Nazis Take Paris

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Inhabitants Stay Indoors as Germans Take City

Paris Radio Now Speaks German and Hitler Plans Triumphal Entry

Paris belongs to Adolf Hitler. Abandoned by the French and declared an open city to prevent its destruction, the capital of France was turned over whole to the Nazi invaders early this morning.

Late yesterday the French Army retired from both sides of the city. At 7 p.m. last night German motorcycle machine gunners reached the northern gates of Paris, established posts and awaited orders to enter. At midnight the last Parisians who wanted to escape were allowed to leave—by the South. Then the French police and gendarmerie, left behind by the French Government to maintain order during the transfer, closed the city's historic gates and awaited until the time when the Germans would relieve them of their duties.

Dead City

The Nazi troops who came marching through the wide boulevards of Europe's most beautiful city found a dead city. Of its 3,000,000 inhabitants, an estimated 2,000,000 had left, and those who remained stayed discreetly indoors.

Not a business house functioned, not a cafe was open for business. Only the police roamed the streets, and they had been disarmed to constitute a purely civilian force. Of the capital's diplomatic corps, only U. S. Ambassador William C. Bullitt and a small part of his staff remained.

Radio in German

It was the second time in 70 years that the French capital had fallen to a German invader, but this victory of 1940 far eclipsed in world importance the Prussian triumph of 1871. Then the Prussian King was proclaimed Emperor of Germany at Versailles, and after a few months the forces of von Moltke and Bismarck retired to leave the French to themselves. What symbolic use the ingenious Nazi dictator will now make of his possession of Paris remained to be seen, but already the Paris radio blared forth announcements in German and already the Fuehrer planned a triumphal parade up the Champs Elysees and through the Arc de Triomphe. (See page 4.) Church bells rang and flags waved throughout Germany today.

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For the French the fall of Paris was a stunning, perhaps fatal, blow—from a military, psychological, industrial standpoint. The center of the nation's railroad system was gone. The cultural capital of the Republic, the center of French learning and French freedom, had been abandoned to a totalitarian dictator. At least half the country's industry, and easily half of its arms producing factories, were now in Hitler's hands.

In its communique announcing the city's fall, the French General Staff said: "In renouncing direct defense of the capital, now declared an open city, the French command wanted to spare the devastation which defense of the city would have entailed, and estimated that no valuable strategic reason justified the sacrifice of Paris." But the truth was that whether Paris itself resisted or not the city was destined in a few hours to be encircled anyway.

Maginot Line Imperilled

"From today on, the French fight behind Paris," screamed a headline this morning in the Deutsche Allegemeine Zeitung, of Berlin. The German radio, in its version of why the French had declared the capital an open city at the last minute, said that Parisians remaining in the city had rioted and had demanded capitulation rather than destruction.

But there was no hint that the Fuehrer would now call a halt to his advancing Armies. Already the left flank of the Nazi armies were advancing on Chalon-sur-Marne, east of Paris, and thus threatening to cut off the entire French Army at Verdun, Metz and in the Maginot Line along the Rhine. Unless that advance is speedily stopped, said the military experts, the whole of Alsace and Lorraine seems destined to be quickly isolated.

Even in the West, near the English Channel, the Germans were running wild down the coast, took the great port of Le Havre The British again promised "immediate and massive" aid, but they could scarcely be called optimistic. A British Foreign Office spokesman realistically described the French Army in these terms: "The French Army is very tired. Many French divisions have not been relieved in 10 days of constant fighting while covering an 80-mile retreat." Sir Philip Joubert, British Air Marshal, in a discussion of military possibilities, admitted that Britain could not now prevent German troops from landing in the United Kingdom.

For the French it looked like the beginning of a complete debacle. For Adolf Hitler, the title of "Mehrer" (Aggrandizer), bestowed on him last year after his move into Czechoslovakia, seemed never more fitting.

—R. N.

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