

P.T. - Lunoco. Thursday, July 17, 1941.

WAR

The greatest of all battles is being fought. In this Nazi-Soviet war we've had an abundance of ~~xx~~ superlatives. The greatest, the largest, the most gigantic. And yet, it takes superlatives to state the case. So great are the armies and the distances. Berlin tonight tells of a stupendous battle along the entire front of eighteen hundred miles. Nine million men locked in a struggle ~~of~~ mad violence - nine million men and an incalculable weight of machines.

Berlin pictures a supreme Blitzkrieg ~~xxxx~~ assault all along the front from the Baltic to the Black Sea, and claims that the Red Army has thrown into the ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Maelstrom the last of its reserves. The Nazis admit that the red forces are attacking fiercely. ~~counteracting fiercely~~ They've been doing that for days now, launching savage counter-drives to stop the plunging and advance of the Nazi war machine. Concerning the importance of the battle, Berlin says, "Probably will decide the fate of the whole Soviet German War."

The German high command is still silent, and even the propaganda accounts given out in Berlin do not specify places to

any extent. There are two exceptions. One is Kishinev, the capital of Bessarabia. The German and Rumanian troops are said to have captured that important city, which, however, is in the southern zone, the less important zone.

The other city named is- Smolensk, and that is important. Nazi spokesmen today announced the capture of Smolensk, that important railroad center and vital objective along the road to Moscow. The claim is ^{all} the more plausible, because Moscow had previously told of fighting near Smolensk - indicating that the German Panzer columns ^{after} ~~have~~ got there, a long advance. In this, the Soviet war bulletins have followed the customary pattern - telling of success at one place, and then, of success at another place ^{to the} rear, implying a retreat. For days, the reds claimed a victorious resistance at Vitebsk. Now suddenly they announce ^{that they are} ~~they are~~ fighting near Smolensk, which is a long drive to the east from Vitebsk.

One ~~thing~~ thing of the utmost importance is that Smolensk would seem to be inside the Stalin line. If the Germans have got there, they've smashed through that much extolled series of Red

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Army fortifications. Or have they? It's hard to tell where the Stlain line is. News accounts and maps have located it at various places from time to time, now here and now there. So maybe the Stalin line is like a party line - it changes.

These are the broad outlines in the monster clash of arms, which unquestionably deserves the superlative - the greatest of battles.

COMMISSARS

The reestablishment of political commissars in the Red army may be highly significant. After the war with Finland, the winter before last, communist functionaries were shorn of their high preogative. They were ~~deprived~~ deprived of their share in the actual military command of Soviet units. They were limited to the business of giving political instruction to the soldiers - to keep them strong in the red faith of the proletarian revolution and loyal to Stalin. At the time, we heard ^{that} the change was made because ~~the~~ ^{by} meddling ~~of the~~ ^{the} ~~ix~~ political commissars was partly responsible for ~~the~~ ^{the} bad ~~showing~~ the red army made in Finland.

Now, however, they ^{are} ~~are~~ restored to power. This is officially announced in Moscow. As representatives of the Communist party, they ^{are} ~~are~~ to share authority with the officers commanding the troops in battle. Making it - a dual command. Every military order is ^{to} ~~to~~ be signed by the political commissar as well as the commander.

What's the reason for this? The official Moscow dispatch gives us the following:- "War", It says, ["] ~~It~~ has demanded that our

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political workers do not confine their activities to propaganda, but also to assume responsibility for military operations at the fronts." Just what that means is not clear, but the suspicion is it's a move by Stalin for the communist party to keep closer control over the officers of the Red Army. The commissars have a special duty which the Moscow dispatch describes in these words:- "Uproot cowards, panic mongers and deserters." They ^{are} ~~are~~ also ordered to report on the behavior of officers in the units to which they are attached. It is easy to surmise that this has a good deal to do with the suppression of possible discontent and sedition in the Red Army.

Stalin once defined the function of the commissars in these words: "The commander is the head of the regiment," said Stalin, "And, the commissar is the father and soul of the regiment.

VICTORY

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We have one bit of vivid detail about a British Air Raid today. There were attacks on various German centers - the biggest R.A.F. daylight assault. At the great Dutch harbor of Rotterdam, twenty-two Nazi-operated ships were blasted - totaling more than a hundred and forty thousand tons. And the London account tells us that ~~xxx~~ when the British Air squadrons roared over Rotterdam they were in V-shaped formation. "V" -- for victory. This -- as a dramatic act in the striking victory campaign the British are conducting. Propaganda in the countries occupied by the Nazis. People incited to mark the letter "V" on houses and walls. Symbol of the victory that will free them from Nazi domination.

So the British bombers at Rotterdam flew in the shape of the letter "V". They roared low over the housetops, still in the form of that letter of victory. And the London story tells us ~~xxx~~ they were wildly cheered by the people of Rotterdam. They then dropped their bombs on the harbor.

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In London today a member of Parliament proposed the formation of a special V department of political warfare.

He recommended the regular use of the morse code letter in all foreign broadcasts originating in Britain. And then there's the story of a wing Commander in the Australian Air Force who has written a victory song - in tempo of the Morse Code for "V". Three short beats and a long one.

In Berlin a propaganda representative today admitted that the marking of "V" was on the increase in the conquered countries. He said it was an expression of peoples' hope for a German victory over Communist Russia. That sounds ~~like~~ like a tall one -- the Nazis trying to take over the British "V" campaign for ~~thex~~ themselves.

LINDBURGH

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There was a lively exchange of words today in the great Lindbergh-Ickes duel. An appeal to the White House, the famous flyer protesting to the President against things that Secretary of the Interior Ickes has had to say about him. The other night for example, when the secretary called the aviator "The knight of the German eagle", and accused ~~kingder~~ Lindbergh of presenting what Ickes called, "The Nazi party line."

Lindbergh says that Ickes has been accusing him of being connected with the interests of a foreign government, and asks for a presidential investigation. The Lindbergh letter reads in part as follows:- "Mr. President, I give you my word that I have no connection with any foreign government. I've had no communication directly ~~of~~ or indirectly with anyone in Germany or Italy since I was last in ~~Europe~~ Europe - in the spring of nineteen thirty-nine.

"Prior to that time", the letter continues, "My activities were well known to your embassies in the countries where I lived and traveled."

Then Lindbergh goes on to refer to the much talked about decoration that he received in Berlin - a favorite subject for

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attack by Ickes. "Mr. President", he writes, "Is it too much to ask that you inform your secretary of the Interior that I was ~~awarded~~ decorated by the German Government while I was carrying out the request of your Ambassador to that Government?" Is it unfair for me to ^{ask} ~~ask~~ you to inform your Secretary that I received this decoration in the American embassy in the presence of your ambassador, and that I was there at his request?

The letter from Lindbergh to the President concludes as follows: "If there is no question in your mind, I ask that you give me the opportunity to answer any charge made against me.

From the White House came a quick response - an intimation that Lindbergh's request for a Presidential investigation was made for publicity. Presidential secretary Steve Early referred to the fact that the communication to the White House had been given to the newspaper ^s for publication.

And Secretary of the Interior Ickes made a prompt rejoinder. He denied saying that Lindbergh had any Nazi-Fascist connection. "I never said at any time that he was connected with the interests of a foreign government," declared Ickes. To which he

added that if Lindbergh were what he called - "An outstanding American", he would return the German decoration he received - no matter how he happened to get it.

The Secretary also made a retort to a letter sent to him by the Brooklyn chapter of the America First Committee. This letter proposed that Ickes take six months off and tour the country on a smear campaign in a big way. "After you have completed your six months' service," says the American first letter, "You might then lend-lease yourself to the British Government. They might be willing to fly you to Germany a la Hess. We are sure," "The epistle from Brooklyn concludes, "That one or two blasts of your mud ~~xix~~ would blow Hitler right off the map."

To this the secretary replied in the following words:

"I didn't know that ^{the} dog days came ^{so} ~~that~~ early in Brooklyn." And then he coined ~~that~~ sounds to me like a new grammatical form.

Speaking of the Brooklyn letter, he ~~xxxxxx~~ called it "Smart alecness." That's new and elegant, and suggests a whole series of similar locutions. You might speak of "American firstness or, Harold Ickesness."

HALIFAX

At Los Angeles today, there was a display of aristocratic British courtesy. Lord Halifax arrived to pay a visit to aviation factories building war planes for Britain - and he was picketed. He was received at city hall and there found a picket line of women. They said they represented American mothers **opposed** to war. They carried banners not at all complimentary to the ambassador. One read - "Bundle up Halifax to Britain." On another placard was inscribed, "welcome, Lord Halifax."

Confronted by the women pickets carrying the signs, Lord Halifax smiled with grave courtesy and tipped his hat to them - just as formally as if he were greeting a duchess or ^{two} ~~one~~ in London.

YOO HOO

Today the general was officially upheld in the great yoo-hoo episode. The war Department supports Lieutenant General Ben Lear and his ^{idea of} ~~rigors of~~ discipline. This was announced in Washington by under-secretary of War Patterson, who said:- "We always support our generals. Where would we be otherwise?"

He added that the incident had been exaggerated, although he admitted that it made a fine news story. Which reminds me of a poem, I ~~received in the mail today~~, a clipping from a newspaper. It's a version of Yankee Doodle, and one stanza goes like this -
to the tune of Yankee Doodle:

"A bunch of troops came riding by
And cried - 'What's here before us:'
A lot of girls in snappy shorts
'Yoo-hoo' they ^{cried in} ~~circled~~ chorus.
Yankee Doodle keep it up
Yankee Doodle Dandy
Mind the music and the step
And with the girls be - always rigidly conventional.

RAIN

In a newspaper at Albany yesterday a poem was printed, a lyrical effusion that had to do with the weather. In the area of Albany~~x~~, no rain had fallen for two weeks, and the farmers were becoming desperate. The drought was so bad that it inspired one farmer's wife to poetry - Mrs. Ella Fuller. Her verses were printed, and it went like this:-

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"The farmer's toil, his calloused hand,
His honest pride in his hallowed land,
All his hopes for a job well done
Lie ~~here~~^{sere} and blighted in the sun.
The drouth lies low on the land again:
God, send us rain:
Send us rain.

That appeared yesterday, and this morning a downpour hit Albany. It has been raining heavily all day - over a large section of the east, in fact.

RESCUE

This morning at the entrance of New York harbor, a steamboat from Sandy Hook was navigating along, when a strange object was spied at sea. The boat investigated, and found a young woman sitting in an automobile inner tube. You know the way people float around in the water, supported by an inner tube. They rescued her, and she was able to give them a smile- although she had been drifting out on the deep blue ever since yesterday. She is Eleanore Maldonado, nineteen year old daughter of a minister. Yesterday, she went to the shore near Cedar Beach, New Jersey, and splashed out into the water with her inflated inner ~~inner~~ tube. The ocean was calm, and it ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ was pleasant to float idly, sitting in the tube. She mused with day dreams, ^and didn't notice the passage of time. Nor did ~~she~~ she notice that an off- shore breeze was blowing her out to sea.

Then she happened to look toward shore, and saw it was a long distance away. Too far for anybody to see her and discover her ~~plight~~ plight. She shouted for help, but it was no use. She continued to drift further out, and night came on. During the hours of darkness she saw the lights of passing ships,

8 1/2 and tried to hail them - but they couldn't hear her. She kept herself from growing numb, by switching ~~her~~ her position and kicking her legs. ~~And so on and so on--~~ *And so on and so on--* ~~And so~~ *through* all ~~during~~ the night.

Meanwhile, her disappearance had been reported. There was a frantic hunt for her along the shore, and it was supposed that she had drowned. But ~~this~~ morning, as the Sandy Hook boat went chugging along, there she was, sitting in an inner tube - out at sea. She's no worse for the strange misadventure, suffering a bit from exposure - but nothing serious.

9 1/4 I wish I knew what make inner tube it was. Anyhow it saved Eleanor's life — and they ought to sell like hot cakes, eh Hugh?