

America is on trial, and our democratic form of government is undergoing its supreme test. More than half the world is ruled or is being pillaged by the Dictators, and the survival of the gallant countries which are fighting against their aggressions hangs in the balance.

It is unfortunate that we as a people failed for so long to grasp the fact that the growth of the European dictatorships during the past decade has been a challenge, and a threat to us, as well as to the balance of the world. That failure on our part, while unfortunate, is easy to understand. We were, and are, a peace-loving people, given to the practice and preservation of the doctrines of individual liberty, and the equality of men. We found it well-nigh impossible even to conceive that there could arise on any national or international scale, a movement challenging the very fundamentals of civilization, and openly seeking to overthrow the attainments of mankind during the past-thousand years.

The right of individual liberty; the right to worship God according to the individual conscience; the right of assembly; the right of free speech, free press and radio—in spite of what we heard or read from time to time,—we simply could not conceive that even a dictatorship would ever attempt to take these liberties away.

It is true that our President was far-sighted enough to sense the danger, and so intimated in his Chicago speech of several years ago. The mass of our people, however, as well as our leadership otherwise, failed to perceive it—at any rate, to proclaim it.

With the onslaught on Poland, the ravishment of Norway; the betrayal of Denmark; the enslavement of Holland and Belgium, and the overthrow of France, we began to open our eyes. We then began to take notice of the fact that we too are in danger. But even then, there were and are yet, many hundreds of thousands of our people who seem to think that the breadth of the Atlantic Ocean is sufficient protection.

The overwhelming majority of us, however, without regard to party, sect, or class, determined that while the Atlantic would be helpful, we dare not rely upon it as our sole protection—therefore, a vast defense preparation has been for some months underway.

It is in that connection that today's proceedings are being held, and it is well. The lesson of the past year and a half, particularly, has made it plain that one of the most effective methods used by these dictatorships in their conquering march has been the setting up of a vast system of subversive agencies in the country about to be attacked.

This method, by which apparently friendly visitors are used to confuse, mislead, betray and injure the nation visited, has come to be referred to popularly as the Fifth Column method. The setting up of such a net work of espionage and sabotage has ordinarily been found to have taken place months, and even years, before the attack. It further appears that only the leaders of the Columnists—key men—are sent from abroad; that members of their race who have long been residents of the visited country are depended upon largely to carry out the work of confusion, destruction, and betrayal.

It is no longer a question for debate as to whether or not such foreign