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LIBERAL CRITICS OF THE UNITED STATES POLICY
TOWARD THE VICHY GOVERNMENT, 1940-1943

by

RICHARD JAMES CHAMPOUX

B.A. Montana State University, 1958

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Arts

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

1959

Approved by:


Chairman, Board of Examiners


Dean, Graduate School

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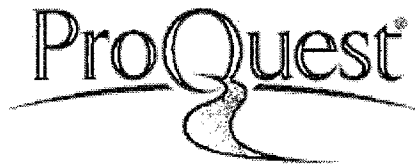


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INTRODUCTION

The American State Department throughout its history has been the target of much criticism. Rarely, however, were the officials of this department subjected to such vituperation as during the period from June of 1940 to December of 1942. The basis for this criticism was the position the department took in its relations with the Vichy government of war-time France. From the moment the department decided to maintain relations with Vichy, this decision proved to be one of the most bitter controversial issues of the period.

In the main, the American liberals were the most vociferous of the many groups that were voicing criticism of the department's attitudes and actions that subsequently came to be called the Vichy policy. The leaders of this liberal public opinion were often President Roosevelt's most ardent supporters. The barrage of criticism at times grew to such height that he became restive, but he never wavered in his belief that the policy he was following was the one best calculated to promote our diplomatic and military aims.

Since the war has ended there have been works devoted to the subject, trying to substantiate either, on the one

hand, that the State Department was right or, on the other, that the risk entailed was not worth the gain. William Langer's book, Our Vichy Gamble, and the Hull Memoirs are foremost works in the field to prove the State Department's case, while Charles A. Beard and others have tried to disprove this stand. For the foreign point of view, Churchill's outstanding six volume history of the Second World War and Robert Aron's L'Histoire de Vichy are invaluable. In all works that mention the subject it is often noted that "the Liberals" were especially loud in their criticism of a particular action. Nowhere, however, has this criticism been evaluated. Whenever this criticism has been mentioned the author has found it sufficient to insert a few quotations simply to prove that the liberals did have something to say on the subject. This has tended to show the liberal cause as completely one-sided against the State Department. This thesis will show this was not entirely the case.

As the former secretary of state, Cordell Hull, states in his memoirs:

During the period of intense criticism against our Vichy policy before the landing in North Africa, the President and I labored under the handicap of being unable to announce the advantages that were accruing to us from that policy. We could not expose the results of the contacts we were keeping in Vichy and in North Africa or of the economic accord with Weygand. Easy as it was to criticize, it was correspondingly hard to give the whole story. Publishing a balance sheet of our policy would have prejudiced the policy itself and incited the Germans to require Vichy to reduce or

eliminate these contacts and negative [sic] their results. Consequently, the criticism accumulated with virtually no opposition until it solidified into a position that no doubt will endure for years.¹

Among the many factors that should now be included in this "balance sheet" is an evaluation of the liberal criticism of this policy. It is impossible to attempt to cover all this criticism in a paper of this kind; therefore, it is limited to five leading liberal periodicals.

These periodicals are The New Masses, The Nation, The New Republic, Commonweal and The Christian Century. They are often considered the core of liberal opinion. The New Masses, as a front magazine for the Communist Party, expressed an extreme left-wing position. In the center were The Nation and The New Republic, and on the right, Commonweal and The Christian Century. Commonweal, the Catholic liberal magazine, has often been criticized as being too conservative but the position this magazine took on the Spanish Civil War, for instance, warrants its inclusion here as a liberal magazine. Other magazines often considered typical liberal periodicals, such as Common Sense and The New Leader, would have been included in this study but were not available at this institution.

The attitudes expressed in these periodicals will be

¹ Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull, Vol. 11 (The Macmillan Company, 1948), p. 1194.

considered in the light of the facts as known generally when the events took place and then in the light of information which has been revealed since the end of the war. In conclusion the position of each periodical will then be weighed against the State Department and the results of the policy it followed.

CHAPTER I

THE POLICY IS FORMULATED

May-July, 1940

Although the name developed later, the elements of the Vichy policy appear as early as May, 1940 when the Germans ended the "Phony War" and invaded the Low Countries and France. President Roosevelt and State Department officials were deeply concerned with the speed of the German conquests. What would happen if France fell, and Great Britain were to follow? This would give the Nazis control of two of the world's largest navies at a time when the United States had the major portion of its fleet concentrated in the Pacific, and the advocates of a two-ocean navy had not yet won their argument. Domination of the Atlantic would give them the initiative in any war with the Western Hemisphere.

These considerations made the future of the still sizable French fleet important. President Roosevelt expressed his concern to Premier Reynaud on May 26 when he wrote:

While we still hope the invasion will be checked, if the worst comes to the worst, we regard retention of the French fleet as a force in being as vital to the reconstruction of French colonies and to the ultimate control of the Atlantic and other oceans and as a vital influence towards getting less harsh terms of peace. That means that the French fleet must not get caught up in the Mediterranean. Those ships in the eastern Mediterranean must be in a position to exit

through the Suez Canal. Those at Toulon, Tunis and Algiers must be able to exit past Gibraltar and be in a position, if the worst comes, to retire to the West Indies or to safe ports in the West African possessions...

Finally, if the Germans hold out alluring offers to France based on surrender of the fleet, it should be remembered that the offers are of no ultimate value and that the condition of France would be no worse, but in fact would be far stronger, if the fleet were removed as a whole to safe places. ¹

The French fleet, at this point, was relatively unscathed and ready for action. If France fell and the fleet were available it would be invaluable in helping to protect Great Britain against the expected invasion and also in keeping the sea lanes open between England and the United States. Further, it could neutralize the Italian fleet in the Mediterranean and also protect the French overseas colonies.

Before the armistice was negotiated the American government insisted that the fleet should not, under any circumstances, be turned over to the Germans, and that if surrender of the fleet were part of the German terms, then the armistice should be rejected. The State Department went so far as to say that, "... should the French government fail to take these steps and permit the French fleet to be surrendered to Germany, the French government will permanently lose the friendship and goodwill of the govern-

¹ William L. Langer, Our Vichy Gamble (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1947), p. 13.

ment of the United States." ²

The terms of the armistice were finally released June 23rd. It contained 24 articles by which France was divided into two zones, the northern half to be occupied by the Germans while the southern half was to be wholly under French administration. Other terms provided that the army was to be demobilized and all aircraft were to remain where they were at the time of the signing. The most important item from the American standpoint was Article 8:

Apart from the portion which shall be left to the French government for the protection of its interests in its colonial empire, the French war fleet must be assembled in ports later to be designated; it shall there be demobilized and disarmed under German and Italian supervision. The selection of these ports shall be made in accordance with the ships' home bases in peace time. The German government solemnly states to the French government that it does not intend to use for its own war purposes the French fleet which will be stationed in ports under German control, with the exception of such units as may be necessary for guarding coasts and raising mines. Moreover, the German government solemnly states that it does not intend to lay claim to the French fleet when peace is concluded. Apart from that portion of the French fleet (to be determined later) which is to defend French interests in the colonial empire, all warships now away from France are to be brought back to France. ³

The armistice, and especially this article, brought forth a storm of criticism from British and American

² Hull, op. cit., 1, 792.

³ Pertinax André Geraud, The Grave Diggers of France (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1944), p. 445.

officials. They protested that the German word was worthless, and demanded stronger assurances that the fleet would not fall into the hands of the Nazis. Admiral Darlan, French Admiral of the Fleet, tried to reassure the British and the Americans by issuing secret orders to the fleet. These orders instructed the fleet to make preparations for scuttling in the event the enemy or an "ex-ally" should attempt to seize a ship by force. Furthermore, this order was to remain in force even if contradictory orders, signed by Darlan himself, were later issued.⁴ But even the secret scuttling order did not set other minds at ease. Could not there be, for instance, other secret orders known only to the French to be used when circumstances changed? This was just one of the many questions being asked not only by government officials, but also by the American liberals.

American liberal criticism during this period, and for the remainder of 1940, dealt mainly with internal French politics and particularly with the new regime that the Pétain-Laval group was attempting to establish. After the signing of the armistice, The New Masses claimed that Britain now faced, "...at least a German siege in which the larger part of the French navy, in combination with Italian

⁴ Robert Aron, L'Histoire de Vichy (Ottawa: Le Cercle du Livre de France, Ltée., 1955), p. 74.

and German naval forces, will bring the contest to British shores." ⁵ We know that this never happened but it shows the temperament of some of the liberals at the time. In this same article The New Masses set the pattern it was to follow for the next year when it claimed France was undermined by the policies of certain men, the counterparts of whom "...own and rule America." Further, it stated the French Communists were the, "...only force whose policies were correct, and in whom the hope of the future lies." The article ended by stating that the French defeat meant a, "...setback to the war plans of the Roosevelt administration..." and further that, "...Roosevelt shares with the ruling circles of France and Britain responsibility for the debacle." Thus right from the beginning this periodical was against the new regime in France, and against Roosevelt and his administration. Also, from the beginning of the period this magazine showed marked contempt for the other magazines we will be investigation in this study. In one article, for instance, The New Masses claimed The Nation and The New Republic has been corrupted by the "bankrupt intellectuals" they employed as writers. ⁶

⁵ "How France Was Betrayed," The New Masses, June 25, 1940, pp. 4-5.

⁶ Ibid.

The New Republic claimed the Pétain group was anti-liberal. Commenting on the armistice, this magazine said the French people and the world would not have known anything about the terms of the agreement if the British information office has not published them.⁷ It should be noted here that throughout the war one of the main fears of both American and British officials was that all the terms of this armistice had not been published. After the war, however, it was found that the French had revealed all the terms to the State Department immediately after the document was signed. Throughout the last six months of 1940 it is significant that both The Nation and The New Republic attributed most, including the article cited above, of their news concerning France to British sources. Would this tend to color the attitudes these magazines were to take in the future? The reader should keep this in mind as we note the comments that are to come in the months to follow.

The question of recognition of the new Pétain government was never openly discussed by the American State Department. At the outset there had been some talk of following the British example and allowing relations with France to lapse. It was realized, however, that the fate of the French fleet could only be influenced by direct re-

⁷ The New Republic, July 1, 1940, pp. 3-4.

presentation at Vichy. Traditionally the American policy of recognition had never taken into account the form or ideology that a government professed. The only test had usually been whether a government was willing to live at peace with the United States and live up to its international obligations. At the time, it will be remembered, the United States still recognized Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and other totalitarian powers such as Japan and Russia. Thus it was decided to be the better part of wisdom to maintain relations with France, and to do whatever could be done to keep the new regime from falling completely under the influence of the conqueror. Our Vichy policy now contained 3 basic points: 1.) The French fleet must not be used against the United States; 2.) Germany and Italy must not get control of French bases in North and West Africa or in the Western Hemisphere; 3.) The Vichy government must be kept from going beyond the terms of the armistice into the realm of open cooperation and collaboration.⁸

On the other side of the ledger the United States would accrue many benefits. By maintaining an embassy in Vichy the United States could encourage the French by convincing them that the Americans were behind them. Through the embassy at Vichy close watch could be maintained on develop-

⁸ Langer, op. cit., p. 80.

ments within France and its colonies. Finally, the United States could obtain information (from its representatives) which would otherwise not be available.

On the other hand, however, as the critics were to point out, there were many developments that would spring from this policy that had not been reckoned with beforehand. The cloak of legitimacy thus attained by the Vichy government was to prove invaluable to retaining the loyalty and devotion of most of the overseas possessions. As Gabriel Paux, the French High Commissioner at Beirut put it, "How could I suspect a government with which the United States continued full diplomatic relations?"⁹ It also helped the Vichy government to represent General Charles De Gaulle, who since June 18 has been recognized by the British as the leader of the Free French resistance movement, as a dissident, a usurper and a traitor. Because of the American action, then, it was always extremely difficult for de Gaulle to present his movement as the legitimate government of France.

As for de Gaulle The New Masses said:

There is a steady flow of discredited French politicians--Leon ("Non-Intervention") Blum is one of the latest-- to London where General de Gaulle operates a French "national committee" for Churchill. Even if de Gaulle were replaced by Blum it would not help the

⁹ Pertinax, op. cit., p. 457.

prestige of this stooge committee.¹⁰

At about the time this was written (July 9, 1940), it should be noted, Leon Blum was being detained in a French prison by the Pétain government. He never was to go to London throughout the war. At another point The New Masses claimed, when speaking of the armistice, that, "...he [Hitler] tore up one of the armistice terms, permitting the French to scuttle their ships if they were unable to run the British gauntlet."¹¹ This was not true; this term was never inserted into the armistice and was not discussed at the armistice talks. These two instances of obvious falsification are pointed out early to underline the fact that the periodicals under discussion often did not have the true facts of a case. Throughout this thesis, it will be indicated where these periodicals printed false facts blatantly as the truth. This practice was especially prevalent during the period from June to December, 1940. Also, it may seem strange that there was little liberal comment on the Vichy policy during this period. This may be explained by the fact that events effecting the policy were in continual flux and it was difficult for anyone--including the liberal writers-- to know what was going on in Europe at

¹⁰ The New Masses, July 9, 1940, p. 24.

¹¹ The New Masses, July 15, 1940, pp. 70-71.

the time.

CHAPTER II

A PERIOD OF WAITING

July-December, 1940

During the period July-December, 1940, there were many conflicting reports as to what was really happening in Europe. For example, it was not clear, whether the French had revealed all the contents of the armistice to the Americans. This suspicion, of course, was not revealed to the French but it is noted in much correspondence between high American and British officials. Thus, the State Department was continually looking for further and stronger assurances from the French concerning their fleet. Numerous events in France, during the period, tended to make certain acts of the Vichy government look suspicious.

The new form of government instituted on July 10 was one of these actions that irked the officials of the State Department and provided material for critical liberal pens. On that date the members of the French legislature, sitting as a constitutional convention, by a vote of 567 to 80 passed a resolution stating:

The National Assembly gives complete power to the Government of the Republic under the signature and on the authority of Marshal Pétain, President of Ministers, for the purpose of promulgating, by one or more acts, the new constitution of the French state. This con-

stitution shall guarantee the right of Labor, the Family, and the Fatherland. It shall be ratified by the assemblies which it shall create. ¹

This decree gave Marshall Pétain dictatorial powers to use as he saw fit. In this country, the old marshal was affectionately known as "the George Washington of France" and was looked upon as the bulwark against the forces that would have left France as a full collaborator with the Nazis. On the other hand, his association with such dubious men as Pierre Laval (who introduced the decree giving Pétain dictatorial powers) was mystifying to many. Just previous to the establishment of the new government, Laval went so far as to say, "Since parliamentary democracy wished to enter the ring against Nazism and Fascism, and since it has lost the fight, it must disappear from the face of the earth." ² Later, in the summer of 1942, he was to go further and openly announce he had hopes for a German victory. State Department suspicions were well founded especially after Pétain took Laval into his new government. These suspicions were shared by The New Republic which commented that, "Pétain is undoubtedly a patriotic Frenchman but this eighty-four-year-old general is not only old and tired but

¹ Paul Farmer, Vichy-Political Dilemma (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), p. 140.

² Pertinax, op. cit., p. 471.

he is also a friend of Franco." ³ This magazine also condemned him for appealing to Hitler's mercy and to his "... honor as a soldier for an 'honorable peace'..." ⁴

Both The New Masses and The Christian Century noted the connection of the new regime and the Roman Catholic Church. The Christian Century claimed the official paper of the Vatican, Osservatore Romano, had hailed the new French political order. In the same article it went on to say, "The corporate state which Laval is about to proclaim is in full agreement with Pius XI's ideas of social organization; Pétain and Weygand, [the then French High Commissioner in North Africa] as martial sons of the church, represent the Roman ideal of competent administration." ⁵ The Christian Century also noted the great significance of the Vatican rapprochement with France was the Catholic hope that, "... after the end of the war a Latin bloc may be formed... bound together by a religious tie, and able to resist inundation by a culture based upon state totalitarianism." It added that, "...ultimately, it would aim toward the reassertion in Europe of a Catholic totalitarianism, unknown in modern

³ Marshal Pétain previous to his inclusion in the war cabinet of Premier Reynaud, in June of 1940, was the French ambassador to Spain.

⁴ The New Republic, June 14, 1940, p. 844.

⁵ The Christian Century, July 17, 1940, pp. 893-894.

history..."⁶

The New Masses also mentioned the Catholic connection: "Significantly, it has the Vatican's blessing," but expressed the hope that, "The men who hold this bastard power will not hold it for long."⁷ Later, in a description of the new regime's leaders it described Pétain as, "...one of the architects of appeasement... a main lobbyist for Franco," and one who, "...helped to wreck the Franco-Soviet Treaty that could have meant peace." It also stated that General Weygand told the French negotiators at the armistice talks not to ask for the return of the two million French prisoners since, "...they would come back and overthrow the Pétain regime."⁸ This assertion, however, has never been substantiated. On the contrary, one of the most persistent demands of both Pétain and Laval was the release of French war prisoners.

In July the British decided to deal directly ("operation Catapult") with the threat posed by the continued existence of the French fleet. On July 3 combined units of the British fleet converged on elements of the French fleet

⁶ Ibid., September 25, 1940, pp. 1166-1168.

⁷ The New Masses, July 23, 1940, p. 16.

⁸ Philippe Deval, "Four Musketeers of Betrayal," The New Masses, July 30, 1940, p. 5.

stationed in Portsmouth and Plymouth in England, and at Alexandria and Mers-el-Kebir in North Africa. The ships in English ports were taken over by an overwhelming force which stormed the units as they lay at their piers, unaware that any action was pending. The ease with which this phase of the operation was carried out was later cited as an example of how easily the Germans could take over the French ships stationed in metropolitan ports once they had control of the port area. In North Africa the French commanders were given an ultimatum with three choices. Either they could follow the English to British ports and join them in the fight against the Axis, or they could sail to American ports and allow themselves to be demobilized. If neither of these conditions were acceptable then the French commanders were given the suggestion that they should scuttle their ships. If none of these conditions were accepted within a certain length of time, the English warned the French they would fire upon them. At Alexandria the French commanders allowed their ships to be demobilized in the roadstead and put under English surveillance, but at Mers-el-Kebir the French chose to fight. When the smoke finally cleared at Mers 1,500 French sailors had lost their lives, and most of the units there were put out of action for months to come. The resultant clamor in French official circles can be imagined, but in the United States immense relief spread

through the highest government offices, for the British action meant time had been gained to prepare for the protection of the Western Hemisphere. ⁹

For the liberals, "Catapult" meant a great danger had been lifted from our shores. The New Masses said, "The result has been that one great danger to the British--and ultimately to the United States--has been removed." ¹⁰ The Nation claimed the British attack on the French at Mers-el-Kabir was justified because it was an act of self defence, but they said it was also "...obviously justified by Pétain's refusal to keep the nation's promise to turn over the fleet to Britain in case of surrender." ¹¹ In this instance The Nation was not necessarily stating the true facts since this was the British argument and even today the French will not admit that this was the case in 1940.

After "Catapult" France broke off diplomatic relations with the British, and American ties with Vichy became that much more valuable. Now a new feature was added to the expanding Vichy policy. An attempt would be made to bring the French and British closer together. ¹² Before any success

⁹ Winston Churchill, The Second World War (Boston: Houghton Miffling Co., 1948-1953), 11 p. 239.

¹⁰ The New Masses, July 15, 1940, pp. 70-71.

¹¹ The Nation, July 13, 1940, p. 21.

¹² Hull, op. cit., 1, p. 804.

could be achieved, however, General de Gaulle persuaded the British that an attack on the French colony of Dakar could prove profitable and would help in establishing his claim as the rightful heir to administer the sovereignty of France. In September the attempt was made and failed. This action tended to further separate the British and the French and helped to establish in the minds of the men of the State Department a suspicion of de Gaulle. The New Masses immediately took up the cry against the Free French and Churchill and added a new twist by asking:

"Is it possible that Lord Lothian, the British ambassador, connived with the administration and the State Department to stage a demonstration off Dakar that would impress the American people with new and alarming dangers to this hemisphere?"¹³

The Nation, relying on British information sources, falsely stated that de Gaulle decided to withdraw his troops without provoking a fight among the French.¹⁴ The Free French were not only beaten off by gunfire from the beaches but their representatives who did succeed in landing were either arrested or killed.

Up to this point the Catholic liberal magazine Commonweal had no comment to make on the situation in France or on the State Department's relations with the new regime.

¹³ The New Masses, October 8, 1940, pp. 24-25.

¹⁴ The Nation, September 28, 1940, p. 257.

In this month Commonweal's future position could be discerned indirectly by some comments that were made about de Gaulle. It remarked that the armistice had been carried out by military men and that military tradition had prevailed both inside and outside France by these same men obeying orders. It went on to say that de Gaulle and his followers "...are simply volunteers in foreign service acting on their individual responsibility... Any talk of their being the 'real' French government is absurd." ¹⁵ Throughout the period under study Commonweal was to maintain this position toward de Gaulle and, as we shall see, to advocate the maintenance of the Vichy policy.

In this same month the Vichy High Commissioner of Indo-China signed an agreement with the Japanese giving them protective rights over the Indo-Chinese railroads and centers of transportation. All the liberal magazines let this incident go by without comment except The New Masses which claimed the State Department had helped the Japanese seize Indo-China by shipping arms and airplanes to Siam which this magazine claimed was Japan's accomplice. In the final analysis this magazine stated the matter was simply a case of American and Japanese imperialism. ¹⁶ In the light

¹⁵ Commonweal, September 13, 1940, p. 418.

¹⁶ The New Masses, October 1, 1940, p. 14.

of the American policy toward Vichy, however, this was to prove to be a major setback for the United States when the Japanese decided to bomb Pearl Harbor. In the process this seizure of Indo-China made it far easier for the Japanese to take Hong Kong and the Philippines.

One of the most crucial periods in Franco-American relations came in October when Pétain consented to meet Hitler at Montoire in southern France. The first hint that a meeting was to take place came from the British. In the British note there was a fear expressed that the main units of the French fleet, then based at Toulon, would be turned over to the Germans.¹⁷ Secretary of State Hull delivered a strong warning to Gaston Henry-Haye, the newly arrived French ambassador to the United States. There was no reply from the French and the meeting took place on the twenty-fourth. The agreement, the full text of which was not published until after the war, had among its parts such statements as:

The Axis powers and France have an identical interest in seeing the defeat of England accomplished as soon as possible. Consequently, the French Government will support, within the limits of its ability, the measures which the Axis powers may take toward this end. The details of this practical cooperation will be dealt with in a special agreement between Germany and Italy on the one hand and France on the other.¹⁸

¹⁷ Churchill, op. cit., 11, 513.

¹⁸ Langer, op. cit., p. 95.

The details of the collaboration were to be worked out later and Pétain thus felt he was justified in agreeing to the principle of the general clauses which in fact meant agreeing to the principle of collaboration. He admitted this upon his return when he broadcast to the nation that, "A collaboration between our two nations was considered. I accepted the principle of it." ¹⁹

It was commonly supposed in this country that Hitler had promised France a final peace in return for the fleet, cession of certain bases and a repartition of the colonies. The news issuing from Montoire and Vichy seemed so ominous it was decided that the President should send a strong personal note to Marshal Pétain. The note stated:

The government of the United States received from the Pétain government during the first days it held office the most solemn assurances that the French fleet would not be surrendered. If the French government now permits the Germans to use the French fleet in hostile operations against the British fleet, such action would constitute a flagrant and deliberate breach of faith with the United States Government.

Any agreement entered into between France and Germany which partook of the character of the above mentioned would most definitely wreck the traditional friendship between the French and the American peoples, would permanently remove any chance that this government would be disposed to give any assistance to the French people in their distress, and would create a wave of bitter indignation against France on the part of American public opinion.

If France pursued such a policy as that above out-

¹⁹ Ronald Matthews, The Death of the Fourth Republic (New York: Praeger, 1954), p. 76.

lined, the United States could make no effort when the appropriate time came to exercise its influence to ensure to France the retention of her overseas possessions. ²⁰

Pétain was a little indignant at the wording of such a strong note but he replied:

To answer the anxiety of President Roosevelt, Marshal Pétain desires to state that the French Government has always preserved its liberty of action and that he [Roosevelt] knew that he might be surprised at an appraisal as inaccurate as it is unjust. The French Government has declared that the French fleet would never be surrendered and nothing can justify questioning today that solemn undertaking. ²¹

The meeting and the diplomatic exchanges concerning it were so well guarded that none of this information leaked out and there was no liberal comment on it. This incident has been mentioned to point out that the liberal journals did not have access to every type of information. And as has already been shown, often the information they did have access to was not always correct. As a final judgement on the importance of the Montoire meeting and its after effects the words of Renthe-Finck, Hitler's special diplomatic delegate to Vichy, are of worthy note:

For me Montoire constitutes the greatest defeat of the whole German policy towards France. We gained nothing from it, and nearly lost everything we had. We did not succeed in winning France over to our cause, nor in

²⁰ Sumner Welles, Seven Decisions That Shaped History (New York: Harper and Co., 1951), pp. 39-40.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 40-41.

occupying the whole of French territory. If there had not been Montoire, there would probably not have been, either an allied landing in North Africa, or our own debacle there. ²²

After Montoire the President was convinced that if the embassy in Vichy was to serve the purpose for which it had been established then the time had come to appoint a full time ambassador there. Roosevelt feared that certain elements in France, notably the Laval group, were pushing Pétain and the Vichy government toward full collaboration and eventually into a war with Great Britain. At first General Pershing was approached but at the time he was very ill and it was decided to invite Admiral William D. Leahy, then governor of Puerto Rico, to take the post. In the letter of invitation Roosevelt said, "We need in France at this time an ambassador who can gain the confidence of Marshal Pétain, who at the present moment is the one powerful element of the French government who is standing firm against selling out to the Germans." ²³ The President also felt, since Leahy was a navy man, that he could get close to those in charge of the French fleet and thus have a greater opportunity to influence them to keep the fleet out of the hands of the Germans. Leahy accepted and was appointed

²² David Thompson, Two Frenchmen (London: The Cresset Press, 1951), p. 78.

²³ William D. Leahy, I Was There (New York: Whittlesey House, 1950), p. 6.

December 20. He did not, however, arrive in Vichy until late in January.

Liberal criticism became more defined as the year drew to a close. Commonweal, for instance, stated in one article that, "The most effective means of opposing Hitlerism lies somewhere between the extremes of appeasement and outright intervention."²⁴ A second article was more explicit. Commenting on the Leahy appointment, it said the admiral would be ambassador to the French government and, "...not to the 'Vichy Government' which is a disparaging appellation used by people outside of France to mark their desire for barricades, suicide and vicarious heroism.

An ambassador," it added: is the best means our government has found to secure information concerning the actions and intentions of foreign governments. We need that information now more than ever. It should not be based on hearsay: it cannot be made effective through absence.²⁵

The New Masses was consistent in its opposition to Roosevelt and Vichy by criticizing the Leahy appointment; "It certainly makes quite a spectacle; the great Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt palsy-walsy with Marshal Pétain."²⁶ Later it claimed the French ruling class was looking for time and better terms from the Germans waiting to see

²⁴ Commonweal, November 8, 1940, p. 67.

²⁵ Ibid., December 6, 1940, p. 164.

²⁶ The New Masses, December 3, 1940, p. 4.

which way the war would swing, adding: "That there is definitely such a trend is deducible from the British and American diplomatic machinations with Vichy, of which the appointment of Admiral Leahy is one example..."²⁷

Meanwhile in Vichy on December 13, Pétain tricked Laval into resigning. Pétain's main accusation was that Laval had not kept him informed as to what was going on in the government. In accepting Laval's resignation Pétain said, "Every time you go to Paris, I ask myself what new ruin you will bring down on us. The French people don't trust you and neither do I."²⁸ State Department officials saw this as a good sign for future Franco-American relations. Before this, however, there had been a distinct line drawn between Laval and Pétain in so far as the feelings of Washington officials were concerned. To Roosevelt and other officials Pétain was admired because he represented, in their minds, the strongest element standing against full collaboration with the Germans. Laval, on the other hand, represented those who stood for stronger ties with the Nazis. The importance of Laval to the Germans can be seen in a letter Hitler wrote to Mussolini commenting on his dismissal. In this letter Hitler says:

²⁷ The New Masses, December 24, 1940, p. 18.

²⁸ Farmer, op. cit., p. 205.

The French government has dismissed Laval. The official reasons that have been communicated to me are false. I do not doubt for a moment that the real reason is that General Weygand is making demands for North Africa which amount to blackmail, and that the Vichy government is not in a position to react without risking the loss of North Africa. I also consider it probable that there exists at Vichy itself a whole clique that approves of Weygand's policy, at tacitly. I do not think that Pétain personally is disloyal. But one never knows. ²⁹

The Nation, in one of the few comments on the Laval dismissal, claimed the strongly anti-Nazi and pro-British attitude of the French people, "...was the real reason for Laval's dismissal." ³⁰ This is too simple a reason and would have provided food for argument within France at this time. The Nation, apparently, did not know the real reasons for the Laval dismissal as they are given above.

Thus by the end of the year the State Department had weathered one diplomatic storm, Montoire, chosen to send an ambassador to France, and had begun to define more fully its Vichy policy. Three of the liberal magazines under study also began to define their editorial policies toward the State Department and its Vichy program. From the beginning The New Masses was opposed to Roosevelt, to the administration and to Vichy and the State Department's attitudes toward the new regime. The Nation was becoming

²⁹ Welles, op. cit., p. 57.

³⁰ The Nation, March 22, 1941, pp. 312-313.

definitely more and more anti-Vichy and against the State Department's policy. Commonweal, on the other hand, was an advocate of the program Vichy was pursuing and thus favored the State Department and its actions. Both Christian Century and The New Republic were against the forces ruling Vichy but were non-committal on the State Department and its Vichy program at this point.

CHAPTER III

THE YEAR OF DECISIONS

January-December, 1941

At no time during the period of American relations with Vichy did the United States policy undergo such a test of strength as during the first six months of 1941. When Leahy arrived in Vichy in January his instructions had enlarged the Vichy policy and more fully defined it. In the first place he was instructed to gain the confidence of both Marshal Pétain and Admiral Darlan, who controlled the French fleet. Secondly, he was to convince the French that the best interest of France lay in the defeat of the Axis and thus this meant staying on the American side. Thirdly, he was to act as a "watchdog" to make sure the French did not go beyond the terms of the armistice. Along this line Leahy was to repeat "...to all and sundry that an Axis victory would mean the dismemberment of the French empire and reduce France to a vassal state." Fourth, the new ambassador was to seek renewed pledges that under no circumstances was the fleet to be turned over to the Germans. Leahy was also told that he was to warn the French whenever necessary that if the fleet was turned over to the Germans, France would forever forfeit the long-standing

good will and friendship of the United States.¹ Fifth, the United States, through the Red Cross, would endeavor to send food to France insofar as this relief would not prejudice a British victory. Finally, in regard to the French Empire, the instructions said the United States desired to maintain the status quo in the West Indies and in French Guiana and thus all French warships in this area should be immobilized. As for North Africa, Leahy was to say that the United States was sympathetic toward the maintenance of French interests in the area and in improving its economic condition. In ending the instructions said the United States was ready to assist in maintaining and improving its economic condition in any appropriate way.²

Pierre-Etienne Flandin, the man who replaced Laval, lasted a brief and insignificant seven weeks. On February 9 Admiral Darlan, in turn, replaced Flandin. While this political reshuffling was going on within France the question of French North Africa came up for discussion between State Department officials and French representatives overseas. Because of the lack of certain materials in North Africa the natives were becoming restive and it was feared the Germans might use this as an excuse to invade and take

¹ Leahy, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

² Ibid., pp. 445-446.

over the area. Also the State Department felt North Africa should be kept free of foreign influence as long as possible in case in the future Pétain might desire to move his government there. With this in mind an agreement was drawn up by Robert Murphy, the former Counselor of the Embassy in Paris and now American Consul General for North Africa, and submitted through General Weygand to Vichy for its approval. After being approved by Vichy it was signed on March 10 by American officials in Washington.

The main points of the secret agreement, which came to be known as the Murphy-Weygand Accord, stipulated that the United States would supply North Africa with tea, sugar and petroleum, the three products most desperately needed by the native population. It was further stipulated that these goods were to be consumed exclusively in North Africa and to make sure that this was done American agents were to supervise delivery and distribution.³ These agents, however, as was revealed later, were to act as American spies in the area. In this capacity, they were not only to assure that the American imports did not reach the hands of the Axis, but they were also to report on the movement of trade and all significant military and political developments. Weygand even gave the Americans permission to have diplomat-

³ Langer, op. cit., p. 135.

ic pouch service and use a secret code in their communications with Washington.⁴ Until the ships began to leave American ports for North Africa the liberals had no idea of this agreement and it was not until after the invasion of North Africa, at the end of 1942, that the agreement was revealed by the State Department.

During March and April the liberal magazines, not knowing of the Murphy-Weygand Accord, took potshots at other aspects of the policy. In particular they condemned Leahy's efforts to have food sent to feed French women and children in the unoccupied zone. The New Masses began the offensive by stating:

When the President announces he will consider any power, or gang of generals as 'allies' of his 'democracy' if only they come to terms with him rather than Hitler, he confirms in public what has long been obvious in practice: that the State Department has been working feverishly to buy off well known 'democrats' like General Franco, Marshal Pétain, and Maxime Weygand, ready to give them food, and even arms if only they will switch sides.⁵

The New Masses in its following issue came out against sending any food to the French because as they saw it:

...with this measure, we have the unfolding of a policy whereby food becomes a direct diplomatic instrument. The distinction between humanitarian and political motivations disappears, just as in this war the distinction between civilian and military fronts

⁴ Ibid., p. 179.

⁵ The New Masses, March 25, 1941, p. 11.

has disappeared. Food, quite like guns and airplanes becomes an acknowledged weapon of war.⁶

The Nation, again citing a British source, claimed the Germans could requisition food in the unoccupied and thus any food the United States sent to France would benefit the Nazis. Before any food was sent Leahy should submit a report on the food exchange procedure in France since, "This is information to which we are entitled, whether or not the Nazis object to its disclosure, before we are asked to urge Britain to modify its blockade." ⁷ Later in the year both Commonweal and The Christian Century were to take stands on this issue in opposition to The New Masses and The Nation. For the moment Commonweal was satisfied in saying, "England is making an even greater mistake than she did at Oran [Mers-el-Kebir] in refusing to accept American offers to help relieve, among others, the wants of the Belgian and French populations." ⁸

During this same period Commonweal praised Pétain and his government by saying, "We were told that he could be a tool of Hitler. We find him unperturbably defending the honor of his country and voicing a social philosophy the

⁶ Ibid., April 1, 1941, p. 19.

⁷ The Nation, April 5, 1941, pp. 397-398.

⁸ Commonweal, April 25, 1941, pp. 14-15.

antithesis of Nazism." ⁹ Later, in another issue, it said, "...this is certain. There is no legitimate or constitutional French government today save the Pétain government." ¹⁰ This was an indirect dig at de Gaulle and The New Masses took up the refrain by calling the Free French, "...another British phantom." ¹¹

In March and April, Leahy became very suspicious of Darlan and his frequent meetings with the Germans in the occupied zone. The first indication that something was in the air came in March when Leahy was notified by British intelligence that the damaged battleship Dunkerque was preparing to leave African waters presumably to head for a metropolitan port. When Leahy mentioned the matter to Pétain he said he had no knowledge of such a move but upon summoning Darlan he found the admiral had given the order without informing him. Immediately the order was countermanded but it became continually more and more apparent that Pétain was not being informed about many major decisions being taken in his name. ¹² Meanwhile, a revolt had broken out against the pro-British government in Irak.

⁹ Ibid., March 7, 1941, pp. 486-489.

¹⁰ Ibid., April 25, 1941, pp. 14-15.

¹¹ The New Masses, April 8, 1941, p. 21.

¹² Pertinax, op. cit., pp. 526-527.

This gave the Germans a chance to plan an intervention in the area and in order to facilitate operations they decided to ask the French for certain concessions in the region. In early May Darlan was called to Paris by Otto Abetz, the German ambassador, to discuss the matter. After the preliminary meetings showed Darlan to be submissive a meeting was arranged with Hitler for the eleventh. At this meeting Hitler showered Darlan with promises of what Vichy would obtain at the end of the war if she would cooperate now. Accordingly, on May 27-28, Abetz and Darlan signed the Paris Protocols. The French promised to allow the German airforce to make use of their bases in Syria, to permit German submarines to use the naval base at Dakar and finally to permit the Germans to make use of French transport facilities in North Africa for the supplying of their troops fighting the British in Egypt.¹³ When certain persons close to Pétain told him the news of Darlan's recent doings he seemed to indicate that he knew nothing about it. After they pointed out that this could lead to an open break with the United States he consented to have Darlan and Weygand meet with him and discuss the matter. After a number of meetings the opposition to Darlan and the agreement that he had signed grew so intense that on June 6 he was forced to admit the

¹³ Langer, op. cit., p. 156.

protocols should be reconsidered. At the next opportunity he promised to bring them up with the Germans for discussion.¹⁴ Though the protocols were discussed other events in the east, where Germany had invaded Russia, took the pressure off Darlan for the moment.

Meanwhile, the liberals were unaware of this new crisis just as they had been unaware of the Montoire meeting and its consequences. Nevertheless, whether referring to the crisis or not, The New Masses showed true insight by remarking at the same time, "Mr. Roosevelt is now compelled to cover up his fiasco, and he conceals it from the American people by pronunciamentos to France which smells strongly of sour grapes."¹⁵

At the end of his first six months in Vichy, Leahy, having weathered the business over the Paris Protocols, wrote the President that, "...it is impossible to guess what will happen in France tomorrow or the next day and almost as difficult for me to point to any useful accomplishment that we have made here since my arrival six months ago."¹⁶ It is amusing, at this point, to speculate what the liberals would have had to say had they known about the

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 157-159.

¹⁵ The New Masses, May 27, 1941, p. 17.

¹⁶ Leahy, op. cit., p. 47.

Paris Protocols and this note of Leahy's. Considering the extent to which Darlan had brought France so close to open and full collaboration with the Germans it seems amazing that the State Department continued to do business with his government. On first sight this seems to be the case, but on second notice it is seen that this was not entirely the whole picture, for it was fairly clear that Pétain was not in sympathy with the Darlan policy. Secondly, there were many men within the government at Vichy who were openly collaborating with the United States and providing much information that could not have been gathered elsewhere or under any other circumstances. For this reason alone the connection with Vichy at this point seemed worth keeping.

After the invasion of Russia The New Masses was strangely silent for two months on the subject of Vichy but The Nation claimed there had been little response in France to the call for volunteers to fight the Bolsheviks and the, "...government dropped the entire plan." ¹⁷ Again The Nation did not have the facts straight for the French government never officially sanctioned a volunteer brigade to fight the Bolsheviks, rather it was the brainchild of two rabid French Nazis, Marcel Deat and Jacques Doriot.

¹⁷ Louis Dolivet, "Volcano Under Vichy," The Nation July 26, 1941, pp. 67-69.

Secondly, the plan was not dropped and eventually over five thousand Frenchmen found themselves fighting on the Russian front.¹⁸ In the same article The Nation voiced a criticism of the Vichy policy that was to be heard many times before the policy was abandoned in the last days of 1942. On this point The Nation said:

Many persons in important positions who are now hesitating would never allow themselves to be identified with Fascism. They are undecided at present because Vichy says that it is 'on excellent terms with the British and the Americans.'¹⁹

In July also, the shipment of goods to Weygand in North Africa was beginning to be noticed and The New Republic, after a long period of silence on the subject, took time to chide the State Department by saying:

Our State Department, which is yet to score its first success against Fascism anywhere in the world, has been thinking, and has reached the conclusion that the most subtle use of our oil on behalf of democracy is to make it available to Vichy and Japan. It smears General Weygand with 16,000 tons of this material to the visible distress of Prime Minister Churchill. By these actions the State Department declares its disbelief that France has been conquered.²⁰

Commonweal, at the same time, not being daunted by the opposition building up against Vichy and the State Depart-

¹⁸ Farmer, op. cit., pp. 272-273.

¹⁹ Dolivet, op. cit.

²⁰ Samuel Grafton, "A New Learned Society," The New Republic, July 21, 1941, p. 83.

ment's policy, continued to show its admiration for the French government by stating, "Actually the creation of a new order, or 'National Revolution' as the French call it, is not an empty slogan, but a vital necessity recognized by everyone..." 21

In August the State Department came under the full editorial guns of both The Nation and The New Republic. Both these magazines came out strongly for the recognition of General de Gaulle and his Free French Council of Defence in London. The Nation, noting that Vichy officials in Indo-China had just agreed to allow the Japanese to share their rule of the area, opened their attack by saying:

But if Vichy acted under 'duress' as Mr. Welles gently put it, what moral does it carry for the United States? Does it not prove--namely, that since the French government does not exist in any real sense, attempts to purchase its favor or give it help are nothing more than attempts to appease Berlin.

The question this country should ask itself is not the imbecile, self-answering question, is Vichy independent? What this country should ask is the question, is there still time to prevent the full utilization of French African possessions by Hitler. And if Vichy surrendered Indo-China under duress then, on what theory should we continue to sell oil to the Vichy forces in North Africa?

President Roosevelt has not put an end to the appeasement of Hitler's disguised agents in Vichy even though the covering has worn so threadbare that the State

21 Helen Iswolsky, "Rebuilding in France," Commonweal, July 11, 1941, pp. 270-273.

Department acknowledges the existence of 'duress.'²² After this searing attack the magazine advocated that we combine with the British and de Gaulle and raid the Nazi and Vichy bases in North Africa. In the next issue The Nation let up a little by saying:

The combination of bribes and warnings applied to Vichy may for the moment strengthen the elements which oppose full and complete collaboration with Hitler in Africa. That it will fail in the long run we are certain.²³

In a long article The New Republic finally took a stand on the issue by stating:

Of all the outrageous attempts of the State Department to finger the strings of Hitler's puppets, the appeasement of Vichy has been the most amazingly unstatesmanlike.

From the earliest days of Vichy, our policy has been at best stupid, at worst pro-Nazi.

We, in contrast, [to the British] are officially unaware of de Gaulle's existence...If we are to retain any respect among the peoples not only of France but of England, we must follow Churchill's lead...and recognize de Gaulle as Commander-in-Chief of the Free French and his Council of Defence of the French Empire as an authority with power to negotiate treaties.²⁴

The State Department remained steadfast throughout this period and continued to resist the pressure that was build-

²² Freda Kirchwey, "The Abasement of Vichy," The Nation, August 2, 1941, pp. 84-85.

²³ The Nation, August 9, 1941, p. 16.

²⁴ Michael Straight, "Vichy: The Failure of Appeasement," The New Republic, August 18, 1941, pp. 214-215.

ing up for the recognition of de Gaulle. Vichy, in the eyes of the State Department officials remained the only legitimate government of France. The State Department's position on this point was further strengthened by a note from Leahy which stated:

"The de Gaulle movement has not the following indicated in the British radio news or in the American press. Frenchmen with whom I can talk, even those completely desirous of a British victory, have little regard for General de Gaulle." 25

In conjunction with the Free French movement underground resistance was building up in occupied France, especially after the invasion of Russia, for then the French Communists, with their many organized cells, could play a full role. In mid-1941 a wave of assassinations broke out in France. In retaliation the Germans began to shoot fifty hostages for every one German killed. There were howls of indignation from the American press but Commonweal took an opposing stand by stating:

We have always been unwilling to ask of the French people that through resistance to German pressure they submit France to total occupation and to the full measure of German oppression. We have been unwilling to join with those, who from a safe distance, encouraged the French people to a revolt which seemed to be as futile as it would be heroic... 26

The Nation's attack on the State Department heightened

²⁵ Leahy, op. cit., p. 43.

²⁶ Commonweal, August 22, 1941, pp. 411-412.

in intensity in September when it was announced that the majority of those being executed by the Germans were Communists. The magazine claimed that:

...if Nazi 'order' is established in France, whether by the German army or by French terrorists (the Vichy police and others) the responsibility for that shameful result will rest in large measure on the shoulders of the American government and on the American people. ²⁷

The article went on to say that the American people must wake up to the dangers inherent in our policy of continuing to recognize Vichy. If the American people do wake up, the article continued:

...the reactionary bureaucrats in the State Department will find themselves removed to posts in the more unimportant regions of the earth and an honorable, energetic, pro-democratic policy will be put into effect.

The article ended by again calling for the immediate recognition of de Gaulle and his movement. The New Masses came back into the picture after three months with remarks on Leahy, the Vichy embassy in Washington and de Gaulle. The magazine rebuked Leahy for attending the proceedings where Pétain, "...formed his Fascistic legion" and criticized the administration for allowing, "...pro-Nazi espionage activities..." to take place at the Vichy embassy in Washington. ²⁸ In another article The New Masses, after

²⁷ Freda Kirchwey, "Which France Are We For ?", The Nation, September 6, 1941, pp. 191-192.

²⁸ The New Masses, September 16, 1941, p. 20.

claiming de Gaulle and his Free French forces were "stooges" and "phantoms" of the British, began to take a more conciliatory attitude toward him by admitting he had many followers but adding, "...where the de Gaulle party sometimes goes to the other extreme in its nationalistic fervor, the Communists espouse a broad internationalism." ²⁹ Later, as we shall see in the next chapter, The New Masses will call for the recognition of de Gaulle and the Free French. Some possible reasons why there was such a turnabout in their position will be discussed when their call for recognition is noted.

Finally, in October, the liberals did win somewhat of a concession when a representative of the Free French was officially received by the State Department. American ties with the Free French were further extended in the following month when the de Gaulle forces were granted the benefits of the "Lend-Lease" act. The President, in a letter to the State Department, said he had extended de Gaulle these benefits because, "...the defence of the territories rallied to Free France was vital for the defence of the U.S." ³⁰ Petain was a little irritated when he heard this news but after calling de Gaulle a traitor and explaining his hatred

²⁹ Ibid., September 9, 1941, pp. 6-8.

³⁰ Charles de Gaulle, War Memoirs, trans. Jonathan Griffin (New York: Viking Press, 1955), 1, 215.

to Leahy the matter was dropped.

November also saw the end of General Weygand as the French High Commissioner in North Africa. The Germans for a year had been pressing Pétain to get rid of Weygand and as he (Pétain) told Leahy they threatened to occupy all of France, to feed the entire army of occupation on French foodstuffs direly needed by the French themselves and eventually to starve the population by this method if Weygand was not removed.³¹ The State Department immediately retaliated by suspending all economic aid to North Africa but since the German offensive had bogged down on the Russian front it was feared their attention might be turned to Africa and the suspension was quietly lifted after only two weeks. Only The Nation took space to comment on the dismissal. They said, "Pétain has thrown away his one face card," and predicted the marshal would be pushed further because he had agreed to the Nazi demands.³² The importance the Germans were supposed to have attached to Weygand was probably exaggerated for Hitler said after his dismissal, "There are so many Weygands in France that any one of them could take over the role of the old retired general to-

³¹ Leahy, op. cit., p. 59.

³² Jal Allen, "Exit Weygand," The Nation, November 29, 1941, pp. 535-536.

morrow." ³³

The fateful month of December, 1941 was to prove one of the most pressing months in the history of this country's foreign relations. After the attack on Pearl Harbor the importance of the French fleet became even more paramount since it was now felt it could more positively tip the scales to which ever side its commanders decided to fight with. The Nation and The New Masses continued their attack and began to call for drastic action on the part of the administration. The Nation, in a full front page editorial, said, "The men in the State Department who engineered the policy of appeasement--are full partners in the guilt of Pearl Harbor." It went on further to say:

The President has not yet convinced himself that the Munich mind operates with fatal effect in the Department of State just as it did in the Foreign Office. He still reposes confidence in men who have lost the confidence of the public. ³⁴

The New Masses said Pearl Harbor had shown clearly that the policy of appeasement was played out and thus the United States should:

...take the initiative, take over the French colonies,

³³ Galeazzo Ciano, Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, edit. Malcolm Muggeridge, trans. Stuart Hood (London: Odhams Press, 1948), p. 462.

³⁴ Freda Kirchwey, "Partners in Guilt," The Nation, December 27, 1941, p. 656.

such as Martinique and the islands off Newfoundland, take over French Guiana, and prepare to move across, via the Azores, to Dakar itself. ³⁵

Commonweal, on the other hand, proposed that the State Department maintain its present position. The writer of this article claimed that those who would throw the present policy, "...are driving the French into Hitler's arms." Further, the article stated, "Doubtless on the day we break with France we will recognize de Gaulle as the head of the French government; certainly that day we will recognize Hitler as the spokesman for Europe." ³⁶

Thus the year drew to a close but not without one last salvo. This time it was the turn of the Free French, for while all eyes were on the west coast in anticipation of a Japanese invasion it came on the eastern shores of St. Pierre and Miquelon where de Gaulle had decide to take matters into his own hands.

³⁵ The New Masses, December 9, 1941, p. 19.

³⁶ C.G. Paulding, "Toward a Policy," Commonweal, December 5, 1941, p. 159.

CHAPTER IV

THE 'SO-CALLED' AFFAIR OF ST. PIERRE-MIQUELON

With liberal criticism building up for the past twelve months and so many crises happening at once December appeared to be the worse month members of the State Department would face for a long time. The final crisis came on Christmas Eve when news reached Washington that St. Pierre and Miquelon Islands had been invaded. The new crisis came from a quarter which until this point seemed hardly worthy of attention. It was directly because of this lack of attention, however, that General de Gaulle decided to send three warships under Admiral Emile Muselier to invade the Vichy held possessions of St. Pierre and Miquelon. These island, which lie just off the eastern coast of Newfoundland, the Free French claimed were sending radio signals and weather information to large German submarine packs that lay in wait throughout the area. De Gualle, writing after the war, said he had decided to provoke the affair, "...in order to stir up the bottom of things, as one throws a stone into a pond." ¹ At the time no one could have done a better job of "stirring up" things.

¹ de Gualle, op. cit., p. 216.

The immediate reaction of the State Department can be seen in a note that was issued to the press as soon as the news reached Washington. The note, which was signed by Secretary of State Hull, read in part:

Our preliminary reports show that the action taken by three so-called Free French ships at St. Pierre-Miquelon was an arbitrary action contrary to the agreement of all parties concerned and certainly without the prior knowledge or consent of the United States Government.

This government has inquired of the Canadian government as to the steps that government is prepared to take to restore the status quo of these islands. ²

This note, and especially its reference to three "...so-called Free French ships...", was to raise a stir among the liberals that has rarely if ever been equalled.

Before investigating the criticism that surrounded this event, however, a brief look at the facts that surrounded the invasion and the aftermath of the invasion is necessary in order to understand the underlying issues that were not always apparent at first glance. In the week previous to the invasion, the State Department had signed an agreement with Admiral Georges Robert, the Vichy representative at Martinique, guaranteeing the status quo of French possessions in the Western Hemisphere. In return the French agreed not to ship back to France over twenty million dollars in

² Robert Bendiner, The Riddle of the State Department (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1942), p.92.

gold that had been deposited on the island when the war broke out or to transfer any military equipment from the French possessions to the homeland. They also agreed not to allow Nazi submarines to land at Martinique. A medical emergency was the only reason they could use for landing and this had to be confirmed by American naval authorities. All of these agreements were known as the Martinique Guarantee. Also, during this week, Admiral Muselier had approached the Canadian government for permission to take over the islands. The Canadians, after listening to his plan refused to allow him to go ahead without the prior approval of the United States. Muselier then paid a visit to Pierrepont Moffat, the American ambassador to Canada, and explained his plan. Moffat vetoed the idea and then Muselier asked permission to go to Washington to plead his case, but was refused a visa.³

During the same period, de Gaulle had assured the British that "...no orders for the operation had been issued and that it would not be carried out by the Free French naval forces."⁴ This note was sent on the seventeenth and the following day de Gaulle sent the following note to

³ Ibid., pp. 92-93.

⁴ Robert L. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, An Intimate History (New York: Harper Company, 1948), p. 482.

Admiral Muselier:

I order you to proceed and rally Saint-Pierre and Miquelon by means at your own disposal and without consulting foreigners. I take the responsibility for this operation which has become indispensable to the preservation for France of her possessions.⁵

Thus it is readily seen that de Gaulle was not being faithful to his friends and allies, the British.

Besides all the afore-mentioned, the State Department also had to keep in mind the obligation the United States had entered into when it signed the Havana Convention in 1940. In part this convention outlawed, "...the use of force to effect the transfer of sovereignty possession, or control of any territory in the Americas held by belligerent nations."⁶ Added to all this, the President had sent a personal message to Marshal Pétain noting Vichy France's proclamation of neutrality after war broke out between the United States and Germany stating:

You may rest assured the Government of the United States under present circumstances and in view of the instructions which you have issued to Admiral Robert will continue to give full recognition to the agreement reached by our two Governments involving the maintenance of the French possessions in the Western Hemisphere.⁷

Under such circumstances the State Department was forced to

⁵ Thompson, op.cit., p. 185.

⁶ Langer, op. cit., p. 185.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 216-217.

denounce the Free French action. The term "so-called" was unfortunate, however, since it was subject to misinterpretation and appeared to convey the meaning that the Free French were misrepresenting themselves.

Roosevelt and Churchill, at the time, were in the midst of the Arcadia Conference in Washington. For Churchill this was his first meeting with the American secretary of state and he was struck by the fact that, "...amid gigantic events, one small incident seemed to dominate his mind."⁸ The President was somewhat amused at first by the incident and called it a "teapot tempest."⁹ Later, however, when the criticism of the State Department reached such an intensity that many of the department's highest officials threatened to resign the President took a different view of the matter. Also, in such critical times Roosevelt could ill afford to have doubt cast upon the actions of the government. For Hull the St. Pierre-Miquelon affair, from the beginning, was, "...one of those footnotes of history that had dangerous possibilities of becoming whole chapters."¹⁰

To heighten the State Department anxiety Admiral Leahy

⁸ Churchill, op. cit., 111, p. 666.

⁹ Sherwood, op. cit., p. 488.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 479.

reported from Vichy that:

Darlan referred to the St. Pierre-Miquelon incident and said that the Germans had already used the seizure of those islands by de Gaulle as an argument for the entry of Axis troops into Africa in order that it may be protected against similiar invasion. ¹¹

The Vichy government, however, in an official communique noted with, "...satisfaction the news that the Federal Government [in Washington] has publicly condemned the initiative taken against its knowledge and sentiment by former Admiral Muselier." ¹²

The Nation was the first of the liberal magazines under study to take the State Department to task for the position it was maintaining. In a front page story it said:

The evidence indicates that the State Department acted on its own, pursuing with imbecile consistency its fixed policy of yielding to Vichy, snubbing the Free French and ignoring the contrary advice of Britain.

It then went of to say that,

"...without the least delay the President should demand the resignation of the officials who on their own say-so betrayed the cause to which this country has been pledged not only by the terms of the Atlantic Charter but in many pronouncements by the President."

Was The Nation implying that the President was unaware of some of the committments the State Department was making ? In one section it called for an inquiry into all the State

¹¹ Langer, op. cit., p. 218.

¹² Sherwood, op. cit., p. 482.

Department's actions in regard to Vichy, especially to see whether its officials had agreed to hold for Vichy the French possessions in the Western Hemisphere. If this were found to be true, the article continued, the President, "...should find out quickly what it implied in terms of action." It warned that, "If the President fails to act, the dictators will have gained one of the decisive victories of the war." ¹³ It is rather odd that the writers of this magazine could think that the President was unaware of what his own officials were doing. Secondly, it is another good example of the lack of knowledge of these magazines about certain events. It is apparent here, for instance, that The Nation knew nothing about the stipulations of the Martinique Guarantee. This, however, was not surprising since the commitment was secret. The Havana Convention, on the other hand, had been published when it was signed. Notice, however, that there is no mention of the justification of the State Department's actions on the basis of the Havana Convention but rather allusions are made only to a possible mutual commitment the Department might have made with Vichy.

In this same issue the editors of The Nation sent a

¹³ Freda Kirchwey, "Mr. Hull Should Resign," The Nation, January 3, 1942. pp. 1-2.

telegram to Admiral Muselier which stated:

You and the Free French forces and the people of St. Pierre and Miquelon have the unqualified support of all patriotic Americans who feel nothing but shame at their government's betrayal of our common cause. Hold fast. Destiny has put the defense of freedom in your hands and you cannot afford to yield or compromise.

The Admiral, in reply, said:

The Admiral-in-Chief commanding the Free French naval forces, the marine volunteers, the immense majority of the population of St. Pierre and Miquelon thank you with all their hearts for your telegram. I knew it was not possible that the noble American nation would not be wholeheartedly with us in the cause of Liberty and in the sacred right of peoples to self-determination. What ever happens we will hold on until the end. For all democracies of the world St. Pierre, like your Statue of Liberty, is a symbol. ¹⁴

Another article in the same issue of The Nation expressed its dissatisfaction by saying that Hull's "so-called" statement was, "...a stupidity that calls for his removal." This article went on further to say:

The State Department could not have chosen a better way to undermine the confidence of oppressed peoples everywhere than by its slur, and I think some way should be found to let the world know in decisive fashion that the undemocratic little clique of decayed pseudo-aristocrats and backsliding liberals who dominate the State Department do not speak for the American people. ¹⁵

This writer also made the mistake of claiming both the

¹⁴ The Nation, January 3, 1942, p. 2.

¹⁵ I.F. Stone, "Aid and Comfort to the Enemy," The Nation, January 3, 1942, pp. 6-7.

British and the Canadian governments had knowledge of and had consented to the operation. A writer for The New Republic made the same mistake. He condemned the secretary's statement and said: "The truth about the State Department is not that its motives are evil but that some of its personnel are ignorant." ¹⁶ The New Masses was satisfied simply to ask for a clarification of the whole Vichy policy in the light of the many contradictions inherent in our attitude toward the Vichy regime on the one hand and our relations with the Free French on the other. The writers for this magazine were extremely cogent in their presentation of the case and knowledge of the facts. The big question for The New Masses was whether, "...the policy toward Vichy may not actually contradict our basic anti-Axis strategy..." ¹⁷ Commonweal, for the first time not openly and completely agreeing with the State Department, noted its surprise and shock at the State Department note but added, "...whether purposely or not, the action taken by the Free French at St. Pierre and Miquelon seriously interfered with our recent negotiations with the French government. It is obvious that we cannot accept such interference, if the essence of

¹⁶ The New Republic, January 3, 1942, p. 3.

¹⁷ The New Masses, January 6, 1942, p. 18.

any policy be coherence." 18

In the first week of January the officials of the State Department and the President became extremely irritated at Admiral Muselier's insistence that he be allowed to remain on the islands. To substantiate his claim that he was there through the hospitality of the people, and by their choice, a plebiscite was held among the island population. The results of the plebiscite showed over ninety-eight percent of the people favored the Free French. Vichy spokesmen, however, claimed the people were coerced and all Free French opponents jailed. The next move on the part of the United States was a threat either to force the Free French out of the islands or to starve them out. The President agreed to all of these proposals, even suggesting the latter one. 19 Department officials also claimed during this period that the Hull statement was not aimed as an insult at the Free French but had been so worded because the invasion report had not been confirmed at the time the statement was issued. Hull himself, however, further confused the issue by stating that the term "so-called" referred not to the Free French but to the ships. 20 This statement led one writer to

18 Commonweal, January 9, 1942, p. 284.

19 Sherwood, op. cit., pp. 488-489.

20 The New Masses, July 25, 1942, p. 69.

comment, "Unless it turns out that the Admiral [sic] and his crew approached the islands on surf boards, this quaint explanation will save very little face; and that is as it should be." ²¹ In the meantime Hull and other department officials in trying to build up their case made reference to the Havana Convention, however they omitted any mention of the clause which outlawed the taking over of any territory in the Western Hemisphere by force. In its place department officials had substituted another clause which stipulated that "no non-American state should be permitted to attempt directly or indirectly, to replace another non-American state in the sovereignty...which it exercised over any territory located in the Americas." When this note was published, The Nation, sustaining its attack, replied:

The absurdity of classifying the Free French coup, even if it had not been endorsed by the almost unanimous vote of the population, as a change of sovereignty is obvious to any but a State Department mind. ²²

The New Republic, now completely anti-State Department, claimed the use of the Havana Convention to maintain Vichy's sovereignty, "...implies that the United States is playing Hitler's game." ²³ This was an extremely harsh

²¹ The Nation, January 17, 1942, pp. 50-51.

²² Ibid., January 10, 1942, p. 22.

²³ The New Republic, January 12, 1942, p. 37.

statement for the period if one remembers that the United States had just gone to war with Germany only a few weeks before. The Nation's next comment continued this same line of thought when it asked, "Are we against Hitler and his puppets or are we against the people who are fighting him?"²⁴ At this point The Nation also claimed, "The Communist Party is backing the action of the State Department in rebuffing the de Gaullists on the seizure of St. Pierre and Miquelon."²⁵

The New Masses, which followed the Communist Party line very closely, took many different stands on de Gaulle. Before the German invasion of Russia, it will be remembered, The New Masses called the Free French movement a "stooge" committee and a "phantom" of the British. After the invasion, and the expulsion of the Russian ambassador from Vichy for espionage, The New Masses took a more conciliatory attitude toward the Free French movement. But it must be remembered that de Gaulle and his movement always represented a threat to the plans the Communists had for France in the future. During the war the Communists were the strongest group within the underground movement in France

²⁴ Freda Kirchwey, "Free and So-Called Free," The Nation, January 24, 1942, pp. 82-83.

²⁵ The Nation, January 17, 1942, p. 65.

and controlled most of the active groups that were not directly affiliated with them. This strength they hoped to maintain after the war and to help de Gaulle was to undermine themselves. Nevertheless, from June 1941 to June 1942, when things were going badly on the Russian front, any enemy of the Nazis was a friend of the Russians. This might be the reason why The New Masses was soft pedalling de Gaulle at the moment. On the St. Pierre-Miquelon Islands affair this magazine did not support the Free French but neither did it oppose them. It did, however, continue to criticize the State Department for its relations with Vichy.

In what obviously looked like an attempt to save face, the State Department finally ruled on February 13 that the Havana Convention did not apply in the case of St. Pierre-Miquelon. The true point of the matter, however, was that no country, not even the United States, had officially invoked the Convention. This announcement did, however, invoke some comment from The New Masses and it will suffice to show how one of the magazines felt just before the issue was finally settled. The New Masses, in a long article, asked:

What is State Department policy toward the Free French occupation of the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon? Nobody knows, not even those supposed to be directing it...This game of now-you-see-it-now-you-don't is only one more evidence of the utter bankruptcy of the appeasement policy with which the State Department career boys have been trying to buy themselves into

the affections of the old men of Vichy. ²⁶

The issue was finally settled in March when Admiral Muselier was recalled under pressure from both Great Britain and the United States. Before long he was engaged in a long and bitter quarrel with de Gaulle and in the end he resigned his position as the highest ranking Free French naval officer. After Muselier left, the islands were taken under joint supervision by the United States and Canada for the remainder of the war. Thus ended the comic opera incident of the St. Pierre-Miquelon Islands affair but not before it had nearly done damage to the Anglo-American Alliance and to relations with the United States administration. De Gaulle, by this move, only increased the mistrust of him and his movement held by the State Department. The British also began to take a more cautious view of him. To some American liberals de Gaulle was the darling of the freedom movement but to others, if he did not sit next to the right hand of the devil he was close to it.

²⁶ The New Masses, February 24, 1942, p. 11.

CHAPTER V

THE ROAD IS CHOSEN

January-November, 1942

While the St. Pierre-Miquelon incident was at its height there were many other developments going on to plague the American Secretary of State. The accumulation of so much strife in such a short length of time prompted Hull to consider resigning. In his memoirs he states, "I so seriously considered resigning that I pencilled out a note to the President tendering my resignation."¹ The liberals, writing in the magazines under study, that had called for this resignation had no idea how close they came to realizing their hopes. Hull stayed on however, and weathered the storm. Nineteen forty-two was not, however, to prove to be a calm and serene year by any means. It had been ushered in under a storm of criticism and was to end in just the same fashion.

The Nation aside from its articles on St. Pierre-Miquelon in January reviewed the entire Vichy policy. It concluded that the United States had gained absolutely nothing from this policy and had lost much. The Nation claimed:

¹ Welles, op. cit., p. 64.

This record of the State Department policy toward Vichy indicates that our diplomats have become so involved in what they no doubt consider a policy of the greatest cleverness that they have lost sight of basic principles. It might be worthwhile to hang in every office of the State Department a sign reading: "De Gaulle is fighting against the Axis. Pétain is a prisoner of the Axis. Nothing the United States can do will alter these two facts."²

The Nation, even though its writers were concentrating on the St. Pierre-Miquelon incident, continued to pound away at the whole Vichy policy never letting up from its original denunciation. Commonweal also continued to be the only magazine that consistently advocated that we maintain the Vichy policy and all that it implied. In January, Commonweal praised Leahy and said, "He stands in the gateway of Europe with his foot there to keep the door from closing.."³

In February the French battleship Dunkerque sailed quietly off to Toulon from its North African base in defiance of a promise given to Leahy ten months earlier. In this same month a German submarine stopped at Martinique to disembark a sick sailor and left before United States authorities could investigate. There were also reports of continued use of French transport facilities in North

² Waverly L. Root, "Vichy Bait for Washington," The Nation, January 17, 1942, pp. 56-58.

³ C.G. Paulding, "Our Embassy in Vichy," Commonweal, January 16, 1942, p. 309.

Africa by the Germans. These events rankled official Washington to such a degree that it was decided to take a decisive stand with Vichy. Leahy at this point was so disgusted with the constant bickering going on with the French that he requested to be recalled. No one, Leahy felt, believed the United States would ever take any positive action. The time had therefore come when the United States must show that it was not bluffing. The President was of another mind, however, and decided to give the French one more chance. In a note to Pétain on February 11 he stated:

There can be no justification under the terms of the armistice for the shipment of war materials or other direct aid to the Axis powers, and without official assurances from the Vichy Government that no military aid will go forward to the Axis in any theater of war and that French ships will not be used in the furtherance of their aggression, Admiral Leahy will be instructed to return immediately to the United States for consultation as to our future policy. ⁴

No magazine made any comment on these events until the following month after Pétain had once more agreed to adhere to the terms of the armistice and make sure no assistance was given to the Axis. The Nation was again the first to note the new Vichy assurances and pledges by claiming the State Department had set a "new high in incredulity" in accepting them. ⁵ The New Masses claimed that, "Of all the

⁴ Langer, op. cit., pp. 235-236.

⁵ The Nation, April 4, 1942, p. 382.

preposterous ignominies in the history of umbrella diplomacy, this takes the cake." Later in the article the writer called the Vichy policy a "riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma."⁶ It should be noted at this point that the American government repeatedly was being forced to ask assurances from Vichy and that every time Pétain obligingly pledged that the assurances would be met. After a while, however, repeated guarantees that are not fulfilled wear thin. Thus the liberals seem justified in feeling a sense of disgust that the State Department would continue to be duped by these seemingly false promises. The State Department, however, had also reached that point and only needed one small incident to recall its ambassador. This incident finally occurred in April when Laval was brought back into the government replacing Darlan as Pétain's right hand man.

Before this happened, however, the United States established a consulate at Brazzaville in Free French North Africa and The New Masses threw its entire support behind de Gaulle and his movement. In the article in which The New Masses finally supported de Gaulle there was no explanation of why the magazine had decided to take this position. This was the custom for this magazine since, as has been

⁶ Joseph Starubin, "Whitewashing Vichy," The New Masses, April 7, 1942, p. 13.

noted, it often contradicted a previous stand without explaining why. On this occasion the magazine simply said:

As things stand today, our policy still contradicts that of Britain and the Soviet Union. How long will it take the State Department to remember that the people of France are fighting Hitler and that the least we can do for them is to recognize de Gaulle ? ⁷

Also during February The Nation began to question where Roosevelt himself stood on appeasement. The magazine answered its own question by stating that official Washington was divided into three groups on the question of appeasement. The first group, the article states, is made up of people friendly to Fascism, "particularly of the Catholic variety, who would give Spain and Vichy anything they want." The second is made up of those who are opposed and in the middle "are those who think it necessary to dole out limited quantities of supplies to Vichy and Franco to keep them from joining the Axis." The President, the magazine said, belongs to this immediate group. ⁸ This statement was unique for up until this time the magazine had hinted that the President was not aware of much that was going on in his own government. This statement seems to imply that indirectly the President was responsible for the Vichy policy. Notice, however, that The Nation never comes out

⁷ The New Masses, February 3, 1942, p. 19.

⁸ The Nation, February 28, 1942, p. 247.

into the open directly accuses Roosevelt of being responsible for what was going on in the State Department.

The Vichy policy reached another of its major crises in mid-April when the Germans decided to test their diplomatic strength against the United States. As the Germans saw it the only reason Laval was being excluded from the Vichy government was the insistence by Washington that his inclusion would mean the recall of the American ambassador. The Germans decided to test this theory by painting a grim picture of future Franco-German relations unless Laval was immediately brought back into the government. The Germans won on April 15 when Marshal Pétain reinstated Laval with the title of Chief of the Government which gave him the power to issue decrees on his own signature alone. State Department officials were horrified at this action and immediately sent instructions to Leahy to return to Washington for consultations. Laval, it will be remembered, represented to the State Department that group in France which looked for closer collaboration with the Germans. Laval, for instance, upon the entry of the United States into the war stated that he felt the United States had committed a serious error in entering the war. As he saw it if Great Britain and Russia were victorious over Germany then, "Bolshevism in Europe would follow inevitably." Under such circumstances he said he would prefer to see Germany win the

war.⁹ Immediately after taking office in April he said in another statement, "We are placed before this alternative: Either become a part of the new Europe or resign ourselves to disappearing from the civilized world."¹⁰ Even though one of these statements may seem prophetic today, to the State Department officials of the time they represented the mouthings of a man who would stoop to anything, even to collaborating with the enemy, to gain his own ends. The State Department's case was emphatically put by Under Secretary of State Welles when he said in reference to Laval and his group:

...that handful of Frenchmen who, in contempt for the tradition of liberty and individual freedom which has made France great, have sordidly and abjectly, under the guise of 'collaboration' attempted to prostitute their country to that very regime which is bent upon nothing less than the permanent enslavement of France.¹¹

State Department officials knew that Laval was considered by the Germans to be the only man in France capable of bringing the French over to full collaboration. Proof that they were right was found after the war in one of Goebbel's diaries when, in commenting on the Laval reinstatement, he said it, (the reinstatement), "is a tremendous advantage for

⁹ Langer, op. cit., p. 250.

¹⁰ Bendiner, op. cit., p. 97.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 98.

us, and for that reason it is causing alarm in London and in Washington." ¹²

The Nation reacted immediately to the news and claimed that:

The change at Vichy, indicating as it does complete subservience to Berlin, represents a serious diplomatic defeat for the State Department. The effects of which can only be offset by a complete reversal of its appeasement policy. ¹³

In another article it said:

It is good that the United States government is being forced at last to abandon the pretense that it, not Hitler, was handling the strings attached to the puppet. It is good that our attempt to persuade the French people of our friendship while we snubbed their leaders, and bribed and cozened sic their betrayers has at last collapsed: the end of equivocation is at last in sight. ¹⁴

In still a third article this magazine recommended that we pull out of France entirely, diplomatically, and to recognize de Gaulle. The writer felt that any future relations with Vichy, even though our ambassador was to be recalled, would require working with Laval and this would brand America as a helpmate in any future collaboration with the

¹² Joseph Goebbels, The Goebbels Diaries, 1942-1943, edit. and trans. Louis P. Lochner, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1948), p. 129.

¹³ The Nation, April 18, 1942, p. 445.

¹⁴ Freda Kirchwey, "Laval Takes Over," The Nation April 25, 1942, pp. 477-478.

Germans.¹⁵ The New Republic also described the Laval reinstatement as a diplomatic defeat for the State Department and claimed,

"...we played at diplomacy with Vichy and aided it month by month to brew the poison of collaboration in the despair of a defeated people."¹⁶ The New Masses, after saying, "and so the State Department policy of playing ball with Marshal Pétain comes to its ignoble denouement as we always said it would," called for a break in relations and immediate recognition of the Free French.¹⁷

Commonweal, as usual, disagreed with these three magazines and took a peculiar stand on the Laval issue. In the first part of the article the magazine stated, "Laval has returned to power and we do not judge his intentions. Not improbably he is moved by a desire to serve his country." Later in the article, however, the writer states that he is against Laval because German pressure brought him back into power. The German pressure to bring Laval back, the article ends, came, "...not from a failure of American policy--our presence in Vichy--but from the relative success

¹⁵ Louis Fischer, "Laval and Roosevelt," The Nation, April 25, 1942, pp. 486-487.

¹⁶ The New Republic, May 4, 1942, p. 602.

¹⁷ The New Masses, April 28, 1942, p. 19.

of that policy and from an intense desire to bring it to an end." ¹⁸ In June Commonweal clarified its position by stating:

We based our position on a primary necessity of maintaining contact with the people of France, and through them with all the peoples now subject to German rule in Europe, and we intended through this contact to uphold their hopes of liberation. ¹⁹

The plea in this article was to keep relations open even though Leahy had been recalled.

In this same month of June Laval publicly stated, "I foresee a German victory" and went on to add that the allied cause was lost. ²⁰ With this statement Laval lost all chance of finding any further sympathy, if ever there had been any, within the State Department and certain liberal circles. Now the majority of the liberal journals were to concentrate on gaining complete recognition for de Gaulle and to discrediting the previous State Department relations with Vichy and the simple ties that remained. Again, The Nation led the attack by an early article which stated in part:

Laval openly expresses a hope for a German victory, nevertheless, we are resuming supplies to North Africa, we continue official relations with a govern-

¹⁸ Commonweal, April 24, 1942, p. 4.

¹⁹ Ibid., June 17, 1942, p. 197.

²⁰ Thompson, op. cit., p. 79.

ment headed by a man whom our secretary of state acknowledges to be a German puppet, and our cold shoulder is still turned toward the Free French who are fighting and dying on our side. Is there some method in this madness? We fail to see it unless there is lurking within the State Department the same fear that Laval expressed in one of his speeches --the fear that a German defeat will mean a Europe overrun by Bolshevism. ²¹

Later the same magazine said, concerning the Vichy policy, "The whole relationship has been a fraud, somewhat perverse, totally impotent." ²² The New Republic, continuing to fight strongly for Free French recognition, claimed, "The Free French are getting the rawest deal of any group associated with the United Nations in this war." Furthermore, the article stated the State Department had given the Free French, "One of the dirtiest deals in the whole cynical history of secret diplomacy." ²³ At the end of July efforts were again somewhat rewarded, however, when the United States recognized de Gaulle as the leader of the Free French. But this recognition did not mean that he represented the sovereign government of France.

It was rather easy to say de Gaulle represented the true feeling of the French people and that the United States

²¹ The Nation, July 4, 1942, p. 1.

²² Freda Kirchwey, "Toward a Break With Vichy," The Nation, July 25, 1942, p. 65.

²³ Varian Fry, "Justice for the Free French," The New Republic, June 8, 1942, pp. 785-787.

should recognize him as an ally. But there was no way of testing the French public opinion to find out if this was true and many officials in the State Department doubted it. From all indications coming from United States representatives abroad agreement was unanimous that de Gaulle did not represent the true feeling and sentiments of the French. Thus in the eyes of the State Department de Gaulle represented a group that had no mandate from the French people. Plus this, he had no definite political program and was proving difficult to work with in building up a resistance program even outside of France. ²⁴

In August Admiral Leahy was chosen by the President to assume the duties of Chief of Staff and immediately his competency was questioned in view of what he had accomplished at Vichy. The President's own estimation of Leahy and what he had accomplished at Vichy was expressed in a letter to the Admiral in early April when he had said, "On the whole, I think our rather steady pressure has been successful to date." ²⁵ The Christian Century, after many months of silence on the issue, agreed with the President and said, "Admiral Leahy is an extremely competent man in whom the

²⁴ Langer, op. cit., p. 257.

²⁵ Welles, op. cit., p. 59.

President has great and well grounded trust." ²⁶ The Nation claimed he was, "...a man who supported Pétain and even after the accession to power of Laval argued against a break with Vichy." ²⁷ Commonweal came immediately to his defence and in a long article took both The Nation and The New Republic to task for their continued fight against the State Department and its Vichy policy. The article began as an open letter to the French asking them to wait for the coming invasion and "...to give no inner and irremediable consent to an order we intend to destroy." The article then continued by saying that this:

...is a language unknown to the editorial writers of The Nation and The New Republic...These people want French civilians to open the second front, violence in the Paris streets, a French revolution while we are still in no position to give the revolutionaries any effective support--they think the war will be won through their arguments with our State Department. They attack Admiral Leahy, and they have not even the courage to admit that they are attacking the man who sent him to France and who now has placed him in a position of high trust. ²⁸

The Nation immediately retaliated but took a rather odd stand on Roosevelt. The article was a complete reversal of the position the magazine usually adopted in that now

²⁶ The Christian Century, August 5, 1942, p. 997.

²⁷ The Nation, August 1, 1942, p. 84.

²⁸ C.G. Paulding, "Paris," Commonweal, August 14, 1942, p. 389.

for the first time the blame for any mistake in foreign policy was laid at the President's door. The article in taking this position stated:

It is true that the President bears a particular responsibility for the Spanish embargo and for the mis-carried policy toward Vichy; it is true that in the last analysis he is responsible for the sum total of American foreign policy, with all its mistakes of omission and commission. Yet it remains clear beyond a doubt that his lapses into appeasement have been by way of surrender rather than through choice. ²⁹

Both The Nation and Commonweal continued this battle of words for the next month. The main contention that Commonweal tried to make was that if the Pétain group were to go and the United States broke off relations then a rabid Nazi such as Doriot and Deat would take over and this would mean war with France. ³⁰ The Nation, on the other hand, claimed that to support both Vichy and de Gaulle at the same time was contradictory and thus the aid that was being rendered was uneffective since both factions opposed each other. ³¹ At this point it seems that both these positions are right and that the controversy is unsolvable. But one should notice that the State Department recognized this contradic-

²⁹ Robert Bendiner, "Who is the State Department," The Nation, August 15, 1942, p. 126.

³⁰ C.G. Paulding, "Speaking Practically," Commonweal, September 11, 1942, p. 485.

³¹ Freda Kirchwey, "Hapsburg Hopes," The Nation, October 24, 1942, p. 401.

tion and that their position in the middle left the department with the option of choice when the moment was most opportune.

In the next two months there was to be much switching of positions by the liberals. In October The Christian Century, which until now had said nothing about de Gaulle, half-heartedly opposed him as a future French leader in an article that said:

General de Gaulle's importance as a symbol of French resistance to Nazi tyranny is generally admitted. But grave questions arise as soon as it is proposed to commit postwar France to his leadership. Here, apparently, is another of the taxing problems which will confront the United Nations when the time for peace-making comes. ³²

The New Republic, then surprisingly, on November 2 published a statement that said, "We do not belong with those who feel that there are no strategic reasons for appeasing Vichy. Undoubtedly the secret files of the State Department contain many such reasons..." Later in the same article the magazine further stated, "Many Americans are beginning to ask when we will gather the fruits of our long continued devious policy toward Vichy." ³³ Americans were not to have to wait much longer for these fruits for at the moment some of them were reading the words quoted above troop ships

³² The Christian Century, October 7, 1942, p. 1205.

³³ The New Republic, November 2, 1942, p. 564.

were heading toward North Africa in Operation "Torch."

CHAPTER VI

THE POLICY ENDS

November-December, 1942

On November 8, 1942 American forces landed in North Africa and the Vichy policy came to an end when Marshal Pétain broke off diplomatic relations with the United States. Before the landing, however, there were many plans initiated that were to have a bearing on the policy and its immediate aftereffects. In September, for instance, Roosevelt decided to find a French leader to administer the conquered area until the war ended. General Giraud was the man finally chosen since it was felt he was outside both the Vichy and the de Gaulle camps having been in a German prison until his escape the previous April. Both General de Gaulle and General Giraud had been discussed. In comparing these two men Roosevelt once said:

General Giraud is the type of French military man who loves his country and is not in any way a politician, but a good soldier. General de Gaulle is a good soldier, patriotic yes, devoted to his country, but on the other hand, he is a politician and a fanatic and there are, I think, in him almost the makings of a dictator. ¹

¹ Eleanor Roosevelt, This I Remember (New York: Harper, 1949) p. 281.

Meanwhile, since April of 1941 Robert Murphy and his aides had been quietly doing their job of administering the North African aid program and spying for the United States. Many contacts with underground leaders had been made in this time and just two weeks before the invasion General Mark Clark secretly landed in North Africa to meet with these leaders and lay the final plans for the invasion. Since it was an American operation all final decisions were made by the President. Roosevelt decided to exclude the Free French from the operation for several reasons. In the first place, in two previous operations into Vichy territory, at Dakar and in Syria, de Gaullists forces had met fierce resistance from French opponents. It was thus decided on this one point alone that to include them in this particular operation would be tantamount to precipitating a civil war in the area. Secondly, it was known that his organization was well infiltrated by Vichy and German spies and thus might be a source of leakage if the Free French were included in the planning. Also, because of de Gaulle's actions at St. Pierre-Miquelon and in Syria with the British, it was felt that he could not be trusted. In a letter to Churchill, in which he advised the Prime Minister of his decision, Roosevelt said, "I consider it essential that de Gaulle be kept out of the picture and be permitted to have no information whatever, regardless of how irritated or irritating

he may become." ² General de Gaulle was not informed of the operation until troops were actually pouring ashore and the reader can well imagine his reaction.

Just before the invasion President Roosevelt had sent a personal message to Marshal Pétain via the American chargé d'affaires at Vichy to be delivered only after the operation had begun. The message read in part, "My clear purpose is to support and aid the French authorities and their administration...I need not tell you that the ultimate and greater aim is the liberation of France and its Empire from the Axis yoke." When the message was delivered the marshal immediately penned a reply that was very uncooperative and said, "You knew that we would defend the Empire against any aggressor...You knew that I would keep my word. We have been attacked, and we shall defend ourselves. That is the order I am issuing." But as he handed this reply to Pinckney Tuck, the American chargé d'affaires, it is said that he gave him a knowing tap on the shoulder as if to say, "This is only for the record." ³ Nevertheless, the Vichy forces in North Africa did resist the American landing and to the surprise of General Eisenhower, who had charge of the operation, the French leaders in the area

² Langer, op. cit., p. 290.

³ Ibid., op. cit., p. 349.

would have nothing to do with General Giraud. But there was an even greater surprise in store for the Americans for Admiral Darlan had, at this most inopportune of times, decided to come to Algiers to visit his ailing son.

Darlan was immediately captured and ordered, since he was the French Supreme Military Commander, to give the order to cease fire. This he refused to do until he had contacted Pétain. Less than an hour after Pétain sent the above message to Roosevelt he was answering Darlan's request for orders by saying, "I have received your message through the Admiralty and am glad you are on the spot. Take what action you like and keep me informed. You know that you have my complete confidence."⁴ This, it would seem, left the way open for Darlan to negotiate with the Americans but he hesitated wanting to make sure that they had landed in such strength as to be able to control the situation and to stabilize it. He maintained this attitude of aloofness for three days and when finally faced with the possibility of being made a prisoner of war he decided to negotiate. Before the negotiations began Darlan ordered all French forces in North Africa to desist in resisting the Americans. The outcome of the talks was that Darlan was placed in charge of civil functions of the local government

⁴ Aron, op. cit., p. 506.

and General Giraud was put in command of all the French military forces.⁵

Meanwhile, in Washington on the day of the landings Secretary Hull had summoned press correspondents to the State Department for one of the most ill-advised conferences of the war. Hull took this opportunity to settle accounts with those who had criticized the government's past policy toward Vichy. He interpreted recent events in the light of what had gone on before in an attempt to justify his previous actions. He said there had been five purposes to the Vichy policy. First it was an opportunity for the government to receive highly important information from inside German-controlled territory. Secondly, the maintenance of close relations with the French encouraged them to oppose Hitlerism. Third, it kept alive the basic French concepts of freedom, looking toward the restoration of "free institutions for France as they existed before the German occupation." Fourth, the personal contact with Vichy helped them to resist German demands for an enlargement of the armistice, looking ultimately toward full collaboration and the surrender of the French fleet. Finally, and this Hull claimed was the most important, was that it paved the way for the invasion that was then taking place.⁵ But as we shall see his

⁵ Langer, op. cit., pp. 366-367.

gloating was premature for the worse criticism of the Vichy policy was yet to come. Yet, there was to be one benefit in that some of the liberals accepted his argument and this tended to split the most ardent of the liberal camp.

Immediately the liberal magazines picked up the bait and began to swing their critical pens. The New Republic, taking the lead away from The Nation for the first time, was the first to comment. The article began by saying that to point to the North African invasion as proof of the wisdom of the Vichy policy was "to prejudge the outcome." Further it said, "If the Vichy regime exerts only a formal amount of force to save its face, the State Department policy may have been partly justified."⁶ In the same issue another writer commented further:

On the other hand, it is certain that the policy frittered away much good will on the part of the anti-Fascist French, and raised doubts all over the world about our war aims...History may throw more light on the wisdom of our policy. But there is no assurance that the State Department was right.⁷

Later, however, The New Republic in a long article condemned the secretary of State for his statements. The article stated in part:

The State Department seems unduly concerned with fighting an internal war against its critics. So anxious

⁶ The New Republic, November 16, 1942, p. 623.

⁷ The New Republic, November 16, 1942, p. 624.

has Secretary Hull been to prove the rightness of his past appeasement policy that he has allowed himself to issue a statement revealing the most unabashed Machiavellianisms and has hereby played directly into the hands of Axis propagandists.⁸

The New Masses, in its turn, concerned the secretary and predicted that no one would take Mr. Hull's statement seriously. This writer claimed the policy had done the opposite of what Hull claimed were its achievements. The article said in reality the policy had helped, "...confuse, discourage and demobilize the French people and enabled him [Hitler] to maintain valuable espionage centers on American soil in the Vichy embassy and consulates."⁹

It was rather odd that on this particular issue The Nation waited two weeks before saying anything on the subject. In the first article the writer bluntly stated:

General Eisenhower's forces have rescued North Africa from the Axis and the State Department from some of its severest critics. The chances are excellent that North Africa will stay rescued, but I am not sure about the State Department.

In this article the writer claimed General Clark had paved the way for the invasion and not Murphy and his aides. this is obviously untrue.¹⁰

⁸ Ibid., November 23, 1942, p. 659.

⁹ The New Masses, November 24, 1942, p. 3.

¹⁰ Robert Bendiner, "Was Hull Right About Vichy," The Nation, November 21, 1942, pp. 532-534.

The first criticism was mild compared to what was to come when the announcement was made that Admiral Darlan had been taken into the American camp. Though the Vichy policy was officially over the magazine took the position that Darlan was still tied up with it and that in reality the policy had not been ended at all. Every magazine but Commonweal had some comment to make on the Darlan appointment. The Nation simply said, "Prostitutes are used; they are seldom loved. Even less frequently are they honored." ¹¹ The Christian Century asked, "If this is what is to happen after American troops 'liberate' territory from the Nazi menace, then in the name of the Four Freedoms what are we fighting for?" ¹² The New Masses said there is every reason to use Darlan if he would help our cause but it warned:

...Let us make certain that we do not permit this discredited politician to use us in order to resurrect a new Vichy, obstruct the preparations for opening a second front in Europe, and short-circuit the activity of the French people at the very moment that they are springing to join us in the great struggle against Hitlerism. ¹³

The New Republic did not object to receiving the surrender of such persons as Darlan, "when it will save lives and

¹¹ Freda Kirchwey, "America's First Quisling," The Nation, November 21, 1942, p. 529.

¹² The Christian Century, November 25, 1942, pp. 1448-1450.

¹³ The New Masses, November 24, 1942, p. 3.

time." But, the article went on, "...to strike a military bargain with them is different from welding a political partnership with them." ¹⁴

Public opinion grew extremely indignant both to Great Britain and the United States against what most people considered a stupid mistake on the part of the State Department. But, oddly enough, on this particular occasion the State Department was entirely innocent since it was the military, that is General Eisenhower, who decided to include Darlan in the government of North Africa. Finally, criticism grew to such a height that President Roosevelt was forced to make some statement on the matter. On November 17 the President said:

I have accepted General Eisenhower's political arrangements made for the time being in Northern and Western Africa. I thoroughly understand and approve the feeling in the United States and in Great Britain and among all the other United Nations that in view of the history of the past two years no permanent arrangement should be made with Admiral Darlan...The present temporary arrangement in North and West Africa is only a temporary expedient, justified solely by the stress of battle. ¹⁵

But if the President, or anyone else, thought this explanation would act as a brake on the liberal criticism they were sorely mistaken. The New Republic questioned the

¹⁴ The New Republic, November 23, 1942, p. 3.

¹⁵ Langer, op. cit., p. 327.

President's statement by saying:

The attack on North Africa does not suddenly make every previous action of our government perfect, as some official and unofficial press agents in Washington would like to pretend. Some of the earlier criticism, even of the State Department's famous policy of appeasing Vichy, still stands, and as to other parts, the best you can say is that it is too early to tell whether our official attitude was expedient or not. ¹⁶

In another issue this magazine said North Africa should not be governed by Darlan or anyone that the United States had chosen but rather by a civil and military group chosen by all the United Nations. ¹⁷ In still another issue The New Republic continued with, "...the North African blow was to have freed the French spirit but it has, by our acceptance of Darlan's aid on his own terms, actually depressed and confused it..." This article went on to say that those waiting to be liberated in Europe will now question whether the Americans would accept "quislings" wherever they landed? ¹⁸ The Nation, in its turn, stated:

What doubtless appeared a reasonable military expedient is proving a costly political blunder, and various government spokesman in Washington are trying to mitigate the effect of the transaction by explaining that it is only a temporary deal at worse, due to be abandoned as soon as its immediate purposes have

¹⁶ The New Republic, November 30, 1942, p. 713.

¹⁷ Ibid., December 28, 1942, p. 840

¹⁸ Ibid., December 7, 1942, p. 729.

been secured. ¹⁹

The New Masses throughout December grew increasingly irritated at the deal made with Darlan. On the 8th it said, "The continuance of any arrangement with Darlan, let alone a further strengthening of his position, must be questioned." ²⁰ On the 15th its writers coined a new word, "Darlanism," and said it is a "secret weapon forged to block offensive operations into Europe, to dismember the allied coalition, to set the stage for a new batch of criminals to replace the old." ²¹ And finally on the 29th it stated:

'Darlanism' is a kind of pathological politics to be cured not by cleansing but by surgery. The alternative is to run the risk of a plague whose ravages are without limit. ²²

Meanwhile southern France had been occupied by the Germans and on November 27 the main portion of the French fleet gathered at Toulon was scuttled. Commenting on the latter incident The Nation said:

...sunk beneath the waters of Toulon Harbor, along with the French navy, is a myth that bedeviled our foreign policy for more than two years--the myth that it was necessary for the United States to play ball

¹⁹ Kirchwey, op. cit., "Quisling," The Nation, November 21, 1942, p. 529.

²⁰ "How Long is Temporary?", The New Masses, December 8, 1942, p. 21.

²¹ The New Masses, December 15, 1942, p. 21.

²² Ibid., December 29, 1942, p. 4.

with Vichy in order to keep the French fleet out of Hitler's hands. ²³

Within the liberal camp there were things happening also, for dissension had struck their ranks. The new position taken by many liberals was that maybe the State Department had been right. Others felt the department should not be completely condemned until all the facts were known. A good example of this dissension can be found in the December 14 issue of The New Republic, where in one article a writer states:

...it ought to be admitted that the official treatment of Vichy could have been due, not to secret sympathy with Fascists or lack of aggressiveness, but to a belief that this was the best way to serve our military requirements pending the time when an offensive could be undertaken...We can argue about the wisdom of the course adopted from now until doomsday without settling it, but it must be admitted that we still do not have all the facts accessible to the State Department, and that we are not justified in questioning the motives of all those responsible. ²⁴

In another article in the same issue a writer blandly stated, "Looking back over the past ten years, we can see that the liberals, ill informed or not, were right in practically every instance and the State Department was wrong." ²⁵

Even The Nation, which had been the bulwark of the

²³ The Nation, December 5, 1942, p. 604.

²⁴ George Soule, "Liberals and the State Department," The New Republic, December 14, 1942, p. 788.

²⁵ The New Republic, December 14, 1942, p. 780.

Vichy policy opponents, found itself under attack from within and without. In two separate issues full pages of letters disagreeing with its current stand were printed. But The Nation would not give up its position but instead condemned those who would criticize. In a long article that went into all aspects of the problem, including the Darlan controversy, the writer ended by saying:

The opposition expressed by The Nation to Darlan's appointment as military and civil chief in North Africa was received with total disapproval by many liberals...The mass surrender of the liberals in this country, their determination to believe that military expediency and political wisdom are identical, their rush to follow the leader wherever he may be heading-- these phenomenon are ill omens for the future of democracy. ²⁶

Another writer for The New Republic also took somewhat the same stand when he wrote:

Many liberals have failed to grasp the larger issue involved in this criticism and have bent over eagerly to take their dozen strokes of punishment. A number of outstanding liberals, concerned with the integrity of their movement, still insist that it is in our best interest to admit that we were wrong in our criticism. ²⁷

By the end of 1942 the liberals were openly fighting among themselves over this issue. One aspect of the problem was removed, however, on December 24 when Admiral Darlan

²⁶ Freda Kirchwey, "Darlan and American Liberals," The Nation, December 5, 1942, pp. 559-560.

²⁷ The New Republic, November 30, 1942, pp. 698-699.

was killed by an assassin's bullet. How ironical was President Roosevelt's statement when he called Darlan a "temporary expedient." After Darlan's death few would still argue that the Vichy policy was still in operation but still there were its aftereffects. As some liberals saw it the continual snubbing of de Gaulle, by naming Giraud to take Darlan's now vacant position, was a direct result of the policy. To go into all the policy's aftereffects and their ramifications, however, is a project far beyond the scope of this paper. With the death of Darlan the main problem ended. What was to come after will be left for future historians to tell.

CHAPTER VII

THE BALANCE SHEET

There are many things to be learned from a study of this type. The most obvious from an evaluative standpoint is that all the liberals were not in the same camp. From the beginning Commonweal stood by its initial contention that the State Department's policy was the right one to follow. The Nation on the other hand believed just as strongly that the policy was all wrong. The New Masses and The New Republic at different times vacillated on the issue. One was never sure where The Christian Century stood. As an adjunct to the problem, the question of whether to recognize de Gaulle or not received either approval or disapproval depending upon what each magazine thought of the main controversy.

Another lesson to be learned from this study stems from the State Department's contention that these magazines did not know all the facts and thus their criticism was inaccurate and invalid. This study has proven that this was true, especially in the case of The Nation. But, because these magazines did not know all the facts does not mean they should have relinquished their critical functions. For to have relinquished their functions as critics would

have made them impotent. Perhaps one could say these magazines were expressing their frustration, at not knowing the facts, by the amount of criticism they produced. An expression of this frustration was the limits to which their criticism carried them, even to the point at times of leaving truthfulness and objectivity, the prime journalistic virtues, behind. But this tells us nothing about the main question involved in this study. Was the liberal justified in criticizing the Vichy policy? In the first place, since the magazines took many different stands on as many occasions; one would have to first decide what part of the policy, or occasion, this question should be applied to. On the St. Pierre-Miquelon episode and the Pétain promises in early 1942 there is no question that the liberals did have a good argument to support their case. On the other hand, their criticism of the shipments to Weygand and the question of whether or not to recognize de Gaulle was not, in most cases, warranted. In the Weygand case, for instance, no one will now argue that the United States did not receive much more than was given. As for de Gaulle, emotion probably might have been the better part of valor on the State Department's part. But, look at what the United States would have lost had it been decided to recognize de Gaulle and his movement as the sovereign government of France. If the United States had taken this move in early 1941, it

is apparent now, the group favoring collaboration would have gained early control over the Vichy government. Secondly, the French fleet would have passed into the hands of the Germans. Thirdly, Spain, in all likelihood, would have succumbed to French and German pressure and this would have closed the Mediterranean to both the British and the Americans. How long victory would then have been postponed is anyone's guess.

The lesson to be gained from this, then, is that the Vichy policy cannot be taken in its entirety and condemned. To evaluate properly the criticism of the policy one should take each incident, as has been done in this thesis, and evaluate it on its own merits. The answer to the main question, then should be obvious. No, the liberal critics were not justified in criticizing the State Department for its policy toward Vichy. For this policy was not just one position that remained stable throughout the period under study. As has been shown, the policy was always evolving. Add to this the fact that the liberals oftentimes did not have all the facts and this judgement can be seen as warranted.

Another question to be answered is whether their criticism effected State Department policy. In the case of Vichy, after examining the facts, it can be seen the State Department was prompted in its actions merely by day to day

happenings in France and not by what the Liberals were saying. On certain matters, however, such as material aid to de Gaulle, one can probably say the meagre allowances and recognition he did receive were partly due to the efforts of the liberal writers that favored him. On the matter of material aid to de Gaulle the writers of certain magazines seemed to be fighting the old battle for the Loyalists of Spanish Civil War days. Similiar to the Loyalist case, de Gaulle was also refused arms and recognition. In de Gaulle's case, however, the government's attitude changed and eventually he was to receive full recognition. The final question on the matter of de Gaulle should be--what would the United States have gained had all its support been thrown to the Free French from the beginning ? Besides losing all that has been mentioned before the United States would have gained nothing in comparison. De Gaulle, in 1940, it must be remembered, was a comparatively little known figure not only outside of France but within as well. De Gaulle owed much of his popularity, during the war, to the British propaganda office and many in this country received their only information about him from this source. In the first part of this study it was apparent that much, if not all, of The Nations facts on de Gaulle and on Vichy stemmed from British sources.

The liberals acquired their name for stands on other

issues and the problem in this particular study is not that they were being "liberal" as such, but rather that the source from which the criticism came from has historically been labelled "liberal". The liberal magazines in this particular study, however, could have been replaced by just about any other five different magazines or newspapers. Their positions on the individual incidents were that varied at times.

In the final analysis, however, to get back to the main point, it cannot be disputed that no French ship was ever taken over and manned by the Germans against the United States. This, it will be remembered, was the first concern of the President when it appeared that France might fall in 1940. With this concern the Vichy policy began and later was to germinate the thoughts that originated this paper.

The final judgement ? Maybe a statement Marshal Pétain made at his treason trial would best answer that question. The marshal simply said, "God and posterity will make answer to your judgement of me." ¹ So also will they make the final judgement on the American Vichy policy, the liberals and their criticism.

¹ Farmer, op. cit., p. 4.

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