Capital Notes

BY I. F. STONE

Washington, April 4

AFFIEST bit of Washington correspondence in a long time was a Chicago Tribune story from the capital which was also carried here last week by Cissie Patterson's Times-Herald. The dispatch, by Walter Trohan, quoted "word... from the underground of patriots" in occupied Europe that American short-wave propaganda "extolling the Soviets" was hurting the Allied cause. American broadcasts, according to the Chicago Tribune's secret underground sources, confirmed Nazi propaganda "that Britain has betrayed the small nations into the hands of the Bolsheviks and that the deal has been made with the consent of the United States." The broadcasts, as a result, were "increasing the efficiency of so-called slave labor in German industry. In deciding to throw in their lot with the Nazis as against the Reds," Trohan reports, straight from the underground, "many captive workers no longer attempt to delay production." Note the phrase "so-called." OWI sources declare that short-wave broadcasts about the Soviet Union have been objective news reports, but these reports in recent months, of course, have consistently told of victories. Perhaps the Chicago Tribune thinks it would encourage the underground more if we spread word that Hitler was winning.

When the history of this period comes to be written, I believe it will be found that the State Department and not North African influence was largely responsible for the abrogation of the Cremieux decree of 1870, which conferred French citizenship on the Jews of Algeria. I do not know who the "unbiased specialist" was whom Under Secretary Welles quoted in his letter to Baron Edouard de Rothschild, but the State Department "specialist" with whom I discussed the problem several months ago was extraordinarily vague and flighty on his facts and reflected the anxiety of some forces within the department to find an excuse for abrogating the Cremieux decree.

The European division of the department, which has always been pro-Franco and anti-Soviet, is also streaked with anti-Semitism, and in the case of the Cremieux decree seem to have maneuvered the Under Secretary, who is above the State Department average, into being its spokesman. A. A. Berle, Jr., is one of those who have opposed sending a Jew to North Africa lest it "offend the Arabs" (on the same principle one ought also to object to sending a Christian). But the people who show such consideration for the supposed susceptibilities of the Arabs were also the ones who supported the appointment of Peyrouton as Governor General of Algeria, though Peyrouton's previous service as Governor General of Tunisia had made his name synonymous with persecution of Arab nationalism.

Representatives Warren G. Magnuson and John M. Coffee of Washington are forming a group of progressive members of the House to take up with the War Department charges made by the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. Two veterans who fought in Spain with the brigade have distinguished themselves in New Guinea, where one was decorated with the Distinguished Service Cross by General MacArthur. Five hundred members of the brigade are in the American armed forces, and three hundred more are in the merchant marine, where eight have lost their lives. There are branches of the government which realize that the experience of these men in Spain makes them of particular value—I can say no more—in some of the military tasks ahead of us. But the brigade claims that there have been many cases of discrimination against veterans of the Spanish War, some of whom have been barred from combat duty and from advancement. One of the men the brigade declares was barred from combat service is John Gates, now a sergeant in the United States Army. Vincent Sheean and Herbert Matthews have written of the courage and skill in combat Gates showed in Spain as morale officer of the Fifteenth International Brigade.

It takes a little while to catch on to the extent to which Washington is a Jim Crow town. Although the Negro press reaches 4,000,000 readers each week, its correspondents are barred from the House and Senate press galleries and from White House press conferences. The Washington correspondents, though as likable and pleasant a crowd as one can meet anywhere, are dominated in this respect by Southern mores. I came up against this myself the other day—if I may be forgiven a personal note—when I asked William H. Hastie to lunch. I had never met the Judge before and wanted to talk with him of his experiences in the War Department, where he had served for two years as civilian aide to Secretary Stimson. Judge Hastie is a Negro, and on inquiry I found that the only place I could take a Negro to lunch was...
Hitler’s Last Year of Hope

BY PETER SAAR

The German High Command’s concept of the strategy that would promise success to the Reich was the same in 1914 as it was in 1939. It called for a surprise attack of overpowering force, preservation of the initiative, and a campaign of brief duration ending with a total victory for German arms. A blitzkrieg is indeed the only strategy adapted to the geographic, economic, and military situation of Germany.

In 1914 the German troops went into battle in the belief that they would be home again in a few weeks. France’s mobilization had not been completed, and French soil was occupied as if it were a field of maneuver. The rapid forward thrust got as far as the Marne. There, in September of the first year of war, General Joffre brought the German offensive to a halt. The battle of the Marne has understandably assumed legendary proportions in both Germany and France, for it decided the First World War. The Marne miracle enabled France, with the aid of its allies, to gird for the final struggle, which lasted another fifty months.

The Second World War started out like the First. Who in Germany would even remotely have thought of defeat in June, 1940? France had been overrun, and to every German the conquest of England seemed a matter of weeks. But two years later the Reich again faced the fateful dilemma from which Hitler thought his military and political preparations had saved it.

The compulsion to wage a ruthless campaign with quick and decisive victories presents the German General Staff with a clearly outlined dual task: (1) the destruction of enemy power, that is, of the enemy’s fighting forces; (2) the occupation of enemy bases for armament and supply. If these two objectives cannot be attained in the first onslaught, if, after overcoming the element of surprise, the opponent has time and opportunity to reinforce and regroup his armies, to secure their supply, and to mobilize allies, then the Reich has only the choice between immediate capitulation and a protracted war of attrition. Choice of the latter leaves but one chance of victory for Germany—the undermining of the enemy’s morale, the collapse of his home front. It is no longer a problem in strategy; it is a matter of speculation.

A war of attrition forces Germany constantly to conquer new supply bases for the ever-growing needs of that war. But every such move reduces its man-power reserves; so that in the event of a prolonged war and superior enemy strategy, the moment must come when the Reich no longer has enough hands to hold and utilize what it has conquered.

When in the second half of October, 1918, discussion in Imperial German headquarters revolved around the question whether the Ukraine could be given up and the last divisions left there sent to the west, General Ludendorff warned: “The Supreme Command, with the
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