

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

I am in Philadelphia again tonight. I say again because I so often come here to visit my radio sponsors of the Sun Oil Company. But this time it is to take part in a great banquet in honor of a former member of my notorious ball team, the Nine Old Men.

Robert L. Johnson, distinguished New York publisher, has just accepted the Presidency of Temple University. Around me at this dinner are nearly a thousand representatives of nearly all walks of life, who are here to pay tribute to Bob Johnson.

As I came in a few minutes ago nearly everyone I stopped to talk to asked me the same question:- "What is the latest news from Russia?" So, I'll answer that question first.

It may very well be that the Nazi-Soviet war has already been decided -- the mighty Red Army a wreck. At any rate a picture of catastrophe is presented by the news. It may or may not be a true picture, so, let's examine the dispatches and size up the situation as well as we can.

It is vividly apparent that the present onset of the blitz was designed as a supreme and overwhelming attempt to land a knockout -- shatter the Red army once and for all. Today Berlin revealed a general order issued by Hitler to the German army on the day when the offensive was launched -- last Thursday. To his soldiers the Nazi Fuehrer made the following statement:

"Today is the beginning of the last great decisive battle of this year." This was formal notice that the attempt was indeed to be -- all out. As a side inference, Hitler's use of the word "last" is being noted. What's the meaning of that? "The last great decisive battle of this year?" A rational implication would seem to be that there would be no major stroke against the British until next year? Perhaps.

The Nazis claim that their enormous blitzkrieg drive has

has broken the central Soviet army into bits. They say that in the area in front of Moscow, two vast encirclements have been accomplished -- one west of the Soviet capital. The other - southwest of Moscow. At each of these two focal points an immense Soviet army is in a trap, and is being destroyed -- says Berlin. The claim is that the two encirclements have encompassed a million men. Moreover, the Nazi forces stand at Orel, that strategic place south of Moscow, halfway along the railroad to Kharkov, nerve center of the Donets coal and industrial area. From Orel the blitzkrieg forces are in a position to cut around to the east of Moscow -- the back door.

Berlin does not predict that Moscow will be captured speedily. German military spokesmen insist that their objective is not to capture cities but to destroy armies. Anyway, if they have the vast encirclements they claim, it would take some days at least to clear out the Red troops in the trap. They might have to do that, before going on to Moscow.

They say that Budenny in the south has been completely broken -- with panzer units chasing after remnants as they move deep

into the great industrial region of the Donets. Here's the latest:-
the Germans claiming that they are within artillery fire of the
terminus of the pipe line of oil from the Caucasus.

This is the picture that Berlin gives in the most jubilant
tones and with fanfares of trumpets. London echoes with a gloomy
tone. Calling this the greatest threat to the Allied cause since
Dunkirk. And saying that Timoshenko must try to withdraw his troops,
even if he has to abandon Moscow.

London pessimism is all the darker because of the factor
of British and American aid to the Soviets. They say that this
aid cannot arrive in time to affect the decision of the battle.

Here's the latest, a United Press dispatch from London which
begins like this:- "British Parliament leans to the belief that
Russian setbacks have indirectly shorn Prime Minister Churchill's
government of its invulnerability and may bring about an eventual
cabinet shakeup." So says the dispatch from the British capital,
and it goes on with an account of discontent among politicians and
people -- discontent because of the belief that Great Britain has
fallen short of giving maximum aid to the Soviets. They should have

given more.

The London United Press correspondent reports that he interviewed members of Parliament, from conservatives to socialists today, and gathered this general opinion -- if the Red Army does not get out of its present trouble quickly, Prime Minister Churchill may be called to account.

What has Moscow to say? The Soviets report victory. Yesterday was one of those rare occasions -- the Red war communique admitting a grave set-back. Moscow announced that the Nazis had captured the vital city of Orel. But today the Red army once more announced success -- Nazi attacks beaten back. Especially at Vyasma, where repeated panzer assaults were hurled back in disorder. Moscow tells of German casualties on a huge scale -- those "enormous losses" so familiar in war news. And the Red air force claims that it has control of the sky.

However, the Soviet successes are accompanied by a grim tone in the Red newspapers. Today the Moscow press called upon the people to awaken to their peril: -- "Realize the full significance of the danger" were words used. And Stalin's newspapers hammered on the theme that this is an hour of "life or death."

PANAMA

Today's revolution and change of Government in the Republic of Panama was a highly dramatic affair, especially as it coincided with President Roosevelt's message to our Congress asking for a change in the neutrality law to permit the arming of American ships. The Panamanian coup d'etat resulted in the overthrow of President Arias, who only a few days ago made headlines by forbidding the arming of American owned ships flying the Panamanian flag.

We are now told that the deposed President was a pro-Nazi. That comes with some surprise, to hear of a Latin-American neighbor being a Hitler enthusiast. And in what a neighborhood -- the Republic of Panama, right in the middle of which is the all-important Panama Canal.

The coup d'etat was not an orgy of violence. The first public indication was last night -- in the form of an action by the American military authorities in the Canal Zone. Orders were issued for all soldiers to stay inside the limits of the Zone, Panamanian territory -- out of bounds. Indicating that something was happening. Then today we had the news of the overthrow. It happened quietly. The leaders of the revolt merely proclaimed that President Arias was not the

President any more, and proceeded to name his successor. A number of arrests were made, supporters of Arias being calpped in jail. The ousted president, meanwhile, had ousted himself in advance; he had flown to Havana.

Involved in the coup d'etate were high officials in the government of President Arias. Leader Number One was his Minister of Justice. His name -- DeLaGuardia, who took decisive action first by removing the inspector -- general of police.

Vice-President Number Two is now elevated to the top rank. His name is Guardia. Number one vanished also. Some Guardia or La Guardia in the past must have been rather busy around this hemisphere. In any case, Panama tonight is not ruled by President Guardia. The word from down Canal Zone way is that he stayed in office only a few hours, and then resigned. And the new president is -- De la Guardia, the Minister of Justice.

NEUTRALITY

President Roosevelt asked Congress today to repeal the section of the Neutrality Law that forbids the arming of American merchant vessels -- he wants that done immediately. At the same time, in his message to Congress, the President recommended a second change in the Neutrality Law:- abolish the clause that keeps American commercial craft from going into the European war zones. Let U.S. freighters deliver lend-lease armament to Britain. But he does not ask that right away -- he recommends it for future action.

How much good will the guns do? The President admitted that arming would not guarantee the safety of ships, but he said it would add to their safety. He explained that with guns aboard, a merchant ship could prevent a submarine from shooting its torpedoes while lying on the surface. It would have to fire them submerged -- the aim not so good, more chance of a torpedo missing. Then, as for surface raiders, a ship with guns would have a chance to keep the raider at a distance until help came. In attack from the air, the vessel might shoot down a bomber or keep it so high that it couldn't aim accurately.

So now we have the formal White House request for a change in the neutrality act.

BAGHDAD - STAUDT

There are many distinguished educators here at this great banquet in honor of Robert L. Johnson, the new President of Temple University. Among them Dr. Thomas Gates, President of the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. William Mather Lewis, President of Lafayette, and many more. Yes, and here is one educator, from an American institution more than ten thousand miles away, in a city with perhaps the most romantic name of any city on earth -- Baghdad, the City of the Arabian Nights.

This American educator is Dr. Calvin K. Staudt, also from Pennsylvania. For seventeen years he has been the head of an educational institution in Baghdad -- the American School, which has trained many of the men who are now the leaders in Iraq, Persia and Arabia. The head of the largest Arabian tribe in the land of the Tigrus and Euphrates, the paramount Sheik of the Shumar, is one of his boys.

Dr. Staudt and his wife recently went through the revolt in Iraq, and were in Baghdad during a great massacre, in which three of Dr. Staudt's students were killed. During the revolt all other schools Mohammedan, Jewish and all the others, were obliged to close down,

all except the American School, under Dr. Staudt who is here from Baghdad, at this banquet in honor of the new President of Temple. He tells me that a massacre of Jews took place in Baghdad, the story of which never reached the outside world. The press didn't get a line about it. After a short speaking tour, telling his thrilling story, Dr. Staudt will be off to Baghdad again, by plane or magic carpet, to train the youth of the land that was once the Garden of Eden; and the youth of the land of the Arabian Nights, to teach them something about our American ideas of democracy and life in general.

MOVIES

The trial of two motion picture union leaders in New York developed sensational testimony today. The men facing the Court are William Bioff, West Coast leader of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees -- and George Browne, president of the I.A.T.S.E. The witness against them was Nicholas Schenck, the ace motion picture executive who is president of Loew's, Incorporated. Nick Schenck testified that Bioff and Browne got fifty thousand dollars a year from each of four big film companies -- two hundred thousand dollars a year in all. They exacted money under the threat of calling strikes -- in Hollywood. So stated the witness.

Schenck told a dramatic story. He said that in Nineteen Thirty-Five, the union staged a series of motion picture strikes -- for the purpose of showing the film companies ~~how~~ how powerful they were. And the next year, West Coast representative Bioff, came to him -- saying he was the boss, although Browne was the president of the union. Schenck today quoted Bioff as saying, "Now look -- I want to get this over with as quickly as possible, I want you to know that I am boss, and that I elected Browne president for one purpose. I want to get two million dollars out of the motion picture

industry."

Today Schenck attributes that statement to Bioff, and added that he ridiculed the demand for two million. He told Bioff -- "You're crazy."

To which the labor leader responded, "We showed you what we could do. You'll have to come through with it."

Schenck testified that he rejected the demand and later Bioff approached him again. He had union president Browne with him this time, testified the witness.

"Now look," said Bioff. "I thought it over, and maybe I asked too much. So I'll take a million." That's how Schenck quoted Bioff today. He testified that he still turned down the ~~summit~~ demand for only a million.

Still later, the West Coast leader of the movie union returned once again. His request, according to Schenck was really modest this time. "I want fifty thousand dollars a year from each of the big companies and twenty-five thousand each from the smaller ones." Schenck quoted Bioff as saying. "Now look," he is said to have added, "I don't want to waste anymore time. I want cash."

Today Schenck testified that he told Bioff, "absolutely no."

But the movie magnate changed his mind. He and other film executives became convinced that they would have to pay. They couldn't face a strike. "It was going through my mind that our business would be destroyed," Nick Schenck testified at today's trial.

So the money was put up. Four major companies paid each fifty thousand dollars a year to the two union chieftains. The amount to date totalled five hundred and fifty thousand dollars. And that's the sum named in the indictment against them.

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY - BOB JOHNSON

As I mentioned a few minutes ago, I am at a banquet in honor of the new President of Temple University, Robert L. Johnson. All of Bob's friends, of which number I am one, feel sure that he will make a great success as he head of this vast institution of learning founded fifty-seven years ago by Russell Conwell, founded with funds from that brilliant lecture "Acres of Diamonds". Temple has nearly eleven thousand students, and is the type of institution where a boy or girl can get an education, if he has the will to get one, whether he comes from a well-to-do family or not.

The story of the founding of Temple University has always fascinated me. In those days Russell Conwell, whose successor, Dr. Dan Poling, is sitting beside me -- Russell Conwell was pastor of Baptist Temple here, One day seven poor boys came to him for advice as to how they could get an education. Dr. Conwell told them to come each evening and he personally would teach them. And out of that grew Temple University. Every cent from his famous lecture, Acres of Diamonds, which he delivered some six thousand times, went to educate some boy or girl, and to found Temple. It was a common thing for Russell Conwell to deliver a lecture, say out in Dakota,

give the check for his night's work to some local boy, and then, Dr. Conwell would have to wire his secretary in Philadelphia for enough money to get home. He died a poor man. But, he gave riches to tens of thousands of young Americans.

And now his place at Temple is taken by my friend Bob Johnson, to whom all of us at this banquet are paying tribute tonight.

(Applause)