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La Lettre de la France Libre

NEWS OF THE FREE FRENCH MOVEMENT



"Some Frenchmen there were who would not bow the knee . . ."—WINSTON CHURCHILL at Ottawa

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FRENCH resistance to the common enemy of civilization grows steadily with each additional month that separates us from the Armistice. Axis propaganda, persecution and oppression have failed to dam the mounting tide of determined French opposition to the Nazi tyrant.

Every day four or five Frenchmen in France are arrested and some of them shot for having in one form or another committed the crime of resisting the invader and his schemes. For every Frenchman who falls into the hands of the Gestapo a hundred others carry on. Underground activity is constantly gaining fresh strength. Latest first-hand testimony of this has just been brought to London by Paul Simon, courageous pioneer of clandestine newspapers in France, whose story we tell in this issue.

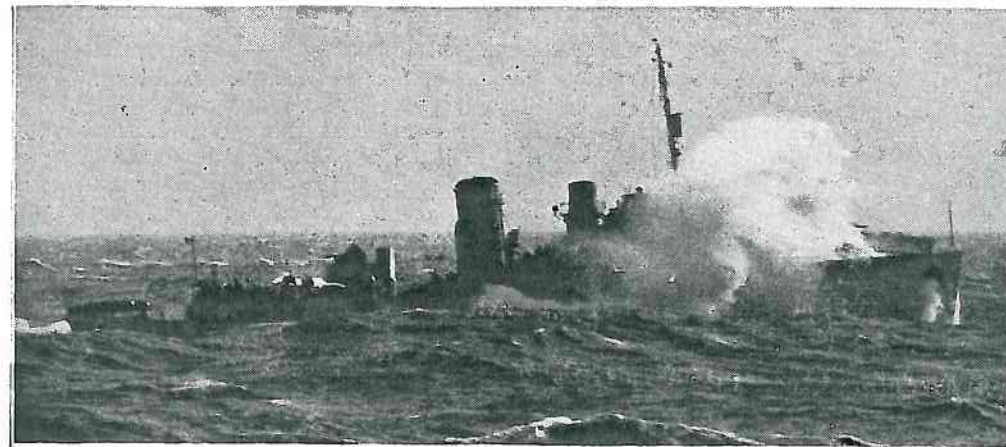
Resistance in acts and organization in a temporarily disarmed nation is necessarily the task of selected numbers. But the basis of all effective resistance must be in the wills and minds of the oppressed population as a whole. Except for a handful of active collaborators and political adventurers (who in other circumstances would no doubt have been content to distinguish themselves as simple war profiteers), every French man and woman lives for the day when Teuton boots will no longer foul the soil of France. They are opposed with every fibre of their being to every form of collaboration. The saddest remark of a French mother, a French wife to-day is: "He is a prisoner in Germany"—one and a half million of them. The proudest remark is: "*He is with de Gaulle.*"

And this resistance is no passive waiting on future opportunities of action. It is a war with its own rules. It has already turned the swaggering conqueror into a suspicious and nervous intruder. Stuepnagel's attempts at terrorisation have signally failed. Instead, his own men walk about France fearfully, in two and threes, never alone. German soldiers are mysteriously shot. Sudden strikes hold up production in the coal mines. On the two sides of the demarcation line between occupied and unoccupied France, the whole population is linked in a secret conspiracy wherein everyone risks his life. Hostages and bribery have failed to have any effect. Allied soldiers hidden in France remain hidden. The hand that shot a German soldier is never denounced. In their war of demoralisation against the Germany army of occupation, the French people, united in their will to resist, are holding their own.

More than that, resistance has had important political results. It has foiled the collaborationists in their major aims. Public opinion and the more active part of many an anonymous "resister" in various places has, so far at any rate, prevented the defeatists from making the final surrender.

Meanwhile, outside in the free world, the Free French Movement, too, grows steadily and fights in the vanguard of French recovery. In Libya, on the high seas, and in the air, its soldiers, sailors and airmen are worthily upholding the best traditions of France.

La Lettre de la France Libre



LA LETTRE DE LA FRANCE LIBRE

(NEWS OF THE FREE FRENCH MOVEMENT.)

FEBRUARY, 1942

No. 15

FIGHTING IN THE WESTERN DESERT

Division from Syria

Side by side with the British troops of the 8th Army, fighting against Rommel's forces in Libya, is a Free French motorised division—a division composed of hardened soldiers who have come from Syria, and who have previously seen service on such varied battlefields as Norway, the Western Front, Eritrea, and even in Libya during the first offensive. The division is under the command of General de Larminat, formerly Chief of Staff of the Syrian Army under Generals Weygand and Mittelhauser, and former High Commissioner for Free French Africa. It is composed of troops belonging to the following regiments: Foreign Legion, *Infanterie de Marine*, Spahis, Light Cavalry, Tanks, Armoured Cars and Artillery. Since the Syrian Armistice of the 14th July last, it has been completely reformed, re-equipped and strengthened.

Amongst the Free French regiments in the division, the famous Legion is predominant. The Legion is now three times the size it was at the opening of the Syrian campaign, numbering a great many troops who subsequently rallied to the Free French Forces. The *Infanterie de Marine* is composed chiefly of Bretons and Parisians who served formerly with the 23rd Colonial Infantry Regiment. The *Infanterie de Marine* previously took part in the capture of Massawa, in Eritrea, and the honour of being the first to enter the town and of hauling down the Italian flag fell to one of its majors. The picturesque Spahis, of Syria and Morocco, who for centuries have ridden their Arab steeds into battle in the desert, are now motorised. They have always been amongst the most ardent supporters of General de Gaulle.

*Above: the corvette
"ROSELYS."
See page 12*

General Catroux's Order of the Day

On the occasion of the departure of the division from Syria, General Catroux, Commander-in-Chief, Delegate-General and Plenipotentiary of Free France in the Levant (see biography on page 20), addressed the following Order of the Day to his troops:—

“The year now starting brings us the fulfilment of the wish dearest to the hearts of the Free French. You are going to have the supreme joy of attacking the enemy. Yesterday, you were the hope of France. To-morrow, you will be her pride. The echoes of your battles will resound from the Mediterranean to the North Sea and from Tunis to Agadir. Your victories and your sacrifices

will stir all hearts, renewing strength and causing the salutary waves of the spirit of war and liberation to pass over our country. Your fate is enviable. Your mission is great. You will be worthy of it. Long Live France!”

On the day that Halfaya fell (Saturday, 17th January, 1941) news was received in London that the Free French Division had been in action for several days in the Halfaya region. Together with British and Polish troops, they occupied this last enemy stronghold on the frontier of Libya and Egypt. The garrison, numbering 5,500 men, most of them Germans, surrendered unconditionally and delivered up their arms and ammunition.

FRENCH AIR FORCE IN LIBYA

Ceaseless Attacks on Halfaya by the Lorraine Squadron

The Free French Lorraine Squadron, which was first mentioned in an R.A.F. communiqué from the Middle East, as being in action in the Libyan offensive late in November, made a valuable contribution to the fall of Halfaya. Together with Blenheims of the R.A.F., Free French bombers had attacked ceaselessly enemy defences, transports, and the shelters in which Italian and German troops were hiding in Halfaya.

So regular were the Free French attacks, which took place at intervals of half an hour, or even sometimes twenty minutes, that the crews nicknamed their journey the “Bus Route.” Each plane carried out three or four raids a day, which, according to the modest statement of one of the pilots, gave the ground staff rather a lot to do,

especially as the earth was sodden after the heavy rains.

During the first day's attack on Halfaya, all the planes were hit by shell bursts from an exceptionally accurate ground battery. Thereupon all the planes made a special point of attacking this battery until it was silenced. Later they were scarcely worried by the ground defences, and were able to machine-gun them from a very low altitude.

Since the opening week of hostilities—during which time the Squadron took part in more than thirty-three operational flights against the Axis forces—the “Metz” and “Nancy” flights have been in almost continuous action against the enemy, as repeated references in R.A.F. communiqués have shown. Besides the Halfaya sector, heavy bombard-

ments in the Tobruk, Gazala and Benghazi areas have been also carried out.

Wing Commander Blinded in Both Eyes

Soon after the opening of the offensive, the command of the Lorraine Squadron was taken over by Wing Commander Charles Félix Pijeaud, former Chief of Staff of the Free French Air Force. On the 20th December he was leading the Squadron on an offensive reconnaissance in the Benghazi sector. A column of enemy lorries was attacked, and several were destroyed before 15 Me. 109's appeared on the scene. One of the Nazis was brought down, but, in the ensuing dog-fight, Wing Commander Pijeaud's plane was set on fire. Despite the blaze he succeeded in making a landing in the desert. The pilot of an accompanying plane thought he had been killed, and he was reported missing. Nevertheless, when the British troops entered Derna, nine days later, they found him—but by then he had lost the sight of both eyes.

When Wing Commander Pijeaud landed he was picked up in a badly wounded condition, taken prisoner by the Italians, and sent to the hospital at Derna. Warned by two British airmen, wounded prisoners like himself, that the Italians were preparing to evacuate the hospital, he decided to escape with them in the general disorder of the evacuation.

Wing Commander Pijeaud's wounds were, by then, very grave, and although suffering great pain he and his comrades, who supported him in his blindness, spent four days hiding in holes in the ground around Derna. It was in one of these holes that the British troops came across the three air-

men. Wing Commander Pijeaud was taken immediately to a hospital at Alexandria, but it was too late to save his life.

A Brilliant Officer

An eloquent tribute to this gallant Free French hero was paid by Air Commodore Martial Valin, Commander-in-Chief of the Free French Air Force, in a broadcast from London. After telling the story of Wing Commander Pijeaud's last flight, Air Commodore Valin said:—

“He was a brilliant officer, who trained at the Military School of Saint-Cyr and passed through the French Air War Academy. Squadron Leader at the age of thirty-four, he might, like many others, have remained in France and, sheltering behind an oath, have continued to pursue a promising career. Yet his noble nature could not accept the easiest way out. He refused to recognise the armistice, and set off by boat for Gibraltar, whence he subsequently reached England. He brought over a bomber belonging to the French Air Force and now, thanks to him, this plane is taking part in the defence of Free French Africa. Nevertheless, it was a tremendous sacrifice for him to leave France without once again seeing his mother or his wife and children, to whom he was devoted.

“To you, his grief-stricken mother, who lost your husband in the last war and who, thirty years later, have given your son for France, I say, if this can be of any comfort to you in your great affliction, that your son leaves an undying memory in the hearts of his superior officers and subordinates alike.

He Died to Free our Country

"To you, his admirable wife, who bravely replaced in your home a father absent in a just cause and who, by your work, continued to secure a fitting existence for your children, I say that your husband died to free our country, and, in doing so to free *you*, and that, though he will not be present at the victory, he will have been very largely instrumental in its achievement. Your boy and your little girl may well be proud of the name they bear, for it will be held in veneration by all the children of France.

"Finally, I would ask all Frenchmen who are listening to me to collect their thoughts, uniting Wing Commander Pijeaud with all our volunteers who have died for their country, and to repeat with me, earnestly as a prayer, the unforgettable lines of Victor Hugo :

*"Gloire à notre France éternelle,
Gloire à ceux qui sont morts
pour elle,
Aux martyrs, aux vaillants, aux
forts,
A ceux qu'enflamme leur
exemple,
Qui veulent place dans le
Temple,
Et qui mourront, comme ils
sont morts."*

FRENCH AIRMEN HELP TO DEFEND BRITAIN

Free French Fighter Squadron Formed in Scotland

"All pilots out!" The last syllable is barely uttered when they come streaming out. Seemingly unhampered by their heavy tackle, they sprint across to a row of waiting Spitfires. Engines splutter angrily, and a few moments later,

To Wing Commander Pijeaud, General de Gaulle has awarded, posthumously, the Liberation Cross.

Returned to Squadron after Five Days in Desert

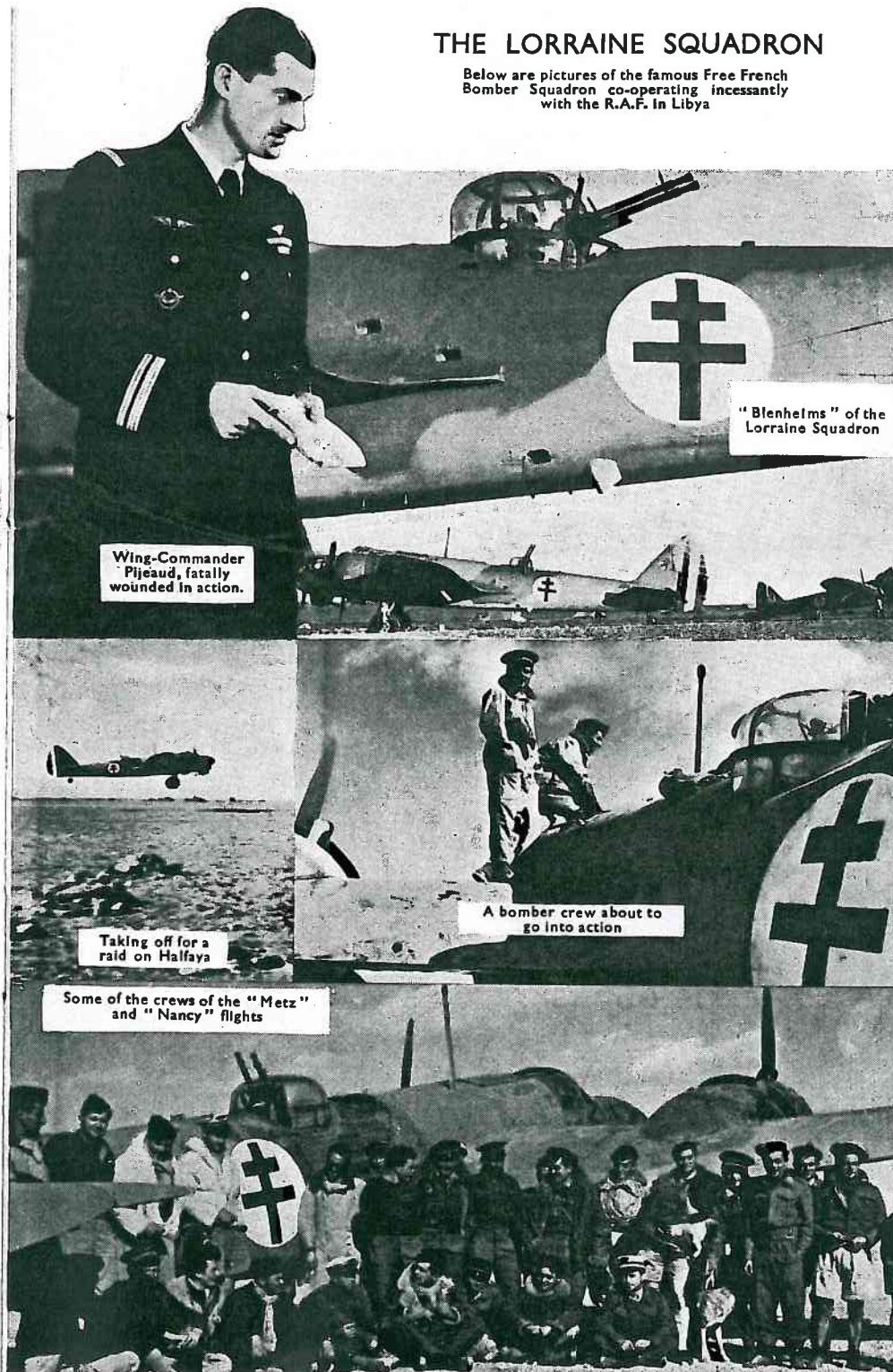
The fate of the observer in Wing Commander Pijeaud's bomber was less tragic. Here is his own story of how, after five days' wandering in the desert with nothing to eat, he was able to return to his squadron and continue the fight :—

"German and Italian troops infested the country," he said. "I had nothing to eat for the five days I was wandering about, but I got water from the streams and pools made by rainstorms. Frequently I was shot at by Italian and German snipers.

"Finally, I saw an Italian farmhouse on which the white flag was flying. I approached very warily, and saw some British troops. They had come to the assistance of the farmer and his family who had appealed for help because the farm was being looted by the retreating enemy. They were British mechanised troops, and they gave me such splendid assistance that I was soon on my way back to the Squadron."

THE LORRAINE SQUADRON

Below are pictures of the famous Free French Bomber Squadron co-operating incessantly with the R.A.F. in Libya



find hard to understand. All this I saw to-day, writes a *Free French Correspondent*, when the Air Ministry gave me special facilities for visiting the station where the first Free French fighter squadron to be formed in Great Britain has now assumed an operational rôle. That rôle is the defence of one of the most vital areas in Scotland.

"Paris" and "Versailles" Flights: 25 Enemy Planes to their Credit

Do not imagine, however, that because this is the first Free French fighter squadron (it has been christened the "Ile de France") the pilots are all newcomers to the game. Between them, and flying with British units, the pilots of its "Paris" and "Versailles" flights have 25 "official" or "probable" enemy planes to their credit.

Consider Captain X...., one of the two flight commanders. He is a Breton, 29 years old, who has more than 1,000 flying hours to his credit. In the fighting in France he broke his arm and was sent to a coastal hospital under German supervision. In the middle of the night he got up and, with his arm in a sling, walked down to the harbour. There he saw a small tramp steamer. With a minimum of fuss he requisitioned it. He collected some French sailors and asked them to join him, then, in the same cool, unhurried way, proceeded to take from the quay all the coal he would need. In this way he came to England, without a single maritime chart and across water strewn with mines.

Dived Through a Wall of Fire

Captain X.... has attacked and damaged thirty-one enemy ships.

He set on fire two seaplanes and a gasometer in Ostend harbour. He is a reticent man who is not over fond of journalists, and the best stories of his exploits came from a colleague.

"We were over Nieuport," he told me. "The ack-ack was simply terrific. There were at least 50 anti-aircraft batteries as well as innumerable machine guns, all blazing away with everything they had. Did you see "Target for Tonight?" Well, imagine what you saw there multiplied by ten. I tell you, there was a sheer wall of fire.

"Usually, one looks for a gap in the fire through which one can dive on to the objective. This time there was no such gap. But Captain X.... didn't hesitate, he just went slap into it. He did the job and came back again, miraculously unhurt. And then, while I was still trying to get my breath back, he dived down again and repeated the performance!"

Vichy's Omission

This colleague told me something else. The French authorities were so impressed by Captain X....'s daring escape with a broken arm from a military hospital, that they included the feat in a book entitled "The Fifty Finest Acts of Courage of the War." The book was published with the approval of the Vichy Government—but omitted to add that Captain X....'s object in escaping had been to join General de Gaulle!

The second flight commander has also had considerable flying experience. He was in the French Air Force from 1927-30, and served in the Podgha operations preliminary to the operations of Djebel Sagho, in Morocco. He managed to go to America after

the armistice and rejoined General de Gaulle from Canada. He has made seventy-eight operational flights in Britain, of which thirty-five were over France and Belgium,

and has damaged, or set fire to, twenty enemy ships.

Both the flight commanders served previously with the famous "Churchill" Squadron.

THIRD INTER-ALLIED CONFERENCE

Declaration Based on the Hague Convention

When the Inter-Allied Conference was held for the third time, on the 13th January, at St. James's Palace, nine allied countries were represented. General de Gaulle, M. Maurice Dejean, National Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, M. R. Offroy and M. J. E. Paris represented Free France. The conference was opened by Mr. Anthony Eden, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and was presided over by General Sikorski (Poland).

At the suggestion of the French National Committee, the Allies met to approve and sign the text of the following declaration, which was based on the Hague Convention of 1907, forbidding belligerents in occupied countries to perpetrate acts of violence against civilians, and on the joint declaration made by President Roosevelt and Mr. Winston Churchill:

"Whereas Germany, since the beginning of the present conflict which arose out of her policy of

aggression, has instituted in the occupied countries a régime of terror characterised in particular by imprisonments, mass expulsions, the execution of hostages and massacres.

"And whereas these acts of violence are being similarly perpetrated by the allies and associates of the Reich and, in certain countries, by the accomplices of the occupying Power.

"And whereas international solidarity is necessary in order to avoid the repression of these acts of violence simply by acts of vengeance on the part of the general public, and in order to satisfy the sense of justice of the civilized world.

"Recalling that international law, and in particular the Convention signed at The Hague in 1907 regarding the laws and customs of land warfare, do not permit belligerents in occupied countries to perpetrate acts of



violence against civilians, to bring into disrepute the laws in force, or to overthrow national institutions.

"The undersigned Representatives of : The Government of Belgium, the Government of Czechoslovakia, the Free French National Committee, the Government of Greece, the Government of Luxemburg, the Government of the Netherlands, the Government of Norway, the Government of Poland, and the Government of Yugoslavia ;

"(1)—affirm that acts of violence thus perpetrated against the civilian populations are at variance with accepted ideas concerning acts of war and political offences, as these are understood by civilized nations,

"(2)—take note of the declaration made in this respect on 25th October, 1941, by the President of the United States of America and by the British Prime Minister,

"(3)—place amongst their principal war aims the punishment, through the channel of organized justice, of those guilty and responsible for these crimes, whether they have ordered them, perpetrated them, or in any way participated in them,

"(4)—determine in a spirit of international solidarity to see to it that (a) those guilty and responsible, whatever their nationality, are sought for, handed over to justice and judged, (b) that the sentences pronounced are carried out.

"In faith whereof the signatories duly authorized have signed the present declaration."

General de Gaulle's Speech

After General Sikorski had read the declaration, General de Gaulle

made a short speech in which he affirmed Free France's desire to see that the guilty parties who have "succeeded in establishing in Europe a more frightful régime of terror than that installed by the Barbarian hordes at the beginning of the Middle Ages," should not be allowed to evade just punishment. He spoke as follows :—

"The French National Committee approves all the more the Joint Declaration read to us by General Sikorski, since France has been invaded by Germany three times within a period of seventy years, and has therefore suffered thrice in less than a century the atrocities inevitably accompanying all German occupation.

"But, as the strength of the Reich grew, the extent and violence of these atrocities increased. To-day our enemies, by placing all their technique and all their skill at the service of their ferocity, have succeeded in establishing in Europe a more frightful régime of terror than that installed by the Barbarian hordes at the beginning of the Middle Ages.

"In signing this Joint Declaration to-day we mean, like all the representatives of occupied countries, to declare solemnly that Germany alone is responsible for the outbreak of this war and that she shares with her allies and accomplices responsibility for all the atrocities that proceed from it. We demonstrate our firm intention to see to it that all the guilty parties and men who are responsible in any way should not be allowed to evade just punishment as did those of the other war.

"But if it is legitimate and necessary to ensure full punishment for crimes committed, it is quite as legitimate and necessary to take the essential measures so that a renewal of such crimes should be made impossible. We

are certain that the solidarity which unites martyred Europe to-day will continue to manifest itself to-morrow, when our task will consist in ensuring that Germany will never again be in a position to harm the world."

GENERAL DE GAULLE PRAISES RUSSIAN SPIRIT

Broadcast to the French People.

In a radio speech to the French people on the 20th January, General de Gaulle spoke in praise of the magnificent fighting powers of our Russian ally. "This nation of 175 million inhabitants is worthy of greatness," he said, "because it knows how to fight, and because it rose up, armed and organized itself, and because its cohesion remains unshaken by the most dire trials." General de Gaulle also pointed out how much the liberation of the French people was dependent on a Russian victory. Below are extracts from his speech :

"All true Frenchmen acclaim the Russian victory.

"So far as Germany is concerned, the war front in the East to-day is nothing more than snow-covered cemeteries, deplorable trainloads of wounded soldiers, and generals who have met with sudden death. Of course, we do not for a moment suppose that this is the end of the enemy's military strength. But there can be no possible doubt that the Germans have just suffered one of the greatest setbacks in history.

"While the force and prestige of the Germans are tottering, we see the star of Russian

strength rising to its zenith. The world is witness to the fact that this nation of 175 million inhabitants is worthy of greatness because it knows how to fight, that is to say, to suffer and to strike, and because it rose up, armed and organized itself, and because its cohesion remains unshaken by the most dire trials.

"The French people greet the success and ascension of the Russian people with enthusiasm, for now the liberation and vengeance of France have become pleasant probabilities. The death of every German soldier who is killed or frozen in Russia, the destruction of every German gun, plane or tank in the Leningrad, Moscow or Sebastopol sectors, gives France yet another chance to rise up again and conquer.

"Suffering France is with suffering Russia. Fighting France is with fighting Russia. France, in the slough of despair, is with Russia, which has been able to climb from the darkness of the pit to the radiance of greatness."

*"La France a perdu une bataille !
Mais la France n'a pas perdu la
guerre."—General de Gaulle.*

"MINERVE" SINKS A NAZI TANKER

Adventures of a Free French Submarine

How a Free French submarine sank a strongly escorted German tanker, and then, by accident, came to the surface in the midst of the convoy, and escaped to tell the tale, is one of the latest and most remarkable exploits in the history of the Free French submarine force.

The submarine "Minerve" was operating off the Norwegian coast and the rocky outline of the shore fringed with trees, could be seen clearly through the action periscope. But that was not all. Hugging the coast was a large, heavily-laden Nazi tanker—a beautiful target. The submarine commander lost no time in releasing the two torpedoes. One of them hit the tanker amidships. A tremendous explosion which shook the "Minerve", fol-

lowed by a sheet of flame leaping from the tanker, proclaimed a complete victory for the submarine.

Surfaced by Accident

But then an accident happened. By a small error which nearly led to grave consequences, the submarine surfaced—and came up

right in the midst of the convoy. Ahead was a destroyer, a few yards away was an armed trawler, and overhead was a Nazi bomber circling around seeking what prey it might destroy. "So surprised

were we all—both the Germans and ourselves," stated the submarine commander, "that we had dived again before the ships had time to open fire. We heard machine-gun bullets from the bomber, however, rattling like hailstones on the submarine. Our dive had been such a quick one—it was all over in less than a minute—that we sank to the bottom like a stone. Then the fun began. We were attacked ceaselessly for thirteen hours by depth charges and bombs. During the first forty minutes

when the attack was at its fiercest, depth charges were lowered every two minutes.

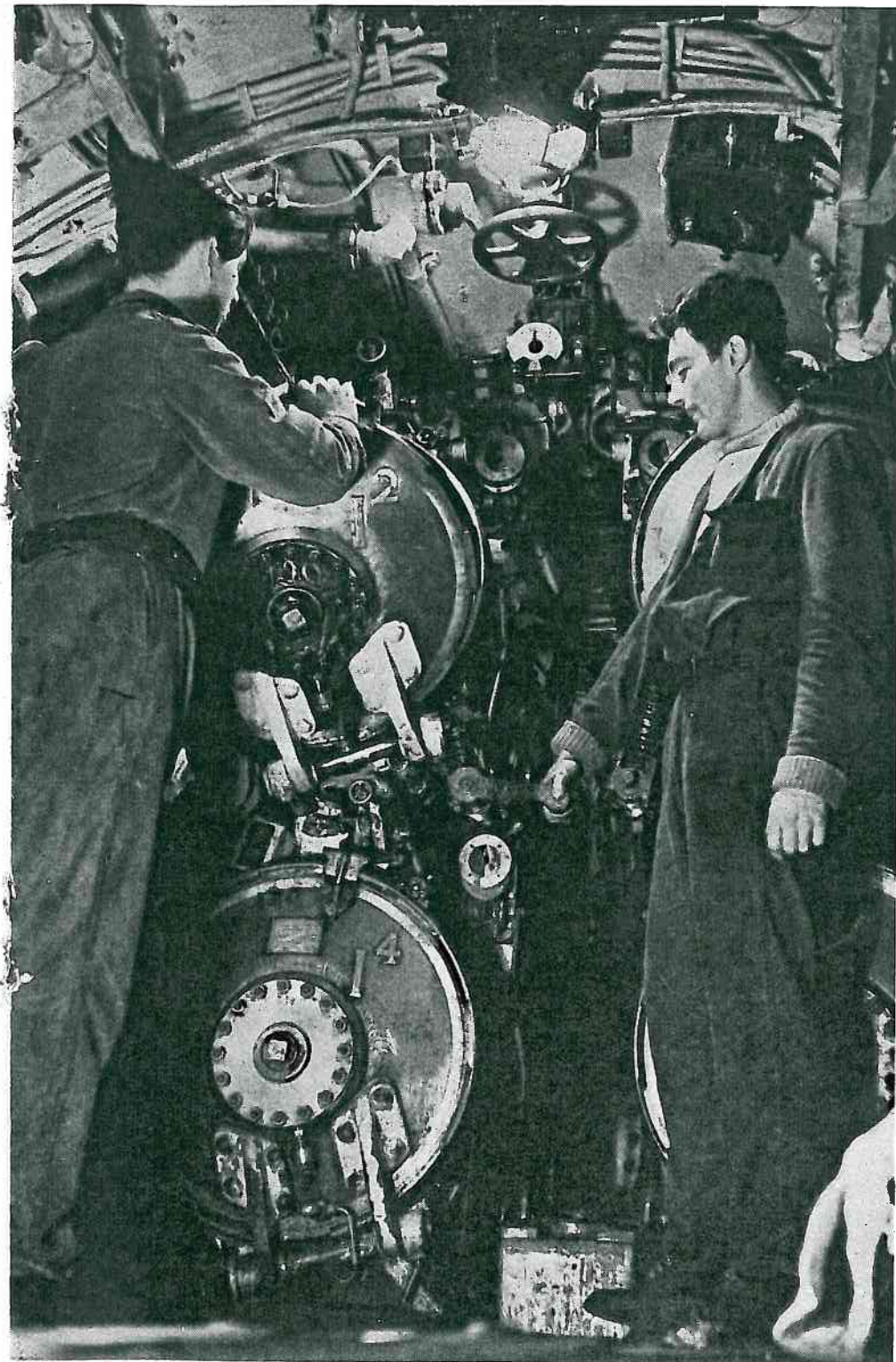
"There was nothing for it but to sit and wait. The "Minerve" trembled and creaked. The crew waited in silence. It was easy at first to walk about in stocking feet and listen to the attackers.

TRIBUTE

In a letter to Admiral Muselier on the 8th November, written soon after he took over his last command, the late Admiral Sir Tom Phillips, who lost his life in the *Prince of Wales*, wrote of the collaboration of the Free French Navy and the Royal Navy, in the following words:

"The brilliant way in which the Free French Navy has collaborated with the Royal Navy during the past sixteen months and my personal regard for you, its Chief, are amongst my most pleasant memories of my time at the Admiralty.

"In the course of my new duties, nothing could give me greater pleasure than to co-operate with the Free French naval units which are serving the cause of France in the farthest corners of her vast Empire."



But later, as the hours went by and the oxygen was beginning to be used up, each moment seemed like an hour. In the suffocating atmosphere, we prayed for a breath of fresh air. Once, early in the night, we thought it was all over. Then once again we heard the

noise of propellers, followed by bombs falling. After that there was silence. Evidently, they thought they had got us. They were wrong. The "Minerve," although slightly damaged, returned to port to be fitted out again for her next voyage."

U-BOAT RAMMED BY FREE FRENCH CORVETTE

A U-boat had been rammed by the Free French corvette *Roselys* while on convoy duty, it was announced on the 30th January.

The U-boat was seen on the surface on the starboard side of the *Roselys* at a range of about 400 yards. The corvette's helm was at once put over to ram. The U-boat crash-dived but was not quick enough, and the corvette rammed the U-boat. As the *Roselys* passed clear, depth charges were dropped.

Since no prisoners were taken and no wreckage was picked up it is impossible to say that this U-boat

was destroyed, but there can be no doubt that it was seriously damaged. No casualties or damage of any consequence were suffered by the *Roselys*.

The corvette was commanded by Lieutenant André Bergeret who joined the Free French Navy in August 1941. He was given the command of the *Roselys* in September 1941. In his early thirties, Lieutenant Bergeret served formerly in the French Merchant Service. He is married to a well-known American authoress who escaped to New York from France after the German occupation.

EYE-WITNESS'S STORY FROM ST. PIERRE

Appeal to Admiral to Occupy Islands

What really happened at St. Pierre and Miquelon has just been told by two 19-year-old boys, Emile Sabarets and Jean Siegfried, who have arrived in this country from St. Pierre in order to serve with the Free French Navy.

For months there had been much unrest on the islands. The pro-Vichy Governor, de Bourmat, although almost entirely without support, rigorously enforced "collaborationist" principles. On one occasion he even went so far as to fine a man for singing the Marseillaise after 10 p.m.

When a letter arrived from a sympathizer in Newfoundland

saying that Admiral Muselier was in Canada, a member of the Association of Ex-Servicemen—the Association, incidentally, had been dissolved after the armistice by the Governor—managed to smuggle out a telegram appealing to the Admiral to occupy the islands. To welcome Admiral Muselier the inhabitants made their own flags out of empty flour sacks on which they painted the tricolour and the Cross of Lorraine. The plebiscite, they said, with its overwhelming majority for Free France, was a true reflection of public opinion.

The two boys told how, before the Admiral's arrival, some 40

islanders had managed to escape to join the Free French Forces. Those who could not leave the island formed themselves into an organization known as "General de Gaulle's Legion," and, on the 14th July, some 300 members took part in patriotic demonstrations outside the Governor's house. When Admiral Muselier called for 45 volunteers to replace the sailors he was leaving on the islands, twice that number immediately offered their services. Sabarets and Siegfried were among those chosen. It

is the first time that either has left the island.

About 40 islanders had been arrested at different times because they wanted to continue the fight with Free France and her Allies. Sabarets had himself spent 15 days in prison for wearing the Cross of Lorraine in his lapel and for carrying Gaullist tracts. There was no newspaper on the island, but news was obtained from the London and Canadian radios, despite de Bourmat's efforts to jam the broadcasts.

FREE FRENCH COLONIAL STAMPS

Designed by Edmond Dulac

Philatelists will be interested in the new stamps which are being issued for the Free French Colonies. Designed by that celebrated French artist Edmond Dulac, who came from Toulouse, and won wide fame as an illustrator of both French and English books, they are worthy successors of the British Coronation issue which he designed in 1937 to mark the coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. The new Free French colonial stamps include the colonies of the Cameroons (issued 22nd December, 1941), French Equatorial Africa (issued 22nd December, 1941), the French Establishments in India (now in preparation), Oceania (now in preparation), and New Caledonia (due in the spring), as well as an additional air mail stamp which is also due in the spring. For each colony there is only one design—the photographs on page 15 are the actual size of the stamps—but there are fourteen different postage values: 5, 10, 25, 30, and 40 centimes, 1 franc, 1 franc 50, 2 francs, 2 francs 50, 4, 5, 10 and 20 francs. These stamps are printed in fourteen different tones,

assigned in certain definite colours by international conventions to certain uses, which were only obtained after several attempts had been made. This will explain why, although the order for the designs was given early in February, the first series was not ready until the end of November.

The story of the preparation of the designs is an interesting one, for on each stamp are to be found emblems and motives which, at General de Gaulle's express wish, while respecting the style and tradition of each territory, have blended into a design evoking the mission of Free France.

The Cross of Lorraine—The Crusader's Cross—for the Cameroons

Take, for instance, the stamps of the Cameroons, the territory which rallied to Free France on the 28th August, 1940. Among the most enthusiastic partisans in the Cameroons were the Syro-Lebanese, formerly emigrants from distant Syria. They will recognize on the stamp of Free France not only the thick leather shield which

the Cameroon huntsmen still wear to this day, but also, delving deeper into the past, the shield of crusaders in the Holy Land long ago, handed down through the ages to those who now hear the call to the Crusade of Liberation. On the shield is the famous Cross of Lorraine, emblem of Free France of to-day. Used in the arms of the Dukes of Lorraine in memory of their ancestor, Godfrey de Bouillon, it is the very same cross which Godfrey de Bouillon brought back from the Crusades. This double-branched cross was found by the Crusaders on Christian monuments dating from before the heathen conquest of the Holy Land. The forged steel sword, fighting symbol of Free France, and the traditional "R.F." complete the central motive of the stamp. On the edges of the stamp the triangular designs so frequent in African art symbolize the union between France and the Cameroons, a territory which has known two civilizations, and voluntarily chosen that of a Free France.

A Phoenix Re-born from the Funeral Pyre

The stamps of French Equatorial Africa embody the Phoenix, re-born from the ashes of its funeral pyre, as legend has it, every 500 or 1,500 years (a matter about which historians disagree). The ball of myrrh in which it had wrapped itself has melted in the fire and the bird is there, the same and yet not the same, transfigured and re-born, spreading out its protecting wings over the vast spaces of French Equatorial Africa, the greatest colony of Free France. No graphic representation of the Phoenix has been found, but in the Far East there lives its double, the

Feng or Feng-Huang. Poems describe it, pictures represent it in its traditional colours of greenish blue, yellow, red, white and black, symbolizing uprightness, honesty, justice and benevolence, and its sacred form has been perpetuated by sculpture. One of the most beautiful examples of the latter, which was photographed in China by a French mission—and submitted by the Director of the Warburg Institute—served as an inspiration for the stamp of French Equatorial Africa.

The Lotus Flowers of India

For the stamps of the French Establishments in India, it was necessary to find a symbol which would not offend any of the various religious beliefs practised in the five Establishments. Major Hackin, the archæologist, who has since died in the service of Free France, rejected a whole series of projects before accepting these lotus flowers standing out on a background of Hindu design, among which the double-branched cross is introduced as a decorative element. Edmond Dulac used documents in the composition of this stamp and that of the Oceania stamp, which were kindly provided by the Keeper of the Department of Oriental Antiquities and Ethnography at the British Museum.

Around the World with Captain Cook

In a double canoe, similar to the one which the Tahitians will see on the stamps of Oceania, their ancestors sailed from Asia at the time of the great emigrations. Captain Cook had already discovered Tahiti a year before Bougainville took possession of this South Sea island, then called "O'Tahietie," for France. The

artist, W. Hodges, who accompanied Captain Cook on the second voyage "forwards to the South Pole and around the world" in the years 1772, 1773, and 1774, has handed down to us an exact representation of the tipairuas, or "travelling canoes." Each canoe was about 3 feet broad, 70 feet long, and 3½ feet deep, and the tiny central cabin, with its frail roof of reeds, protected some dignitary or shielded precious merchandise from the sun and the rain. These barques, at once so fragile and so seaworthy, were built entirely with implements of stone.

The Kagu Bird of New Caledonia

New Caledonia, Pacific island east of Australia, famous for its nickel mines, coffee plantations, and gigantic tropical flowers, has a national bird, the Kagu, existing only in New Caledonia and now rarely seen even there. The Kagu already figured on Caledonian passports. The crest of the bird is red, and its body slate-grey. When attacked unexpectedly it spreads its brilliantly coloured wings, dances and plucks with its beak at the end of its wing or its tail, and turns about suddenly to rush at the disconcerted foe, triumphing over him when he least expects it.

Air-Mail Stamp

Lastly, there is the Air-Mail stamp, which is identical for all the colonies, differing only in the name on the border. The aeroplane portrayed on the stamp is so recent a model that, seven months ago, when the stamp was designed, the plane was not yet under construction. To-morrow it will link together the vast colonies of Free France, united under the Cross of Lorraine.



Oceania



French Establishments in India



New Caledonia



French Equatorial Africa



Air Mail



The Cameroons

AFRICAN KING JOINS FREE FRANCE

Arrived with subjects on British Gold Coast.

Koadio Adiomani, King of 200,000 Abrons (natives inhabiting the Bondoukou district of the Ivory Coast, in Vichy West Africa) recently joined the cause of Free France together with thousands of his subjects.

Elding the surveillance of the Vichy police, the King, with his son Prince Kouame Adingra, five native chieftains and several thousands of his subjects, arrived dramatically on British Gold Coast territory, carrying a French flag and asking that the Lorraine Cross be added to it.

King Koadio was cordially welcomed by British authorities and Free French officers, and his first act was to send the following telegram to General de Gaulle :

"At the outbreak of war, September 1939, I sent this message to the Governor of the Ivory Coast : 'Faced with these inhuman Teutons who for a second time seek to bleed France, we, her children, the Abrons, have the opportunity to help in the defence of our dear Mother Country ; we are ready to answer her call and will be happy to die for her, for we are certain of her victory.'

"My feelings and those of all my subjects have not changed since that day, Since the Armistice we have been unable to understand the new attitude of the Ivory Coast authorities. For us there is but one enemy : Germany, always Germany.

"You, General de Gaulle, are alone a good Frenchman, and you represent the France we have always known. All the chiefs and

natives of the Ivory Coast think like us. Long live immortal France !"

King Koadio is the most important leader in the central and southern regions of the Ivory Coast. His prestige is enormous. At the outbreak of war he sent 1,000 native soldiers to the French army and presented to the French treasury over one hundred lbs. of gold and jewels worth half a million francs. Three of his sons volunteered for service in the French army ; one is prisoner in Germany, a second was drowned when his ship was torpedoed by a Nazi U-boat.

Resistance Becoming Bitter.

Authoritative Free French circles in London stated that the rallying of King Koadio and thousands of his subjects is evidence that Vichy's hold on French West Africa is becoming precarious. Natives can neither understand nor respect the craven attitude of submission adopted by the Vichy leaders. Their resistance is becoming as bitter as that of the French people. As early as June of last year the native King of Porto-Novo shot himself rather than submit to the "collaborationist" régime. Since then, natives of the Ivory Coast have refused to contribute to Marshal Pétain's Winter Relief Fund, informing the Governor that "If the children of France are hungry, that is because the Germans have devoured everything." They have refused to pay taxes or to carry out work that might benefit Hitler.

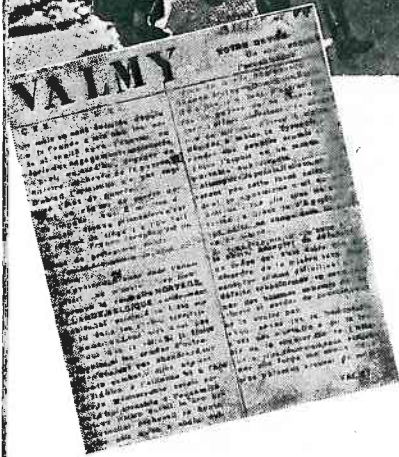
FREE FRENCH COMMEMORATIVE DATES.

1940

- June 18th .. General de Gaulle's first call to Frenchmen to continue resistance.
- July 1st Admiral Muselier's Order of the Day establishing the Free French Navy and Air Force.
- July 20th The New Hebrides rally to Free France.
- August 7th H.M. Government and General de Gaulle conclude an agreement by which General de Gaulle is recognised as Leader of the Free French.
- August 26th Chad territory rallies to Free France.
- August 27th The Cameroons rally to Free France.
- August 28th French Equatorial Africa rallies to Free France.
- September 2nd French Establishments in the Pacific rally to Free France.
- September 9th French Establishments in India rally to Free France.
- September 20th New Caledonia rallies to Free France.
- October 27th Declaration relating to the Free French war effort and Ordinance instituting the Council of Defence of the French Empire.
- November 16th Creation of the Order of Liberation.
- December 15th Loss of the Free French submarine "Narval."
- December 17th The Free French are mentioned in a congratulatory message from H.M. King George VI to General Wavell.

1941

- January 5th Free French Forces take part in the capture of Bardia.
- January 6th H.M. Government recognise the Council of Defence of the French Empire.
- January 21st Commercial agreement concluded with the Cameroons.
- February 1st Raid on Murzuk and death of Colonel d'Ornano.
- February 23rd Inauguration of the d'Ornano Camp (the Free French "St. Cyr") in Brazzaville.
- March 1st Free French Forces take part in the capture of Kufra.
- March 23rd Free French Forces in Abyssinia cut off the Keren-Asmara road.
- April 9th Free French troops enter Massawa.
- May 20th Commercial agreement concluded with French Equatorial Africa.
- June 8th Opening of the Syrian campaign.
- July 14th "Quatorze Juillet"—End of Syrian campaign.
- September 24th Establishment of the French National Committee.
- November 24th The "Lorraine" Squadron first mentioned in an R.A.F. communiqué as being in action in Libya.
- November 24th President Roosevelt authorises Lease-and-Lend shipments to Free France.
- December 8th Free France declares a state of war in the Pacific.
- December 24th Free French Marines occupy the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon.



IN OCCUPIED FRANCE

German soldiers, above, watch anxiously, while gendarmes line the road during the funeral procession of Lieut-Colonel Karl Holtz, the assassinated military commander of the Nantes region.

Left: "Valmy," the newspaper edited by Paul Simon.

Editor of Clandestine Paper Escapes to England

A few days after the Armistice in June 1940, Parisians were astonished and heartened to see slogans all over the capital saying: "Who is the most handsome Aryan in Europe?—Dr. Goebbels," "Who is the biggest plutocrat in Europe? — Marshal Goering," "Who is the last tyrant in Europe? — Adolf Hitler," and, most daring of all, "Long live de Gaulle—Liberté — Egalité — Fraternité." Who had the courage to print such slogans, and how did he do it?

With nothing more elaborate than a child's toy printing set with rubber characters, Paul Simon and four colleagues set to work. Buying the sticky-backed paper used for protecting windows from bomb

blast, they printed their slogans on it and pasted them by the thousand on the walls of Paris, and even on the windscreens of German military cars.

Simon was able to obtain a slightly superior press which permitted him to print four lines at a time, and in January 1941, he decided to launch "Valmy," a clandestine newspaper, which he went on printing until a few weeks ago, when he left Paris twenty-four hours ahead of the Gestapo and escaped to England. "Valmy" was the second clandestine paper to be printed in Occupied France—the first was "Pantagruel" (see "La Lettre de la France Libre," No. 1), whose editor, says Simon, was recently shot by the Nazis.

"Only One Enemy—the Invader"

The aims of "Valmy" were clearly defined by its title, which

commemorated the victory of the 1st Republic over the Prussians, and by its sub-title which read: "There is only one enemy—the invader"—"Un seul ennemi—l'envahisseur." Fifty copies were printed of the first issue. The second issue was delayed on account of shortage of ink. A special permit from the *Prefecture de Police* was necessary to obtain ink; this method did not appeal to Simon, so he stole it from the offices of the German H.Q. in Paris. When the second issue appeared, another friendly organisation got hold of it and reproduced ten thousand copies. By June, two thousand copies of "Valmy" were being printed by Simon. This figure gives no idea of the actual circulation, however, for each copy was passed from hand to hand many times over.

The distribution of the paper was so organised that the Gestapo might be able to arrest an agent but could not discover the system he employed. Simon gave copies of "Valmy" to each member of his group, who in turn formed another group, and so on. Thus each member knew the identity of the group leader above and below him, but no more.

"And," added Paul Simon, "the efficiency of this system was proved when someone once offered me a

copy of my own paper. Naturally I accepted!"

Printed in Paris Basements

In August, Nazi brutality in France was reaching new heights, and the Gestapo was redoubling its efforts to track down the publishers of clandestine papers—at one time there were between 15 to 20 being printed in Paris basements.

Simon and his colleagues had earnest discussions about the procedure to be adopted in the event of their premises being raided. Finally, it was decided to keep a large monkey-wrench handy. Whoever was nearest to the wrench when a policeman entered would be entitled to use it to the best effect; it was agreed that the policeman's body should be hidden in the bath-tub.

On two successive months publication of "Valmy" was suspended; on the second occasion all copies were burnt after the word had been passed round that the Gestapo were hot on the trail. Eventually, Simon's premises were due to be raided on a Saturday night; on the Friday he was warned by one of his many friends. He left Paris immediately, and subsequently reached England by means which may not be disclosed. "France," he says, "is resisting—and will know how to strike when the day of liberation dawns."

Results of the "New Order"

During the first five months of 1941, mortality in France—as compared with the corresponding pre-war period—increased by 43 per cent. among persons over 60, by 22 per cent. among adults below this age, and by 10 per cent. among children. In Paris itself, the latest statistics relating to infant mortality show an increase of 45 per cent. over that of the past five years. Further-

more, in a speech made by M. Caziot, Minister of Agriculture, on October 19th last, he stated that practically all children old enough to attend secondary schools lost weight during the 1940-41 school year. Finally, it was estimated that the birth-rate, compared with that of 1939, showed a decrease of some 40 per cent. Such are the results of the "New Order."

GENERAL CATROUX

High Commissioner of Free France and
Commander-in-Chief of the Free French
Forces in Syria and the Levant.

General Catroux, who, as Governor-General of Indo-China, was one of the first French Generals to join the Free French after the Armistice of June 1940, comes of a military family. His father was also a General.

Early Training under Lyautey

Georges Catroux was born in January, 1879. After studying at the military school of La Flèche (Sarthe), he entered Saint-Cyr Military Academy at an early age, and when he left in 1899 was posted to the famous mounted company of the Foreign Legion, the ambition of many generations of "Saint-Cyriens."

From 1903 to 1905, Lieutenant Catroux served as Aide-de-Camp to Governor-General Beau, one of France's empire builders, then Governor-General of Indo-China, a post which he himself was to occupy later in dramatic circumstances.

Returning from the East, he was sent to North Africa, and under the then Colonel Lyautey, another of France's empire leaders, with whom he was to work later on, Catroux took part in the operations on the borders of Algeria and Morocco which culminated in the installation of French authority in Morocco. In 1911, after serving with General d'Amade in Morocco, he went to Algeria as Aide-de-Camp to Governor-General Lutaud, remaining there until the declaration of war.

Prisoner in Magdeburg Fortress

When war broke out in 1914, Georges Catroux left for France at the head of a company of Algerian infantry, and took part in the battles of Charleroi and Arras, as well as in operations on the Somme until, in 1916, he was wounded and taken prisoner at Baillleul.

After several attempts to escape from his German camp, Captain Catroux was interned in the fortress at Magdeburg, where he had as fellow-prisoners Roland Garros, the French ace of the last war, and the future General de Goys, another famous



French airman. He helped Roland Garros to escape, but he himself was caught and confined in a dark cell for three months.

Returning to France in 1918, he was appointed Military Attaché in Constantinople with the rank of lieutenant-colonel, and afterwards went to Beirut with General Gouraud, the first French High Commissioner in Syria. Colonel Catroux was with General Gouraud when an unsuccessful attempt was made on the General's life, causing the death of an aide-de-camp.

Governor of Damascus

Appointed Governor of Damascus, Colonel Catroux retained this post under General Weygand during the Druse campaign until he was recalled to Morocco by Marshal Lyautey to take over the "2ème Bureau" (Intelligence) in Fez, during the Riff campaign.

But Catroux was needed again in Syria, and in 1926 he returned to Beirut under M. Henri de Jouvenel, then High Commissioner, as head of the Political and Military Intelligence Section of the Army of the Levant. He served in a similar capacity under M. Ponsot, the new High Commissioner.

Commander on the Algerian-Morocco Border

In 1928, Colonel Catroux was back in North Africa, serving his period of command as Colonel of the 1st Regiment of the Foreign Legion at Sidi-bé-Abbès, in Algeria. A little later he was called upon to take over the command which Marshal Lyautey had made famous before the last war, at Ain Sefra, on the border between Algeria and Morocco.

General Commanding at Marrakesh

In 1929, Catroux went back to France to take his course at the Centre for High Military Studies in Paris, which is known in the French Army as the "Ecole des Maréchaux." He was then promoted brigadier-general, and again appointed to Morocco as commander of the district of Marrakesh. There he took part in the final pacification of this part of Morocco in the Anti-Atlas range. For the part he then played he was given the decoration of Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour, a distinction which is seldom granted to a brigadier-general. Shortly afterwards he was promoted lieutenant-colonel.

Recalled to France in 1936, General Catroux was given command, first, of the 14th Infantry Division in Mulhausen, and then of the 19th Army Corps in Algiers. He remained there until a few months before the war, when he was placed on the reserve by General Gamelin, with whom he disagreed on the subject of army organization.

Governor-General of Indo- China—Refused to Accept Armistice

Recalled to service in August 1939, by M. Georges Mandel, then Minister for Colonies, General Catroux was made a full general and sent to Indo-China as Governor-General.

He held this post until July 1940, when, refusing to accept the decision of the Bordeaux Government not to continue the struggle, he was relieved of his command. Admiral Decoux, commanding the French Navy in the Far East, was immediately sent to Indo-China to take his place.

General Catroux then placed himself at the disposal of General de Gaulle and issued an appeal to his brother officers all over the world to carry on the fight. His name was known and respected for many years in Morocco and Syria, where a number of those who had been serving under him succeeded in defying the orders of the Vichy authorities and joining the Free French Forces.

Free French High Commis- sioner and Commander-in- Chief in the Middle East

Appointed member of the Council of Defence of the French Empire by General de Gaulle, the body entrusted with the guardianship of the integrity of France's empire and the general policy of the Free French colonies, General Catroux went to the Middle East as High Commissioner of Free France and Commander-in-Chief of the Free French Forces. In this capacity, and in close collaboration with the Allied authorities, his task was to watch over France's traditional interests in the Levant.

Delegate of Free France in Syria and the Lebanon

Syria, where General Catroux had spent so many years, was still under Vichy control and could therefore be used by the Germans as a base for operations against the adjoining British territories the moment the German Armistice Commission so ordered. This situation, which had long been foreseen, arose in the early summer of 1941, when German planes landed on Syrian aerodromes to help the rebellion against the British in Iraq. The Vichy authorities obeyed German orders, which went so far as to include the transfer to Iraq of large quantities of war material which had been stopped by the Armistice Commission.

When the unfortunate necessity for action on the part of the Allies became evident, General Catroux was appointed by General de Gaulle as Delegate-General and Plenipotentiary in the Levant, and assumed responsibility for the conduct of operations on behalf of Free France. In this capacity, he attended the Armistice Conference at Saint Jean D'Acre, on the 11th July, by the side of General Wilson, British Commander-in-Chief. His was the painful task of discussing the Armistice conditions with the representatives of General Dentz, the Vichy High Commissioner.

Afterwards, it also fell to General Catroux to negotiate and later proclaim the independence of Syria and the Lebanon on behalf of General de Gaulle, in accordance with the promises made by France as early as 1936 and now fulfilled by Free France.