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And Evening Chronicle

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● W. C. Dowd, 1865-1927 ●

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The Air Base

It May Not Be Sufficient To Meet Post-War Needs

Before Charlotte gives vent to its enthusiasm over the picture of post-war air development here, and paints pictures of the City as a great terminal for trans-continental and trans-ocean lines, it might be well to survey with a realistic eye the existing equipment for such expansion.

Morris Field, it is no military secret, has been greatly expanded since the Army took over. It is also no secret that Morris Field, though two of its runways have been lengthened to 5,000 feet, is by no means a satisfactory military air base. For that reason, it has never become a training center, and is now a smallish command post — while other fields in the Carolinas have grown to many times its size. Morris Field will not be, during this war, a satisfactory air base.

Bounded by a railway line, a road, and terrain which sheers away on a drop of almost 50 feet, the field has presented several problems. When an estimate was made, with an eye to enlargement, it was found that the cost of lengthening the runways to 7,000 feet would represent a cost of $6,500,000—and the moving of three and a quarter million yards of earth. That was a too-expensive, 18-month job. Thus, so far as the building of a big military base is concerned, Morris Field has turned out to be something short of a whooping success.

As a civilian air base, in the post-war period (providing the property is returned to the City), it should serve admirably for a time. Even now, the big Army bombers take off and land with comfortable margins on the field's runways. It is likely that any transports in use for a decade after the end of the war will be able to use the field. It is with the heavy, swift fighter planes that danger rides.

But, if Charlotte intends to keep pace with future expansion, and meet competition of other cities in the day when commercial planes will require 10,000-foot runways, and air ports will play great parts in community life, then planning should be begun. For Morris Field will not forever answer the needs of Charlotte. So far as the immediate future goes, perhaps, it will serve. As one observer has commented: Though it's not perfect by a long shot, it's just right for us. If it were any worse, we couldn't use it; if it were any better, the Army would keep it for itself.

One great change wrought by this fast, mechanized warfare is that he who fights and runs away is easily caught up with.

Unemployment

It May Become Record-Breaking Problem in the Post-War World

There is disagreement on the future. An American Federation of Labor report, brought to light, forecasts that there will be some 12,000,000 unemployed Americans after the war. A minimum of 7,000,000 jobless is foreseen, even under most favorable conditions. But, at the same time, Expert Roger Babson predicts that a post-war boom is in the cards, to provide old-time prosperity for millions.

Somewhere between the extremes, likely, lies the true course of affairs for tomorrow. There will surely, in the days after peace, be dislocations. War plants will close or convert to other production. If they close or convert suddenly, millions will lose their jobs—at least for several months. And, in the same period, the first of the fighting men will be coming home, seeking their old jobs.

One answer already prepared for that emergency is the voluntary retirement of housewives, the very young and the lame and halt from industry. Those millions, however, may be reluctant to retire, now that they have tasted independence, and became familiar with fat pay checks of their own. Most of them, however, must be dismissed to avoid a serious crisis.

Another enemy of unemployment after peace is planning for the tapering off of production, and switching to the production of civilian goods. There will be great new needs from all nations, and American plants, providing they are converted wisely, over a period of several months, should be ready to fill those needs. Under proper Government supervision, the period of conversion should be short; in the meantime, dismissal pay for soldiers will relieve their temporary burdens.

The AFL report, however, must be seriously regarded. If the Government's planning has been considered, and the net unemployed figure still reaches 12,000,000, then plans should be made anew.

The mountains of Sicily, the hills of Rome, the Italian Alps—the Axis has a nice selection of pretty passes to be brought to.

The Slowdown

Fewer Drunks in County Indicate Beer Ban Works

Business is not so good in County Recorder's Court these days. On a Monday morning, where once the Solicitor struggled through case after case of drunkenness, or drunken driving, he now is able to pace easily through the docket. In normal times, his labors lasted well into the afternoon. Recently, they have ended with noon. No, business is not what it once was.

The most logical supposition as to the cause of the decline is that the local beer ban is having its effect. We are not the ones to suppose that such a ban will prevent men from having their hard liquor, or from stocking up on beer if they wish—but the results are to be seen in the County Court. Drunks are becoming rarer, just as they are in the City Court.

It is the opinion of officials, some of them at least, that the County beer and wine ban, and the City beer ban, have done a great deal toward reducing the production of week-end drunks. And, so long as the trend continues, there will be a great deal of support toward keeping the bans in effect.

We feel no disposition to challenge either figures, trends or reasoning. But we remain unconvinced that these bans are having a miraculous effect upon the thirsty of the community; they never have before. However, so long as the courts mark a noticeable improvement, there can be little immediate honest objection to the bans themselves.

Absolutely not, Benito. Nothing doing on coupons for vacation gas.

Dutch Smiles

A Puppet Butcher Worries Over Good News From Italy

The latest crack in the German morale is a smile on the face of Holland. Arthur Seyss-Inquart, the Quisling of the Lowlands, complains to Berlin that the news from Italy has put all his Dutchmen into a good humor. For the first time since the occupation, there are grins to be seen on the streets. The little tin *Fuehrer* does not like it. He will not brook this insolence. The war goes on with great German successes on every front, yes. But the Dutch must remember that war is a solemn thing. Men must die. There must be no smiles.

Well, there was a time, perhaps, when Herr Hitler himself danced a jig. But that was a gay moment of the war, when France crumbled to her knees. *Der Fuehrer* could laugh and dance. But the Dutch, at the eminently successful delaying action fought by Axis troops in Sicily and Italy, they must not smile.

The men who have been filled with gloom for so many years, and have walked the streets in silence, seeing all about them the ruins of their lives and their country—they are suddenly happy. Perhaps, these dogs, they think they see the coming of the end. Ah, they are so wrong! *Der Fuehrer* is still on the throne, and the armies of Germany are intact. What can the sons of decadent democracy accomplish in the face of the *Wehrmacht*? Nothing, nothing but little victories.

But suppose for a moment, wise Arthur, stuffed ruler of the Dutch. Suppose the stories from Italy are true, that the country is doomed, and that the big bombers will be coming now, in greater and greater numbers. Suppose that Sicily was the first great gap to be knocked in the fortress. What, then, is to become of Seyss-Inquart? Where does his name stand on the black list of the bloody-handed? But why, in such a case as this, have not these dogs, these Dutch, learned the truth for themselves? Why, indeed? . . . Ah, those smiles, those filthy smiles.

At that, Sherman only knew the half of it. He wasn't a civilian through it all.

The Bureau of Minor Research is taking up the study of an Ankara-to-Bern-to-Stockholm rumor, to see how travel has broadened same.

Sicily's Conquest

The Thirty-Eight Days

By Dorothy Thompson

WASHINGTON

THE fall of Messina marked the end of the Sicilian campaign. It was accomplished in 38 days. And all of us owe a debt of deepest gratitude to the officers and men who planned and executed this first conquest of the enemy's own territory. It was meticulously planned, and it was a gratifying demonstration of British, Canadian, and American teamwork.

That the victory was so swift should not lead us to minimize its difficulties. The Axis considered Sicily a main bulwark of their Fortress of Europe. Mussolini began modernizing its fortifications as far back as 1936, during the Ethiopian crisis. Whatever we may think of the Italian soldier, Italy has always been a nation of builders, and Italian engineers second to none.

The terrain was singularly favorable for defense, with every beach overshadowed by steep rocks affording exceptional means of protection. The whole area, also, had a network of airfields, and was full of troops, largely Italian, but also German. Despite the fact that the enemy succeeded in evacuating numbers of these troops, we took more than 130,000 prisoners, which in itself is proof of the military force that was there.

Nor did our officers underrate the seriousness of the adventure. A month before the campaign, Gen. Eisenhower himself intimated that we might "be sent back with bloody heads." The British, Canadian, and American boys, who set out in the darkness faced their task in solemn acceptance of the idea that every one of them had about a 50-50 chance of surviving. That no such casualty list is presented to the American people, is reason for the most humble gratitude to God and good planning.

In the course of the African campaign our soldiers, it was clear, had become veterans, and our staff work immensely improved. We out-generalized the Germans who, hitherto, had been accepted as masters of the art of warfare. The Germans had expected our landing in western Sicily, at Trapani and Marsala, and thus had destroyed all landing facilities at Trapani. In addition, they had concentrated their main force in the western corner, and were greatly surprised when we landed, instead, on the southern tip. Then, they delayed shifting their full weight to the south believing still that the first landing was a trap, and that the landing in force must occur in the west. So we gained valuable days in which to establish our first front.

After the first days we were assisted by two factors, on only the first of which we had counted: superiority of our materiel, and the attitude of the Sicilian population. The Fascist Government had sent out calls for guerrilla warfare. The call was a comedy. Our troops were welcomed by the civilian population with flowers and fruits. This is the first time this has happened anywhere except to Hitler, in Austria and the Sudetenland, when he entered territory inhabited by Germans. The landing of our troops turned into an anti-Fascist demonstration, and cost the position of Mussolini.

It is revelatory that we had better planned our military venture and were better able to exploit its success, than we had foreseen the political developments or have been able to exploit them.

The lull that occurred, after about a fortnight, was due to the natural barrier of Mount Etna. Only those familiar with Sicily can imagine its grandiosity. Etna is more than a great volcanic mountain; it is not one peak but an agglomeration of peaks, arising out of the sea to altitudes of eleven thousand feet. On the lowest levels are groves of citrus fruits, above them forests, and above them naked rocks, filled with caves, excellent as gun positions, and above them deep snows. Such a position can be held by defenders very inferior in numbers. The Etna massif, fills more than half of the breadth of Sicily. We had to by-pass it through other, very difficult mountains, all of which it overlooked. That we succeeded is one of the most admirable details of the campaign.

The conquest of Sicily puts us two miles from the Italian mainland. We can bombard it from land and penetrate it fully and easily by air. We are masters of the Tyrrhenian Sea—Italy's channel waters. We are in full possession of the transit routes through the Mediterranean, shortening our communication lines by thousands of miles to the Near East and all Asia. We are near the Balkans. And we have proven that we can land, from the sea, on enemy soil, fortified and protected by enemy forces.

That this success comes in the same moment when the Russians are advancing, and when our joint Anglo-American military staffs are planning new campaigns in Quebec is a good omen. Our admiration and gratitude pour out to our Commanders-in-Chiefs, our officers, and the brave young Anglo-American soldiers, who in the last 38 days made world history.

The Selection Is Rather Limited This Year

—By Dorman Smith

A Strangage Lobby

The Merry-Go-Round

By Drew Pearson

WASHINGTON

DON'T be surprised if Hollywood opens one of the strongest and strangest—lobbies ever set up in Washington. The film companies are making plans to this effect, and the lobby would not be to influence legislation, but to keep Congress acquainted with the multiple problems of Hollywood. The film industry now ranks, after farming, automobiles and steel, as one of the most important in the U. S. A. The farm lobby is all-powerful in Washington. Automobiles and steel are potently represented through the U. S. Chamber of of Commerce, the National Manufacturers Association, as well as their own private lobbies.

But Hollywood so far has let its views percolate to Congress through glamour girl photos plus Will Hays' peregrinations between New York, Washington and Hollywood. Hays has been equally ineffective. Will Hays is now as dead politically as the Harding Administration which spawned him. He carries no weight in Washington. Two years ago, the film moguls hoped that the appointment of Wendell Willkie as counsel in the Senate "Smear" investigation, and later his chairmanship of 20th Century Fox, would help Hollywood.

But today, through no fault of Willkie's they believe Col. McCormick's Chicago Tribune attacks against Hollywood are motivated as much by his dislike of Willkie as his objection to what he calls "New Deal Propaganda" in Mission to Moscow. That is why film industry leaders want to establish a streamlined, non-political lobby right in the Nation's Capitol.

Capital Chaff

Quite a few Italian soldiers in Sicily undressed, hid their uniforms, put on overalls and went home to work to avoid becoming prisoners. . . . Tom-Corcoran, the ex-Brain Trust'er, is helping his old friend Mayor Ed Kelly and his ex-Boss Jesse Jones in a proposed amalgamation of Chicago's street car lines, busses, elevated and alleged subway. . . . Milo Perkins got off to Mexico this week to be gone until November—the first vacation in seven years. . . . The State Department's chief of the American Republic Division blue-blood conservative Phil Bonsal, thinks "For Whom the Bell Tolls" is entirely suitable for foreign distribution. Paramount censored most of the anti-France criticism out of it.

Britain Backs Down

It was not generally known, but when Madame Chiang Kai-shek was in the U. S. A. it was planned to present her with a gift of two Liberty ships which she was to christen. Then suddenly the gift was mysteriously held up. Now, several months later, it has been decided to present China with the two Liberty ships. Behind this is one of the most important economic decisions made by the British Empire since the war began the decision to pay Chinese seamen the same wages as British.

Inside reason why the two Liberty vessels were withheld from Madame Chiang was because the Chinese proposed British-scale wages to the crews on these ships. This would have meant agitation by 10,000 Chinese seamen on British ships throughout the world. For a time this developed into an embarrassing, almost ugly argument. The Chinese Government felt that it had a right to pay its seamen any wages it wished on the two new Liberty ships we were giving Madame Chiang. But the British, supported by the War Shipping Administration, opposed.

The argument got down to the very roots of Empire dominance; down to Britannia's rule over the seven seas. For what most people don't realize is that hundreds of British ships are manned by low-paid Chinese sailors. In peacetimes, Chinese seamen sail on every British merchant ship on the Pacific. Thousands of them ply up and down the Yangtze River, along the China coast, among the South Sea Islands—all under British captains and the British flag. In wartime, their number has been perhaps greater, due to the terrific casualties among British seamen.

U. S. vs. British

The lower wage scale paid to Chinese is one way British shipping has been able to squeeze out American shipping in peacetime; also one reason why American ships have registered under the Panamanian flag. The Jones-LaFollette Act sets up labor standards aboard American registry ships far superior to those among Chinese crews on British ships.

So after the last war, the American flag, despite the greatest shipping tonnage in the world's history, gradually disappeared from the seven seas. But now the British have taken a step which may mean more equalized wage competition after the war. They have agreed to pay Chinese seamen the same scale as British.

The British did not make this decision easily. Obviously they recognized the ramifications it would have on the Empire after the war. Sir Arthur Salter negotiated regarding the matter for weeks. Lord Leathers, head of the British Ministry of War Transport, made a special trip to this country. In the end, Prime Minister Churchill himself sat in on the discussions. Finally, the increased wage was agreed to not because of Madame Chiang Kai-shek and her two stymied Liberty ships, but because of heavy Chinese desertions from British ships in American harbors.

After the war, of course, the British can reduce wages. Also they are still below the American scale.

Side Glances

"Here comes the farmer who owns this land and the place looks a sight—hurry up, George, and put on your shoes!"

We Must Answer

America's Stand?

By Raymond Clapper

WASHINGTON

IN SUCH discussions as those at Quebec and in the many others that must follow, President Roosevelt's influence would be stronger if clear American public sentiment indicated the main broad lines this nation desired to follow. When Congress returns after its current vacation among the people, it will be in a position to indicate through discussion and resolutions where the American people stand.

A most welcome and constructive reform is being worked out now under the leadership of Senator Vandenberg so that many questions relating to foreign policy may be decided by a majority vote of both Houses. In these times it is inviting disaster to make our decisions dependent upon a veto power exercised by one-third of the Senate. That requirement has forced the Executive to resort to devious methods of avoiding reference to Congress at all.

Foreign policy not based on national self-interest is on weak ground. It loses strength also if based alone on Presidential edict, arrived at in dead secret and reported by newspaper men working under military restrictions as at the battlefront. A wise Presidential policy will have more force at home and abroad if buttressed by clear evidence of active public support. We do not realize that in foreign countries people remember what happened to Wilson and wonder if it will happen again.

Under such conditions America cannot exert the influence that it should exert. It is not alone things that we might want to do. We also want to prevent others from making decisions that might be against our interests. For self-protection, we need to have our full strength behind our foreign policy.

One of the first questions to be answered is whether we want to use force to make the victory stick. In other words, do we want to compel Germany to disarm and stay disarmed? Do we want to forbid her from taking tanks and airplanes, for instance? Do we want to use force in keeping Italy on the safe track? That is a fairly immediate question. How much force we shall use after the armistice is the central question to be decided before we can move on with peace and reconstruction.

Our side has been confident that might makes right. We have believed that he is thrice armed whose cause is just. We had high ethics. Yet while we disarmed, Japan fortified the Pacific Islands. Britain went blissfully to sleep while Hitler built airplanes. Just a year ago the Axis almost broke through at Suez which might have made victory impossible for us. Our vast resources are being turned into military force that will win, but our indifference to force almost proved our downfall.

The surest way to make the victory mean nothing would be to fight and have our men killed in order to disarm the enemy and force him to surrender—and then permit him to begin rearming. But you will never prevent Germany or Japan from rearming by sitting at the Wishing Well with little Snow White. We will have to use force to prevent it. That means inspectors. That means bombing fleets ready to move in if there is any violation of disarmament restrictions. Are we ready to face that? We ought to say.

In such an argument I would strongly favor the side of force. We can disarm a nation and still allow economic and political freedom within the restrictions. American civilians are not permitted to carry concealed weapons. But we are still free citizens, with the ballot, free speech, and opportunity to work our way economically. Could it not be the same with a nation? Germany could be disarmed and still have her elections, free speech and the right to trade everywhere.

That is the kind of broad question that Congress, as spokesman for the American people, could decide now.

An Easy Win

Unplotted Course

By Samuel Grafton

NEW YORK

IT is a grand triumph to have captured Sicily without knowing what we intend to do with it. I say this quite sincerely. It is a triumph of organization, a triumph of the spirit of democratic compromise. The debate back home as to what we ought to do with conquered territory has not kept us and our Allies from conquering same.

We conquer, in a sense, in the spirit in which we live; we do both as a kind of day-to-day proposition. We do not care much, at the moment, for final purposes. If the only way to get through the day is to conquer Sicily, well, then, let us conquer Sicily and get through the day.

And we do it. It is not wholly bad. I like, and I believe the world likes, the American soldier and his spirit of competent willingness without fanaticism; the soldier who is equally ready for a battle or a furlough, and is able to concentrate business-like attention upon either one.

However, the world presses us for explanations. What do we intend to do with Europe? We find it ever harder to say (what is true) that we do not have the least idea. We have no national purpose beyond not being beaten. We are not like professional Germans, who cannot take a drink of water without reflecting that it is German water, created specially for German kidneys which, in turn, were specially designed with an eye toward the conquest of the World. We drink because we are thirsty. We fight because this is the year for fighting. If it were the year for peace, we would be just as pleased; or more so. We do not fight because we want a certain state of affairs to be established ten years from now, we fight because fighting is the assigned task for this year, without which we cannot get through the year safely or well.

The good thing about us is that, even though we do not look beyond the corner of this year, we are still able to fight like hell. But the world continues to demand long-range reasons. So we invent some. We are going to occupy Germany; we are going to take over German schools and teach democracy in them; we are going to destroy Germany as a military force, etc., etc.

But these are not actually our war aims at all. These are merely things it is possible to say without starting too much of a dispute at home. So we say them. They sound resolute. Actually, when we do conquer territory, as in Sicily, our administration of it is quite mild. It is day-to-day administration. Just as our fighting is day-to-day fighting; we fix the waterworks and set up traffic policemen, and then we call it a job, content to let next year take care of itself.

We put some Fascists in jail, but, on the whole, we probably concentrate more strenuously on exterminating the local mosquitoes.

Well, we built America in just that day-to-day way, and a good job, too. The difficulty, as one very able student of history has remarked to me, is that we need an enormous margin for error in order to succeed so aimlessly. You have to be very rich and have a lot of time to be able to make huge mistakes and still recover from them. rich enough to cut down forests that should never have been cut down, to dig up soil that should never have been dug up, and still get by. Is there such a wide margin for error in Europe?