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## WEEKLY NEWS ANALYSIS

By Edward C. Wayne

### British Open New Offensive in Libya In Attempt to Divert Axis Attention And Create Second Front for Russia; Demand for Strike Legislation Grows

(EDITOR'S NOTE—When opinions are expressed in these columns, they are those of the news analyst and not necessarily of this newspaper.)  
(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

#### BRITISH: Second Front

British tank units armed with U. S. military supplies opened what London termed a "second front" against the Axis powers when they opened a smashing drive into Libya in North Africa.

Berlin sources denied London's claims that (1) the attack was a surprise and (2) that it really amounted to a second front. Berlin said that what Russia had been hoping for was not a drive in Africa but a campaign on the continent of Europe so that Nazi forces would have to be diverted from their efforts against Leningrad, Moscow and the southern Russian fronts.

But Britain's campaign in Libya did take most world capitals by surprise and first reports indicated that 750,000 British troops aided by the R. A. F. had started their attempt to drive all Italian and German forces from North Africa.

First objective was the relieving of the besieged British forces at Tobruk, Libya. Here a British garrison had been holding out against the Nazis and Italians since mid-April.

#### STRIKE: 'Unsound Premise'?

The breakdown of negotiations between President Roosevelt and John L. Lewis over the "captive coal mine" strike had been followed by the actual walkout of some 53,000 miners, an immediate loss to the involved steel companies of close to a million tons of coal.

The walkout had come to cap a previous climax reached when the house was considering the neutrality act. This found the members openly deserting the administration, feeling that the President was too lax on labor, and was letting Lewis dictate to the White House.

The President, who long had kept thumbs down on anti-strike legislation, had stood his ground although the pressure on him to give way to



JOHN L. LEWIS

Was his promise unsound?

the popular congressional demand for such a law became terrific.

He made strong statements on the issue, charging Lewis with an unsound premise in demanding a closed shop for the miners in captive pits simply because the Appalachian agreement in the coal industry had given the closed shop in commercial mines.

There had been evidence that the strike which began in the steel-owned mines would spread to commercial mines as well, on a "sympathy" basis.

The expected stories of violence and disorder appeared, but still there had been no immediate move to call out the troops, the only such maneuver being the mobilization of two companies of the Alabama home guard.

There also had been threats of sympathy strikes in steel plants, but one of these was called off on the plea of members of the United Mine Workers themselves, who urged the steel employees to stay on their jobs until the mine strike was settled.

#### REPERCUSSIONS: From Walkout

The expected aftermath of the actual strike, particularly in view of what had gone before in the way of pleas from the President and refusals from Lewis, was widespread excitement concerning the labor situation, particularly as strikes were threatening which would involve thousands of other workers in vital industries.

#### JAPAN: Carrying the Ball?

Treading gingerly, much as a novice would attempt to walk barefooted over a Hindu fakir's bed of spikes, were Secretary Hull and Saburo Kurosu as they had started their conversations looking to a better understanding between America and Japan—or a better misunderstanding.

Kurosu, using a familiar autumnal term in the United States, had said that he was carrying the ball for Japan, and that he hoped to make a touchdown.

But neither he nor Hull were setting any speed records in their broken-field running. Early stages of



CORDELL HULL

Mr. Kurosu 'carried the ball.'

the talks were "exploratory," both said, and if there was anything sinister about the affair it came from Kurosu, who asked reporters, "Why are Americans so war-minded?" This brought a smile to the correspondents who were thinking in terms of Japan's record as opposed to that of the United States.

After the first conversation with Hull, the Japanese envoy was asked, "Still think you'll make that touchdown?" He answered gravely, "I don't know."

#### RUSSIA: Offensive

The Red army had taken the offensive in the northern and central sectors, but on the south was losing an important battle to preserve connection with the Caucasian oilfields, vital to her armed forces.

The Nazi invasion force in the Crimea had taken Kerch, last port on the eastern tip of the Crimean peninsula, and only a two-mile strait separated her troops from a foothold on the Caucasus itself.

Yet it was to be a difficult foothold to gain, and even more difficult to hold, military observers agreed, especially a hard point with which to establish lines of communication and supply.

Unusual reports were coming from Moscow, once more supplanting Kuibyshev in the datelines of dispatches, including stories of Germans on the retreat in one sector so rapidly that they fled through the snow in their underwear, leaving their uniforms behind.

Also the unpreparedness of the Nazis for winter warfare was described as most desperate, and it was recounted that prisoners had been taken wearing women's fur coats.

A Daniel Brigham dispatch to the Times from Bern stated that one Red outfit finally had been equipped entirely with automatic rifles (whether Garands or not could not be learned) and that in the Kalinin district this organization had dealt a crushing blow to the Nazis.

London had reported an effort on the part of the Germans with heavy mechanized forces to cut the railway line between Rostov and Moscow, and that the air force also was heavily involved.

The Red air force, on the other hand, was reportedly filling itself out with British and American planes, and was rapidly meeting the numerical superiority of the Germans.

#### MISCELLANY:

Blankenberghe, Belgium: Five exhausted British fliers on a rubber raft were saved from death by Jean Guillini, Belgian swimming champion, who battled icy waters of the English channel for 50 minutes to tow them ashore. The men were made prisoners by the Germans.

#### SPEED: In Production



W. AVERILL HARRIMAN  
Messenger of cheer.

W. Averill Harriman, American lease-lend envoy, had arrived in the British capital, full of enthusiasm for American production and found himself overwhelmed by the speed British production had attained.

Having set himself to deliver messages of cheer to the British over the American pace of manufacture of war materials, Mr. Harriman instead declared he was beginning to worry lest the United States might fall behind Britain in this field where America was supposed to be pre-eminent.

Mr. Harriman said that United States' aid to Russia was proceeding well, but that again he felt the country was behind the scale at which the British have been sending aid.

#### CHANGE: In Leaders

The reply of the British government to demands that changes be made in the war leadership, which had frankly meant members of the war cabinet, came in the form of a change in generals, effective Christmas day.

Gen. Sir Alan Brooke, 58, a specialist in mechanized warfare, was to replace Gen. Sir John Dill as chief of the imperial general staff.

Dubbed a "wizard" in this form of warfare by his fellow officers, General Brooke had been commander of the home defense forces since July, 1940.

There was little significance to be found in the change except for the fact that General Brooke was two years younger than Dill. Sixty was described in the British press as a "normal retirement age" for an army general.

Brooke was a winner of the D.S.O. in the last war, is a steely eyed, dark mustached northern Irishman, and was commended for his brilliant direction of the Second corps during the battle of the Low Countries in 1940.

He is credited with being the inventor of the barrage map for artillery fire. He also is quoted with a statement that he would "welcome an invasion attempt" as it would afford an opportunity of "throwing the Nazis into the sea."

#### MISSION: To Soviet

A large number of American army officers soon will have a close-up view of the actual conduct of the German blitz against Russia.

It had been learned that a big military mission was being formed and will be sent to Archangel, Russia. Plans are being kept secret about the mission, but news was obtained that Maj. Gen. John N. Greely of Fort Sam Houston will head it.

The mission not only will observe the war, but will be actively in charge of the distribution of America's lease-lend aid to Russia, seeing that the goods and materials go to the proper spots to do the most good.

August 26 a similar mission was sent to China. The sending of one to Russia emphasized the close cooperation with the Soviet that was now America's full policy.

#### REWARD: Slaying Suspect

For the first time since the slayings of German soldiers of occupation started in France, the German authorities named a murder suspect, identified him, and offered unusual rewards for his capture.

The name, oddly of German sound and spelling, was that of Gilbert Brustlein, 22, and he had been described as "an exceptional dangerous evildoer."

Any informant of his whereabouts was offered not only large sums of money, but also the Nazis offered to set free any prisoner of war that the informant might name.

Brustlein, it had been reported, was the man responsible for the killing of Lieut. Col. Paul Friedrich Hotz, German commandant of the district of Nantes.

#### Unfit Draftees To Be Treated

Army to Build Up Health of 200,000 Who Were Dropped in Draft.

WASHINGTON.—Plans for rehabilitating 200,000 of the 1,000,000 youths who have been rejected for military service because of physical or mental deficiencies were announced by President Roosevelt at his press conference recently.

The program will apply immediately to the 200,000 who were certified by local draft boards as susceptible of physical rehabilitation for the army. Local physicians and dentists will give the treatments, for which the federal government will pay as part of the cost of national defense. When in proper condition, the men will be inducted into the service.

50 Per Cent Unfit. While this is the immediate program, Mr. Roosevelt said that it was only the first objective, adding that something should be done along broader lines, and declaring that he considered the existence of the conditions revealed by the selective service examinations as an indictment of America. Nearly 50 per cent of 2,000,000 men examined for selective service were found unfit mentally or physically.

The President said that he would start a long-range program calling for co-operation of states, counties, cities, townships and individuals to remedy the underlying causes of the situation.

The plan for rehabilitating the 200,000 men was adopted on the basis of a report to the President from Brigadier General Hershey, director of the selective service system. The President could not estimate how much it would cost but said that it would be much less than if the men had been inducted and rehabilitation had been attempted.

Plans Under Way. The plans are already far advanced for helping the 200,000 men. Those suffering from heart diseases, musculo-skeletal defects and mental and nervous disorders will be put in a special category and will be examined by traveling boards or teams of specialists who will recommend curable cases for immediate treatment at government cost.

Of those rejected under the selective service act, 100,000 were found mentally unqualified for service, since they did not have the equivalent of a fourth-grade education. The other 900,000 rejections were due to physical defects or mental and nervous diseases. The largest category of physical defects came under the dental classification, representing nearly 21 per cent of the whole. Defective eyes were another major cause of rejection.

"The registrant will have the privilege of having the services performed by his family physician or dentist in his own community. "The cost of this rehabilitation program will be borne by the federal government as a necessary part of our national defense program, and additional funds will be made available to the selective service system for this purpose."

Lathe Worker, 90, Marks No Time Lost in Year

BELOIT, WIS.—It's something to be able to operate a high-speed lathe for a year with no "time-lost" accidents, especially for a 90-year-old worker.

But that's just the beginning of Edgar Ardean Ballou's record. He has just completed his eighty-first year of self-support, and he's still going strong six days a week at the Fairbanks Morse plant here, and keeping up with the rest of the "youngsters." Ballou has never been late for work in 81 years, has good eyesight and still enjoys his work.

Fellow workers thought this record was worthy of a surprise party recently to help their oldest employee celebrate his anniversary.

Admits He Registered Girl in Draft as Joke

PITTSBURGH.—A 21-year-old Carnegie Tech student who registered a girl for the draft "just for the fun of it" was embarrassed to learn that draft authorities failed to appreciate the joke.

The prankster, James Boyle, 21, admitted he registered Miss Cecelia Christy, 19, of Swissvale, as a potential draftee and was released pending consideration of the case by draft headquarters in Harrisburg.

Boyle had been sought for the last two months ever since County Draft Board No. 6 at Swissvale sent out a questionnaire to a "Sydge" Christy only to learn that "Sydge" was a girl. "Sydge" was Cecelia's nickname.

#### Cloud Heights Now Found by Photo Eye

New Method Aids Weather Bureau and Aviators.

SCHENECTADY, N. Y.—Scientists have developed a new method of measuring the height of clouds that is expected to help the weather bureau and aviators.

The glow of a tiny searchlight is spotted on clouds during the daytime and the height is computed by simple geometry, triangulation. The method was developed by the bureau of standards.

A small 1,000-watt mercury lamp developed for searchlights and television studios is used in the new system. The "splat" of the light where it hits the under side of the cloud is perceived by a photoelectric eye separated from the light on the ground.

"During the daytime," scientists explained, "dark overcast clouds at an elevation of 9,000 feet have been readily detected. For cumulus clouds illuminated by direct sunlight and having elevations up to 4,000 feet, the detection is positive."

The projector consists of the lamp in front of a two-foot parabolic mirror. The "electric eye" detector receives the light through a lens and a slit diaphragm.

The narrow beam from the lamp is projected into the sky at a frequency of 120 flashes a second and the rays scatter when they hit the clouds. This light scattering is detected by a photoelectric eye located at a known distance from the lamp and adjusted for the flash frequency so that the beam may be distinguished from background atmospheric light.

The height of clouds, of course, is important in determining "ceiling" of visibility and the safety of conditions for plane flight. In addition the data are important in forecasting the weather.

#### All Men in London Must Help Out in Fire Watch

LONDON.—With "London Must Not Burn" as his slogan, Herbert Morrison, minister of home security, ordered all able-bodied men residing in London to register for compulsory fire-watch duties.

This call-up, which affects the majority of men between the ages of 18 to 60, is the consequence of an insufficient number of volunteers.

Hitherto, compulsory registration has applied only to people living and working in the city and Westminster, but it will now affect the whole of the London region, irrespective of requests of local authorities.

Speaking in parliament Morrison said:

"In every London area, including the outer suburbs, all male British subjects between 18 and 60 must register with the local authority. Certain classes of people already carrying out war duties will be exempt."

In the original regulations, giving the minister the necessary power, it outlines that he must be satisfied with the number of persons voluntarily enrolled.

#### Liquid Plastic Termed Likely Hose of Future

MINNEAPOLIS.—A Minneapolis beauty expert predicts that in the near future women may buy their stockings "by the gallon."

Myndall Cain, a beautician who has devoted many hours to worrying about the possible shortage of silk stockings, believes a plastic substance that can be painted on the legs may be just what every woman needs.

"It could be applied with a sponge and removed with a special oil wash," she explains. "It would last for two or three days and probably would cost about 50 cents an application."

Until the day of the plastic "stocking" arrives Miss Cain suggests that women can meet any hosiery shortage by painting the legs with cosmetics, by wearing knee-length booties, "which were stylish when grandmother was a girl," or by wearing cotton, wool, knitted, crocheted or net stockings.

#### Wool Inedible for Moths, Science's New Discovery

WASHINGTON.—Science held out hope to the housewife and others of making woolen articles safe from moths and heavy-handed laundresses.

The bureau of standards and Textile foundation announced discovery of a chemical treatment which shows promise of making wool less edible for moths, less sensitive to alkaline factors in soap and less likely to shrink.

Industrial trials will be given the process before a final decision on its worth.

## Washington Digest

### Price Control Problems Enliven Inflation Threat

Three Distinct Groups Hold Up Definite Action; U. S. Farm 'Bloc' Is Often Confused With Farmer's Organizations.

By BAUKHAGE  
National Farm and Home Hour Commentator.

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There are three distinct groups in Washington all pulling in different directions at price control legislation. There is a group which believes with Bernard Baruch that a ceiling must be put on all prices and wages. There is a group, represented by Leon Henderson, price control administrator, which believes that only those prices which show signs of getting out of hand should be controlled. There is a third group in congress which simply refuses to take any action. These latter are the ones who are responsible for delaying consideration of the present bill which is widely criticized by many in all three groups.

The result of these conflicting groups is a growing fear that inflation which cannot be checked will be upon us before we know it.

For a while it was thought that the administration might follow Canada's plan of price control which is soon to be put into effect. First, Canada tried a piece-meal method, similar in some respects to Mr. Henderson's ideas. Then, inasmuch as this did not work satisfactorily, "ceilings" on both prices and wages were written into a new plan which more nearly resembles that supported by Mr. Baruch's followers.

Details of Britain's price control policy were recently reported by officials here and they reveal some interesting theories of particular interest now. This policy may explain why it is being said that some people in Washington believe "a little inflation is a good thing," in spite of the dire warnings as to what will happen if price rises are not checked immediately.

#### British 'Bidding' System

The British, it seems, have come to the conclusion that freezing prices and wages and profits just do not go hand-in-hand with a maximum war effort in a democracy. They say frankly, "You have to bid for a maximum war effort." In other words, you have to permit the workman to get bigger wages, you have to give the farmer higher prices, you have to offer industry a bigger profit, if you expect a maximum effort in the machine shop, in the field and orchard, behind the desk. Therefore, you have to follow a certain amount of elasticity in prices and wages and that means a certain amount of inflation.

Equally frankly the British have evolved this maxim: Building morale is just as important as checking inflation. You can give the workman certain social advantages to improve his morale, you can remove some of the business man's restrictions—but you must also bid for their services with something more material—money.

When full war production is fully achieved, when every human unit and every piece of material which is not actually needed for the minimum non-defense production is at last being utilized in the war effort, then prices can be frozen, the British believe, and not before.

It is perhaps this philosophy which some of the administration leaders have borrowed and which eventually will be adopted by congress—if it is not too late by the time congress makes up its mind to act.

#### 'Farm Bloc' And Inflation

In the next few weeks you are going to hear some unpleasant things about the farmer. He is going to be blamed, whether justly or not, for encouraging inflation by refusing to allow farm prices to be curbed sufficiently to hold off inflation. In this connection you are going to hear the term "farm bloc" applied to all the interests working rightly or wrongly for the farmer.

This inclusive use of the phrase is incorrect. A bloc, according to the dictionary, is:

"Bloc, (French, bloc or lump) 1. Politics (a) In European countries, especially in France and Italy (this was before Mussolini and Pétain, of course) a combination of two or more groups or parties willing to make common cause for some definite object. (b) In the United States, a combination of members of different parties for a similar purpose, especially in congress; as the agricultural or farm bloc, a bloc in the United States congress

formed in 1921 by members from agricultural states, to secure agricultural legislation, irrespective of party lines."

By the definition, a bloc is composed of members of congress, but many people when they use the word include the farm organizations which maintain their offices in Washington. The Grange, the Farm Bureau Federation and the Farmers Union. Like the United States Chamber of Commerce, the Congress of Industrial Organization and the American Federation of Labor, the agricultural organizations are pressure groups—lobbies, if you will.

#### 'Bloc' and Politics

There is a reason why the bloc can, and sometimes is, more likely to be an evil force than the organization. The bloc composed of politicians who must have votes at the next election try to out-promise their political opponents. Therefore, they will promise to vote for special legislation and even vote for it as it is brought up. But sometimes their real purpose is not to get a certain law passed but rather to promise it and work for it until they themselves are elected.

The need for the farm organizations did not appear at the beginning of the nation. When representation in congress was established on a geographical basis this was an agricultural nation. Each farm was a unit which to a large extent represented a cross-section of the nation's economic activity and interest.

Then conditions changed, cities and industrial centers grew up whose problems were entirely different from the economic interests of the farmer. At first the result was rebellion—small revolts but significant ones; the Whiskey rebellion, Shays' rebellion, attempts by force to obtain recognition of the rights of special groups. Finally, the farm organizations came into being. At first their chief objective was to obtain public school and agricultural education.

This movement was the beginning of the department of agriculture, the land grant colleges, the state agricultural institutions. Gradually, these organizations began to give more and more time to promoting the farmer's interests by obtaining state and federal legislation for his benefit.

Of course, some of the methods of these groups can be anti-democratic. We frequently hear more about them than about the honest effort, and sometimes not until much harm has been done. That is why Secretary Wickard says that "each group must operate tolerantly, and above all openly and frankly, not through stealth and concealment."

#### Carrying the Mail



A navy mail clerk on a trip to the local post office to pick up mail for officers and men serving on his station. It is in this manner that officers and men on shore obtain mail from their families, sweethearts and friends, as well as from official sources. The crossed quills and three stripes on the rating badge above this sailor's elbow indicate that he is a Yeoman, first class, while the service stripes near the wrist indicate that he has served four "hitches" or a total of over 16 years in the navy.