

WEEKLY NEWS ANALYSIS

German Drive Reminder of Last Desperate Fling in World War I; Farmers Harvest Banner Crops

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 (EDITOR'S NOTE: When opinions are expressed in these columns, they are those of Western Newspaper Union's news analysis and not necessarily of this newspaper.)



Attired in civilian clothes, and with some of their number carrying mace-like antitank projectiles, Heinrich Himmler's home guard parades in Berlin.

WESTERN FRONT:

History Repeats

To many, the mighty German counter-offensive Field Marshal Von Rundstedt launched against Allied armies on the western front was reminiscent of General Ludendorff's last desperate throw of the dice in 1918 in an effort to improve Germany's position for the negotiation of a peace.

Then, Ludendorff's drive failed; this time, resolute U. S. troops moved in to stem Von Rundstedt's attack, with decisive Allied counter-measures expected to not only blunt the enemy's thrust but also sap the most formidable part of his force and reduce his war potential for next spring.

There was one difference between Ludendorff's suicidal gamble in 1918 and Von Rundstedt's of this war, however, and that lay in Heinrich Himmler's success in holding the German home front together to supply the wehrmacht with men and materials for the big drive. In 1918, on the other hand, Ludendorff was faced with a crumbling home front, once rising to a bawling rage in those months because a tottering government failed to provide sufficient troops and supplies.

As the Germans' desperate drive developed, it followed the pattern of other major Nazi attacks of World War II, with powerful armored spearheads punching through forward defenses and then speeding onward to let the trailing infantry deal with opposing elements surrounded to the rear.

It was thus that the Germans wiped out the Poles; broke France, and marched a third of the way across Russia. This time, however, the enemy faced a stronger, better equipped, more resolute foe, and as his attack developed, U. S. reserves thrown into the battle moved to dam the surge.

In launching the offensive, Von Rundstedt followed the 1940 invasion pathways, pointing spearheads across Belgium and Luxembourg. In choosing this battleground below Aachen, the Nazi field marshal concentrated the bulk of his forces against the First Army, which had thrown the Germans onto the edge of the Rhineland plain.

In the early fighting, the Nazi thrust against Monschau was appreciably contained by the Yanks, but the spearhead farther south probed as deeply as 22 miles to the important road juncture of Stavelot in Belgium. Still another Nazi force pushed across the Belgium border and threw a pincer around St. Vith.

In Luxembourg to the south, the Germans drove through the Ardennes forest beyond Echternach after meeting stiff U. S. resistance.

Once the German attack got underway, the battle turned into a slugfest, with the enemy pouring men into the initial breaches to exploit their breaks, while the Allies moved reserves to the front to check the drive.

Coincident with Von Rundstedt's smash to the north, Gen. George S. Patton's U. S. First Army encountered stiffening Nazi resistance in the Saar, with the enemy following his favored pattern of throwing in short, sharp armored counter-attacks in an attempt to momentarily check the Yanks' push.

Meanwhile, it was announced that Himmler himself had taken over command of German resistance in the Colmar pocket in Alsace, throwing in strong detachments of his motley but fanatical home guard units.

PACIFIC:

Put on Heat

All through the scattered Philippine islands, the enemy came under increasing pressure of U. S. land and naval forces as the Americans speeded up their attack on this great archipelago guarding the Japs' vital inner imperial lines.

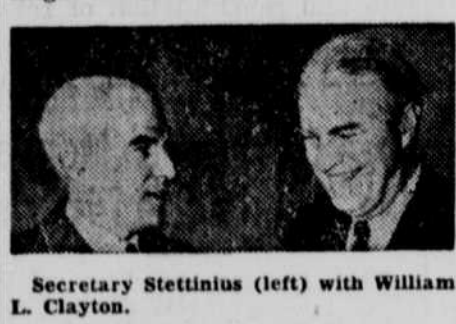
Latest threat to the enemy was the U. S. landing on Mindoro island, where the Yanks drove forward against negligible opposition to establish air bases from which land-based bombers could join carrier planes in hammering the main island of Luzon to the north, nerve-center for the whole Jap defense in the Philippines. Even as the doughboys plodded forward, carrier planes ripped at enemy shipping feeding island garrisons from the main staging point.

On Leyte, General MacArthur's triple-pronged offensive continued to squeeze the Japanese into an ever narrower corner on the island.

STATE DEPARTMENT: O. K. New Setup

Amid fierce debate, in which charges were leveled that the recent reorganization of the state department put the House of Morgan in an influential position in the shaping of U. S. foreign policy, the senate confirmed President Roosevelt's appointments of William L. Clayton and Nelson Rockefeller as assistants to Secretary of State Stettinius.

With ardent New Dealers Pepper (Fla.) and Guffey (Pa.) leading the attack, it was charged that the new setup in the state department following Secretary Hull's resignation might indicate a reversal in a liberal U. S. foreign policy, to which Senator Connally (Texas) replied that President Roosevelt would chart the country's course regardless of the reorganization.



Secretary Stettinius (left) with William L. Clayton.

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CROPS: Banner Year

Surmounting weather and manpower problems, American farmers again answered the nation's call for high level production with a near record output of crops, 24 per cent above the 1923-32 pre-drought average, the U. S. department of agriculture reported.

Pointing to near record acreage, the USDA said: "... Farmers planted only when they could and they kept on planting past the normal season as long as there seemed half a chance of success."

Production of grains, fruits, nuts and commercial vegetables were all above last year, with all-time top harvests of corn at 3,228,361,000 bushels and of wheat at 1,078,647,000 bushels. Output of dry beans and peas, oil seeds, tobacco and hay and forage crops has been seldom exceeded. Cotton was about average.

POSTWAR PLANNING: Stability Sought

Looking forward to the day when the war will end and the cessation of wartime production will pose problems of providing adequate opportunity for a peacetime economy, senate and house committees busied themselves in developing a program for the prosperous employment of both labor and agriculture.

Most specific action taken was by a senate committee headed by Montana's Senator Murray, which submitted a proposal for an annual estimation of the amount of expenditure necessary for full employment and the probable outlays by private industry, with any differences to be made up by federal investment. Before the government would undertake any expenditures, however, every effort would be made to stimulate the flow of private capital.

While Senator Murray's committee presented the proposal, a house committee held hearings in Chicago, Ill., on means of bolstering postwar agriculture.

While advocating a reappraisal of farm credit needs, international agreements to dispose of surplus commodities and lowering of trade barriers, Edward A. O'Neal, president of the American Farm Bureau federation, also called for realistic marketings based on feed and labor costs to replace subsidies.

Movement of 2,000,000 persons from farms after the war to provide them with sufficient income and guard against overproduction was advocated by Chairman Oscar Helme of the Iowa Farmer Grain Dealers Association. In agreeing, Prof. Noble Clark, chairman of the Land Grant Colleges' committee on postwar agricultural policies, urged a broadened educational program to equip rural youth for occupational opportunities.

WAR COSTS: Pricing Policy

Aiming to cut government costs and at the same time impose greater efficiency on some firms with a resultant release of manpower and material, the war department announced the adoption of a new pricing program employing teams of experts that will comb over contracts before letting.

Expressing the belief that lower prices would lead to greater use of manpower and material, Col. Fred C. Foy, director of army service forces purchases, said: "... Whenever a contractor's selling prices are close to his costs, the contractor has an incentive to lower his costs to increase profit..."

To firms establishing close pricing policies went the promise of consideration for a higher rate of return in reviewing contracts for excess profits and maintenance of work in case cutbacks, or reductions, are made in their line of war production.

AGRICULTURE: New Crop

Thanks to a new oil extraction and harvesting process, the raising of sunflower seeds may develop into an important farm crop in the middle west, following successful experimentation in Illinois' Piat county.

Due to a new solvent process of oil-chemist Ezra Levin, oil now extracted from the sunflower seeds and the resulting mash no longer become rancid, while the construction of a new combine cuts the once high harvesting costs.

Planted in 40-inch rows and cultivated twice through the season, 1,600 pounds of seed were obtained from an acre, with a yield of oil at 14 1/2 cents per pound reportedly higher than that obtained from a similar planting of soybeans. Not only is the oil good for salads and cooking, it was said, but seeds were found to have protein content of 53 per cent.

WAR SHIPPING: Big Profits

With nine American steamship lines having made \$26,847,000 in profits on \$31,364,000 worth of business from April to September on lend-lease runs to the Middle East, the U. S. maritime commission started court action against seven of the operators to recover excess income.

Operating on rates that the commission itself set at the time when subs were scourging the seas and ships were needed to haul material to the British in the middle eastern and north African sectors, the companies averaged \$300,000 profit per vessel, or 910 per cent of the book value of each.

Although two of the companies have refunded \$300,000, the others have refused to make remittances, claiming that they merely charged prevalent rates, recognized by the British themselves.

TIRES

With increased military demands and manpower shortages limiting supply, no passenger tires will be available for "B" card holders or less essential "C" card applicants through the first three months of 1945, trade circles reported.

At the same time, it was said, the supply of heavy truck tires during this period will be the smallest for any quarter since 1941. Release of experienced workers from the army was proposed to help remedy the truck tire shortage.

Washington Digest

Liberal Ground Swell Sweeping Over Europe



Underground Coalesces Democratic Groups In Fight for Popular Government; Look to 'Big Three.'

By BAUKHAGE
 News Analyst and Commentator

WNU Service, Union Trust Building Washington, D. C.

As the New Year approaches, Washington is preparing to experience the results of two titanic struggles which will chart the course followed by this nation and the world in the decades ahead.

One contest will be witnessed on the floors of congress. The other in some unnamed spot where President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill, Marshal Stalin and perhaps General De Gaulle will sit down and try to agree on details of the framework of an international organization for the maintenance of peace.

The election was supposed to have settled the old issue of "isolationism versus internationalism" but those terms were far too indefinite to delimit any lasting decisions and since November our allies have been strewing land-mines of doubt along the way, causing many cases of non-interventionist jitters in congress.

There will be debate in the senate flavored with remarks, the tenor of those which criticized the British course in Greece.

As to the battle behind closed doors, you can imagine that the American viewpoint will need all the support the President can rally behind it, to overcome the tendency of Messrs. Churchill, Stalin and De Gaulle to fall into all the old bad habits of their happy power politics days.

In order to understand the differences which have already arisen between those who support British armed intervention in Greece and those who support the state department's action in protesting against it, it is necessary to take a look behind the scenes and see what these forces are which are bound to shape the new governments of Europe as they are re-born after the period of democratic hibernation during Nazi-Fascist occupation or control.

U. S. Favors Self Rule

In the first place, there is a powerful, liberal-oriented ground swell to be discerned everywhere if we look for it. It is the belief that, eventually, this force will dominate, which has prompted the American "hands-off" policy. Uncle Sam merely says: "Let the people of the various countries choose the form of government they want. Those who want democracy enough will get it if there is no outside interference."

That is one thing to bear in mind. Another is that this ground swell, as I call it, is the result of many different factors - not merely hunger and discontent or faith and enlightenment; not only inspiration or desperation, but aspiration as well, aspiration toward the natural historical and evolutionary goals of progress which are a part of man's eternal struggle for liberty.

The reaction against Nazi tyranny and the successful resistance to German control in the form of the underground, generated certain forces toward freedom and independence. The underground made its own laws, gave opportunity for the coalescence and strengthening of all democratic movements. It was natural when the Germans were driven out that these forces refused to bow to representatives of any regime, no matter how beneficial, if it had about it even the slightest odor of sanctified feudalism.

It is necessary to get this premise firmly fixed in our minds or else fall into the error of writing off every revolutionary movement as "communist," including some certainly no whit less virtuous than our own in 1776.

It is well to study the France of today in this connection, and interesting to note the comment which appeared in the French press at the time of the first revolts in Belgium and later in Greece where Allied support was given the government in power. The "Franc-Tireur," whose name indicates the "underground" flavor of its opinion, explains why, so far, France has had no such internal trouble.

"It has been our great good fortune," it says, "to have a man to protect our honor and prepare the

liberation, who had such character and personality that he is universally accepted, acclaimed and followed by the entire nation as our leading member of the resistance."

The last seven words are the important ones - "as our leading member of the resistance." In other words, De Gaulle was able to lead his fellow countrymen into liberation without chaos because he had the approval of the most active and most militantly democratic elements of the underground.

New Spirit In Greece

Papandreou, premier of Greece during the revolt, with all his virtues, was no De Gaulle in that respect.

I was reliably informed that Papandreou had expressed firm anti-monarchist sentiments, that he is, as he says, a democrat and a socialist, that he had a clean record through the occupation. But - and what a "but" there is, judged by such standards as I imagine "Franc-Tireur" would hold up - Papandreou was selected by the King with British consent. The motives back of his election may have been honest enough and practical enough from the standpoint of the old order. Here was a man with a good record who, it would seem, could reconcile the royalists and the leftists. But that formula itself violates the very principles of the new order, and when the left-wingers began to feel that the cabinet was monarchist and British-made, they withdrew and their followers refused to give up their weapons.

All armed groups in Greece not absorbed officially by the army were ordered to turn in their arms. The police, of course, did not turn in their arms and they were the same police who had helped the pre-war Metaxas dictatorship, and later the Germans, "keep order." The "sacred battalion," a group composed chiefly of former Greek officers who fought bravely beside the Allies all through the African campaign (and were charged with containing a strong monarchist element) was not disbanded but became a part of the army.

Translate the above into terms of the French attitude and see how impossible acceptance of a Greek government such as that could be to groups thinking as the French resistance groups think. There is every reason to believe that the leftist movement in Greece and elsewhere in Europe, even where the majority of their leaders may be led by communists (as was not the case in Greece) is actually at heart a drive against tyranny and toward democracy.

Here again it might be wise to examine some of the opinion expressed by Frenchmen now backing the De Gaulle provisional government which is a product of the forces similar to those operating in other liberated countries.

The leading editorial in the December issue of "Free France," that attractive and informative magazine published in New York by the French provisional government, gives the reasons for the change of attitude toward the French communists as follows:

1. The French communist party joined the resistance movement and later gave its allegiance to De Gaulle's national committee.
2. The comintern was dissolved.
3. The communists rendered invaluable aid to the resistance movement.

4. The striking collaboration of all French patriots in the underground struggle removed many prejudices, including the suspicion of "communists sans patrie" (a political group with loyalty to no fatherland).

The editors of Free France cautiously state that it is too early to answer the important question: Have the French communists accepted democracy as it is understood by the western democracies? Nevertheless, they note for the record that so far "the communists helped to draw up the National Resistance council program of March, 1944, tacitly accepting the democratic principle" and "the abolition of private property is not listed among the immediate demands of the communist party."

BRIEFS... by Baukhage

There is a new dodge in tax-dodging. A black money market which cashes big checks, thus preventing the record of deposits. But look out, some of those cash deposits may bounce as high as a rubber check.

That great sporting race, the Japs, recently organized a weight-carrying race around the island of Iava. The natives did the carrying.

Great Britain has found that true love (even in Greece) doesn't always run smooth.

The appointment of Archibald McLeish as assistant secretary of state was opposed by certain senators and others on the ground that he was a poet. It is well they didn't have to pass on the confirmation of John Hay!

Farm Topics

Farm Fire Loss Can Be Greatly Reduced

Prevention Is Real Solution to the Farmer

FARMERS must become better fire fighters, if they are to reduce the nation's staggering farm fire losses.

Preparedness to deal with fire involves first, having available the necessary fire fighting equipment, second, keeping such equipment in operating condition, and third, knowing how to use it effectively.

The investment in a sufficient number of hand and wheeled extinguishers to protect living quarters, barns, tractors and trucks is small when compared to the potential destruction of one good fire. When buying fire fighting equipment, look for the label of the Underwriters' Laboratories which shows that the equipment measures up to standards acceptable to fire safety engineers.

Some one or two persons who can be depended upon to do a conscientious job should be given the responsibility of inspecting fire fighting equipment regularly, recharging extinguishers according to directions.

Seeing to it that every adult on the farm knows how to use the equipment is perhaps the easiest part of the job. Fire fighting, before fire gets to the terrifying stage, is interesting and people like to learn how to master a blaze. In some rural areas, professional fire fighters are invited to stage demonstrations and drills at which farm-



Years of hard work go up in smoke.

hands in the entire area may be present.

While the outbreak of fire cannot always be avoided, many fires are due entirely to carelessness or negligence. Most preventable fires on farms are caused by defective chimneys and heating apparatus, flammable wood shingle roofs, spontaneous ignition of rubbish, improper use of electricity, carelessness with matches and cigarettes, flammable liquids, and lightning. Correction of these hazards can be accomplished by proper maintenance of the farm property and by the development of safe habits on the part of all those on the farm.

Agriculture In the News

By W. J. DRYDEN

Corncob's Many Uses

The utilization of corncocks for Missouri Meerschaums is well known, and has been an outlet for corncocks for many years. There are newer uses, however, which give promise of offering additional profit to the corn grower.

It is now possible, and practical, to produce gasoline from the corncocks.

The dairy cow will welcome corncob in her ration. It is recommended that the whole corn be ground, however. Ground corn cobs, or those unground, will prove a welcome addition to the litter supply for poultry and stock.

One of the cheapest, and newest plastics is one being made from the lowly corncob. This might mean an additional \$20 a ton for the corn crop. The conversion of sugars suitable for the manufacture of industrial solvents is being done from corncocks.

Other uses include a flour for cleaning furs, for burnishing metals, for removing oil from tin, sweeping compounds, insulation, ceramics and tile, replacement for cork, absorbent in dynamite and many other uses.

New Tree Planter

A new type of tree planter has made its bow. It can put in three miles of trees set six to eight feet apart in a single hour.

Drawn by a tractor, the planter can be handled by one man who feeds the young trees into a narrow trench dug by a wedge-shaped plow. The planter is used in establishing shelterbelts and windbreaks and works well on ground formerly cultivated or where there is only a light sod.

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People in the News . . .

Testifying that her husband refused to work as long as Mr. Roosevelt was president, Mrs. Catherine Ingrassia of Detroit, Mich., was granted a divorce.

Only a few days after purchasing his own plane, 24-year-old Howard Hoy of Urbana, Ill., was killed when it crashed in the barnyard of his own farm.

Delivery of a premature two pound baby boy to Mrs. James Snodgrass of Forest Park, Ill., came as a complete surprise to both husband and wife. "We had no idea we were going to be parents again, and I ought to know," said Mr. Snodgrass. "I've got two boys already, one seven and the other eight years old." The child was born after Mrs. Snodgrass' complaint of a back-ache.