

IOWA EDITORS AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Since the founding of the first Iowa newspaper at Dubuque on May 11, 1836,¹ the United States has been engaged in five wars — the Mexican War, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, the first World War, and World War II. During the Mexican War editorial opinion was expressed in a score of Iowa newspapers, which in 1848 were equally divided between the Whigs and the Democrats. On the eve of the Civil War, in 1860, 104 newspapers were being published in Iowa, 35 of which were Democratic, 59 Republican, and 10 Independent.² The overwhelming majority of these newspapers supported the Union throughout that desperate struggle although at least one Iowa editor languished in a Federal penitentiary on a charge of disloyalty.³ In 1898 and again in 1917 the Iowa press, without regard to creed, race, or party, vigorously supported the national government in its prosecution of the war. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, more than five hundred editorial pens bitterly lashed out at this treachery and pledged unswerving loyalty to the "all-out" effort to win the war.⁴

¹ Petersen's *Du Buque Visitor* in *The Palimpsest*, Vol. XVII, pp. 117-128.

² Mott's *A Partial Study of Early Iowa Newspapers* in the *Annals of Iowa* (Third Series), Vol. XVI, pp. 222-233. There were ten newspapers in Iowa in 1846 and twenty in 1848.

³ Gue's *History of Iowa*, Vol. IV, pp. 180, 181. Dennis A. Mahoney, editor of the *Dubuque Herald* and an able political writer, was arrested by a United States Marshal on the night of August 14, 1862, and incarcerated in a Federal prison in Washington, D. C.

⁴ Petersen's *Remember Pearl Harbor* in *The Palimpsest*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 33-46.

The whole-hearted support of the war effort in Iowa is a tribute to the broadminded character and patriotic outlook of the average Iowa editor. About one-half of these editors classify themselves as "Independent"; of the remainder the Republican newspapers outnumber those listed as Democratic by more than two to one.⁵ A large majority of the Republican and Independent editors did not favor President Roosevelt's domestic policy. Many did not see eye-to-eye with him in his handling of foreign affairs. Despite these differences of opinion Iowa editors have been united in demanding a vigorous prosecution of the war to a victorious conclusion. All are agreed that partisan politics must be adjourned, that the most able men in the nation must be called upon to serve, and that a square deal be given Mr. John Q. Public, whether cast in the rôle of capitalist or laborer, farmer or manufacturer, merchant or consumer, selectee or taxpayer, soldier or civilian.⁶

Of the 21,473 newspapers and periodicals published in the United States in 1941 a total of 659 were published in Iowa. Fully 559 of these were newspapers — 46 dailies, 14 semi-weeklies, 498 weeklies, and a paper published thrice monthly.⁷ A study of the editorial comment in the Iowa press during the first three months of World War II presents a fairly accurate cross-section of opinion throughout the Hawkeye State.

⁵ *Iowa Official Register*, 1941-1942, pp. 231-257. This volume contains a list of Iowa newspapers arranged by counties and another alphabetically arranged. The political character of the paper is indicated under each arrangement. The frequency of publication, day of publication, and the name of the editor or publisher are also given.

⁶ The writer consulted over four thousand editorials printed in fully half the newspapers of the State in the preparation of this article.

⁷ N. W. Ayer & Son's *Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals*, 1942, pp. 3, 298. This valuable compilation gives terse but valuable data on each Iowa town in which a newspaper is published. In addition it gives the year the paper was established, its subscription rate and circulation, the name of the editor and the publisher, and the width, depth, and number of columns.

These newspaper editorials do not represent merely an agricultural point of view; one sometimes forgets that the value of manufactured products in Iowa totaled \$718,418,350 in 1939 compared with a valuation of \$728,506,000 on farm income in 1940. Nor ought one to consider Iowa a purely isolationist area with editorial comment devoted largely to local affairs. The *Des Moines Register*, which finds its way into half the homes of Iowa, has exhibited a world outlook rivaling that of such newspapers as the *Baltimore Sun*. Four of Iowa's newspaper editors have been awarded a Pulitzer prize — Verne Marshall of the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, E. P. Chase of the *Atlantic News-Telegraph*, W. W. Waymack of the *Des Moines Register*, and Frank Luther Mott, a former editor of a weekly newspaper and now Director of the School of Journalism at the State University of Iowa. Numerous weekly newspapers have won national distinction — the *Traer Star-Clipper*, the *Storm Lake Pilot-Tribune*, the *Sheldon Sun*, and the *Hamburg Reporter* being prominent among those winning recognition by the National Editorial Association.⁸

As individuals the editors of these Iowa newspapers, be they great or small, invariably attain a position of leadership in most of the cities and towns of Iowa. They represent various phases of religious, political, and intellectual life in their communities. The dailies gather news from the four corners of the globe as well as from the forty-eight States of the Union. Both dailies and weeklies record births, marriages, and deaths in the old home town, the advent of visitors and the departure of fellow townsmen, the humdrum as well as the social activity of the community. To the small town editor comes the preacher with his week-

⁸ The factual data concerning newspapers hereinafter cited is based on information taken from the *Iowa Official Register*, 1941-1942, and Ayer's *Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals*, 1942.

ly church notice, the doctor or dentist with his professional card, the merchant or businessman with his advertisement, the agriculturalist with the farm sale problems, the county treasurer with his delinquent tax list, the publicity chairman of a women's club with her notice of some noted speaker, and Mrs. Grundy with her spicy gossip. Rich man or poor man, preacher or pagan, teacher or tramp, socialite or socialist, all gain ready admission to the sanctum of the country editor. His office is indeed the meeting place of democracy in its purest form and the editor is the very symbol of democracy itself.⁹

FAREWELL TO ISOLATION

The outbreak of World War II sounded the death knell of "America First" sentiment in Iowa as well as in the nation. In a front page editorial entitled "United We Stand!", the *Cedar Rapids Tribune* excoriated the "deep ignorance" of the Japanese leaders and of Hitler for failing to take into account the "American spirit and American national philosophy" which had brought a "near-miracle to pass" in the form of "100 per cent unification of the American people over night."

"Taking as an indication of national weakness the fact that American public opinion is almost invariably divided on any and every question, and that the nation is a miscellaneous mixture of people, races and religions such as is

⁹ *The Iowa Publisher* for February, 1942, believed the weekly editor had a real job ahead in serving his country. "The job calls for assuming now, if never before, an active leadership in community affairs that is simply inherent in the very nature of successful newspaper publishing. It may mean more than an arm-chair philosophizing about what should be done. It may mean active participation in canvassing, public speaking and the like.

"As the war goes on there will be a need for community morale building in every town in America that the chain radio and the metropolitan newspaper will not be able to handle completely. . . . No one knows more about how that can be done than the editors and publishers in their respective communities."

found nowhere else on the globe, Hitler seems to have prodded Japan into picking a fight with us on the assurance that she could give us a knockout blow before a fighting spirit could be aroused here. . . .

“How amazed the fuehrer must have been when he was told that the Congress which had been half-and-half divided on the question of American foreign policy last Saturday, came out Monday with a unanimous decision (poor goofy Jeanette’s vote doesn’t count) for all-out war against Japan—and, by implication, all-out war against Nazi Germany too! With what astonishment must Hitler have learned that the ‘low morale’ of our young men resulted in their jamming every Army and Navy recruiting office on Monday morning. . . .

“And we Americans learned a good deal about Americans too. We learned that the good old American motto, ‘United we stand,’ is still in full force and effect whenever there arises a need that we should stand united.”¹⁰

A western correspondent of the *Baltimore Sun* was astonished at the transformation of sentiment in so-called isolationist Iowa, with special reference to the town of Hampton. “Most of these farmers have never seen any ocean,” he wrote, “and more often than not they have drifted into the isolationist camp. But once aroused to a national emergency, the average dirt farmer out here will strain his guts to do his part of the required business—and more.”¹¹

The entire western hemisphere was welded together after Pearl Harbor. “Totalitarians”, the *Atlantic News-*

¹⁰ The Cedar Rapids *Tribune* (Established 1904, Independent Republican and Labor, Circulation not given), December 11, 1941.

¹¹ *The Evening Sun* (Baltimore, Established 1837, Independent Democrat, Circulation 152,401, morning; 163,083, evening; 221,491 Sunday), March 3, 1942. The item is in the form of a despatch from Hampton by “Our Great Plains Correspondent”.

Telegraph declared, "who expected to see the United States, or even all the Americas, divided on the issue of war, must have received a shock at the reaction of the western world to the unprovoked attacks on the Hawaiian Islands. There can be no misunderstanding of such facts as the declaration of war by most of the countries in the western hemisphere, and the closing of some recruiting offices early on Monday, because of inability, at the moment, to handle any more applicants for admission into the armed services of the country. If the Japanese, and behind them the Nazis, had depended upon disunity as an ally, they must be badly disappointed at the result of their attack, upon the morale of the western people. The defeat at Pearl Harbor did more to cement the western world together than all the good neighbor policies and all the preaching that had been done in the months before the attack."¹²

The isolationists were pummelled from pillar to post by many editorial blasts. "It is not necessary, nor even expedient", the *Des Moines Register* declared on February 12th, "to give any great attention at this stage to the occasional efforts which will be made, by those who were farthest 'out on the isolationist limb' Dec. 7, to save their faces. We are much too busy now with the war itself. With respect to the important things, they were clearly mistaken. With respect to some minor things, naturally, their views happened to coincide with the views of those who did see the war coming."

This same editor believed we would have been in an "unthinkable predicament" if we had followed the isolationist "line" from the beginning. "We should probably have by now no useful allies anywhere in the world. We should be hemmed in not merely by Japanese control of the western

¹² *Atlantic News-Telegraph* (Established 1871, Independent Republican, Circulation 4649), December 11, 1941.

Pacific, therefore, but also by Nazi control of everything eastward. We should not have outposts in the North and Middle Atlantic. We should not have been able to keep South America with us. Our conversion and expansion of industry for war purposes doubtless would have lagged very considerably behind the present rate, because of the illusion of security in isolation. And so on and so on.

"In short, we should be sitting on a mighty hot 'island' between two unfriendly oceans, with even our Panama and Caribbean back doors under the muzzles of aggressive, power-mad conquerors—Or else we should already be at war with the rest of the world—and alone! . . . Because we did get into motion, even if cumbrously and reluctantly, before the sleeping potion of isolationism had really paralyzed and trapped us—because of that, we have today a *fighting chance*." ¹³

Less charitable and far more pointed was the *Independence Conservative*. "In the senate, the other day," the editor remarked, "we were edified by a statement by the arch isolationist Senator Wheeler that military reverses in the far east bear out former statements of his that our country is not prepared for war. What he did not go on to say was that had it not been for him and his kind who carried their pre-war obstruction to the verge of treason we would be far better prepared than we are." ¹⁴

¹³ *The Des Moines Register* (Established 1849, Independent, Circulation 177,464), February 12, 1942. On April 2, 1942, *The Des Moines Register* quoted its circulation at 183,573, that of the *Des Moines Tribune* at 136,146, and the *Sunday Register* at 379,026.

¹⁴ *Independence Conservative* (Established 1855, Democratic, Circulation 1650), February 11, 1942. A Jackson County editor was inclined to agree that Burton K. Wheeler and his "henchmen"—Nye, Lindbergh, Clark, and Hamilton Fish—had done everything humanly possible to lead the country to the brink of destruction. "Mistakes no doubt have been made but it makes one shudder to contemplate the position this nation would be in today had the advice of Burt Wheeler and his colleagues been carried out."—*Bellevue Herald* (Established 1887, Democratic, Circulation 1120), February 17, 1942.

No Iowa Senator or Representative can fail to recognize the personal significance of the scoreboard of the votes on measures affecting the preparedness program and United States foreign policy as compiled in the *Des Moines Sunday Register*.¹⁵ This chart clearly revealed that the majority of Iowa's Congressmen were isolationists, a fact further emphasized by Harlan Miller's comment in *Over the Coffee*.¹⁶

Many Iowa editors apparently intended to carry the war record of political candidates to the polls. "We plan to support candidates for office", a Decorah editor declared, "who are whole-heartedly for the defense program and whose past records indicate they have been for defense consistently and sincerely. . . . As we view the situation, the entire Iowa congressional delegation with the exceptions of Senator Herring, Democrat, and Karl M. LeCompte and Paul Cunningham, both Republicans, did not support national defense until the war declaration."¹⁷

The Davenport *Daily Times*, agreeing that the "America First" kind of politics was "automatically adjourned for the duration", attributed our involvement in war to the fact that "our military and naval program had been so sabotaged by congress over the years that the Japanese were encouraged to fight us, believing they could destroy our Pacific fleet and defenses before the nation could mobilize itself for the hard pull of producing the weapons necessary to the final defeat of the axis. . . .

"Memory of the support which the America First has already given to isolationists in the house and senate will

¹⁵ The *Des Moines Sunday Register* is sold in all ninety-nine counties in Iowa and unquestionably represents the most influential newspaper in the Hawkeye State.

¹⁶ *Des Moines Sunday Register*, March 22, 1942.

¹⁷ *Decorah Journal* (Established 1864, Independent, Circulation 2949), January 29, 1942, quoted in the *Des Moines Register*, February 11, 1942.

linger long after the organization is dissolved. Nothing that these politicians can now do will overcome the liability under which they must labor, for their political opponents in next year's elections will cite their record."¹⁸

IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE

In addition to the isolationists Iowa editors singled out those blasé, complacent individuals of the "It Can't Happen Here" persuasion, who suddenly found their Shangri-La topple down upon them. "Do you remember", queried the *New Hampton Tribune*, "some who said it could not happen here, when Hitler's forces overran small nations of Europe, did so much damage in England, made a heavy conquest in Africa? Do you think the friends of the Axis would not like to bomb the iron ore docks at Duluth and other docks on the Great Lakes? Do you think our great cities of this central west and even our smaller towns are not to be concerned? It can happen here unless we destroy the power of the enemy."¹⁹

As each reverse was reported in the press the gloom of the nation deepened. And with each report Iowa editors were inclined to bristle at those armchair strategists who had claimed to know all the answers.

"The German sub invasion of American waters", one editor declared, "is sufficient answer to the wise boys who insisted that Hitler couldn't invade the United States, that we were perfectly safe so long as we minded our own business and built up our defenses. Remember that old query, 'If Hitler can't get across the English channel, how can he cross the Atlantic?' The authors of that bit of wisdom are

¹⁸ *Daily Times* (Davenport, Established 1886, Independent Republican, Circulation 25,357), December 9, 1941.

¹⁹ Quoted in the *Eldora Herald-Ledger*, January 15, 1942. The *New Hampton Tribune* was established in 1876, is "Independent" in politics, and has a circulation of 2936.

now asking why we aren't prepared. They insisted that the only wise policy of the government was to sit back and let the war take its course. Now that we are definitely in it through no act on our part, they criticize lack of preparation.

"The isolationists who referred to 'Mr. Roosevelt's war' are now super-patriots, but they are in no position to criticize the government for lack of adequate preparation."²⁰

An Algona newspaper, incensed at the efforts of former complacent editors to attribute the woes of the nation to their political opponents, was inclined to indict "all" for this country's unpreparedness. "If we remember rightly most people, republicans and democrats alike, were against the suggestion of a two-ocean navy a few years ago and when attempt was made to fortify Guam in the Pacific it was not the administration who stood against it. . . . We all know that even three years ago if any attempt to arm such as is now going on, had been advocated by President Roosevelt, he would have been marked by all of us as a real 'war monger' and deposed from office. It is true we were not prepared, but let's let the blame rest on all of us, for there is where it rightfully belongs. As a matter of fact we all thought we were living in a civilized world and not on the outskirts of hell."²¹

A northwestern Iowa editor felt it was time that Americans realized they were sitting on the brink of an inferno. Overconfidence of United Nations lost Singapore, allowed German battleships to escape from Brest, and led to the disastrous surprise on Pearl Harbor. "This lesson has been repeated so many times in recent months that it ought to begin to seep in on those high in control of allied planning.

²⁰ *The Rolfe Arrow* (Established 1914, Independent, Circulation 986), February 5, 1942.

²¹ *Algona Upper Des Moines* (Established 1865, Independent, Circulation 2950), February 17, 1942.

It ought also to begin to seep in on the people that this war is no tea party affair but a real battle to the finish with no quarters either asked or given. It will determine the destinies of nations for generations to come, and these destinies cannot be trusted to listlessness or hopeful wishing. Action, offensive and aggressive, is the only thing that can win.''²²

APPEASEMENT

The inevitability of World War II was recognized by most editors after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Although he could not help reminding his readers of President Roosevelt's "positive assurance" during the campaign of 1940 that American troops would not fight on foreign soil, an independent editor admitted that we would have been drawn into the struggle no matter who had been elected President.²³ The inevitability of the struggle with all its gruesome implications came like a cold shock. The *Des Moines Tribune* recalled President Roosevelt's speech at Chicago in 1937 when he warned that if the "present reign of terror and international lawlessness" could come to pass in other parts of the world, America itself would not escape. "We didn't want to take the trouble or the risk of 'quarantining the aggressors' then, and now our odds in manpower have declined from 9 to 1 to about 2 to 1 — and on all the present fighting fronts our side is actually outnumbered in fighting men and outclassed in volume of equipment."²⁴

²² *Cherokee Daily Times* (Established 1870, Independent, Circulation 3392), February 14, 1942.

²³ *Afton Star-Enterprise* (Established 1879, Independent, Circulation 1200), February 5, 1942. This conclusion had been voiced in 1919 by a *Des Moines Register* editorial which prophesied "There will be no neutrals in the next world war."—See Aman's *Views of Three Iowa Newspapers on the League of Nations* in *THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, Vol. XXXIX, p. 248.

²⁴ *Des Moines Tribune* (Established 1881, Independent, Circulation 135,639), February 5, 1942.

Instead of attempting to "quarantine the aggressors", the *Osceola Sentinel* declared, the State Department had carried on a "silk glove" diplomacy which failed in its purpose. "For a number of years we sold to Japan steel, scrap iron and gasoline in an effort to keep peace in the far east. Newspapers throughout the land pointed to the inconsistency of such a program and the danger involved. We sympathized with China and at the same time supplied her enemy with the implements of war. While doing so, the wily Japs, getting ready for an assault on the United States, a conflict that for years appeared inevitable, built up a reserve of gasoline, airplanes manufactured out of material we sold them; ships and ammunition with which to make the dastardly attack on Pearl Harbor.

"We furnished the material with which Japan for the time being created superiority in air, on water and land in the far east. There's nothing to be gained by mourning over events that have happened as result of our appeasing foreign policy with Japan. We must make up in intensity of effort that which we lost through misguided international diplomacy."²⁵

Another editor viewed this appeasement policy in much the same light. "Much of the material being used to further this conquest was furnished by the peoples they are attacking who for years have sought to appease them by acceding to all of their demands. We will now have to pay for that pacific policy with thousands of lives and billions of money. It will take the Allies a year or more to prepare to meet them on even terms and meantime we must expect unfavorable news from the fighting fronts in the Far East."²⁶

²⁵ *Osceola Sentinel* (Established 1859, Republican, Circulation 2875), February 12, 1942.

²⁶ *LeMars Sentinel* (Established 1870, Republican, Circulation 2677), February 13, 1942.

After tasting the bitter dregs of defeat for more than two months most Iowa editors could express themselves forcefully on the relative merits of isolation versus international coöperation. "The series of disasters which have taken place in the Pacific", the *Adair News* observed, "are a grim testimonial to more than 20 years of blindness, inefficiency and wishful thinking on the part of this country, England and other democracies. So far as the fighting quality of the United Nations troops are concerned, we need have no qualms. It is a fact that in every instance where those troops have met Axis troops on anything resembling even terms, they have emerged victorious. A relative handful of American and Filipino soldiers under the great General MacArthur have held off a Japanese army estimated at more than 200,000 men — and they have done that with almost no hope of relief or aid. The tragedy is that MacArthur and other leaders were given so little to work with. We delayed, we refused to read the writing on the wall, we practiced business as usual and politics as usual and strikes as usual, and so the defeats we have suffered became inevitable."²⁷

ENEMY NATIONS

Once embroiled in the world conflagration Iowa editors commenced taking stock of our adversaries and allies. Since Hitler and his Nazi hordes were generally looked upon as Public Enemies No. 1 much editorial comment was directed toward Germany as the leader of the "gangster" nations. For years Iowans had been reading that this was an economic war in which the "have-not" nations were simply trying to gain a place in the sun. But the *Tama News-Herald* had little patience with those who pointed to

²⁷ *The Adair News* (Established 1882, Independent, Circulation 1200), February 13, 1942. The *Iowa Official Register* lists this paper as Republican.

the economic bankruptcy of the Fascist nations. "A lot is being said about the so called 'Have-not' nations. Yet, these 'Have-nots' have been able to build up such tremendous armaments that now they have the world in a frightful war. These nations could have had a-plenty if their energies had been devoted to peaceful pursuits of business. These nations have had the wrong leadership. Leaders who wanted to work for the benefit of the common man couldn't hold their jobs and were replaced by criminally minded men. These false leaders have one way and one only. It is not the way of peaceful business. Their method is to go out and steal all that can be stolen. But, even when they go out and steal, they do not divide the loot with the people. The loot is simply used to build up more armaments for more stealing. This banditry, of course, can be carried on only when the people are subjected to the most brutal despotism under which there is not a hint of liberty for the common man. The frightful cost of the war could have made all nations of the world prosperous for many years to come."²⁸

Some editors thought that Iowans must look deeper than Hitler if they wished to discover the underlying cause of the war. "Kaiser Wilhelm", the *Knoxville Express* pointed out, "was the scapegoat of the German militarists just as Hitler will be made the scapegoat when the crash eventually comes in this war. This force behind Hitler is made up of generals and other high officials who will desert him when the proper time comes and try to make a peace that leaves Germany intact as it was before the war started. They will blame the poor Austrian rabble-rouser for starting the war and he will be destroyed. Hitler is but a pimple on the face of an ulcered Germany with the deep infection

²⁸ *Tama News-Herald* (Established 1866, Non-partisan, Circulation 2321), February 5, 1942. The *Iowa Official Register* classifies this paper as Independent Democrat.

far rooted in the government. As in the last war peace will be attempted with little or no loss to Germany proper. A few years will pass and again the Prussian thought will rise against a world stupified by the vision of peace and the promise of disarmament. . . . Peace will come and there will be cries from Germany that the threat of Hitler has been removed for all time, but until the decent nations of the world remove the rotten core of German militarism and conquest deep-seated in the nation, there can be no peace. Like an iceberg, Hitler is only the part that shows above the water—the dangerous seven-eighths lies out of sight.”²⁹

The matter of war guilt was recognized by virtually all. It was the “long lasting stigma” which had been placed upon the leaders and the people that appalled the *Sioux City Journal*. “It is perfectly true”, the editor pointed out, “that the nazi obscenities under the Hitler regime will put a stigma on the German people that will be there for a long time after this conflict is ended. Likewise will the Italians suffer because of what Benito Mussolini has done in his role as a jackal premier. And as for the Japanese, it seriously is doubted that as a people and a government they ever shall be able to put themselves in a favorable light in the eyes of western civilization, especially that part of it represented by the United States of America.”³⁰

To those Iowans who were disposed to hold the German people guiltless or who looked for a speedy collapse within the Reich the *Marion Sentinel* raised a restraining finger. “Americans are being warned by people who have had a

²⁹ *The Knoxville Express* (Established 1865, Democratic, Circulation 2340), February 26, 1942. This Iowa editor agrees with the English Lord Robert Vansittart who has recently asserted that some re-education of German leaders would be necessary before militarism could be eradicated from German life. — See *News Week*, March 30, 1942.

³⁰ *Sioux City Journal* (Established 1870, Independent, Circulation 53,003), February 8, 1942.

chance to form authoritative opinions, not to expect any collapse in Germany back of Hitler. The people of Germany may not all want this war, but they are in it, and have nothing else to do but carry on. Any other course would be suicide for the individuals and groups starting trouble. And the Germans personally are not suffering. It is the people in the countries over-run by the Germans who are feeling hardship and death from lack of food and shelter. Americans may as well prepare for a long, hard war. Germany will not be whipped until over-run by armies from outside. This war will have to be taken to the German people themselves and it begins to look like we are the folk who will draw the assignment of taking it there."³¹

Although bitterly condemning Hitlerism, many editors asserted that it would not be necessary to "hate" before America could win. "Hate never got any nation very far, nor any individual either", the *Keota Eagle* observed. "Hate is what a criminal feels when the forces of law close around him. Hate is what Hitler feels toward England and America and Russia. But that isn't what we feel toward the misguided peoples who wage war on us. Despicable as they seem to be, treacherous as they undoubtedly are, they are but tools in the hands of higher-ups."³²

A veteran of World War I, Earl E. Houdek of the *Rockford Register* gave a definite "No!" to this matter of hate. "This writer", Houdek writes, "was in World War No. 1 and he never hated anyone, and to the best of our knowledge neither did any of the other 221 men in our battery of heavy artillery. We didn't hate the Germans any more than an officer of the law has a personal hatred for the criminal he is tracking down. . . ."

³¹ *The Marion Sentinel* (Established 1880, Independent, Circulation 1975), February 5, 1942.

³² *The Keota Eagle* (Established 1875, Independent, Circulation 1173), February 12, 1942.

"We accepted the responsibilities of the army not because we hated anyone, but because we loved our country and because we wanted to protect that country from those who sought its destruction. We hated the ideologies of those who fought on the other side, but we had no individual and personal hatred for our enemies."³³

Hate might be decried by the editorial pen but the *Sioux City Journal* of February 28, 1942, doubted whether the "millions" of enslaved Europeans facing "famine and starvation" would ever know any other feeling. Basing his information on the report of the Interallied Committee which was too well "documented" to be considered "propaganda" the editor wrote: "The Germans have carried out a systematic program of pillage in every country conquered. Streams of food have flowed into Germany from Denmark, Norway, the low countries, France, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Greece." After pointing out that Greeks were dropping dead in the streets from starvation, that the French race was in danger because of starvation, that conditions were "simply terrifying" in Belgium, that Poles were "boiling down the bark of trees and the skins of dead animals", that virtually all countries were eating dogs and cats, the editor concluded: "No wonder we receive reports in this country that 'a tidal wave of hate' against the Germans is sweeping over Europe. Robbed of their heritage of freedom when the nazis marched in and conquered them, these suffering peoples now starve that their conquerors may be fed. It is a perfect setup for hate, which in the circumstances is a perfectly natural and justified emotion."

The pictures of starvation victims in Poland depicting "bloated, emaciated bodies of children" and showing "piles

³³ *Rockford Register* (Established 1887, Independent, Circulation 825), January 29, 1942.

of human carcasses awaiting burial" was revolting to the editor of the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*. Although they reminded the editor of the "atrocities reports" of World War I, he felt they were "easier to accept as factual because of the known record of the Nazis."³⁴

The *Charles City Press* was amazed that Americans still remained "who sympathize with the career of Hitler" after being confronted with such tales of abject suffering and death.³⁵ "Hunger is the order of the day, death the only punishment for infraction of the rules laid down by the German masters", the *Des Moines Tribune* declared on February 13th. "All opposition to the 'New Order' has been pitilessly crushed and the closed frontier keeps the world from looking in. What a prospect for the world, if Hitler should win the war!"

Despite these gloomy pictures the La Porte City *Progress Review* praised its readers for maintaining a good sense of balance. "A pleasant difference between this war and the last one is the almost complete absence in this community at least of any animosity toward our citizens of German descent. We haven't started calling hamburger 'liberty sausage', we still ask for sauerkraut when we want it, and there has been no move to force abolition of German services in churches attended by the older people who still feel more at home at services conducted in that language. One reason, perhaps, is that our German population is now on the average at least a generation farther away from the old country, with the result that there is less of a natural lingering affection for the old homeland than at the time of the first world war. More important, though, is the fact that most of us have approached this war with much less

³⁴ *Cedar Rapids Gazette* (Established 1883, Independent, Circulation 44,344), March 1, 1942.

³⁵ *Charles City Press* (Established 1896, Republican, Circulation 3728), February 24, 1942.

emotionalism than we did the last time, and common sense leads us to realize that the vast majority of our German people are among the sturdiest, most loyal Americans in the country."³⁶

Although a vengeful mood marked most editorials concerning Hitler and his jackal-like accomplice, Iowa editors did not lose their sense of humor. Thus, when the *Northwood Anchor and Index*³⁷ objected to the "too generous" use of the adjective "lousy" and the verb "stink" the *Winterset Madisonian* felt constrained to query, "But what descriptive adjectives are strong enough to express meaning when we wish to speak of the Fuehrer, who started the world wide war of brutal aggression, and then invoked the blessing of Deity? Or how shall we express our opinion of the slant-eyed villains who pretended a peace parley at Washington in order that their Sunday morning attack in the Pacific might be more effective?"³⁸

The bitter attitude toward the perfidious Japanese did not diminish in the three months following Pearl Harbor. Indeed, most editors were quick to lash out at anyone who advised the use of silk gloves or urged discretion. When the Reverend James P. Gable of the First Methodist Church at West Branch protested against the use of a sign in the Des Moines navy recruiting office that read, "Jap Hunting Licenses Issued Here", and a Des Moines minister advised the American people not to become incensed at the

³⁶ *La Porte City Progress Review* (Established 1870, Independent Republican, Circulation 1325), January 29, 1942. The *Sumner Gazette* of February 19, 1942, welcomed the greater tolerance exhibited by Americans compared with the "intense hate" built up during the first World War against the German people, their language and culture. The *Sumner Gazette* was established in 1880, is Independent Republican, and has a circulation of 1175.

³⁷ *Northwood Anchor and Index* (Established 1885, Independent Republican, Circulation 2070).

³⁸ *Winterset Madisonian* (Established 1856, Republican, Circulation 2319), December 31, 1941.

“aggressor dictators” but rather to exercise a “forgiving spirit” so that a “righteous peace” might be negotiated when the war is over, there were emphatic protests.³⁹ “We’re for a righteous peace, all right”, asserted one Buena Vista County editor, but he added: “If we have any red corpuscles in our veins, and the writer thinks we have, we’ll not quit this frightful war until we’ve blasted Tokyo and Berlin as the nazis and Japs have blasted Warsaw, Rotterdam, London, Manila, Chingsha—yes, and let’s not forget the infamous attack at Pearl Harbor!

“After that’s done and we’ve compelled the aggressors to sue for peace, we must make such a world-wide arrangement that civilization will not have to go to war every 25 years to preserve itself from destruction.

“If this be treason, make the most of it.”⁴⁰

Since Iowans had been hearing about the so-called “Yellow Peril” for forty years, the editor of the *Mitchell County* (Osage) *Press* was not surprised at the “deceitful treachery” of the Japs.⁴¹ Many editors were inclined to think that this was but a temporary advantage which the United States would speedily overcome as it rallied its forces for offensive warfare. As the weeks passed and the Japs infested the Philippines and pursued their relentless course down the Malayan Peninsula, it gradually dawned on Iowans that the so-called “experts” had greatly under-

³⁹ *The Des Moines Register*, January 10, 15, 1942.

⁴⁰ *Storm Lake Pilot-Tribune* (Established 1870, Independent Republican, Circulation 2975), February 5, 1942. A Humboldt County editor was inclined to agree with this “at least in spirit” but at the same time felt it was more important to make the world “safe” than to make the dictators suffer. Nevertheless, the editor concluded, a man who couldn’t “feel righteous wrath is of little value.”—*Humboldt Republican Independent* (Established 1889, Republican & Independent, Circulation 4550), February 13, 1942.

⁴¹ *Mitchell County Press and Osage News* (Established 1865, Republican, Circulation 2560). The term “Yellow Peril”, like many other catch phrases, is of course an unfortunate generality. The Chinese, who make up more than three-fourths of the “yellow race”, are not aggressors.

estimated the perfidious Orientals. "Somewhere along the line", the *Allison Tribune* records, "we got the idea he was only a toothy, smiling, obsequious little guy whom we could brush off anytime we felt like it — just as we'd get rid of a pestiferous mosquito — but it isn't so. Instead of letting our cartoonists depict him as an Axis understudy we might have been wiser had we drawn him as the wily, vicious and efficient menace that he is."⁴²

The *Emmetsburg Democrat* was inclined to agree with this view. "For too long a time", the editor declared, "our white folks have underestimated the fighting ability of the yellow man. We are today learning a good lesson for having too much pride in ourselves. The Jap, while he is fighting in his own back yard and has every present advantage in numbers and equipment, is still proving that he is a foe worthy of being considered seriously. There is no doubt that both the Japs and the Chinese have courage that compares well with any other nationality or race."⁴³

As the days passed and Japanese successes continued, many editors demanded to know why we were so grossly misinformed by our military and naval experts. "Just why we did not know more about what they were doing is not known", declared the *Afton Star-Enterprise* on January 29, 1942. "Surely our intelligence department could have found out. We let many Japs into this country, allowed them to roam about at will. They attended our institutions of learning. You hardly ever saw a Jap in the city of Washington, D. C. who did not carry a camera. It was common knowledge that they took many pictures and sent them to officials in Japan. Any person who could add two and two together knew they were planning an attack against

⁴² *Allison Tribune* (Established 1880, Republican, Circulation 1174), February 18, 1942.

⁴³ *Emmetsburg Democrat* (Established 1884, Democratic, Circulation 2721), January 29, 1942.

this country. But we were not ready when the attack was made. If we had been ready the attack would not have been made. That is all water over the dam, though. We have been functioning just like a big, fat, lazy, rich democracy and now we are going to have to pay for our indolence. We are gradually waking up and as soon as we get going the war news will be better. It will sound better just as soon as we start winning, but we are going to have to get ready first. The men may have been asleep at Pearl Harbor but they were snoring no louder than we were right here in the U. S. A.”

There were other papers, like the *Jewell Record*, that felt Iowa editors were too critical of American military leaders. “The military leaders of this country were doing a good job, with what tools they had. Everything America had in the way of fighting tools, on land, in the air and on the sea is better than anything any other nation has; only we don’t have as much of it. The American people wanted it that way, properly, and we would not have had it different. The only place for being critical, and that of ourselves, is that we did not demand that our government stop pretending neutrality about two years sooner than it did, and start arming.”⁴⁴

Iowa editors were not inclined to underestimate the wily Jap. Many of them disagreed with Churchill and Roosevelt that the Japanese were secondary and that Hitler was Enemy No. 1. “Highest ranking enemy of the United States in this World war is Japan”, the *Logan Observer* declared. “There are many who, accepting this as a fact, believe this country’s first all-out job is to put all of everything we have into wiping the Japanese off the face of the world.” After pointing out that Japan had clearly demon-

⁴⁴ *Jewell Record* (Established 1882, Republican, Circulation 650), February 5, 1942.

strated that the United States was her primary foe the editor urged that we aim our men and war machines at our chief target.

“This country need not worry about others of the Axis. Germany is in no position to do us any great injury and Italy, of course, is out of it. Japan is far superior to them on the oceans, and directly and indirectly that is where the war must be fought and won. The Japanese navy is a threat that we shall do well to recognize.

“Our first big task is to give Japan the drubbing it deserves. With that out of the way we can help take over the job our Allies have. Unless we do concentrate on that one big essential we shall continue to suffer as we have been since Japanese aggression started on December 7. Japan plainly has shown what it is about. We should be smart enough to read the map it has made for us and to act accordingly.”⁴⁵

The *Woodward Enterprise* also expressed itself in “disagreement” with the plan of turning most of our energies against Hitler. “We consider the Japanese every bit as an important a foe—perhaps a little more so at the present time for this country.

“It is our opinion that the Japanese action was taken, not at the command of Hitler, but as a step to get all she can get while the war in the west was being fought. The imperialistic yearnings and action by Japan over the last score of years is quite evident. They were in formulation and were being enacted before Hitler gained control of the German Reichstag. . . .

“In our opinion, both fronts are equally important. And it seems to us our major war at the present is in the South Pacific. Surely the combined forces of Russia and Britain

⁴⁵ *Logan Observer* (Established 1884, Republican, Circulation 800), January 29, 1942.

with auxiliary allies should be able to keep the Nazis pretty well occupied."⁴⁶

Although the *Red Oak Express* felt that the defeat of Hitler would determine the outcome of the war, it could not dismiss the gravity of the Japanese threat. "Since the fall of Singapore and the gradual but inevitable fall of the Indies", the editor declared, "the Jap warlords are now promising to DESTROY UNITED STATES AND ENGLAND. That is no idle threat. The Japs have long despised the United States. They have outwardly professed friendship but inwardly awaited the day they could destroy us. . . ."

"Japan, fired by early victories is confident of her ability to smack us down. That our government underestimated her strength is certainly true. Japan is a formidable foe with great striking force and one that will require all of our strength and ingenuity to hold off until we are prepared to take the offensive."⁴⁷

⁴⁶ *Woodward Enterprise* (Established 1885, Independent Republican, Circulation 854), January 29, 1942.

The possibility that Japan may have spoiled Hitler's game was advanced by a Jackson County editor. "Hints from Europe have it that the Japs annoyed Herr Hitler no end when they took the bull by the horns and made the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor Dec. 7th. By their sneaking action, people of the United States were united in a common cause, the very thing that the ex-patriot hanger wished to avoid. . . . Had the Japs delayed their attack, in all probability this country would not be at war today and congress would still be at its dilly-dallying that made it famous throughout the world last summer and fall."—*Bellevue Herald*, February 3, 1942.

⁴⁷ *Red Oak Express* (Established 1868, Republican, Circulation 3475), February 16, 1942. Three days later the same editor declared: "Tiny Japan is making a monkey out of the giants. She has moved troops, warships, supplies three thousand miles from her home base almost at will. No wonder her premier shakes a defiant fist and warns the smug Englishmen and Americans that his yellow people are going to knock us out. The Japs have cause to boast." After pointing out the disparity in population and resources of Japan when compared with the United States and Great Britain, the editor concluded: "WE, with all our vastness and self sufficiency are being taunted and shoved around by this arrogant brat. . . . Once we were going to blow him out of the sea in three months. Since Pearl Harbor we have run for cover."

THE ALLIES

The attitude of Iowa editors to the allied nations — Britain, Russia, Holland, China, and South America — was almost uniformly favorable. Russia, of course, prior to Pearl Harbor, had run the gamut of editorial comment from bitter hatred to sheer admiration for her heroic stand against Hitler. After December 7th, even the most hostile editors began to realize that the fate of this nation might well be decided by Russia's success or failure against Germany. On the very day Pearl Harbor was bombed the Most Reverend Archbishop Francis J. L. Beckman of the Dubuque Diocese released for publication a letter he had sent to Archbishop Curley of Baltimore commending that prelate for his attack on President Roosevelt's "abominable aid-to-Russia" policy. "The statement", Archbishop Beckman declared, "is most timely; for we have had a good deal of muddled thinking and muddled leadership in this desperate business of courting Communism, of whitewashing and canonizing Soviet murderers."⁴⁸

Four days later, however, the "official organ of the Archdiocese of Dubuque" observed in a front page editorial that war had come despite the hopes of the people for peace. The editor concluded: "Coöperation among all groups must supplant differences that were legitimate before the declaration of war by Congress. All America is now called upon to stand as one man, united, strong, determined, behind our government."⁴⁹

Most editors took a realistic attitude on aid to Russia. "Debate over whether the Russians or the nazis are greater

⁴⁸ Printed in the *Dubuque Telegraph-Herald*, December 7, 1941.

⁴⁹ *The Witness* (Dubuque, Established 1921, Catholic, Circulation 18,411), December 11, 1941. "Now it is war that must be waged and won", the same editor declared on the editorial page. "Strikes and Communism and politics have hampered and even hamstrung defense. Strikes and Communism and politics are now out; patriotism and victory and Country are the paramount considerations now."

foes of the church", an Osage editor declared, "interests far fewer Americans just now than speculation as to how long the former can keep the latter occupied. Success or failure of Russia probably means whether or not an American army will have to fight abroad."⁵⁰ The *Mason City Globe-Gazette* reflected a thoroughly realistic opinion: "There are good reasons for helping Russia today, but they don't spring from any deep love for the communistic way of life."⁵¹

A rapidly accelerating bond of sympathy toward and concern for the Russians was noted after December 7th. "We now need the coöperation of Russia in the Pacific as desperately as the Soviet Union needs our tanks", declared the *Davenport Times* on December 8th.⁵² On this same day the *Dubuque Telegraph-Herald* reminded readers of Hitler's German Winter Relief Campaign speech of October 3rd in which he asserted that Russia had been "eliminated" as a serious military factor. "Two full months of furious fighting have passed since then. The Germans are no closer to Moscow than they were then. In south Russia their advancing machine has gone into reverse. The Russians fight on, grimly, furiously. . . . Do the German people remember?"⁵³

⁵⁰ *Mitchell County Press and Osage News*, quoted in the *Ames Tribune* (Established 1867, Independent, Circulation 4608), December 9, 1941.

⁵¹ Quoted in the *Clayton County Register* (Elkader, Established 1878, Republican, Circulation 2574), December 10, 1941. The *Mason City Globe-Gazette* was established in 1857, is Independent Republican, and has a circulation of 19,467.

⁵² *Davenport Times*, December 8, 1941. On this same day the *Times* editorialized on Hitler's retreat from Rostov. "The city, said the Nazi spokesmen, was being evacuated by German troops in order to teach the population a lesson. Since when have German troops ever withdrawn to teach any population a lesson? The fact was, of course, the Russians simply made it impossible for Hitler's troops to hold Rostov and they were compelled to retreat."

⁵³ *Dubuque Telegraph-Herald* (Established 1836, Independent, Circulation 31,293), December 8, 1941.

The *Atlantic News-Telegraph* was delighted with the continued Russian successes. "It is almost unbelievable, but the Russian victories are beginning to reach major proportions. Of course, it is too early to form any judgments, but it could be that Hitler's military effort has already reached its peak and that the retreat from Moscow is the beginning of the end for this modern Napoleon, as it was for his predecessor. Be that as it may, the current Russian victories are most important to the democracies, for they are practically a guarantee that the Germans will be kept too busy on the Russian front this winter to do much damage on other fields of battle."⁵⁴

With the dawn of a new year the Russians, to the consternation of the Germans and the amazement of armchair prophets, continued to advance. The *Oelwein Register* viewed with satisfaction the Germans "sprinting" homeward leaving much of their military machinery behind them.⁵⁵ Many editors did not hesitate to poke fun at Hitler and his intuitive campaign. "The German broadcasters", chuckled the *Wright County Monitor*, "told the German people that the retreat in Russia was 'strategic' and had been 'planned.' That's not what we call such things in this country. When a man or men get out of a place the way the Germans are getting out of Russia we always use the word 'Scram.' That's an abbreviation of 'scramble.' A scramble is a rout, a confused rush, an indiscriminate running hither and yon in a vigorous effort to get out of danger. That's what the Germans are doing."⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Quoted in the *Ames Tribune*, December 9, 1941.

⁵⁵ *Oelwein Register* (Established 1896, Republican, Circulation 3973), January 3, 1942.

⁵⁶ Quoted in the *Eldora Herald-Ledger* (Established 1865, Independent, Circulation 2900), January 15, 1942. The *Wright County* (Clarion) *Monitor* was established in 1869, is Republican, and has a circulation of 2600.

The *Sioux City Journal* took a similar jocular attitude: "Any time in the

While the *Des Moines Register* of February 26th derived "great satisfaction" from the Russian offensive it did not expect any "miracles" to happen. The entire gain after two and one-half months of hard counter offensive had advanced the "mean line" of action only 50 to 100 miles. Nevertheless the editor felt this offensive revealed Russia's almost limitless reserve power and her ability to "seize the initiative" at any opportunity. Stalin had also prevented Hitler from maintaining an idle winter line while German production and training caught up with his losses, thereby keeping the German expenditures "piling up" throughout the winter. Since Russia had to be bolstered against the inevitable spring offensive the *Register* urged the continued feeding of the maximum of supplies and equipment to Stalin's warriors. "No one can tell where this war is going to make the 'turn' very definitely against the Axis. At least it has as great a chance of making it in Russia as anywhere, at present."

On the same day this editorial appeared, Russian Ambassador Litvinoff addressed the Overseas Press Club dinner in New York City. Calling upon Russia's allies for more assistance, Litvinoff emphasized that his country did not demand "exclusive rights" in smashing Hitler's war machine. There was only one way in which Hitler could be beaten in 1942, Litvinoff insisted, and that was by "simultaneous offensive operations on two or more fronts separated by long distances." The Davenport *Times* felt this realistic Russian approach contained "deep significance" since it bulwarked the position of President Roosevelt.⁵⁷ While not unmindful of the hazards involved, the

future the Germans wish to borrow from a foreign language they might use Timoshenko for headache. That's the name of the Russian general who's been giving Adolph Hitler such a splitting one."—Quoted in the *Ames Tribune*, December 17, 1941.

⁵⁷ *Daily Times* (Davenport), February 27, 1942.

Sioux City Journal felt the Russian plan was worthy of consideration. "The Litvinoff suggestion is most interesting, particularly since the sensational performances of the Russian forces have shown nazi soldiers are not invincible and can be whipped. The strategy urged has possibilities of success and the certainty of great sacrifice. A movement by allied armies for invasion of the continent would involve losses, possibly enormous. The Germans have fortified much of the coastline all the way from Norway to Brest, France. That line would have to be broken somewhere. It could be broken, of course, if sufficient power were hurled against it. And if the Germans rushed soldiers from the eastern front to protect themselves elsewhere, thus weakening their forces engaged with the Russians, they would expose themselves to further smashing drives by the soviet divisions. It would be wonderful to get the despised Hitler between two such millstones."⁵⁸

The *Marshalltown Times-Republican* agreed with this strategy, asserting it would fit into the category of offensive warfare as urged by Wendell Willkie in Los Angeles. "Russia has a right to expect more help than such supplies as we can send by the long ocean routes", the editor asserted. "She has a right to expect that Britain, with the help of United States troops, gets serious about that invasion of the European continent. In fact Stalin has more than broadly suggested that when he said that Germans will be driven 'out of Russia,' not that Russia will march on to Berlin. On to Berlin is our job. . . . The time for a knock-out is when the enemy is groggy."⁵⁹

Prior to December 7th the United States had been committed to an all-out lend-lease policy to Great Britain. Iowa

⁵⁸ *Sioux City Journal*, February 28, 1942.

⁵⁹ *Marshalltown Times-Republican* (Established 1870, Independent Republican, Circulation 10,948), February 28, 1942.

editors generally approved of this action. Every British victory was greeted with general rejoicing while a defeat was met with almost universal gloom. This feeling became all the more intense after Pearl Harbor for thereafter it was recognized that the fate of the two nations was inextricably woven together.

Despite this feeling of unity some papers did not hesitate to question British conduct in the war whenever it seemed that nation was not performing its duties.⁶⁰

Perhaps one of the most pointed statements was made by Harlan S. Miller in a letter addressed to President Roosevelt through his "Over the Coffee" column. Few newspaper men have been more ardent advocates of all out aid to Britain, hence his reactions are all the more significant. Professing to interpret the pulse of Iowa public opinion, Mr. Miller wrote: "We're a little worried about the British, too. We're fond of 'em as allies, & all that. We're willing to give up eggs & sugar & butter for 'em, & lend 'em & lease 'em lots of stuff they'll never pay for. But we wonder whether they're saving some of the hot spots for American boys?"

"We admire their valor, which they've demonstrated. But we'd like to see more of it. Will American boys get the job of retaking Bengasi & Libya next time? Will American boys have to save the Suez canal? Will American boys have to recapture Singapore, the impregnable? We hope it won't be any more impregnable in Jap hands than it seems to be in British hands."⁶¹

⁶⁰ Many editors insisted that constructive criticism was healthful as well as needed, pointing to the fact that the British themselves often lashed out strongly at Churchill. "Speaking of national unity", a Jasper County editor declared, "the British don't hesitate about having their say when something goes wrong with the war effort. . . . national unity isn't promoted entirely by blind acquiescence to everything that the government does."—*Newton News* (Established 1902, Republican, Circulation 4301), February 14, 1942.

⁶¹ *Des Moines Register*, February 3, 1942.

These criticisms, it should be pointed out, were made in a newspaper friendly to Great Britain. There were other newspapers, however, which stoutly took up the cudgels in favor of England.

The *Sioux City Journal* of February 22nd was much concerned over the anti-British feeling manifested in some places. "Hate of the English and everything pertaining to the British empire is encountered among native born Americans who really suffer—there's no other word for it—from their intense anglophobia. It is more widely distributed than the average person would suspect. It is encountered in surprising places among groups of various derivations. Some English haters are, themselves, descendants of settlers who came to the new world from the British isles."

After pointing out that some native-born Americans still thought in terms of "tyrannical and despotic" George III while some native Americans of foreign stock clung to the "tradition" of hating England through the ages, the editor concluded: "If it had not been for Great Britain and her matchless navy the prepared aggressors could have hurled themselves upon unprepared America, and, beyond a doubt, they would have done just that long ago. But the British stood fast and absolutely alone against the greatest war machine that ever existed, that of nazi Germany. Their navy and their air force insulated the United States. Their courage safeguarded us. We survived because of the British who for more than two years held a dangerous and barbarous enemy at bay. Let those who hate Great Britain ponder the question of where we should have been if it had not been for her."

The *Boone News-Republican* believed that the evidence that England shipped 9000 planes and 3000 tanks abroad at the risk of weakening her own home front was extremely heartening. "Britain may have been short-sighted in many

ways in this war. Singapore was lost and Burma is going because the British underestimated Japanese strength. But the United States has been guilty of under-estimating the Japs, too. England can be criticized, no doubt, for many things, but it should never be forgotten that England stood alone against Hitler for many months, enduring without thought of giving up the worst sort of aerial bombing."⁶²

The *Rolfe Arrow* of February 12th believed that Great Britain was doing her share of the fighting and attributed much of the propaganda that England was ready to fight to the last Frenchman, Australian, or Canadian, to Nazi propaganda or unthinking isolationists. "The English have done their usual amount of bungling in the conduct of the war, but they cannot be justly charged with avoiding their share of the risk. To date English bungling has produced nothing to equal the criminal negligence of the U. S. commanders in Hawaii. Part of their failures have been due to lack of equipment and means of transportation. The English war cabinet undoubtedly contains some deadwood which will have to be removed. Some critics of the government have been unreasonable and unwilling to accept the facts of the war situation; but England has produced no leader since Chamberlain who can match in dumbness our Lindbergh, Wheeler and Nye."

The fall of "impregnable" Singapore on February 15th was a particularly gloomy day for the United Nations. This tragic reverse, coupled with the escape of the Nazi warships from Brest, was almost too bitter a pill for some editors to swallow. While admitting that the latter incident "greatly complicates defense of the Atlantic" the *Cedar Rapids Gazette* hastily urged its readers not to blame "British incompetence for it all". "The Nazi coup was a

⁶² *Boone News-Republican* (Established 1865, Republican, Circulation 4006), February 28, 1942.

bold and clever stroke, carefully planned and carried out with daring under precisely the right conditions. The British reputation for bungling, which has had several unfortunate additions recently, has been blamed widely in this case. There may have been bungling. But on the other hand, in such instances we often tend to expect the impossible and thus to criticize blindly.

“Britain’s fleet, just as our own, is dispersed over vast portions of the globe, trying to do many jobs. It could not be concentrated rapidly. Both RAF bombers and what naval craft were available were hampered in the extreme by a thick Channel fog over which they had no control.

“Incompetence can’t be defended—and probably there was some incompetence in success of the Nazi trick. But it is unfair to charge all our disappointment to that. Some of it in this case can be chalked up to just plain bad luck.”⁶³

In addition to Russia and England, Iowa editors commented freely on our other allies — China and the Dutch East Indies in the far Pacific and the Latin American republics in the Western Hemisphere. The *Madrid Register-News* praised the Chinese for their steadfast resistance to Japanese aggression. According to this editor the Chinese presented only one liability to the allies — their arms and ammunition had to be furnished them. “But they do have unlimited man power”, he asserted, “and under the circumstances this man power seems to be turning into first

⁶³ *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, February 17, 1942. Another editor wrote: “Much bitter comment has been heard about the part the British have played in this war and that we were again going to have to pull their chestnuts out of the fire. This is not so and while we do not know why the forces at Singapore have not had more re-enforcements we do know that the men who are directing the armies and navies of the allies are well aware of the situation and the danger involved for that is their business.

“All we stay at homers can do is buy defense stamps and defense bonds and have faith in the men directing the armies and navies and a greater faith in our way of life and we will eventually triumph.”—*Parkersburg Eclipse* (Established 1872, Independent, Circulation 998), February 12, 1942.

class fighting men. One thing is certainly true, they are a greater help to the United States and England than Italy is to Germany. If supplies can be continued to China this unlimited man power can be used in stretching the Japanese lines to the breaking point. And in the end a new China may emerge powerful and right minded enough to change the far east from a menace to friendly and peaceful relationship with other right-minded and peaceful peoples."⁶⁴

The *Des Moines Register* of February 10th viewed with satisfaction congressional approval of a new loan of five hundred million dollars to China but regretted that it would probably be of more value in strengthening China's morale than in actually delivering goods to the army of Chiang Kai-Shek. "We simply cannot afford any lessening of resistance to the totalitarian aggressors at any of the points where it is possible to resist. And the heroic record of the Chinese for more than four years suggests that they will not be discouraged by new reverses—even though their resources dwindle more than ever before—so long as they are convinced that the other ABCD powers are doing the best they can and that a new day is on the way. . . . If moral support is all that we are able to give them for a time, then we had better make it the very strongest kind of moral support imaginable. For without that massive human backlog of resistance against the Japanese, our situation in the months just ahead would be even worse. . . . And by now it must be clear to all that it is going to be, for a while yet, plenty bad enough."

From the very beginning of World War II the editors of the Hawkeye State watched with concern the reactions of

⁶⁴ *Madrid Register-News* (Established 1885, Republican, Circulation 2231), February 5, 1942. The *Atlantic News-Telegraph* of February 28th praised the Chinese for their gallant and steadfast resistance against the Japs and asserted that the allies could learn a "lesson" from them.

Latin America. The *Oelwein Register* of December 10th found it gratifying that "practically all of the South and Central American countries have joined us in a war declaration against Japan." The *Humboldt Independent* felt relieved that a "desire to whip Japan" afforded "one thing Mexico and Uncle Sam can agree on". When the twenty-one American Republics broke all commercial and diplomatic relations with Germany, Italy, and Japan, the *Albia Republican* hailed this "break with Axis as a break for us".⁶⁵

The *Dubuque Telegraph-Herald* of February 1st felt that in "all the blizzard of bucks" that was being "blown into the war effort" it would be hard to find twenty million more profitably used than those that were advanced to five Central American countries to finish the highway to Panama. These countries, already closely tied to American economy, will be all the more so when overland communication is possible. "The ability to truck supplies and equipment to the Panama Canal might save that artery in some emergency when sea communication should be interrupted", the editor asserted. "It's hard to see how we can lose on this one."

The arrival of the second expeditionary force in Ireland was hailed with delight by most editors. The *Des Moines Register* on January 28th said it was "obviously smart" to land American soldiers in Northern Ireland. Since Eire still mistrusted England it was well that the "traditional friend" of Eire that had served as a refuge for millions of emigrants from the Emerald Isle should send its own contingent.

"It was not any unhappy accident, incidentally, that the first American soldier to walk down the gangplank on Irish

⁶⁵ *Albia Union-Republican* (Established 1860, Republican, Circulation 2412), February 5, 1942.

soil was the son of an American citizen born in Germany, who went with his father's blessing and the command to 'Give 'em hell'."

"The Nazis have had such good luck in rallying to their cause large numbers of the people of German stock in such places as Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Balkans, and Latin America, that they imagined Americans of German stock would be grist for the same mill. So rousing good anti-Nazis of German stock like Wendell Willkie, Gen. Walter Krueger and Private Milburn Henke are worth a good deal on the propaganda front."

The *Council Bluffs Nonpareil* noted that Winston Churchill had spoken prophetically against the surrender of the English bases to Ireland in 1938 because they were desperately needed in combating submarine warfare and protecting convoys. But Mr. Chamberlain and his associates declared Churchill was an alarmist and was talking of things not likely to happen. "But they did happen", the *Nonpareil* pointed out. "Britain has suffered grievously from the lack of Irish bases. Thousands of sailors have lost their lives and millions of tons of precious cargoes are at the bottom of the Atlantic. England, and Ireland too, may yet be invaded as a result of De Valera's refusal to permit the use of Irish bases.

"American troops are in Ulster and many American lives may be lost because De Valera, backed up by some Americans of Irish descent, is really helping Hitler though claiming to be neutral."⁶⁶

Through the maze of editorial opinion one idea particularly stands out—solidarity—the need for the United Nations to advance steadfastly and courageously against the enemy shoulder to shoulder. The editor of the *Pella*

⁶⁶ *Council Bluffs Nonpareil* (Established 1857, Independent, Circulation 15,215), February 26, 1942.

Chronicle was "concerned" over the "discordant voices" arising among the allies. "Two lessons for both Americans and the Allies are plain", he declared. "First, hot-headed and indiscreet people should hold their tongues. Second, the great American pastime of boasting is out. . . . Better do it like MacArthur does, fight all the time and say nothing."⁶⁷ "This is no time", the *Davenport Democrat* asserted, "for Americans and British to call each other harsh names. In the past both have made mistakes and it is only human that we shall make other mistakes in the future. But a lack of faith and confidence in our Allies and vice versa, is bound to be harmful. This is the age that challenges us with crushing force, that demands the assertion of our highest attributes. Now is the time for all of us to make a determined effort to pull together and help build a safe foundation for civilization."⁶⁸

The *Grinnell Herald-Register* was sorry that Pierre Van Paassen made "certain references" to the English people and politics in both his Grinnell and Des Moines speeches. "We are inextricably involved with the English in the outcome of this war. We stand or fall with them. Anything which is said or written which will tend to promote disunity or ill feeling between the two great nations we feel would

⁶⁷ *Pella Chronicle* (Established 1864, Independent, Circulation 2700), February 19, 1942.

⁶⁸ *Davenport Democrat and Leader* (Established 1855, Democrat, Circulation, Daily 14,799, Sunday 19,157), March 1, 1942. It was not merely the Iowa (or American) press that was guilty of this critical bickering. A considerable furor was started when Premier Hepburn charged that the United States Navy was "hiding" from the Japanese. The *Dubuque Telegraph-Herald*, commenting on the "Field Day for the Critics" arising out of Hepburn's accusation, the fall of Singapore, and the escape of the German battleships from Brest, declared of Premier Hepburn: "He has a loose tongue, and apparently little information. Our naval attack on the Marshall and Gilbert Islands, with brilliant results, refutes his statements, and suggests that Hepburn must be a little patient, whether or not he likes that. The Canadian government repudiates his statement, of course."

better be left unsaid".⁶⁹ With this sentiment the *Brooklyn Chronicle* was in complete accord. "Those who dislike Britain — justly or unjustly it makes no difference — should realize that now the welfare of their armies and navies as well as those of Russia — for whom the same conditions hold — are also our welfare. Their defeats or disasters are now ours. Our country FIRST, of course, but our allies certainly are second now — whether we like them or not. Our final hopes of winning are linked with the allies — and WIN WE SHALL!"⁷⁰

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⁶⁹ *Grinnell Herald-Register* (Established 1868, Independent Republican, Circulation 2941), February 19, 1942. An O'Brien County editor felt certain we could not depend on our allies alone to win the war. "We are the hub of the anti-axis wheel and as we go, so goes the wheel. For a long time we sat back and watched Britain hold Hitler at bay almost single handed after the fall of France and the low countries. And the bloody British did a very good job of it".—*Sheldon Sun* (Established 1889, Independent Republican, Circulation 2745), February 18, 1942.

⁷⁰ *Brooklyn Chronicle* (Established 1875, Republican, Circulation 1225), February 26, 1942.