THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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TUESDAY, MAY 7, 1946.

How Does It Look In Russia?

ON the eve of the first anniversary of V-E Day President Truman has urged upon Congress an "Inter-American Military Co-operation Act", designed to establish a military sone of influence in this hemisphere. We have no doubt at all of Mr. Truman's sincerity when he insists that the measure is necessary to maintain "peace and security". But we wonder, as always, what the hyper-suspicious Russians will think of a nation which insists upon the absolute national integrity of Russia's small neighbors but plans in its own backwick a program of military collaboration "including the training, organization and equipment of the armed forces of those countries."

The act is based on the principle Mr. Truman enunciated months ago when he came out for universal military training and against sharing atomic secrets. Our survival, in his view, depends upon military strength; if we avoid war it will only be because we are so powerful no nation will dare fight us. America, being virtuous, and historically a non-aggressor, can then become the keeper of the peace.

We have held from the beginning that no government can subscribe to this theory and at the same time place its faith in the United Nations. The concept of security based on individual military might is inimicable to the plan to outlaw aggression through international co-operation, which is the UN's stated function. Moreover, since the UN's survival depends directly upon agreement between the dominant members, any act which leads to the further deterioration of Russo-American relations, as this one certainly will, becomes a direct and immediate threat.

We assume that Mr. Truman considered all these things before he burst forth with his Inter-American plan at this peculiarly tense moment. And if he did, we can only conclude that he has abandoned his original faith in UN. Information available to him, which he has not seen fit to transmit to the people, must have led him to believe that there is a chance, at least, that Russia plans for aggression.

But if Mr. Truman is wrong about Russia's intentions, the act of arming ourselves and our neighbors will strengthen Russia's deep-rooted suspicion of our motives, and force her to plan similarly for her own security.

Certainly it will step up her effort to install "friendly" governments around her borders, which will in turn, increase American and British suspicion of Russia's "expansionist" motives.

Around and around we go, and the dream of peace withers before our eyes.

John L. Lewis Is Forcing The Issue

IN a queer, perverse way, John L. Lewis appears to be enjoying the knowledge that his arrogance has finally left him without a friend in the world outside the miners' union he carries in his pocket. The liberal support that once sustained him has long since vanished. The Communists will have no part of such a rugged individual. Other labor leaders, even in his own AF of L, realize that his defiance is a threat to all of organized labor. Instead of convincing him that he is wrong, this seems only to convince Mr. Lewis that everybody else is. And so he is preparing now for the role of martyr, which suits his Shakespearian talents so well.

John Lewis has been winning his annual Spring contest with the coal miners so regularly most of us have forgotten that he ever lost a strike. But he did, and he very nearly lost his union with it. It was in 1927, when the UMW stayed out of the mines for seven months while Lewis battled for an industry-wide contract. Then the miners started to drift back to work despite his purple exhortations, and the UMW went down in inglorious defeat. Lewis had to publicly admit that the strike was a failure and permit his local leaders to negotiate their own contracts. And the UMW began to disintegrate; by 1933 the majority of the bituminous miners were again unorganized.

It is clear that the New Deal program of labor legislation created John Lewis, permitted him to become a major threat to the national economy. It isn't particularly important that nobody in the New Deal intended to run up such a Frankenstein's monster, or that Lewis himself soon came to scorn Franklin Roosevelt and all his works. The important consideration now, we think, is that somewhere in that mass of New Deal labor legislation there were omissions and gaps that made it possible for the sound theory of collective bargaining to be employed as an instrument of dictatorship, first within a union and finally far beyond it. The fact that the great majority of labor leaders, being responsible and patriotic citizens, have not abused these new powers is almost irrelevant. John Lewis has demonstrated what can be done by an able labor leader without moral principle. He has made it clear that we must overhaul our labor laws.

We have noted before the danger of undertaking any such project now, when the Administration is weak to the point of impotence, the Congress is busy demonstrating its own brand of irresponsibility, and the temper of the people is ragged and uncertain. This is a task for statesmen who recognize that the right of working men to organize, bargain collectively and strike must somehow be protected. It will be enormously difficult at best; at the moment, when we are cursed by a dearth of statesmen, it may be impossible.

It may yet be possible to patch up some sort of compromise that will take us past this crisis. But it will be a compromise with the devil; John Lewis, in blind arrogance, has insisted on forcing the issue. We can only hope—and its a thin hope—that this one baleful old man will not insure by his own defeat the defeat of a thousand honest, responsible labor leaders.

Visitor From The Far Left

IN some ways Max Lerner, who recently paid a flying visit to the South, is as much a stranger in these parts as those English and French visitors of the pre-Civil War day who used to junket through the region and carefully note their impressions for posterity. Certainly Mr. Lerner, who occupies a position on the far left, comes from a greater ideological distance, and perhaps his notebook, which he has since transcribed onto the editorial page of *PM* is of even greater interest.

Mr. Lerner wrote his piece from Atlanta, which he considers the South's capital, and he was highly encouraged to find in Georgia something like a political revolution in progress. He notes, with pleasure, that recent enfranchisement of the Negro has also liberated the white voter, and that registration for primary elections is moving toward a new high. And he rejoices with the natives over the fact that Gene Talmadge's Cracker Party recently took a beating in Richmond County.

Mr. Lerner notes encouraging signs of what he calls "three essentials for releasing the progressive potential in the South." They are the repeal of the poll tax, the breaking of the white primary, and the organizing of Southern workers. When these three steps, now being undertaken in isolated spots, have become universal throughout the region reaction will be on its way out. He concludes his Atlanta notes:

> The ground will have been cut beneath the Bilbos and Rankins, as it has already been cut beneath Dies and Starnes, Talmadge and Rivers. Republican reaction has long been panting to fall heir to the rich political prize of the Southern Congressional and electoral votes. The new stirrings in the South promise to deprive the Republicans of their Great Dream. The South today is, in my view, the most politically exciting section of the country. It has a chance, while remaining "solid," to become democratic with a small d.

We find Mr. Lerner's views most interesting, and would take issue with him on only one point. Delighted as we are with the prospect of being rescued from the Republicans, who have been panting after us for so long, we find ourselves resenting his prediction that the liberated South may remain a solid political bloc. We have, let it be noted, been solid much too long already. A real liberation would release the basic differences of opinion that have always existed beneath the hard shell of one-party solidarity, and we doubt if we would present a solid front pleasing to Mr. Lerner. We would, instead, lose our regional political identity and, except for climate and accent, become indistinguishable from any other section of America. That, we might add, is the prospect that excites us.

Another Voice

Why Not Smaller Packages?

WHAT ever happened to the five-cent loaf of bread? And the half-pint bottle of milk?

We are being told to eat those last remaining slices even though they may be slightly on the stale side. The wheat shortage, you know! We are also admonished to make custards and puddings out of that last cup of milk in the quart bottle. All of which is very good advice, even if it were not necessary to conserve food so that the starving of other countries can live.

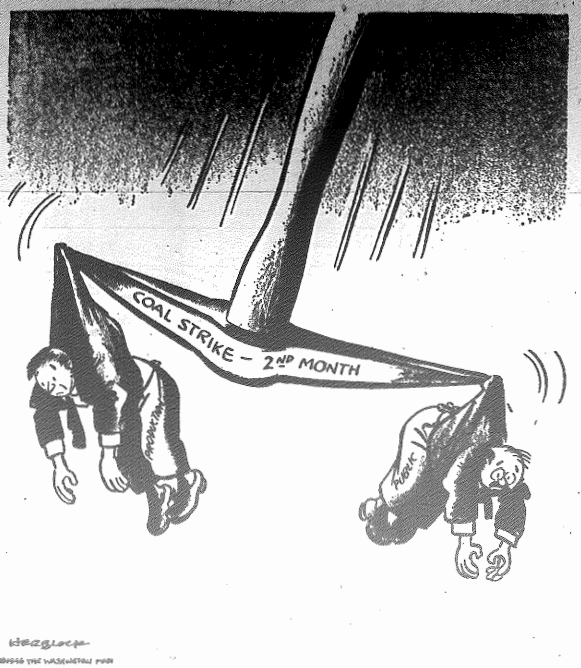
But what about the millions of people who live alone, or the families of two? Small families are on the increase in this country, but the tendency of bakers, dairymen and canners is to offer for sale only ten-cent loaves of bread, quart bottles of milk and large-size cans of fruits and vegetables. The natural result is terrific waste.

A certain amount of waste is inevitable in the handling of food, whether by wholesaler, retailer or consumer. But smaller packages would go a long way toward holding it to a minimum.

Ask the buyer or cook for any small family.—*WINSTON-SALEM JOURNAL.*

The seasonal prison breaks are on, though many a fugitive is quickly retaken. Thus, a western long-termer who escaped in a laundry wagon was brought back later with the flat work.

Tick Tock—Tick Tock



People's Platform

A Second Piece Of Pie

MATTHEWS

WE farmers were told over and over again that food would win the war and keep the peace. So far so good, but the experts in Washington decided last fall that we would have an over-production of food in 1946. The OPA said the bottom would fall out of food prices. Yes, the above is a record of facts, and therefore the Army got an order, and passed it on to all farmers who were having to use German prisoners for planting grain. I will copy the order here word for word:

Date October 25, 1945

TO ALL FARMERS
USING POW'S AS FARM LABOR

"Pursuant to orders from Headquarters, Fourth Service Command on and after November 1, 1945, prisoner of war labor for agriculture will be authorized for specific jobs of harvest of crops. No certificates of need for labor of a GENERAL FARM WORK NATURE OR WORK THAT MAY CONTRIBUTE TO THE 1946 CROP WILL BE FILLED."

This order was enforced by Army officers who came out to the farm on inspection trips. I would have had about 2,000 extra bushels of wheat if this order had not been made. How many lives would this much grain have saved? I did manage to get in a little more grain after this order came out because the POW's knew of the order (and every other order because some of them worked in the Army office), so when they would see an officer coming in an Army truck or car they would shut off the tractor and any other work in the field. When the Army car got in the yard the POW's would be washing the car, digging around the plants in the yard, sharpening cross cut saws and axes to go cut pulp wood. Yes, it was OK to cut pulp wood.

All this business was their own idea. They knew as well as I that all my help would be cut off if they were caught planting wheat or grain of any kind. If they were caught cutting weeds or sprouts in my pasture I would have lost them because this would contribute TO MORE MILK AND BUTTER IN 1946. So I just got tired of it all when I still had thirty-five acres yet to sow and put them to cutting pulp wood. Come out and see it—five miles of it—you could not count the stacks in five days—but the people in Bula rope even can't eat pulp wood. POW's were still cutting pulpwood even after they were taken away from the farmers.

If you see some farmers eating the second piece of pie please excuse them.

—DAN HOOD

P. S. I am sending you this because I think your readers should know the facts. I still have this Army order in my files. If I could not prove it I would not dare to quote it to you.

If a farmer got paid for his production and work at the union wage scale, wheat would be five dollars per bushel, and milk would be fifty cents per quart. The farmer would then be able to hire competent help. He would not have to work sixteen hours per day as he does now. That is one of his troubles now—he works so hard to keep things going that he is too tired to THINK—does not have time to think of who it is that is running him to death, and setting prices for him to sell by and another set of prices for him to buy by. Every tool he uses is union made, and every thing that he produces is non-union made. He can not win when the man who makes his tools and sells it to him at HIGH PRICES also sets the price on and buys back the production of that tool.

(NOTE: We are prepared to defend to the death the right of Mr. Hood, or any other farmer, to a second piece of pie. But we do question his interpretation of the Army's POW order, quoted above. As we understood it at the time, POW labor was being taken off the 1946 crop, not from fear of overproduction, but because there was a danger that the 1945 harvest, then behind schedule, would be lost. It was regarded as an emergency measure, and undertaken in response to pleas from farmers who said they couldn't obtain sufficient labor to harvest crops then in the fields.

As to the pulp-wood business, that seems to have been the result of a bad guess on '45 food prospects, which then looked good enough to warrant use of some farm labor to relieve the critical shortage of paper.

We are not defending any of the agencies involved, and we can certainly understand Mr. Hood's wrath. But for the sake of the record it should be pointed out that the bad guesser was not the OPA, but the Department of Agriculture. The OPA is not concerned with the bottom falling out of any market, but is trying desperately to keep the lid on.—EDS., THE NEWS.)

Visiting Friend

GREENSBORO

VERA BRITTAIN, native of England, and author of many magazine articles and books, including "Testament of Youth," "Testament of Friendship," and "Thrice a Stranger," arrived in America May 1st to begin a one-and-a-half months lecture tour of the United States under the auspices of the American Friends Service Committee.

Miss Brittain will speak on such subjects as "The Recovery of Europe," "Which Way to Peace," "The Third Horseman," regarding famine conditions in Europe, and "The Spiritual Regeneration of Europe."

This lecture tour of the United States, which begins shortly after the first of May, will not be the first such trip for Miss Brittain. She toured the country in the Winters of 1934-35, and each year from 1937 through 1940 when she returned to England with her husband. Her impressions of America were recorded in a book called "Thrice A Stranger." She also wrote "Honorable Estate," published in 1936, and "England's Hour," published in 1940 when the London blitz was at its height.

We fortunately have secured her for two engagements in North Carolina. The first on May 9 at the Centenary Methodist Church at Winston-Salem at 8 P. M., and the second at the David Millard High School in Asheville at 8 P. M. The engagement in Winston-Salem is under the local sponsorship of the Group Action Council of Business and Professional Women's Clubs and the engagement in Asheville under the sponsorship of the chapter of the American Association of University Women.

There is a wide interest in Vera Brittain among church people and literary and other followers and I am sure notice of these meetings in your paper will be appreciated.

—B. TARTT BELL,
AREA SECRETARY, AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE.

The People's Platform is available to any reader who cares to mount it. Communications should be less than 300 words, typewritten if possible, and on only one side of the paper. Libel and obscenity will be deleted—otherwise anything goes. Each letter must be signed, although, in exceptional cases and upon request, we will withhold the writer's name.—Editors, THE NEWS.

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

Anti-OPA Lobby Keeps Clothes From Vets

(NOTE—This is the second in the series of Drew Pearson's expose of the behind-the-scenes lobbying against price control.)

WASHINGTON

FOR some time Maj. Gen. Graves Erskine, ex-Marine fighter on Iwo Jima and now head of the Labor Department's re-employment administration, has been trying to get more clothes for veterans. To this end he asked Civilian Production Administrator John Small to shift wool manufacture from making so much fabric for women to produce more for men. Fabrics for women's clothing bring higher profits, and the wool industry has been concentrating on them.

Gen. Erskine thought he had it all arranged with CPA Administrator Small to issue an order regarding this. But he didn't count on charming wool lobbyist Arthur Besse, Besse, head of the National Association of Wool Manufacturers, is not only a New England blue-blood and treasurer of the North American Yacht Racing Union, but a smooth and convincing talker. He talked Mr. Small right out of the order transferring more woolen fabrics to men's clothing.

Gen. Erskine was only trained to fight Japs on Iwo Jima. He hadn't reckoned on the wool lobby. The veterans were out of luck.

Wolves In Sheep's Clothing

WHILE Besse has done a good job lobbying to cut the heart out of OPA, even busier for the wool lobby is efficient F. Eugene Ackerman of the American Wool Council. Actually, the Wool Council, composed of wool growers, is not much interested in the OPA fight; but Ackerman is in it up to his neck just the same. For he also represents two woolen mills, Forstmann and Botany of Passaic, N. J., which are hot for price increases. Also he puts out "Facts and Fashions," a publication supposed to deal purely with fashions, but which deftly throws the knife into price control.

Finally, Ackerman nurses a secret ambition to head up the new Wool Research Council to be created by the Government under a bill introduced by wool champion, Senator Joe O'Mahoney of Wyoming. The job would pay around $25,000.

It was energetic, able Eugene Ackerman, who, working partly on wool growers' time, came to Washington months ago and helped sell Congressman Fred Hartley of New Jersey on the idea of stirring up public sentiment against OPA through an investigation by the Howard Smith Committee.

This probe was also pushed by the National Retail Dry Goods Association, whose membership ranks among the top three industries of the nation in lobbying against OPA.

Serving Two Masters

ACTUALLY most of the nation's retailers, including many NRDGA members are for OPA. Macy's has taken full-page advertisements urging its continuance. Marcus-Niemann in Dallas has publicly proclaimed the same. Thousands of small retailers are worried over inflation, want price control continued, though with modification of certain OPA regulations.

Despite all this, the National Retail Dry Goods Association some time ago helped promote the OPA Investigating Committee, headed by Representative Howard Smith, the Virginia Democrat who always votes with reactionary Republicans.

Cross-examination of witnesses at this hearing was so biased and one-sided that Representative Jerry Voorhis, fair-minded California Democrat, resigned in protest.

However, here is the pay-off. Counsel for the Smith Committee, Hyman Fischbach did such a beautiful job heckling witnesses and bringing out testimony unfavorable to OPA that he was promptly given a fat retainer by the NRDGA. Furthermore, he continued to serve two masters at one time—the U. S. Government and the NRDGA.

From the Government, Fischbach received $8,200 for probing OPA; while from the Dry Goods Association he received a larger fee, presumably for digging up dirt against OPA.

When this columnist asked Fischbach in New York last week whether he was still on the Government pay roll and still drawing two salaries, he replied that he was not. He said he had left the Government pay roll Dec. 31, 1945. He also stated that he received a "fee" from NRDGA, not a salary. When asked if this fee was $40,000, he said he could not reveal the amount.

In Washington, however, the clerk of the Smith Committee stated that Fischbach was still doing "special work" whenever they needed him, while Congressman Smith when asked last week who was counsel for his committee, replied: "Hyman Fischbach."

Later the versatile Fischbach was loaned by the NRDGA to Senator Wherry of Nebraska to write his Small Business Committee minority report. The report followed the same lines as the anti-OPA attack which Fischbach already had written for the Smith Committee. And after Fischbach had finished it, the NRDGA, which had been paying him, distributed the document all over the country—under the signature of Senator Wherry.

Marquis Childs

Misgoverned Capital

WASHINGTON

ONCE again this is the season for tourists in Washington. For the first time since the war they are back in force. Many of them are veterans with their young wives, reunited after the long trial of the war.

They see the shining city in its Spring splendor. Around the fountain, on the south lawn of the White House, tulips are in bloom. The ancient Queen of India tree nearby has put on its purple blossoms.

The visitors see the marble monument to Lincoln; Lee's house, across the river in Arlington; the pure and beautiful obilsk to the memory of Washington. They see the memorials of a great and powerful democracy and the halls that house its current Government.

What they do not see is the shame that is concealed behind this marble front. A careful survey has just confirmed what many Washingtonians already knew—that the capital has the worst hospitals in the United States. The school system is one of the most inadequate and overburdened in the country.

JAILS AND SLUMS

The farcial escape of prisoner after prisoner has made the District of Columbia jails a joke throughout the country. So it goes in one department after another. Almost in the shadow of the Capitol are slums as bad as any in the entire country.

The report on the capital's hospitals should shock not only the city but the nation. They long have been bad. Standards of care had deteriorated before the war brought a labor shortage which made the situation much worse. Even in some hospitals in which private patients paid the highest fees, the number of accidents should have been a warning.

During the war an interesting thing happened. Women from secure and comfortable homes became volunteer nurse's aides. They went into the city's free hospitals and charity wards.

What they found was so shocking they could hardly believe it existed in a so-called civilized community. They found filth and negligence that hardly can be described. It was like something out of a much earlier century. This was the way the other half died—in torment and neglect such as would not be accorded a valuable animal.

One of the nurse's aides was Mrs. Millard Tydings, wife of the Senator from Maryland. She got her husband interested in doing something about it. Tydings put in a bill calling for a medical center for Washington, with beds for 1,500 patients at a cost that has been estimated at $19,000,000. Thus far the medical center bill has made slow progress.

HIDDEN SHAME

So long as visitors and complacent Washingtonians see the marble facade, nothing is likely to be done. But perhaps the shame will not stay hidden forever. And it is a fearful commentary that in the capital of our country the surface of decency should be so thin.

As the report condemning the city's hospitals made clear: one of the chief reasons for this condition is the fact that there is no civic responsibility. Washington is the perfect illustration of irresponsibility.

Apparently it worked well enough in the days when the capital was a sleepy Southern town that came to life during the months Congress was in session. But it does not work today when Washington has become a city of more than a million population.

The District of Columbia is governed, after a fashion, by three commissioners appointed by the President and subject to confirmation by the Senate. If the commissioners were angels sent down from heaven they would probably have their troubles. They are not angels. They have no real franchise to govern a community of a million persons.

A story, which may or may not be true, is told of one of the current commissioners at the time he was offered his appointment by President Roosevelt. He hesitated, saying he was not sure that at his age he could give enough to the job.

HOW GEORGE DID IT

"But surely" said the President, smiling his most charming smile, "You can do as much work as George Allen does."

That was when Allen, since made head of the Reconstruction Finance Corp., was enjoying life as a district commissioner. How long, the capital of a great democracy can stand up under that kind of government is a question.

Samuel Grafton

A Brief Disturbance

MANTEO, N. C.

THE water in Oregon Inlet is glassy. Cormorant fly by, and ducks and geese. There is life above the water, in the air, but the water is empty. After trolling for hours the water comes to seem not only empty of life, but hostile to life, incapable of supporting life, as if we were fishing in a sea of Dakin's solution. The guide becomes worried; he climbs out on the free deck, peers across, looking for channel bass, and steering with one arm reaching through the window to the wheel inside the cabin. We can see the beach, but there is no life on that either; no life anywhere, but that which flies; and we, the intruders, being drum-majored across the smooth surface by a gasoline screw.

Every discoloration on the surface of the water comes to have a meaning, but the meanings are many; each patch can be a tide rip, or a school of channel bass, those large and perfect fish, some blonde, some brunette, but all sharing in varying degree that golden brown color which tints the water. An acre of menhaden floats by, with the gulls diving from above and eating the little living fish, and discussing them. But the small, choppy surface passes; and again the water becomes lifeless, and sterile, as if it could be put into bottles, and set on the shelves of any drug store.

WORLD WEARINESS

A weariness grows upon the flesh; the rods take on the heaviness of noon; all the tackle and precious small equipment seems futile, and the sky mocks it. The boat makes a sharp turn, and the engine picks up speed, but the guide has seen nothing, after all, and the boat slows down again. The burst of life is an embarrassment on the empty seas, and the trolling apologies for resuming. The gulls take sitz baths, looking like floating wooden toys, and the boat creeps through a wide emptiness of waiting and suspense.

Here begins a self-questioning; lunch, and a small babble of talk; old jokes remembered. And rods held slackly, as if to challenge the immense unconcern of the sea with a small nodule of unconcern on the boat. There is an impulse to say the unexpected and the trifling, even the obscene; to mock with a show of life the mockery of the lifeless sea. The arc of the spirit droops further, and one thinks, with a sudden fresh imagining, of the streets of big cities, and of parks and restaurants, and of other such things far away and impossible; and the boat pushes along from nowhere to nowhere.

SUDDEN CHANGE

It rounds, as it goes, an invisible corner. The rod stiffens in the hands and bends; and out of all the universe, one can stare only at the little rod. The drag has been set so hard that one could hardly pull line against it with all one's strength, and now the line streams out as from a free spool. Something is incredibly on the other end; a kind of blankness, and in a strange lag, that very dimension of life has changed in a single moment.

The gulls have risen from their interminable baths, and are flapping away over the boat, discussing a horrifying news bulletin; the water is shot with long, brown forms, and the breakers hit, and is as if the sea itself had risen to an oblique angle; and the boat rises, and one stands too, knowing that one will never be able to close his hand around that, jumping the rod. But bending, with a terrific hungry urgency, to bring to boatside whatever is on the end of the line that wishes, with massive reluctance to stay away. He comes aboard finally, an improbable visitor from the bottom of the sea, shoulder-high to a man, and tired. One gives him a glance, and looks over side to see more of the strange upending turbulence.

BACK TO NORMALCY

It is gone, and the world is back in place again. As if at a signal, delivered and noted, the gulls have decided to bathe just once more, and the sky is in place, and the sea has resumed its antiseptic calm. One sits down heavily. The guide begins to talk, softly, of fishing stories of the past. It takes a bit of time to understand that he is not shaken by the rending thrust of line which came up from the bottom of the ocean, but is trying to work it so that he will be given the fish to take to market and to sell.