ment the disaster in the Java Sea has left the United Nations without even an adequate defense force in the South Pacific—although there are reports that this situation may soon be rectified. In Burma, Thailand, and China what is required for successful offensive action is land and air superiority. On land the Chinese alone have troops which, if properly equipped, could drive the Japanese into the sea; India could provide unlimited man-power. British and American pilots have so far maintained superiority in the air. Given supplies—and they appear to be arriving despite the loss of the Rangoon end of the Burma road—and cooperation from India, a real offensive can be launched in this area. Unfortunately, India’s vast resources are tied up pending political action by Britain. Fully effective offensive action may depend more on Cripps’s journey to India than on MacArthur’s spectacular flight to Australia.

**Curb the Fascist Press!**

**BY FRED A. KIRCHWEY**

The fascist press in the United States should be suppressed. It is a menace to freedom and an obstacle to winning the war. To protect it in the name of democracy is an evidence of timidity, not of self-confidence. A self-confident nation takes whatever steps are necessary to secure its existence; it does not allow its institutions to be used by its enemies as weapons for its own destruction.

Many good liberals who support the war believe that the fascist press in the United States is no menace. They think it can safely be ignored or its effect offset by pro-democratic counter-propaganda. They think suppression would be more dangerous than the thing suppressed. They say, The American people can be trusted to reject treasonable, anti-democratic arguments. They ask, How can you draw the line between treason and defeatism or ordinary isolationism? They argue that opinion as such should never be suppressed, that any limitation on the expression of opinion may lead to repression of all opposition to or criticism of the government.

This, roughly, is the position of our Attorney General. Mr. Biddle remembers the attacks on pacifists and “reds” and dissenters generally that disgraced the country during and after the First World War, and he is determined to prevent another epidemic of witch-hunting—legal and extra-legal. His attitude has undoubtedly spared us many nasty incidents, and we have good reason to be grateful for his democratic conscience; but I think his fears of indiscriminate repression have led him to underestimate both the dangers we face and the capacity of a liberal government—with a liberal Attorney General—to distinguish between enemies and traitors on the one hand and loyal critics on the other. Risks are inevitable in war time; a Biddle might be replaced by a Martin Dies. And even a Biddle can make mistakes. But in my opinion such risks are not so great or so immediate as the danger of an unchecked fascist press.

I use the word “fascist” deliberately. It is not a perfect word, and a semanticist would censor it immediately. But it covers better than any other the varieties of opinion I believe should be prohibited the use of the mails. The fascist press includes such out-and-out pro-Axis papers as still exist; it includes also the publications of native fascists like Pelley and Deatherage and of Jew-baiters, Britain-haters, and foes of democracy like Coughlin. There are a lot of these in the country, and their considerable circulation is increased by millions of pamphlets and throw-aways preaching the same gospel. All of them should be suppressed.

It is not enough to watch them and wait till they propose some overt act such as rebellion among the armed troops or the assassination of the President. It is not safe to discount them as the mouthpieces of individual cranks and crackpot minorities. It is necessary to consider them, and the democratic safeguards behind which they carry on their work, in the context of the movement of which they are a part.

Fascism invariably uses cranks and dissatisfied minorities as its fifth column in all the countries it attacks. The treason press in the United States, small or large, is an integral part of the fascist offensive. These miserable sheets are enemy paraphernalia whether they are edited by sixth-generation Americans or first-generation Germans. This war is only incidentally a national war. Primarily it is a war against the whole future society for which these papers clamor. Their attacks on democratic methods, their filthy slanders of the President, their lies about Jews, as well as the open aid and comfort they offer to theAxis, combine to make them fit subjects for suppression. They should be exterminated exactly as if they were enemy machine-gun nests in the Bataan jungle. And in wiping them out we shall be forced to admit that “opinion” can no longer be considered a sacred prerogative of our enemies just because they happen to be fighting within our borders. Opinion is one of their most effective weapons, and to allow them to use it against us is reckless to the point of insanity.

It has been argued that the worst dangers of antidemocratic propaganda can be averted by a policy of forcing full publicity about its source. Morris Ernst, for example, believes that disclosure rather than repression is the best method of control. He would not drive Father Coughlin off the air or suppress Social Justice but would force him to disclose publicly the sources of his funds and the individuals or organizations for whom he speaks. Such compulsory disclosure, like the registration of agents of alien firms or governments, might serve as a check, but it would be a minor one at best. The limits on
its usefulness are immediately apparent. Concealment of sources of funds is not difficult; it has been practiced consistently and successfully, and even the threat of federal action would not end it. Undoubtedly, if we had a law compelling exposure, some pro-fascist persons and groups, skulking behind false names, would be exposed and jailed; that would be useful, just as the imprisonment of Viereck is a good thing. But only the careless would be caught. And even when exposure is successfully enforced, the effect may be unimportant. Not every purveyor of fascist poison is paid by Hitler or the Mikado. Many are subsidized by the pennies of their own followers; Coughlin himself must get a large part of his support from sympathizers— isolationists, anti-British Irish, Christian Frontiers. Even some wealthy, "respectable" citizens have openly backed pro-fascist enterprises. Publicity would weaken the fascist press but it would not kill it.

Nor can we depend upon the health of the democratic community to throw off the infection. The people of the United States are certainly beyond the war and against fascism, foreign or domestic. But the ills of our social system offer the anti-democratic propagandist powerful ammunition to shove into his guns. Racial discrimination, poverty, insecurity are used by the enemy press to attack the morale of large numbers of people. The ills are real; their cure is not to be found in substituting tyranny for an imperfect democracy. But the alternatives are not set forth. Instead, the genuine grievances of the people are inflamed and their unity and fighting spirit undermined. It is foolish to pretend that Americans are immune to this sort of attack. We are neither wiser nor better fortified than were our brothers in countries that today are captive units in the fascist new order.

The best lesson we can take from their fate is the necessity of action while there still is time to act. Tolerance, democratic safeguards, trust in public enlightenment—these happy peace-time techniques have demonstrated their inadequacy. Two methods are open to us: suppression and a vigorous counter-attack. Both should be used. The organs of the party-line fascists are easy to identify and should be put out of business without delay. The fellow-travelers should be watched—and fought. McCormick and Hearst and Patterson are more dangerous than the out-and-out fascists both because they are not out-and-out fascists and because the circulation of their papers is enormous. Their defeatist arguments and misleading information must be met by an unceasing barrage of counter-propaganda; the recent speech by Archibald MacLeish was an excellent example of the way they should be handled. And the moment they skid across the thin line that divides their doctrine from open treason they should face the full blast of the law.

I don't deny that a policy of suppressing enemy propaganda involves difficult problems of differentiation and danger of such errors as the British government has stumbled into in its attack on the London Daily Mirror. But I believe those problems and dangers must be faced. The last ten years are strewed with the wreckage of democratic governments that refused to take strong measures until it was too late. The United States has a healthy instinct for self-preservation, and we have still a good chance to reject the technique of democratic suicide perfected in Europe.

All-Out Against Labor

BY I. F. STONE

WASHINGTON, March 22

ADMINISTRATION leaders have rarely been as worried as they are by the growing clamor against the forty-hour week. A batch of newspapers from the Southwest, where the campaign first appeared, makes it easier to understand the letters and telegrams flooding Congress with demands for anti-labor legislation. "The Little People," declares the Oklahoma City Times in a front-page editorial, "are tired of 40-hour-week war production and 168-hour-week fighting." The Memphis Commercial Appeal publishes a Letter from an Arkansas Father in which John C. Sheffield of Helena, Arkansas, asks, "Do our boys at the front get 'overtime' and 'double time' in the fox holes of the Philippines?"

But this is more than a campaign against the payment of overtime. In the appeals being made by the anti-labor press there is a flavor of civil war. "Customarily," the Tulsa World said editorially, "the wrath of the people in a war country is against the military enemy. Now the United States faces domestic foes, and wrath is being turned inwardly instead of outwardly." Where is the real enemy? Roger Babson's article of March 15 was given banner headlines: "End Forty-Hour Week or Be Hitler Slaves." Babson wrote, "Our most dangerous enemy for today is not Hitler. It is not Japan. It is our own refusal to give up selfish privileges for the duration of the war. From the evidence at hand I regret to say that labor seems to be one of the worst offenders." The Daily Oklahoman in the same issue with that article asked, "Are the people of this country fighting for the