

Washington Digest

World's Greatest Capital Has Its Seamy Side Too!

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WASHINGTON.—A boy joined the staff of a four-page paper of which he was one day to become editor. The office was a rattle-trap building whose notable characteristics, he later said, were "sewer gas, rats, dirt, overgrown rowdy newsboys who had to be held in check by a long whip and firearms," and it was "positively dangerous at times to go into the alley which they infested, leading to the composing room."



The town as the boy had grown up in it was a straggling overgrown country village "with zigzag grades, no sewerage, no street cars, no water supply except from pumps and springs, unimproved reservations, second-rate dwellings and streets of mud and mire."

That doesn't sound like the nation's capital whose budget for the coming year is \$76,755,000—but that was the way it was in 1858 as described by the editor of the Washington Evening Star, Theodore Noyes, who died early this month. He joined the paper in 1877.

Except for the Australian capital of Canberra which arose almost as Camelot at a wave of Merlin's wand, there is nothing to compare with the bizarre history of a city whose site was based on a political deal and no city which has gone through more vicissitudes than this Baghdad-on-the-Potomac.

No city was ever more magnificently planned, or more discreditably neglected in its early days, as Mr. Noyes' description indicates. Today, as the undisputed capital of the world, it still has to battle with a grudging congress for its budget. It remains the chief city of the greatest democratic republic whose 93,000,000 citizens have no voice in their own government and whose citizenship itself is a bar to the basic privilege of a democracy—the ballot.

Mr. Noyes was, as is the newspaper he served, a Washington institution. He will be remembered for his long campaign to give Washington a vote in congressional and national matters.

Rats Were Menace To City's Health

Some time ago I had occasion to mention the invasion of Washington by rats and how the city hired a modern Pied Piper who has done an effective, if silent, job. This was brought to my mind recently when I encountered a fat, black cat on my way to work early one morning. The cat had a guilty look, and I had a hunch he had spent the night in riotous living and was merely sneaking in to change his collar.

However, the cataclysm caused by the rat-invasion in which, believe it or not, a baby's hand was eaten, brought hasty action and I see that it was considered worthy of comment by experts, including the editors of the magazine of the American Museum of Natural History.

The campaign began when a case of typhus which is spread by fleas and mites on rats, was discovered. Traps set in the neighborhood caught a number of rats whose blood was typhus-infected. The United States Public Health service got busy, shocked to learn that the scourge of Europe two centuries ago was a possibility right here in our fair capital.

An expert was called in. He first sealed up all points where commercial transportation entered the city. Then 300 traps were set up in the zone where the infection had been found. Five days later the traps were taken in and the area was thoroughly dusted with DDT, the insecticide which the army perfected. Next red-squill bait was distributed. It kills rats, but not pets or

children who might pick up the bait. In places where there was no danger to human beings the deadly "1080" was distributed. The campaign was successful. Meanwhile, a clean-up of potential rat-breeding premises was started with court orders to enforce it. Today Washington has a complete scientific rat-control program which will cost us about \$75,000 annually.

War Profiteering Will Be Scandal

The juicy scandal uncovered by the senate war investigating committee in which "profiteering at its worst," as Senator Mead called it, was exposed, is, I fear, only the beginning.

Any moment I expect to hear an explosion in connection with surplus property. War breeds waste, and the cloak of patriotic endeavor as Samuel Johnson indicated even more bluntly, often covers skulduggery.

The same thing happened after the last war, and on a smaller scale, after all wars. But what is probably making people squirm all over Washington is the revelation of the fact that telephone wires were pretty generally tapped, and heaven knows what may be in the FBI files. It is a strange thing about the telephone. People have just come to take for granted that because you can't see anybody on the line, nobody is there.

I wouldn't be surprised to learn that telephone conversations with most of the government departments are being recorded right now. I have reason to believe that when the question of installing these recorders in the White House was brought up, it was flatly turned down. White House employees have a long and excellent record for fidelity. Of course they are carefully screened, and when the campaign to get everybody fingerprinted (an excellent idea if you have nothing to conceal about your past and no plans for an over-adventurous future) was begun, the White House employees voluntarily came forward and offered their thumbs, fingers and hands for the ink-pad.

'When the People Vote, They Win'

The June "Economic Outlook," published by the Congress of Industrial Organizations, contains an article entitled "When the People Vote—They Win." That might be interpreted in more ways than one. The article points out that an "off year" is so designated politically not only because the presidency is not at stake, but because the politicians know that general apathy on the part of the voter has marked those elections in the past: 1938 (off) thirty million voters went to the polls; 1940 (on) fifty million voters; 1942 (off) twenty-eight million; 1944 (on) forty-eight million.

The CIO takes the attitude that what the people as a whole want is what they (the CIO) want, and that the people get what they want when they vote for it. They say: "Mass registration and mass voting is the best guarantee of liberal progressive government."

They might also add that if you want conservative rather than liberal progressive government, you have to vote for it, too. In any case you can't get what you want unless you go after it. The "Outlook" prints a table showing how the vote shifted in certain districts in off-years. The table showed that when the vote fell off, it was the Democratic vote. Districts which swung from Democratic to Republican candidates in most cases shifted with a decrease in the total vote. . . . "The Republican vote remaining relatively stable, while the Democratic vote dropped sharply."

Does this prove that Democrats are sleeper than Republicans, or that the Republican is a creature of habit?



WHAT DO YOU MEAN NO MEAT . . . Meat shortage? They evidently never heard of a meat famine down Rocky Mount, N. C. way where porkers part with giant hams like the one above, which tipped the scale at sixty pounds or three times the weight of Sally, who looks at it with disbelief or "something." Rather a large size ham to put in the oven, meat shortage or no meat shortage.



ITALIAN PRESIDENT GAINING FAVOR . . . Benedetto Croce, famous philosopher, is shown, left, as he congratulated Enrico de Nicola, who was recently named provisional president of the Italian republic. President De Nicola enjoys enormous personal popularity in Naples, a monarchist stronghold, and his election by the Italian constituent assembly, won some ardent monarchists over to "De Nicola's Republic."



THE ARMY GOES BACK TO THE HORSE . . . The horse has come back into his own with the U.S. constabulary forces now on duty patrolling some 1,600 miles of German border along the Czech and Russian frontiers. Here Pvt. Manuel Ward, standing, is inspecting the pass of a civilian from the Ukraine, while Pvt. Gene Robbins sits on his horse. Both GI's are from Troy, Ohio. Maj. Gen. Ernest Harman, who rides a grasshopper plane commands the unit.



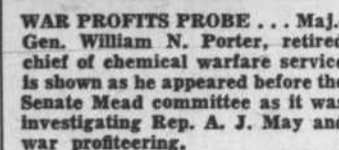
HOWARD HUGHES'S MAMOUTH PLANE WRECKED . . . Wreckage of Howard Hughes's largest great plane is shown after it had hit telephone wires, crashed into a home and then into Rosemary DeCamp's garage, finally hitting another home in Beverly Hills, Calif. Home is shown burning in background. Hughes was only one in plane when it crashed. He was rescued from the fire and rushed to hospital, where it was first reported that he had little chance to survive.



HONOR CAMP FIRE LEADER . . . "Edith M. Kempthorne Extension Fund" has recently been established in honor of Edith Kempthorne who has served the cause of Camp Fire since its beginning. Fund will carry on her work.



WAR PROFITS PROBE . . . Maj.-Gen. William N. Porter, retired chief of chemical warfare service is shown as he appeared before the Senate Mead committee as it was investigating Rep. A. J. May and war profiteering.



PAPOOSE-PACKING PAPA . . . The morning beach stroll and baby-tending chore are easily combined by this papa at Nag's Head, N. C. He took the baby's auto seat out of the car and h'isted it onto his shoulders. The idea was copied from packs brought to America by war brides.



BELGIUM WILL REMEMBER . . . An urn holding blood-stained earth from the battle of Bastogne was presented to President Truman at White House by Belgium Ambassador Baron Silvercrans, right, as a gift from Belgium in honor of U. S. GI's.



NEW TENNIS QUEEN . . . Paulette Goddard, California star, who took the world's women's tennis crown at Wimbledon, England, when she defeated Louise Brough, Beverly Hills, Calif., in straight sets in what was an all-American final.

NEWS BEHIND THE NEWS

By **PAUL MALLON**

Released by Western Newspaper Union.

SPANISH ISSUE IS JUST RUSSIA'S 'RED HERRING'

WASHINGTON.—The British handled the Communist-pushed Spanish questions in the security council — and deftly, they worked affairs around so no important action was taken, and the United States merely went along. Behind their energy was their knowledge that installation of an unsympathetic regime in Spain would threaten Gibraltar, still the rock or at least the pebble of empire.

The seven to four vote against the Polish resolution, urging a break of relations of all nations with Spain, was about as good as the Communists will do in the security council. On the CP side were Soviet Russia, Poland, France and Mexico, while the British got Australia, the Netherlands and Egypt and we may have helped some in lining up Brazil and China for the majority of seven.

The division showed that as long as the U. S. and Britain stand together in the council, the free democratic side is not in much UNO danger. But if they ever break and either sides with Russia, there may be trouble. The difficulties of Communism are due to Russian joint antagonism of the British and Americans, driving them together. This is not unnatural because of the common association of ideals, our joint favoring of the parliamentary system, and corresponding Christian ideals.

In this case, the British had an easy opportunity. The whole Lange-Russian case was founded upon the assumption, as stated, that Spain "is a serious danger to the maintenance of international peace and security" — which everyone knows is not a fact. You can see it. She borders on only two countries, neither of which considers her actually a threat. She has not invaded anyone. She is not a world power. These things are evident. The council's own investigating committee found only that Spain "is not an immediate but a potential threat to peace," according to Dr. Lange, although the British do not agree with this interpretation. Nobody said when she might be a threat.

BRITISH ON DEFENSIVE

But the first Lange resolution hoped and expected "the Spanish people will regain the freedom of which they have been deprived." The same hopes and expectations could be expressed about the Russians. All free people would like to see other people free also, but no proposal was made to have every nation sever diplomatic connections with Russia.

So the Communist proposition was rather absurd. The truth is it was cooked up by the Russians, who put the Poles up to it, in order to make the western world stop debating Iran, the Communist revolution in the north province there, and to put the British diplomatically upon the defensive. The Russians themselves vetoed one move to send the problem to the large assembly of nations, where they can expect to fare worse than in the council. About the only thing the Russians achieved was the putting of the British on the defensive and submergence of Iran for a time.

Thus the status quo of Spain is likely to continue, with only increased Communist agitation within its borders where strikes are reported, and the usual Communist methods developing.

You must remember Communism does not really recognize free democracy as a proper philosophy of government. They like to think of the world as divided into two parts, one Fascist, and the other dominated by themselves. This does not happen to be the case. The two great parts into which the world is divided is free and slave. On one hand are we, believers in freedom of the individual, parliamentary systems, elections for all parties, even the communists. On the other are the Russians who do not believe in the freedom of the individual, but in his subservience to the state, have no parliamentary system of government, and hold only one-party elections which are not elections at all, but popularity contests in which anyone who votes against the government had better start for the border.

In that conflict, Spain or the Fascists do not measure much. Fascism (Fascies) means group control — like they have in Russia. The difference between Spain and Russia to the citizen thereof, is that Spain is run by an army man while Russia is operated by "Generalissimo" Stalin (the generalissimo having originated in civilian life).

We do not believe in either kind of dictatorship. But if we allow ourselves to become immersed in arguments over little Spain, we may become oblivious of Russia, which is many times its size and weight.

ASK ME ANOTHER?

A General Quiz

The Questions

1. How many capitals did the United States have since the Declaration of Independence?
2. Where did Portland cement gets its name?
3. Did spaghetti originate in Italy?
4. The walls of what city came tumbling down because of the shattering effects of sound waves?
5. What former President was chief justice of the United States?
6. Who made the comment by song, "I'll never, never find a better friend than Old Dog Tray"?
7. Where does ambergris come from?
8. What did the Greeks worship under the name of Boreas?
9. The name given the steersman of a racing shell is what?
10. Submarines spend more time on the surface than submerged, even in wartime. Why is this?

The Answers

1. Nine.
2. From "Portland stone" which comes from England. It bears a close resemblance to Portland cement.
3. No. Marco Polo introduced spaghetti to Italy from China.
4. Jericho.
5. William Howard Taft.
6. Stephen Foster.
7. It is yielded by sick whales.
8. The north wind.
9. Cockswoin.
10. To conserve and recharge their batteries, which must be used when submerged.

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MISCELLANEOUS

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DOAN'S PILLS



In 1940, 50 million votes; 1942, 23 million; 1944, 45 million.

BARBS . . . by Baukhage

The big batter-and-biscuit man from Texas who knew how to say it with flour, got tired of saying no to OPA.

These days, prices rise with the sun.

Non-skid rugs are forecast by Business Week. Anything to make life less rugged.

The tobacco plants in Maryland look as precise and prim as if they had been done up in curl papers each night.

There is an old Spanish proverb that says: "Make a bridge of silver for a flying enemy." Maybe the United Nations could get rid of Franco that way if they can't find any other.