REYNAUD CONTESTS CHURCHILL POINTS

Describes Events Leading Up to Fall of His Country TELLS OF APPEAL TO U.S.

France's Wartime Premier

Challenges British Leader on

Description of Armistice

and Tank Threats The following article comment-ing on Winston Churchill's Memoirs is by the Premier who was in office when France fell. He en-

By PAUL REYNAUD Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES. PARIS, March 1—With the authority vested in him as the artisan of victory, with all his art as a

writer and with his persuasive

tragic events of May and June, 1940. As we were companions in distress (neither of us is likely to forget it) it is only right that I should contribute to this task by asking the reader to consider the same facts from another viewpoint, that

road for the troops following by motor transport and the horde of infantry divisions swarming in their wake. On May 15 at 2:50 A. M. the commanded by General Corap, which was holding the left bank of the Meuse from Mesieres to Dinant, was ordered to withdraw so that from Sedan to Dinant a breach of eighty kilometers [about fifty miles] was opened in our front. And through it the

memoirs that the disagreement between us as to the effect this event was bound to have was even greater than I realized at the time. At 7:30 on the same morning, May 15, I telephoned Churchill to inform him of what was happening and to ask him for assistance of the air force stationed in England. He seemed so astonished that I repeated, "We are beaten!

through each breach." let me telephone you Georges?" "Certainly." Churchill Not Convinced do not know what General Georges said to him but Churchill was not convinced of the nature of the disaster for in the telegram

head of my personal diplomatic staff, M. de Margerie: brief discussion then took place between Mr. Churchill and

General Gamelin as to the true gravity of the danger represented by the German tanks. The Prime Minister refused to take this threat very seriously; unless, he said, the tanks were supported by considerable infantry they were little more than so many small flags stuck into a map and they would be able neither to hold their ground nor to obtain supplies. In his eyes, this was not a real inva-

an-"Inferiority of numbers, inferiority of equipment, inferiority of

31.) The Prime Minister expressed

know exactly what he thought for he states that almost a month later on June 11 he spoke to General Georges about this possibility. of continuing the war from North Africa, at the same time admitting

thought the idea was "defeatist." The difference in opinion

In Churchill's mind there was not the slightest doubt: To cease

he

intense astonishment. We

that one week earlier

obviously fundamental.

Questioned Attack Spot

Churchill says that he asked

allow me to cite the brief note Continued on Page 28, Column 2

reader will

titles the article "Churchill and the Tragic Weeks of 1940."

good faith, Winston Churchill has just published his account of the

of France overrun by the enemy. On May 10, 1940, the Wehrmacht invaded Holland and Belgium. On the thirteenth and fourteenth our front was broken at Sedan, Givet and Dinant by the German advance Panzer divisions supported by flights of Stukas opening the

Panzers literally fell upon the retreating army, cutting it to pieces. Major Disagreement Cited It is obvious from Churchill's

shown that after a certain time the offensive wears itself out. Remember March 21, 1918."

"Impossible, it can't have happened so soon. Experience has

altered.

tearing

is

We have lost the battle!"

"All that has been

of Panzers

torrent

sion."

which he sent that very evening

to Roosevelt he stated: "The battle is only just beginning on land and I should like to see the masses of the armies engaged." The next day, May 16, Churchill came to Paris. How far he was from grasping the overwhelming danger can be gathered from the notes made at the time by the

Géneral Gamelin when and where he expected to attack the flanks of this spearhead—a question which bore the imprint of the strategy of the previous war. Gamelin swered: Monsieur de Margerie Churchill that the French Government might well find itself forced to continue the war from North Africa. (Churchill is mistaken in placing this conversation on Lay

to believe in the certainty of victory on the soil of continental France was a sign of weakness. To his mind the one purpose of further assistance in the air which he promised us on May 16 was "to restore the morale of our French friends." Army Morale Shaken I will certainly not attempt to deny that the morale of our Army was badly shaken by the brutal

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revelation of this new form of warfare; but as far as I personally

am concerned the

Continued From Page 27

which I received the next day from the Military Governor of Paris:

May 17, 1940.

Mr. President:

It was my duty to suggest yesterday that the Government and Parliament should leave Paris. You have decided to remain.

I congratulate you with all my heart.

> Your obedient servant, HERING.

My difference of opinion with the British Premier is easily explained.

Relied on French Generals Churchill, who was head of the Admiralty during two World Wars, has an admirable knowledge of naval questions. But with regard to war on land he had naturally relied upon those among the great chiefs of the French Army who were his personal friends. They had definitely asserted that a continuous front is impregnable, and while it is true that it can be breached, in such a case the reserves are brought up and cut off the attacking force which thus becomes an easily reduced bulge. Such indeed had been the experience in the previous war—except during the last few months.

To his way of thinking it followed that this breach of May 13 and 14 in our front was in no way different from those which had occurred in the previous war on March 21, 1918, for instance. Surely, it was a sign of weakness to contemplate at such an early date the continuation of the war from North Africa as if there were no hope at all of saving the situation in France.

Warned French Chiefs

That was Churchill's attitude. Now what was mine? It was this:

Between the two wars I had been in complete disagreement with our great leaders on the French military problem.

As early as July 5, 1924, warned them that their out-of-date defensive army would not prevent Germany from re-arming, from "linking hands with the Red Army over Poland's corpse" and from invading France, adding, moreover, that we would not be able to depend upon the "Union Sacrée" of

Aug. 2, 1914. On March 15, 1935, I maintained in the Chamber of Deputies that, owing to the speed and destructive power of an armored corps supported by aircraft, a revolution had taken place in the art of warfare. I painted a picture of the disaster which was to occur five years later: the Belgian Army "thrown back to the sea," our northern fontier attacked, our front pierced, and if we did not have the armored corps demanded by General de Gaulle "capable of counter-attacking just as overwhelmingly as it had been attacked * * * all would be lost."

All was indeed lost. Panzers in Sweep

The panzer divisions, continuing their headlong advance, were about to regroup in a half-circle to the west of Saint Quentin and from there to execute their scythe-like movement against Dunkirk, encircling the flower of the Allied armies. It was an irreparable disaster and, had it been possible to think of oneself. I would have been justified in a bitter feeling of "I told you so."

I had vainly opposed the operation in Belgium, decided upon before I came to power at the request of the British, who sought to avoid at all costs having a jumping-off place for enemy aircraft opposite their coast. In any event we had not the necessary means to carry it out.

We had entered the war without a single armored division and Churchill recalls that when I was a Deputy I had tried without success to persuade Great Britain, which had the necessary industrial and financial resources to create the armored corps I had not been able to obtain from the French Parliament. I add that the British High Command had undertaken to occupy only a short sector of the Allied front in Belgium.

The only logical thing to do was to consider continuing the war from North Africa, but in the country of the miracle of the Marne and in view of the assurance of the new Commander in Chief, who enjoyed a prestige to which Churchill pays tribute, this would have meant going directly counter to national feeling. It was a moral and political impossibility. All that remained for me was to play the role of a perpetual mendicant in my dealings with our Allies.

Begged for France

Whether in Paris on May 16 for help of the RAF or in London on May 26 in an effort to keep Italy out of the war or in Tours on June 13 to have my appeal to Roosevelt supported by Churchill I was always shamelessly begging for France, which was exhausting itself in fighting the advance action in the common cause of democracy. It was scarcely the moment to

strike attitudes for the benefit of posterity. Help and again help. Everything that could be secured had to be obtained. I thought of Clemenceau's saying "Glory is the opinion of people who mean nothing to us." To obtain the maximum I said to Churchill:

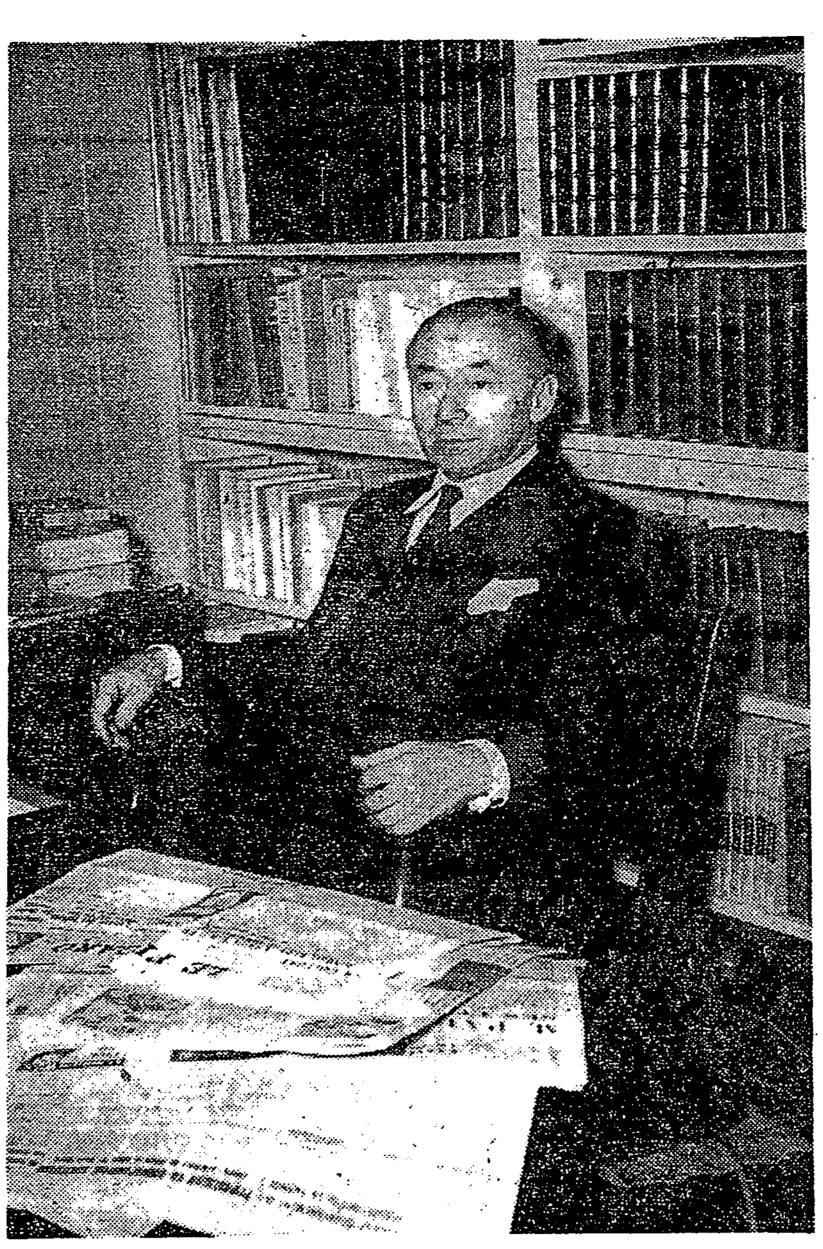
"Take care! You know I shall never capitulate but I am not alone in the Government. There are various people headed by a Marshal covered with glory who favor an armistice."

Panzers Roll Onward

In Tours, for instance, I described the state of mind of my opponents and I cited their arguments.

Was Churchill's own attitude to ward Roosevelt any different? Fa: be it from me to reproach him with it. Yet the British Prime Minister was in an infinitely les desperate position than I was!

In France the panzers wer rolling on their way to the ver heart of the country; public opin FORMER FRENCH PREMIER ANSWERS CHURCHILL



Paul Reynaud

was.

The New York Times (Paris Bureau)

think will answer the numerous

criticisms which can always be

leveled at a man situated as l

Answers to Many Questions

questions: How faced with the im-

mensity of the disaster and to save

the honor of the army I was forced

to have recourse to men, of whom

one was regarded as a glory of

France and the other enjoyed very

high prestige among army offi-

cers; on the reasons why I had to

dismiss certain Ministers, Monzie

[Anatole de Monzie, then Minister

of Public Works and Transport],

among them, to put others, of

whom General de Gaulle was one,

I must say a word here about

the meeting at Tours. Reading the

account given in Churchill's mem-

oirs, the reader may well wonder

whether I had not given up all

hope and abandoned all idea of

continuing the struggle. Church-

ill says that at first I seemed "de-

Leaving aside the impression, let

us see what is the fact. Take the

report written by his own col-

laborator, from which he cites a

passage. That very morning I had

made public the telegram by which

I informed Roosevelt that France

would continue to fight on from

North Africa and if necessary its

Atlantic possessions. I had, there-

fore, burned my Government's

This last sentence is as follows:

"Mr. Reynaud stated that he felt

the same confidence and that, if he

lost it, he would at the same time

Testimony by Weygand

my opponents. General Weygand,

should have testified under oath

at the Riom trial that when he

arrived at the Council of Ministers

at Cange a few minutes after the

end of the conference in Tours:

"M. Reynaud announced the deci-

sion of the French Government to

continue the struggle. There is

complete agreement on this point

between the French and British

After which Petain read a state-

ment demanding an armistice. It

it surprising that, according to his

official biographer, General Laure

I should have declared at that

point: "M. P. Reynaud declared

that it was contrary to the hono:

Memory of Others

particular his visual memory is

such an excellent one, is sometime

Churchill, whose memory and it

Governments."

of France"?

Is it any wonder that one of

lose all reasons for living."

in their place.

pressed."

boats.

It will give the answers to many

ion, parliament and, since the disaster, my own government, were profoundly divided. I was in conflict with General Weygand, the Commander-in-Chief, as to the continuation of the war and I was unable to do anything about it for I could not in the midst of the battle give the French Army a third Commander-in-Chief within a few days.

Churchill on the contrary was head of a united government supported by a unanimous House of Commons, and by a nation resolved to resist with all its strength an invasion which was threatened for the first time in a thousand years.

Yet on June 14 Churchill himself, in an effort to obtain from Roosevelt a statement which would help me in the battle I was waging in Bordeaux against the advocates of an armistice, hinted at the possibility of England wavering. After having said that if the worst came to the worst his Government would not fail to send the British Fleet across the Atlantic he added the following warning:

"A point may be reached in the struggle where the present Ministers no longer have control of affairs and when very easy terms could be obtained for the British Island by their becoming a vassal state of the Hitler Empire. A pro-German Government would certainly be called into being to make peace, and might present to a shattered or a starving nation an almost irresistible case for entire submission to the Nazi will."

Cites Churchill Message

On June 28 Churchill sent Lord Lothian, British Ambassadoi in Washington, a telegram in which he foretold what would happen to England if it should one day find itself in the same position as France in the past few weeks. It said: "Never cease to impress on the President and others that if our country were [successfully] invaded and occupied after heavy fighting some Quisling government would be formed to make peace on the basis of our becoming a

German protectorate." [This quotation is in Mr. Churchill's manuscript, but did not appear in the installments

published in THE TIMES.] I do not know whether or not. any connection can be discerned between these telegrams and Roosevelt's mental attitude as it appears from one of the entries in Roussy de Sales diary.

Commenting on my telephone call June 5 to the President asking for arms he writes that Noel Coward, then a guest at the White House, told him: "The effect was like a tonic. Reynaud put new heart into F. D. R., who was completely depressed."

I may say that during this conversation with the President I in no way had the impression that the President was depressed. I am convinced that, just as I never doubted Churchill, so he, in his turn, never had any doubts about Roosevelt.

A Question of Language

However that may be, Churchill was right in using this language. Who would dream of accusing him of having weakened because he did so? The same was true of me. The indomitable Churchill was my Roosevelt. Playing a double game, some will say? No, two different; languages in talking to two different people.

If, on the one hand, I alluded to the armistice, on the other I never ceased to assert that it was a duty and a necessity to fight to the end, even though I was told by one of the Ministers at the last meeting of the Government in Bordeaux: "We're there already, at the end!"

To give only one proof among so many others: At his trial Pétain called his friend General Serrigny as a witness on his behalf. Speaking of the last hours in Paris the latter spontaneously stated: "In the car, which was taking us to see M. Paul Renaud, he (Marshal Pètain) told me in what high esteem he held his Prime Minister for the combative spirit he showed on that occasion."

In the memoirs which I shall publish shortly and which will be an entirely revised edition of a book which appeared eighteen months ago ["France Saved Europe" (Flammarion, Paris)] facts and proofs will be found which I forced to rely upon others whose statements should be thoroughly sifted. This was the case with regard to the Bordeaux events. He writes from hearsay in this connec-

tion since he was not in Bordeaux. This information comes from the British Ambassador and General Spears who themselves were only able to learn from others what took place at the meetings of the Council of Ministers and conversations in which everything was settled. Churchill confines himself to adopting the impressions gained by his two envoys.

Quotation Questioned

He writes: "Evidently M. Reynaud, exhausted by the ordeals through which he had passed, had not the life or strength for so searching a personal ordeal, which would indeed have taxed the resources of an Oliver Cromwell or of a Clemenceau, of Stalin or of Hitler."

The company is flattering. though mixed, but is the assertion

correct? No one will reproach one of the busiest statesmen in Europe with not having in his narrative taken into account depositions made under oath since June, 1940, by numerous witnesses in various courts of justice or before the Commission of Investigation of the National Assembly both by outstanding personalities in the state and by my most determined adversaries

on the question of an armistice. But the reader must be told that all this testimony has entirely elucidated what took place in Bordeaux almost hour by hour. Those seeking enlightenment of the most dramatic chapter in the history of France will find numerous extracts from these declarations in my book, which will prove my contentions.

They will see what one of my most determined opponents, General Weygand, told of altercations he had with me in Bordeaux with regard to the armistice, the last of which is described by him, not without reason, as being exceptionally violent.

Statement by Chautemps

They will read statements by another of my opponents, Monsieur Chautempts [Camille Chautempts, former French Cabinet Minister] asserting that I purposely misled the last meeting of the Council of Ministers, that of June 16, by saying that the British Government had rejected France's request to be allowed to inquire as to the enemy's conditions.

Such, according to my adversaries, are the extremes to which my passionate opposition to the armistice drove me right down to the last minute.

Is all this compatible with the idea that I could have yielded without a struggle to a sort of nervous depression as the reader of Churchill's memoirs might well believe? To say I was exhausted is to state a subjective opinion, but not to announce a fact. But this opinion is contradicted by the facts, which have been disclosed since June 16, 1940. It was I, alas, who had to deal with exhausted individuals who allowed themselves to be led by my adversaries.

De Gaulle Sent to London

For instance, I was forced to remind Darlan, who had adopted an exhausted air and who objected that the transport to North Africa, which I had requested, was impossible for lack of ships, that I had sent de Gaulle to London for the very purpose of obtaining these from the British Government.

As to the nomination of Pétain as my successor, there again Churchill was misinformed. He was told that I "handed in my resignation" about 8 P. M. to the President of the Republic. This is incorrect.

At the end of the last meeting of the Council of Ministers on June 16 at which to begin with I was alone in sustaining the proposal for a Franco-British union, at which my insistence that the given word must not be broken had not shaken any of my adversaries, at which both vice presidents of the Council, Pétain and Chautemps, and 'numerous Ministers had pronounced themselves in favor of the armistice, and at which a sharp altercation had broken out between Mandel [Georges Mandel. Cabinet Minister] and Chautemps with regard to those "who don't want to fight," it was obvious to any reasonably minded individual that I could not continue to govern under such cir-

cumstances. **New Cabinet Necessary**

I had to reorganize my Cabinet or resign. Churchill says that in the morning of the previous day I

had stated to his Ambassador that I had "definitely decided to divide the government in half and to establish a center of authority on the opposite shore of the Mediterra-

nean." I obviously would have divided it in two in order to replace those who demanded an armistice. The Ambassador and General Spears informed Churchill that on June 16 they had urged me to form a new government and asked the President of the Senate to use his influence with the President of the Republic so that he should charge me with the task of forming a new administration.

That was the sole purpose I had in mind when a few hours earlier I had objected to the British Government's acquiescing in the Chautemps proposal.

Actually under the Constitution of 1875 the approval and signature of the President of the Republic who had to consult the presidents of the two chambers were necessary for a new government to be formed. That is why I asked for a recess of the meeting of the Council of Ministers from 8 to 10 o'clock.

I first saw the President of the Republic to whom I explained that I could no longer carry out my policy with the then government.

Seen as Armistice Bid He himself, testifying at the Pétain trial, stated perfectly

frankly that he asked me, as he had done the previous day, to agree to the Chautemps proposal which I rejected as being nothing more nor less, in fact, than a request for an armistice. To this I replied that if he wished that policy carried out he must ask Marshal Pétain, not me.

The presidents of the chambers then arrived. President Edouard Herriott in his evidence at the Petain trial summed up in a few words what happened:

"This meeting has been described to you and I shall not dwell upon it. But you are aware that Monsieur Paul Reynaud stated that he refused to act against his political conscience and that therefore he would not ask for an armistice."

Is the refusal to act against one's political conscience a sign of exhaustion?

While I was in conference with the three presidents, the ministers, who were waiting in the adjoining room, were wondering, according to what one of them has written, whether I was going to be asked to form a new government to continue the war.

"Point of History Cleared"

This point of history is therefore completely cleared up. Among other written proofs I would mention the diary kept by a friend of President Herriot which entirely corroborates the evidence of the highest state officials. I may remind readers of the remark made by Pétain himself to one of his closest collaborators saying that Mandel and I were "fight-to-theend diehards without munitions" because of our opposition to the armistice for which he claims Pétain said he would never forgive

Such are the facts. Surely it can be said that they are irreconcilable with the impression Churchill gained from the reports he received.

It should be added that as to the impressions, everyone had his own. Thus the most brilliant of Vichy journalists, M. Henry Beraud, who was in Pordeaux on June 16, wrote: "But Reynaud who insists on gambling with his own head is still fighting" and goes on to reproach himself for not having with his own hands, strangled a Minister, who, coming from the Council meeting remarked, "I'm on President Reynaud's side."

"Gambling with his own head" was not such a bad prophecy as we shall see.

One of the best informed people as to these events was Hitler, for on assuming power my opponents had placed themselves at his mercy. Were it true that I had weakened, that I had thus cleared the way for Pétain to take over the Government and so promoted Hitler's designs, there was certainly one man who would have known it and that man was Hitler himself.

He was certainly very well informed.

So it is not surprising that I suffered five years' imprisonment for, as Marcel Deat, the enemy's spokesman, wrote, "having wanted to continue the war in the shadow of the African coconut trees" and no one can be surprised to learn that documents discovered in the Reich Chancellery have disclosed that after having contemplated having Georges Mandel and me shot the enemy decided to hand us over to Vichy to be assassinated by the murderers in its militia with Hitler's personal instructions that on no account were we to be allowed to escape. The fate suffered by my unfortunate friend proves that these were not merely empty words.

That is the extent to which Hitler's rancor went.

I have tried to show how different the aspect of the same events can be according to whether they are viewed from a happily inviolate island or from France suffering the martyrdom of invasion. I hope I have thus thrown some

light on the most dramatic days in our history and having made this spontaneous and friendly contribution to the work of the great Englishman I am glad to resume my place among his readers.