The Lyons Den
By Leonard Lyons

At the Peshawar trial this week ex-Premier Reynaud recalled the surrender of Belgium. One noted correspondent needed no reminder. For some time the O.W.I. had asked him to stand by and comment on Reynaud’s broadcasts. He had listened carefully, but a burst of heavy static drowned out the first few sentences of the Premier’s speech. Then Reynaud discussed allied Unity. France’s determination to fight, etc. The speech ended and the correspondent had to take the mike. He struggled to interpret this seemingly unimportant speech. He spoke of hidden meanings, of unknown considerations which must have prompted Reynaud, etc., etc., struggling on and on for 3 minutes. Now aware that in the first two Reynaud sentences drowned out by the static, the Premier of France had announced the news of Belgium’s surrender.

Despite Congress’ decision to take its vacation now, the Moral War Investigating Committee will work through the summer. Its members will investigate the aluminum plants in the northwest and make a survey of reconversion in the aircraft industry. When a Fortune writer, preparing an article on the never published Robert Woodruff, head of Coca-Cola, interviewed Walter S. Mack, head of Pepsi-Cola, Mr. Mack’s sole comment was: "Bob Woodruff is a good friend of mine and I like him."

Just before Gen. Patton returned to Europe he attended a dinner at which George Jessel was master of ceremonies. Jessel told a few stories, then introduced Gen. Jimmy Doolittle; he told a few more stories, then introduced Patton. These are two real heroes in this room tonight,” said Patton. “Two truly brave men. The first, unquestionably, is Jimmy Doolittle. And the second is George Jessel, who must be very brave because tonight he dared to tell one joke which I first heard at the Academy back in 1929.”

Orson Welles’ radio series in the fall will consist of straight newscasting. The Marine combat correspondents who wrote "The U.S. Marines at Iwo Jima" tell their friends: “This’ll give you a peek at what went on in that bloody piece of real estate.”

The 21st Bomber Command has named a 3 B-26s after the Marine division that fought on Iwo, because within 100 days after the island was taken 213 B-26s were saved by landing there. The 9,000 crew members’ lives saved thereby were more than double the number of Marines killed in taking the island.

Ronald Balsam of the El Morocco set, the ex-husband of Millie Rogers, received his Navy discharge and is back in civilian tuxedos.

War correspondents who headed straight from the Queen Mary to Billingsley’s Stock Club reported none of the remarkable details of a red-eyeplayboy flight: "The 13,000 troops aboard ate 60,000 eggs each day of the flight. When the soldiers boarded the ship they were assigned, given tags specifying the "Army" to which they were assigned. There are 3 shipboard Arms—Red, White and Blue—each "Army" must remain in its section of the ship. Otherwise, if 13,000 men were to rush to one section, the ship’s balance would be tipped. The troops eat so much bacon that, as soon as the ship leaves N.Y. for England, the kitchen men start slicing bacon in preparation for the return voyage. There are two drills a day. The first calls for all men on deck. That’s to make it possible to clean the rooms. The second calls for all men to go to their quarters now. And that’s to make it possible to clean the decks.

Call Tinney, the humorist-columnist, is back after two years in the C.B.I. Theatre. During those two years Tinney refused all promotions, resolved to become the only back-private left in the Army. "But last week while I was on a train, someone jabbed me in the back," he lamented. "And now, alas, I’m a PFC," said Tommy and Jimmy Durante may do a joint 15-minute music-and-talk program for a morning radio show.

Dr. Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of Penicillin, told New Yorkers in the night spots he visited this week that they’re paying too much for Penicillin, and that he’d like to see the price cut to the absolute minimum.

George Frideric of Life magazine is a friend of the John Steinbecks and is working on the new Steinbeck book. When Mrs. Steinbeck and her son and nurse arrived in N.Y. this week they found it difficult to find a New York hotel room. A mutual friend telephoned Frideric and suggested: "Why don’t you let them use your apartment?" After all, George, you could move to the Princeton Club. That wouldn’t take long, would it?"

"For me," replied Boston-born, Harvard grad Frideric, "it would take four years and two days.”

David Selznick entered into a business deal with a N.Y. producer for the orth of one phase of his many enterprises. They shook hands when the contract was signed, and made a solemn pact: "We will have no secrets from each other. No secrets whatsoever." Then they adjourned to the producer’s midtown apartment to celebrate the new association: "The telephone rang, and the producer’s butler whispered something into his employer’s ear. "Excuse me, David,” the host said to Selznick, "but I’ve got to take that phone in the other room.” “Other room?” said Selznick. "Didn’t we make an agreement that we wouldn’t have any secrets from each other? “That’s right,” said his new associate. “But this is long-distance.”

Crosby Gilge, the veteran showman, in reviewing some of his theatrical experiences, discussed his on-time partnership with Jed Harris. "It was not just a shabby, million dollar association," said Gilge, "but one of those few million-dollar affairs and was so firmly founded on matters of the soul and the spirit that even Jed himself could not have damaged it. In fact, I severed my purely social connection with George Bernard Shaw just because Mr. Shaw objected to Jed’s calling him ‘Beryl.’”
Schwellenbach Names Two Aides

WASHINGTON, Aug. 2—Appointment of John W. Gibson of Detroit and Albert Abrahamson of Brunswick, Me., as special assistants to the Secretary of Labor was announced today by Secretary Schwellenbach. Mr. Gibson, who had been president of the CIO Michigan State Council, will be associated with Carl Moran and Daniel W. Tracy, assistant secretaries, in the task of reorganizing the department. Mr. Abrahamson, who was assistant executive director of the War Refugee Board, will assist Mr. Moran.
April 17, 1945

: Miss Janet K. Cordell
: David White

Subject: Mr. Albert Abrahamson

For your information Mr. Albert Abrahamson has made no other employment arrangements and is to be carried in a leave without pay status until further notice.

Mr. Albert Abrahamson

We have been carrying you on the rolls of the War Refugee Board in a leave without pay status since January 27, 1945. It is our understanding that you have accepted a position in a private enterprise in New York; therefore, we assume that you may desire to resign from the Board. Included is a resignation form for your use.

We recently moved to the Sloane Building, 10th Street, N.W., Fifth floor. Best wishes to you.

Very truly yours,

David White
Administrative Officer
March 29, 1945

Mr. Albert Abrahamson
C/o Moses Leavitt
Joint Distribution Committee
270 Madison Avenue
New York, New York

We have received your letter of December 29th
and the War Refugee Board to become effective
M. Leavitt

Dear Mr. Abrahamson:

We are with reluctance and deep regret that
accept your resignation. In view of the period de-
noted above, it is our understanding that you have accepted
position in a private enterprise in New York; therefore, we assume
that you may desire to resign from the Board. Enclosed is a
resignation form for your use.

We recently moved to the Sloane Building, 12th Street,
N. W., Fifth floor. Best wishes to you.

Very truly yours,

David White
Assistant Executive Director
War Refugee Board
Washington, D. C.
December 8, 1944

Dear Jim:

In view of the marked decline in the volume of War Refugee Board operations, I accept your resignation. In view of the marked decline in the volume of War Refugee Board operations, and I can understand your desire to leave the Board at this time. I hope that we shall have an opportunity to discuss the matter in more detail in the near future.

Sincerely yours,

Albert Abrahamson

Mr. Albert Abrahamson,
Mr. Assistant Executive Director,
Exec War Refugee Board,
War Washington, D. C.

Washington, D. C.

JWP:shd 12/9/44
December 8, 1944

Dear John:

In view of the sharp decline in the volume of War Refugee Board activity, and in further view of the planned transfer of its remaining functions elsewhere, I hereby submit my resignation from the position of Assistant Executive Director. This resignation is to be effective on December 31, 1944.

Ten months with the Board have been both rewarding and instructive to me. I am grateful to you for arranging for me to join the Board in its important work and for the many courtesies you have shown me during our association.

Sincerely yours,

Albert Abrahamson

Mr. John W. Pehle,
Executive Director,
War Refugee Board,
Washington, D.C.
Memorandum re: Albert Abrahamson  
February 11, 1944

1. Serial Number ASN-32966288.


3. Residence, 1530 16th Street, N. W., Dupont 8063.

4. Previous employment experience:
   a. Executive Director of National Refugee Service, July 1941 to May 1943.
   b. Teacher and professor of economics, Bowdoin College since 1925. Now on leave from position of Associate Professor of Economics.

5. Military record:
   a. Draft Board No. 5 Cumberland County, Maine, Room 612, 143 Congress Street, Portland, Maine.
   b. Inducted June 7, 1943.
   c. Passed 38th birthday on November 4, 1943.

His particular qualification for the staff of the War"
(Draft of letter to be sent (if necessary) to Stimson or McCloy)

To expedite the work of the War Refugee Board it is necessary to proceed immediately to recruit a small staff of experts. It is particularly essential that I procure the services of an individual with a first-hand knowledge of the operations of the private agencies engaged in refugee work.

A canvass of the field indicates that the best available person is Albert Abrahamson, now a private in the Army of the United States. His A.S.N. is 32966288 and he is assigned to the Office of Strategic Services, Presentation Division. He was inducted on June 7, 1943 and attained the age of 38 on November 4, 1943.

His particular qualification for the staff of the War Refugee Board lies in the fact that for 22 months preceding his induction into the Army he was Executive Director of the National Refugee Service, a private organization with headquarters in New York City. During his service as Executive Director of this agency, he had occasion to be in contact with most of the important public and private individuals and agencies in the field, and to acquire a mastery of the problems involved. He is thus in a position to give the Board the immediate benefits of these experiences. His broader qualifications are further indicated by his service since 1928 as a member of the economics faculty at Bowdoin
College, and by his experience (while on leave from Bowdoin) on several public and private assignments, one of which was to serve as State Administrator of the W.P.A. for Maine from 1935 to 1937.

Since it is my conviction that the services of Mr. Abrahamson are essential to the proper and efficient conduct of the activities of the War Refugee Board, I am requesting that you arrange for his honorable discharge from the Army.

It is my understanding that there are provisions for the honorable discharge of an enlisted man "for the convenience of the government" when "based on the enlisted man's importance to national health, safety, or interest". In this connection you will recall that the President's Executive Order, creating the War Refugee Board, contained the following declaration:

"It is the policy of this Government to take all measures within its power to rescue the victims of enemy oppression who are in imminent danger of death and otherwise to afford such victims all possible relief and assistance consistent with the successful prosecution of the war."