

THE TIMES

July 31, 1941

P.M. WINS VOTE 429-120!

By F.O. Jenkins (London):

The past month saw the Government prevail in a vote of confidence in the House of Commons. Prime Minister Churchill had called for the vote in response to the calls of several backbenchers, led by Lord Halifax, to initiate peace negotiations with the enemy. In opening the three days of free and open debate on the measure, the Prime Minister stated, "It has come to my attention that some are openly advocating for peace with our Nazi, Italian, and Japanese enemies. Far from running from dissent or questioning in our glorious democracy, I feel that we should meet it head on. Though our actions in prosecuting the war have not been perfect by any means, I cannot conceive that any could have done better given the challenges facing our nation and the Empire. We have tossed aside party partisanship and united together in the best interest of the British People. Let any man who truly believes that we should leave occupied Europe, the Crown Colony of Hong Kong, Singapore, or Malaya in bondage and betray our guiding principles of democracy and freedom be made to vote to repudiate this government and advocate for appeasement in the open." Lord Halifax then rose, was recognized by the Speaker and stated, "Far from appeasement, I would urge this House to recognise the reality of our situation. Without American intervention, the prospects for victory are far from certain ..." before being shouted down by the Government benches.

The three days of debate made clear that many of the MPs who chose to vote against the Government did so from a variety of motivations – lack of raises for labourers in war industries, problems with the conduct of the war, lack of scapegoats for military misfortunes, and the Government's firm commitment to total victory. The Prime Minister reached out to all MPs with this final statement before the vote:

Although I feel the broadening swell of victory and liberation bearing us and all the tortured peoples onwards safely to the final goal, I must confess to feeling the weight of the war upon me even more than in the tremendous summer days of 1940. There are so many fronts which are open, so many vulnerable points to defend, so many inevitable misfortunes, so many shrill voices raised to take advantage, now that we can breathe more freely, of all the turns and twists of war. Therefore, I feel entitled to come to the House of Commons, whose servant I am, and ask them not to press me to act against my

conscience and better judgment and make scapegoats in order to improve my own position, not to press me to do the things that may be clamoured for at the moment but which will not help in our war effort, but, on the contrary, to give me their encouragement and to give me their aid. I have never ventured to predict the future. I stand by my original programme, blood, toil, tears, and sweat, which is all I have ever offered. It is because I see the light gleaming behind the clouds and broadening on our path, that I make so bold now as to demand a declaration of confidence of the House of Commons.

The Prime Minister then took his seat as the Hon. Wm. Fitzsimmons, MP (Con. – Salisbury) read out the formal charge calling for a test of the confidence in the government. The vote was an open vote, all parties lifting the whip, allowing the free vote. In the end, the government prevailed with over 78% of the vote in favour of the Prime Minister's continued leadership. The Empire and this nation are fortunate indeed to have such a determined leader at the helm in this time of world crisis.

HONG KONG HEROES RETURN!!!

By F.S. Caldwell (Rangoon):

Rangoon gave a boisterous welcome to the Hong Kong Provisional Brigade which entered the city in good order under the skirl of the pipes. These heroes not only resisted the perfidious attack of the Japanese upon the Crown Colony but bravely soldiered on alongside Chinese forces for over a year. Their bravery and fortitude against extreme odds are an inspiration to all people who refuse to bow down to the forces of fascism and despotism.

On the tenth of April 1940, after demands for the port of Hong Kong to be opened to the Japanese Navy were refused by Sir Alexander McLeod, Governor of the Crown Colony, two divisions of Japanese Marines supported by heavy cruisers attacked. The local garrison, consisting of the 2nd Battalion of the Black Watch, 1st Battalion of the Green Howards, and 2nd Battalion of the Mahattra Light Infantry were slowly pushed back despite a valiant counter attack by the Black Watch which almost broke the Japanese defences at their landing zone. Once ashore on the island of Hong Kong, the Japanese showed just how "civilized" they are --- hospitals became houses of death rather than succor and mercy as the Japanese systematically butchered whole wards at a time. Rape, murder, and looting became commonplace as this cancer spread across the island. After several week of determined resistance, and supplemented by local militia and the Royal Hong Kong Constabulary, 3,000 fighting men continued to fight on in Kwoloon and in the New Territories until the end of May 1940, when they reached Chinese lines.

For the next year, these brave men of the Hong Kong Provisional Brigade, under the able leadership of Lt. Col. T.L. Baker-Finch of the Green Howards and Sir Patrick Hutchison, Chief Commissioner of the Royal Hong Kong Constabulary, demonstrated to

the enemy and to the world that even in the face of extreme odds that the British Empire resists dastardly aggression that would trample upon the freedom of the world to the utmost. The cost was high as only 2,122 men arrived in Rangoon to the welcome of the Governor, the people, and the garrison. Burmese, Chinese, Indian, French, British, and Australian alike crowded the streets of Rangoon to show their appreciation of the valour of these brave men. These men who fought hard for freedom and courageously demonstrated the words of Mr. Churchill, “never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never, never ... Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy” are expected to receive leave and suitable honours in the coming months. The whole of the Empire is rightfully proud of their bravery, valour, and determination in the fight for freedom!

A GREAT SUCCESS FOR DEMOCRACY!

By W.T. O'Rourke (Bangkok):

After the liberation of Siam by our valiant troops, His Majesty's Government and the Provisional Siamese Government have announced the initiation of the process of political transition of Siam. This country will be converted from a Japanese puppet to a democratic government chosen by and for the Siamese people.

We British have learnt from history. Abusive peaces do not help anyone. Siam is a strategic country for the stability of the whole of South-East Asia, and we will do our best to help her on the road to democracy and freedom.

The Provisional Siamese government has scheduled elections for the 15th of April 1942. This will give time to the new Siamese government to reorganize all the political and economic structures and to draft a democratic and egalitarian constitution. In one of its first acts to demonstrate to the world its desire for peace, the Provisional Siamese government declared Siam a non-belligerent in the current conflict.

His Majesty's Government has pledged both financial and material support for civil education, reconstruction, and the improvement of infrastructure. All Siamese POWs have been released and returned home to participate in the building of Siamese democracy. Additionally, His Majesty's Government has pledged to defend Siam from any external threat for the duration of the current conflict.

A democratic Siam will be a beacon of hope and a demonstration of British intentions across Asia. We do not offer occupation and exploitation as do the Japanese but rather seek to share the blessings of democratic government with all mankind.

IN BRIEF

SCHEER SUNK!!!

As has been extensively reported over the BBC for the past week, elements of the Royal Navy engaged and destroyed the Nazi raider Scheer on the 24th of July. HMS Rodney and HMS Repulse opened the attack, with HMS King George V adding her weight about five minutes later. The Scheer failed to fire a single salvo, being hit at extreme range by multiple salvos amidships. A shot from HMS Rodney penetrated her forward magazine and she exploded into a wall of flame, listed over to port, and quickly sank. The Royal Navy engaged in rescue operations with dispatch but only 110 of Scheer's crew were plucked from the waves.

NAZIS BREAK PACT AND INVADE DENMARK!

Despite her non-aggression pact with Hitler, The Kingdom of Denmark was attacked on the 22nd of this month and their capital of Copenhagen occupied within days of the opening of hostilities. The Danish government formally surrendered on the 27th of the month. Once again a democratic government put its trust in the word of Adolf Hitler and once again the flame of freedom has been trampled down. The Danes will not soon forget this Nazi betrayal and will soon be among the collection of free peoples fighting to resist Nazi tyranny.

A VICTORY IN SPAIN!

This past month saw the 11th Armoured Corps and the 20th Mechanised Corps drive towards Madrid against two crack German Infantry Corps. Using the Tejo River to protect their left flank as they advanced, the 11th and 20th made good progress, destroying three divisions of German infantry and forcing the survivors across the river in disarray. Over 23,000 Prisoners of War were taken during the advance. This month will see our boys continue down the road to Madrid!

French Advance Into Tunisia!

Free French forces have moved into Tunisia from the west and are driving upon Tunis. Elements of the Free French Army have pushed back an Italian Infantry Corps and an Italian Armoured Div. from the east of Bone with the support of the Free French Fleet. Reports from the front indicate that the enemy is short of fuel, food, and ammunition. The way to Tunis is clear. With most of the Italian formations remaining immobile to the west of Tripoli, our gallant French Allies continue to advance.