THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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Joe Ervin

Joe Ervin's strange, untimely death in Washington yesterday lent tragic accent to Christmas for thousands of North Carolinians who knew and respected him.

The Congressman, at the beginning of a career in national politics after two decades devoted to the practice of law and to public service in Charlotte, had acquitted himself well during his first term, so well he seemed virtually assured of reelection without serious opposition next Summer.

His tireless devotion to the affairs of his constituents, and his earnest approach to national problems, had earned him the respect of his colleagues. "Joe's the hardest-working young fellow we've got up here," Representative Doughton, dean of the North Carolina delegation, said. No freshman Congressman attracts much attention in Washington, but Joe Ervin had done as well or better than most of his fellow first-termers.

The spectacular manner of his death is likely to becloud the fact that his passing is a real tragedy for Mecklenburg. His services to this county, as citizen, attorney and minor office-holder, were many and varied. And after he was elevated to the Congress he remained as available as ever: it was his practice to establish a sort of open court when visiting Charlotte and to hear every constituent who cared to talk about his troubles.

We had regarded his brief career in Congress as a most promising one, and had looked forward to its fruitful development. Now we can only hope that he found the peace he sought, and express here our deep appreciation for his past services.

A Lonely Christmas

All through this holiday we have been haunted by a vision of little Jimmy Byrnes in Moscow, far from his own hearth at Christmas time and weighed down with the heavy responsibility that took him away from Carolina at this sentimental season.

There is a striking parallel between the three Foreign Ministers and the three Wise Men; they all came seeking a better world, and if Messrs. Byrnes, Molotov and Bevin can arrive at a real hope for peace they will have done almost as well as those who came to Bethlehem.

We have had little news of the conference; about all the correspondents could get through the veil of Russian censorship was an intimation of their own optimism. We do know, however, that several urgent matters were on the roster—the atom, control of Germany, settlement of a good many of the tender territorial differences in Central Europe.

Even if the Foreign Ministers agree all the way down the line, there will still remain a great area of disagreement between Russia on one side and the United States and Britain on the other. But if, sitting down together at Christmastime, the Foreign Ministers can work out solutions to the surface problems that have divided us, there will be reason to hope that we are on our way to dissolving those basic differences that lie far deeper.

Jimmy Byrnes has an opportunity to bring home with him the finest Christmas present his country ever had — agreements that will serve as the beginning of a real Big Three accord. And it would, of course, also be a Christmas present for all the world, for there can be no peace, nor any hope of peace, until the Big Three regain the unity that brought them so recently to victory.

It seems such a simple problem when it is set down in words, and yet it is so terribly difficult. For agreement involves the mutual yielding of that sovereignty which nations have always cherished. We doubt if this has been a merry Christmas for Jimmy Byrnes, for he must have heard the words of the old carol: "The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight . . ."

Out Of The Groves

The atom apparently started it. At any rate scientists are bursting out of their ivory towers and smelly laboratories the length and the breadth of the land, making speeches, organizing committees, testifying before Congressional investigators, writing letters to the editor, even buttonholing strangers in bars.

This is a slightly shocking spectacle, of course, for Americans have long been taught that the professors are dreamy fellows, capable of splitting an atom, perhaps, but certain to get lost if allowed to go downtown alone. University executives are not prepared to cope with this strange and frightening predilection for public debate, and some, at least, are looking upon their released charges with horror.

It has nothing to do with the atom, of course, but a North Carolina professor seems to have talked himself into the bad graces of his college administration. Ross Steven, a North Carolina State biologist on leave, has been ordered by State's Chancellor, J. H. Harrelson, to cease and desist from participation in the controversy centering around a proposal to remove the Division of Game and Inland Fisheries from the Department of Conservation and Development.

In a rather hurt tone, the Chancellor remarked: "Stevens was given a leave of absence to assist with the game program in North Carolina. It was our understanding he would serve in the capacity of biologist."

It seems, however, that Mr. Stevens has spent his time organizing chapters of the North Carolina Wildlife Association throughout the state and whipping up support for a separation of Game and Fisheries. That, according to the Association's President Page, was what he was hired for, and what the College understood he would do.

Well, it's a quite a little controversy, certain to involve the question of Mr. Stevens' academic freedom before it's over. Who is to draw the line? Certainly Mr. Stevens would enter without hesitation into a learned debate with his colleagues over the ancestry of the red-breasted titwee and no Chancellor living would dare question his right to do so. Is it, then, out of his province to work for what seems to him a better system of protecting the state's wildlife?

We don't know, and we'd hate to have to hand down a final opinion. But we are certain that there will be more and more professorial controversies as time goes on. It isn't very logical to lock away on a campus the men who have devoted their lives to gathering information on subjects that turn up at the center of raging public debates. On the other hand, it is important to keep the professors free of political pressure, and when they step outside their cells they are immediately subjected to it.

The matter, we think, will finally be solved by the scientists themselves. Already they show a marked aptitude for controversy, and a good many of them seem to enjoy it. We doubt if they will ever be cornered and locked away on the hill again, and we are delighted to see them coming down to breathe the tainted, controversial air that prevails down here in the bottomland.

From The Asheville Citizen:

A Child And Society

Governor Cherry assumes full responsibility for the case of Ernest Brooks "in the light of my best judgment."

In that merciful judgment, we think, North Carolina will fully concur. Ernest was 13 days less than 15 years old when he committed a crime particularly heinous in the mores of this State. He was convicted and sentenced to die. The Governor's timely intercession commutes the death sentence to life imprisonment.

This Negro boy from New Hanover County is truly a case study in the record of one of society's failings. The rapist and burglar gets short shrift from the laws which govern the conduct of men. But when a child stumbles into waywardness, where is the blame?

Last April Governor Cherry commuted the death sentence of an Alexander County white youth of tender age who had shot and killed a law enforcement officer. He said profoundly at the time: "I do not feel that the State of North Carolina should execute a child. We cannot hold him to the same degree of responsibility to which we hold an adult."

From this precedent the Governor expands a philosophy. He finds that the blame for Ernest's deeds falls in part "upon the citizenship of our State who fail to correct the conditions of society which neglect to give proper environment for the under-privileged."

This is a stern indictment, no less stern in larger aspects than the indictment which society first brought against Ernest Brooks. The State cannot execute a child, but it must imprison him for life. What can it do in enlightened best judgment to salvage the other Ernests whom crime may beckon and destroy?

A couple of atoms were discussing a third who had dropped out of sight. "I wonder," one suggested, "if he's gone fission."

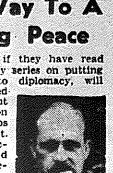
"Goering told Mussolini that the Luftwaffe would crush England." Little by little, one comes to understand what made the late Duce's eyes bulge.

A voice on the bus: "For Christmas I always buy him a necktie like the one he has on, and in 25 years have had no complaints."

Drew Pearson

Christ Pointed The Way To A Lasting Peace

SOME people, if they have read thisfar in my series on putting Christianity into diplomacy, will have concluded that I am a nut on the question of peace. Perhaps they are right. In that connection I should warn that I belong to a religious group, the Society of Friends (Quakers), which tries to practice the doctrine of peace.



With that warning, therefore, I return to the fact that Christ was a Man who went out and worked at His religion. He didn't stay in one place. He didn't hide His candlestick under a bushel. He battled so hard for His cause of peace on earth, good will toward men that eventually He sacrificed His life.

He had what He thought was a great idea and He traveled day and night trying to sell it.

Now we in this country have a great form of Government and a great basic concept of getting along with our neighbors. And it's time we went out as Christ did and tried to sell our American religion.

SELLING THE IDEA

We can't sit passive in big, ornate houses as most of our Ambassadors do, giving ritzy cocktail parties for upper-crust old ladies and other has-beens. Our diplomats have got to go out and talk to the real folks that make up the backbone of the country.

This is not just a theory. It works out in practice that when the people of a country are behind you, and don't have to worry about their Government, their Government, even an out-and-out dictatorship, can't make war on you. The people won't let 'em.

Take, for instance, the case of Joe Stalin in 1942 and '43. He was constantly griping because we didn't start a second front against the Nazis. And in order to spur us into a second front, he kept hinting that he might make a separate peace with Germany. U. S. advisers were worried about this. But Churchill wasn't. He kept telling Roosevelt that there wasn't a chance in the world that Stalin would make a separate peace with Germany because the Russian people wouldn't let him. He would be kicked out of office overnight.

Take some other cases nearer home. We and our Pan-American neighbors have probably done a better job of warding off wars than the rest of the world, partly because we have a free press and can mobilize opinion. Several times within the last decade, Colombia, Peru and Ecuador have been on the verge of war. Once or twice their armies actually started to march. But their neighbors all sat round the ring, held on to their coat-tails, and fanned public opinion into a hot flame against the foolishness of war. In the end the South American generals, who were the only ones who actually wanted to fight, had to take a back seat.

SHIRT-SLEEVE DIPLOMACY

This took a lot of hard, skillful work. The men who did it—Sumner Welles, Oswaldo Aranha of Brazil, Padilla of Mexico and others—didn't just sit back and say they had faith that things would come out all right. They didn't merely sit around at cocktail parties. They went out as Christ did and sat in all-night conferences, and they put their nerves trying to hammer home the religion of peace. And, most of all, they mobilized public opinion against war.

Another dispute which General Pershing tried to settle was the Tacna-Arica row between Chile and Peru. It dragged on until armies were lined up on both sides ready to invade. Finally, Carlos Davila, a practical Chilean diplomat, persuaded both sides to resume diplomatic relations and go about the normal business of trade and cultural intercourse for a couple of years. During that period, the people of both countries discovered what good friends they could be and there hasn't been any trouble since.

In other words, if the people of one country like and understand the people of another, no Government of dictator or clique of generals can push them into war.

SOVIET FEARS DEMOCRACY

That brings us back to the all-important problem of Russia, which our military men frankly classify as a serious potential enemy. Basically, however, there should be no quarrel between the Russian and American people. We have no territory to argue over, and nothing to quarrel about.

They don't want their people to mix with ours, they don't want American newspaper men or preachers to circulate over there. They don't even like children of the Russian Embassy in Washington going to our schools. Because they have seen that wherever a good Russian Communist stays long in this country he comes to realize that we have a pretty good system and he becomes ruined for keeps as a Communist.

FRIENDLY AND TOUGH

They are much more afraid of democracy than even the Chicago Tribune is of Communism. But a Secretary of State who is both wise, friendly, and tough can do it. And by doing it, the side-problems of Iran, Turkey and the Balkans will solve themselves. An enlightened and more democratic Russian people, their suspicions allayed, eventually will force the politburo to behave differently toward their neighbors.

Of course, I may be crazy and a chronic liar, but anyway this is my small Christmas contribution to the goal of a warless world which I am convinced is quite possible of attainment.

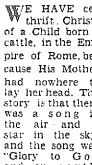
Along About 1975

Dorothy Thompson

The Star Was An Atomic Bomb

NEW YORK

WE HAVE celebrated a spendthrift Christmas, the birthday of a Child born in a stable, among cattle, in the Empire of Rome, because His Mother had nowhere to lay her head. The story is that there was a song in the air and a star in the sky, and the song was "Glory to God and on earth, peace and good Will to all men."



But:

"Here night descends. Everywhere starvation, disease, cold, degradation, despair. In Czechoslovakia a million children destitute. In Hungary, no bread after Feb. 1. In Poland, unimaginable distress . . . anguish. In Berlin, infant mortality 50 per cent."

—Report from Europe to the Unitarian Service Committee.

The simple people among whom He was born and grew up thought the fulfillment of Isaiah was at hand.

"For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given,
And the Government shall be upon His shoulder.
And His name shall be called
Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father,
The Prince of Peace."

Men disputed about the story, and skeptics said it was a myth, and traced its origin to ancient cults. But when Rome, the mighty world empire, was falling, and people were in despair, as they are when the world is slipping out from under their feet, the strange Christians had the promise of eternity, and security in the community of faith and love, which is the strongest community of all.

THE GREAT COLLAPSE

When the great collapse came, the greatest ever until now, the despised Christians saved what there was to save and when the dark lifted the age of Christendom came.

There were no nations, there was Christendom, and the early and middle part of the age was great—perhaps the greatest—until corruption stole in, and war and the Black Death corroded the social fabric, and the reformation exploded the unity, and nations and nationalism took form, and there were many sorts of Christmas.

But the story persisted, and those who were too skeptical for faith had to believe in it, too, in their own way. Its persistance revealed in itself a human necessity and therefore a truth. It was a truth that human beings—born to die—whose lives are full of suffering and war and wickedness and frustration ever hope for the Son of Man who will reign without force in the City of God; in the community which is a brotherhood; in the time when men and nations shall be reconciled. Aspiration is truth, and lives were tested by One Life, and in the very wickedest times, of which this is one, there was always that Image, so attractive and so disturbing, that drew men unto it.

SECULAR THEOCRATS

Strong rulers, the secular theocrats, were ever afraid of that Image. When Hitler put up gas chambers he had to indoctrinate youths actively to scorn the Image so that it would not rise before their eyes when they were doing that which would have seared their souls if they were permitted to have souls; if their souls were not first killed, so they could destroy other people's bodies.

At the Kremlin Square the Revolution had written "Religion is an Opiate of the People." But when the invaders came and towns were burned and people butchered, more was needed than a material creed. All material things were lost, all suffering was equal.

Then if the Image were an opiate it was for endurable or intolerable pain. It was, and is, the Promise.

On the birthday of Jesus, there were millions of children being born in stables and caves, of mothers who had nowhere to lay their heads, and there was no song in the air or star in the sky. And because we cannot bear that we turned our faces from it. We bought out all the stores; we lighted up Christmas to a dazzle so that the Christmas dazzle would blind out Christmas — the child born in a stable and the gospel of love.

STRANGE CHRISTMAS

That is why it was a strange Christmas, with the star in the sky was perhaps an atom bomb, and peace was persecution and war unending and even those who do not believe in the Image could not forget its troubling and its joy. It is always there—always holding out that hope of reconciliation and brotherhood, that can be realized only by man himself, who wants and longs for it, but will not strive for it.

From The Saturday Review:

To Fit The Crime

HOW GREAT a poet was Ezra Pound is open to question. Some of his poems belong to the permanent literature of the United States—a country which for many years he has attacked ignorantly and with contempt. Yet the false scholarship, the excessive eccentricity, and the confused thought and emotion of much of his poetical work show something less than greatness. As a technician, he was superb. As literary pioneer and prophet, he foresaw in the early nineteen hundreds literary trends of the future; indeed some of his poems read now incredibly as if they had been written in what was then the future. Unintentionally he was powerful in shaping and strengthening the modes and tendencies of at least two decades, and his influence upon some of his younger contemporaries can scarcely be exaggerated.

Yet this is no alibi for a charge of treason. As poet, even more than an ordinary man, is responsible in proportion to his talents. The excerpts from Pound's Italian broadcasts attacking the Allied cause and America in wartime are proof that he was a traitor to his country. They are proof of an even more deadly charge for which he might be tried in Nuremberg, if not here. He was a traitor, and especially as man of letters, to the cause of humanity and of civilization. He preferred the Fascist way, and urged that brute power should be allowed to succeed by brutality. He despised his fellow men, except tyrants, their instruments and their parasites. Because he desired a world order in which Mussolinis and Ezra Pounds could satisfy their egomanias.

Pound's punishment should fit his crime. As a poet, he deserves death. But Pound the man, when he was not a verse-maker, Pound of the broadcasts, the prose pamphlets, and private letters, was a muddled and mediocre mind, easily deluded by childish fallacies in government and economics. And this mind was clearly an unbalanced mind, unable to disentangle reality from wishful thinking. He was, as many unpublished documents, and some published ones, show, intemperate, abusive, violent without discrimination, obscene, and mendacious in his language to a degree that in a less scientific age would have been called insanity, but for which modern phychiatry has a more accurate name. As a poet, when he was a poet, Pound was responsible. But when he was not a poet, and often when he was writing poetry that lacked only a balanced mind behind it to make it great, he was irresponsible. His vituperative letters were often a far more accurate revelation of himself than of his enemies.

Such a man should not escape penalty for his misdeeds. The analogy with the great Dante who attacked his native Florence from his place of exile will not hold for a instant, and not because of the dispagity between the men. Dante with all his faction was driven out of Florence in what amounted to civil war. It would have been death for him to have returned. He changed his skies and his allegiance by necessity. Pound, an expatriate by choice, retained his American citizenship, expecting that if he came home he would be howled at for his incivilities. Instead, when he did come, he was invited to dinner!

Death is not the right punishment for a muddled mind, whose treason, even, was muddled and ineffective. Louis Untermeyer has suggested that he be given life imprisonment in a cell lined with the poetry of Eddie Guest. Mr. Pound would probably prefer hanging. But let his punishment fit the crime.

"Hope they'll have some new cars on the road in '46—everybody drivin' so slow and careful, can't make a livin' no more!"

Marquis Childs

Old School Tie In The G. O. P.

WASHINGTON

NO Christmas gift could mean more to the nation than a new and courageous leadership for the Republican Party. In the national stocking that would rate very high.

The two-party system is vital to our political well being. In ordinary times we could worry along with two parties that had all the striking differences of those famous twins, Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

But these are not ordinary times. It is not enough today to sit back and hope that eventually the political grand prize will fall into your lap. It is not enough to count on the force of reaction to sweep the party into power.

This may explain why the GOP got such a drubbing, both from within and without the party, after the recent National Committee meeting in Chicago. The so-called platform that came out of the Chicago meeting was so vague and so shaky that it would not support even a mouse; to say nothing of a large and ancient elephant.

Then when Chairman Herbert Brownell appointed a national policy committee to inject more vigor into the interim platform, he named to that committee for the most part the reactionary moguls who have kept the elephant in chains. These are the same men who have helped to lose earlier elections.

GOOD MATERIAL

What makes this seem even sadder is that there is good material within the party. There are vigorous men and women; men and women with ideas who never seem to get a hearing. They are here in Congress; they are back in the States.

In fact, I believe that the raw material of a revolt within the Republican Party is at hand. What is more, the party has a man who could lead that revolt. Under former Governor and former Capt. Harold Stassen the Republicans could take the progressive leadership away from the Democratic Party.

President Truman's course has been uncertain and often confused. He is badly handicapped by the Southern reactionaries who are determined to keep any program within narrow bounds.

STASSEN'S OPPORTUNITY

This is the opportunity for a young leader like Stassen who is not handicapped by previous commitments and past prejudices. Yet what do you hear about Stassen? You hear that the powers within the Republican Party are determined to kill him off before 1948.

They may succeed in killing him off. It is hard to be on your own in the face of a tight organization with old school tie of cash paid on the line through the years and unflagging party loyalty count for more than anything else.

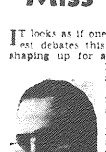
If the revolt comes, it will have to come from within the party. It will have to unseat the men and women who think the Republican Party is their personal property because for years they have put up the dollars to keep the top organization going.

Conceivably reaction might sweep the GOP into national power. But the danger is the sweep would go so far that we would end up with something very like fascism.

Samuel Grafton

Preparing To Miss A Bus

NEW YORK



IT looks as if one of the roughest and wildest debates this country has ever seen is shaping up for along about next April or May. The stage is being set for an emergency: we are preparing a predicament for ourselves. For all of the powers the President needs to "hold the line" against inflation, and against homelessness, and against improvident use of short materials, are set to expire on June 30; and it is quite clear that Congress intends to sit the situation out for at least four months, that it proposes to take the issues up only at the eleventh hour, when a fumble can send the whole structure toppling.

The Office of Price Control is visibly frightened: the Wall Street Journal reports that price officials feel controls may break down and "just be ignored" if the final hour is allowed to approach without signs of Congressional action. It is not hard to visualize an almost hysterical situation which could arise if, say, only five or six weeks of legal price control remained, and Congress were in a snarl. No business man would be able to sign a contract for future delivery, he would not know what prices to insert on the appropriate dotted lines; and many producers would be tempted to hold off sales entirely until the question were resolved.

ANOTHER DEADLINE

Along with price control, the President's general priorities powers are scheduled to die on June 30. They were originally set to end on Dec. 31 of this year, and have been extended for a meager six months only in the past few days; one more indication of how Congress favors the last minute, or skin-of-your-teeth approach to these basic questions of reconversion.

The Administration had asked for a year's additional time, but Senator Taft led the fight to make it six months, and won, with the help of 23 other Republicans, six Southern Democrats, and one Progressive. (More than 30 Senators were absent, though one additional vote on behalf of the President would have thrown the issue into a tie, and two would have saved his plan.)

So there you have it: Senator Taft promises that Congress will watch reconversion developments, and around April or May, will provide an additional extension, if necessary. But while it is all very well for Congress to say it will watch business trends, and be guided accordingly, the truth of the matter is that business watches Congress and is guided accordingly.

If builders, for example, feel that Congress is hostile to the priorities powers (which the President is using to channel lumber, etc., into lower-cost homes) they may spend the next four months arguing against priorities, instead of building; whereas if the priorities powers had been extended for a year, they might go ahead and build. Congress cannot be so naive as to believe that its actions do not affect the business picture, which it declares itself so meekly to be objectively studying.

TO MISS A BUS

It is rather absurd to sit around and wait for an emergency which one knows perfectly well is coming, like Arbor Day; and a number of our legislators may make unconvincing figures when they come running into the arena on that morning, bidding us to make some hasty stab in the dark at our problems because, puff, puff, we are short of time. It does not promote domestic tranquillity, or improve our internal tone, to see such an elaborate build-up for the quite simple business of missing a bus.