

PM

Monday, September 14, 1942

Laval Enslaves All France for Hitler

**Compulsory Labor in Germany
Decreed for Men and Women**

By EDWARD SCHRIFTGIERSER

Pétain clamped the chains of Nazi slavery on the men and women of France today. The aged Marshal, Pierre Laval, and their Quisling cabinet, promulgated a decree ordering all French men and women to compulsory labor.

The decree, which the Government frankly admitted meant slavery in Germany for thousands of Frenchmen, was signed by Pétain on Friday night, but was not issued until Sunday. Its promulgation makes clear the reasons back of the sudden mobilization Saturday of Vichy's defense forces, a demonstration of armed might obviously designed, not to guard against invasion, but to terrorize Frenchmen who thought of revolt from within.

Under Hitler's latest order, transmitted to the French by Overseers Laval and Pétain, all men between 18 and 50, and all single women between 21 and 35, must work at any job the masters ordain.

'In Superior Interest'

Every man and women is liable to service at any task deemed "necessary in the superior interest of the nation." An if there is any interest there, now, superior to Germany's, M. Laval does not recognize it.

United Press dispatches passed by the Vichy censor said frankly the decree was designed to provide French workers for labor in Germany. The very fact that the censor passed this interpretation underscored its correctness. Laval not so long ago announced with considerable flourish that his Fuehrer had condescended to release French prisoners of war at the rate one prisoner for every three skilled French workers who volunteered to work in the Reich. The response was infinitesimal, so small that only 1500 prisoners were freed of the 1,500,000 held in Germany and apparently has since stopped altogether. Now the French worker will no longer be given his choice.

Labor Secretary Hubert La Gardelle, one of the signers of the decree, will have the authority to designate who shall be drafted and what work they shall do.

OldMagazineArticles.com

Mussolini's Friend

La Gardelle, Laval's shadow, is a personal friend of Mussolini, and may be counted upon to have the proper Fascist attitude toward recalcitrants.

The decree provides severe penalties for violation of its labor code, ranging from a week to five years in jail and various fines. Frenchmen will be subject to muster for work, either individually or in groups, anywhere the Government chooses. At harvest time men may be sent from the cities into the country, and the urban unemployed may be sent permanently into agricultural labor.

It was made clear that this was a real mobilization of forced labor, much wider in its effect than recent roundups in Paris of jobless frequenters of bars and movies.

Provisions of the decree apply to Frenchmen in the colonies as well as in France, and may be extended to foreigners living in France. Students are exempted while actually pursuing their studies. There are no other exemptions, and a question which immediately arose was how it would affect members of religious organizations.

The Vichy censor let Ralph E. Heinzen, UP correspondent, remark in an otherwise very cautious dispatch that "never before in history has a Frenchman been obliged to work." In a country which was once the most individualistic in the world, enforcement of the decree will require a complete reversal in the national attitude. Very likely that was what a high official was referring to Saturday, as he surveyed the machine-guns guarding all roads into Vichy, when he voiced the unfinished threat:

"If ever trouble breaks out in France. . .".

Jewish Roundup

Recently the Nazi-controlled rulers of France have been attempting to round up all Jewish refugees in the Unoccupied territory for return to the lands of their origin—in effect, to send them to slavery in Germany. Andre Philip, labor commissioner in London for Fighting France, said on the British radio last night:

"Thousands of French workmen accepted misery and destitution rather than submit to alien rule. Hitler has wanted to replace half a million German workers he had sent into uniform by finding foreign labor. . . . All the forced labor the Germans got from France was 30,000 laborers, women and foreigners. This made Hitler furious and now he wants to bring back Jews he once expelled."

In New York today five former members of the French Chamber of Deputies endorsed the protest against Laval's assumption of dictatorial powers, issued last week by Edouard Herriot, who was president of the Deputies, and Jules Jeanneney, president of the suppressed Senate.

Herriot said: "It is impossible that liberty will die in the country of its birth."

Supporting this assertion and also voicing admiration for the Fighting France of Gen. de Gaulle, were Pierre Cot, deputy for Savoie; Edouard Jonas, Alpes Maritimes; Henri de Kerillis, Seine; Herve de Lyrot, Ile et Vilaine, and Pierre Mendes-France, Eure.