

L.I. - Sumoco. Friday, May 2, 1941.

WAR

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London reports that fighting has been going on all day long -  
in Iraq. The battle is at the Habbaniyah Airdrome, which is ~~x~~  
sixty-five miles east of Baghdad. This airport is of vital  
consequence for the defense of the Mosul oil wells, which in turn  
are an all-important possession of the British Empire. Last night  
we heard how a critical state of affairs existed between the  
British and the Iraq Government, which government is <sup>now</sup> said to be  
pro-Nazi. The word twenty-four hours ago was that forces of the  
Iraq army had been concentrated near the Habbaniyah Airport -  
threatening. And Britain was demanding that these forces be  
removed - trouble might break out.

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And Trouble did break out! London states that fighting began  
this morning, and was started by the Iraqies. They opened fire  
with artillery, shooting at the British troops holding the airdrome.  
The British fired back, and the battle was on.

~~What will develop out of this? That's one of the most~~  
~~important questions in many a day.~~ Is today's fighting a mere  
un-important skirmish? Or is it the beginning of large scale  
hostilities between the British forces and the Iraq army?

~~How far does the pro-Nazi government of the old Mesopotamian land intend to go?~~ One report tells us that the full Iraq army has been ordered to mobilize. Another states that the Iraq forces have seized the Habbaniyah Airport and various other strategic points. Also - the Mosul oil wells. This rumor comes from Berlin. The British, on their side, have flashed a radio broadcast to the Iraq people, bidding them to overthrow the pro-Nazi government.

Of all the rumors, <sup>at</sup> tension is arrested the most sharply by one from Turkey - which states that the Iraq government has asked Nazi Germany for help in fighting the British. A query about this was made in Berlin tonight, and Nazi spokesmen said they knew nothing about it. However, it would not be surprising. British opinion is positive that the trouble has been stirred up by German <sup>the</sup> machinations, incited by Hitler agents. And obviously nothing could suit the Nazi purpose better than to have Iraq in revolt, and have German fighting units established there.

Will Hitler send aid to Iraq? Can he? That's a tantalizing question. Nazi air bases in southern Greece are within

reasonable flying distance of the new area of trouble, and air transports could carry troops and light equipment. Whether they could do it in the face of British fighting planes, is another thing. Moreover, German units sent by air would be isolated in Iraq - out of communication by land with the forces of the blitzkrieg. It would seem to be quite a ~~big~~ gamble - but the Nazis might take it. <sup>It</sup> On the other hand, <sup>It</sup> this Iraq uprising might possibly be part of a general plan concerted by the Nazis for a drive to the Mosul oil wells - ultimate destination, the Suez Canal. They might plan it through Turkey, or via French Syria - with the revolt in Iraq as one element of a military combination. <sup>It</sup> Much in that case would depend on the relative strength of the British and Iraq forces. The native army is not <sup>large</sup> ~~much~~ - twelve or fifteen thousand men. And the soldiers are probably no better than is customary in such countries. The magnitude of the British units is unknown. Two forces of Imperial soldiers have been landed, and are said to consist largely of Indian troops. But how many? From this distance it is impossible to tell how the battle might go, how quickly the

British might succeed in suppressing the pro-Nazi forces. One thing is obvious, that it behooves the British Empire to reestablish its control as quickly as possible or the damage may be immense.

Iraq was seized from Turkey by the British in the last war. By action of the League of Nations, it was set up as an independent kingdom - under a British mandate. Relations have been governed by a British-Iraq Treaty, which gave London a large measure of control. There were disputes about the Mosul oil fields.

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Britain acquired them, and built that famous pipeline to the Mediterranean. During the present war, all seemed quiet out there until a military revolt several weeks ago tossed out the pro-British

government, and the regime was taken over by an army clique said

*— bought by Berlin no doubt.*  
to be pro-Nazi. And now fighting has broken out - a new chapter

in the ancient land, where some believe that civilization began.

The country of the Euphrates and the Tigris, the land of the two

River. Hence the name Mesopotamia, which is Greek meaning -

"between rivers." It's the realm of ancient Babylon and Nineveh,

the Caldeans and the Assyrians. ~~It's~~ It's capital is Baghdad,

with its famous legend of Haaron al Rashind and the ARABIAN NIGHTS, of Alladin and Sinbad the Sailor. A land of ancient wonder, and now in the spotlight of the war news.

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The other important item in this same war news of tonight tells of Tobruk. The latest word from Cairo is that a violent battle is raging, with Axis infantry and tanks launching heavy assaults supported by intense bombardment from the air. Last night we heard that German and Italian forces had penetrated the outer defenses of Tobruk. Today, the British stated that at one point where enemy units had broken through, a vigorous counter-attack was launched, - axis tanks destroyed, German and Italian troops driven back. Today the attack went on with increased violence; says Cairo.

Alarming news comes from Spain -- in the form of an address made today by Spanish Foreign Minister Suner, brother-in-law of Franco, and regarded as the leading pro-Nazi pro-Fascist in Spain. Today Suner launched a denunciation of what he called -- the pluto democracies." That's the term the Axis people like to fasten on the democratic nations. So the Suner attack was directed at Great Britain and the United States. And the inevitable surmise is that it points



in the direction of the possibility of Franco lining up with Hitler. The goal, of course, being Gibraltar.

ROOSEVELT

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President Roosevelt today put pressure on the Office of Production Management - demanding an all-out effort for defense, twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. In a telegram to the O.P.M. Associate Directors William S. Knudsen and Sidney Hillman, the President stated that this nation is confronted by what he called - "a critical situation." He propounded to Knudsen and Hillman the following program:-

Mobilize every bit of machinery that can be used to build armament. ~~Put all the machines and tools into operation where they are, or transport them to places where they can be used.~~

"The goal," wired the President, "should be to work these machines twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week, relieving the machines only for such time required for overhauling and repair." Mobilize skilled workers, and put them on shifts for the full time operation. Canvass the whole country for men who can operate the machines. Scrutinize the armed forces, and look for workers who can be used. Instead of giving them military ~~xi~~ training, employ their skill in the building of weapons.

That's the gist of the telegram which the President sent today to the Directors of Defense - spurring them and the nation to greater action.

WILLKIE

Today we have an answer that Wendell Willkie makes to Colonel Lindbergh -- or are we still entitled to call him "Colonel"? Some weeks ago, COLLIERS MAGAZINE printed an article by Lindbergh, in which the Lone Eagle expressed his familiar views -- that we can't save Great Britain from defeat, that peace should be made, and that isolationism is the best policy. So now COLLIERS, to effect a balance, prints a retort by the recent Republican candidate.

Wandell Willkie asserts that Great Britain can win. "England can even lose the Mediterranean and still win this war," he writes. Willkie emphasizes that Britain's desperate need is ships. And he adds -- that we should give Britain destroyers.



FUNDS

There has been talk about freezing funds <sup>belonging to</sup> ~~the funds of~~

the Axis powers, ~~in particular.~~ Today Secretary of State Cordell

Hull was asked about it - the likelihood of the United States

tying up financial resources owned by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy

in this country. The Secretary's response was rather surprising.

He stated that the government is considering the idea of freezing

all funds, tying up the financial resources of every nation.

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The word from Washington is that the Secretary of State has been opposing suggestions that the United States take action

to freeze the Axis funds. Today, he says that they're considering

the idea of tying up all funds - of every nation, Britain included.

## TAXES

The tax issue continues to dominate in Washington -- how to raise more billions for national defense and aid to Britain. Two proposals in direct contradiction were made today. One suggested, more income taxes. The other - less.

Edward O'Neill, President of the American Farm Bureau Federation told the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives that there should be a drastic cut in income tax exemptions. The idea is that the present exemptions should be slashed in half. Right now, they are eight hundred dollars for single persons and two thousand dollars for those who are married. The President of the Farm Federation would have these exemptions reduced to four hundred for the single, and a thousand for the married.

The President of the C.I.O. Phillip Murray, appeared before the Committee, and his argument was -- raise the income tax exemptions. He wants to put them back to where they used to be - the former level of the one thousand dollar exemption for those who are single. Twenty-five hundred for the married people.

Raise taxes, is one phase of financing national defense and aid to Britain. Another angle is -- cut down ordinary government expenditures - the none-defense kind. Speaker Rayburn of the House

of Representatives stated today that he's going to take to the White House a plea for the government to save a billion dollars.

This economy is in accordance with proposals made by the Secretary of the Treasury. He suggested that there should be a cut in the huge sums appropriated for such things as the Civilian Conservation Corps, the National Youth Administration - and also farm relief. That would seem to give the economy idea the blessing of the administration, but Congress wants the initiative in the non-defense cuts to come from the White House. Let the President lead the way in effecting the saving of a billion dollars.

BONDS

The first precinct to report in the sale of defense securities is Meddybemps, Maine. That's a town with a pretty name - *not counting cartoonist Bob Brinkerhoff.* Meddybemps. The population is ninety-nine, <sup>1</sup> And the sale of defense bonds and stamps is one hundred per cent. The postmaster reports that on the first day everybody invested in defense savings - each one of the ninety-nine people of Meddybemps. *So three cheers for Meddybemps.*

EDDIE EAGAN - BOYS LEAGUE PRESENTATION

EDDIE EAGAN:- Lowell, may I break in on your news for just a couple of seconds?

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L.T.:- Why, sure Eddie, anything you say. My interrupter is Eddie Eagan, President of the Boys Athletic League. Eddie, one-time amateur heavyweight boxing champion of the world, is now a New York lawyer, and ~~he~~ devotes his spare time to serving as President of the Boys Athletic League.

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EDDIE Eagan: The reason for my interruption is just this: We recently took a poll of the boys in twenty-two states and the District of Columbia. As a result, I am here to present you their trophy, because they have again voted you their favorite commentator.

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L.T.:- Thanks a lot, Eddie. Thanks in behalf of myself and my sponsors, the Sun Oil Company. The Boys Athletic League is doing magnificent work, through its recreation centers, craft-shops and summer camps. I hope we can get together on some ballgames this summer.



THEATRE

Here's some bad news for the actors and playwrights of New York. The dramatic critics will be able to pan them to their heart's content - write bad reviews, say that the play was terrible, the acting awful, plain ham. This privilege to pan is implied in a bill which Governor Lehman of New York signed today.

In the past, theatrical managers have been known to bar critics from their theatres, when said critic <sup>have</sup> ~~has~~ roasted said manager's dramatic productions - criticism too harsh. They've refused to sell tickets to such reviewers, wouldn't let them in. But now that's all a thing of the past. The New York Legislature passed a law which makes it <sup>illegal</sup> ~~unlawful~~ to bar any adult from a theatre, providing he has the price of a ticket and behaves himself during the performance. <sup>it's</sup> ~~that's~~ especially designed to prevent critics from being kept out, and the Governor signed the bill today. <sup>Hence forth</sup> ~~So the~~ critics can pan and pan-with impunity. They can write that the acting is bad, the play dull, and much too long.

Talking about <sup>a</sup> ~~the~~ play being too long, we may note an experiment in brevity that's being conducted at the Music Hall here

in Rockefeller Center. For the stage show that accompanies the motion picture, they're giving a tabloid version of Madame

3 1/2 Butterfly - the whole opera compressed <sup>into</sup> ~~so that it lasts~~ a mere hour.

It's played four times a day with alternate casts of singers.

One of these is a brilliant young Philippine soprano, Enya Gonzales -

the perfect Madame Butterfly. Talking about the tabloid version at

the Music Hall, Senorita Gonzales tells me about the length of some

operas - which seem as if they'd never end. The classic is

"Parsifal", which lasts for nearly five hours. The first act goes

on for two hours, and in it the baritone has one long stretch of

9 singing which continues right on - for forty minutes. The longest

aria on earth - ~~it's~~ marathon singing. Later on, the tenor,

Parsifal, stands gazing entranced at the Holy Grail - for fifty

minutes. ~~Something of~~ an endurance record for gazing with rapture.

Well, I'm not out to make any endurance record. I don't

Now, not wanting  
want to turn this program into a Parsifal of news-broadcasting.

9 1/4 So here's Hugh James.