"; and when they are only beautiful, like "from the rock-bound coasts of Maine to the sun-kissed shores of California." Meaningless words have done much to lead us into this mess, and they are keeping us there.

I have come to the conclusion that the heads of our State Department are helpless before words. They are fooled by plain words which express plain motives, and they fool themselves with fancy words. The *White Paper* released by the State Department reveals informal talks between our diplomats and foreigners, describes formal meetings, and, of course, gives the previously published declarations and messages.

Our Ambassadors and Attachés had sent to Washington a steady stream of plain messages from the lands of our enemies. They said that the leaders of our enemies are fanatics and dangerous. These leaders extol war and deride democracy, privately as well as publicly. They have the power of the government

behind them; more, they have the people behind them. They will not be deterred by anything, they will use every means to gain their ends of brute domination over the world. It is of no use to do anything but prepare for war, enlighten our own people, resist every move. Nothing could be plainer, and it is all written down.

In the face of this, what were our leaders' actions? Ostentatious declarations of our nobility of purpose, continued entreaties for conferences, postponement of reprisals, wordy but unconvincing insistence on our rights and justice. Delays and beautiful words. As if we Americans have to prove that we are decent fundamentally. What shameful, abject crawling and entreating our leaders did!

And, worst of all, neither we nor Congress was adequately informed of our representatives' reports. We had plenty of time to get ready, to show our strength, to intimidate, for a change, the bullies. There is a clear mandate in the Constitution for the Chief Executive to inform Congress from time to time on the state of affairs. The executive branch of our government can exert tremendous powers by mere reiteration, if by no other way, to awaken Congress and the people to the dangers that surround us. No other part of the government has the facilities for accumulating impressions, opinions, and fact as the State Department.

We are the people! We do not want fancy words. Tell us what is being done and planned about freeing people everywhere, how are we determining their lives and livelihood, how are we seeing to it that justice will prevail on this earth?

A. B.

A DENUNCIATION OF DEMOCRACY

"The Menace of the Herd," by Francis Stuart Campbell. The Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee. 1943. 398 pp., including appendices and index. \$4.00.

Mr. Campbell reduces democracy to ochlocracy—mob rule—and doesn't like it. Neither would most people like mob

rule, perhaps not even members of the mob, if asked about it.

The author brings a scholarly analysis to bear on past history and governments. From Plato to contemporary philosophers he finds a universal horror of the rule by counting noses. The common people—the herd—he decries as being unfit to make decisions of state—invariably wrong, invariably cruel. The Founding Fathers were careful, Mr. Campbell points out, to omit the word "democracy" and to institute indirect elections, checks and balances, and life-long tenure of the high judicial offices.

It is not the intrinsic goodness of people that is questioned, but their capability of reasoning logically from principles of God and liberty. The trend to complete democracy leads to equality, not equity. This runs directly into a mere majority deciding everything; matters of state, of custom, of taste, of morals, of religion. Minorities lose all rights, all freedom, all hope, even life itself.

Mr. Campbell, as a Catholic, sees his church particularly as a defender of liberty. He pleads for a cohesion of liberty, conservatism, and religion, which he believes go together. Monarchies and oligarchies are acceptable to him. Even a republic is satisfactory, so long as the written constitution is firm enough. Only under such forms of government can the independence of man be secured. For an individual has no right in a democracy against the majority. Lynching is justifiable in a true democracy, because the majority will it. Campbell sees Nazism and Bolshevism as "totalitarian democracies." The evils of modern Europe can be traced to them, and America is treading the same path.

Needless to say, we cannot agree with this special view of democracy. It sounds clerical-fascist. Nearly all of us mean by democracy a republican form of government, with the rights of minorities, personal liberties, and religion secured.

Here is an encyclopedia of history (right or wrong), a compendium of classic and mediaeval quotations. It shows a truly astonishing breadth of reading and cultural background. The book is an expansion of the simple ideas set forth by the Italian historian Guglielmo Ferrero in his "Words to the Deaf." Provoking it will be to many people, but never dull.

A. B.