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MARCH 12, 1953

A Gangster Dies

In Russia last week there died a gangster whose record, by comparison, casts an aura of something suggesting saintliness around Al Capone and all his predecessors, back as far as recorded history goes.

For, forgetting for a moment his role as a murderer, consider this:

In ancient times, the most cruel thing an enemy could do was to poison the wells. Joseph Stalin poisoned men's minds.

He did it so ruthlessly and so completely that all indications are that he is genuinely mourned by the people of Soviet Russia as a kindly little father—almost as a god.

Today the Russian dictatorship is headed by another gangster; one perhaps even more cruel and ruthless than Stalin.

So much are ruthlessness and cruelty and physical force taken for granted in Russia, in fact, that it would not be at all fantastic to learn sometime that Georgi Malenkov murdered Stalin, in order to give Malenkov the advantage of timing the crisis.

What the effect of Stalin's death and Malenkov's rise to power may be on the West is anybody's guess. About all that seems even reasonably certain is this: There seemed no hope of peace with Stalin in power. With a change, things could improve. But it is equally true—perhaps more than equally true—that they may get worse. For in many men's minds there is a growing feeling that they can never be really better until they first grow worse.

* * *

Two things are worth pondering:

1. It was a cruel despotism and dire poverty, in a period when nobody had even heard of Communism as we know it today, that produced Joseph Stalin.

2. Can freedom and dictatorship ever find the basis for a working agreement?—is the world big enough for both?

It is to be hoped that the Eisenhower administration, like the Truman administration, will seek, at all costs, to avoid all-out physical war. But that should blind none of us to the fact that there is, and of necessity must be, eternal war between freedom and slavery, as long as either survives. Each is too great a danger to the other to be permitted to survive.

It may take a generation, or a thousand years, but the free peoples, if they would stay free, must destroy dictatorship, wherever it rears its head. And somehow—and this, perhaps, is the most difficult of all our tasks—we must find a way to do it without surrender of all our freedoms in the process.

Marked Others

Somewhere, at some time, in almost every life there not only is the drama of hope and fear, success and failure, but also high courage and selfless devotion. It is there, if we could but see and read the whole record of that life.

But we cannot. And so when a man dies, even his best friends find it hard to describe in words the innate goodness and nobility, often the innate greatness, that emanated from his spirit. At most, we usually can pick out one or two qualities or characteristics so marked in him as to have left their mark on others.

That is true of two men who died here last week. Both comparative newcomers to Franklin, each had

a characteristic so marked as to have made an impress, directly or indirectly, on the whole community.

With Roy Geoghegan, it was a quiet, unassuming courage. It was so characteristic of him that close friends and casual acquaintance alike came to expect him to laugh at misfortune and illness—and he always did. Though he lived in a world filled with people who indulge in self-pity, Roy Geoghegan never bored anybody listening to his complaints. Friends think of him, in fact, as having laughed, not at, but with death.

With St. Clair Anderson, it was devotion to perfection. In his case, that devotion was emphasized in his work as mechanic. It was not enough that a part for a machine fitted "well enough to do"; it must fit perfectly. It was not enough that he had ground a piece of steel to within a hundredth of an inch of the size required; it must be within a thousandth of an inch. In a Western North Carolina still influenced by generations of having to get along with makeshift, that demand for precision is a legacy badly needed.

An Open Letter

to

Mr. Walter Dean

Macon County Representative

in the

N. C. General Assembly

Dear Mr. Dean:

For the first time in my life, I am writing a legislator to suggest the introduction of a local bill. From the fact that it is something I have never done before, you can judge how important I consider the bill I am suggesting.

Never in the memories of most of us have so many people been so deeply interested in Macon County's schools. That, I believe, is an extremely healthy sign; because the effectiveness of a public school system is just about in proportion to the public's interest and the public's support.

I am sure we should all like to have the public stay interested, and I believe the only way to accomplish that is to make the public feel the schools are their schools, and to give the public a part in their operation. How can you accomplish those two things better than by letting the public name the men who make the policies of our county school system—the members of the county board of education?

As you know, under the present set-up, members of the board of education are nominated in the primary, in early summer, and appointed by the legislature in the late spring—nearly a year later.

As Mr. Gash, the Democratic senator from Transylvania county, so well said recently, such an arrangement is a "farce". The members of the county board either should be elected outright or appointed outright—not chosen in a half-way-between method such as we now have.

This letter is to suggest a bill providing for the election of the members of the Macon County board of education by the people of the county.

It would be for you, possibly in consultation with school authorities, here and in Raleigh, to work out the details of such a bill. I take the liberty of offering only a few general suggestions:

1. Five men have been nominated to the local board under the present set-up. Bad as that set-up is, they should be appointed and should serve their terms. In short, the bill should provide for the first election to take place approximately two years from now.

2. There is nothing partisan about the schools; they serve the children of Democrats and Republicans alike. Furthermore, there is nothing political about school problems. For those reasons, members of the board of education should be elected in a non-partisan election, without reference to their party affiliation.

3. A provision for staggered terms might be wise, thus making sure that one or more members with experience were on the board at all times.

I am making this letter public in the belief that it will prompt Macon County people to write you about this matter. I believe the vast majority, without reference to party, favors such a change, and it will be surprising if you do not get many letters urging it.

Respectfully,

WEIMAR JONES.

Any fool can cut prices; but it takes a man of brains to make an article of quality and sell it.—P. D. Armour.

Letters

NEED TALENT, TOO

Dear Mr. Jones:

Answers to the question, "What are Macon County's greatest needs?", as given by the Rotary Club, vary widely; such answers are wrong—and yet they are right. Wrong because the Franklin Chamber of Commerce is trying to do much more than any one of these limited fasks, and right because they are all included, along with many others, in the overall program of the organization.

I maintain that our greatest need at present is talent in our civic organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce. We are in need of the rolled-up sleeves. The faithful, hard slugging "Georges" in any organization movement can't do it all. Talent used to mean a unit of money. Some people still think so. They may be generous with their checks—but woefully stingy with the talents in themselves. Even with a very small budget we could accomplish near wonders in this county, because we have access to all the natural resources and natural beauty that are essential to the making of a fine business or tourist center. On the other hand, organizations with an unlimited budget will only be going through the motions unless they have manpower and talent to back them up. We need to bring these two factors into balance, and here we will need the widespread support and power of the whole county, before we glide smoothly and speedily toward our goals.

The usefulness of the Franklin Chamber of Commerce in a positive way is undeniable, as a review of its past accomplishments will show, but any measure of success of these organization or any other organization should be preceded by a question: How many members of this organization have been unsparing with their talents?

What we need now are libraries of men—who are willing to work. I would suggest that every citizen of Macon County review the past accomplishments of the local Chamber of Commerce, then take a look at the goals set up for 1953; they are broad and ambitious but without the support and endorsement of all our citizens, these aims and ambitions will never be realized.

Sincerely,

Franklin, N. C.

(MRS.) LASCA E. HORSLEY

Newspaper Shop Talk

Mostly About Us

This is the saga of a Wednesday afternoon.

Now Wednesday afternoon is a very special time at The Franklin Press. Because, at The Press, as at most country weekly newspaper offices, Wednesday afternoon, rather than Saturday, is the end of the week; the paper is "put to bed" on Wednesday, and Thursday morning work starts on next week's issue.

With the paper gone to press, you'd think things would quiet down somewhat. That's exactly what The Press editor thought last Wednesday. (Though, after seven years' experience, he really should have known better.) It was mid-afternoon. From the shop came the roar of the press, the click of the folder as it merrily turned out the finished 12-page issue, and the rhythmic thwat, thwat, thwat of the mailing machine as it slapped name and address labels on the papers.

The editor was indulging in that rarest of luxuries around a weekly newspaper; feet on desk, he was doing exactly nothing.

The phone rang . . . Was it too late, the phoner wanted to know, to get a picture in this week's issue.

The Press some day hopes to have its own photo engraving plant. Until then, though, all pictures must be sent out of town to have cuts made, requiring a time lapse, usually of two

or three days. So the regretful answer had to be that it was too late.

Feet went back on desk and the pleasant occupation of doing nothing was resumed.

The phone rang again . . .

This time it was a telegram from a man in a distant state. Please try to get the want ad he ran last January back in this week's issue.

Once more a rather discouraged pair of feet were raised from floor to desk.

Then there came the coincidence of the little pigs . . . (See "Meandering" on page 1.)

A man, obviously in distress, entered the office to ask, Was it too late to get a want ad in this week's issue? He'd lost a pig.

How?

He'd been to the weekly sale at the Macon Livestock Auction yards and had bought a six-weeks old pig. Paid \$10 for it. The pig was tied in a sack—securely tied, he thought—and placed in the back of his truck. But somewhere between the railway Depot here and Pine Grove the pig had managed not only to wriggle out of the sack but to escape from the truck. At Pine Grove there was no sign of the pig—only an empty sack . . .

Hardly had he left the office before another equally distressed man entered. He, too, hoped it wasn't too late to get a want

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STRICTLY

PERSONAL

By WEIMAR JONES

"Do two things, and you would do 10."

That was the comment, in the course of a conversation, of a young man, formerly in business in Franklin, on the list, published on this page last week, of "This Country's Greatest Needs".

"First, you've got to have money to do anything. You can get it by a fair, honest, intelligent assessment of property for taxation. Bring in some one from outside the county, who knows property values—but who does NOT know anybody here.

"Second, what is everybody's business is nobody's business. We need a city manager in Franklin—somebody who knows what he is doing to devote his full time to the job. And by all means it ought to be a YOUNG man.

"Get those two ideas at

work in Franklin, and they soon would be adopted by the county."

Also discussing "This Country's Greatest Needs", a woman, who prefers to remain anonymous, writes:

"For years I have been impressed by the haughty coldness of many who walk the streets of Franklin. Common courtesy would help Franklin tremendously.

"Second, this town is so littered with trash surely passers-by must call Franklin 'the overturned, wind-swept Waste Basket'.

"Third, more steady pay checks are needed. More plants similar to Van Raalte would solve that problem. If that problem were solved, there would be more money available

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News Making As It Looks To A Maconite

By BOB SLOAN

The death of Joseph Stalin may provoke events which will provide a real test as to the greatness of President Eisenhower. The following is supposition, but it could come to pass; and besides it's interesting to speculate.

There are indications that Georgi Malenkov, Stalin's successor, might be less inclined to try to spread the communist doctrines and rule throughout the world and will concern himself more with bringing economic stability and better living conditions to the people within the present Soviet. This new relatively unknown Russian ruler is first and foremost a party man. There have been reports that there is considerable discontent in Russia today. Therefore, Malenkov, being a party man, first and last, may decide the best way to remedy this situation is to repair fences at home. This may even lead to the search of foreign markets and certainly a more friendly attitude toward the free nations of the world.

This in the long run will create a situation in which the President of the United States could be confronted with one of the hardest decisions of his life. It won't be a matter of what to do but how to do it. With a seemingly less dangerous Russian the hue and cry will arise to reduce military spending and to cut our military forces in half or more. First, the president will have to decide if we can afford to drop our guard. With memories of Hitler and Stalin fresh in his mind I do not think that Eisenhower will be caught in the trap, but I am afraid that his pleas for military preparedness will fall on ears no more receptive than those who listened to Franklin Roosevelt, in Chicago in the late '30's, urge our nation to gird itself against the threat of Hitler's legions. Despite his eloquence and logic the great Democratic leader was called a war monger, and we refused to listen. Will Eisenhower be able to provide leadership that will cause a democracy to keep its guard up even

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Do You Remember?

(Looking backward through the files of The Press)

50 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Messrs. Lawrence Sellers and Samuel Bryson left Monday for Oregon. We wish them success in the Far West.

Mr. J. A. Pendergrass, of Nantaha, was here yesterday and called in to pay his dues, he being a Confederate veteran. He is a zealous reader of The Press.

A crowd of young men from Smith's Bridge expect to leave next Monday for the State of Washington. They are Wm. Holbrooks, E. N. Bates, Barnett and Robert Garland, Jim Vanhook, John Beasley, John Young, Javan Gray, Homer Rhodes, and Robert Curtis.

25 YEARS AGO

A dental bill of 37 years standing was recently paid by Mr. J. H. Worley, of Clay County, to a Franklin dentist. It perks us up considerably to realize that our descendants, 40 years hence, may collect a few bills now due The Press.

Mr. O. V. Mincey has just returned from California, where he had been seeking work. He says that California is over-estimated and that the mountains here are much better for the average man than California.

Mr. Lawrence Holt, of Highlands, and his grandmother, Mrs. Martha McCloud, made a trip to Franklin Wednesday.

Mrs. W. T. Moore has returned home from New Orleans where she attended Mardi Gras.

10 YEARS AGO

Henry Stockton, of Greenville, S. C. was in Franklin on business Friday. He visited his cousin, Mrs. M. A. Sanders, on the Georgia road, who has been ill for the past six weeks. It had been 35 years since they had seen each other.

Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Bryson celebrated their 54th wedding anniversary Sunday.

Mrs. Anne C. (Mrs. A. R.) Higdon was elected worthy matron of Nequassa chapter No. 43, Order of Eastern Star, at a meeting held at the Masonic hall on Thursday evening.