

L. T. - SUNOCO - DECEMBER 24, 1934 (MONDAY)

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:-

This Christmas is in some ways a strange one for me. In years past I've spent the day in the Nativity in odd places, once in the blazing heat of the Australian desert. Another time in the bitterest conditions, bitter cold, bitter warfare, with the Italian Army, battling the Austrians mid glacier and granite in the Alps. Still another holiday season, the first after the War with the Passion Players in the then isolated Oberammergau. But this Christmas I'm in what seems the oddest place of all -- home.

The radio is an exacting task-maker, and allows no holidays, neither Christmas nor the Fourth of July. The broadcast must go on! I live in the country, the city is my working place; but not home -- although I'm there most of the time. This is my fifth Christmas since I've been on the air. On every other one I've been in New York, in office and studio. This time though, the Sun Oil Company, with the cheery streamline spirit of Blue Sunoco, spoke up and said a fellow had better br at home on Christmas, once in a while. So here I am among the cows and

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chickens and tall trees, including a tall Christmas tree.

We've had to string a wire for several miles to hook up with the main trunk line down to Radio City. So I've rigged up a studio out behind the barn, right above the winter supply of potatoes and the apples we couldn't sell. Dick Stoddart, the N. B. C. engineer has his control mechanism set up down below, right in the middle of the potatoes and apples. He has a string up through a trap door, tied to my arm, which he pulls to give me the signal when to start and stop. He gave me a yank just now, telling me it was time to begin the news, and by the way, so it is -- time to begin the news -- Christmas Eve tidings.

Too bad they can't always be as glad as those tidings the first Christmas Eve. Yet, the news at Yuletide does commonly have a cheery sound -- and, that's true this year, as in most years.

AMNESTY - 1

From the troubled sections of Europe comes the welcome word: amnesty -- prisoners freed on Christmas. And it's more than a pleasant example of the holiday spirit. These amnesties we hear about today do help to ease and tranquilize the various suppressed storms of national enmity.

In Austria, President Miklas turned loose 170 political prisoners today - 90 Socialists and 80 Nazis -- Socialists clapped into jail at the time of the Red Radical outbreak in Vienna months ago; Nazis imprisoned last summer when the Nazi Putsch resulted in the murder of Chancellor Dolfuss. And President Miklas announces a still larger amnesty for next week, when a thousand more Austrian political offenders will be sent home to their families.

A timely significance is attached to the freeing of Croatian malcontents in Yugoslavia. This follows right on the heels of the dangerous international complications that resulted from the assassination of King Alexander, who was killed by Croatian revolutionaries. It might have been expected that the Yugoslavian government, while so bitterly accusing Hungary of having sheltered

the Croation terrorists, would clamped down more severely, than ever on the discontented Croats at home. But it is just the opposite. Prince Paul, the regent of the kingdom during the boyhood of little King Peter, has made an effective gesture of goodwill toward the Croats. Yes, effective -- as is indicated by today's news, which brings with it a picture of the Croat people rising to give three cheers for Prince Paul and the Yugoslav government. They interpret this Christmas amnesty as a sign that there is a change in Belgrade, and that ^{the} old policy of supressing the Croatian minority has given way to an easier and more tolerant regime.

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And now another anmesty, not of many persons but of one -- an obscure person. His name is not even given. Yugoslavia has restored civil rights to one Hungarian. And that has helped along the Christmas joy and gladness in Budapest. Because that particular Hungarian is one of the thousands who were expelled when the Yugoslavia government decided to deport all Hungarians from its borders -- that stream of refugees forced from their

homes which almost brought Europe into another war. Budapest believes that this one banished Hungarian who has his rights restored and permitted to return to his home is only the beginning -- and that this one instance will be followed by other, with Yugoslavia finally permitting all of the expelled Hungarians to return,

And then there is another surge of friendliness in Budapest, an amicable gesture toward Soviet Russia. For 20 years white, aristocratic Hungary has been on the outs with Red, proletarian Russia -- no diplomatic relations. But it's different now, and today Budapest is welcoming the first Soviet Minister. He's an Armenian, another example of the way the Red Kremlin draws on the non-Russian elements of its vast empire, for its officials. Stalin himself of course is a Georgian. The new Soviet minister, as an anti-religious Communist will have little sympathy for the traditional blaze of Christmas festivity in Budapest. But he's being overwhelmed with the Hungarian Yuletide spirit, as well as the new feeling of amity toward the Soviets. And they say his fingers are being worn out from all the hand shakes.

JAPAN

Japan has her own Shinto and Buddhist festivals, but maybe the men of Nippon are smart enough to play to the Christmas spirit of the Christian West. Anyway Tokyo comes through with some tidings of good will today -- regarding the most recent reported Soviet raid into Manchukuo. Patrols of the Red Army are said to have violated the boundary. But Tokyo smiles blandly and says, "It was nothing! A very small matter! even if it occurred. And we are not sure that it did occur. Maybe it was really no Soviet raid at all. Let us forget it."

With this dismissal of the latest trouble making incident the Mikado's government announces that Russo-Japanese relations are better now than they have been for months,

ALBANIA

A party of travelers has arrived in Greece fresh from the secluded mountains of Albania. They report that they left the country because soldiers are on the march -- and not in any military Christmas parade. Rebel regiments advancing against the capital city of Tirana. The revolt is led, they declared, by officers of the Albanian army, under the command of a former aide de camp of King Zog.

Well, revolt is nothing new to the pale-faced, nervous cigarette-smoking monarch of those feud, fighting mountain clans. He has faced rebellion before. He himself got into power by the road-of-rebellion. He began life as Ahmed Zogu, member of a mountaineering land-owning tribe. He learned to shoot by practicing on mountain goats. He was barely out of his teens when he gathered 300 other sharp shooters and shot his way to the throne. He didn't want to be a mere dictator. He sent to Italy and bought a jeweled, golden crown, spurs of gold and a golden sceptre. From London he ordered several thousand new suits, from the most swagger Bond Street tailors so that he could change into a new suit before each meal.

And he made himself king. Just a few more odd details added to the many others about King Zog, now reported to be facing serious rebellion.

Here are a bunch of fellows who are not having a merry Christmas -- the troops of several nations marching into the Saar Valley to police the January elections. The Italians have marched in, and they got the cold shoulder -- not a single "Hurrah", nor a single "hoch", not a single "Merry Christmas". And the troops of England, Holland, and Sweden are getting the same unchristmaslike lack of cheer. The explanation is that the people of the Saar are Germans and still think in the terms of the World War. They think of the troops now come to police the election in the terms of armies of occupation -- those armies of occupation that held the Rhineland territories of Germany for so long after the end of the World War.

Now about the strange turn in the Lindbergh case.

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Developments today indicate that ~~the~~ it may result in the calling of a new jury panel. One hundred and fifty men and women have been called to appear as possible jurors on January second. From them the twelve jurors to try Hauptmann were to have been picked. It turns out that some of the hundred and fifty have received pamphlets through the mail, pamphlets giving a fictitious account of a supposed case in which a man accused of kidnapping an aviator's child was acquitted. The pamphlet is a kind of fiction story. The names were not the same as in the Lindbergh case, but something similar, something like Lindbergh, something like Hauptmann.

Who sent it? At the first glance some might have suspected it ~~might~~ be a trick of some one interested in the defense, to persuade the jurors. But it's nothing of the sort.

The pamphlet was written and mailed by Mrs. Mary Belle Spencer, a Chicago lawyer. She was in the news not so long ago when the Chicago Board of Education brought her on the carpet, because her two daughters of twelve and fourteen had never been to school. Mrs.

Spencer replied that they didn't need to go to school, because they were educating themselves by reading the records of court proceedings and also the Congressional Record. That seemed an odd idea, especially the Congressional Record part of it. And now the lady has had still another odd idea -- that of sending to possible jurors in the Hauptmann case a fiction story closely suggesting the Lindbergh kidnapping, in which the man accused was found not guilty.

Both the prosecution and the lawyers defending Hauptmann believe that this peculiar pamphlet-incident may make it necessary to call an entirely different list of possible jurors.

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JOHNSON

Christmas cheer for General Johnson, and Donald Richberg, the man who succeeded him in command of the N.R.A. They needed the spirit of Christmas because unpleasantness began when Mr. Richberg warned the Saturday Evening Post, which is printing some articles by General Johnson. "If there's any libel in those articles, the magazine will have to stand the consequences."

Libel is not such a Christmasey word. It's more in the spirit of Blue Monday or Black Friday.

General Johnson responded with a characteristic Johnsonian fling. "Donald is a high official," he growled. "Why doesn't he stand on his legal rights and sue for libel, not attempt to use his position to threaten the freedom of the press. It's just a symptom," the General snorted, "of the ants of conscience in Donald's pants."

It was sad, sad, especially at this glad peace and good-will time of year, to hear such eminent gentlemen talking about law suits and libel; also about conscience, and termites in the trousers. But Christmas prevails. It always does. Not even could Donald and the General resist the Yuletide spirit.

RADIO

That record radio "Merry Christmas"^{to} day reminds us of some of the long distance conversation that's been going on these days. Last week we worked on a Fox Movietone news-picture of an England to Australia radio conversation in which the Duke of Gloucester in Australia launched a ship in England. This time it's holiday greetings between the Chatham, Massachusetts Station of the Radio Marine Corporation and a British Aviator flying a mail plane over Persia, nearly nine thousand miles away. They had a brief talk, the aviator telling ~~that~~^{how} he was just preparing to land to refuel in the romantic ^{Persian} old city of Jask. Then from Massachusetts flashed the cheery closing salutation of Merry Christmas. And from ~~Persia~~^{Persia} the response came -- "Happy New Year".

The previous record of the Chatham station ~~is~~ for long distance conversation with an airplane was a chat with Mrs. Lindbergh when she and the Colonel were flying over the Pacific.

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SANTA CLAUS

Pope Pius' Christmas greeting from Rome lays emphasis on the Biblical injunction for peace on earth, and concersely is a denunciation of those who want war.

An hour or so ago, President Roosevelt lighted the national Christmas tree in Lafayette Park, Washington.

In South America, where Christmas a summer affair Santa Claus finds it impossible to use a sleigh. There isn't any snow. He might arrive in a bathing suit. But, he has solved his problem in another way. This year he'll arrive by plane and parachute. Twenty thousand Chilean children, gathered at the Jockey Club, will see the plane soar over head and then watch Saint Nick in crimson coat and pants and a full set of whiskers bail out and flutter to earth.

In China the children will be visited by Dun Che Lao Ren. China is not a Christian land, but Christmas customs have caught on; and they call Santa Claus: "Dun Che Lao Ren," which means "Christmas Old Man", - so's your old Man. Well, I hope that the Christmas Old Man will visit all you folks tonight and fill your new stockings.

FAIRY TALE

Christmas is an appropriate time for fairy tales -- which are inclined to be political these days. I don't mean that the politicians tell us fairy tales -- though that also is true. ^{This time,} It's a case of Mother Goose stories being given a political interpretation.

The Moscow Communists did that sort of thing elaborately when they revamped all the old stories to fit the new proletarian ideology -- turning kings into commissars and giants and dragons into bourgeois enemies of the working class.

But the latest example is ^{not} ~~in~~ Red Russia ^{It's} Nazi German -- With Hitler represented as the young prince in the tale of the Sleeping Beauty. At the annual convention of the National Socialist School Teachers in Berlin, the school masters and marms were informed that the old story really means that the sleeping beauty is the German soul. And when the young prince kisses the sleeping beauty and wakes her up -- why that really means Hitler awakening the German soul with a kiss.

The Muscovite Bolsheviks, who began the political revision of old stories, have meanwhile been drifting the other way. After seventeen years of a Communist Utopia, Red Russia is getting

back its sense of humor. The grim lords of the Kremlin in addition to their new reign of terror, are now permitting their proletarians to smile. For the first time, they've sanctioned the making of a comic film, in which such rough-house jokes are permitted as a scene in which a pig drinks a lot of vodka, climbs up on the dining-room table and passes out cold on a platter - stewed but not roasted. A near-sighted guest salts and peppers the animal, takes a knife and fork and starts to eat the pig, which thereupon objects in the liveliest possible way.

Then there's another scene in which a cow drinks some of that vodka and passes out and they put her to bed with a fashionable lady who is sound asleep. When the lady wakes up and sees the cow beside her, she says: "Oh you handsome Commissar" and that's when the hilarious fun begins. That new Soviet comedy smash-hit is said to include one of the greatest fights ever seen in a movie in addition to the cow in bed. It's a fight in a symphony orchestra. The climax shows the French-horn player fkat on the floor, his horn still glued to his lips. As the scrap surges over him, the battlers step in his stomach, one big

foot after another stamps down on his Solar Plexus which causes the horn to tootle in an ~~astor~~ astonishing way.

The resurgence, the resurrection of the Russian sense of humor is so pronounced that even the official Communist newspapers are poking fun at some of the more solemn exaggeration of Marxian proletarianism. The official Kremlin newspaper, Ivestia, tells of an enthusiastic Communist who has given his five children a remarkable set of proletarian names. One boy is called "Communist Youth International". A girl is named "Leninism Is Our Guide". While still another Daughter is named after the rescue of the Soviet Arctic Expedition a few months ago. Her name is "Camp of Schmidt in the Arctic." One can imagine a despairing lover sigh:- "How cold you are "Camp of Schmidt in the Arctic". When are you going to thaw?"

That's too proletarian even for the Soviets.

But whoa there! You'll pull me through the floor. That's Dick, the daring engineer, yanking at the string on my arm. Meaning it's time for me to say: Merry Xmas and SO LONG UNTIL TOMORROW.