

LOWELL THOMAS - SUNOCO. WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 1943 *Tomman*

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

For days a big Jap convoy has been reported moving toward New Guinea -- with nobody quite sure what was meant by the new enemy move. Today the news is -- the giant convoy has been beaten up and scattered. It was done by air power, with flying fortresses and big Liberator bombers assailing the Japs, sinking ships, and sending the remainder of the convoy into disorderly retreat.

A dispatch from New Guinea stresses the weather -- tropical storms, the black tempests of the equatorial regions. We heard previously that the Jap sea force was advancing under cover of the weather. Transports, escorted by cruisers and destroyers, were shrouded by clouds and rainstorms as they pushed on down the New Guinea way.

Notwithstanding the unfavorable skies, the American squadrons found the Japs and bombed them. Two big cargo steamers were sunk and five or six others damaged. [A bulletin from General MacArthur's headquarters states: "We are chalking up one of the greatest triumphs against Jap shipping ever scored in the southwest Pacific."

ALEUTIANS

In the Aleutians, a thousand bombs hit Kiska during February. The Navy today reports on Aleutian air activity during last month, and states that nine bombing attacks were made against the Japs on Kiska Island. Eight enemy planes were shot down and not one of our aircraft lost.

BURMA

In Burma, a big non-stop air offensive is on -- Allied planes raising havoc with the Japs. In Europe, they use the term -- round-the-clock. And that same expression applies to the Allied offensive launched against Burma. It has been going on round the clock for forty-eight hours, the latest being a devastating assault against the big Jap base at Myitkyina.

One might surmise the great air activity to be a harbinger of a ground offensive, but this would be hardly confirmed by that old wiseacre -- the weather man. It doesn't take the seventh son of a seventh son to predict rain in Burma. The monsoon season is approaching, and already the first rains are falling. The Monsoon, with its unending deluge from the sky will be in full flood in a few weeks, and a dispatch from Calcutta today reminds us what that means -- swamp, morass, and the dripping jungle.

I have been out in those monsoon lands, spending many months in Burma, and have an uncomfortable appreciation of what the dispatch tells us. In the Arakan district of Burma, the section into which British forces have thrust, the average monsoon rain is thirty inches a month. The new military roads that have been constructed will be turned into rivers of black paste. The camps of troops will become shallow lakes in the jungle. No land transport is possible -- not even by mule. Even the mules will be bogged.

SUBMARINE

Here's one kind of program you've never heard. You, of course, have listened to jazz orchestras, and symphonies, skits and comics, political speeches and news. Some interesting, exciting, beguiling, entrancing; but none that ever approached the fascination and suspense of a program aboard the SEA WOLF.

That American submarine has put into base at New London, Connecticut, to be refitted -- after a series of monumental cruises in the Pacific. Eleven Jap ships sent to the bottom, including a cruiser, a destroyer and three troop transports.

Ordinarily, the crew of a submarine, attacking under water, doesn't know what is happening on the surface -- nobody except the captain at the periscope. But that ^{was} not the case with the SEA WOLF.

The skipper of the submarine is Commander Frederick Warder of Grafton, West Virginia. And when the SEA WOLF, under water, attacks ^{it} a hostile ship,

Skipper Warder at the periscope ^{would} gives a running account to his crew -- through the sub's loud speaker system. A broadcast to the crew! The way an announcer gives a blow by blow description of a prize fight.

This was revealed ~~today~~ by Electrician's Mate John J. Sherman of Westchester, New York, who told how the SEA WOLF sighted ~~two Jap cruisers~~ in the Pacific, and attacked ^{the Jap cruiser,} one of them. At the periscope Captain Warder gave his orders, and then told the boys what was happening. You can imagine the suspense of the crew, as they listened to that broadcast.

Electrician's Mate Sherman related it as follows: "The Captain told us what was going on. He said, 'Up periscope, down periscope, full speed ahead. A heavy cruiser is up ahead. She is about ten thousand tons. Distance about three thousand yards. I'm going to get this baby. Are you all set below? Ease the rudder two degrees left.'" "

And then the Skipper gave the torpedo order: "Fire one, Fire two. Fire three." He was silent for a moment as he peered through the periscope, and to the men within the iron shell it was a moment of nerve wracking suspense. Then the broadcast continued: "We have hit her. The Japs are manning their guns. They're firing in our direction, trying to hit our periscope. Now they're jumping over the side. The ship is starting to go down." There was another moment of silence and suspense, and then the broadcast voice cried out: "She is blowing up! Everybody is in the water!"

~~And there's a broadcast we'd all like to hear,
But I guess we never will -- unless we join up on the
SEA WOLF.~~

R.A.F.

The round-the-clock bombing of Germany continues -- with another series of R.A.F. air raids last night. For the eighth day in succession, Germany was hit by showers of high explosive from the air. Three R.A.F. bombers lost this time. London says it was a rather light raid -- light in comparison to the titantic blows that have hit Germany on previous nights. Its purpose; to keep the Nazis nervous, rather than cause any great military damage.

The latest is -- Nazi reprisal. It is about midnight in London, now, and the British capital has just had an air raid. Planes flew across the Channel to revenge the tremendous air blows that have hit the land of Hitler. A rather feeble revenge, however. Tonight the Germans came under cover of murky London skies, but made no attempt to keep in formation, and streaked in from different directions. Only a few got to London, where they were met by tremendous anti-aircraft fire. Whereupon they dropped their bombs

quickly and ran away. We have no detailed report of what damage they did, but apparently it was not a great deal.

TUNISIA

Tonight's news from Tunisia is pretty much the same as last night's, with the Americans pushing on toward the line they held before Rommel's offensive. The North Afrika Korps is withdrawing, and today the soldiers of the U.S.A. were sweeping without opposition across the central Tunisian plain -- heading toward Faid Pass.

Northward, where the British are, there is not much change. A Nazi assault made some progress, but a British counter-attack regained lost ground. British General Sir Harold R.L.G. Alexander describes the situation in these words: "in a state of suspended animosity."

RUSSIA

The big word from Russia tonight is that Slavonic name which begins with three impossible consonants - R-z- and h. The town of Rzhev, which probably isn't the classical Russian pronunciation. Anyway, that place was one of the greatest strongholds along the northern Russian front. The Germans fortified it with tremendous effort and skill, and apparently it was impregnable. That is, it was quite impregnable in the bitter blizzard war of last winter. The Nazi war machine recoiled from Moscow, but the on-rushing Red army never did succeed in capturing Rzhev.

They've got it now. The first word came today from Berlin with the Germans admitting that they had abandoned Rzhev. They said it was methodical evacuation. Later today, a Moscow communique announced the capture of the stronghold. Moscow says it was stormed in the face of violent resistance, with the Germans suffering heavy casualties.

SOCIALISTS

Today the Soviet Embassy in Washington disclosed the fate of two Socialist leaders about whom much inquiry has been made. Their names are Erlich and Alter, and both were Jewish leaders prominent in the Polish labor movement. They were in the part of Poland that the Russians took over at the time the Nazis and the Soviets divided the country. Thereafter their fate was a mystery. American labor leaders tried to find out about them, but without results. They say the State Department in Washington tried to intervene in the case of Erlich and Alter and offered to supply visas that would enable them to come to this country.

Today, at last, the fate of the two Jewish labor leaders is disclosed. The word is given in a letter from the Soviet Embassy in Washington, a letter written by Russian Ambassador Maxim Litvinov to William Green, President of the American Federation of Labor. Green had recently sent a cable to Soviet Foreign Commissar Molotov, asking about Erlich and

Alter. Now the news:-

They have been executed. Litvinov states that they were shot after a trial before the supreme tribunal of the Soviets. He states that the two were arrested and sentenced to death in August, Nineteen Forty-One. They were Socialists hostile to the Communist regime. Later they were released at the request of the exiled Polish government. Litvinov charges, that after being set free, Erlich and Alter resumed their hostile attitude toward the Soviet government, and appealed to Red Army troops to stop fighting and make peace with Nazi Germany. They were again tried, and this time they were executed.

The revelation draws a bitter protest from the American representatives of the Jewish Workers Union of Poland. They describe Erlich and Alter in these words: "the inspiration of the Jewish underground movement in Poland." They denounce the charges that the Litvinov letter makes against Erlich and Alter,

and say: "The Jewish people will never forget this
bloody crime."

ABSENTEEISM

In Washington today, Navy Secretary Knox testified before a Congressional Committee on the subject of absenteeism from war plants. He stated that the chief reason why armament workers take time off is because of hilarious weekends. They celebrate, and then hangovers keep them from reporting on the job at the usual time.

Another cause for absenteeism is transportation difficulties -- hard to get to the plant. Secretary Knox stated that this is not a valid excuse for staying away. "It is just as much up to them to get there and do the job," said he, "as it is for the man who has to carry a gun and slog miles through the mud and rain of the jungles."

What to do about it? The Secretary of the Navy warned against the proposal that is now up before Congress -- the proposal to draft war workers who stay away from the job without good and sufficient reason. He said that this, obviously, would apply only to such

employees as are subject to selective service, while much of the absenteeism is to be charged to men whom the draft would not take anyway.

What's the remedy, then? Secretary Knox proposed pay deductions -- and more than merely docking absentee workers for the time they take out. His idea is that employees who stay away from the job without good cause should be deprived of some of the money they have earned while working.

FOURTH TERM

As President Roosevelt completes ten years in office, the question of a fourth term pops into the news again. Today a delegation of the Democratic National Committee called on the President at the White House and a couple of them asked, "How about a fourth term?"

This was stated by Postmaster General Frank Walker, who is Chairman of the Democratic National Committee. He was at the conference, and upon emerging he stated: "Some of the men said that if the war was on the President should be a candidate in Nineteen Forty-Four." He added that it is the consensus of opinion of the Democratic National Committee that the war will not be over by Nineteen Forty-Four, so the implication is obvious. That implication was mentioned to the President today. What response did he make?"

"He smiled it off," said the Postmaster General.

ASTROLOGER

Here's another of those ways to lick Hitler. A lot of people have their own pet schemes for smashing the Nazi Fuehrer, but not all of us can dope out the right system by studying the stars. Madame Cassandra can -- because she is an astrologer. We are told that Madame Cassandra has interpreted the horoscopes of the great and near great all over the world, and now she has studied the signs of the Zodiac and gives us an astrological formula for victory. Here it is:- "Marry Hitler to the wrong woman. Confine the war to his own home!"

Most people would say, "hang him." But, some husbands would remark that marriage can be even worse.

One question is, what kind of lady would you pick for Hitler? Don't speak up all at once, fellows; and name your choice. It's got to be done by astrology.

Madame Cassandra tells us that Hitler was

born on April Twentieth, and anybody with that kind of horoscope is hard to control. Well, we all know that. Madame Cassandra recommends that we should have Hitler marry what she calls -- "an August woman." She claims that ladies born under the astrological signs of August are most formidable. "August women dominate their mates," says she. Hugh, remind me to look up my wife's birthday.

So now we have the woman picked for winning the war -- but how can you make Hitler marry her? To drag Der Fuehrer to the altar might be one tough job. How many armored divisions would it take?

After telling us about an August woman, Madame Cassandra goes on to the subject of August men. She states that they're the right kind for chorus girls. Why? Why do chorus girls want men born in August? Because they are under the astrological sign of the lion, explains Madame Cassandra. No, not wolf, lion. And the star gazing lady elucidates as follows:-

"The lion always sheds its fur," says she, "and the girls figure that this means a mink coat for them."

Could this be astrological kidding?