

BLUEPRINT FOR BEDLAM

BY WALTER DAVENPORT

ILLUSTRATED BY COLIN ALLEN

That Baruch report was only the opening gun in the battle of the postwar planners. Washington is knee-deep in panaceas and, from now on, it's every man for himself

IT WOULD be just like the depraved Adolf Hitler to quit this year and catch us with our postwar plans down. And you can't trust the Japs, either. Not that anybody worth listening to in Washington expects either Germans or Japs to have wit enough to run up the white flag while they have anything left to run it up on. But in the event they should double-cross us it is wholly possible that we'd be left sud-

denly with twelve million fighting men and twenty-five million war-production workers to find jobs for, to say nothing of the business of reconverting about three fifths of our industries to peace production.

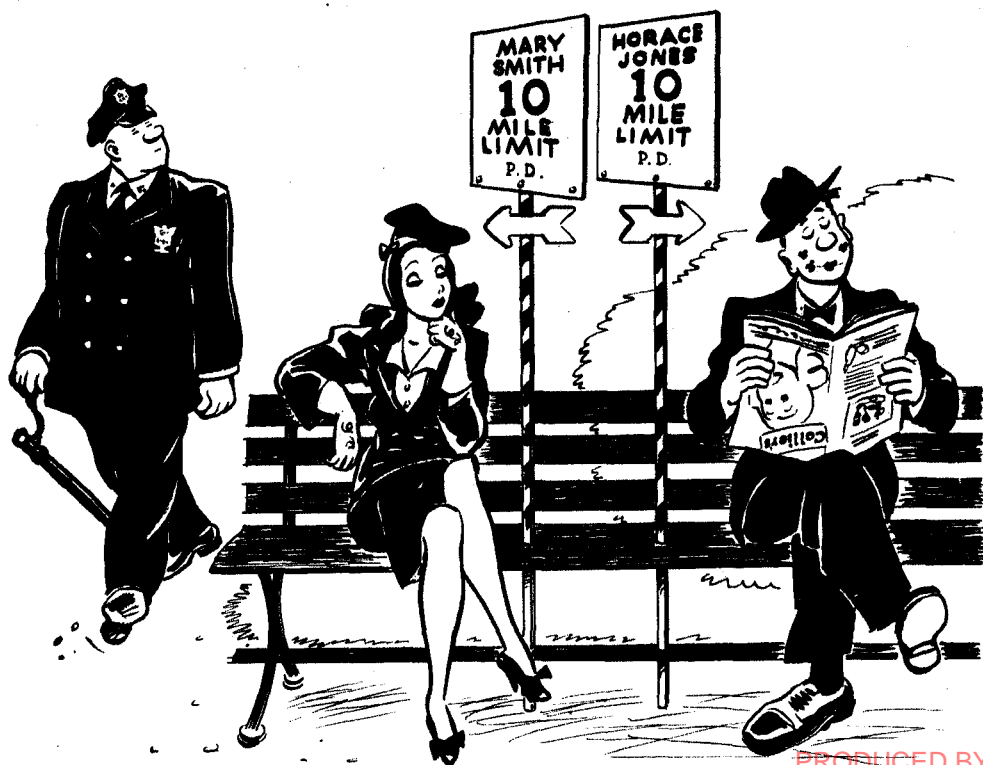
To the consternation of the Administration's ill-wishers, Mr. Baruch's plan was thrown to the public at least four months before schedule—the schedule having been written by them. Thus the Administration won the first round in the political brawl which threatens this year to be noisier than the war. From now on, on the floors of Congress, via radio and in pulpits, you will hear postwar planning shouted in all known clichés. Before we shall know whether our recovery from war is to be administered from the White House or from Capitol Hill the whole subject will have had a horrible political kicking-around.

When the White House came forth with the Baruch plan, the shock was felt hardest in a small office on the third floor of the Senate Office Building—the home of the Senate Special Committee on Postwar Economic Policy and Planning. In that office are more than three hundred plans waiting to be woven into a policy. But until the White House led with its powerful Baruch to the chin, not a politician in Washington would touch any of them with a long-handled mine extractor.

Until then, nobody seeking office this year was taking any chances—not with the voting public in its current bouncer humor. Plans which might please management might enrage labor. Those which had organized labor's okay would alienate the farm vote. And those on which labor and management might conceivably get together might fetch rebel yells out of both the farmer and the little businessman. The Army wanted to administer reconversion. The Navy wanted a hand in it. The War Production Board thought it was best equipped. The Department of Commerce believed that it was best fitted because of its neutrality. And so on.

The Senate Committee had an idea that the public should be conditioned for whatever plan might eventually be adopted. It thought that it should take to the radio and tell the country just what peace's problems would be. But word came from the White House that this would be bad practice, that too much talk about peace might distract the public's mind from the job at hand—winning the war. Then, according to the committee, the White House pulled a fast one.

Actually the Administration would have preferred that comprehensive postwar planning be deferred until after the campaign, but it simply couldn't trust the opposition—Republicans and anti-Roosevelt Democrats. Just before the White House released Mr. Baruch's plan, the rumor grew that the opposition was merely waiting for the so-called psychological moment to spring a plan warranted to make



"Mind your own business" is the basic idea back of the stationary plan. It limits everybody's travel to 10 miles

Townsenders, Technocrats, the Social Justice crowd, the Social Crediters and all the other patented hallelujah-jammers ashamed of their lack of imagination. Maybe it was only a dreadful rumor but the White House was taking no chances.

In the offices of the Special Committee, etc., sat Mr. Scott Russell of Macon, Georgia. Mr. Russell is Counselor to the Committee. He is a strongly built, middle-aged, graying gentleman with humorous eyes. He is president of the Bibb Manufacturing Company (textiles) and was urged into this small-thanks job by his friend, Senator Walter F. George, who is the committee's chairman. Mr. Russell has the naturally relaxed manner of a man who doesn't waste time trying to do better than his best and is resigned to the fact that there is quite a difference between a national policy and a campaign issue.

It is Mr. Russell's job to read and collate all the plans contributed to the committee. If occasionally the submitted ideas confuse him as much as the contributor seems to be confused, he may call upon any of the multitude of government agencies for the advice of their countless experts and interpreters. Frequently, however, such calls add nothing to clarity. It's pretty much like summoning a stranger off the street to settle a domestic argument.

Too Many Axes to Grind

Often the borrowed expert has a plan of his own and has just been waiting to warn the committee of the disaster to come unless it's adopted. Or he is a shill for his bureau's own plan. At least twenty-five government agencies have been working up postwar plans on their own. Each has worked thereon in a secrecy which would make the State Department or the Office of Strategic Warfare look like a department-store window at high noon. And some of them even sent out spies to ferret into the operations of rivals. Moreover, each of these plan-writing bureaus was seeking thus to convince the White House that the others were frittering away the taxpayer's time and money in a manner very scandalous indeed.

Therefore, Mr. Russell has not only to study each plan coming into the committee offices but he has also to be on his guard against borrowed and devious experts. Most of these experts have been economists with long noses to look down. And some of them have offered personally conceived plans as miraculous and daffy as the Super Fat tax idea which we shall lay before you in a moment.

The report which Mr. Russell, via Senator George, has submitted to the Senate was designed to give birth to a resolution. The resolution adopted, after necessary committee wrangling and over the protesting outcries of plan-writers whose panaceas were discarded, a commission would be appointed—although Republicans and anti-Administration Democrats protest that to give the appointive power to the President just means "Here we go again."

But that won't be Mr. Russell's responsibility. The basis of his final report (preliminary reports being trial balloons) was fashioned out of first-class plans written by completely aware people. It leaves to state, city and other local authorities all local projects dealing with their own unemployed. Later, perhaps, it would offer plans for assisting such local authorities to finance their projects out of a federal Treasury which Senator George says is already empty.

And whether, eventually, the commission would take over such emergency projects as the Department of the Inte-

This is the Global Congress, ruling the world from an island in the Atlantic. It's simple: you obey or you don't eat

rior's power and irrigation public works, no one knew. Mr. Ickes says that this project can become operative in thirty days after victory and give employment to 480,000 men for three years. But there are members of Senator George's postwar planning committee who wouldn't trust Mr. Ickes any farther than a butterfly can spit. They also see the big cold old hand of Mr. Ickes hovering over them prepared to grab control of the whole works.

The basic plans from which the committee's report rises are those of the Committee for Economic Development, of which Mr. Paul G. Hoffman, president of the Studebaker Corporation, is chairman; the National Planning Association, headed by Mr. William L. Batt, vice-chairman of the War Labor Board; the Brookings Institution, the American Federation of Labor and the C.I.O.

Postwar planning is a double headache for these two labor groups. Someone has assured them both that at least six million of our servicemen are going to return to civil life yearning to do something permanent to labor leaders and labor organizations who have been responsible for war-production strikes. We cannot vouch for the figures. But be assured of this: Both the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O. have ambitions to be more important in politics and industrial management. And at this moment they are wondering just what they'd better do about the irate six million.

And before we go further, you may as well know that while the War Production Board is at present a little too busy to be fooling around with administering the economic aspects of the peace, Mr. Nelson and his associates are firmly convinced that no existing or possible agency is as well equipped as they are to direct industrial reconversion. The situation is, you see, somewhat complicated.

Mr. Nelson has already promised the Smaller War Plant Corporation, which was created to fight the reconversion battles of subcontractors and "little businessmen," that as surpluses occurred in materials they should be released first to its wards. In the Senate now is a bill to cre-

ate an Office of War Contract Termination. It will, according to Senator George, be incorporated into a larger general measure creating a commission to supervise the cancellation of war contracts, demobilize and reconvert industrial plants and dispose of surplus government property. Unhappily for this commission, it will doubtless be its job to decide such dismal problems as who shall be demobilized first and how to placate those war material contractors who will thus be late in getting back to a peace basis.

But Mr. Russell, firmly refusing to permit his emotional temperature to rise above the mildly annoyed level, goes right along reading incoming plans at the rate of five or six a day. So let's sit down here in his office and help him read them. Maybe you had better take off your coat, even loosen your necktie. Some citizens have developed some pretty hot flashes.

Here's that Super Fat tax plan. This gentleman is convinced that there is entirely too much human poundage waddling around loose, doing nothing except taking up much valuable room. He begins on the premise that the United States Treasury will be pretty innocent of cash when

the war's over. Moreover, he thinks, American industry will be idle for a year while refitting itself for peace and will, therefore, produce no tax moneys. So he'd weigh us all. Those of us whose weight exceeds the standard set by life-insurance companies for our age and height would be taxed twenty-five cents per pound up to fifteen per cent overweight. Anyone fifteen per cent overweight or more would have to pay a dollar for each of those unnecessary pounds. In thirty typewritten pages complete with graphs, tables and curves this economist proves that the income from this levy would finance virtually everything necessary to maintaining the American way of life until things get going again. After that we'd be permitted to go hog-wild once more.

A few of these plans tend to frustrate the casual reader. Some people have to read them twice to catch on. "Get rid of the inequalities in the use of vast territory," writes the author of the Permanent Peace, Plenty and Prosperity Plan. "Also abolish great wealth given free to your species and your prejudices will disappear and our intended unity will be conjoined

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You'll be glad to hear the Treasury isn't considering the Super Fat tax, which would cost you a buck a pound

ESCAPE FROM BEAUTY

BY PETER
PAUL O'MARA

ILLUSTRATED BY
MARIO COOPER

The Story Thus Far:

DR. WARWICK O'BRIEN HATHAWAY and his distinguished, rather formidable wife, Caroline, live with their three daughters—Moirra, Sheila and Erin—in the pleasant old town of Whitestone, Virginia. All three girls are extraordinarily beautiful with a loveliness that has become almost legendary the world over. Two of them marry; Moira becomes the wife of Jean Desalles, a wealthy New York banker, and Sheila has taken for her fourth husband a hero of the Royal Air Force, Air Vice-Marshal Sir Alistair Bowers. Then, some two years after Pearl Harbor, it is rumored that Erin is engaged to Lloyd Curran, a powerful figure in Hollywood, now a major in the U. S. Army.

Dr. Dane Johns—a young man who, brought up as a foster son in the Hathaway home, is regarded as a member of the family—hears of the engagement. He heads a hospital founded by Jean Desalles on Long Island; he has an office in New York City; he is a busy man. But when Dr. Hathaway invites him to come down to Whitestone for the family's annual Christmas dinner, he goes gladly.

Quite by chance, on the train as it enters Washington, he is near an attractive couple—a good-looking Army major and a diamond-adorned, mink-coated girl. He sees the girl put her arms around her companion; he hears her say: "I love you, Lloyd darling." And he suspects that the major may be—*Erin's fiancé!*

On the local train to Whitestone, the two men take the same car. Both are bound for the Hathaways'. They introduce themselves. The major is Lloyd Curran! He tells Johns that his friend on the train was Lane Delancy, a motion-picture actress. . . .

The party turns out to be a brilliant one. Sheila and her husband are among the guests, and the young Englishman makes a favorable impression on everyone. The climactic moment comes when Erin's father rises and prepares to announce her engagement. As he is speaking, a man in whom all three of the girls have always been more than mildly interested—Stephen Sawyer—strides in.

Sawyer's home is next to the Hathaways'. An artist, he had enlisted in the Army at the time of Pearl Harbor; now he has come back, unknown to anyone. He says, casually, that he has returned from Guadalcanal a wreck, that he is no longer in the Army. Everyone—especially Erin—gives him an enthusiastic welcome. Then, when the excitement has died down, Dr. Hathaway finishes the announcement.

Later, when she is alone with Stephen, Erin asks him if he will marry her! Stephen says, flatly, that he does not want a wife.

From that moment on, Erin feels trapped, is in a savage, dangerous mood. Realizing this, when the Whitestone Hunt starts the following day, Johns keeps an eye on the girl, whose mount is a wild black stallion. He sees her take some dangerous jumps, and he follows close behind. Then, to Johns' horror, the stallion falls. Hitting the top strand of a wire fence, the animal turns a somersault and Erin is hurled to the ground.

Leaping from his horse, Johns makes his way toward the girl. She rises and staggers toward him; and, as she draws near, all he can think is: Oh, her face—her lovely face!

