THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

And Evening Chronicle

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W. C. Dowd, 1865-1927

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1943

The Rathole

Closing Brenner Pass May Isolate Italian Boot

Far to the North of the Italian battlefields lies the Brenner Pass, favorite meeting grounds of the dictators. There, in the narrow passageway on the German-Italian border, Adolph Hitler and Benito Mussolini have often met. There, Hitler cleverly steered the stuffed and pompous ruler of an empty empire away from glory. There he kept from him the secrets of power politics. There the two met to discourse of evil. There, in the gap through formidable mountains which is only some 300 yards wide, the lords of the Axis have left their ghosts.

Now, those ghosts are being laid. For the first time, Allied bombers have carried their burdens there. The hills shake, the bridges go down, and the narrow way from Germany into Italy is in danger of being permanently closed. There is the threat, now, that the only direct means of supplying the German armies in Italy will be blocked. There is one other way, through Switzerland. And the determined Swiss have made it known that they would dynamite their tunnels, at the first attempt to pass through their country with supplies of war.

As the armies struck in the South, the bombers winged their way North, destroying communications, halting relief forces, and hammering at the roads and rails. The thrust at Brenner Pass may become the most vital single move of the campaign. If that entrance—and exit—can be stopped up, then Italy can be largely isolated; Germany will be forced to use more planes for supply, and that will expose them to the Allied planes which rule the skies. The rate of attrition will climb.

And, when the time comes for Allied forces to move out of Italy and toward Germany, it will not be necessary to use the mountain passes, which may be easily defended. It is more likely that the invasion forces will turn West, into France, and East, into Albania. Strategically, Germany has a poor ally in Italian geography. The entire area could be cut off, and, when conquered, will make one great air base, useful throughout the Winter months. Hitler and Haushofer were right in their original thesis: Italy bears the kiss of death.

The Gossipers

Men of All Ages Just Will Speak Rudely of Charlotte

We may as well up and admit it: People often make unkind, cutting remarks about the City of Charlotte. If one wishes evidence, he has only to visit any other Carolina town, and fish around for opinions of the Queen City. He'll get 'em, usually hot ones. For a period of years, we've been conducting a private survey into the depths of this phenomenon; confusion is greater now than at the beginning. But there are certain salient facts to be presented and remembered.

This favorite sport of the Carolinas, this flinging of mild insults at the largest city of the area has historic origins. Some of the most famous people of other centuries have cast slurs themselves upon Charlotte. It has existed to this day. Even friends of the City, realizing from long experience a certain civic attitude of defiance inherited from the old times of rebellion, have not been loath to speak out, with frankness.

In culling famed remarks made about Charlotte, we have sifted them down to four, running through some 150 years of the City's life:

1. Earl Cornwallis, Lieut. Gen. of His Majesty's American forces, once called City and County "a damned hornets' nest"—and with good reason. As he spoke for local history, he retreated toward disaster.

2. George Washington, shortly after the Revolution, visited the City, stopping at Cook's Inn on West Trade St. He forgot a silver snuffbox here, later wrote, complaining of his loss in "that trifling village, Charlotte." This was not held against the Father, but was not freely mentioned in more patriotic circles.

3. Twenty years ago Joseph Pennell, world-famed etcher and virtual discoverer of Whistler, visited Charlotte, commented on the rich red-and-green color of the section, and departed with: "Charlotte has more churches and less art than any town I ever saw." There was none to dispute.

4. A few months ago, ex-Mayor E. McA. Currie, appearing before the Civil Aeronautics Board, was asked if he didn't favor keeping peace with Eastern Air Lines because that firm held a monopoly. His reply deserves a place in the short list: "I would not. I'm from Charlotte, and we don't keep peace with anybody."

You may take your choice of these recorded opinions, formulate your own, or continue with no opinion at all. In Charlotte, most residents consider virtually all these remarks as highly complimentary to City, County and people. Otherwise, they would not consider them at all. Mecklenburg has been forever like that.

A Promise

OPA Sees Living Costs Lower, But It Doesn't Seem Likely

More than anything else, with the exception of an announcement of victory in the war, Americans would like to believe Prentiss Brown's prediction that the cost of living would shortly be rolled back to the level of September, 1942. The costs, housewives will reflect, were high enough even then—but they are a great deal higher now, regardless of fancy figures showing a decline since July of this year.

Mr. Brown, who has used the moonlight and roses approach as against Leon Henderson's raucous barking, has been only moderately successful in his job. The Office of Price Administration may have become the most valuable single agency of the home front, but the public will never accept it as such. Its fundamental errors have been too obvious. And now, with prices in high gear, people will not be expecting any such miracle as a substantial reduction in living costs.

OPA has told probing Congressmen, for example, that food stabilization had already done half the job of rolling back prices. One task remaining is the reduction of restaurant prices. OPA goes so far as to admit that the task will be difficult. It is our hunch that it will prove impossible. Living costs, in face of far greater demands on American food producers by fighting forces and foreign nations, seem sure to hover at about the present level—or else keep on going up in that slow, agonizing spiral.

The Dissenters

Some Are So Short-Sighted As To Insist on Practicalities

There are thousands of men at home who were not pleased by the talk of President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill making plans for the post-war era at the Quebec conference. Most of them gave no voice to their displeasure; most of them probably were not conscious of their resentment. But most of the people in America did not understand such long-range talk, and that is certain.

Many o those who did think about the meager reports were puzzled. There must have been wonder as to just how far Franklin Roosevelt had gone in committing the United States to this or that policy, on his own hook—and assuming in advance that he would still be in the White House when the peace was written. There were many thoughts like that, at home.

Abroad, where the fighting men are living and dying, there were surveys being taken at about the same time. Those men were considerably more down-to-earth than their leaders at Quebec. The consensus was, among the fighters, that post-war plans could wait, so far as they were concerned. They thought that the assurance of employment when they returned was more important than anything else. They could wait for the other plans, just so long as they could get a good job when they were through with fighting.

There is much that is sensible in that attitude, and whether it takes into account the need for planning in advance or not, it is the attitude of men at home and abroad. It offers a wide opening for a political appeal, next Fall. If that has not already occurred to many a returning Congressman, and to more than one Presidential candidate, then it soon will. There will be, ere long, a battle cry: fewer plans, more action. It may well be carried to victory in the hot campaigns ahead.

The talk of a twin-pronged pincers movement against Japan does not mean that one will be led by Eleanor Roosevelt, from New Zealand.

Churchill Speaks

A Warning To Russia

By Dorothy Thompson

WASHINGTON

MR. CHURCHILL'S Quebec speech was admirable, possessing those familiar yet never stale qualities of chivalry, fortitude, balance, and candor, that make him at once the grandest and most winsome interpreter alive of the fighting democratic spirit.

Mr. Churchill spoke only in part as the British political and military leader. He made a survey of the war situation as a United Nations statesman, and spoke politically as the mouthpiece of America as well as Britain, indicating complete Anglo-American agreement.

His speech confirms that there are major differences of opinion between the Anglo-American powers and Russia. Fortunately, it was full of hope that the relations between the Western democracies and our continental ally may be clarified. But there was no indication of the basis on which such agreement might be reached. There was only an account of a proposed procedure, namely a meeting of the three foreign ministers, to be followed, in case an agreement is thus reached in principle, by a meeting between Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt.

In such a situation it is a most unhappy incident that one commentator, Drew Pearson, should have made the utterly irresponsible charge against the American State Department, that it desired to see Russia bled white. The most consistent critics of the State Department are horrified by such an allegation. Mr. Churchill rightly pointed out that Russia has been the recipient, from both America and Britain, of enormous amounts of munitions, and it is well known that the President and Mr. Churchill have pushed through priorities for aid to Russia, often over the objections of their own military staffs.

Mr. Churchill presented the case between Russia and the Western democracies with fairness and candor—and for the candor especially, we must all be immensely grateful. It is better for all concerned to recognize that there are issues, than to be led to believe that no differences exist.

The differences to which Mr. Churchill devoted so large a part of his speech, do not arise out of ill will, as Mr. Pearson suggested. They arise chiefly out of disparities between Russia and the West concerning, first, what is [illegible] possible, and second, what is to be expected in Germany.

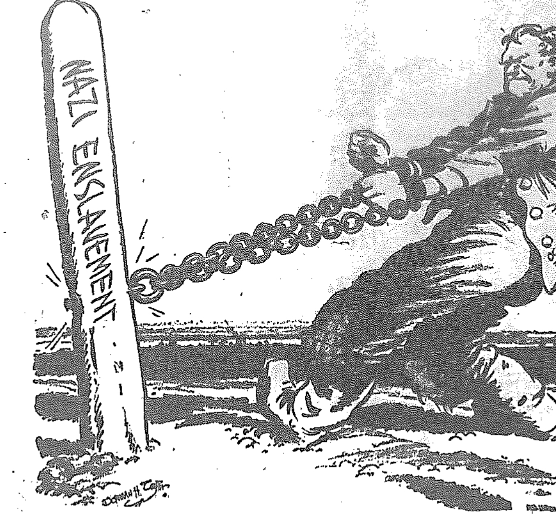
Mr. Churchill's speech was made with a subtle choice of words, but the Russians will understand exactly what he meant. It is important that he referred to the Western democracies as "the two great powers of the sea and of the air," and added that our armies have only been created since the outbreak of war. He did not need to underline the fact that in this they differ greatly from the Russian armies, which have been recruited by universal service for twenty years.

To underline his fairness he said that the Russians are entitled to ask for a second front, that it is thoroughly understandable that they should, but he hardened on the proposition that we shall make a major operation only when we are reasonably certain of its success, and—to put it bluntly—that our own military chiefs, and not the Russians are going to be the judge of that moment. That a grandiose front across the Channel will be opened was promised again. But the indication of the speech was that it will not be done now. The greater probability appears to be the opening of yet another front in the Mediterranean.

It is clear that the Russians believe that Germany can be cracked this year by a joint military and political offensive. Up to now our leaders have been consistent in assuring us that we must expect a long war before Germany collapses. Mr. Churchill, summarizing recent events in Germany, the occupied countries, and the Balkans, the Russian successes and the effects of the Anglo-American bombings, admitted a possibility. But he expressed himself as unwilling to base Western strategy on such speculations and declined to discuss the length of the war, from the viewpoint of German mass psychology.

Getting Impatient

—By Dorman Smith



On Policing The World

By Raymond Clapper

WASHINGTON

SOME people around here winced when they hit the bare knuckle part of Bud Kelland's postwar safety zone scheme. They were pleased that a reformed Republican isolationist should urge that for our own participation we have a four-power concert with Russia, China and Britain, and in any case a permanent open military alliance with the British. That was fine. But you could see some eyebrows go up when Kelland went on to say that if those hopes failed we would still have the bare military might of the United States which he would want to have spread out over both oceans.

That picture of the Pacific being an American lake and of American control over Dakar, and Iceland and Greenland and perhaps other jumpoff points in the Atlantic was a bit breath taking to some. Yet what Kelland suggests as to the far-reaching air and naval strength that America would need to protect herself in the absence of alliances reaches the heart of our problem. Unless we are willing to join in a comprehensive organization with other nations, then we shall be forced to try to defend ourselves alone at an effort which seems almost prohibitive.

Gen. H. H. Arnold, chief of the Army Air Force, tells us in the Army's ordnance publication about airplanes that we shall soon have in combat capable of flying to Europe on a round trip. How are we to protect ourselves against other countries having airplanes that will fly from Europe here and back? Weapons are developing so that there is no protection for any community. Germany has put up the most concentrated defenses, yet Allied bombers go over Hamburg and Berlin time after time and we are inflicting damage such as we do not want ever to come to any of our Atlantic coast cities.

This time there seems to be strong logic for relying on force to back up our hopes. We are moving very slowly and with extreme caution in forging the shape of things to follow the war. In the Administration there is fear of advancing elaborate schemes that will be the target of political attack. We are fearful of courting the same disaster that overtook Wilson. And at times it seems as if little progress is being made although we are assured that there is progress under the surface about which it is not wise to talk at the moment.

Hitler used military force to wreck the world of his time. Possibly we can use great military force to build a world that will be safe for free people again. Obviously a large nation gets nowhere except into war if it does not have strong force.

War Honeymoon Is Over

By Samuel Grafton

NEW YORK

MR. CHURCHILL'S quality of respect for himself comes out clear and strong in his Quebec speech. You feel that this man has a position. You feel he is not ashamed of it. He said, in almost so many words, that he is not going to make a second front for the purpose of satisfying Russia. He will make one when it can succeed, without squandering life. And he said many other things.

He is for the present King and Government of Yugoslavia; he disregards and does not mention the Partisan movement. He hopes for the restoration of that King and that Government. He said these words, knowing what Russia thinks of the Yugoslav Government-in-exile. He described the United States and Great Britain, meaningfully, as strong "sea and air" powers, with growing armies, to be sure, but sea and air powers first.

It was a strong man's speech. Because of it, the war enters a wholly new phase. A kind of political vaudeville turn has come to its end, a routine in which some of our statesmen have stood on platforms and pretended that there were no differences of view as between the Western governments and Russia, no disagreements.

The everything-is-hunky-dory mood is over. A kind of honeymoon of the war has closed down. Mr. Churchill wants the foreign ministers of America, Britain, and Russia to come together. But he makes it clear that there are problems to be resolved by these functionaries before the heads of the three states themselves can, as he puts it, intervene. The moon is down, and we can now see in daylight something of the clotheslines and outhouses of the war. We know, at least, that it isn't a mirage, that we do have official disagreements with Russia.

The children's hour is ended; it is not going to be so simple as we thought to win the war together with our ally, and build the alliance to follow. It is going to be hard; the long road is paved with broken glass. Our Governments are no longer pretending it is all they can do to hold themselves back, they are so much in accord with Russia. Mr. Churchill has, in effect, said frankly that after having mastered the first crises of extending aid to Russia, of making a treaty with her, of setting up lend-lease, we have at last come to a troubled point, a doubtful pause. He has decided to let the public know something about this.

And there, perhaps, may be the clue to the future, to let the public know, and to let it know more. Perhaps we have gone as far as we can go alongside Russia, on the basis of private decisions, necessarily taken by a few top men in America and England, two countries in which political life is free and in which opinions about Russia are many. We have reached the point where the leadership can perhaps go no further without directives and refreshment from down below.

Is there any way to go forward now, except by a clear statement to the American people of what, precisely, is Russia's price for co-operation and alliance, and how much of the price our leadership is ready to pay, and how much not? Can we move another inch without this kind of discussion?

Two men have led us by the hand as far as they can. Now, perhaps, we must lead them. I am not sorry for Mr. Churchill's speech. There is never any reason to be sorry about growing up.

"The war's fine for these kids—they'll get used to street cars and busses and maybe they won't want an automobile when they're twelve years old!"

Everyday Counselor

First Tenth

By Rev. Herbert Spaugh

IT doesn't pay to try to "hold out" on the Lord. If we make Him a promise we had better exert every effort to live up to it. Ananias and Sapphira tried it according to an account in the Book of Acts and lost everything. I have just read a story from one of our Mission Fields in which history repeated itself. It is told by one of our missionaries in Nicaragua:

"Years ago when the Yulu church building was completed it had no proper windows. Window openings were cut into the board walls to let in light and air, which were closed only by board shutters which were used to keep out the rain. The Yulu Indians saw better churches further down the coast and resolved to put glass windows in their church too. In those days there were no mines operating in the neighborhood of Yulu, nor were there any mills cutting mahogany lumber. The chief source of money for the Indians was crude rubber which they tapped from trees growing wild and scattered throughout the jungle.

"The Indians held a meeting and decided that all the men would go into the forest to tap rubber and whatever they found would be donated for the windows and a little organ for the church.

"One of the men hadn't gone far from home when on the side of the Yulu mountains he came upon a group of fine rubber trees which had never before been cut. There he got his bag full of milk in record time. He felt sure that he was more fortunate than the others, and that he might use this fine rubber for himself, or at least part of it. He could go back and tap the trees a second time in a few days and this he would give to the church. Finally he yielded to the temptation and made up his mind that he would make out of his find a sheet of water-proof rubber cloth for himself and say nothing to anyone about it.

"Having decided this, he walked on, was in sight of home when he stumbled and fell. Every drop of the milk was spilled."

When we have set apart a set portion of our time, talents or money for the Lord's use we had better not yield to the temptation to use it for personal purposes. Many Christians tithe their income. That means taking off the first tenth for the Lord's work, before taxes, bonds, etc., are taken out. Be sure that money is spent for the Lord's work which includes personal charity, donations to charitable institutions, as well as contributions to the Church.

If we set apart some of our time to teaching Bible School, to holding an office in the Church, let's be sure that we don't "hold out" for personal reasons, some of which we don't really believe in our own hearts. "But now the Lord saith, them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed."

Leon Left Out

Merry-Go-Round

By Drew Pearson

WASHINGTON

LEON HENDERSON, two-fisted father of the Office of Price Administration, recently had a tire blow out on his 1938 jalopy, filled out all necessary papers for a new tire, took them to his ration Board. There, the OPA, which Leon created, turned him down. "There are just too many tire certificates already outstanding," OPA explained, "and not enough tires. You'll have to wait until there are some new tires."

This means that what a lot of officials long have worried about, has now happened. The hiatus has arrived between exhaustion of our carefully conserved rubber stockpile and the beginning of synthetic rubber production. Last year, Henderson tells friends, the OPA warned Rubber Czar Jeffers not to be too generous with new tires, that we would reach a vacuum at the end of 1943 before the new synthetic tires began to roll. Henderson also urged Jeffers to manufacture more tires from reclaimed rubber, thus saving new rubber.

But Jeffers listened to politically-minded Jesse Jones who was devoutly anxious to prove that he was not so wrong on rubber. So now the man who advised caution can get no tire for his jalopy. Note: There is also no rubber for the heels which Leon Henderson now advertises on the air.

Help Wanted: Female

The Government wants more stenographers—thousands of them—for work in Washington. The Civil Service Commission has sent agents into the field, beating the bushes for new recruits. Any one of the major war agencies could use several hundred more girls today. But they just aren't to be had. Trouble is that girls have come to Washington for the thrill of working in the Capital, and have found that there is less thrill than hard work, and no place to hang up your stockings to dry.

They live in what they call "the-more-the-merrier apartments," work 48 hours a week, and can't even find time to go shopping. They had expected Washington to be romantic, but there are too many girls in proportion to men, and they never get a chance to see the important people who come to town. They have trouble with the dry cleaner, eat poor food, and get dates only with the file clerk across the hall. And worst of all, the salary that looked so handsome from a distance melts away into the withholding hands of Mr. Morgenthau.

If a stenographer's salary is $1,620, plus 21 per cent for overtime, the total would be nearly $2,000 a year, which looks pretty handsome. But she loses a 5 per cent reduction for the retirement fund, plus 20 per cent in withholding tax, or a total of 25 per cent. Many a girl has decided she would rather go back home, work in a defense plant, and live with the family. But the Government hopes that girls will go in for patriotism instead of romance and come to Washington even if it isn't what it's cracked up to be.

Cotton Ed Smith

A significant situation is brewing around the figure of South Carolina's venerable Cotton Ed Smith, caustic Roosevelt-hater. In 1938, during the famous "purge" campaign, the President was definitely opposed to Smith, but never made a public speech against him.

In the end, Smith was nominated over Gov. Olin Johnston, partly through the tacit aid of Senator Jimmy Byrnes. Jimmy naturally did not want Johnston elected, since he came from Byrnes' section of the state, so Jimmy used his influence with the President to block any speech against Smith. However, the South Carolina situation has now shifted. Justice Byrnes is no longer in the Senate. Olin Johnston, re-elected governor a second time, is now a candidate once again for the Senate.

And this time Johnston will get the tacit support of Justice Byrnes. The popular South Carolinian will make no speeches, may even deny that he will do anything at all. But friends close to him will work openly against Cotton Ed Smith and for the election of Gov. Olin Johnston to the U. S. Senate.