

## Speaking for Lowell Thomas

The word from India is broadly - that the Indian Nationalist Party is preparing to say:- "No." They are about to refuse Britain's offer of a dominion status for India - after the war. This is stating it broadly.

46  
Tonight's dispatch from New Delhi makes a ~~more~~ subtle distinction. It declares that the Working Committee of the All-India Congress is drafting what it calls - "a statement that in effect turns ~~xxx~~ down Great ~~xxxxxx~~ Britain's plan, but avoids a flat rejection."

So there's the subtle distinction between a turn-down and a flat rejection. The meaning would seem to be that they'll say they can't accept the proposal as it stands, but will leave a way open for further discussion - a possible compromise. This - in spite of the fact that British Envoy Sir Stafford-Cripps has stated flatly that India would have to take the plan or leave it as it stands.

47 Mahatma Gandhi is against it - that seems to be clear. The little brown holy man is said to be urging the Nationalist Committee to reject outright the London proposal designed to get India whole-heartedly into the war. Gandhi's viewpoint is said to be the familiar one - opposition to all war, in accordance with his creed of non-violence. There are contradictory reports about the position of ~~Jawaharlal~~ Nehru, the active Nationalist leader. Some say he's for, others against. The latest would seem to be that he, like the majority of the Nationalist Committee, is in favor of a temporizing turn-down, leaving the way open for further discussions.

The main Hindu objection is said to rest on the claim that, while the plan brought by Sir Stafford-Cripps would give India self-rule after the war is over, it does not transfer any power to the Indians right now.

Moreover, The Hindus are said to be opposed to the clause of the plan that would, in their view, establish the Mohammedan sections of the country as a separate dominion.

Next in importance to the Nationalist Congress is the Moslem League, representing the aggressive Mohammedan minority. They say the Moslem League is prepared to inform Cripps that the Mohammedan group does not feel it necessary to consider the British plan because if it is turned down by the Nationalist Party - ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ what's the use?

8  
There's nothing completely certain about all of the foregoing, but it represents the large probability; what we may expect to become definite - tomorrow probably.

BURMA

In Burma, the Chinese have definitely succeeded in breaking out of a trap at Toungoo. The Japs had them encircled, ~~xxxx~~ <sup>yet</sup> Chiang-Kai-Shek's veterans ~~xxxx~~ <sup>under</sup> the command of American General <sup>Stilwell</sup> ~~Shinwell~~ fought their way to the enemy lines, and joined up with Allied forces to the northeast of Toungoo. They've abandoned that important town, although at last reports it would seem that a Chinese rear guard was still holding some part of Toungoo.

The other key city along the China battle line is Prome -- west of Toungoo and on the Irawaddy River. The Japs are pushing hard against Prome, threatening to outflank the ~~fx~~ place and it would seem that the British position there is in peril. Today's British bulletin gives us the probability that the British-Chinese forces will fall back, for what may be a decisive battle on the <sup>axis</sup> ~~planes~~ lying south of Mandalay. That will mean a crucial struggle for northern Burma.

49  
Here's a late dispaatch, just in -- which tells us that a British force has been encircled by Japanese

troops ten miles south of Prome. They're in grave  
danger. But this bad news is partly offset by reports  
that Chinese <sup>the</sup> killed five thousand Japs in a bitter  
battle at Toungoo.

## PHILIPPINES

The battle in the Philippines has turned into a day and night bombardment -- by Japanese artillery as well as enemy bombing planes. Today's communique issued by the War Department in Washington states that cannon on the south shore of Manila Bay have joined in the attack on Corregidor and the other island-fortifications nearby. They have been targets for tons of air bombs and now artillery shells, too, are raining on the powerful defenses. Our guns are replying with a heavy fire, making it a dual cannonade. Apparently, little damage has been done.

50 In fact, the largest injury reported today was on a place that should have been immune -- a hospital on Batan Peninsula. The army reports in the following words:- "A base hospital in Batan was bombed by the Japanese, causing a number of casualties. This hospital, the announcement goes on, "was plainly marked and had been carefully avoided by the enemy bombers -- until yesterday." In other words, the Japs have been observing

the <sup>laws</sup> ~~loss~~ of war and humanity, but apparently couldn't  
keep up the lofty standard of conduct.

## AUSTRALIA

To the north of Australia the Japs are having a bad time. They're being bombed and blasted, and in ~~xx~~ New Guinea heavy floods are still washing them out.

Australian and American bombers hit the Japs on the Island of Timor and destroyed six enemy planes on the ground. And they hit at a New Guinea air drome, where the ~~xxxx~~<sup>rain</sup> of bombs devastated Japanese flying installations.

51 From Australia we have a statement of what American bomber forces did to the Japs in the campaigns of the Philippines and Java. Colonel Eubank, Commander of the American war planes, states that sixteen enemy warships and forty-six transports were sunk, or damaged, up to March First. Since March First, it is estimated that at least fourteen other Jap warships were sunk or damaged.

The Australian Premier today gave a formal pledge that the Australian government will stand firmly behind the decisions of General MacArthur. They won't try to



interfere. This -- as Australia is reorganizing its own forces, with the appointment of a new set of hard-fighting Commanders.

## CONVOY BATTLE

There's something rather weird about a naval engagement in a snowstorm. I don't recall many examples of this - warships battling with flaming gunfire in a swirling haze of white. When things are seen through falling snow, they can assume a ghostly appearance. So, imagine the dim hulk of a hostile war vessel looming in the blizzard - and then the flash and roar of cannon.

52 This ghostly kind of battle has been raging for four days now on the frigid waters north of the Arctic shore of Soviet Russia. The weather up there at this time of the year, is likely to be of the most forbidding kind. Spring has not yet arrived, and snowstorms are a commonplace. At the same time, that Arctic area of the sea is the most likely place for naval fighting just now. United Nations aid to Soviet Russia is a dominating theme - with the German Spring offensive

expected momentarily. The Red Army needs every bit of help it can possibly get, all the armament that Great Britain and America send. And that means great convoys steaming around the Arctic coast of Scandinavia, and on to the Soviet port of Murmansk.

Nazi Germany, by the same logic of war, must try to stop these convoys; must attack them with all the power the Nazis can muster in that northern region. And so the great sea battle that's raging right now is a convoy affair -- repeated Nazi attacks on a big convoy of British and American ships that are guarded by British and Soviet naval units.

Let's look at today's communique issued by the London Admiralty. It's couched in the usual terse kind of military phraseology, which can be effective and telling. It states:- "Attacks by enemy surface

craft, and U-boats to prevent a convoy of American and British supplies from reaching Russia were beaten off by British and Russian forces."

"On the morning of March Twenty-Ninth," the Admiralty announcement continues, "enemy light forces were sighted. The visibility was poor with frequent snowstorms. H.M.S. TRINIDAD engaged one large enemy destroyer, which she crippled and set afire. She then gave chase to two other destroyers, which escaped."

"A few hours later," the communique goes on, "another attack developed. During the ensuing engagement H.M.S. ECLIPSE hit and stopped one destroyer - but the arrival of two more enemy destroyers compelled her to break off the engagement."

The London dispatch then goes on to enumerate some of the damage:- "The loss of one destroyer has already been admitted by the enemy," it says.

"H.M.S. <sup>TRINIDAD</sup> TRINIDAD and ~~H.M.S.~~ ECLIPSE suffered some damage, but both ships returned to harbor safely."

To this we may add that the TRINIDAD is an eight thousand ton cruiser and the ECLIPSE is a destroyer.

Continuing with the battle, the London announcement states, "During the passage of the convoy, the presence of the U-boats was discovered, and successful attacks by the Allied forces resulted in three U-boats being severely damaged, if not sunk."

This Admiralty bulletin says nothing about possible damage to the British-American ships of the convoy - beyond the general statement that the enemy attacks were beaten off. The Germans, on their part, claim to have sunk or damaged a number of convoy ships. One bulletin mentions four sunk, and another speaks of two. They claim to have destroyed one big freighter loaded with American armament bound for Soviet Russia.

CONVOY BATTLE - 6

Such is ~~what~~ what we know of the big battle of the convoy, and in addition ~~we~~ we hear of heavy Nazi air raids against the Soviet port of Murmansk - trying to destroy supplies already landed there, and trying also to put the harbor out of commission.

VATICAN

China is sending a diplomatic representative to the Vatican. This was announced today by Whang ~~Shi-Chieh~~ Shi-Chieh, Minister of Information, at Chungking. He stated that the Chiang Kai-shek regime had asked Pope Pius the Twelfth to exchange diplomatic reference, and that the request had been "favorably received." China will receive a Papal Nuncio at Chungking, and in return, China will send a diplomatic representative to the Vatican.

56 This follows insistent reports that Japan is trying to establish diplomatic relations with the Vatican. Tokyo states that this is being done - an arrangement similar to the one that China announces today.

①  
Brazil reports the discovery of a plot to create a secret base for Axis submarines operating in the South Atlantic. At an isolated point along the ~~Brazilia~~ Brazilian coast, they discovered a special dock - secretly constructed. And nearby was a hidden store of gasoline - huge quantities, say the Brazilian police. They have arrested twenty Japs at <sup>a small</sup> ~~the~~ nearby town ~~of~~ ~~Aracaju~~. These are said to have engaged in a conspiracy to refuel Axis submarines by means of the secret dock and supply of gasoline.

This disclosure comes to a climax of police raids throughout the State of Sao Paulo. At one locality the police seized a large number of automatic rifles and four hundred thousand cartridges. ~~Aracaju~~  
At another place they broke up an outlaw Japanese meeting, and found a military map of Brazil with strategic



57  
points marked in red ink. Another headline arrest is that of a Japanese named Tonogawa, a humble, hard-working farm-hand -- apparently! The Brazilian police claim that he is really a general in the Japanese army, an officer who at one time commanded an invading unit in China. In the possession of this "farmer-general" was found a quantity of rifle bullets, and a number of war trophies.

ROOSEVELT

President Roosevelt stated today <sup>that</sup> the new Pacific War Council in Washington will work in parallel harmony with the similar war council in London. He indicated the London group will consider Pacific war problems of a political nature. While the Washington council will devote itself to matters of action.

Thus they will direct the battle against what the President today called "the powers of black paganism". He quoted that phrase from a letter he received.

CORRECTION

58 Some people seem to think that last night I indicated that no more heating units for old electric ranges will be made. That inference was incorrect. The order issued by the War Production Board applies only to ~~yx~~ heating units for new electric ranges.

## BLACKOUT

Last night in Bristol County, Massachusetts, they had a blackout. The people cooperated earnestly in the dark war-time precaution, and there was only one arrest for violation.

58½ On a black street, in Fall River, a gleam of light flashed. It was a man lighting a match. He held it -- the small flame flickering <sup>in</sup> the darkness. Air raid wardens instantly arrested <sup>the</sup> culprit and demanded sternly -- what did he mean by violating the blackout?

In response they got a hiccough or two, the whiff of a beery breath, and the following explanation: The unsteady gentleman said he lit his match -- because he wanted to see the blackout. Get the idea? It was so dark he couldn't see any blackout at all. So what do you do in a case like that? You light a match, and take a look.

*And now Hugh James*