print on the pamphlet said. This sur-
passed all the foolishness Jean had ever
seen. "Save a man on your street"—as
if there were heathens or naked savages
with rings in their noses living next door
to her. What would the church think of
next?
She turned to the child. "Come on,
Jane Elizabeth," she said. "Your father
will sell you to the rag man if you don't
be a good girl and hurry as I say."

The Fallacy of Isolationism

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Following the first world war, the
majority of people in the United States
became great believers in isolationism;
that is, they wanted to avoid any foreign
contacts other than those necessary to
trade and certain business relationships.
"Buy American" became the slogan;
"self-sufficiency" was the goal. The
American people were determined that
their sons should not fight on foreign soil
again. Today we are facing the result
of our holding to the idea of isolationism.
We turned our backs on the invasion of
Japan into Manchuria; we knew some-
thing should be done about it, but we
were afraid to try it alone. We excused
our inaction when Hitler marched into
Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the
other defenseless nations by saying, "It's
a European war. Let them fight it out."
We soon found out, however, that we
could not ignore the militarism of any
country for two reasons. First, we are
connected with these countries by com-
munication and transportation lines; and,
second, we have business interests spread-
ing all over the world. We know now
that these facts cannot be ignored.
Because of the advancement in com-
munication and transportation, the coun-
tries of the world have been welded to-
gether until now we can think of the
world in terms of a unit rather than
many pieces of territory, individual and
separate. In considering the speed of
transportation we naturally look to the
sky. According to Transcontinental and
Western Air, Inc., a person may travel
from New York to Cairo, Egypt, in
twenty-two and one-half hours; from
Chicago to Mash-bad, Iran (Persia), in
twenty-seven hours; from San Francisco
to Singapore, Malay States, in thirty-four
and one-half hours; and from Philadelphia
to Capetown, Union of South Africa, in
thirty-two hours. With the aid of the
wireless we are now able to turn a few
knobs, set the dials, and immediately hear
from countries in any part of the globe.
To travel to the other side of the earth
is only a matter of hours; to hear and
talk to someone in any remote spot, hav-
ing the right equipment, only a matter
of minutes. With this development in
rapidity of contact, the peoples of the
world now can easily learn of each other's
habits, customs, and traditions, as well
as the events taking place over the world.
Out of this wide and wonderful develop-
ment of speed in transportation and com-
munication, all nations became vulnerable
to aggression; oceans no longer provided
protective walls; distance meant very little; even the ruggedness of terrain would not affect a plane dropping bombs. We were faced with the possibility of invasion, which was a new and horrible prospect to us Americans.

The other reason why a nation cannot become isolated is that as the world has grown industrially, big business inevitably went beyond national lines. This reason was very potent, for on our own initiative we went to the countries and enlarged our business organizations. The TWA company, to which we referred before, must maintain some sort of representation in all the places where their planes are flown. Other large business houses also create bonds to hold the world closer together, making it smaller, figuratively speaking, through branch offices and representatives. As business becomes world-wide there is a mixture and exchange of ideas by men and women from all parts of the globe. But here again we find a disadvantage to isolationism.

Whenever the economic factor enters the scene, our interest is heightened. The business branches of various companies are vitally affected and are necessarily interested in every event which takes place in the country in which they are located. Thus, many times it is the business men of the country who demand interference by the United States to protect American business. The United States has been referred to in these examples; it must be remembered, however, that every country is facing the same situation. All nations are being brought closer, and the many walls and lines separating them are becoming less and less significant. Complete isolationism is impossible between nations.

There are several changes which must take place, then, if countries can no longer isolate themselves. The goal of self-sufficiency must be abandoned. For many nations this goal was unobtainable no matter what methods they used to add colonies or develop the homeland’s resources. The theory of comparative advantage presents a different idea for the governments to consider. This theory may be stated best by example. If country A could make paper pulp at a lower price than country B, and country B could produce a cheaper maple syrup than country A, it would be to the advantage of each if these two countries produced their specialties and traded with each other to get the product which they could not produce economically. This would destroy any hope of complete self-sufficiency, which is merely an attempt to remain neutral in case war breaks out, to be independent of other countries for food or necessary raw materials.

Before the theory of comparative advantage can ever be successful, however, the world must have free trade, trade without restrictive tariff walls. All nations cannot be sellers only and not buyers. It is realized that nations must practice the principles of good business. In other words a nation must look out for its own interests, and thus must, according to many people, put some sort of charge on foreign goods coming into the country. This tax probably will be levied whenever a foreign product is competing with a domestic product. If the theory of comparative advantage were followed, however, competition between foreign and domestic products would be decreased, and if practiced wholly, competition would be destroyed, the need for a protective tariff would not exist, and free trade would come into being. Isolationism then would no longer be a part of governmental policy.
More fundamental than anything yet discussed are the thoughts of the citizens of a country. To accomplish any degree of world unity, individuals must get away from the idea of isolationism. We must develop a strong feeling of bonds between nations, and when the many citizens of the countries realize that they are affected by events taking place over the world, and, likewise, that what they do will affect citizens of other nations, then the desire for isolation will be seen to be fruitless. It cannot exist in our modern world. Until the individual accepts the new responsibility of being world-conscious as well as nation-conscious, attempts at isolationism will be made, but these attempts cannot succeed.

A step such as the one suggested here, to break away from the confines of isolationism, is undeniably progressive. Man has steadily had to broaden his viewpoint because of the successive development of transportation and communication, and now another barrier must be destroyed in order to give world peace a chance for success. It is inevitable that the change from isolationism will take place, but it is important and may become imperative that we realize this inevitability now. When it is seen that isolationism is not possible between nations and that cleaving to it tends to precipitate wars, then the people of the world will be building a union of all nations.