

P.T. - Sunoco. Friday, May 1, 1942.

AXIS

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The latest Hitler-Mussolini meeting was held in the deepest of secrecy at Salzburg, in Austria.

Yesterday, while we were getting rumors that the two Dictators would ^{soon} meet - they were already together in conference. Most of the Fuehrer-Duce pow-wows hitherto were followed by world shaking events, but this time the Nazi-Fascist get-together does not have such an awe-inspiring aspect - after the non-success that Hitler has had in Russia and the trouble ~~with~~ that Mussolini is supposed to be having at home.

We do not know what transpired between the two. Official German and Italian announcements are merely repetitious with the usual platitudes - "brothers in arms", and that sort of thing. One fact to be noted is that Japan, Number Three member of the Axis, was not represented at the meeting - this in

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spite of the fact that the Japanese Ambassador to Germany was at Munich, not far away. ^{Which} ~~this~~ may or may not have significance as indicating that the two European Axis partners are not taking their Far Eastern pal into their private councils.

There is no doubt that Hitler and Mussolini talked plenty about the forthcoming German offensive against the Soviets. And we have some confidential word from Europe which mentions the name of - Rommel. The United Press, quoting private advices, says that Marshal Rommel is to be shifted from Libya to south Russia. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ He, of course, is the expert on mechanized warfare who has made a formidable reputation in the battles of north Africa. They say the shifting of Rommel to the Ukraine would mean that the Nazi panzers in Libya will not try any offensive, will stay

where they are - with Rommel commanding a drive against the Russian Caucasus, the oil region. This, they declare, will be made with masses of tanks in such numbers as have never been seen before.

With all this emphasis of rumor on the southern ^{Russian} front, we have news of heavy fighting in the north.

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A Stockholm dispatch states that the Red Army is ~~said~~ ~~to be~~ attacking all along the far northern front from Murmansk in the Arctic down to the Gulf of Finland. They are ~~assaulting the Finns and Germans with~~ incessant attacks.

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From the center of that enormously long battleline, we hear of floods - vividly suggestive of the spring thaw in Russia. A Soviet bulletin states that Red Army tanks, artillery and bombing planes are smashing the Germans hard on a flooded battlefield.

The ground is still frozen in the Arctic north

of the line; ~~xxx it is~~ thawing and flooded in the center; and is growing dry and firm in the south.

That is the situation, so far as terrain is concerned - as we hear more and more insistently that the Nazi spring offensive will be hurled at southern Russia and the Caucasus.

Russia's May Day, without a celebration, was marked by a powerful proclamation that Stalin issued, *saying* ~~He said that~~ the Soviets seek no conquest, *that* all they intend to do is drive the invader out. And Stalin called on the Soviet people to muster every ounce of strength to do this.

MAY DAY

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May Day in France resulted in clashes between
~~the~~ French civilians and German troops. One riot
occurred at the city of Rouen, in Normandy. ^{there} The French
staged a May Day demonstration, and some were killed
in fighting with the Nazis.

R.A.F.

When darkness fell upon England today, a great air fleet swept across the English Channel -- just about the biggest the R.A.F. has ever sent to bomb the Nazis. So right now the burst of bombs must be devastating many a strategic point controlled by the Germans.) Tonight's huge attack followed fighter and bomber sweeps during the day -- British air forces carrying out daylight raids. And we hear that they are meeting with little resistance from Hitler's air force. Facing anti-aircraft fire mostly -- great concentrations of shells flowing upward at the sky raiders.

Last night, Nazi air units raided England again. They did some bombing and were given a hot time by the night fighters of the R.A.F. The Germans lost eleven out of a fleet of less than fifty bombers -- and in the case of one bomber shot down there was a singular bit of sky battle melodrama.

Night fighting is the weirdest phase of the war of

THE AIR. Fantastic enough at any time -- but consider what happened to one R.A.F. pilot. His name is Max Aiken, and he is the eldest son of Lord Beaverbrook -- the great British press lord who until recently was a member of the cabinet of the Churchill Government and now is on an economic mission to the United States. I remember Max Aiken, met him at his father's country place outside of London. That was the time, five years ago, when I was in England covering the coronation. I had a talk with Max Aiken at the Beaverbrook dinner table, and found him a quiet young flying man, full of enthusiasm for adventure in the air -- though he spoke neither much nor loudly was modest and reserved.

The other day here in New York, I was talking to Lord Beaverbrook about the war and I asked him about ~~xxx~~ ^{his} eldest son, and he responded with parental pride that he could not quite repress. Young Max, he said, was coming along splendidly as a pilot in the

R.A.F. He had the instinct for war, the zest of air battle, the hunting instinct. By nature a warrior, said Beaverbrook.

So here is the story of what happened to R.A.F. Pilot Max Aiken, last night.

He was the leader of a squadron of night fighters that swung up into the black to attack Nazi bombers. And he shot one down. As he blasted the bomber with the full fire power of his guns, the incredible thing happened -- up there in the dark sky, where the planes in battle were seen only as shadows.

"My guns blew off his starboard wing," said Max Aiken today, "and the wreckage came back and struck my fighter."

So there's the fantastic freak of air battle. The shot-off wing of a bomber flying back and smashing into the fighting plane that was doing the shooting.

The impact of the wing damaged the fighter.

Max Aiken says he thought at first that his port engine

had been smashed up, but on landing he found that the flying wreckage had merely hit his propeller.

"I wish I had known that at the time", he said today.

"Because, as I was returning, I saw another hun.

We nearly collided. I could have caught him," he

added, "but not knowing what damage had been done to

my port engine -- I let him go."

MUTINY

From Cairo comes the story of a British troopship loaded with German prisoners - Nazis who had been captured in the battles of Libya and were on their way to prison camps in South Africa. Some of them were high officers, one a General von Ràvenstein.

The Germans did a lot of singing, sentimental ballads and old songs - in that familiar beer hall way. The British sentries on duty listened, and paid not much attention - Germans are always singing, you know.

One evening, the tuneful strains of a ballad echoed from the quarters of the prisoners. It might have been about home and mother, or about Lena or Gretchen. That is what the British sentries thought - all but one. This English soldier happened to understand German, and as the words of the song came floating he cocked an ear in amazement. Instead of being about home and mother, or

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Lena or Gretchen, the soulful ballad was about gathering at certain places on the ship, about what to do, about a plan to be carried out. And one bit of melody named the time, the hour - that night.

The astounded sentry caught the idea - mutiny. The song was a ~~xxx~~ device for getting instructions to the prisoners in a plan to seize the ship - overpowering the crew.

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The sentry jumped across the deck to report to his commanding officer, and swiftly a search was made, and It was disclosed that the prisoners, commanded by General von Ràvenstein, were all set to stage a spectacular mutiny - and sail away with the British troopship as a German sea raider.

BURMA

Tonight's news from Burma continues the ominous progress of events in that oriental country. The Chinese report two things. First - the Japs have struck northward from the captured City of Lashio. They are driving up the Burma Road, ^{and} ~~They~~ are now within fifty miles of the Chinese frontier; ^{which} ~~and that~~ means they have advanced thirty-two miles north from Lashio.

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Secondly - Mandalay. The Japs have reached the southern outskirts of that city of song and romance. This enemy column advanced from the south, and the Chinese report them fighting their way into Mandalay.

Beyond these two facts, there is not much that is clear, and in the confusion little is revealed about the positions of the Chinese and British defenders - how perilous their situation may be. ^R However, the Chinese dispatches continually use that ill-omened word -

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"encirclement." Ill-omened -- when the enemy does the encircling. So the appearance is, as on previous days, that large forces of defenders are ^{in grave danger of} being trapped.

ff At the same time, they are striking back vigorously - inflicting severe checks on Japanese infiltration parties, those thrusts of encirclement. The counterblows, while brave and successful, are local, apparently.

And, with the Japs at Mandalay on the south, and nearing the border of China on the north - the loss of Burma to the United ~~xx~~ Nations appears more probable than ever.

TAXES

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The Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives today settled ^{two} ~~the~~ major issues concerning corporation taxes - that section of the war revenue program which concerns business firms. There was Committee action on two points - excessive profits and surtax. ^P The Committee voted a flat surtax rate of ninety-four per cent. This ^{was} ~~is~~ at variance with recommendations made by the Treasury and also by the Committee's own staff of experts. Both the Treasury and experts suggested ^{taking} ~~making~~ ninety per cent of the excessive profits of corporations, but the Committee boosted the figure by four points - to ninety-four per cent.

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The Ways and Means Committee differed with the Administration also on the subject of surtax.

The Treasury recommended - thirty-one per cent. The Committee today cut the figure almost to half, voting for a surtax of sixteen per cent.

DONATIONS

How would you like to hire a vigorous and sturdy gentleman with chin whiskers and Red, White and Blue suspenders? In other words, how would you like to have Uncle Sam on your payroll? Do you think that can't be done? Does it sound like something of a sacrilege -- the idea of hiring Uncle Sam? Not at all. We get the idea from President Roosevelt.

Today at the White House Press Conference, the President told of people who contributed gifts of money to the government for the production of armament for our soldiers.

One of these is a merchant who runs a dry-goods store in New Jersey. Ever since Pearl Harbor, he has been contributing to the nation's war cost -- giving one per cent of his gross sales. He wrote to the Treasury saying - "Uncle Sam is on our payroll for the duration."

PARACHUTISTS

In North Carolina today they were hunting for mysterious parachutists. ^{A day} ~~An~~ attachment of fifty soldiers and a posse of a hundred citizens hunted for hours through the woods and swamp lands near the town of Bayboro. ^R Have enemy parachutists come floating down out of the sky onto our soil? It seems fantastic - and there is nothing very certain about the North Carolina ~~parachute~~ scare. The only evidence is ^a ~~the~~ story of two boys who told local police officers they had seen three men float down by the parachute route and land. At last reports the small army of searchers had found nothing.

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WOMEN

The plans to register women for war work are off -- at least for the present. This was announced today by President Roosevelt -- on a recommendation made by Man Power Commissioner McNutt. There is no present need for a nation-wide mobilization of women for war work. That is the report made by the Man Power Commissioner. The President explained that right now the number of women who want jobs is greater than the number of jobs available for them. And until this condition changes, there is no need to register women.

DRAFTEE

Today a cousin of Sergeant York got into the army - at last. He's a Tennessee mountaineer who says he is a third cousin of America's Number One hero of the previous war. He is described as a whale of a shot with a rifle - and that ~~is~~ ^{is in the} also a tradition of Sergeant York.

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Yet this sharpshooting Tennessee mountaineer was on record as - a draft dodger. He failed to show up when called, and was arrested a couple of times. But that is all over now. After an investigation of the case of the third cousin of Sergeant York, the Army has decided that he is no draft dodger at all. Why then did he fail to show up when summoned for service? The official verdict gives this explanation - illiteracy. The mountaineer can't read or write. The selective service notices were just Chinese laundry tickets to him. - He is better with a rifle.

ZOO

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It is now time for me to be on my way - and start ~~home of Blue Sunoco,~~ training for Sunday - in Philadelphia. Apparently I will have to be in shape for ^{Sunday's} a spring celebration that I am going to attend at the Philadelphia ^{Zoo.} Zoo. They have got me slated for some difficult competition. Because here is what they say in a pamphlet announcing the event:-

"Sunday, May Third, is May Day at the Zoo - with

Lowell Thomas, performing elephants and Chimpanzees."

So, maybe I ought to ^{hurry up and learn to} trumpet like an elephant and ^{swing} sing

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from a tree like a chimpanzee. — at Philadelphia, home of Blue Sunoco. So Hugh, see you; at the Zoo.