

U.S. TANKS ARE RACING ACROSS GERMANY
FOURTH RUSSIAN OFFENSIVE IS LAUNCHED

Extension Of Month For Coal Contracts Is Perkins' Program

Last-Minute Appeal By Labor Secretary Expects This Week

Washington, March 26.—(AP)—Secretary of Labor Perkins is expected to try to stave off a possible nationwide soft coal strike by appealing this week for a 30-day contract extension.

The current wage agreement expires Saturday night, and negotiations between John L. Lewis United Mine Workers and bituminous operators, which began March 1, have stalled.

Lewis' demand for a ten cents a ton royalty is said by the operators to be a big obstacle.

Adding to the tense situation building up as the contract's expiration date approaches, is a strike vote among the 400,000 bituminous miners scheduled for Wednesday. Few would predict that the miners would vote in the negative, while Lewis is negotiating a new contract for them.

Oscar S. Smith, head of the National Labor Relations Board's field division, said the NLRB is all set to take the vote, necessitated by Lewis' notice on February 26 that a dispute existed under the war labor disputes act.

Secretary Perkins, although silent about her plans, was expected by both sides to try to bring about a contract extension.

The stumbling block to this appeared to be the issue of retroactivity. Edward R. Burke, head of the Southern Coal Producers Association, said operators are opposed to making retroactive any wage adjustments resulting from a new contract.

In the past, they have opposed such a step because they expect price increases can't be made retroactive to compensate for any added payroll burdens.

Miners, on the other hand, remember what they consider the loss of a big slice of retroactive pay they thought they were entitled to in 1943.

CHINESE COMMUNIST DELEGATE TO FRISCO

Chungking, March 26.—(AP)—The Chinese communist leader Tung Pi-wu was disclosed today as one of the ten Chinese delegates to the world security conference at San Francisco, but doubt was expressed whether the communists would be satisfied with only one representative. Tung is the former representative of the Chinese communists in Chungking.

Byrnes Would Be Czar In New Manpower Bill, Aimed At Coal Miners

Washington, March 26.—(AP)—Compromise? Manpower legislation, viewed in some quarters as a potent anti-strike measure aimed at 400,000 soft coal miners, changed the vacation plan set forth in the bill today.

They were summoned back to the capital to begin considering tomorrow the product of more than two months of congressional give-and-take, to which this preamble was added:

"Every individual not in the armed forces shall have an obligation, when called upon, to serve the nation in an activity essential to the war effort."

One member of the Senate-House conference committee which drafted the compromise, said the preamble was written into the bill as a direct result of the stalemate soft coal contract negotiations.

As now drawn to adjust sharp differences between the two chambers, the manpower bill gives War Mobilizer James F. Byrnes power to:

- 1. Fix employment ceilings for any plant or industry.
2. Control the hiring and job transferring of workers.

Moscow Pressure May Force Ouster For Mannerheim

Stockholm, March 26.—(AP)—The retirement of aging Field Marshal Baron Carl Gustaf Mannerheim as president of the Finnish republic is expected shortly as the first step in reorganization of that country's government, to conform more closely with a leftward swing reflected in the recent elections.

In all but extreme racial circles in Finland, Mannerheim is generally credited with doing an excellent job in holding the people together during the difficult days of the armistice negotiations with Russia and the subsequent withdrawal of Finland from the war.

But there is no denial that, as a personification of Finland's heretofore strongly conservative and anti-communist elements, Mannerheim is anything but popular with Moscow. He has been attacked several times by the Soviet press and radio.

Food Probe Is Started By Senators

Washington, March 26.—(AP)—Senators set out today to get the cold facts on America's food situation, beginning with the meat shortage.

A five-man sub-committee has been assigned to the investigation, but virtually the entire Senate Agriculture Committee arranged to sit in on the opening session to hear questions from small meat packers.

Senator Stewart, Democrat, Tennessee, invited the packers to bring along their balance sheets to prove their contention they cannot buy and slaughter livestock at a profit under existing price ceilings.

The investigation has four principal aims: To determine how much food is on hand in the nation; where it is; what are the prospects for increased production; and the probable demand.

LEVEE BREAKS

Memphis, March 26.—(AP)—Two west Tennessee counties lost today their fight against flood waters when a privately-maintained levee collapsed, with an estimated 70,000 acres of rich farm land to be inundated.

Soviets Aim At Hitler's New Hideout

Moscow Says Nazis Shifted From Italy To Defend Vienna

London, March 26.—(AP)—A fourth Russian offensive has been launched toward Germany's southern mountain redoubt, Berlin announced today, and Moscow dispatches said the enemy had shifted divisions from Italy and the sagging western front to defend Vienna against a not-distant attack.

Two Russian armies already had overrun four-fifths of Hungary below the Danube, and their spearhead was within 36 miles of the Austrian border and 77 miles southeast of Vienna.

Berlin broadcasts said a new assault had been sprung north of the Danube in Slovakia, while Marshal Ivan Konev's first Ukrainian army group continued to grind through the Moravian mountains north of Vienna.

The newest attack, described in Berlin as an all-out offensive, was started on the lower reaches of the Ilron river in Slovakia at 1 a. m. Sunday, a German broadcast said, and a bridgehead over the Ilron was gained at Leva, fifty miles northwest of Budapest, and 37 miles northeast of Komarnon, on the Danube river key to Bratislava.

Marshal Doodor I. Tolbukhin's third Ukrainian army linked up with the second Ukrainian army under Marshal Rodion Y. Malinovsky in a drive that swept along a 90-mile front through Hungary with gains up to 16 miles.

Severely wounded, the Germans fell back into well-fortified defenses in the Győr area, and all signs pointed to the stubborn kind of opposition forming before the Soviet armies driving close to Bratislava.

The initial phases of the fresh offensive along the south bank of the Danube northwest of Budapest had carried 23 miles through the tough Bonyony forest and Vertes mountains under conditions that were made worse by a well advanced spring thaw.

War Plants Hit By U. S. Bombers In South Reich

London, March 26.—(AP)—Two oil plants, a gun factory and an armoured car works in southeastern Germany were attacked today by 300 escorted American bombers as the airmen switched back to strategic targets after a week-long bombing pride for the Rhine offensive.

The small force of heavy bombers split into two task forces over Leipzig. One went for a synthetic oil plant and a natural oil refinery at Feitz, 20 miles south of Leipzig, while the other flew to Plauen, ten miles from the Czechoslovak border and blasted the twin war factories.

Many Stocks Are Weaker

New York, March 26.—(AP)—Leading stocks continued to back-track fractions to more than a point in today's market, although real pressure was lacking in most cases.

Dealings, quite active at the start, soon slowed. Few recoveries were in sight near midday. Prominent losers included U. S. Steel and U. S. Rubber. Mild resistance was shown by Great Northern.

OFFICER CORPS IN WEHRMACHT OUSTED

London, March 26.—(AP)—Moscow radio today broadcast a statement by the free German committee there, declaring "the entire officer corps of the Wehrmacht has been eliminated and replaced by Himmler's SS through 'intrigues, dismissals, wholesale arrests, suicides and war casualties.'"



U. S. PONTON BRIDGE ACROSS THE RHINE RIVER
ONE OF A NUMBER of pontoon bridges spanning the Rhine is pictured shortly after U. S. Army engineers had constructed it to replace the railroad bridge that had collapsed at Remagen. Large numbers of men and huge amounts of equipment are reported to be pouring across these structures as the all-out Allied drive gains momentum. This is an official U. S. Signal Corps photo.

Nagoya War Plants Wrecked In Bombing

21st Bomber Command Headquarters, March 26.—(AP)—Five of Japan's big war industry plants in Nagoya were left wrecked by Sunday's B-29 demolition raids, headquarters announced today.

Manila, March 26.—(AP)—Philippine-based American bombers wrecked the big hydroelectric plant on Formosa Friday in their continued pounding of this southern bastion protecting the Ryukyu islands "bridge" to Japan, headquarters reported today.

A shift of the first dismounted cavalry division from central to southern Luzon was disclosed for the first time. The Monday communique said they were initiating a drive along the main highway south of Santo Tomas in Batangas province. Doughboys of the 25th and 32nd divisions were fighting for important Balate pass of northern Luzon.

Japs Say Americans Landing In Ryukyus

Guam, March 26.—(AP)—American troops, supported by an intensive bombardment from a large carrier-battlefleet task force, are "attempting" landings on Okinawa group in the Ryukyus chain, only 325 miles south

of Kyushu in the Japanese homeland, Domei news agency reported without confirmation today.

Aerial bombardments of several of the Ryukyu islands, including Okinawa itself, and of air bases in all of the southern Japanese home islands of Kyushu, Shikoku and Honshu, preceded the reported landing.

Okinawa, most important in the Ryukyu chain, and an ideal base for strikes at either Japan or the China coast, probably would be the chief objective in any amphibious operation in the central Ryukyus.

Okinawa has several airfields and good harbors suitable for anchorage of large warships.

MAJ.-GEN. RUPERTUS, OF MARINES, IS DEAD

Washington, March 26.—(AP)—Major General William H. Rupertus, 35, Commandant of the U. S. Marine Corps schools at Quantico, Va., who led the first Marine division in the south Pacific, died here last night.

Death was due to a heart attack while he and his wife and five-year-old son were visiting Colonel R. B. Kilmartin, commanding officer of the Marine barracks at the navy yard.

His last assignment in the Pacific war theater was commander of the Marines in the invasion of Peleliu in the Palau islands.

Cotton Trend Is Downward

New York, March 26.—(AP)—Cotton futures opened unchanged to 20 cents a bale lower. Noon prices were five cents a bale higher to 20 cents lower.

WPB Enters Picture On Curfew Rule

Priority Penalties May Be Invoked On Violating Concerns

Washington, March 26.—(AP)—The War Production Board said today it would invoke priority penalties against midnight curfew violators only when the War Manpower Commission certifies that an employment ceiling has been violated.

Violations of the curfew itself will not bring WPB punitive action through the halting of light, power or fuel, or the suspension of priority privileges, a WPB spokesman said.

The first step in enforcement, it was stated, is the imposition of a law manpower ceiling by WMC upon the offending night club, or a "zero ceiling," which would put the place out of business by forbidding any employment of workers. If the ceiling were ignored, WMC would so certify to WPB.

When a certification is received, he added, the case will be turned over to WPB's compliance division for investigation. A hearing would be held, at which the government would be required to prove that, because of the manpower violation, electricity, fuel or other materials needed elsewhere to promote the war effort, were being used.

DANIELS BECOMES SECRETARY TO FDR

Washington, March 26.—(AP)—Steve Early bowed out today as presidential press relations secretary and Jonathan Daniels took over the spot he had been holding on a temporary basis.

Early, for a time, will serve as Mr. Roosevelt's appointments secretary, replacing the late Major General Edwin M. Watson. By June 1, he will be free to accept an offer of private employment.

WEATHER

FOR NORTH CAROLINA: Mostly cloudy in west, partly cloudy in east portion, and continued warm today and tonight, beginning in extreme west today. Tuesday mostly cloudy and mild.

Black Market Gas "Ring" Uncovered In Henderson

Raleigh, March 26.—(AP)—The Raleigh district OPA said today that an alert filling station operator and State Highway Patrolman Albert L. Taylor, both of Henderson, had broken "the crust" on a large black market counterfeit gasoline ring.

OPA is investigating evidence uncovered by Taylor, who was notified by a filling station operator that a Negro had just purchased gasoline from his station with a counterfeit "A" coupon.

Widespread investigation in Henderson, Louisville, Franklinton and Durham areas is now under way.

Pending developments, OPA said that further information could not be released at this time. However, OPA indicated that the case was developing into one of the largest black market investigations in some time.

All Armies Gaining On West Front

Over Eighty Miles Of East Rhine Held Firmly By Allies

Paris, March 26.—(AP)—The American third army closed within six miles of Frankfurt-on-the-Main today and sent its tanks racing through Broken German lines on the flat central German plains within 250 miles of Russian lines.

The first army to the north exploited another breakthrough of decaying German defenses, comparable to the victory at St. Lo, advancing three miles nearer Berlin overnight, from the Remagen-Bonn sector. A dozen villages fell.

The American ninth army advanced five miles deeper into the rubble heaps of the Ruhr, past out-thanked Duisburg, deepening its lower Rhine front to at least ten miles. The British second army, with at least one famous Canadian division pushed ten miles east of the Rhine on the flat Westphalian plains.

More than 80 miles of the east Rhine banks were firmly in Allied hands. The final campaign to cross Germany was rolling up massive victories all the way from Wesel to below Frankfurt.

Nowhere was the bewildered and severely tired Wehrmacht able to check the mighty tide of more than 1,250,000 shock troops. General Eisenhower had massed on the western front for the final battle.

Lt. General George S. Patton's third army made new crossings of the upper Rhine. He now had seven tankheads. The Main river, which flows through Frankfurt, was crossed on a captured bridge at Aschenburg and reached at two other points eight miles southwest of Frankfurt, and two miles east of Mainz.

The third army was more than forty miles beyond the Rhine and running ahead unchecked within 235 miles of Berlin.

Germanys were surrendering by the thousands. The 21st army group in the north, comprising the 4th and 9th armies, had taken 10,000 prisoners. The total western army bag bulges with more than 300,000 since D-Day.

In the north, from the suburbs of Duisburg to north of captured Rees, the cross-Rhine front curved by Field Marshal Montgomery's American ninth, British second and Allied first airborne armies was solid, 31 miles or more wide along the Rhine and at least ten miles deep.

MODEL IS WOUNDED BY BOMB EXPLOSION

London, March 26.—(AP)—A German underground report today said Field Marshal Walter von Model, commander of the northern group of armies on the western front, had been wounded by a bomb.

The report said Von Model's injury necessitated the quick switch of Field Marshal Albert Kesselring from Italy to take charge of the western front when Von Rundstedt was removed.