

L.T. Amoco. - Friday, Aug. 7, 1942.

Edwin

RUSSIA

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The battle in Russia appears to have reached perhaps its most critical point -- though not because of any great German advances reported today. The Nazi war machine did push on in the two main directions of its double drive. Moscow tells of enemy gains in the direction of Stalingrad -- east of the Great bend of the River Don. And, in their push south of the Don, the Germans are still moving on.

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The key to the whole war picture may very well be the matter of -- reserves, Red Army reserves. For days we have been hearing about masses of new troops and armament that the Soviets might be ready to hurl back into the battle. -- Final Red Army reserves to check the rush of the Panzers. Today the news brought insistent intimations of this.

Moscow spoke of counter-attacks, Soviet assaults against advancing columns. These counter-attacks in some places annihilated as much as forty percent of waves of German troops. They repelled the Nazi armored forces at a dozen or more points. This kind of action may well suggest that Soviet reserves are coming into the battle -- and from the German side we have still clearer indications.

Tonight's Berlin bulletin states "German troops are engaged in a struggle with newly arrived enemy forces." The Nazi controlled Paris radio states that on the Stalingrad Front the Red Army is counteracting with what it calls -- "Extreme violence."

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It speaks of "Masses of infantry and tanks." And that would certainly suggest reinforcements -- reserves.

Moreover, the Soviets are attacking to the north -- far to the north -- in front of Moscow. The Russians tell nothing of this -- the word is from Berlin. The Germans enumerate five Red Army assaults in the sector northwest of Moscow, and claim that they were repelled.

London, meanwhile, talks of a gathering of United Nations leaders and diplomats in Moscow. It has been rumored for days that British Prime Minister Churchill was in Moscow. These reports came from enemy sources, but now we have some London confirmation of exceedingly important Moscow conferences. The story is printed in Lord Beaverbrook's newspaper the Evening Standard, and pictures a get together to formulate plans to save Russia.

We are told that the American Ambassador to Turkey, Laurence Steinhardt, has gone to the Soviet Capital, -- also other American and British officials.

INDIA

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The Indian Nationalist Congress adjourned today without taking a vote on the subject of passive resistance. That desperately dangerous issue goes over until tomorrow. It is ~~believed~~ believed certain that the delegates will ~~not~~ vote to affirm the resolution to start non-violent non-cooperation -- unless Great Britain grants the independence of India right away. Today's session of the Congress dealt first with preliminary matters, the all important resolution to come later -- that action which threatens to throw India into rebellion and turmoil with the Japanese enemy at the gates.

INDIA

The drama of India is being played out amid scenes suggestive of a carnival or circus -- carnival Oriental style. In a public square out in ~~xxxxxx~~, far off teeming, steamy Bombay, a great tent has been pitched -- in size recalling the big top of the circus. Beneath the tent the delegates of the India National Congress are gathered -- also spectators. Admissions charged to get in. A swarming crowd -- in garments of white cotton, most of them dressed like Gandhi -- simple white sheet, and dinky white cap.

In the large square around the tent are throngs of lookers-on -- with street vendors playing their trade -- beggars, holy men, ash-smearred mendicants, magicians, snake charmers. And the strange sight of the hooded cobra swaying to the music of a pipe. Also with a few holy cows strolling by. Anyone who has been to India can visualize the scene. I myself, have seen spectacle like it time and again -- traveling up and down romantic Hindustan.

There are murmurs of excitement as the big-time nationalist leaders arrive, Pandit Ja-wah-har-lal Nehru, and President of the Congress, Maulana Abdul Kaban Azad. But the stir is the greatest with the appearance of that familiar figure, which we have so often described as -- the little brown man in the loincloth, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the Mahatma, whom ~~xxxx~~ tens of millions of Hindus revere as

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a saint. Gandhi the dominant figure -- as the Nationalist Congress begins the business of the day. And, the principal business of the day is the resolution committing Nationalist India to a campaign of non-violent ~~exit~~ resistance -- unless the British grant the independence of India right away.

In the big tent Gandhi sits in his loin cloth, naked to the waist, his bare legs curled under him in Indian fashion. Then comes the big moment -- Gandhi's address to the Nationalist Congress. Some of the things he said will sound very strange, as I repeat them.

For the mystic mind of India is ^a kind of _^ nebulous thing for us of the west.

Gandhi, the implacable leader of threatened revolt against the British, today proclaimed himself to be Britain's friend, and told how he was helping the British. "I am Britain's friend," he said, and added: "I tried at the start of the struggle to get them out of difficulty and danger."

He paid tribute to those long-time rulers of India.

"The British have the will to win. They are a brave people."

he cried. "Their boys will shed their lives for their freedom."

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Then the Mahatma went on to repeat his familiar argument -- ~~that~~ that India wants independence, so that it can best serve the cause of the United Nations. He propounded an offer -- that free India would immediately line up as one of ~~the~~ the United Nations, would make a treaty allying itself in the war against Japan. ^{FF} To that he added a bit of sentimental phraseology: "Maybe within a week English hearts will melt and our freedom will be recognized," said he.

One bit of Gandhi eloquence will gain a sort of approval in some quarters. "I am ~~not~~ not a visionary," he declared, "But a trader." And that accords with a good deal of suspicion that the mystical Mahatma has plenty of the shrewd politician, the opportunist, about him.

Gandhi took a vigorous fling at the Moslem League and its leader, Mohammed Ali Jinnah. He argued that the India Nationalist Congress represents all India -- including Moslems.

This is strenuously denied by Mohammed Ali Jinnah and the Moslem League, who are threatening to take drastic measures against any attempt to establish the Hindus in power. In other words, that old feud between the Mohammedan and the Hindu in India.

The first headline act of the session today was an appeal -- to the United States, China, and Soviet Russia. The Nationalist Congress voted to send a message to President Roosevelt, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, and the Soviet Ambassador to London -- asking them to intervene with the British government in behalf of the independence of India. The immediate word from Washington is that not much is likely to be done about the plea from Gandhi and his faction.

The British Indian government meanwhile is taking firm measures to meet the threat of the civil disobedience campaign -- that non-violent resistance which can so easily turn to violence.

Today the authorities at New Delhi issued

an edict to forestall one of the most important parts of the non-cooperation business. This the Hindus call Hartal. And it means a closing of shops, a tying up of all business. The New Delhi decree is directed against this, and forbids the closing of any shops that deal in the necessities of life. Restaurants and stores dealing in grain, ~~xx~~ flour, vegetables and other foodstuffs are required to keep open and continue to do business, hartal or no hartal. If shopkeepers try to close their places in obedience to an order by the India Nationalist Congress, they will be arrested -- subject to fine or imprisonment or both. And the local authorities are empowered to seize and operate shops. Anyone who refuses to cooperate in the opening of shops is liable to fine and imprisonment -- employees as well as the owners.

AUSTRALIA

From General MacArthur's headquarters in Australia we have today an estimate of the latest Jap seizure of islands, the enemy ^{having} ~~has~~ occupied three more in the ^{Sea of} Arafura, ~~Sea~~, the principal island being Tanimbar.

A spokesman for General Mac Arthur points out that the newly captured islands are only two hundred and twenty miles from Australia. The Arafura Sea is just west of New Guinea -- between that great dark island and the isle of Timor, which is in Japanese control. ^{TP} ⁵⁰ ~~and~~ the enemy has now completed the capture of the string of islands that flank northern Australia. These islands would be a route for a United Nations counter-offensive -- but, now the Japs have ~~got~~ them all. Moreover, by the latest capture of islands they have increased the number of points from which they might attack Australia. ^{TP} This is the estimate given by the spokesman for General MacArthur, and it is soberly realistic.

SABOTEURS

President Roosevelt today put an end to some sensational rumors -- these in connection with the eight saboteurs. One was that the President would announce the fate of the Nazi agents today -- would reveal it at his regular news conference. The other rumor gave this startling word -- that six of the eight Nazi agents would be electrocuted in Washington within twenty-four hours.

All of which put a focus of dramatic interest on today's White House news conference. The suspense, however, was quickly broken. The President did not make any revelation about the saboteurs. ~~But~~ Instead, he said he had not yet finished reading the testimony of the trial, and couldn't say how much longer it would take him.

CARGO PLANES

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The War Production ~~EXX~~ Board today announced ~~the~~ approval of a plan to build a great fleet of cargo-carrying planes. And this okay applies specifically to the proposal advanced by Henry J. Kaiser, the shipbuilder of the West Coast. He wants to build aircraft in shipyards, mass production of huge planes.

War Production chief Donald Nelson stated today that Kaiser has been authorized to construct five hundred -- and big ones. They are to be seventy-ton flying boats patterned after the Martin cargo plane built for the Navy -- the monster called "Mars." The plan is for Kaiser shipyards to start by building a hundred. If that turns out to be successful, they will continue with four hundred more -- five hundred in all.

There is, however, one proviso. This cargo plane program will go through -- only if it can be accomplished without interfering with ^{our} schedule for the construction of combat planes, aircraft actually used in battle. Shipbuilder Kaiser will tell the War Production Board the amount of materials he will need. If these materials can be spared without impeding the production of combat planes -- okay.

CARGO PLANES - 2

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Henry J. Kaiser himself is certain the thing will go through. He described today's WPB approval in these words: "The beginning of a great cargo plane program." His idea is that we can beat the Nazi submarine menace by transporting war supplies across the ocean through the air.

STATUES

President Roosevelt today issued a recommendation that may change the appearance of a lot of places in this country -- change for the good, most likely. He said he thought a whole lot of communities should pull down a whole lot of public monuments -- statues and so on.

This has to do with our wartime shortage of metals of various kinds -- to alleviate which we are having a campaign to collect scrap metals.

President Roosevelt made mention of the cannon seen so often in public squares. Sometimes the artillery is of World War vintage -- sometimes Civil War with maybe a stack of cannon balls.



STATUES

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And, President Roosevelt today went on into the realm of art -- historical art. He spoke of the tall statues seen in various towns and cities. These range from World War doughboys to Civil War generals on rearing charges^π. And, of course, there's the massive bronze effigy of the statesman of the nineties in a frock coat and a majestic pose, his right hand in his coat lapel. -- a la Daniel Webster.

The President suggested that a lot of ^{any} ~~this~~ impressive historical art ought to be torn down and turned into scrap ~~metal~~ metal. He added that after the war it could be replaced by something a little more artistic.

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Apparently he doesn't think much of the aesthetic beauty of some of those works of sculpture -- and I don't blame him. In fact, I'd like to make a suggestion. The President might begin in Washington, where there is no end of sculptured effigies of forgotten statesmen. For that matter, the President might take a look around in the White House -- and find a thing or two.

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And now Hugh, will you assume a statuesque, Daniel Webster pose in front of this here Mike?