

# Hoover at "Close Range" as Analyst Regards Him

By EDWARD PRICE BELL

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What is Herbert Hoover like in feeling, in intellect, and in will?

With diffidence, but, I hope, conscientiously, I am going to try to point some sort of psychological portrait of the republican candidate for the presidency of the United States.

What is he like in feeling, which is the deepest source of men's thoughts and actions?

There is, or has been, an impression in the world that Mr. Hoover is not a particularly sympathetic man; that he is more materialistic than spiritual; that he is more mathematical and mechanical than humanistic; that he is rather narrowly, rather unintelligently, American; that he would build up a colossal and superlatively prosperous America, though he crushed the rest of humanity.

Does one recognize any resemblance to Mr. Hoover in this picture?

### *He Is No "Economic Mussolini"*

Well, in the flesh, he does not look to me like a cruel man. I can see no savagery in his face. It has no hard lines. His eyes are not furtive or sinister or truculent. He does not smile all the time, but he can smile. He does not seem domineering; he seems in some degree the contrary. I cannot recognize in him "the inexorable and merciless economic Mussolini" portrayed by one of his French critics.

But we are speaking of outer phenomena. Let us try to get beneath these. Let us see if, by following certain of Mr. Hoover's own words, we can find our way into his heart.

"I especially rejoice in the effect of our increased national efficiency upon the improvement of the American home. That is the sanctuary of our loftiest ideals, the source of the spiritual energy of our people." Security, comfort, opportunity for the average American family—these are the tests of governmental policies, says Mr. Hoover.

### *He Has Dabbled in the Humanities*

"Nearly 9,000,000 more homes with electricity, and through it drudgery lifted from the lives of women. Time and distance swept away, life made freer and larger, by 6,000,000 more telephones, 7,000,000 radio sets, 14,000,000 additional automobiles. Our cities growing magnificent with beautiful buildings, parks, and playgrounds. Our countryside knit together with splendid roads."

Does it sound like the language, does it suggest the vision of the zealot of mathematics and mechanics and economics? Or would it appear that, at one time or another, Mr. Hoover has dabbled in the humanities? He talks about "our loftiest ideals." He speaks with apparent fervor of "the source of the

spiritual energy of our people." He seems to be gladdened by the idea of less labor and more happiness for everybody.

If Mr. Hoover be honest—and I know of no reason to question his honesty—it is somewhat hard to think of him without at least a fair share of the broad sentiments of humane culture. Indeed, one can fancy an emotionalist declaring:

"Why, this man is no engineer. He is no economist. He is a lyricist who has strayed into politics."

So much for the sentimental side of Mr. Hoover. Now as to his intellectual side.

Men of strong feeling, one scarcely need say, sometimes think badly, if they think at all. It is agreed generally, if not universally, I believe, that the republican standard-bearer, with all his liveliness of emotional sense, does not think badly. At the proper moment he brings his emotions into rigid restraint and thrusts his intellectual powers into action. It is the vigor and rigor of these powers, when in action, which doubtless have given Mr. Hoover his reputation for a certain ruthlessness or cruelty of spirit.

Let us consider first some of the aspects of this man's mind in the domain of theory—the doctrinal domain—for he is capable of doctrinaire thinking. Such thinking, as we have seen, does not dominate him; he is, after all, a pragmatist. He enjoys speculation; he is happy, so to speak, in his philosophical ramblings; but, in the end, his touchstone is that not of theory, not of logic, but of the demonstrable, of the concrete.

### *Results the Necessary Guide*

"However a thing may strike us in the abstract," said Mr. Hoover to me, "I conceive that we can be guided finally by results only."

Our theory, in other words, must not

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deceive us; it must not leave us with our theory and nothing else.

Individualism is an important matter in every sphere of human interest and possibility. What does Mr. Hoover think of it? What is his reasoned philosophy in relation to it? Is he an individualist or a socialist, an egoist or a communist? Does he believe that society should look to the individual, or the individual to society, for salvation? Where does he find the source and the assurance of progress—in the man or in the mob?

This psychological and sociological question is more than an important question, as important questions go in current discussion. It is fundamental. It is crucial. It is perhaps the weightiest question to which mankind can address its reason. As you decide it so you take your own measure, and so you direct such force as you have in the making of the political and social system in which you live.

Mr. Hoover has given a great deal of thought to persons as individuals and to the various social orders in the world. His approach has been that of both the theorist and the practical man. For years he was deep in what he calls "the backwash and misery of war." Political chaos, social chaos, economic chaos, individual and class conflicts—he knew and struggled with them all.

With what result?

With the result of an emphatic, of what he regards as an irrevocable, confirmation of convictions which already had come to him—the convictions of an individualist.

"I emerged," to use his own phraseology, "an unashamed individualist."

#### *Individualism and Equality*

But, in Mr. Hoover's view, there are different conceptions of individualism. American individualism he differentiates from all others. He prefers it to all others. He judges it to be, as a matter of fact, the only real individualism, the only principle and practice of actual personal liberty, yet evolved. European individualisms are marred by caste and class. The open door to every one is not there. Birth and property close it. And without the open door to every one there is no individualism in Mr. Hoover's understanding of the term.

America, if he be right, is the only country on the globe where every child is beckoned upward and welcomed among the peaks. There is, he holds, indispensable mutuality of good in this—good for the child and good for the nation. There is no other way to get on, or certainly no other way to get on at full speed. Equality before the law is not sufficient. Equality of opportunity is vital, and only in America, according to this student of peoples, is there equality of opportunity.

#### *Democracy in Leadership*

Unregulated individualism, in Mr. Hoover's opinion, would not be American individualism. There is no such

thing as unregulated individualism in America. Individual strength cannot do as it pleases here. If it could, equality of opportunity would not last long. Equality of opportunity soon would be strangled. Governmentally, industrially, commercially, Americans are safeguarded against what Mr. Hoover describes as "tyrannies, dominations, inequalities, injustices."

"Society progresses on its leadership," was one of the republican nominee's statements to me.

Leaders come from the people, all the people, not just a few of the people. Great Britain, for example, draws her

#### HILL'S PHILIPPINE FACTS

Percy A. Hill recently furnished the information below to a well known British author making an economic study of the orient:

"Boiled down, annual earnings in the Philippines from agriculture, transportation, forestry, mines, fisheries were, in 1928, I estimate, P690,000,000.—Taxes were above 10% of this.—The population is about 13 million, as follows: 3/4 million in commerce, transportation, industry and retailing; 3/4 million pagans in remote regions; 1-1/2 million nonproducers, officials, clerks, lawyers, doctors, etc., including landowners and city landlords: the 1918 census stated 12%, and it's now close to 15%; ten million producers.—Total earnings of producers, not over P300,000,000, based as follows: Per family, 4.5 persons. Growing rice, 4 million; per family, P200. Growing and making sugar, 1-1/4 million; per family, P320. Growing and stripping hemp, 2-1/4 million; per family, P225. Growing coconuts and producing copra, 2 million; per family, P280. Growing tobacco, 1/2 million; per family, P180. Add earnings from minor products and household industries, P54 per family; getting about the total of P300 earnings per family annually.

"Expenses per family are: For rice or its equivalent, P127.50; meat, oil, salt, soap, etc., P65.70; clothing, P27; tools, repairs, etc., P15; expense of one child in school, P7; housing, repairs, taxes, light, fuel, etc., P19.80; amusements, weddings, burials, baptisms, cockfights, medicines, luxuries, etc., P35; interest on borrowings, average and universal, P45; total expenses, P342.50."

Comment: it doesn't seem to come out right. But may it not be nearly correct?

leaders from a fraction—probably one-sixth—of her population, while America draws her leaders from the whole commonwealth. What is the great and irresistible suctional force which does this? It is that vital equality of opportunity. It gives us the rarest personalities we produce for leadership in every branch of effort, professional, industrial, commercial.

#### *Where Genius Gets Its Chance*

Ninety-five per cent of our creative and commanding capacity, as Mr. Hoover estimates it, has originated with those who either worked with their hands or were born of such workers.

A new idea?

Not at all, but an idea worth remembering and repeating. Denis Diderot, more than a century and a half ago, addressing the Empress Catherine

on the subject of universities, wrote:

"The number of thatched cottages and other private dwellings being that of palaces in the ratio of 10,000 to one, the chances are 10,000 to one that genius, talents and virtue will come from a thatched cottage rather than from a palace."

So we find that Mr. Hoover, in abstraction, is a prophet and a philosopher of democracy. Only an individualist fills this role—not a Marxite or Leninist or Mussoliniite; not a socialist or communist or syndicalist. Millions of these gentlemen, at least, shout against the goose-step, against militarism, yet would stereotype the human race in a regiment

#### *Renewing the American Spirit*

Passing from theory to some of the specific issues of the campaign just closing, let us sound Mr. Hoover a little on the farming question. He has said that it is "the most urgent economic problem in our nation today," that "it must be solved," that "we [the republicans] have pledged ourselves to find a solution," and that "an adequate tariff is the foundation of farm relief."

There you have this candidate's position and his promise. But there is much more in his mind on this subject. He esteems our farming population as valuable to us far beyond the utmost range of economics—as life-supporting to our social organism. In no circumstances would he see it "industrialized" out of existence or at all unjustly affected by progressive "industrialization."

"We cannot spare our farmers," said Mr. Hoover. "We cannot afford, we have not the remotest desire, to injure them. For one thing, they are our vast and invaluable reservoir of individualism—the sine qua non of our American civilization. We get regimented in the cities. The farmers and the small business men are our only irreducible individualists."

#### *Task of Keeping Men Free*

Liberty—Mr. Hoover always is talking about it. It is at the core of his feeling and his reasoning. It burns like an altar light in his consciousness. Take economic liberty, for instance. He deems it basic in any structure of freedom. Socialized governments of every kind are fatal to it. Therefore, he is against them. As little government as possible in business, and no business dictatorship in government, voices Mr. Hoover's standpoint touching the right relation between these power units in modern society.

"The government should watch the game," said he. "It should see that nobody marks the cards or loads the dice. If it does more in the direction of actual participation in business, bureaucracy spreads and spreads until it suffocates liberty and extinguishes the primal impulse of the individual."

#### *In the Chamber*

Poverty, as I have said, is not an enemy of liberty. It is both



physical and spiritual malnutrition. It chains people to a narrow experience, a narrow outlook and a deadly lethargy. It is hateful to every normal human sentiment. The mere fear of poverty is morally, and, therefore, materially, destructive. It breaks down the best there is in youth. It is an awful specter to advancing age. It strikes at all the potentialities of national genius. The legend that poverty and high art are natural fellows never was, and never can be, true. Poverty is intolerable in any country zealous for the greatness and the humanity of its civilization.

That is what Mr. Hoover thinks.

"The security, the happiness and the independence of every home"—to quote this leader—are much on his mind. The home, to him, underlies everything else. We shall find our national might and perpetuity there or nowhere. I asked Mr. Hoover if he thought the American home were threatened with disintegration. He did not think so. It is his judgment that our general prosperity is making our homes so healthful and attractive that they are safe and splendid breeding grounds for the nation. Mr. Hoover counts our rising generation the cleanest and most intelligent we ever have produced.

#### Hoover's Prohibition Views

##### Prohibition.

What can we say of the republican pilot's point of view on this question, which may be seen floating upon the current of every political discussion? He is for the retention of the eighteenth amendment and the enforcement of the laws enacted thereunder. Prohibition, as he defines it, is "a great social and economic experiment, noble in motive and far-reaching in purpose." It has been "deliberately undertaken." It must be "worked out constructively." It has engendered "grave abuses." These must be "remedied."

Criticism of it is all right. To seek constitutionally to change it is all right. But nullification cannot be countenanced. "Searching investigation of facts and causes alone can determine the wise method of correcting" the "grave abuses."

So much is official.

But how does Mr. Hoover personally feel about prohibition?

I think I can tell you, though you must not take it as a direct quotation from the republican nominee. I think he believes thoroughly in prohibition. I have not a doubt that he would like to see, and is confident he will see, the "great social and economic experiment, noble in motive and far-reaching in purpose," a complete ultimate success. He believes in it for moral reasons—is convinced it will make better women and men. He believes in it for intellectual reasons—is convinced it will give to America better minds. He believes in it for economic and human reasons—is convinced that it will beget—already is begetting—better mothers, with happier wives, happier children,

richer, more cultivated, more charming, civically more stable and useful homes.

I give you that as Mr. Hoover's individual faith respecting prohibition.

#### Helps Toward Permanent Peace

As to the tariff and restriction of immigration his attitude is known to everybody. He is uncompromisingly for them as essential to our prosperity, and hence to all that our prosperity means to other people. For Mr. Hoover, despite certain foreign prepossessions, would not depress foreign prosperity. He rejoices



*Mr. Hoover's South American cruise ought to be good business and good diplomacy. Since our President-designate (he won't be president-elect, remember, till the electoral votes are formally cast and officially counted) was presumably set in motion by domestic rather than foreign exigencies, there seems no reason to fear that he will bring back with him such a cargo of ill-will as Mr. Wilson brought back from his unlucky excursion to Paris. Mr. Wilson, by force of circumstances, was compelled to appear to the Europeans in the red coat and white whiskers of Santa Claus, whose pack was full of good things for all good children; and after considerable argument as to who were the good children and who were not, it turned out that there were not enough prize packages to go round.*

*Mr. Hoover seems to think, and most people will agree with him, that modern diplomacy is mainly a job for business men. The professionalizing of the American diplomatic service which has been gradually progressing for twenty years past is a good thing, but there seems to be a feeling in Washington that the professionals, the career men, are too much under the tradition of pre-war diplomacy when an ill-chosen phrase might mean the difference between peace and war, and success could be attained by an aptitude for dining out. At any rate Mr. Coolidge has set a callous Vermont foot on the proposal of the career men to regard themselves in a different class from other executive appointees. Some of them were going to ignore the practice of turning in their resignations on March 4; they meant to go right on at the desk, as if we still had the same old President. Possibly Mr. Coolidge also wishes we were going to have the same old President; but he knows that we are not and he is going to make the diplomats know it too.*

—Elmer Davis, in *Life*.

in it. He knows that prosperity anywhere aids prosperity everywhere. He is a thorough convert to the postulate of the interdependence of the world.

Mr. Hoover is for all the principles of the republican platform, including that of adequate national defense as the necessary accompaniment of systematic and ceaseless efforts toward settled international peace. He is for persistence in America's endeavor to develop in the Filipinos qualifications for state-

hood, and for strict fidelity to American traditions in the western hemisphere believing the Monroe doctrine to be exclusively an instrument of justice good will and stability.

We have given some attention to Mr. Hoover's emotional nature and to his way of thinking. What sort of will has he?

The answer is in his record as a private citizen and public man—a record, admittedly, progressive, constructive, distinguished. It is not enough to be broadly sympathetic. It is not enough to think with originality and accuracy and power—at least, not for a man of affairs. This man must have will force of extraordinary quality, for only through the exercise of such force can he crystallize his sentiments and thoughts into tangible achievement.

I have found no one to say that Mr. Hoover's will force ever failed him in his private ambitions—in his career as a mining engineer or international business man—nor in his feeding of the Belgians, nor in his work as American food administrator, nor in his epoch-making labors as a co-ordinative and co-operative influence in the industrial and commercial realms since he accepted the office of secretary of commerce of the United States.

#### JAPANESE PROPHET VISIONS PEACE

Prof. Donsho Kodama, most famous prophet in Japan, using a system descended from ancient times, has announced his latest results at a meeting of the Peers' club under the auspices of Prince Komura, counselor and one of the ablest men in the foreign office, attended by scores of men prominent in governmental and other circles. Prof. Kodama's predictions, which are made annually, attract nationwide attention. Referring to the United States, Prof. Kodama said:

"The great prosperity of the United States will continue. According to the book of divination the cotton crop will be poor, but other crops will be very good and trade will flourish undiminished. Great Britain and Japan will work harmoniously regarding China. The United States will come to the realization of its attitude toward China that its attitude toward Great Britain and Japan in Chinese affairs will be unworkable and as a result it will co-operate with Great Britain and Japan in Chinese affairs."

#### PHILIPPINE LIMERICKS

A daring young girl who was curious  
One day climbed the heights of Calapan  
Burias,

Her skirts were a reminder  
To her boy friend behind her  
That the winds on the cape are just  
furious.

A gracious young modern Priscilla  
Came out from the States to Manila;

The young fellows, who would,  
All did what they could—  
But it took an old timer to thrill her!