

STRIKE

L.J. Sunoco. Tuesday, April 27, 1943.

Here is a late bulletin just off the wire, which tells us of a report that John L. Lewis has called a general strike of soft coal miners -- to begin at midnight on Friday. We have this from Vice-Chairman George W. Taylor of the War Labor Board, who told newspapermen he had been informed that there was such a plan for a strike by the United Mine Workers. Four hundred and fifty thousand coal miners will be involved - if the thing really should happen.

The Vice-Chairman stated that the War Labor Board will take up the report right away -- "first thing in the morning" , said he. He declined to comment on what the Board's action was likely to be, and whether the matter will be referred to President Roosevelt immediately.

The seriousness of the whole thing is only too apparent -- the report of the plan to call a general strike of the soft coal miners.

AIR RAIDS

In Washington today Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox analyzed the likelihood of air raids being launched against this country. He said there was a possibility of what he called -- "nuisance raids."

So far as the West coast is concerned, the Japs might send planes from the air base ^{have been} ~~they~~ constructing at Kiska in the Aleutians -- that much bombed Kiska which today's Navy communique pictures as smashed up again. From Kiska the Japs might launch raids at our Pacific coast, but the distance would make them small and of little importance, -- nuisance raids.

On ~~the~~ ~~this~~ ^{the} side of ~~this~~ continent, ~~our~~ ^{here} on ^{the} Atlantic coast, there is little danger that the Nazis might be able to strike at us.' They might try what the Secretary called -- "suicide raids." Meaning -- with planes that might be able to ~~get over here,~~ ^{cross} but could ^{it} ~~never~~ get back.

8 Summarizing the air raid possibilities, the secretary used the word -- remote, remote possibility.

BOMBING

The City of Duisburg, in Germany, is described as Europe's largest inland port. What kind of inland port? It's a harbor on a canal that links the immense industrial area of the Ruhr and the River Rhine, which is one of the world's great waterways. The Ruhr-Rhine Canal is vital to Nazi industrial transport, and that explains the importance of the inland harbor - Duisburg. ~~It is~~ ^Q Number One target for bombing, and, it was bombed tremendously last night.

Today's dispatch from London states that Duisburg was hit just about as hard as was Cologne in the famous thousand-plane raid. Fewer than a thousand planes this time, but an equal load of bombs. ~~was dropped.~~ Thirty tons a minute hit Duisburg, and the raid lasted for forty-five minutes - giving a total of thirteen hundred and fifty tons of bombs, ranging from four-ton blockbusters to two-pound incendiaries.

Conditions were ideal for the assault. The R.A.F. bombers flew nearly all the way, protected by clouds. ~~And then a few miles from the target,~~ the clouds cleared. The sky was open, and the pilots had no trouble in following the Rhine to the city - the great inland port on the Rhine-Ruhr Canal. The result of the thirty tons of high explosive per minute was catastrophic. One R.A.F. pilot describes Duisburg in these dramatic words: "A cauldron bubbling with angry molten metal which spurted up every now and then as more bombs exploded."

Another pilot tells of an explosion on the ground that sent up a giant red flare, and ~~the~~ ^a column of smoke ^{that} towered as high as ten thousand feet.

The anti-aircraft defense was powerful, shells and searchlights combing the sky. The London dispatch tells of bombers being caught in ~~combs of~~ ^{cones of}

light sent ~~up~~ by groups of from ten to fifty searchlights.

Yet only seventeen planes were lost, not so expensive

considering the magnitude of the raid.

POLES

This was a busy diplomatic day in London, and the cause of all the industrious activity was the ~~break~~^{trouble} between Soviet Russia and the exiled Polish Government. ~~British and American diplomacy was on the job trying to heal the most serious rift that has thus far appeared in the unity of the United Nations.~~ Polish ~~Premier~~^{Premier} Sikorski and the Polish Foreign Minister conferred with Prime Minister Winston Churchill and British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden. United States Ambassador Winant conferred with Eden, and the Polish ~~Premier~~^{Premier} had a talk with Soviet Ambassador Bogomolov. As a result of all this, the Polish exiled government withheld its reply to the Soviets.

Premier Sikorski's Cabinet had prepared an answer to the bitter Moscow statement, which charged the Poles with accepting Nazi propaganda about the alleged killing of thousands of Polish army officers. And the Russians tied this in with the Polish-Soviet dispute about title to

territory after the war. The Polish declaration was scheduled for release today, but the release was suddenly cancelled;- at the request of the British, we are told.

The prospects for a settlement of the Polish-Russian quarrel are increased by news from Moscow, the news that deals with one single word. A Russian word - prerivate^e. The official ~~news~~^{news} had been that the Soviets had broken diplomatic relations with the exiled Polish regime. But today's Moscow dispatch points out that the Russian word really used was - prerivate^e. And this does not mean "break" or "sever", as applied to diplomatic relations. "Prerivate^e" means - "suspend", or "interrupt." According to this, the Russian action was much less drastic than we had supposed, with Moscow not breaking relations, but merely suspending them. Prerivate^e!

And what is suspended may be expected to be resumed - which gives a hint of the likelihood of patching up the quarrel somehow.

TUNISIA

In Tunisia, with the enemy backed against the sea, the Allied line is roughly in the form of a right angle with a tall, upright, and a short base. The perpendicular line runs south from the Mediterranean and ~~is~~ parallels the coast. Then, at the south, it turns abruptly east at a right angle and runs to the shore.

This latter stretch, the horizontal line of the right angle, is occupied by the British Eighth Army under General Montgomery - and does not figure in the news today. The Eighth Army ~~was mostly~~ marking time, ~~today~~, preparing for its next assault.

The flare of activity was along the ~~long~~ line from north to south. At its northern extent are the Americans. ~~In~~ the middle is the British First Army. Toward the south - the French. All three nationalities were in bitter fighting today.

In Tunisia

The Americans are up against the toughest

kind of opposition. They are in rugged country, where the hills have been long and heavily fortified by the Germans. They face a place called Jefna, ~~and this is an~~^{the} anchor of the Nazi defenses in that sector. ~~So the~~

^{the} enemy has turned Jefna into a bristling stronghold.

There are two local summits called Green Hill and Bald Hill. Both are studded with concrete gun emplacements. ^{TP} Today the Americans, after advancing steadily, began their operation for the capture of Jefna.

In one place their attack was thrown back. At another point, to the south, ~~the United States~~^{a U. S.} unit drove ahead and captured a valuable position. ^{TP} At last reports,

American ~~bombing~~ planes were roaring over the enemy - bombing incessantly ^{with a} rain of high explosive, preparing the way for a new American push ^{at} ~~into~~ that key point of Jefna.

In the middle of the line, the British First Army

crossed a river today and got to within six miles of the ~~key point called~~ Tebourba. The First Army is in a position to score the most strategic advance of all, because straight ahead lies the seaport of Tunis, and there the coast bends inward, forming a bay. Because of this, the British First Army has the shortest distance to go to reach the sea, and the country in front of Tunis is relatively clear and open - once the outlying hills are passed. And the First Army has reached that point where the country is leveling out. ~~They are within six miles of the Tebourba key point, and within twenty one miles of~~

And a
~~Tunis~~ drive to Tunis would cut the Axis army in two.

P This is the background for ^a~~the~~ statement in tonight's dispatch from Allied headquarters, the statement that the next forty-eight hours may be decisive in the last battle for North Africa.

South of the British First Army, the French are

fighting their way toward Pont du Fahs - and that place is ^{another} ~~is~~ gateway to the plain in front of Tunis.

The news tells of hard and savage tank battles all along the line. The losses are described as being heavy, with the enemy suffering greater losses than ours. The latest news tells ~~of~~ fifty-four German tanks destroyed in the past four days, making a total of eighty-seven for ten days - which is cutting heavily into the armored strength of the Axis. Still, there are no signs that the Nazi command intends to give in. ~~and try to get out.~~ The Germans are still trying to reinforce their defending garrison at the tip of Tunisia.

McNAIR

At Allied headquarters in North Africa today, who should come strolling in but ^{a three star} ~~a stalwart~~ officer with his left arm in a sling and a big bundle of bandage covering the back of his head: ~~He wore the stars of a general, and was in fact~~ Lieutenant General Lesley McNair - who was severely wounded in battle last Friday and who has had two operations since then. The doctors expected the General to be laid up quite a while, but today ~~ix~~ he insisted on leaving the hospital, and went to headquarters - eager to get into another battle.

General McNair proceeded to tell the story of how he was hit, ^{at the front} ~~He was in an observation post in the front lines, and was just leaving this~~ when a big German shell hit only a few yards away. There was a tremendous blast, and fragments flew on all sides. General McNair was hit by pieces of steel, which smashed his helmet, pierced his skull, and riddled his left shoulder, - shattering a piece of bone.

Today's dispatch uses these words: "Witnesses
said the General made no outcry when he was hit." What
did they expect ~~the~~^a lieutenant general to say - "Ouch?"

McNair took the whole thing, the wounds and the two
operations, in a joking way. And today, referring to ~~the~~^{all}
~~that~~^{that} bandage at the back of his head, he called it -

"a very fancy Easter bonnet." Yes, General, ^{an} off the
~~face~~^{bonnet} without ribbons or flowers.

LIBERTY SHIP

Here is a story that takes the cake. It tells of a convoy battle in the North Atlantic - an "abandoned ship" story that came to a surprise ending. The deadly torpedo turned out to be something else. This was disclosed when a badly dented Liberty ship limped into a British port today, with only half of her crew aboard.

The story that takes the cake was told by George Sheppard, a former cake salesman of Peoria, Illinois. George used to be a whiz at selling coffee-cake, chocolate layer, ^{and} angel food, ^{and lady fingers,} ~~and cream puffs.~~ ~~INDEX~~

But today George is ^a ~~an armed guard~~ gunner's mate, serving with Atlantic convoys - and he doesn't shoot ^{cream puffs} ~~chocolate macaroons.~~

"The wolf pack struck our convoy at dusk," he relates. "We went to the deck to man the guns just in time to see one ship disappear beneath the ocean."

Then the gunner's mate goes on to tell how the wolf pack continued its assault at night. "The submarines," he says, "actually surfaced and shelled ships in the middle of the convoy. We could see a destroyer firing to the starboard while the ship ahead of us was ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ in a duel with a submarine."

goes on! - "An

English merchantman on fire ~~he goes on~~ was drifting through the entire convoy with its crew sticking aboard fighting the blaze. *Then* "said he ~~Then~~ we hit something hard."

The story goes on to tell how the crash was thought to be that of an exploding torpedo. The red danger signal flashed, and somebody gave the order - "abandon ship." Half the crew took to lifeboats, but the other half stayed aboard - rallied by commanding officer of the armed guard Ensign J.T. McNaughton, son of the publisher of a newspaper at Pekin, Illinois - THE PEKIN TIMES. He held his men together, and it presently developed

that the ship had not been torpedoed at all. Then what was the crash? They found that it was not a torpedo, but a submarine. The Liberty ship had rammed a U-boat of the wolf pack. The plates of the freighter were badly smashed and dented, and the collision could have only sent the prowling submarine to the bottom.

Such is the surprise ending of the story told by the former cake salesman today; and ^{that story} ~~it certainly does~~ ^{deserves for the Gunner's Mate} ~~take the mocha tart, apple turnovers, or what have you.~~
Geo. Sheppard of Peoria an extra helping of chocolate layer!

RUBBER

War Production Chief Donald Nelson stated today that the shortage of high octane aviation gasoline was caused by the failure of the Army to figure accurately the amounts it would need. That's the reason, he told a Senate Committee -- and not the demands made by the synthetic rubber program.

This is Donald Nelson's contribution to the quarrel between Under-Secretary of War Paterson and Petroleum Administrator Ickes on one side, and Rubber Administrator Jeffers on the other. ~~side~~ Paterson and Ickes had charged that the volumes of petroleum used to make synthetic rubber were retarding the production of high octane gas~~oline~~ for aviation.

Donald Nelson, testifying before the Truman Committee, pointed out that the reasons for the high octane situation dated back to a time before the Jeffers Rubber program got going -- back as far as Nineteen Forty-One, when the Army named its ticket for

high octane gasoline. ^R "I believe," said he, "that it was an honest failure to estimate gasoline needs at anywhere near what the requirements finally proved to

be." ^R He said the present controversy was largely a conflict of personalities, which produces what he called -- "lots of heat and not much light." ^{TR} Then he added: "War time is no time for airing personal grievances or having public popularity contests."

SENATE LADIES

I have an apology to make, an apology to the Senate Ladies. It seems that I have offended them, and what could be more formidable than the collective indignation of the assembled wives of the Senators of the United States? And, to make the matter sound ~~xxx~~ still more disconcerting, ~~xx~~ I offended them on the subject of their age.

But then, I'm always getting in a jam with the ladies.
~~latest~~
This happened in a recent story concerning the

Senate Ladies versus the Wives of Congressmen, on the subject of their respective records at making Red Cross bandages. I stated that the group called the "Senate Ladies" was formed a year ago - was a year old. In response I had a letter from Mrs. Hazel Vandenberg, wife of Senator Vandenberg of Michigan. She tells me that the Senate Ladies was founded back in the time of the previous World War, Nineteen Seventeen, when they did the same job that they are doing today - making Red Cross

bandages. Mrs. Vandenberg informs me that in the time intervening, the organization has remained unaltered, save for a change or two of the rules. For example, their original charter called for the Chairman of the Senate Ladies to be the wife of the Vice-President.

1/2 But suppose the Vice-President has no wife? ~~Shanix~~

Who then would be the Chairman of the Senate Ladies?

The Vice-President's girl friend? That might provide a

difficult question. ~~but, thank goodness, vice presidents~~

~~don't have girl friends. Or am I getting into~~

~~difficulties all over again?~~

Maybe I'd better get the apology over with as quickly as I can and say, that the Senate Ladies are twenty-six years old! ~~and that should square almost anything.~~

9 And here's ever young
Hugh.