

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

Schism and malice domestic in France came to a melodramatic climax this afternoon. All day the news ticker has been tapping out tales of disorder, plots against the Petain regime. From Vichy came news of an open revolt against the Petain government by the French Parliament. Then at Versailles there happened that which for theatrical sensationalism topped everything else, the shooting of Pierre Laval, thrice Premier of France, pro-Nazi, hater of the British and protege of Hitler. The latest reports tell us it was the work of terrorist assassins -- whatever that may mean. Two other men were wounded, one of them the pro-Fascist editor and ex-deputy Marcel Deat, an associate of Laval's in his alleged attempt to seize the supreme power over France last December. High ranking German officers were there too, and bullets narrowly missed them.

The first reports were unofficial, unconfirmed, and treated as doubtful. According to them, the swarthy little Ex -Premier was not seriously injured. Apparently at first there was an attempt to minimize the news,

treat it as though it hadn't happened. But later there was no doubt about it, for the information came from the hospital where Laval now lies with grave reports ^{coming forth concerning} of his condition, ~~coming forth~~.

The Ex-Premier of France had been in retirement for the time being at his castle near Vichy, in the countryside where he was born, the son of a village butcher. He had gone to Versailles to attend a ceremony to which the Vichy Government attached considerable importance. Petain and Darlan ^{have been} encouraging the recruiting of a legion of Frenchmen to go to the eastern front and help the Nazis fight the ^{Soviets} ~~Red armies~~. This legion was mobilized this afternoon, twelve hundred strong, at the barracks in Versailles, and ^{Pierre} Laval was there to take part in the ceremonious raising of the French colors over that ^{strange} legion. High German army officers and Nazi civilian officials were present.

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(of course
Two assassins, [^] described as Communists,) walked inconspicuously through the crowd, approached the Ex-Premier, took careful aim, and opened fire. They hit him twice, one bullet striking him in the chest, another in the arm. The pro-Fascist editor, standing near him, got one of the bullets in the arm, accidentally it is believed, and not seriously. The third victim

was a Major Durval, a member of the National Popular Assembly, not to be confused with the French Parliament. His injury was not grave. After the three victims had been rushed to the hospital, one report came out that Laval's wound was serious, might be fatal.

One of the assassins was knocked down by the crowd, narrowly escaped being lunched, has now been hustled off to prison.

All this happened while both the Nazi and Vichy authorities were busy arresting thousands in both occupied and unoccupied France, throwing into prison camps all known Communists, alleged saboteurs, Jews, everybody suspected of being in opposition to the Petain Government.

It had been frequently prophesied throughout France in recent months, that Laval would be assassinated. He was desperately hated not only by Communists but by everybody who didn't like the Vichy set-up. He had received thousands of threatening letters.

Laval never disguised his dislike for the British and for the Franco-British alliance. He was the leader of all Frenchmen who clung to the old slogan about "perfidious Albion." Whether selfishly or honestly, he loudly championed the idea of collaborating with Hitler. The people who disliked him called him selfish, because

his policy was bringing him back into power. And because he was taking over too much authority as Vice-Premier, Marshal Petain turned him out late in Nineteen Forty. The politicians in even Vichy then predicted that he would return -- with German backing. Provided, they added, he didn't get shot.

Laval recently stated confidentially that if he had not been kicked out, he would have been able to get favorable terms from Germany without yielding nearly as much to the Nazis as Admiral Darlan has been forced to give up.

This attempt to assassinate Pierre Laval will undoubtedly have wide repercussions. No doubt it will knit the Vichy government even closer to the Nazi hegemony, and will provoke the Petain government to even more wholesale arrests of all its opponents and critics.

Before the incident at Versailles from Vichy had come an official statement that the numerous cases of sabotage recently the murder of a German naval officer, and the demonstrations in Paris, had been fomented by a Communist plot. The attempt at assassinating Laval will be interpreted as proof of that statement. Then, of course, there's the patent historic fact that even the

most unpopular man is apt to become popular if he survives an attempt to assassinate him. Laval, so widely detested in Nineteen Forty, may within the next few weeks, come to the top again - if he lives. According to a later bulletin, Laval telephoned his wife that the bullets have been extracted and that he will recover.

It will be of crucial interest to observe the effect upon the members of the French Parliament who today uttered a formal protest against the order of the Vichy government that all deputies and Senators should leave Vichy. The protest was signed by Ex-Premier Edouard Herriot as President of the Chamber of Deputies, and by the President of the Senate.

One entire Red Russian Army wiped out! That's the top note of a special communique by the Nazi High Command today. Like those other special messages from Hitler's headquarters it was given out over the radio along with a ruffle of drums and a fanfare of trumpets. The Twenty-Second Soviet Army surrounded and annihilated, forty thousand dead, thirty thousand prisoners, four hundred guns taken. This happened, say the Nazis, at a place called Velikie Luki between Smolensk and Lake Ilmen two hundred and sixty-five miles west of Moscow. The battle for Velikie Luki has been going on several days and finished with the capture of the place.

A later bulletin from Berlin brings the claim that Hitler's columns have crashed through the Soviet defenses on the lower Dnieper River, capturing that vast Dnieper dam and power plant. This must be the third time the Nazis claim to have taken the place. Anyhow Berlin says this places the entire industrial area of the lower Dnieper in Hitler's hands.

The Nazis also claim to have sunk twelve Soviet gunboats on the Dnieper River.

Now for the Russian side of the story. The Red armies

are locked in a furious battle with the Nazi invaders along the entire two thousand mile front. Today they fought off attacks by the Germans and Finns on Leningrad with the entire population engaged in digging fresh rings of trenches around the city. General Berezovsky admitting the loss of Gomel to the Nazis reports that it cost the Germans eighty thousand men killed and wounded, two hundred tanks, hundreds of guns, thousands of motor cars and a hundred airplanes.

The Reds admit that Odessa, the great Black Sea Port in the South is encircled by Nazis and Roumanians. Moscow reports described Odessa as one huge armed camp.

IRAN

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And now what about that British-Russian invasion of Iran?

The most definite information comes from Moscow. The Soviets officially report that three Red columns have ~~pierced~~^{pushed} into Iran ~~as far as~~^{about} a hundred and thirty miles. ~~They~~^{and} have occupied four towns including Tabriz, the second most important city in the Shah's kingdom. The wording of the official announcement has a Nazi flavor to it. The occupation, says the Soviet high command, is proceeding according to plan. Moscow Radio puts in a truly Hitleresque touch with the statement that the people of Iran are very glad to have their country saved from the Nazi menace by the Anglo-Russian occupation. The Russians also declare that their advance from the coast of the Caspian Sea met with no resistance.

London ~~is not so definite,~~ merely reports in broad fashion that British Imperial troops are sweeping into Iran from the south and west, ~~along with~~ while the Russians are penetrating from the north.

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But there^{is} also a report from London that the British Government is negotiating with the Shah for a guarantee to expel all Germans from his country. A British spokesman ~~declared,~~^{said,} however,

that all the offers received from ^{Teheran}~~Tehren~~ so far have been unsatisfactory. Mere promises to expel the Nazi agents will not be enough. Both the British Minister and the Russian Ambassador have been conferring with the Shah. They report that he declared he was puzzled by the Anglo-Russian invasion and the reasons given for it. The British spokesman intimated that if Persia's ruler will give proper guarantees, the advance of Russian and British armies will be stopped.

It's an open diplomatic and historic secret that the British are not any too pleased to see Russian armies getting so far into Persia. For more than a century, it has been one of the keynotes of Downing Street diplomacy in Asia, to prevent the extension of Russian influence there.

JAPAN

The United States will enforce the freedom of the seas, and that may be taken as a warning to Japan. It was not so expressed by our Government, it was not uttered directly to Japan. But the inference is clear. It's a follow-up to the caution which the Soviets handed to the Mikado's Government earlier in the day. As Moscow put it, the Government of the U.S.S.R. will take it as an unfriendly act if the Japanese try to interfere with normal trade relations between Soviet Russia and the United States through Far Eastern ports. In other words, hands off any shipments going to Vladivostok from America. The Japanese had already protested that any shipments of that kind would create a delicate and embarrassing position for the Mikado's Government.

At the press conference of Secretary of State Hull today, the newspaper men had asked him about the Japanese protest. The Secretary replied that he thought it would be more fitting if he would let the Foreign Office at Tokyo speak first. Up spoke the reporters then and asked him, What about the freedom of the seas, will the United States insist upon its traditional policy in Far Pacific waters? The Secretary replied that until that

policy is formally revoked, the world may assume that it still is in force. Such an answer, in such a connection, can have only one meaning. The United States demands the freedom of the seas, and that includes war shipments to Soviet Russia through Vladivostok.

Here's the picture as it looks in Tokyo. A correspondent in the Mikado's capital reports that relations with the United States and Russia tonight are at a new low mark. A spokesman for the government put it that neither the United States nor the Soviets have given satisfactory replies to Japanese comments on the shipment of American munitions to Vladivostok. Just now it's a case of stalemate -- that's how it looks to the Tokyo Government. Evidently the Mikado's ministers are unable to make up their minds what to do, whether to turn back the American vessels on their way to Vladivostok or let them pass. Nipponese officialdom says nothing, but its emotions are expressed loudly and violently by the newspapers. They all teem with abuse of President Roosevelt, accusations of war-mongering.

DeGAULLE

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A week ago, President Roosevelt announced the establishment of an air transport service across Africa. Today there was a rumor that the United States Government had been offered bases on Free French territory in West Africa. The report emanated from Brazzaville, the Free French capital in ^{West} Africa. It quoted General Charles DeGaulle as announcing that he had offered our government bases at Duala in the Cameroons, ^{and} ~~also~~ at two points in French Equatorial Africa. He was also reported as having suggested that American bases at those three points would offer protection against any attack that the Axis powers might aim at the Americas, any danger to South Atlantic trade from Nazi or Italian submarines based at Dakar x in French Senegal.

Newspaper men promptly asked Secretary of State Hull about that offer by General DeGaulle. The Secretary replied ^{that} he had never heard of it, knew nothing about it. And at the Navy Department the same answer was given out. Experts in Washington say that the location of the three points reported to have been offered by DeGaulle were hardly suitable for large American bases, unless it became necessary to set up a defense against Axis attacks from Dakar.

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DEFENSE BONDS

This was quite a special date in one hundred and forty-two baseball parks throughout the United States. Defense Bond Day. At both major and minor league ball grounds the American Legion had engaged bands to play. And among the tunes they played was the theme song "Any Bonds Today" which Irving Berlin wrote especially for this occasion. And at all one hundred and forty-two ball parks were Boy Scouts of America who distributed more than one million folders explaining how we all can do our part by buying defense bonds.

EGG

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Somewhere in New York, New Jersey or Philadelphia, there's an egg worth twenty-five dollars, one single egg. That egg was the one billionth to be sold at auction in New Jersey. To ~~see~~ celebrate the occasion, it was enclosed in a special wrapper with a note signed by the Secretary of the New Jersey State Department of Agriculture. This note was to inform the ultimate purchaser of that egg that it was worth twenty-five dollars. Then they shoved it into a carton containing three hundred and fifty-nine other eggs, and somehow in the process of getting it to market, it was lost in the shuffle.

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Twenty-five dollars for an egg - that's almost
^{us}
more than what it costs amateur chicken farmers to produce an egg.

Hugh, I hope your
bride finds that 25
egg when she cooks
your breakfast some
5 1/4 morning