THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

And Evening Chronicle

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● W. C. Dowd, 1863-1927 ●

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THURSDAY, JULY 10, 1941

Meddlers

The Army Needs Help—Not Congressional Sniping

Congressmen Dirksen of Illinois, Kilday of Texas and several other long-nosed Representatives are criticizing General Ben Lear for disciplining one of his battalions. The unit in question is the famed "Doghouse Battalion" which was ordered to march for about 15 extra miles because it saluted some shorts-clad women golfers near Memphis, Tenn., with shouts and whistles. The soldiers also failed to recognize General Lear (in person) when he came up in civilian clothes to ask the soldiers to quiet down.

It is not unusual for a Congressman to turn his back on more urgent matters and get involved in some petty squabble, mainly for publicity purposes. In this instance, however, Messrs. Dirksen, Kilday, et al., are simply making asses of themselves.

If members of Congress are going to take it upon themselves to investigate every questionable use of discipline in the Army—well, the Army had best turn over GHQ to them and let the politicians run it.

General Lear may have been a bit severe on the soldiers who let their youthful exuberance get the best of them. But that's not the point. There are plenty of instances—and we can name a few—of unjustified disciplinary action in the Army. Ask any top sergeant whether he's ever made a mistake in being too tough on his boys. But an extra hike didn't inflict any permanent injury on the "Doghouse Battalion." We'd wager now that it's over the men are a little proud of their accomplishment.

It's commendable for Congressmen to take an interest in the welfare of the Army. There are numerous ways to help the Army, none of which is meddling in its minor disciplinary tiffs.

Strikes Persist

Can We Afford To Keep On Wasting Defense Man-Days?

Crowded off the front page by momentous news from Russia, Iceland and Syria—but still persisting as a menace to our national safety—are an alarming number of strikes in national defense industries.

Official reports to Congress by the War and Navy departments show that as of July 5 production of essential military supplies in 37 separate plants had been dangerously slowed down or entirely stopped.

The Navy Department is affected by 19 strikes; the War Department by 24. Six walkouts affect both Army and Navy material.

The cost in man-days lost and in precious time wasted by these strikes is appalling. The Navy, for instance, estimates that during the first six months of 1941 nearly 2,000,000 man-days have been irretrievably thrown away by strikers in plants involving Navy contracts alone. Last month plants working on Navy contracts lost more than 200,000 man-days. This means that during June, strikes deprived the Navy of what 2,000 trained men might have accomplished in 100 days of work.

The strike situation in plants that should be producing for the War Department is even more serious. Every day that passes means a loss of 12,000 man days in these industries, for there are approximately that many men idle right now.

About 500 of these men work at one plant—the American Potash and Chemical division at Trona, California. Here is produced three vital defense products—borax and boric acid, used in the manufacture of essential glass items, and lithium salts, indispensable in the manufacture of the batteries that enable submarines to cruise under water.

The borax shortage was so acute three weeks ago that the Government placed it under strict priorities control. Now the need is desperate. The strike has been dragging on since March 19—almost four months ago. On July 2, 500 men went back to work, but an equal number are still on strike.

Leader of the CIO walkout is one William R. Gately. Congressman Joe Starnes of Alabama has got the low-down on Mr. Gately. He has photostatic evidence (which he has shown on the floor of the House) proving that Mr. Gately was a registered member of the Nazi Bund Party in 1937 and 1938. Witnesses have identified Mr. Gately as a present member of the Party.

At any rate, despite the solution of some of the more widely publicized labor disputes, strikes—and plenty of 'em—are still with us. They will continue to be with us and to hamper our defense effort until the Government requires the same responsibility for actions of labor unions as it demands from industrial management.

Going Up

Gangway for Inflation—Unless We Do Something Now

Automobiles are selling faster in North Carolina these days than bunion plasters on the afternoon before the policeman's ball. Reports of this feverish buying spree have been circulating for some time, but definite figures on its extent did not appear until they were released recently in the Fifth Federal Reserve District's Monthly Review.

These figures confirm what everyone had suspected: car buyers are demanding 1941 model machines at an unprecedented rate.

During the month of May, 8,708 new cars were registered in North Carolina—a gain of exactly 84 per cent over May, 1940. A total of 34,742 new autos were registered during the first five months of 1941, compared to 22,749 registration during the same period last year.

So right here in Charlotte we have a perfect example of this price inflation against which commentators have been warning us. Wages are higher, more money is available. Auto production for next year has been cut sharply and will undoubtedly be further reduced so that factories may produce war weapons. The inexorable law of increasing demand operating against shrinking supply means one thing: higher prices.

Apply these same conditions to electric refrigerators, radios, furniture and even the three essentials—food, shelter and clothing—and the same result is inexorable.

The *laissez-faire* economists—those who believe that these matters will take care of themselves—say that higher prices will reduce the demand and put an end to the inflation.

But this is only fractionally true. By means of long term credit financing, the new name for the easy payment plan (plus service charges), the family buying a car or a refrigerator wouldn't be likely to let a 15, 20, or even a 30 per cent price increase stop it from signing on the dotted line. When you're making 24 "easy monthly payments," four or five more don't seem important.

The bulk of the consumers—who are, in fact, the wage earners—are much more likely to keep demanding cars, refrigerators and radios, accompanying this demand by pointing to the higher cost of living and yelling for wage increases. With a Government wedded to a policy of higher and higher wages for labor, these demands probably would be encouraged and the employers forced to shell out.

When employers shell out more wages, production costs go up. When production costs go up, in spite of Mr. Leon Henderson, there are going to be either (1) higher prices, or (2) cheapening of quality standards.

So the inflation spirals up: Heavy demand, limited supply, higher prices, higher wages, heavy demand, limited supply and so on ad dizzium.

Our drift toward inflation will be further accentuated by passage of that cowardly compromise optimistically called a tax bill—a measure that would raise less than one-third of the sum to be spent next year. If this bill becomes a law, the national debt will rise four or five times as fast as during the palmiest days of depression.

Every dollar the Government borrows and spends finds its way into the pocket of a consumer and tends to make him demand something. Which ties right in with the inflation spiral.

Inflation can be stopped by striking at its source. One answer is heavy taxes—and if we paid our way in this war without borrowing, taxes would be stiff enough to take the kick out of any buying spree.

Perhaps finance companies should be required to demand larger down payments and shorter payment periods. Take care of the demand and the prices will take care of themselves. The time to act is now. Next year—even next month—will be too late.

Fear-Born Invasion

By Dorothy Thompson

THERE are some things about the attack on Russia that are not clear. It raises the question: to what extent was it launched for purely military purposes and to what extent for political purposes?

Probably for both. The Nazis co-ordinate their military and political strategy in a remarkable way. The attack was presented by Hitler as a military necessity, due to a threatening concentration of Russian troops on the German frontiers. This concentration followed a series of Nazi aggressions in the Balkans, which certainly perturbed the Soviet Union, and was a response to vivid anti-Russian activities going on in Germany, as reported weeks ago in this column.

NO SIGNS OF A RUSSIAN ATTACK ON GERMANY

There is not the slightest indication, however, that the Soviet intended to attack the Reich. On the contrary, there is every indication that Stalin, having assumed for the first time the titular leadership of the Russian State, was putting himself in a position to resume negotiations with Germany and drive as good a bargain as he could. Soviet policy is invariably reflected in the Comintern party line, and that line was peace until the day after the attack by the Nazis.

Was the attack for economic reasons? Here I should say certainly not. The Balkan campaigns have not been an economic asset to the Nazis, but an economic liability. Stalin was prepared to make economic concessions to Germany. He wanted to play in with Germany for his political share.

NAZIS FEARED CONSEQUENCES OF ATTACK OF BRITAIN

If, then, the Reich was not threatened militarily and if a war against Russia promised no short-range economic advantages, why was it launched?

I believe because of fear of the military and political consequences of an all-out attack on Great Britain.

Should that attack be made and fail, the Russian army would be a dreadful threat to the Reich.

Should that attack be made and succeed, it would be a catastrophe to the whole world of unpredictable proportions, setting everything adrift all around the globe.

In that moment, again, the Soviet Union, unexhausted by war and with an international revolutionary organization at its command, would be in a position to produce further chaos and also to pull more territory for itself out of the scramble for spoils.

At the same time, Hitler undoubtedly argued that for a war against the Soviets he could rally all Europe, and that with it, he would divide Great Britain and hold off the United States.

First, he tested the United States by a flagrant incident—the sinking of the Robin Moor. Even the Administration was pretty phlegmatic. The conclusion could be drawn that the United States was still not prepared for any drastic action in the West, and that it would be safe in moving in the East.

Second, he presumably, through Hess, made a bid for a breathing-space peace with certain English Tories, no doubt on the promise to turn eastward, and well aware that such a peace would bring political collapse in England.

Third, he began an enormous offensive directed to world Christianity against the atheism and barbarism of the Soviets.

The German short-wave broadcasting now pours upon the world fulminations against Soviet godlessness, and incidentally the exact phraseology is repeated by Mr. Lindbergh.

NAZI PIETY ON RADIO BROADCASTS IS HUMOROUS

Some of the sudden piety is very funny. Last week I heard an English-speaking broadcaster from Berlin attacking the shocking methods of Russian warfare—dropping parachutists behind lines—and deploring the fact that there is a death penalty in Russia for listening to foreign broadcasts. This, according to the speaker, is a "sign of weakness."!

Every one of the German short-wave broadcasts should be answered to Germany and the whole world, for they are full of the most ridiculous holes.

Why haven't we got twenty million dollars at this moment for one of the most effective instruments of modern warfare—propaganda? Why haven't we got a great bureau of psychologists, translators, journalists and artists to fill the air twenty-four hours a day with American ideas of a good life and a decent New Order?

The political blitzkrieg should begin at once—while German mothers are getting daily reports of the deaths of their sons in this latest of Hitler's paranoic moves.

There is a political vacuum into which to move.

The Big March in Asia

—By Herblock

Letters to the Editor:

From An Isolationist's Pen...

Editors, The News:

Owing to an inopportune encounter with a couple of very thorough surgeons, this reply to Mrs. T. K. Watts, whose letter to me was printed in this column on June 17, is regrettably overdue.

Apparently, Mrs. Watts fears the stark, ugly truth. Like other interventionists, she finds it has an uncomfortable way of juggling with set prejudices. Odd indeed that she should "follow my literary spasms" with such interest.

She thinks that no loyal American would show up the weak spots in our foreign policy; such facts, when brought to the fore, breed defeatism. It is better that we suppress criticism now and let our enemies point out those weak spots later . . . after it is too late to correct them. Patriotism requires that we become docile and surrender our democratic rights, and substitute wish-thinking and self-deception for logic, while war agitators beclout the true state of affairs and "bore their secret way through the sound timbers" of our national structure "with their rotten propaganda" . . . and put the finishing touches on our doom.

To "salvage all that we can of our way of life" is abhorrent to Mrs. Watts. She decries caution and prudence (and open debate) as cowardly, and unworthy of American ideals and traditions. She urges that we abandon all discretion (and free speech) and, with our eyes shut, rush pell-mell into war (on the premise that Hitler's luck will run out about the time it becomes obnoxious to us. Any other course is dastardly and unthinkable.) The way which promises the least peril is un-American, but foolhardiness is gloriously brave.

This business of calling a spade a spade is deplorable. It "sows seeds of doubt and fear." A rosy picture of our dilemma is kinder to our peace of mind, and it adds greatly to our manpulability. (If there is such a word.) She assures us that, since we were able to boot the Kaiser out of France 22 years ago, with the aid of powerful allies, it will be a simple matter to wrest from Hitler a well fortified continent . . . with the weight of world power lined up against us. (While our Army is occupied in Europe and Africa, we can hold off Japan with a company of girl scouts.) It is to be hoped that Mrs. Watts has a magic wand with which to effect this miracle she so glibly prophecies, and that it works more efficiently than does her "turban and crystal ball," else the next song hit may very well be her "Swan Song of Democracy" . . . and the interventionists can take full credit for its authorship.

And even though it is rank heresy to say so, we know that advantages which were ours in the last war are working in reverse today. We do not have to face that fact and govern ourselves accordingly, but it would be the part of better judgment if we did, Mrs. Watts to the contrary.

Mrs. Watts boasts that "America has always emerged on top," which is discounting our unhappy experiences with a liberal hand. Truth is, we "emerged" from our last war on the bottom, with a mountain of debt piled on top of us—and we are still staggering under it. We "emerged" under a burden of grief for the loss of 116,000 sons that we left to rot in foreign mud. We "emerged" with thousands of broken homes and hearts and blighted lives, for which somebody will have to give an account some day before the bar of justice. We "emerged" with thousands of insane and mutilated veterans who have ever since been a drain on our Treasury and a weight on our conscience. Saying nothing of the thousands who have long since coughed out their lungs and passed on to a merciful death.

Add to that the worst business depression in history which brought more hardships and misery than did the war itself. Stack on top of that the contempt which we incurred for our gullibility. (Note to warmongers: That term, gullibility, is not a Hitler-coined cliché phrase even though it has been stigmatized as such. It was applied to us by the whole civilized world long before the advent of Dictator Hitler.) Top that with the IOU's which our allies refused to honor, and do not forget that nosethumbings and the jeers which we received in lieu of payment. If that be emerging on top, may God save us from another such emergence!

Now the interventionists, including Mrs. Watts, would venerate our mistakes of the past and reproduce them in the future . . . and may Heaven help us if our isolation bloc does not hold.

—NEIL DIXSON RUSSELL.
(Mrs. J. Walter Russell)
1126 Clement Avenue,
Charlotte.

Reasons for Wine-Bibbing

Franklin P. Adams in
The New York Post:

An article in the Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol lists seventeen reasons for the consumption of alcohol. This brings to mind a verse whose authorship we are hazy about. It went something like:

If I the reasons well define,
There are just five for drinking wine:
Good wine, good friends, or being dry,
Or lest you may be by and by;
Or any other reason why.

FPA and Baby Ray

Franklin P. Adams in
The New York Post

"What makes the land love Hitler so?"
The eager people cried.
"Oh, Hitler loves the land, you know,"
Der Fuehrer quick replied.

And you each gentle country
In confidence may bind,
And make them follow at your will,
If you are only kind.

TODAY'S BIBLE THOUGHT

Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus, who hath been crucified. He is not here, for he is risen, even as he said.—Matt. 28:5, 6.

Side Glances

"They're at it again—first one that reaches the car gets to drive!"

The QUEEN CITY'S HOPE CHEST

No. 1 — An Uptown Theater-Auditorium
No. 2 — A Separate Court District
No. 3 — An Uptown Rest Room
No. 4 — Street-Widening

Iceland's Importance

By Raymond Clapper

SEVERAL purposes are served by the occupation of Iceland.

First, this action strengthens the defense of the United States. In his radio address of May 27, President Roosevelt said that Nazi occupation of Iceland or bases in Greenland would bring the war close to our continental shores because these points are stepping stones to the North American continent.

Second, by taking over the occupation ourselves, instead of leaving the British to stand guard alone, we release some British strength for work closer to where the fighting is and where we do not have the immediate defense interest that we have in Iceland.

Third, the occupation will facilitate our patrol work in safeguarding shipments of war materials to Britain. Iceland is a strategic point which flanks the main northerly shipping route to England.

SERVING NOTICE THAT WE WILL DEFEND OURSELVES

Fourth, our action in thus venturing out beyond what is customarily regarded as Western Hemisphere territory should give notice to Hitler that we are willing and able to act to defend our security, and that we understand wherein it is threatened. Iceland is inside the German blockade zone. This makes our occupation of it a clear-cut step beyond what we have hitherto done in the present war. It serves to foreshadow our readiness to take similar action with regard to other islands in the Atlantic should there appear to be danger of Hitler establishing himself on them.

Last week Senator Wheeler warned that the Iceland action was imminent. But when President Roosevelt sent an informative message to Congress stating that the occupation had taken place, Senator Wheeler said he would not oppose it as a defensive measure.

ROOSEVELT'S ACTION SAVED SENATORIAL FACES

Some of the isolationists were critical in their comment. But there is every indication that the move will be accepted by the majority in both Houses of Congress with a sense of relief. The reason for that is that President Roosevelt, by acting first and informing Congress later, has assumed the responsibility himself and has relieved the Senators and Representatives from having to go on record on this kind of question. That will be a welcome escape, I suspect, for more than one member.

It will be a welcome escape, I suspect, because many members have to keep their heads down against their better judgment in view of the ignorant and abusive letters from constituents who have been misled by Lindbergh's juvenile chatter.

Intelligent and well-informed Senators and Representatives know that this country, in the light of what has happened in Europe, must take certain steps for its own defense. They know that in this world the United States cannot afford to sit idly by, asleep at the switch, and allow strategic points to slip out of control as the British did time after time in their muddling hesitation. But Senators and Representatives who have to run for re-election are always fearful of abusive editorials, and, being human, it isn't easy for them to stick out their necks. If they can escape going on record on a hard decision, they get along better.

LOOSE TALK IS A MILITARY PERIL

Aside from the political embarrassments involved, there are military embarrassments to having any prospective action heralded and discussed long in advance. That only increases the risk of having our purposes frustrated by the other side.

This means relying more on the discretion of the President than is normally the case. This is not the way anybody likes to have the Government operate. But again it is necessary to choose the lesser evil. The President takes such actions at his own risk, knowing that if he errs in his judgment he does his country serious harm and brings down upon himself criticism and loss of confidence. Thus far he has moved cautiously and seems to have carried majority opinion with him in the actions which he has taken from time to time.

Visitin' Around

Heh, Heh — We Don't Get It

(RFD item,
Lexington Dispatch)

J. O. Hobbs' younguns are having a swell time — mumps.

Aw, Just Another Fuller Brush Man

(North Wilkesboro Hustler)

An ironing board made by our county citizen — McRae down in Rock Creek is a home-made excellent board which he sells for $2 to N. Wilkesboro and Wilkesboro housewives, and, while here Saturday, called in at the Hustler office. He intends a house canvass every Saturday of prospective purchasers.