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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1943

A Lesson

Rommel Hands Us a Licking; The British Could Advise Us

News of the first American defeat in Tunisia brings a sick, sinking feeling to the people back home. This is the first time soldiers of the United States have ever given before German troops. It is the first of our big casualty lists, the probable forerunner of bigger ones. In the Tunisian hills where Rommel struck at us in a surprise move, the Army's dark outlook on casualties was likely born—an eventual 100,000 per month are expected.

New, though defeat may bring grave doubts as to the ability of our commanders in the field, and the suspicion that the retreat may be fit to rank with the disaster of Pearl Harbor, it cannot be held that the final result is in danger. That, however, is not the point. We have paid a price apparently fearful, and apparently because we were caught unawares by a smart tactician.

This is no time for another bumbling Congressional investigation already we have wasted too much precious time in too many ways. It is time to watch over experts, but it is time to ask if our own High Command has made use of British experience in the field as it should. Is there the chance that our commanders have, to the present, shown an inclination to imitate Rommel their own way, without seeking help or advice? Could it be that our lightly held lines and the subsequent defeat represented a major American error—which might have been avoided by British experts?

We refuse to believe that Americans will prove the weak links in any military chain, allied or enemy, and will maintain that U.S. men and arms are equal to any task. But if there is, it is the chance that our own High Command has made use of British experience in the field as it should. Is there the chance that our commanders have, to the present, shown an inclination to imitate Rommel their own way, without seeking help or advice? Could it be that our lightly held lines and the subsequent defeat represented a major American error—which might have been avoided by British experts?

Henry Ingram

Death Halted a Young and Vigorous Public Career

In the death of State Commander Henry Ingram of the American Legion, North Carolina suffered a loss to be deeply felt in the years ahead. As leader of the Legion in troubled war years, he had given his office force and abilities, he has seldom known.

He put the State Legion directly behind his efforts with all its influence, and it can be seen in every war organization. Even to the time of a few days before his death, Henry Ingram was speaking his mind boldly. Last week, for example, he called the State Board of Health to task, charging it with the burden of responsibility for the high rate of incidence of syphilis and other venereal diseases among North Carolina draftees.

Thus in the last this young man the war was but 46 at his passing, gave his organization and his State the benefit of forthright leadership. His challenge of the Board of Health was almost his last act, it may be said to have been typical of his career. Henry Ingram was destined, so his friends said, to become the second National Commander of the Legion from North Carolina; and the Legion have both suffered the loss of a man whose presence in these days was doubly important.

Minorities

One Stands To Lose a Little One To Gain Much in New Park

We think it cannot be said that the property owners of Greenwood Cliff and Harding Place protest, without justification against the coming of the Negro park to an area near their homes. Any group of property owners, it seems to us, might have been expected to raise similar objections. The building of a park, for either whites or Negroes, would tend to depreciate the value of surrounding residential property, and perhaps prompt some of

them to dispose of their holdings and move elsewhere.

Despite a fifty-foot barrier of landscaped grounds to surround the park, many residents of the section feel that there is no insulating them against the park and its occupants; they foresee noisy days and nights, perhaps with floodlights by night. And most of them have expressed their strong disapproval through an attorney. But, despite the fact that these landholders are able to marshal many a reasonable argument, the City Parks and Recreation Commission says it will proceed to prepare the way for the park, and put it into operation by early Summer.

For the Commission, refusing to approach the problem from the point of view of the little band of home-owners on two streets (and not all of those have objected), views the project as the first of a long-range series in Charlotte. The plan for providing Negroes with recreational facilities on the basis of population (30 per cent) is an admirable one; and Chairman C. H. Stone is determined that the Negroes in this new park, though a small beginning, is nonetheless a beginning. For the future, it will expand.

It is that view which looks over and beyond the objection of a few property owners, and for many a day when the City Government will have made a wise investment in Negro recreation and Negro parks. For today, there is no park for Charlotte Negroes, and no supervised recreation. Those considerations make the objections of householders seem all the more important, almost as objections against the progress of the city itself.

Last Fling

Young Draftees-To-Be Form Great New Delinquent Class

According to welfare workers who spend a great deal of their time out on the frontiers of human misery, the past few weeks have seen America turned upside-down. New problems now arise, and to many of them there are no ready-made agencies in the field are deemed sufficient to meet ordinary needs; but today they are often helpless. One case in point is the new air of last-fling desperation worn by boys in their late teens, now facing draft and battle action.

We are told that many groups have made pleas, through their leaders, that something be done about this big new class of delinquents, now apparently dedicated to running wild. For example, a Charlotte Negro leader, reporting to representatives of the Methodist Bethel Center and the Civitan Club, recently announced that large numbers of boys of his race seemed suddenly possessed of the Devil. They saw the draft coming, and they were celebrating the last few breaths of freedom.

The problem, of course, struck all over the country with the lowering of the draft age, and is not confined to Negro boys alone. Nor, even, to America—in Great Britain juvenile delinquency is up 40 per cent. Social agencies attempting to deal with the newly delinquent are facing the most difficult task of all. The new problem-children know that they are not children; tomorrow, they will be men; they fight fiercely any attempt to divert their attention from the last rounds of merry-making. Too young to realize that they will run the days of celebration and too old to go as they are hidden without a final fling, they have become the newest problem of war at home. For them we can think of no word of advice likely to be heard and heeded.

For one the Duce calls a drinking man, Mr. Churchill does a marvelous job of walking the tight rope between over confidence and despair.

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Not Money, Sweat And Blood

America Hasn't Learned About War

By Dorothy Thompson

It is perturbing that in our first clash with the Rommel army in Tunisia we have suffered a clear defeat. Its immediate military significance is, we hope, not too great, and we will all follow Mr. Stimson's advice not to exaggerate it. But we have failed in our purpose to cut off Rommel's arm from the new German army in northern Tunisia, and instead of this, have been pushed back to the frontiers of Algeria, and lost three newly built airfields.

It is the defeat of a strategy and will seriously affect that of General Alexander. The plan was to take Rommel in a British and American pincer. Now, the British Eighth Army is no longer one arm of an offensive, but has become a relief army for us.

Defeats have been the bitter herbs eaten by every new army that has entered this war against the Axis. The British suffered many. The British suffered a whole series of defeats at the beginning of their campaign. Unfortunately, it is impossible for any army to obtain, by observation, experience from its predecessors.

What is decisive is how we digest defeats, what we learn from them. It is not enough to admit frankly that in this encounter we have been thrashed. Gauder is a first step. But in a robust country, every defeat has an immediate reaction. In an increase of energy, will, and determination, not to make excuses, but to sift things through and find out how matters can be improved. That the British in Africa, finally got an army under a great military leader, the British Eighth Army, is no longer one arm of an offensive. Otherwise, General Alexander would never have been appointed.

Now, what do we see in this country in Congress? What is the reaction? In the moment when we suffer a defeat, Congress is debating whether we should establish air hegemony over the whole world. There doesn't seem to be any connection. It is also debating whether our fathers should be exempted from military service. This is happening while the fathers of ten children, and the ten children, are fighting the war in Russia, and Germany is making a levee en masse and putting guns into the hands even of peasants.

Certain things could be discussed. It could reasonably be asked what is more important in a modern army, quantity or quality. It could be asked whether it is possible at this stage of the war adequately to train eleven million men with the existing number and quality of officers. It could be asked whether a crack army of five million might not be superior to a mass army of eleven million. It could be asked whether our method of training young officers directly out of universities, could not be improved by more rapid promotion of trained privates from the ranks.

We are told that the defeat was partly due to the fact that the Germans turned up with the 57-ton tank Mark VI, which is superior to any we have. It might be asked why the Germans have produced a better tank than we. We have been told by every known advertising means that American industry is far superior to any in the world. It is disturbing to realize that the tanks of the Soviet Union are equal if not superior to the German. In this matter of weapons, we can't profit by the experience of our predecessors.

There is a discussion going on—not to say a battle over jurisdiction between the W.P.A. of Mr. Nelson, and the Army and Navy. A pertinent question in this discussion is: Who is responsible for our not having a tank as good as that of the Germans? A stratagem, a ruse, would never give us a hint on how to learn from defeat. The question might be asked, why are we planning an eleven million army, at the cost of war industries and farms, when an already trained French Army in North Africa is lacking modern equipment.

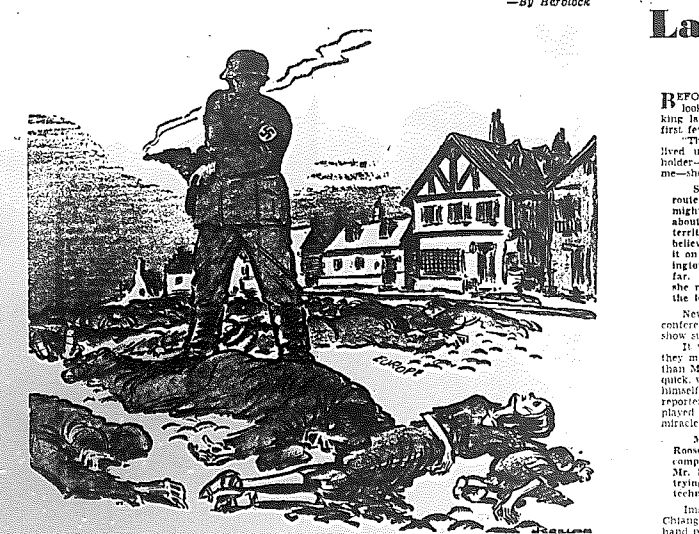
From unofficial rumor-mongers we hear that we want an eleven million army with which to bring weight to the Peace Conference. If any such thought is entering the mind of anybody, the question must be allowed whether a small army with a series of great victories to its credit would not tip the scales against a huge army that has had little to do with winning the war. Every foreign statesman can calculate our potential manpower. What still has to be proved is our fighting power.

This country is not yet psychologically prepared nor does it collectively accept the fact that war is a dangerous business and that men die in it. From the beginning we have tended to think that by some act of divine Providence we would win this war without really paying for it except in money.

Money counts for nothing in this war. What counts is the amount of sweat, blood, and tears expended. How many more defeats must be suffered before we realize the kind of age we live in?

"Saved From the Communist Menace"

—By Herblock



A Black Record

Absentees In Congress

By Samuel Grafton

SOME Democrats in the House are showing a tendency to take a little walk during important votes. They have become the little men who weren't there. As these few Democrats vanish, sitting out of the House, the House becomes a Republican House, for the official Democratic led, 222 to 208, is slim.

I have talked much about absentism, but this is the choicest absentism of them all. You don't vote, you don't vote not only merely so far as votes, Democrats who suddenly find the need of fresh air avoid voting against their Administration, and avoid voting for it, merely at the price of marking themselves down as men who have nothing to say during a world crisis. Democrats have thus let the Republicans pass at least four measures, by straight party-line voting.

One measure would prevent many Government departments from sending out free mail. It passed 204 to 201, all but two Republicans voting for it. Another measure took \$3,000,000 from the Federal Home Loan Bank Administration. Two other amendments cut two other bureaus in the same way. One really wild proposal, which would have let the Communications Commission without a penny (even for policing the air against illegal shortwave transmitters) was halted only by desperate efforts.

One correspondent says prominent Democrats have been seen on the floor just before one of these key votes but not during. Another writer, Mr. Charles van Dewater, who has been compiling these instances, says, as a friend House vote on an important appropriation amendment, such figures as 84 to 26, all being Republicans and all 26 Democrats. The balance of power was outside having a smoke. It had found the perfect device for hitting what happens in the world: the device of going to the smoking room to be waiting for a street car or to be engaged in some other innocuous activity.

Before I forget I should like to list some other measures which have come up since the last time I talked them. They all have the same characteristic of "indifference" to the oblique push, the sideway, crabwise walk.

Cheerleader

Let 'Em All Hear

Congressional Record
MR. HANKIN. Mr. Speaker, on yesterday Mme. Chiang Kai-Shek spoke in both the House and the Senate. Unfortunately an order was issued by the speaker to prevent the broadcast of her speech. I would report demonstrations on the floor of the House, with the result that while this lady received one of the greatest demonstrations here ever given, none in all the history of this country, and while the Record shows round after round of applause in the Senate and a standing demonstration at the close of her address, the Record would indicate that we sat here like a bunch of mummies. No applause, no demonstrations whatsoever were recorded.

British House of Parliament. It is a question for the individual Member to strike out, if he desires to do so, whatever demonstrations are indicated by the transcripts of the official reporters when his speech is taken down. If that policy had been followed—that time-limited policy that began with the Government and only ended something like a year ago—America would be acquainted with the Congressional Record today by speech by Mme. Chiang Kai-Shek in her appeal for the Chinese people who are being brutally destroyed by the savage Japanese. Unless we come to realize that the chief issue is the one that is never mentioned, we shall go through the next campaign without having known what it was about. That issue is the obscuring of issues.

Real-Life Drama

Lady Confucius

By Raymond Clapper

Washington

BEFORE Mme. Chiang Kai-Shek came down here the other day, I looked back over the notes of my visit with her for tea in Chungking last April. I thought perhaps I had never fully impressed. The first few lines in my note book run as follows:

"Then I took me to see Madame Chiang. She more than lived up to my picture. Spoken English was excellent. A straitlaced holder—Colonel Chenault was leaving as I arrived and she introduced me—she has everything—looks, wit, vivacity and intelligence."

She asked about the airplane trip, whether it was hard, the route, how many days, and other traveling details. She said she might go to the United States for treatment soon. She talked about the Indian situation, and at length about abolishing extraterritoriality, and said she was "biting from the inside" to get rid of it as fairly, but. On the basis of her first few days in Washington, it seems to stand up. She has conquered all here thus far. Even the newspapermen have gone all out for her—she must have something that even Clare Luce hasn't got, because the lovely Clare had to work her way through.

Newspaper correspondents who were at the White House press conference when she appeared with the President participated in a show such as we probably shall never see again.

It was high state drama, played by the real characters. Some day they may put Helen Hayes in the part, but she never did it any better than Madame acted it in real life. It was the delicate, feminine, ahead, quick, witty and powerful first lady of the East against the great master himself. As the press conference began the President, the reporters not to put any catch questions to Madame. She in turn played to the President as the big strong man who could work miracles.

Madame Chiang, then, with feet dangling from the high-backed Roosevelt chair, was working smoothly, while toying with her compact, in exact a promise out of President Roosevelt for China. Mr. Roosevelt, the master of the press-conference technique, was trying with equal smoothness not to melt too much under Madame's technique.

Imagine the scene. Two hundred reporters in on the spot, Madame Chiang sitting between the President and Mrs. Roosevelt, who laid her hand protectively on Madame's fragile arm.

Madame made a lovely little gesture, with delicate fingers for everyone. A reporter thrusts a direct question as to whether China's manpower is being fully used in the war. Madame holds her peace, but with a touch of feeling replies that China's men are fighting to the extent that munitions are available for them. When more munitions are sent to China more men will fight. With the greatest of care, she has thrown the ball square into the lap of President. He explains that we will send munitions as fast as the Lord will let us. Madame, smiling and making it all so polite and sweet, has she hears there is a saying that the Lord helps those who help themselves.

About that time President Roosevelt indicated it had gone on long enough and suggested that if the reporters had any questions for him they'd better be getting on with them.

As we left the President's office, the three were sitting inscrutably in a neat row. Mrs. Roosevelt's hand was no longer laid protectively on Madame's arm. Madame's not a hair ruffled, had a pleasant impersonal gaze from which no thoughts escaped. The President was busy with parting words to straggling reporters.

Whatever it was that Confucius said, it sure was a mouthful.

Side Glances



"Anyway, I'm glad Greece is serving on the African front—I understand those Moslem girls are very modest and hard to get acquainted with!"