



25th August 1944

The French Army of the Interior and the French Army of the Exterior fought side by side. Each may say to the other: Merci!

**This account of the Liberation of Paris is based on reports  
received from the correspondents of the French Press Agency.**

# **OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE OF THE 24th AUGUST, 1944, FROM THE FRENCH FORCES OF THE INTERIOR, OF THE ILE-DE-FRANCE AREA.**

" Our offensive was carried on throughout the night of the 23rd to the 24th, and has continued throughout the day.

" In all the districts in Paris, the population is enthusiastically helping with the erection of barricades. These defences are proving strikingly effective. The enemy; compelled to give up carrying out light patrols in cars or tanks, is confining his activities to sending out armoured reconnaissance parties which have attacked, without success, a number of premises and public buildings occupied by the F.F.I.

" Generally speaking, our offensive is successfully bringing about the effective liberation of the greater part of Paris, the enemy now controlling only a few fortified strong points.

" In the course of several engagements, a large quantity of material, weapons, ammunition, cars, light and medium tanks have been captured. Thus, far from weakening, the striking power of the F.F.I., has increased. We have taken about a hundred prisoners. In one single operation at the station of Belleville, two trains, a petrol dump and twenty-four prisoners fell into our hands."

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*...One bright August day an army of citizens sprang up from the depths of Paris. Workmen, clerks, shopkeepers, men and women belonging to all social classes appeared from everywhere and nowhere, rose to challenge the strong German garrison, and liberated four-fifths of their capital in a wave of patriotism, so vigorous and so irresistible that from being the hunter, the enemy became the hunted.*

*The Parisians erected barricades in the streets in order to hinder the possible return of the Germans. Paris returned to its old revolutionary traditions, but this time the revolution was unleashed against the Germans. The Parisians adopted revolutionary methods with a view to national liberation. Let me give you two or three examples of the heroism of which Paris gave proof in the last few days of August.*

*A lad of eighteen climbed on to a heavy German "Tiger" tank and poured the contents of several cans of petrol into the turret. The tank burst into flames as the boy was shot dead by the crew.*

*Another patriot, equally youthful, blinded the driver of another tank by suddenly closing the front hatch, just as the tank was taking a sharp bend. The driver lost control of the tank, which crashed against a wall, was attacked by a group of F.F.I. and set on fire. The boy was crushed under the tank.*

*Another young Frenchman succeeded in over-coming the vigilance of the guard of the Luxembourg Palace, which had been converted into a fortress by the enemy, entered a pavilion in which were gathered several German officers, destroying it with a bomb. He himself died as a result of the explosion.*

*This is how the Parisians fought during the days preceding the final assault of the Allies which brought them into the capital.*

*The street fighting continued in all districts from the Saturday at dawn until the moment when, towards the end of the afternoon of the 25th August, the German commander of the Paris area having capitulated, most of the German pockets of resistance also surrendered.*

*I repeat: most, not all, because several thousand fanatics continued to machine-gun civilians from the tops of roofs. . . .*

*The chains of Paris were rent asunder by the French army, a fact which has earned for the Allied High Command the everlasting gratitude of the French. The French army of the Interior and the French army of the Exterior fought side by side. One can say to the other : merci !*

*Had it been possible to distribute weapons and uniforms in sufficient quantities, I am certain that two million men would have been ready to answer the call. These Forces of the Interior, wearing motley civilian clothing, armed with revolvers, tommy-guns or rifles—many not armed at all—have only one fear, that is that they may not be able to play a large enough part in meting out the punishment which the crimes of the Germans deserve. These men have a deep, violent hatred of the German. They have seen too much, they have suffered too much. Yet an odd contrast may be detected in their feelings : an implacable hatred of the enemy—and at the same time, a timid reserve when the enemy is no longer in question.* PIERRE MAILLAUD

# SIX HISTORIC DAYS

The Paris insurrection began on the 15th August by a rising of the police. About two years ago, three policemen conceived independently the idea of organising a resistance movement inside the Prefecture itself. It was several months before any one of them found out what the others were doing. But shortly before the invasion they "discovered" each other and decided to work together. It was then that the Committee of the Free Paris Police came into being.

A tall young man whom I met the day Paris was liberated, and who was so tired he could scarcely remain standing, was entrusted with the command of this group. Plans were made, and when the Allied forces and Leclerc's men were approaching the capital, the police were ready to go into action.

The moment for action came on the 18th August, when the whole police force went on strike. This was in reply to the German decision to disarm the police in the capital as well as in the suburbs.

As soon as the strike became known, Monsieur Bussière, the Prefect appointed by Vichy, made desperate efforts to restore order among his men. He appealed, threatened, argued. The police still turned a deaf ear. There was no one left to guard the banks, patrol the streets, or control the traffic,

particularly that of the Germans, who were beginning to leave the capital in force. The roads became terribly jammed. Parisians watched the German muddle with suppressed jubilation.

Thus, until the morning of the 19th, the capital was deprived of its policemen. Then, suddenly, three thousand of them, in civilian clothing, assembled on the square before Notre-Dame and outside the gates of the Prefecture.

Their leader demanded admittance. The gates were opened and he was received by the Prefect, who was even more ill at ease than he had been three days earlier. Courteously, but firmly, the Prefect was surrounded by policemen and escorted to his apartment, where he was kept under guard.

Whereupon the new Prefect of Police, Monsieur Luizet—already known for the active part which he played in the liberation of Corsica—solemnly assumed office.

Monsieur Luizet had succeeded in entering the capital by means which have so far remained secret. His stay at the Prefecture was brief. He remained on the premises just long enough to witness the hoisting of the first Tricolor which, for four years, had flown from the main flagstaff of this ancient building. At 10 o'clock in the morning the order came to send eighty patrols to

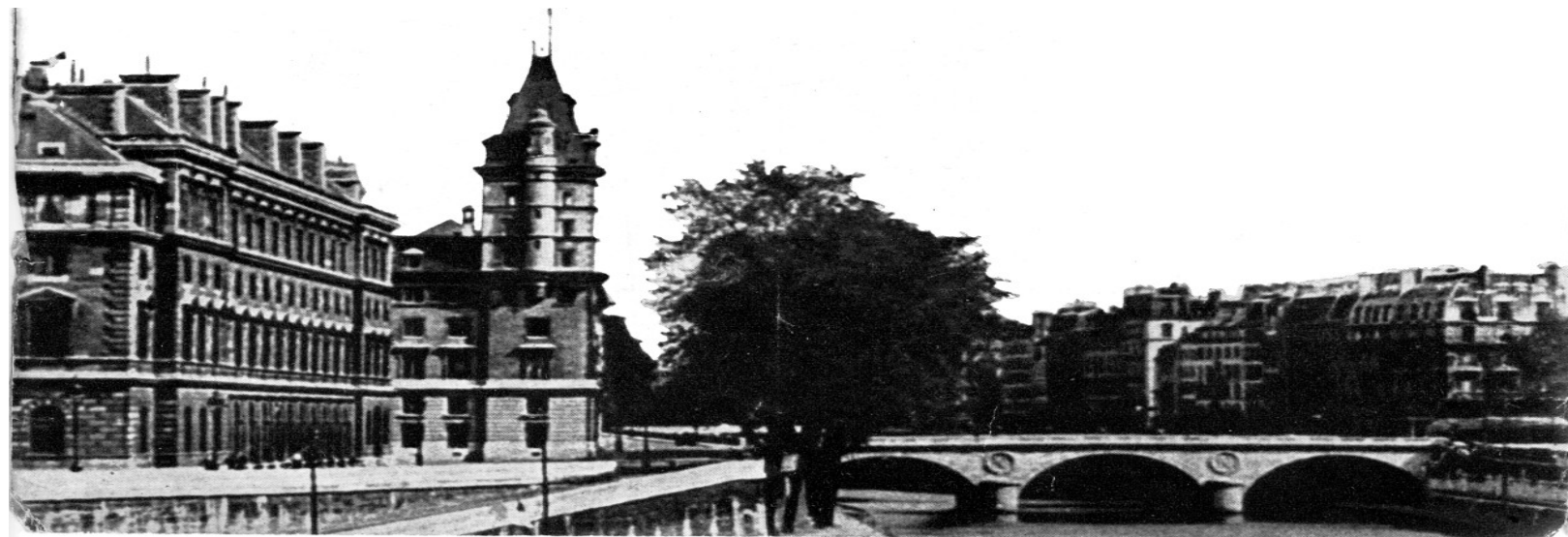
seize eighty divisional police stations, organise the defences of the Prefecture, gather together the weapons, share out the ammunition and barricade the doors.

The big gates were hardly closed when the Germans, who had been warned, arrived with two armoured cars and two lorry loads of infantry. The first shot was fired: the battle had started. . . .

The whole day long, armed only with a few revolvers, rifles and tommy-guns, the police repulsed the attacks made by the tanks which the enemy had brought into action. By 6 o'clock that night the position of the beleaguered garrison was becoming critical, and a call for help went over the telephone to the stations which had been liberated: "Send reinforcements to the Prefecture!"

By 8 o'clock the position was growing more and more desperate, but nothing could induce the patriots to surrender. An hour later the Germans drew closer. Two tanks got into position to fire at the entrance. All seemed lost. The ammunition would not last more than one hour more. Silently the police waited in the courtyard for the two tanks to open fire. . . .

In grim silence also the four leaders sat waiting in their office. Suddenly the telephone rang:





"Cease fire . . . the enemy has asked for a truce until 7 o'clock to-morrow morning." Why? No one seemed to understand the reasons for this. At the request of the Germans, the terms of the truce were made known by the F.F.I, through the medium of the Swedish consulate, and were telephoned to the parties concerned.

Shots fired by isolated snipers continued to be heard in different parts of the He de la Cite. German tanks began to speed up and down the boulevards and the avenues. In the offices of the Seine Prefecture, at the Hôtel de Ville, the F.F.I., wearing armllets and carrying revolvers and sten-guns, guarded the windows. The new Prefect of Police had not yet arrived, but the general secretary of the police, his arm in a sling from a wound received the previous day, was entrusted with the defence of the Hôtel de Ville.

At the Prefecture the end of the truce was awaited.

Before the night had ended skirmishes had broken out in the whole of the Cite ; the Germans were being engaged everywhere.

The Battle of Paris was in progress. . . .

The challenge flung by the police in the face of the occupying forces marked the beginning of the rising. But the battle spread through the whole of the capital. The desire to liberate Paris was not born in one day. The plans

had been carefully prepared and the military operations studied in detail by 30,000 men without uniforms, but trained like soldiers under the leadership of their officers. The support of the police and of the whole population of Paris had been foreseen. Several days before the outbreak of the revolt the population began to defy the Germans, and this defiance became more and more open as the Allied columns approached Paris.

The output in factories was diminishing. No one any longer heeded the orders of the Germans or of Vichy. The metro and the buses ceased running, this because

the Germans, on account of their lack of petrol, were making more and more use of the metro. When the call went out to the population to help the F.F.I, and to construct barricades in order to hinder the movements of enemy tanks and protect the patriots, women and children joined in the work with enthusiasm. Beds, tables were cheerfully sacrificed. Those odd flat circular gratings which surround the tree trunks in Paris were torn up. All this, in addition to the legendary paving stones, was heaped into barricades at specific points, whilst the Germans fired on the workers to stop them.

All Paris had heard the call. All Paris had answered it.

The various units of the F.F.I. had taken up their positions and were carrying out the orders of their leaders. The Germans, emerging from their lairs, did their best to force the barricades with tanks and grenades ; but they had to turn back again and again.

The patriots' weapons consisted mainly of revolvers and of home-made anti-tank grenades, made out of bottles filled with petrol. Nevertheless, the struggle went on with these precarious means until the enemy was completely defeated.

The patriots attacked the enemy and defended themselves at the same time; buildings which had been fortified by the Germans fell to the F.F.I. German losses were high, as also were





those of the patriots and of the civilian population.

Four days later, when Leclerc's division entered the capital, the F.F.I. had overcome most of the resistance, with the exception of a few positions more strongly fortified than others : the Ecole Militaire, the Hotel Meurice, the Senate. Together, the patriots and the men of the armoured division captured them.

As soon as the battle started, the secret wireless stations and the underground press came out of hiding. The first paper posted up the news and, with the wireless, gave the Parisians the first reports of the struggle. Three French war correspondents, Andre Rabache, Fern and Moulrier and Pierre Gosset, crossed through the lines, entered the capital on the first day and worked with their colleagues to give out the news to the capital and to the world. Photographers took pictures of the battle and of the German exodus. A film of the fighting was made under the very eyes of the enemy.

Sheltering behind windows and doors, the Parisians watched the progress of the F.F.I., and the women managed to get and prepare food for the patriots fighting behind the barricades.

In the meantime, fifty feet below the streets of Paris, a young colonel, commanding the F.F.I. of the capital and of the neighbouring districts, directed operations from his secret control-room. For several months past Paris had had its own headquarters.

This 36-year-old colonel, who was a private at the beginning of the war, and who was made a colonel a few months ago, was in charge of 30,000 men. In making his plans he had been assisted by the National Council of resistance

under the leadership of General Joinville. These forces, as well as the rest of the French Forces of the Interior, were under the command of General Koenig, then in London.

A few months ago it became necessary to find headquarters easily accessible, provided with good means of communication, yet impossible for the enemy to discover. The air-raided shelter of the Paris waterworks was selected, as it seemed to possess all the necessary advantages.

This shelter had been built at the beginning of the war, and was bombproof as well as gas proof. It was constructed in the centre of a network of fifteen miles of underground corridors through which the city's water mains pass. These corridors are hewn in the rock. The shelter could be sealed off by huge doors, had its own air-conditioning plant and private telephone lines, independent of the public system. The corridors led to five different exits in the capital, some as distant as the Bois de Boulogne, communicating with the catacombs, and offering a good escape route in case of need.

This was an ideal spot for secret headquarters. In addition to these numerous advantages, it had that of being known only to a very small number of Germans : those who were employed in the waterworks. One or two more persons entering the premises could pass unnoticed. The only Germans who knew of the existence of the shelter left the capital just before the rising. The existence of these headquarters was never suspected by the Wehrmacht. The German headquarters were so unaware of this that, when the battle was raging, an officer telephoned every day to ask if the premises had been attacked by the F.F.I. Naturally he was always reassured on this point.

During the months when the battle was planned, one of the offices installed in the shelter was used every night for the preparation of staff maps. It was in this underground shelter, which so vividly recalls the famous episode of Hugo's " Miserables," that the nerve-centre of the battle of Paris was established. The colonel and his staff got ready their plans. Orders and instructions were telephoned to messengers, who silently left the

underground by one of the five exits with messages for advanced posts installed in cafés, shops or private houses, and returned with reports on the progress of the struggle. Young women worked side by side with them as typists and telephone operators.

In the course of the struggle, which lasted from the 19th to the 25th August, the Paris Forces of the Interior destroyed or captured sixty tanks, the only weapons at their disposal being grenades, rifles and home-made anti-tank grenades. They captured thirty guns, many machine-guns, five hundred rifles and over a thousand revolvers, which all went to help carry on the fight.

The position as regards weapons was serious, and one night the colonel sent an urgent S.O.S. to the Allies asking for more. Unfortunately they did not reach the capital in time.

The exact number of German dead and wounded is not known, as the enemy buried his dead and evacuated the wounded. It is easier to estimate the French losses, although a great number of wounded were not taken to hospital, but were looked after in private houses. The number of dead is estimated to be about 1,900, and there were over 3,000 wounded.

Several hundred civilians, policemen and members of the F.F.I. were murdered by the Germans before they left. Several hundred were deported.

The Germans were utterly demoralised by the swiftness of the attack and the determination of the Parisians. The colonel, wearing a German uniform, crossed Paris on the morning of the 19th August.

The battle for the liberation of Paris will remain one of the noblest pages of the history of France. And the Parisians rejoice not only because they are free, but because they themselves helped to break their chains and because they have been, within the limit of their strength, the architects of common victory.

MARCELLE POIRIER.



# AUGUST 25th, AT DAWN . . .

Throughout the night the F.F.I. have remained on the alert. Sheltering in porches and gateways, they maintained an armed watch on the streets through which the Germans might attempt to attack the buildings held by patriots,

This morning, at Belleville, a few F.F.I. accompanied the bodies of three of their companions, killed during the latest engagements, to their last resting-place.

The funeral service for the patriots who had been killed whilst defending the Halles district took place at Notre - Dame - des Victoires, and—a moving detail—before reaching the church the coaches had to pass many barricades guarded by members of the F.F.I., who solemnly saluted their comrades who had given their life for Freedom.

This dawn of liberation was also, for too many Frenchmen, a dawn of mourning .



# BARRICADES



# GENERAL LECLERC ARRIVES

After a night spent on the barricades of Bagnex and Bourg-la-Reine, where the last Germans making a desperate stand on the route nationale No. 20 were being shot or captured by the F.F.I., the first American detachment, consisting of staff officers in charge of food and medical supplies for the city, made their entry into Paris, side by side with Leclerc's division.

These officers and men, fore-runners of the large detachments which were to take charge of the feeding of Paris, had displayed most remarkable courage, and, if one may say so, most *American* courage.

Having gone forward in jeeps, Major Boyd, Captain Brown, Lieutenant Milton and their men entered with the first armoured units. They kept in close contact with General Leclerc's H.Q.

The entry into Paris by way of the Porte d'Orleans was not without danger. In avenue d'Orleans, just below the church of Montrouge, some roughs, militiamen or Germans in civilian clothing, opened fire from automatic weapons. The column immediately came to a standstill. The delirious and enthusiastic crowd vanished as if by enchantment. The French and American soldiers opened fire on the windows from which the shots had come, and fought their way into the buildings. Within a few moments the enemy was silenced, and the column continued its progress amid the cheering of the onlookers.

Rue Denfert-Rochereau, more shooting, followed by violent exchanges of fire.

Boulevard Raspail, between the Lion de Belfort and the Boulevard Montparnasse, again the street emptied in a moment. Bullets whistled past in all directions, severing the branches of trees and tearing up the earth. French Red Cross stretcher-bearers, daring the bullets, picked up the wounded and the dead, military and civilian.

At the end of about a quarter of an hour the firing ceased. The column moved off again towards the Gare Montparnasse, where

General Leclerc's advanced H.Q. was quickly installed. ... In the station manager's office, the General, young, slim,



with energetic features and light brown hair, spoke quietly. His blue sparkling eyes lend brightness to the tanned forehead and cheeks, covered with sweat and dust. On his collar he wears the stars of an American brigadier-general. He is in battledress and carries a 0.45 Colt revolver. The colonel commanding the F.F.I, of the Paris area stands beside him, as he gives his orders with cool precision, seated before a table covered with maps of Paris and the suburbs.

The leaders of the different units under his command go im-

mediately to the key-points where the Germans are still resisting.

The final liberation of Paris by a French general fighting in American uniform was the greatest honour the proud forces of the United States could do the French.

. . . In the meantime, in another district of the capital, avenue d'Italie, the crowd impatiently awaited Leclerc's men.

In the distance, a rumour, at first indistinct, swells, -and suddenly the cry rises : ' They are coming ! "

The first car moves with the greatest difficulty through the thronging crowd. It is literally crushed. It is a light tank with a crew of five in khaki shirts, sleeves rolled up, wearing American helmets, five Frenchmen with the word " France " embroidered on their shoulders.

When those surrounding them heard their voices, there was a wild explosion of joy. The crowd broke into the Marseillaise once, twice, three times. . . .

With great difficulty the five lads free themselves from the arms which clasp them, from the hands grasping theirs.

A short blast from a whistle. Suddenly . discipline is restored, the crowd moves away, and the convoy begins to roll past amid wild applause and cheering.

Flowers are showered from windows decorated with the Allied colours. In the street below, eager hands seize them and heap them on the soldiers. Now come the tanks, huge monsters of steel, the 32-ton Shermans, each with a crew of five. They all have different names : Narvik, Nor-vege, Biervik. Those men were in the Norwegian campaign.

Their faces, black with dust, criss-crossed with traces of lipstick bearing witness to the enthusiasm of their welcome, are worn but smiling :

" We never feel tired when it is a question of hunting the Boche," says one.

It was at Sainte-Mere-Eglise that they saw France again for the first time for four years. From La Haye-du-Puits to Paris is one more leap. The drivers, worn out by a two hundred mile ride at

full pace, are lying on the packs heaped at the back of their vehicles. Others have taken their place at the wheel.

The heavy tanks are behind, and the vehicles follow each other at a regular pace, with a five-yard interval between them.

Suddenly cries are heard : the rattat of a machine-gun breaks out in front of No. 28 avenue d'Italie. From the sixth floor a man and a woman are shooting on the crowd. At the same time, another one is heard firing from the Place d'Italie, then others, three, four, five, rattle away.



In a moment the streets are cleared. The tanks stop, the crews aim their guns at the windows which are pointed out to them by the F.F.J. . . . Not another sound is heard.

All of a sudden there is some screaming : a lieutenant of the Tank Corps, accompanied by some members of the F.F.I., has gone up to wipe out the pocket of resistance on the fifth floor of No. 28 avenue d'Italie. They bring down a man who becomes the target of thousands of angry fists, and a woman whom the F.F.I. manage to protect only with the greatest difficulty. She is taken to a neighbouring building, where she maintains she is not guilty, although she was caught with a weapon in her hands.

It is now midday.

Avenue des Gobelins, rue Monge, in front of the *parvis* of Notre-Dame, the endless flow of armoured vehicles flows on.

Everywhere the same singing, the same cheering.



# PARIS, AT 11 O'CLOCK ON

**The following is a picture of the position at 11 o'clock on the morning of the 25th, in the different sectors of Paris, according to reports from the Seine Prefecture.**

First arrondissement. - General Leclerc's forces are not yet sighted. The presence of about thirty German tanks and of about 500 soldiers is reported, opposite the Tuileries, in front of the Hotels Meurice and Continental.

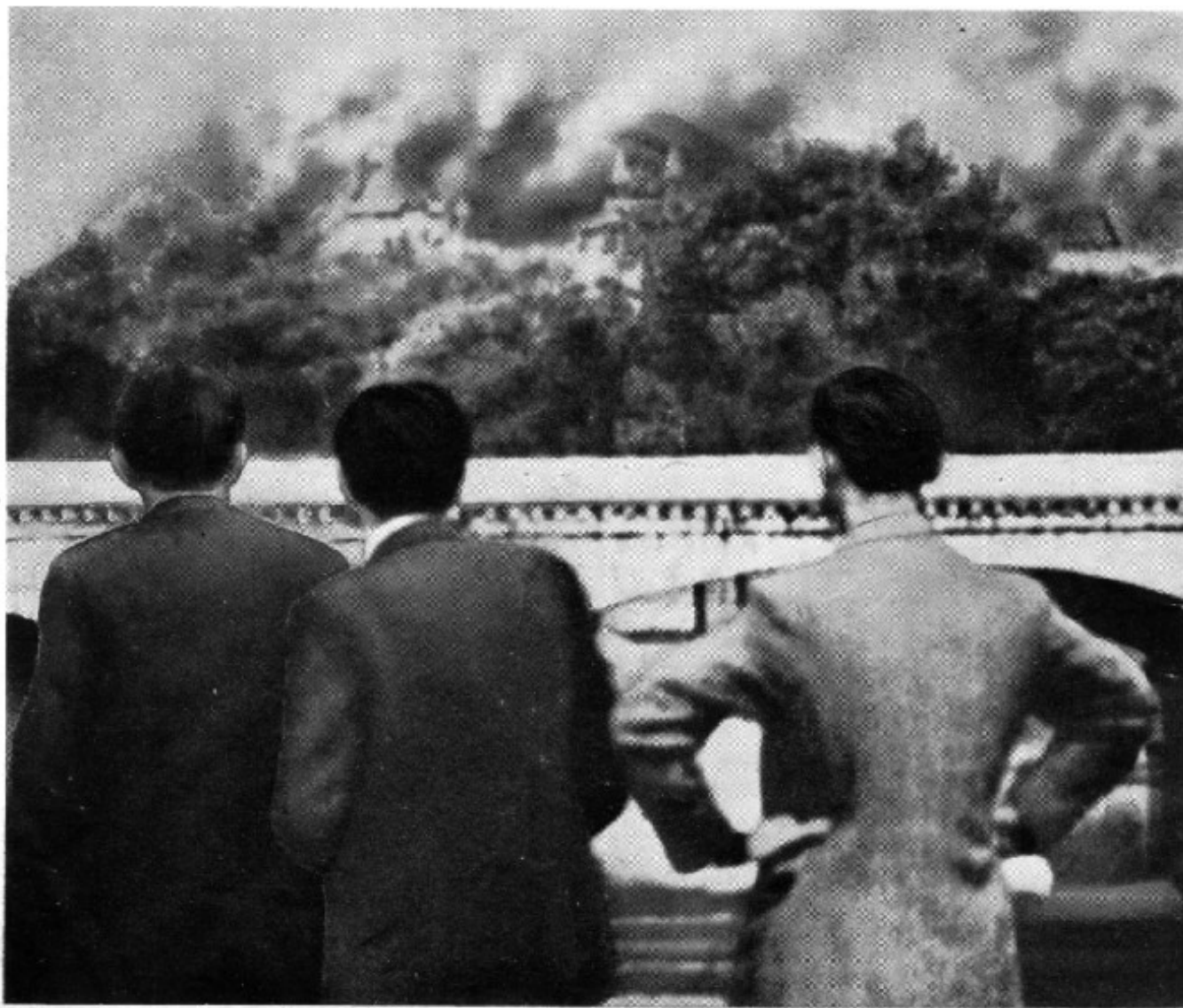
Third arrondissement. - General Leclerc's forces are not yet sighted. The Germans surround the town hall; there is a lot of machine-gun fire. The night has been quiet.

Fifth arrondissement. - Leclerc's troops

have been sighted. They have about ten tanks, some light trucks and some ambulances. They engage the German troops at the corner of the Boulevard St. Michel.

Sixth arrondissement. - For three-quarters of an hour the French troops have been marching down the Boulevard St. Michel, towards the Boulevard St. Germain on the eastern side. A dozen German tanks and 600 men are reported to be holding the Senate. The Germans fire on the French armoured vehicles.

Seventh arrondissement. - General Leclerc's men reach the Invalides. They attack the



# THE MORNING OF THE 25TH...

Ecole Militaire through the Place Fontenoy. Some German soldiers give themselves up voluntarily to the F.F.I.

Ninth arrondissement. - Leclerc's forces have not yet been sighted. There are no more Germans at all in the district, nor are there any militiamen.

Eleventh arrondissement. - The Germans hold the Place de la Republique. Many German guns, about sixty, and 300 men are reported to be there.

Twelfth arrondissement. - General Leclerc's forces have not yet been sighted. The Vincennes keep has been blown up. The museum

is destroyed. There is much damage. The police have arrested 50 militiamen and members of the L.V.F., among whom are about ten women. Militiamen are firing from windows.

Thirteenth arrondissement. - General Leclerc's forces have been marching past for half an hour. There are many heavy tanks. There are no Germans in this sector, and very few militiamen.

Twentieth arrondissement. - Here, all is perfectly quiet. Neither General Leclerc's forces nor any German troops are reported.











### Place de la Republique

Since 8 o'clock on the morning of the 25th August, the patriots had been attacking the solidly entrenched German positions at the Place de la Republique.

With the help of tommy-guns and revolvers, the F.F.I. endeavoured to silence the crews of the German 88 mm. guns facing the avenue de la Republique, from the Boulevard Voltaire and the Faubourg du Temple.

Shortly after midday a light tank which was attempting to leave the fortified position of the Place de la Republique, the keystone of which is the police barracks of the Chateau d'Eau, still occupied by the enemy, was engaged by a few F.F.I. and compelled to go back.

In order to break down this heavily fortified centre of resistance, a request for assistance was sent to Colonel Rol, Commander of the F.F.I. of the Paris region, who detailed for the purpose some tanks from Leclerc's column, which until then had been in position at the Chatelet and Place de l'Hôtel de Ville.

### Seizure of the Tuileries

General Leclerc's forces and the F.F.I. began the assault on the Tuileries at about 2 o'clock.

The armoured units made their way in through the gates on the Louvre side.

The attack went briskly. At four

o'clock there remained only a few pockets of resistance towards the Concorde. Some German tanks were burning inside the Tuileries gardens.

In the neighbouring streets, and especially in the rue de Castiglione and rue d'Alger, near the Cour des Comptes, columns of cars and trucks, which has been awaiting the order to flee, remained there abandoned. A few tanks and light trucks were burning; some houses were on fire. The fire brigade and the Red Cross worked without a moment's respite.

The blockhouses, which had not been able to hold out long, fell to the French, together with their flame-throwers and their heavy machine-guns.

In every street bodies of German soldiers were to be seen. Many prisoners were taken and they moved off quickly, their hands on their heads, under an F.F.I. escort, as the delighted onlookers ceaselessly cheered the patriots.

### Place de la Concorde

When, at about 4 o'clock, resistance in the area of the Tuileries began to weaken, the tanks broke through to the Place de la Concorde, with their guns blazing away. At that moment the 20th Section of the 3rd Company of the 1st R.L.M.T., headed by Lieutenant Ferraro, went in to attack the Admiralty, supported by artillery and tanks. The attack came to a rapid close. . . .

At 4.50 the first German officer, his arm raised in sign of defeat, came out by the rue Saint Florentin, followed by 150 men, the crowd ironically calling " Heil Hitler " to them as they went.

At 4 o'clock a French naval officer hoisted the Tricolor at a first-floor window. It was only at 4.50, after the Nazi flag had been hurled into the street, that the big standard was fixed over the main entrance, whilst the crowd looked on, cheering wildly.

Under the threat of a flame thrower, the last Germans laid down their arms ten minutes later, and moved off on foot towards the Palais Royal, escorted by guards wearing the Tricolor armband.

A little earlier, at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the crowd, which was still in the streets despite the fighting at the Place de la

Concorde, and having heard that the Germans had abandoned the Gare de l'Est, fixed the Tricolor on the Strasbourg monument as if a symbol of the promise of deliverance.

# Liberation

Before nightfall the Place de la Concorde was relatively quiet. This historic spot had suffered little damage in comparison to others. The U.S. Embassy was intact. There had been no fighting at the Elysée or at the Place Beauveau. The Tricolor was flying over the buildings in the rue des Saussaies, which had so recently housed the Gestapo.

Another district of Paris was liberated.

All the while, on the other bank of the Seine, at the corner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, rue de l'Université, there was the glow of flames. . . .

### The Attack on the Hotel Majestic

The Hotel Majestic, the sinister memory of which will linger for a long time in the minds of Parisians, the spacious palace of the avenue Kleber, where the Germans had installed their supply services on the morrow of the armistice, fell to Leclerc's division, after a short but bitter struggle.

Some elements of the column had gone through the 16th *arrondissement* after crossing the Seine by the Auteuil Viaduct. At the corner of the rue Victor Hugo, and of the rue de Presbourg, facing the Arc de Triomphe, the tanks which were at the head of the column attacked the German post holding one of the exits in the avenue Kleber. The premises of the dressmaker " Caroline," situated exactly on the corner, were the first to be damaged in the attack; they were completely demolished. As they had been closed for several days past, there were no victims. Farther away, at No. 9 rue de Presbourg, a hotel occupied by the Germans was also hit by shellfire from the tanks. The façade was severely damaged, but the upper stories were left intact.

# Itinerary

The bitterest struggle took place in the rue Dumont d'Urville, where the Germans resisted fiercely. Ultimately, the defences were breached by our troops, who took many prisoners, for, in addition to the soldiers captured during the fighting for the smaller strong points, the German officials who still remained in the Hotel Majestic also gave themselves up.

The struggle, which had started at 1.30, ended at 4 o'clock. By 5 o'clock order had been restored everywhere, apart from some firing from rooftops, where a few fanatics were still holding out. The patriots proceeded to wipe these out one after the other.

## Champs Elysees

Four o'clock in the afternoon

An immense crowd waving flags throngs the Champs Elysees from the Arc de Triomphe to the Concorde. Tanks, armoured cars, jeeps, F.F.I. vehicles, fire brigade cars pass constantly up and down. Filled with an enthusiasm which hours of standing about and singing have not succeeded in abating, the crowd cheers everything : the tanks of Leclerc's division, those of the 4th American division, the members of all the Allied services who happen to find themselves mixed up in this turmoil of war and victory.

Senegalese soldiers speed by on Sherman tanks, Moroccans with bright chechias sweep quickly by, in the glory of this August evening which, with one broad stroke, wipes out the bitterness of June 1940.

Towards the south-east, dark clouds of smoke rise, symbol of a reign of tyranny vanishing as its military power is crushed.

A squad of policemen wearing the Tricolor armlet march down the avenue, carrying rifles. The crowd cheers them, knowing the decisive part which they played in the first hours of the rising.

Suddenly heavy firing breaks out, and the avenue is cleared in a few seconds. The tanks and the armoured cars immediately get into position and head straight for the enemy snipers who are near the place de l'Etoile. They turn out to be a few men who had escaped from the Hotel Majestic after refusing to surrender, and a few militiamen frenzied with

rage and fright.

## Surrender of the Kommandantur "Der Gross Paris"

It is half-past two. The Kommandantur of the Place de l'Opera has just been taken by assault.

For a long time the Germans here had been firing on the Parisians, who replied to the Boche fire as best they could. A few of Leclerc's tanks soon reduced this pocket of resistance.

After a few well-aimed salvos fired from the avenue de l'Opera, the Germans began setting light to their petrol cans, hoisted a white flag and surrendered. Several wounded men were immediately removed in ambulances, whilst the crowd gathered to watch the fires burning. A red glow was visible round the rooftops, and palls of black smoke rose skywards. The crowd immediately tore to shreds the swastika flag which a patriot had hauled down from the balcony.

Thus was the Place de l'Opera cleared of the repulsive white road-blocks which the Parisians hated so much !

The crowd begins singing the Marseillaise, and an abandoned German truck serves to light a bonfire.

The interior of the Kommandantur is a scene of desolation : rooms filled with smouldering rubble, forced cupboards, broken furniture. Anything of value was removed long ago.

Allied flags have replaced the swastika which flew over the main entrance of the building at the corner of the rue du Quatre-Septembre and the avenue de l'Opera, and in an atmosphere reeking with" soot and smoke, beneath a sky ablaze with the sun of liberation, the people of Paris give vent to their joy.

## The Battle at the Invalides

" The French are coming ! They are here ! They are coming down the Boulevard des Invalides ! " This district, which has been comparatively quiet, is suddenly alive. The crowd surges forward.

The French tanks appear, marked with a white map of France and the Cross of Lorraine. The faces which emerge from the turrets are the faces of Frenchmen.

But it is not merely a march-past

amidst general rejoicing. The leader of the column moves on ahead and stops at the corner of the Esplanades des Invalides and of the rue de Grenelle. A consultation is held there with the leaders of the F.F.I.

The problem is to surround the positions held by the Germans at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Chamber of Deputies. Maps are brought from the near- by National Institute of Geography, and the French commander, a small precise man with glasses, stick in hand, prepares his plan of attack.





The tanks, going on ahead of that of the commander, go in to attack. They crash through the barricades and the iron gates in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs between the Gare des Invalides and the rue St. Dominique. Then, going past the ministry, they immediately attack the other bank of the Seine.

The infantry, following in single file behind the tanks, deal with the Germans still holding the Quai d'Orsay. A few tanks support them with gunfire.

The crowd moves on slowly, keeping close to the wall, making use of every bit of cover, so as not to miss the smallest detail of this historic battle.

As soon as the tanks have gone by, heavy firing breaks out, coming from the Foreign Ministry.

The F.F.I. immediately fall into position to lend support to Leclerc's men.

The Ministry is attacked at point-blank range with rifles, tommy-guns and light arms. Several men fall, slightly wounded. The Red Cross is at work and comes into the ranks of the combatants to remove the wounded.

Some of the tanks are now too close to the Ministry and have to move back, going towards the Esplanade in order to support the infantry. The noise of the shellfire suddenly covers that of the lighter weapons. The smoke and heat are intense. In the middle of the avenue leading to the Invalides, a tank is firing steadily at the Ministry, shattering window after window, door after door.

The commander moves in and out of the ranks of the infantry, goes up to each tank. He gives some orders, then, leaning against the building at the angle of the Esplanade and of the rue St. Dominique, he goes into consultation with two lieutenants. In the middle of the square the tank continues firing.

More wounded are being picked up by the Red Cross beneath the trees between the Gare des Invalides and the Ministry.

Firing breaks out on the third floor of the Quai d'Orsay. A hail of bullets rains down. Over there, near the river embankment, there are two tanks, one with its guns aimed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the other guarding the Seine and the far bank of the river.

At the Ministry the shooting grows in violence. Flying masonry crashes down, and now and again bullets hit the ground, fired from rooftops by a few militiamen, at whom Leclerc's infantry and the F.F.I. aim their tommy-guns and their rifles.

Gradually, resistance weakens, and whilst the struggle at the Ministry reaches its final phase, a German officer, awkwardly waving a large white cloth, emerges from behind the iron railings of the Palais Bourbon. He has come to negotiate the surrender of the six hundred men hemmed in there, and who have lost faith. A smiling F.F.I. helps him to jump down on to the pavement.

All is finished. This bastion of German resistance, housed in two of the historical buildings of Paris, collapses. Later on, a long file of



prisoners will be marching down those stately avenues. And the men, some crestfallen, some sullen, some visibly pleased to be out of the war, will go by with their hands on their heads, a gesture which the Gestapo has for long taught its victims. . . .

**The F.F.I. and the Allied Forces at the Hotel de Ville**

Whilst gunfire can still be heard and a few " Tiger " tanks prowl through the streets looking for trouble, firing now and then a few salvoes, the heroic F.F.I. in the Hôtel de Ville feel close at hand the comforting presence of a great friendly army.

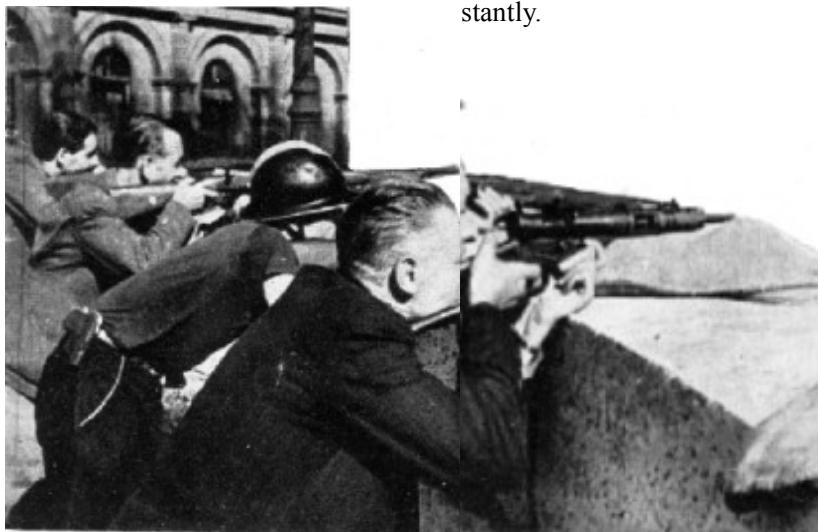
The first men of Leclerc's column are there. They are on guard, Place de Greve. Machine-guns and artillery are aimed at the points from which the enemy might attempt some desperate action. Hidden on the roofs of the houses forming the perimeter of the square, a few militiamen fire on the crowd and on the soldiers. Their fire receives a vigorous answer, and the heavy machine-guns of the French forces riddle the façades of the buildings from which it comes.

Two militiamen and three militia women are taken prisoner.

The civilians leave the Place de Greve. Only the combatants, those of Paris and the others, fraternise here, deeply moved.

Near their trucks and their tanks, Leclerc's Frenchmen, the Frenchmen of the F.F.I., the Americans and the Spanish volunteers chat quietly.

This one tells how, with his



revolver, he destroyed a truck. The other explains the encircling movement in which he took part, in order to bring about the annihilation of the German 7th Army. There is not a trace of ostentation in these narratives. For these men, it is natural to fight for freedom.

In the heart of Paris, still at war, France comes to life again, and her rebirth is a symbol of the great brotherhood of peoples united in a common ideal.

At the beginning of the afternoon, the F.F.I., occupying the Hôtel de Ville, posted up the following order of the day :

" Order of the day No. 5.

" This order of the day will be the last one.

" The F.F.I., consisting of civilian volunteers, Republican guards and members of the police force, have magnificently defended the Hôtel de Ville. They successfully repulsed four of the enemy's attacks, and harassed him constantly.

" The following is a summary of the results . obtained : 24 Germans killed, 28 prisoners taken, 10 wounded. The material captured consists of : 1 light tank, 1 armoured car, 7 trucks, 500 gallons of petrol, and weapons and ammunition of all kinds.

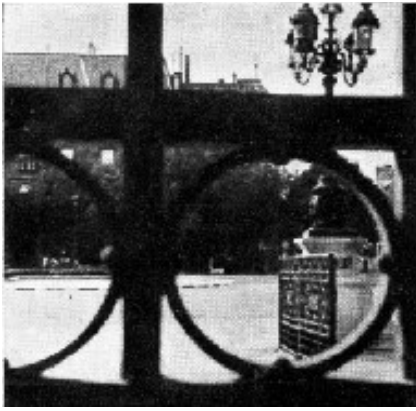
" Major Landry and Major Roger Stéphane are proud to have commanded such men."

Signed :

LANDRY, Military Commander of the Hôtel de Ville.

ROGER STEPHANE, Military Commander of the Hôtel de Ville.





### The Seizure of the Senate House

On the 24th August the Senate was still one of the principal bastions of German resistance on the left bank of the Seine. Several "Tiger" tanks were hiding in the Luxembourg Gardens, and over three hundred German soldiers were inside the Luxembourg Palace.

At about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the F.F.I. of the 15th *arrondissement*, mostly young men from 18 to 20 years of age, attacked this strong point, and, with the support of armoured units of Leclerc's division, they opened a heavy barrage against the building.

At 5 o'clock a white flag appeared on the side of the

building overlooking the rue de Vaugirard, no doubt put out by a soldier who, as the Parisians say, "was tired of it all." But the besieged garrison continued firing, and it was 7 o'clock at night before the commander surrendered. In this engagement, the F.F.I. had lost only one killed and two wounded. In the meantime, the "Tiger" tanks, attacked with machine-gun fire and hand-



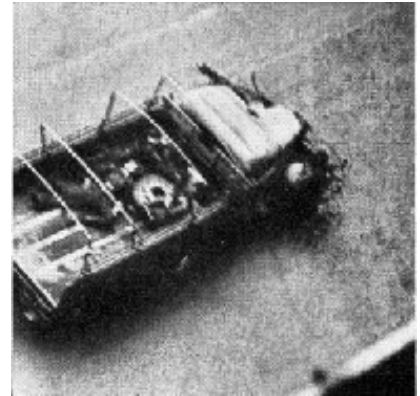
grenades, had been put out of action.

It was a member of the F.F.I., Andre Moureaux, who, having climbed to the top of the building, hauled down the swastika and hoisted the Tricolor in its place. The place had suffered little damage.

However, one part of the Luxembourg Gardens was temporarily closed to the public, the Germans apparently having laid some mines in this beautiful Parisian park.

### At the Préfecture de Police

From the first days of the rising the Prefecture of Police was the main centre of resistance in Paris. In spite of all the German attacks, the buildings remained in the hands of the patriots, and little by little the leaders of the resistance movement, and those who were destined to play an important part in the administration of the capital after the liberation (such as M. Luizet, who became Prefect of Police, and M. Georges Bidault, President of the National Council of Resistance), had succeeded in slipping in.



For nearly a week the greatest animation had reigned in this ancient building. On the evening of the 24th, shortly before nightfall, an F.F.I. truck brought in an anti-tank gun captured from the Germans in the North-East of Paris.

During the morning of the 25th, the excitement of the defenders of the Prefecture grew; the reason: General Leclerc's forces were expected. One of his staff officers, Colonel Billotte, had arrived ahead of his chief. He had been received by the Minister, the General Secretaries present, and the Prefect of Police, M. Luizet. At ten minutes past one, General Leclerc arrived in a light armoured car. He had crossed Paris from the Porte d'Orleans to the He de la Cite, passing by Montparnasse station. The Ger-

mans were still firing near the Odeon.

The General immediately entered the offices of the Prefecture, as the police band played the Marseillaise. A feeling of deep emotion pervaded the assembly.

The General then proceeded to the private apartment of the Prefect of Police, where he was received by M. Luizet and M. Cerat, Commissioner of State, Delegate to the Provisional Government. M. Cerat welcomed General Leclerc, who replied in the following words :

" I congratulate you, Monsieur le Ministre, on the resistance organised in Paris against the Germans, and in particular on that organised at the Prefecture de Police. We knew that you were holding out. . . . Three days ago we were still one hundred and fifty miles away from Paris! "



Prolonged applause greeted the words of the hero of the Fezzan ; cheers followed. " Vive Leclerc ! Vive de Gaulle! Vive la France! "

Then General Leclerc went to the office which had been reserved for him to confer with the members of his staff.

#### **Rue Saint Dominique**

The last incident in the battles of this historic day took place in the rue Saint Dominique just as General de Gaulle—who had not waited for the last shot to be fired—arrived.

General de Gaulle and General Leclerc had hardly entered the War Ministry—it was then about 6 o'clock in the evening—when shots rang out, coming from windows facing the building. This was nothing more than an attempt on his life, conceived on rather an ambitious scale.

The firing at once became extremely violent. A few tanks started shooting. All the windows in the rue Saint Dominique and the rue de Bourgogne were shattered. Then the panic-stricken traitors stopped shooting, and the house-to-house search began. . . .



# GENERAL VON CHOLITZ, COMMANDER 10,000 Germans were

On arriving in Paris, General Leclerc sent an ultimatum to the general commanding the German forces in Paris, requesting him to surrender.

Although further resistance was useless, the German general rejected the ultimatum, to save appearances a little longer.

It was then that the order to attack was given to the different sections of the 2nd Armoured Division, and that the episodes related above took place.

General Leclerc had given strict instructions to avoid causing losses among the civilian population and to prevent damage to public monuments. These instructions were scrupulously obeyed ; the short and heroic struggle caused but a minimum of damage.

## **The decisive Moment.**

General von Cholitz and his staff had taken up their positions in the Hotel Meurice, which was strongly defended.

Lieutenant Karcher, at the head of twenty-two infantrymen, protected by three tanks under the leadership of Lieutenant Bernard, was ordered to

capture the general. The instructions were to fire only in case of absolute necessity.

Lieutenant Karcher and his men came up by way of the Chatelet and the rue de Rivoli. As soon as they reached the Place des Pyramides, they came into violent firing, to which they answered vigorously. They were fired at from all directions, from the Place des Pyramides as well as from the Tuileries and neighbouring streets. A few soldiers were detailed to silence the Germans in the Tuileries.

When the last obstacle, consisting of sand-bags, had been removed, Lieutenant Karcher and his men stood before the Hotel Meurice. The detachment had already suffered some losses : one tank destroyed, seven infantrymen killed.

In the hall of the hotel, Lieutenant Karcher was greeted by a hail of bullets. Von Cholitz's personal bodyguard and killer was there protecting his master. Two shots from a revolver knocked him out. Then, to break the last attempts at resistance, a phosphor bomb was used to smoke out the last defenders.

One of von Cholitz's staff captains appeared and led Lieutenant Karcher and his men to the spacious





# OF GREATER PARIS, SURRENDERS, captured in Paris.



drawing-room, where the German general awaited them. He was standing. He is a fat man with an ordinary face and a slightly upturned nose which gives him a vaguely good-humoured expression, insufficient, however, to mask the brutality pervading his whole person.

The interview was brief. The general was surrounded by his staff. The lieutenant asked :

"Do you surrender ?" "Ja."

"You are my prisoner." "Ja."

A few moments later the Germans had surrendered their weapons to the French, and the haughty Nazi flag was at once replaced by the Tricolor.

## The Negotiations at the Montparnasse Station.

The defeated general then sent an envoy to General Leclerc, who was waiting in his headquarters at Montparnasse station.

This officer, carrying a white flag, took his place in a car at the side of a French officer. The car drove quickly through the streets of the capital, where the grinning crowd watched this representative of the "Herrenvolk" who, with his pitiful flag in his hand and under the protection of Frenchmen, was going to meet his victor.

The terms of surrender imposed by General Leclerc provided first of all that the order to cease fire be given to all resistance pockets still holding out in the capital. Any soldier who, after having received this order, continued to fight would be considered as a franc-tireur and would forgo the rights of ordinary prisoners of war.

After the cease-fire, these soldiers were to surrender their weapons in good condition and go to the assembly points which would be indicated to them. Finally, from that moment, any damage caused to monuments or to private property would be considered as an offence against the common law.

The conditions were accepted without discussion, and the same Boche officer, carrying the same white flag, began the weary pilgrimage from one pocket of resistance to the other, which was to set the final seal



to the liberation of Paris.



THE OPPRESSED PEOPLES OF  
THE WORLD AND THE PEOPLE  
OF PARIS PROCLAIM THEIR  
WILL TO ACHIEVE THE COMMON  
IDEALS OF FREEDOM AND  
JUSTICE.

ORDER OF THE IMMIGRANTS'  
COMMITTEE OF ACTION AND DEFENCE.

"The Immigrants' Committee of Action and Defence, representing the organisations of all immigrants fighting in the ranks of the French resistance movement, orders its forces to intensify their armed struggle against the aggressor until the liberation of Paris and of France is achieved.

"With this object, and in order to give application to the general order of mobilisation decreed by the F.F.I., the I.C.A.D. instructs all immigrants to present themselves immediately at their recruiting centres.

" This heroic struggle of the men and women of France, worthy descendants of their glorious ancestors of 1789, is the struggle of all free men for the common ideal of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity."

The Immigrants' Committee of Action and Defence includes the following organisations :

The Italian Committee of National Liberation.

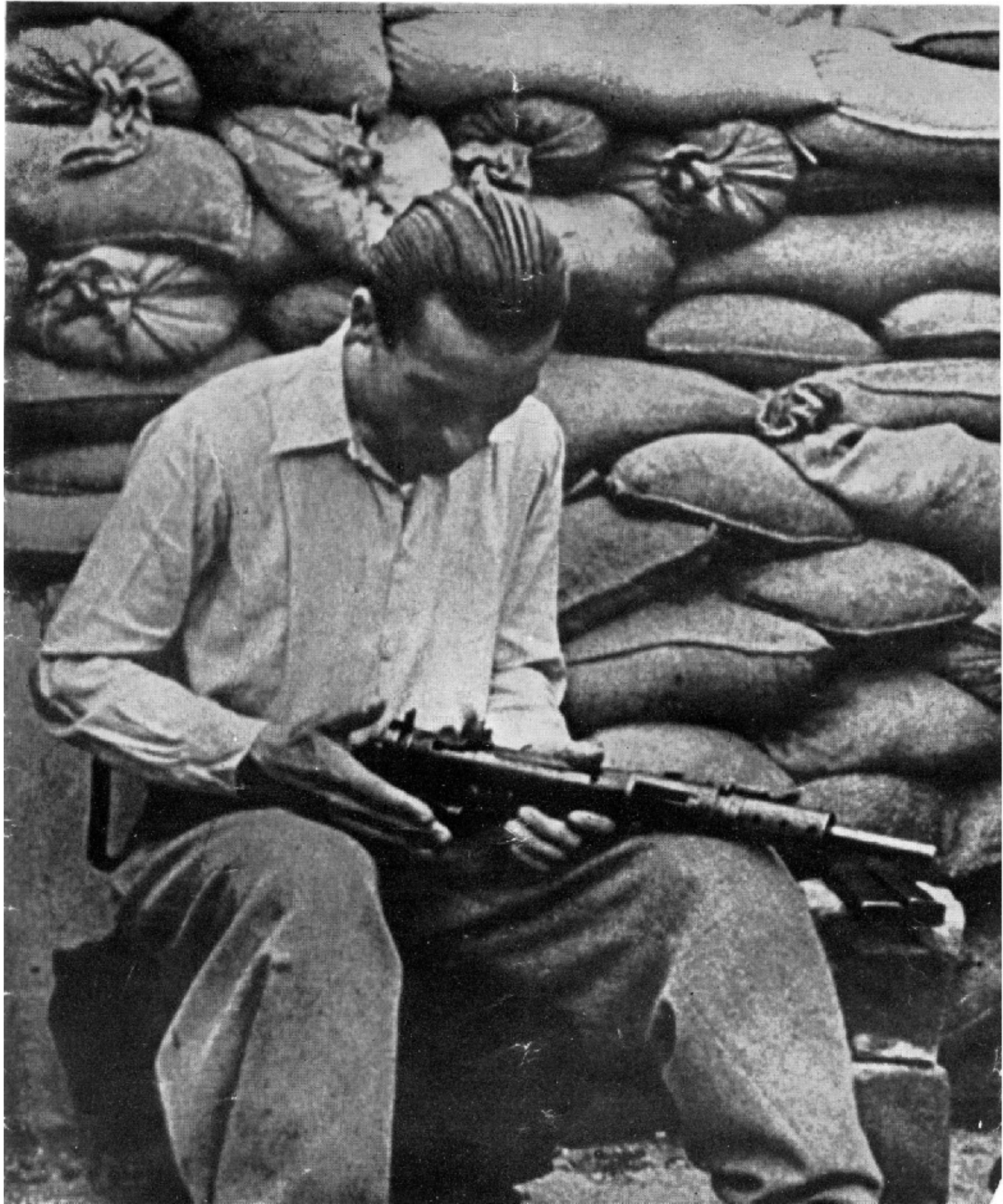
The Polish Committee of National Liberation.

Spanish National Unity. Czechoslovak National Committee. Jewish Committee of Unity and Defence. Union of Russian Patriots. Ukrainian National Front.

Hungarian Independence Movement.

Armenian National Front. Roumanian National Front.

On the 24th August, a group of escaped Russian prisoners and members of the " Union of Russian Patriots " went to the embassy of the U.S.S.R. and hoisted the Russian flag. Other members of the Union of Russian Patriots had previously occupied the premises of Gerebkov, the pro-German organisation of Russian emigres, No. 4 rue Galliera and No. 40 rue Saint Didier.





## GENERAL DE GAULLE ENTERS PARIS.

*" France has lost a  
battle, but France has  
not lost the war."  
Charles de Gaulle,  
18th June, 1940.*

Before even the shooting in the streets of the capital had died down, General de Gaulle entered Paris.

Why should he have waited until complete order had been restored ? Is he not a soldier ? Has he not been, for more than four years, THE soldier of France ? Was he not sure that the Parisians were as anxious to know him—those Parisians who had known so well how to answer his distant call—as he was to see them again and to tell them : "We were right, you and I, when we refused to accept as final our country's defeat."

Accompanied by prominent civilian and military personalities, General de Gaulle first halted at Montparnasse station, where General Leclerc had just received the German peace envoys bringing the surrender of the garrison. He then proceeded to the Hôtel de Ville, where he was awaited by the Prefect, Monsieur Luizet, and the members of the National Council of Resistance. The band of the police force which formed a guard of honour welcomed him with the strains of a stirring Marseillaise, punctuated by the delirious acclamations of the crowd.

In the reception hall of the Hôtel de Ville, surrounded by this eminent gathering consisting of men and women who, without once faltering, had carried on the underground struggle for four years, General de Gaulle, pale with emotion, began to speak :

*" Why would you have us conceal the emotion which grips us all, men, women, who are here, who are here at home, in Paris, which has risen to free itself, and has done so with its own hands ; we will not conceal this deep and sacred emotion. These are moments which will transcend the lives of all of us.*

*" Paris, Paris outraged, Paris broken, Paris martyred, but Paris freed, freed by ourselves, freed by its people with the help of the armies of France, with the support and the assistance of the whole of*

*France, that is to say, of the France which is fighting, that is to say, of real, eternal France.*

*" Well, then, as Paris is liberated, as the enemy who held it has surrendered to us, in Paris, France returns to her own. She returns wounded, but she returns firmly resolved . . . more certain than ever of her duties and of her rights.*

*" I say first of all her duties, and I will define them all for the moment by saying that they relate to the war; the enemy is tottering, the enemy is not yet destroyed. The enemy is still on our territory,*

and it is not possible for us to content ourselves with expelling him from our country, with the help of our beloved and admirable Allies. After that which has happened, we wish, as is rightful, to enter his territory us victors.

" For this the French advanced guard fought its way into Paris, for this the great French army from Italy, which has landed in the south, is moving swiftly up the Rhone valley, for this our courageous and beloved F.F.I, wish to become modernly equipped units, so that we can achieve this revenge, this retribution and, at the same time, this justice. We will continue to wage war until the last day, until the day of total victory.

" The nation well knows that to be victorious, and to rebuild, and to be great, it must have all its children at its side. The nation well knows that its sons and its daughters, all its sons and all its daughters, but for a few unhappy traitors who sold themselves to the enemy and who betrayed the rest to him, who feel and will feel the rigour of the law, but for those, all the sons and all the daughters of France go forward, and will go forward fraternally, hand in hand, to fulfil the destiny of France.

" It is this great and noble national discipline which the government demands from all its citizens. This great, noble national discipline will not prevent the nation from being conscious of its rights—on the contrary. I say here, because it must be heard after what happened in 1940 . . . there is no practical and acceptable way for the nation to make known its will, other than free suffrage for all French men and all French women as soon as conditions will permit the people, who is the supreme judge, to be heard.

"And the rights of France, that is to say her internal rights, the rights which are of interest to all her children and which, in consequence, are of vital interest to her, will be restored as soon as it is

possible to do so. We want the nation to be free from the fear of hunger and from misery. We want French men and French women to be worthy of themselves, worthy of their country. We want conditions of life in keeping with those to which every man and every woman has the right to aspire.

" Lastly, France has external rights. France is a great nation. She proved it at a time when there were no barriers to protect her. We had lost our honour. We were well aware of it, but we are here, we are on our feet, assembled, we are here amid the victors, and it is not finished. This great nation has rights, and she will know how to have those rights acknowledged. She has the right to live in security. She has the right to demand that she be never again invaded by the enemy who has done it so often. She has the right to have a leading place in the ranks of the great nations who are going to organise the peace and the life of the world. She has the right to make herself heard in all the quarters of the earth. She is a great world power. She can, she will know how to insure that others take this into account, because it is a matter of supreme importance. It is the interest of humanity.

" This is what we must do. The government's aims must be : war, unity and greatness. That is our programme. I have only to look upon you all to know with the utmost certainty that it is the programme of all Frenchmen. Therefore, let us go forward. There will be many difficulties. There will be many in Paris especially. We will not be able to restore overnight to France her former riches, abundance and way of life. We cannot in one day restore to our country's soul the peace which was so long hers.

" We will have many obstacles to overcome, many difficulties to surmount. The government will do its duty. The whole nation has the right to demand this. Thus will we go forward to happier days."



## **PROCLAMATION MADE BY THE COMMITTEE OF RESISTANCE.**

**Paris, 25th August.**

**" To the French Nation,**

**" To the people of Paris,**

**" The first French troops have entered the capital, liberated by the national rising. The day for which tens of thousands of the best Frenchmen have given their lives, the day of battle and of victory, has dawned gloriously on the barricades.**

**" Our soldiers in uniform and our soldiers without uniform have linked up in the heart of a town whose inhabitants have stood proudly ignoring the enemy's fire.**

**" With pride, France and Paris salute and thank one and all.**

**" This great victory does not, however, bring the war to an end. After so many years of persistent betrayal, there are still positions to which the enemy clings. Hitlerite Germany is not yet destroyed. There is still some French soil under the heel of the Boche, pillaged, desecrated, steeped in blood.**

**" There must be no relaxation of our effort. The war continues, it continues for everyone, everywhere. It will continue until total victory is attained.**

**" Thus will France come forward as, a great power in the assembly of peoples that will make the peace.**

**" Let us be worthy of our dead. To avenge them, all France stands at the side of the Allies."**

**The Commissioner of State,  
Delegate of the Provisional  
Government of the Republic.**

**The National Council  
of Resistance.**

**The Paris Committee  
of Liberation.**

**“ Paris, heart of France, Paris, capital of Freedom, Paris, capital of the world, not according to the power of Matter and of Domination, but according to the might of the Spirit and of Freedom. The world knows what this city is and what it stands for. Every word coming from Paris has its echo throughout the world. The world did not cease to cherish and to care for Paris when it was enslaved and humiliated. To-day, the world knows the Nazi monster is wounded to the death, for Paris is free.”**

**JACQUES MARITAIN.**

**BURRUPS,  
LONDRES.**