

Foreign Policy: Tough

In 1936, Hitler-hating Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia of New York City proposed that the Nazi dictator should be posed in effigy in a "chamber of horrors" at the 1939 World's Fair. A storm of German protest brought LaGuardia a stern rebuke from Secretary of State Cordell Hull, who said that German-American relations should be based on "mutual respect."

Last week, America had dramatic evidence of how those relations have shifted in two short years. Before the Zionist Society of Cleveland, Ohio, last month, Interior Secretary Harold Ickes chided Col. Charles A. Lindbergh and Henry Ford for accepting awards from Hitler:

"How can any American accept a decoration at the hand of a brutal dictator who with the same hand is robbing and torturing thousands of fellow human beings?"

As the drilled German press broke into a roar of indignation, Dr. Hans Thomsen, heading the Reich's Washington embassy in the absence of Dr. Hans Dieckhoff, hurried to the State Department to demand official apology for Ickes's "coarse and insulting language." Icily polite, acting Secretary of State Sumner Welles heard him out. Then he handed the Nazi government, through its emissary, a stinging oral thwack.

The United States, said Welles, refused to accept the German protest; neither would it make any apology. What one American citizen said about other American citizens was no concern of Germany's. Furthermore, Secretary Ickes's remarks on German persecution accurately reflected the sentiments of the overwhelming majority of this country's inhabitants. Lastly, the protest came with "singular ill grace" from a government which, through its mouthpieces, had long indulged in vituperation of America.

As if this unparalleled diplomatic bluntness was not enough to show the Reich America's official mind, President Roosevelt the same night made a special point of driving from the White House to dine with Secretary Ickes at the latter's Maryland home, a thing the Chief Executive rarely does. Simultaneously, Senator Key Pittman, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, issued as his "personal opinion" what he called a "beneficial statement of facts":

DIPLOMACY

1) The people of the United States do not like the government of Japan.

2) The people of the United States do not like the government of Germany.

3) The people of the United States in my opinion are against any form of dictatorial government, communistic or fascistic.

4) The people of the United States have the right and power to enforce morality and justice in accordance with peace treaties with us. And they will. Our government does not have to use military force and will not unless necessary.

After catching its breath, the amazed Nazi press loosed another tirade against the United States. Though they were told nothing of the protest or its rejection, the people of the Reich read that Ickes was a "Communist Minister of Corruption"; that Pittman was a "brutal war-monger"; and that by accepting the 1938 American Hebrew Medal for improving relations between Jews and Christians, President Roosevelt had showed himself to be "under the influence of international Jewry." German-American relations, said Nazi organs, were at their lowest point since 1917, and with this American diplomats were disposed to agree. Climaxing U. S. protests over Nazi anti-Semitism and the recall of Ambassador Hugh Wilson from Berlin, the Welles-Pittman rebuke seemed the next thing to a complete diplomatic break.



*Ickes Struck at the Nazis . . . Welles Rejected a Protest . . .
Thomsen Got an Oral Thwack*

After several days of consultation between Hitler and his aides, the German foreign office announced that although Welles's words had "left a sting behind," the Reich considered the "Ickes incident" as "officially closed." Washington, however, proceeded to put teeth in its tough foreign policy by a perceptible speeding up of American defense plans.

First the Navy Department announced it would maintain a permanent squadron of four battleships, eight cruisers and 23 destroyers in the Atlantic. Secondly, apparently sound reports in Washington said that Roose-

DIPLOMACY

velt would ask Congress to provide an additional 9,500 airplanes, bringing the total for the Army and Navy up to 13,000. This would quadruple the nation's military air force and far exceed any plane program broached up to now. Lastly, the President told a press conference of plans to create the largest reservoir of potential air fighters in the world. Beginning with the next school year, he said, Congress would be asked to appropriate \$9,800,000 a year for annual training of 20,000 boys and girls in some 300 colleges as airplane pilots. The scheme would be part of the National Youth Administration's vocational education program, and would be administered by Aubrey Williams, just named to head the NYA. Although the plans were worked out by the Civil Aeronautics Authority ostensibly to aid commercial aviation, the President pointed out that any such number of trained fliers would be invaluable "in time of national emergency."