THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

And Evening Chronicle

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● W. C. Dowd, 1865-1927 ●

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TUESDAY, JULY 29, 1941

Sidelight

Mr. Roosevelt Ponders Tokyo's Inflammability

There were movies at the White House last Sunday afternoon. President Roosevelt watched silently while a celluloid record of one of the recent heavy air bombardments of the Chinese capital, Chungking, was projected on the screen. He saw the Japanese bombs descend, destruction upon the stolically stoic people led by Chiang Kai-Shek.

As the last scene faded and the lights were brightened, reporters saw that Mr. Roosevelt's face was grim. He turned to the man who made the movies:

"Mr. Scott, what would have happened if this had been Tokyo and if the attacking planes had been 'Flying Fortresses'?"

"Tokyo," replied the cameraman, "would have burned like a torch, Mr. President."

Mr. Roosevelt was silent for a moment.

"That is what I thought," he said.

Decrepit Debts

The Best Time To Collect 'Em Is When They Are Young

A fundamental fault in the management of our two local governments—which in most respects, we hasten to say, are well and frugally run—is apparent in the County's extraordinary move to collect some 5,000 small tax accounts past due from 1927 on up to 1934. The Board of Commissioners authorized its Collector of Revenue J. A. Sherrill to seek out these delinquents, who have no real property onto which the County could tack a judgment, and to pay as much as 40 per cent commission to collectors.

Understand, now, the fault lies not with the present County Administration. To the contrary, the board is to be commended for its hard-boiled action. Under the archaic system of real-property taxation which sustains local governments in North Carolina, all too many residents of a city or a county—high-livers, too, some of them—avoid paying any taxes at all assessed against them. The least that governing bodies can do is to insist that those who owe taxes shall pay them.

But why, for heaven's sake, wait four-odd years to demand a settlement? In that passage of time tax-delinquents will have died or gone broke or moved away, or taken up residence in some old cellar home.

The time to collect taxes of all kinds, small and personal, is when they are somewhere near current. Taxes are not burdensome in Charlotte and Mecklenburg. Exceptional cases there may be when lenience is justified, but laxness is never justified. There is no reason why small accounts shouldn't be collected promptly, and the same is true of large accounts. It is false accommodation to let the years go by and delinquencies accumulate to where they approximate the value of the property itself.

Past administrations have handed down this problem to their successors, and it is good to see the present Board of County Commissioners dealing with it at last. Better still would it be to see both the City and the County insisting upon the payment of all active tax accounts while they are collectible.

OPACS Advice

Don't Buy a Car Unless You Intended To—and Who Didn't?

Up until a few months ago, Miss Harriet Elliott was dean of the Woman's College of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. As if this title weren't complicated enough, she was drafted along with Frank Graham and others to serve the Government and is now assistant administrator for consumer activities in the Office of Price Administration and Consumer Supply.

The other day Miss Elliott came forward with the following advice to consumers:

"If you really need, and had intended to buy a car, or a refrigerator or a new washing machine, then go ahead and get it by all means. If you had no such plans, then don't make any. Put your money into defense bonds. There may be days ahead when the cash will make you a good deal happier and a good deal more secure than a worn-out washing machine."

In addition to her titles, Miss Elliott also owns a keen, analytical mind. But we'd like to know, has not nourished covetous intent toward a new automobile? One of the most frequently repeated statements in America, we'll wager is "Gosh, I'd like to have a new car."

There is no lack of intention, only a lack of cash. And the finance companies are always ready to step into this breach.

Forgery?

Good Grief, You Germans, You Flatter Uncle Sam

By implication, official German propagandists accuse poor, naive, innocent Uncle Sam of forgery. They say the United States Government falsified the document proving that Major Belmonte Pabon, Bolivian military attache in Berlin, conspired with the Nazi minister to Bolivia, Herr Ernst Wendler, to effect a German-inspired coup in the South American republic.

The Nazis are as outraged as only a frustrated gang of criminals can be. All the evidence indicates that after spending thousands of dollars and the efforts of some of their best spies in Bolivia, the Nazis saw their whole plot crumble—largely because Bolivian and American counter-spies, working together, exposed the foul conspiracy. Forgery is for all of the Americas, the plot was not quite strong enough to stand sunlight. It wilted, and with it the hopes of Nazidom.

Caught red-handed, another nation might have snuck off quietly and licked its wounds in solitude. But not the Nazis. As psychologists have noted, the German national inferiority complex, the key to Hitler's hold on the people, does not permit even a quiet denial. There must be nothing short of a great ceremony. Before radio microphones and movie cameras, the Reich must shout to all the world that they wuz fouled.

Of course the whole floor show at the Wilhelmstrasse yesterday was ridiculous. But the funniest gag was pulled by the spokesman who accused the United States of forging that letter. That was a scream.

To imagine that the American State Department, whose vacillating policy is the opposite of resolute, could conceive and execute such a stroke of intrigue as letter-forging—well, it's too big even for a Hitler lie.

Every time one of his own mob slips up, Hitler goes into a screaming tirade about international law and order. The Nazis have forged a thousand letters, plotted dozens of seditious acts, betrayed government after government, torn up scores of treaties, murdered nobody knows how many persons both in and outside of Germany.

Some people might hope that the United States were capable of a reasonably apt international forgery. It takes that kind of stealth to beat the Nazis at their own game.

Ross The Red

He's Another of the CIO's "Necessary" Communists

Those who know Lawrence S. Ross, either personally or by reputation, will certainly not be surprised to learn that the Dies Committee has declared him a Communist. This organizer for the United Furniture Workers of America (CIO) never was, in our opinion, a questionable character. There was no doubt about it, he was an out-and-out Communist.

He was sent to Hickory by the UFWA-CIO union to organize new chapters of the union. But, like all other obedient Communists, his first allegiance was to the Party.

Lawrence S. Ross (or is it Rosenberg?) is just another item on the bill of indictment being prepared by the public against the CIO. He is further proof of the charge that many responsible jobs in CIO unions are held by Communists. Publicly, union officials deny this accusation. They say fascists are trying to smear them. (Oh words fragrant with the Party line!). Privately, Philip Murray of the CIO has admitted that he is worried because of the Communists in his union, but he doesn't know what he can do about it. Communists are so numerous and such capable CIO workers that, if he fired them, the CIO might crack open.

Led by honest, non-Communist leaders, the CIO is not strong enough to stand. Remove the Reds and—wham! Down she comes.

Such an organization, we submit, is not worth perpetuating. If the CIO can't live without Communism, it deserves oblivion.

Tragic Shortage

By Hugh S. Johnson

As this column has frequently pointed out and as is now becoming more apparent in the news daily, various shortages in material, services and supplies are threatening ever more seriously to crumple up little business in this country like a tin-can which the kids have been using for a shinny puck — or don't kids play "shinny on your own side," a primitive form of hockey, any more?

There are no adequate words to describe what a tragedy that could be. Not merely the appeal from the National Small Business Association, which estimated a resulting threatened unemployment of more than sixteen million, but reports coming to me by the hundreds in my fan mail from "the" sources indicate that this process of wiping out small enterprise has already begun. It has begun not merely in small merchandising but also in small manufacture and small service establishments. They can't get the material to proceed. Shortly they won't be able to get the needed power and transportation.

WHY DON'T WE PLAN TO BE OUR OWN ARSENAL?

When it was so boldly and spectacularly announced that America was to become the "Arsenal of Democracy," why couldn't there have been computed approximately what it would mean to supply the steel, ships, airplanes, aluminum, copper and so forth for the whole cockeyed world, how much our supplies and facilities could produce and how much would be left for our civilian population which, after all, is our first and greatest duty to protect? If it isn't, why are we in this war at all?

There is a perfectly simple answer to that question. We didn't make that calculation because we didn't have any competent and co-ordinated organization to do that work and then lower our sights and balance and ration the exact supply to the most necessitous uses—including those of our own people. As is shown by recent proofs of the uncoordinated crosspurpose in top-side controls, which have also frequently been noticed in this space, we have no such organization yet.

It's the principal weakness in our whole provision for defense—and it could prove fatal. It is "later than you think," but it is not yet too late.

The Great Lib'ry Debate

Louis Graves in Chapel Hill Weekly

Except for the commonest words connected with daily living (eat, drink, sleep, or light, sun, rain, and such) I suppose that, in this University community, no word is spoken more often than library. Yet there is much uncertainty about how to pronounce it.

"I wonder why so many people say 'Lib'ry,'" remarked my mother the other day.

This omission of a syllable is almost surely a case of carelessness. If so, it is carelessness that has become a fixed habit, in some places, with other words ending in ary. By Englishmen the word extraordinary is always pronounced extrav'dinry; that is, they fall to sound not only the final a but also the first a and the i.

Consulting the Century Dictionary and the Funk & Wagnalls Standard Dictionary, I am surprised to find that both give the a in library the sound of a in fate. I don't believe that anybody I know gives it that sound; my own pronunciation and the one I am accustomed to hear (when all three syllables are sounded) is about like that library. The pronunciation, according to the two dictionaries I consulted, would be li-brary-ry. Both these dictionaries put the accent on the first syllable, with no secondary accent.

You people who have made a study of the English language—Messrs. Coffman, Taylor, Booker, Thrall, Payne, Bond, Ericson, Hudson, MacMillan, et als. of the University faculty — does any one of you actually give the middle syllable of library the av sound?

I am laying my plans to "go into conference," on this subject, with Charles E. Rush. If there is anybody capable of giving guidance on how to pronounce library, it ought to be the man who runs one.

Alcoholic Red Tape

Business Week.

The British wanted a tanker-full of alcohol. A tanker had never before been laden with alcohol. A permit was obtained. Molasses was needed. An export permit was obtained. It was necessary to find a waterside distillery. One was found.

Then not a wheel turned.

The British fumed. The OPM pulled at its beard. The tanker owners used pure dock-side, the distillery company asked why. At last the why was discovered. A clerk—one, single, worried, rattled, redevoted, pitiable clerk—had held it all up.

"Form PD had been used," he fretted. "The proper form is PD 1."

TODAY'S BIBLE THOUGHT

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God, and the prisoners were listening to them.—Acts 16:25.

British Have A Secret

By Dorothy Thompson

Note: Dorothy Thompson is in London. In the year that has elapsed since she last visited the British capital, the inhabitants of that city have been given a stiff dose of undiluted Hell Fire; in her first column she dispatched from London, Miss Thompson confesses her problem—for the sake of British morale and compares her fears with reality. She will continue to write three articles each week for readers of THE NEWS.—Editors, THE NEWS.

LONDON — There was an uneasy feeling of suppressed but persistent apprehension about visiting England during this war. Perhaps that was why I postponed it so long—because of that inhibited, almost unconscious fear of being disappointed. All American correspondents told heroic stories and I believed them, yet always there was the realization that I wanted to believe them, that I was hearing what I wanted to hear. So many things have not been as we wanted them to be, nor as we believed them to be.

There was, for instance, France. We had been told premyou to a year ago last Spring of the immortal vigor of France, of the unconquerable army, of the imperturbable morale. But the other truth was there for any candid eye to see before the German armies blasted their way through Holland and Belgium, cutting through France as if it were overripe cheese.

THE FRENCH WERE CONFIDENT —BUT THE GRASS WAS UNCUT

Those armies had not yet moved on May 1, 1940, when I revisited France after a three-years absence. Officials were brightly confident. One noted their words for the meticulous reports. They spoke assuredly; surely they could not be wrong.

But something was wrong. One felt it rather than realized it. Something was wrong with the people. Their faces wore a sullen, furtive expression. Soldiers going off to the front departed in a silence that was not reticent but ominous.

No one there seemed to notice it. Perhaps other observers had become accustomed to it and found it normal. No one seemed to notice that waiters in restaurants and sales-people in shops were irritable. Courtesy had departed from them. They were overwrought and their nerves were snapping.

As always, it had some profound significance I observed that the grass in the gardens had not been cut. They have given it up already, I thought, before a bomb has fallen, and put resolutely out of mind what I could not put out of my nerves. That was on May 1, 1940, and before I had departed on May 23 it was all over really.

Perhaps, I thought, I would find something like that in England. People had written, "England has changed." Yes, but how? There were things one would like to see changed in England. But something else was in England, something pervasive, something deep like England's unturbulent rivers, something continuous, unchanging, strong.

Had the bombs, the insufferable clamor and the insensate tumult of the skies exploded that deep, quiet stream, throwing upon its surface all the sediment and hidden scum? Perhaps that had happened. Better not go. I thought—better trust and believe and have faith, but do not see.

IN A SCARRED CITY THE DOLL HOSPITAL IS OPEN

I saw first the port at which my plane put down and then the faces of those who came to meet me. Homely faces. Merry faces. The people must have thought me a little overwrought from the flight when I began to laugh—a laugh of sheer relief.

The port was terribly scarred. Street after street of obscene ruins of houses caught off guard, and all their intimacies revealed in the wreckage. Shops, factories and great stores which represented someone's lifework, someone's pride, were now dumps into which no one could burrow for salvage.

There were bits of pathos. A sign told me in prim, clean letters that a doll's hospital had moved to another street. The firm intention to continue to patch up dollies was absurd, but in that absurdity was the will to live.

I watched faces, looking hungrily for confirmation, looking bravely for repudiation. People walked briskly past. Girls with stout legs, men bent on their business. They ignored the ruins. They did not avert their eyes from them; they overlooked them.

"Rather grim," was the only comment of my companion, who had just flown off into my England. Into the eternal, beloved landscape of summer clouds and the ever-changing English sky, brooding, calling, fruitfully tapestried, combed and brushed and lovingly tended the land—a shy country, gentle and retreating.

Boys and girls pedaled bicycles on the road and sidewalks passed, walking and on bikes. They did not look quite like soldiers. They were too casual, too at ease. Yet I had the feeling that they were watching, that everyone was watching in an unsentimental way as though unwilling to pay too great a tribute to the enemy who was dangerous, but still contemptible.

"I have 750 sulphur bombs sunk in my itty pond," I heard someone say. "They don't disturb the lilies, just for the moment they invade."

IS THIS WAR-TIME, THIS SERENITY?

"Is this war-time?" I thought in the pub, with its dark, beamed ceiling, its faded cretonnes, its fillets of fish and its beer. It was dark when we came to London. The driver proceeded slowly, but surely as one walks through rooms of one's own house when the lights have gone out.

The sky was nearly gray. There was no moon. Only as my eyes became accustomed could I see that I was moving among ruins by the ghostly outlines of jagged walls, by the vague contours of a broken arch, by the sightless eyes of a building that was all front and no rear, and the sky graying through it.

But the porter at the desk took my name and gave me messages as he did in other days before all this began. A little more warmth and friendliness to those who came from beyond the fortress, from that other world that other world of people who do not know. And then the next day and the next.

Why was it that I should feel so comforted, so secure, so safe in this heart, that has become the heart of the world? Perhaps the enemy will come ever again and drop destruction and twist force into chaos. Still I should feel safe. I should feel safe because I have found what Walt Whitman described as "a city invincible to the attacks of the whole of the rest of the earth . . . the new city of friends."

I have not seen a sullen face nor heard any angry word since my arrival in England. Out of great depths I wonder do these people draw upon inexhaustible reserves of nerves? There is no strident, no clamor in the people. Nobody brags, but everybody is proud in a secret way. That is it.

THEIR SECRET IS A LOVE AFFAIR WITH ENGLAND

These people have a secret—a secret understanding. I think, each with the other. An unspoken love affair with England. As a man has no fear when he fights to protect his love so these people, loving, have utterly lost fear.

One has a curious feeling of envy. Everyone is terribly kind—too kind. Still one is an outsider. There is something these people have in common that I cannot share. It is to have looked reality full in the face and to have created to be afraid.

That, I think, is what it means to be free.

Do not try to break these people, Germans. You will do more than break your weapons. You will break your hearts.

Letters

Answer to Wheeler Postal

(Last week Mr. H. A. Cheek of Charlotte received one of the famous Wheeler-franked postals urging him to be an isolationist. Mr. Cheek's reply appears below.—Editors, THE NEWS.)

Senator Burton K. Wheeler:

Your suggestion on your "America First Committee" circular is herewith declined.

The respective names appearing on this circular and the quotations attributed to each are absolutely repulsive to me and, throwing the name of the "America First Committee" in, they stink.

I am sure the voice of Charles Lindbergh, Burton K. Wheeler, Herbert Hoover, Gerald P. Nye and Joseph P. Kennedy does not interest nor influence the average straight thinking American. I think the five quotations in respective order are not worthy of the protection of the American flag. The first two mentioned should, as secretary of War Stimson intimated, be charged with treason.

Lindbergh forfeited the privilege of free speech and American citizenship by denouncing this country for abode in England and later Germany prior to the outbreak of World War No. 2 but when danger threatened from abroad, he hastily beat a retreat to the "Land of the free."

Our country is already threatened with serious disunity by Bundist, Communist, Fascism and Lewis-ism (Communist inspired). It is unfortunate that the taxpayers have to support such tripe as this, coming from an unduly representative of the people.

How unfortunate that the five mentioned couldn't be "plowed under."

—H. A. CHEEK.

1319 Clay Avenue,
Charlotte.

Keep 'Em Flying!

—By Herblock

Mandate For Peace

By Raymond Clapper

A PEACE campaign is to be launched shortly in this country. Through available organization, an effort will be made to rally nationwide public demand that the Government open negotiations with Hitler for peace.

The campaign will be represented as a "mandate" from the people to the Government.

How would that work? Suppose such a "peace mandate" became as strong as to compel President Roosevelt to yield to it.

In that case, Mr. Roosevelt would have to get in touch with Hitler and say to him in effect:

"I have said that there can be no peace or security in the world so long as aggressors such as you run free to strike without warning at all nations, big and little, even at those with whom you have had non-aggression pacts. The American Government has been giving all aid that it could to nations which were resisting your aggression.

WHAT SAY, LET'S BE BUDDIES . . .

"But, Mr. Hitler, I am obliged to say to you that I must reverse that policy. As you have seen from our newspapers in America, I am now under a mandate to bring about peace as quickly as possible. I am notifying the British Government of this decision and we are suspending at once all further aid that would prolong hostilities. I can assure you, my dear Herr Chancellor, that with American aid now cut off, there can be no further effective resistance to you, nor to your partners, Italy and Japan. This is the end of the war. You have nothing more to fear.

"But, my dear Chancellor, I do plead with you to be generous and considerate. You are now supreme. You can afford to be charitable. Will you not permit me, my dear Chancellor, to tell my country that I have your promise that you will never again attack any other nation, even a small helpless neutral? Some of our people have felt that you have broken your promises in the past. May I not, my dear Chancellor, go back and tell my country that you do not intend ever again to break a promise and that you will never again violate a treaty? O, promise me."

CHAMBERLAIN WAS POPULAR FOR ABOUT 24 HOURS

That's about the sense of what President Roosevelt would have to say to Hitler if he expected to get anywhere with the "peace mandate." And it might succeed. Chamberlain put one over on Hitler like that. When Chamberlain came back from Munich he had it in writing! And did the British people give Chamberlain a big cheer. They loved him for it—for about twenty-four hours.

A few days ago Acting Secretary of State Welles delivered an address here in which he outlined the hope of the United States that after this war is over, after Hitlerism is defeated, the United States and other nations can join in some kind of association that will insure mutual protection against unprovoked attack, relief from an excessive burden of rival armaments, and access to raw materials for all nations.

But a most important proviso was attached. This could only be after Hitlerism was defeated. This Government feels deeply that there can be no security—which is what a real peace must bring—until there is freedom from the kind of attack that has been visited upon Poland, Holland, Belgium and now Russia.

A PEACE NOW WOULD RECOGNIZE AN AXIS VICTORY

To make peace now is to place the future in the hands of the Axis. It is to accept the superior force of the Axis as the dominating force of the world. It is to confide our security to the trusting hope that the Axis will give us a square deal and that, although controlling all other continents, the Axis will be willing to allow the United States and the British empire to build up their strength so that some day it will overshadow that of the Axis.

That is how our people here in Washington look at it. That is why they are dead set against any peace with Hitler while he remains victorious. That is why they hope there will be no "mandate" from the American people to compel this Government to accept the kind of peace that Hitler would give as he sits, at the moment, on the top of the wave.

Visitin' Around

Her Cup of Woe Runneth Over

(Clandville Item, Mount Airy Times)

Mrs. Lucian Brim unfortunately lost a fine cow last week.

Gosh, Are You All Drafting Parents?

(Mocksville Enterprise)

The announcement that boys in the training camps are gaining on the average of ten pounds for their first three week's training, is of special interest to parents of Mocksville who have been drafted.