

RUSSIA STILL HOLDS KEY TO BRITISH FATE

By DeWITT MacKENZIE
Associated Press Writer

President Roosevelt's announcement that he is supporting a British request for 12,000 more warplanes — bringing to 26,000 the total contracted for — is likely to boost England's stock very considerably among wavering European non-belligerents.

The obvious fact that this huge fleet may make the difference between victory and defeat is bound to have an effect on Russia, Turkey, Spain, Portugal and even defeated France.

All these countries Hitler is trying by every means to bring into his camp, at least so far as moral support is concerned. His purpose, of course, is to consolidate his gains and create a unified Europe to support his "new order."

The Russian attitude naturally is a matter of paramount concern to England at this crucial moment. To my mind one of the gravest threats hanging over the British is the possibility (I don't say probability) that Hitler may be able to force the bolsheviks to throw their full support to the axis powers.

That would be a disaster of the first magnitude for England, and might spell her ultimate defeat.

Previously I have expressed the view here that Russia's whole inclination must be to rise up and smite Hitler, whose recent operations are a direct challenge to soviet interests. And I ventured the further belief that Communist Chief Stalin is sitting tight because he hesitates to tangle with Hitler's mighty military machine until a more favorable moment arrives.

In view of the vast importance of the muscovite position, I should like to take you a step further today in considering just what Stalin is up against. Our examination starts with the position existing two years ago.

Just after Hitler's Munich triumph, when the present war already was rearing its poisonous head, I toured most of Europe. My itinerary including the eastern and Baltic states—all countries within the sphere of Russian influence and bound to keep close tabs on their big neighbor.

Everywhere the talk revolved about Hitler's growing strength and ambitions, and what attitude the reds would take towards this new personality, who obviously was going places. In each country—Poland, Rumania, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey—people in high places expressed an identical view.

The burden of this was that the soviet was impotent — that communist leaders dared not engage in a major war for fear the people would take advantage of this chance to coalesce and make trouble. I pressed vigorously for something more substantial to prove such an assertion, and my informants admitted that the truth never would be demonstrated until the soviet did go to war.

That brings us up to the Russo-German anti-aggression pact which Hitler sought and which enabled him to assault Poland. Please note that Hitler himself obviously wasn't convinced that the Muscovites were incapable of making war.

Now Stalin's reasons for signing that extraordinary pact were, to my mind, two. First, he figured that plenty of blood-letting in Europe would create conditions favorable to the spread of communism. Second, he was shrewd enough to recognize the vast strength which Hitler already possessed.

Where Stalin's plans went awry was that he couldn't foresee the collapse of France, which enabled Hitler to roll up one of the most amazing victories of history, and create a menace to Russia.

From then on we see Messrs. Stalin and Hitler jockeying for position against each other — sometimes coming very close to blows—but always avoiding war. They have maintained the tone of friendship — but their thin-lipped smiles couldn't fool anybody.

And now we have Hitler posed and apparently ready to strike

at the Dardanelles — one of Russia's life-lines and an essential bulwark to her safety. It's Stalin's move to counter this threat and you'd expect him to strike quickly if he could.

I think we have our answer

for that. The risk is so great that he is waiting for a better opportunity — probably hoping that Britain will be able to break, or at least weaken, Hitler.

Watch the Classified Page

**S. F. SUIT SEEKS
\$4,844,750
FROM W. R. HEARST**

SAN FRANCISCO, Oct. 31 (UP)—A superior court suit here

Wednesday sought \$4,844,750 from Publisher William Randolph Hearst in connection with bonds of the W. A. R. Realty company, operator of four New York hotels.

The suit alleged Hearst had

personally and unconditionally guaranteed payment of the bonds, authorized in 1925 and maturing in 1942.

The complaint stated only \$24,223 in interest had been paid on the bonds since June 1, 1938,

and \$953,421 is now due on installments. The total amount now due to the bondholders was given as \$4,844,750 plus interest. Scampini said a similar suit is being brought in New York.

The preservation of civil liberties largely depends upon the championship of the rights of the weak by the strong. — Rev. John Haynes Holmes, chairman, Civil Liberties Union.

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