naturally inclined to select the economy that produces the higher standard of living. Therefore, as between an economy with a stable price level and one with a slowly rising price level, the latter is to be preferred. [Applause]

The applause is to be noted. The quotation is from a speech delivered in May before the Academy of Political Science.

There will be hardship and injustice for some, he concedes; but there will be hardship and injustice also in an economy governed by the fetish of sound money. Then he adds:

> At this rate the dollar will lose one-third of its present purchasing power in another twenty years and a little more than half at the end of forty years.

Why does he stop at forty years? Shall we all be dead by that time? Or must one suppose that the dollar is infinitely divisible by two—if not infinitely, then at least to the point at which the cost of printing a dollar will be more than the dollar is worth, the national debt will be wiped out, and we can start all over again? One of the terrible evils of inflation, once it has been embraced as a national policy, is its effects upon people's minds and morals.

What Professor Slichter so calmly contemplates is that the government shall deliberately defraud everyone who has believed its word engraved upon a bond or a piece of money. Even if it were true that for a while it should be able to raise the people's standard of living, an economy based upon swindle is an immoral, criminal economy, and will not endure, all the Harvard economic books to the contrary notwithstanding.

How Dead is Pétain?

SOME of the Parisian market women who had danced at Marie Antoinette's beheading were still alive when Henri-Philippe Pétain was born. This is perhaps the most meaningful fact of his pathetic career: it spanned 95 of the 162 years that have passed since the French Revolution. And no matter what the conscious motives of Marshal Pétain's defections may have been, his strange life reflects a great national tragedy which Americans were hardly ever told about: France consists of two nations which were separated by the Revolution of 1789.

Now it could of course be said of every nation, with some truth, that it is divided against itself by some historical conflict not wholly resolved. If, however, our own Southern Rebels seem still to despise their Yankee brothers, most of them are playing a facetious game. But the atmosphere of fratricide that has pervaded French History for the last two hundred years is deadly genuine. Try as they may, French politicians and American history teachers (always inclined towards "liberal optimism") can not camouflage for long the rift in the French body politic; the wound keeps breaking open, sometimes farcically, sometimes tragically, but always for the same reason: an essential part of the French people refuses to accept the Revolution of 1789.

Napoleon I, Louis-Philippe, Napoleon III, *La Commune*, Boulanger, *l'Affaire Dreyfus*, Clémenceau, *l'Affaire Stavisky*, Laval, Pétain—at the bottom of all the murderous unrest which shakes and mutilates and dishonors the magnificently gifted French race, is considerably more than just an accident of events. A century of "liberal" historiography has produced the generally accepted and dangerously untrue portrait of France as a nation formed by rationalism, egalitarianism, agnosticism. But for every Frenchman who worships Progress, and makes "enlightened" cracks about the clergy, there is one who remains sullenly rooted in romantic paternalism and hates the *laicists* more than he hates the devil (or Hitler, for that matter).

It is one of the misfortunes of American foreign policy that the men who have shaped it (from Jefferson to Franklin D. Roosevelt) were enthusiastically Francophile and just as enthusiastically insensitive to the lasting schism within the French people. Their two-dimensional picture of France as a homogeneously "liberal" nation resulted only too often in catastrophic policy advice, because France simply refused to live up to the accepted legend of Marianne, married to *liberté, egalité et fraternité*. When the chips were down, the lady usually proved to be a bigamist, in scandalous bondage to two exactly opposite characters.

In recent years, particularly, America's European policy has centered upon the fallacious assumption that the motley "third force" represented the true France, and Pétain nothing but a negligible anachronism. But once Moscow has contracted the firm allegiance of France's former Left (the Communist one-fourth of the French electorate which General de Gaulle so correctly calls "the separationists"), France can neither recover nor resist unless Marianne's eternal two husbands form a partnership somewhat beyond dueling over the same girl.

Far from being an argument against de Gaulle's "Rally of the French People," it is an element of promise in it that he perceived the need for a reconciliation between the heirs and the foes of 1789. Perhaps there can never be a real reconciliation; for sometimes it seems as if the violent conflict between traditionalism and "enlightenment" were man's eternal schizophrenia, and particularly the Frenchman's. But only when the two agreed at least on a temporary truce was France ever really strong. And as a strong France is of such vital interest to the U. S., our European policy, now that the Pétain embarrassment is buried, should support any truly promising effort to rally the whole French people.

Africa and Our Security

By BONNER FELLERS

With the present explosive situation in the Middle East, air bases in Africa are essential to the defense of the free world, says Brigadier General Bonner Fellers, who was a United States military observer with the British forces in Africa during the last war.

THE Iranian-British oil dispute is sinister. Nationalism, fanned by Communist agitators, is sweeping the Middle East. Under State Department guidance we are aligned with the British whom we grant primary interest in this area and whose policy we have followed blindly. It is to be hoped that the Harriman mission may succeed and thus mark our first deviation.

The Arabian-American oil arrangements have been so satisfactory that it would be logical if the Iranians, who lack technicians and oil know-how, turned to American oil operators to find the experts they urgently need. But the British anticipated this. And our State Department, contrary to America's best interests, let it be known to our oil men that they should extend no help to the Iranians. The Iranians have asked for West-German oil technicians. But here also the British can and doubtless will prevent this aid by insisting that the Allied powers refuse exit visas.

The explosiveness of the oil dispute is magnified by the fact that a British token-force intervention might also prompt the Red Army to move. Once in the Middle East, Soviet forces would be inclined to remain, for there lies an estimated 50 per cent of the world's known oil reserves. The annual production is 60 million tons.

World Contest for Oil

Europe's economy is dependent upon oil from the Middle East. If this were denied to Europe, we would be sure to supply the deficit. Last year the United States consumed 300 million tons of oil, some two-thirds of the world's production. The Western Hemisphere can meet our peacetime oil demands, but if we were compelled to supply the oil for Europe, rationing would be necessary. And in time of war, oil from the Western Hemisphere alone could not meet the needs of ourselves and our allies.

Russia's oil position is more precarious than that of the United States. So far as can be determined, her annual production, including that of satellite Rumania, totals about 36 million tons; by restricting civilian consumption, she could meet her wartime requirement.

While both the East and the West could fight a war without oil from the Middle East, it is to the best interest of each to see that the other is denied this rich prize.

Oil is the lifeblood of modern war. It would be naive for us to expect that Russia does not have a program to seize the oil fields of the Middle East either on the pretext of preserving peace or as the initial act of hostilities. It is to be hoped that the State Department will not permit the British-Iranian dispute to develop into a deadlock which would "invite" the participation of the Soviet Union.

Our problem therefore—in peace or war—is to prevent Russian seizure of the Middle East with its great oil resources, its freedom-seeking people, and its vital lines of communication. We must seek closer relationships with this strategic area. At present Administration leaders seem to entertain a pious hope that our Allies, or possibly just fate, will do this job for us.

Safeguarding the Middle East

Some argue that a heavily armed Turkey—whose eastern frontier juts halfway along Caucasia's southern border—could threaten Russia's supply line south through the heart of the oil lands. The fallacy of this lies in the fact that, if Russia strikes, Turkey's forces could be destroyed or paralyzed by the Red Air Force.

Others hold that our Mediterranean or Red Sea fleets, with carrier-borne aircraft, could destroy Russia's rail transportation or pipe lines leading from the oil fields. It is also suggested that Marines could be landed to hold oil installations for our own use. But in World War II, because of enemy air action, Britain was unable to use the Mediterranean supply route for her desert campaigns. On May 22, 1941, the German Luftwaffe struck the British eastern Mediterranean fleet and all but destroyed it. On the basis of this experience we can not count on effective Allied fleet operations in the Mediterranean or the Red Sea until the Soviet Air Force is defeated.

Should Russia strike Europe, the Red Army, with strong air support, would be able to attack in such overwhelming numbers that it is doubtful whether European air bases could be held for any appreciable time. Such United Nations air forces as were based in Europe when the war started would be largely tactical and engaged in supporting our ground forces. Thus they would be unable to intervene in the Middle East.

There are some who argue that from air bases