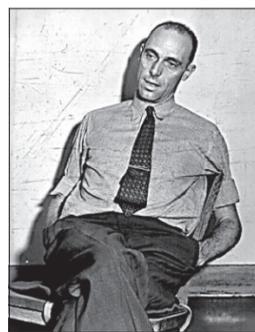


OUR CENTURY

1943

AT A GLANCE

Tornadoes hit area; 2 killed, hundreds hurt



C.G. Andrus

The worst tornadoes to hit Northeastern Ohio since the Lorain tornado of 1924 swept through the area the evening of April 27, killing two boys in a barn near Medina and injuring more than 100 people in Akron and 45 in Cleveland.

Sixty homes were destroyed in Akron and about 100

houses were unroofed in Cleveland, where the tornado cut a path from Edgewater Park to just south of downtown. Damage was estimated at \$2 million in Akron, \$1 million in Cleveland and \$200,000 in Medina County. Civilian defense workers and auxiliary police patrolled the damaged neighborhoods, joined by Naval Reserve members and Boy Scouts.

The Red Cross opened two offices to find shelter for the 500 Clevelanders left homeless. Weatherman C.G. Andrus said he could not discuss the conditions which brought about the tornadoes because of censorship regulations.

There was little respite from the war, even in the theaters. The Beach Cliff in Rocky River was showing "Commandos Strike at Dawn" and the Lexington, on E. 55th St., had "Chetniks," about Yugoslav partisans. "Casablanca" seemed to be everywhere.

In nonwar fare, the Maple Heights offered "Tarzan Triumphs" and the Stillwell in Bedford had Our Gang in "Family Trouble," with

the cartoon "Der Fuehrer's Face" as an added attraction. The Radio Council offered a list of recommended radio shows. It included newscasters Edward R. Murrow, Lowell Thomas and Raymond Gram Swing and quiz shows such as "Information Please," "Truth or Consequences" and "Quiz Kids."

Topping the variety shows were "The Great Gildersleeve," Jack Benny, Charlie McCarthy, Fred Allen, "Duffy's Tavern" and Fibber McGee and Molly. Musical shows included "The American Album of Familiar Music," Fred Waring, "Your Hit Parade" and the Cleveland Orchestra.

Drama shows: "One Man's Family," "Mr. District Attorney," "Counter Spy" and the Screen Guild Players.

President Franklin Roosevelt decreed that baseball should continue because it was vital to the morale of servicemen and war workers. But players were "nonessential" workers subject to the draft, and it was becoming a game of 4-Fs and players past their prime.

Because of wartime travel restrictions, the Indians' spring training was at Purdue University in Indiana. The team started fast as usual, then faltered, also as usual, winding up in third place behind New York and Washington. The leaders were Jim Bagby Jr., who won 17 games, and rightfielder Roy Cullenbine, who batted .289 with 24 home runs.

Other professional teams also suffered from the draft. The Rams had a unique situation: Their owners, Dan Reeves and Fred Levy, were officers in the Army Air Corps. The league allowed the Rams to suspend operations for the duration of the war with the right to retain their players, who, meanwhile, would be distributed among other teams. Two other franchises, the Pittsburgh Steelers and Philadelphia Eagles, combined temporarily. They were known as the "Steagles."

Football fans still had college and high school games. Notre Dame defeated Navy 33-6 before 82,000 at the Stadium, and the Cathedral Latin Lions beat the Lincoln Presidents 18-12 before 40,000 in The Plain Dealer Charity Game. The loss broke a 29-game undefeated streak for Lincoln.

Bill Cook had been promoted to general manager of the Barons and his brother, Bun, succeeded him as coach. The team won the Western Division of the American Hockey League behind the high-scoring line of Lou Trudel, Tommy Burlington and Les Cunningham. Alas, the Barons lost to the Hershey Bears in the first round of the Calder Cup playoffs.

Frank Lausche, who had won his first term as mayor with a record margin in 1941, topped it in 1943. He defeated Edward Stanton, former county prosecutor, by 65,000 votes, and turned his attention to the governor's race. Democrats strengthened their control of City Council, which they had won in 1941 and would not relinquish for the rest of the century.

Clevelanders cheerfully put up with rationing

By Fred McGunagle

Never had the government had so much control over the lives of Americans. It told them how much meat they could eat by issuing ration coupons — and when the word spread, say, that "Fisher's has hamburger," they quickly lined up, clutching their red stamps.

Different-colored coupons allowed people to buy sugar, coffee, soup, butter, canned fish, fuel oil, shoes and sometimes even whiskey. By rationing tires and gasoline, the government told Americans how far they could drive — basically to work and back, and if they could take the streetcar or a bicycle, they were expected to do that instead.

The Office of Price Administration told farmers, factories and merchants how much they could charge for their products. Censors told Americans what they could read about the war. Draft boards told 3,000 to 4,000 young Clevelanders a month where they must work — in the Armed Forces. The draftees now included 18- and 19-year-olds, and by year's end, would include fathers.

Meanwhile, the War Manpower Commission told civilians where they could work: As 1943 began, it "froze" more than 300,000 Cuyahoga County residents in their jobs, forcing them to seek permission for any change. Housewives hesitated to take jobs for fear they might not be able to quit if they had a domestic emergency; the commission irrationally explained that the order was known as a "freeze" because "stabilization" wouldn't fit in a newspaper headline, and that job changes would be allowed on an orderly basis.

The War Labor Board told Americans how much they could be paid. Strikes were forbidden in essential industries, with disputes submitted to binding arbitration. Americans on the home front cheerfully had put up with their sacrifices in the wake of Pearl Harbor. After all, they told each other, "There's a war on." But as the war dragged on and on, some people paid black-market prices to suppliers willing to overlook their lack of ration stamps.

The number of union members rose 20 percent in 1943, from 5.5 million to 6.6 million, and days lost in strikes rose from 4.3 million to 13.5 million. Then, in late April, two powerful unions — John L. Lewis' United Mine Workers and, locally, Thomas Meaney's Cleveland Transit Union, rose up to challenge the government ban on strikes in essential industries. As an April 30 extension of their contract neared expiration, thousands of soft-coal miners began to walk out of the pits, threatening to cripple steel production.

The bombastic Lewis refused to honor a War Labor Board order to keep them working. Emboldened by Lewis' defiance, Meaney's 3,700 transit workers went off the job on April



PLAIN DEALER FILE

Mechanized units with new recruits round Public Square during a parade in 1943.

29, despite Mayor Frank Lausche's attempts at mediation in a midnight meeting and despite a wire from their international union warning it would be a "strike against our government in time of war."

A Page One Plain Dealer editorial called the strike "nothing less than sabotage" and Lausche spoke of asking for troops. It wasn't necessary: The strike was a failure because of ordinary Clevelanders. People with cars stopped at bus and streetcar stops to pick up those headed in the same direction.

Some detoured their route home to stop downtown. The union called off the strike within 24 hours for no promises other than that negotiations would continue.

The miners, meanwhile, carried out their threat. President Franklin

Roosevelt asked the three national radio networks for time at 10 p.m. on May 1. His script declared the government would seize the mines: "The production of coal will not be stopped. Such a stoppage, even for a short time, would involve a gamble with the lives of American soldiers and sailors and the future security of our whole people."

He sent an advance copy to Lewis. At 9:38 p.m., 22 minutes before the speech, Lewis announced the miners would go back to work. Roosevelt delivered the speech as written anyway. He seized the mines again when the union struck in December, though this time, the miners wound up with a \$1.50-a-day raise.

The union leaders had underestimated Americans' determination that nothing would interfere with the war effort. A decorated pilot back home

on a brief leave told The Plain Dealer that strikers should be treated as military deserters: "They should be taken out and machine-gunned. Hell, this is war!" Congress quickly passed legislation — over Roosevelt's veto — making it a crime to "instigate a strike" at plants or mines taken over by the government.

Meanwhile, Cleveland's war plants were working around the clock. Before the war was over, manufacturing employment in the area would rise to 340,000 from 191,000 in 1940. Many workers were newly arrived from the South, including blacks who faced housing shortages even worse than white migrants. Yet Cleveland managed to avoid major racial outbreaks like the Detroit race riot in June that killed 34 and injured hundreds.

Government controls increased. The "pay as you go" federal income tax — deducted from paychecks — took effect in July. A "C" coupon for drivers in nonessential work was cut from four gallons of gas to two. Then, in December, the War Manpower Commission declared Cleveland an area of "acute labor shortage," making the area ineligible for some defense contracts. Clevelanders grinned and bore it.

In their neighborhoods, they formed block clubs of 35 or so families to conduct scrap drives and blackout drills. The Block Plan that began in Cleveland suburbs eventually became part of the national Civilian Defense program.

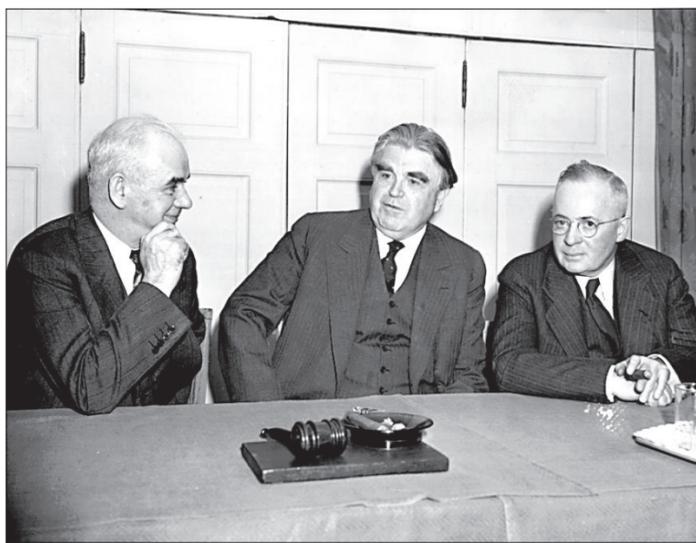
Meanwhile, the news from overseas was gradually improving. The Allies were slowly taking back the territory the Germans and Japanese seized so quickly at the beginning of the war.

On New Year's Eve, 7,000 Clevelanders partied to the music of dance bands at Public Hall. Proceeds went to buy phonograph records for the new Crile Veterans Hospital in Parma Heights, where young men who had won back Pacific islands and muddy Italian fields couldn't dance.

McGunagle is a Cleveland freelance writer.



Jack Benny plays "Love in Bloom" during a USO tour in Egypt in 1943.



PLAIN DEALER FILE

John L. Lewis, center, president of the United Mine Workers of America, confers with Phillip Murray, left, president of the Congress of Industrial Organizations and vice president of the United Mine Workers, and Thomas Kennedy, secretary-treasurer of the mine workers group.

LOOKING AT A YEAR



Waller

Jan. 24: President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and French President Charles deGaulle conclude a 10-day war summit in Casablanca.

Jan. 31: German troops surrender to the Russians at Stalingrad.

Feb. 5: Boxer Jake LaMotta wins unexpected victory over Sugar Ray Robinson.

July 23: Allied troops, led by Gen. George C. Patton, land in Sicily.

July: History's biggest tank battle ends in the planes south of Moscow when German troops retreat.

July 25: Italian leader Benito Mussolini is deposed and placed under house arrest.

Sept. 12: Having captured Sicily, Patton's troops invade Italy.

Nov. 9: Jackson Pollock's work is first shown at Peggy Guggenheim's gallery in New York.

Nov. 28: Churchill, Roosevelt and Russia's Joseph Stalin meet in Tehran to discuss postwar Europe. A week later, they announce they have agreed to a joint strategy for defeating Germany.

Born: Lech Walesa, George Harrison, Robert DeNiro, Janis Joplin, Jim Morrison, Arthur Ashe, Billie Jean King, U.S. chess champion Bobby Fischer, H. Rap Brown

Died: Russian composer Serghei Rachmaninoff, Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, architect of the attack on Pearl Harbor; black educator George Washington Carver, American jazz composer Fats Waller, British actor Leslie Howard.



Carver