ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION

We can assume that the readers of this magazine read the newspapers every day. Whether they concentrate on economics or sports, politics or Dorothy Dix's wise counsel, they all read the political headlines on the front page. They all know that Rangoon has fallen, that winter is coming to a close in Russia, and that a German squadron has passed through the Channel. Yet in addition to all this there are many other news items in the papers which, though less prominently displayed, are worth reading—particularly between the lines.

Take, for instance, that brief telegram from the capital of one of the few remaining neutral states a few days ago, which stated that the Minister of Education of that country had been shot at by several individuals without being hit. Probably few people noticed this little item, yet it belongs on the front page, not because of the event as such but because of the last sentence in the telegram: "The assassination attempt was provoked by students who were dissatisfied with the results of their examinations." This is indeed sensational news. It means that there are still some people left on our planet who act according to impulses other than political. Perhaps some day the state of the world will once again be such that there is no stronger reason for shooting at someone than discontent over the results of one's school examinations.

ARITHMETIC AND POLITICS

When Singapore fell it was announced in Tokyo that—apart from 32,000 Indian soldiers—28,000 British and Australian troops had surrendered. Adding those who had been captured or killed in the previous fighting on the Malay Peninsula and those who had made their getaway we can assume that a total of about 45,000 white troops had been expected to defend against Japan the cornerstone of Britain's empire in the East. At first sight it seems incredible that a responsible government could expect 45,000 men to do the job, even though it is afterwards said that Singapore's ultimate fall was expected. And it is not surprising that during the last few weeks a good deal has been written in England and America, and particularly in Australia and the Netherlands East Indies, about the blindness and negligence of the British High Command. It seems to us, however, that the presence of not more than 45,000 men can be explained not only by blindness and negligence. It is also a matter of simple arithmetic.

To be sure, numbers alone do not decide wars. This, from Marathon to the Battle of France, has been proved time and again. Spirit, training, and equipment of armies play a tremendous role. Yet numbers do count. While we do not intend to enter into a controversy with those who put the blame for the fall of Singapore on the spirit, training, and equipment of the British troops or on the inadequacy of
their leaders, we wish to call attention here to the problem of numbers. It constitutes one of Britain's weakest points and will make itself felt again and again in the future.

On February 10 General Tojo, the Japanese Prime Minister, declared in the House of Representatives that 2,210,000 Japanese had been born during 1941. This is more than three times the annual birth rate of Great Britain. Adding the German and Italian births to the Japanese figure, we reach, for the three Axis powers in 1941, a figure of approximately $4\frac{1}{2}$ million births as compared with less than 700,000 for Great Britain.

One Briton To the Square Mile

Part of the stubborn confidence of the average Briton in the final outcome of the present war is rooted in his faith in that mighty term "British Empire." Indeed, it looks imposing enough if you open a yearbook and find that more than half a billion people are living within its confines (504,218,209 to be exact, according to the World Almanac for 1941). But on how many of these can England count? In peace time the British Empire may have half a billion subjects. But in an emergency such as the present war it can, in the last analysis, count only on those of English or Scottish blood. Of these there are at most 62 million; 46 million in the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, the other 16 million thinly spread, with little more than one Briton to the square mile, over the rest of the British Empire, which, with almost 13$\frac{1}{2}$ million square miles, is 142 times the size of the combined area of England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

For a long time the British have enjoyed the advantages of possessing an empire on which the sun never sets. But today they are paying for it. With their limited numbers, they are trying to defend simultaneously the British Isles, Gibraltar, Malta, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Iraq, Iran, India, Burma, Hongkong, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, and a hundred other outposts scattered throughout the world. For this task they simply have not enough men. The loss of Singapore has been explained by the need for men and equipment in Libya, and the loss of ground in Libya is in turn defended by the necessity of sending troops to Singapore and other places. They were faced by a similar dilemma in Norway and Flanders, in Greece and Crete. With too few men to close all leaks and man all pumps, the ship of the British Empire is sinking. Only the fact that two other ships with larger crews, America and Russia, are afloat is keeping the British from fully realizing the impending disaster. But the other two ships are far away and have plenty of leaks of their own to worry about.

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WHAT'S IN A NAME?

"The Pacific islands of Wake, Peale, and Wilkes which have been occupied by the Japanese forces will be renamed Ohtori Shima, Hane Shima and Ashi Shima," according to a recent telegram from Tokyo. These three islands lying close together and hitherto generally known under the name of the largest of the group, Wake Island, have till now helped through their names to symbolize the Anglo-American control of the Pacific. They were discovered by the British (1796), their position was fixed by Commander Wilkes of the US Navy (1841), and they were annexed by America (1899) after—to quote the American Commander—"all present had witnessed that the island was not in the possession of any other nation."

The new names are characteristic of the change in the Pacific situation. Not only do they demonstrate to the world that Japan has acquired the islands, but in the very choice of the names a different attitude has become apparent. The place of the discoverers' names has been taken by the poetic comparison of the islands to a bird, which, indeed, they resemble when seen
from the air. (Ohtori means bird, hane means wings, and ashi means legs.)

A few days later it was announced in Shanghai that the Mackenzie Wharf in Shanghai had been renamed Koto Mato, and Holt's Wharf Hashi Mato, while the wharf of the famous old firm of Jardine Matheson & Co. was henceforth to be managed by the Yamashita Kogyo Kaisha. On February 17 Singapore became Shonan, the "Light of the South."

Other changes of names will no doubt follow, heralding the turn of the tide in the Far East and the Western Pacific.

Sydney was the name borne by two Australian cruisers which played a part in recent history. The first became famous in the Great War, when she sank the German light cruiser Emden; the second shortly before the outbreak of the Pacific war when she was sunk by the German auxiliary warship Cormoran (the former Steyermark). Immediately after her loss a collection was started in Australia to build a new cruiser which was to carry on the name of Sydney. But the other day a brief telegram announced that the plan had been changed. “It has been decided to use the money for aircraft construction instead,” the news item stated. Australia no longer has the time necessary to build a cruiser, and possibly the complicated ordnance required in such a ship cannot be spared by the Mother Country. Will there ever be a cruiser Sydney again?

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WHO'S WHO AND WHAT'S WHAT

On February 13 President Roosevelt announced in his press conference that Admiral Thomas C. Hart had relinquished his post as Commander of all Allied naval forces in the southwestern Pacific and was returning to Washington. While the President himself gave no explanation, the press had some suggestions to offer, among them the fact that the Admiral was sixty-four years old. This is not a very convincing reason, for the Admiral had been sixty-four when, one month and ten days earlier, to the accompaniment of many hopeful statements, he had been appointed to his post.

The resignation of Admiral Hart is rather one more example of the confusion reigning in the Allied camp and emphasized in our article on Pacific strategy last month. The Japanese advance is so swift that the Allies find it very difficult to catch up with their commanders in chief. Admiral Hart was a specialist on Far Eastern waters, but, as the British and American navies have been swept from the larger part of his accustomed field, a specialist for the waters around Java had to be found. Vice-Admiral Helfrich of the Dutch Royal Navy, aged fifty-six, is just such a specialist. So he became Hart’s successor. However, he is to share the command with the American Rear-Admiral Glassford and — Havas from Washington adds— “he is to hold his new position only ad interim, it is understood.” Ad interim, according to Webster, means “temporary,” and temporary is all that his appointment is likely to be. For in another few weeks a specialist for the waters around Australia may be the order of the day.

To mention a few additional signs of confusion:

Havas from Batavia: “Open dissatisfaction is being voiced here over the news according to which General Wavell's authority will be limited to tactical decisions, while all strategical plans will be elaborated in London and Washington. This is bound to provoke further procrastination and indecision when urgent action is of primordial importance. ‘Two committees above Wavell!’ is the heading of the editorial of an influential Batavia paper.”

On February 11 the Pacific War Council met for the first time in London. Those who had demanded it as the cure for the main ills were disappointed when they read its composition. Neither an American nor a Chinese, neither an Indian nor a Burmese was present. But the familiar
and no longer convincing names of Churchill, Eden, Attlee, and of the heads of the British armed forces were all listed.

In addition to this a new Allied Board of Combined Chiefs of Staff met in Washington for the first time on February 14, to add to the general confusion. It consists exclusively of British and American “brasshats.”

Then there is the controversy over the question, “Who is enemy number one?” The American Secretary of Navy, Colonel Knox, stated that it was Hitler, and this is the feeling of many people in England and on the east coast of America. But Chungking, Batavia, and Canberra immediately replied that it was Japan, and the people in Hawaii and California are inclined to agree. In this respect the Axis powers are in a more fortunate position. There can be no controversy among them over the strategic aims. Their soldiers and people fight for their own nation and its strategic aims, but their successes at the same time benefit their partners.

ABNORMAL GEOGRAPHY

Some weeks ago I started a new file for clippings which I called “Abnormal Geography.” It consists of a great number of brief items. Each one of them in itself is quite unimportant; taken together they are an impressive illustration of the far-reaching changes which our geographical conceptions have recently undergone. Here are a few examples.

When Moscow appointed Litvinov as ambassador to Washington it was urgently necessary that he should get there as quickly as possible. Formerly he would have traveled via Southampton; now he had to take a route via Teheran, India, Singapore, Manila, Hawaii, and San Francisco, which took over one month.

On February 13 Owen Lattimore arrived in Washington from Chungking. Up till three months ago his route would have been by plane via Hongkong, Hawaii, and San Francisco, and the journey so rapid that Mr. Lattimore would hardly have needed a shave. Now it is another story. Taking the shortest route available he traveled via Burma, India, South Africa, and South America, a voyage long enough to require at least three haircuts on the way.

According to a Reuter report from Teheran, the United States is establishing a new port in the Persian Gulf, and Havas announced that America was about to create an important military base in Eritrea, on the east coast of Africa. American bases on the east coast of Africa and on the Persian Gulf! It sounds crazy, yet it makes sense. With the Axis sea and air forces active in the Mediterranean, the only way to bring American supplies or troops to the British Near East is via the Red Sea; and with Vladivostok, Archangel, and Murmansk out as ports of entry for the USSR, Iran is the only gateway left.

US troops have landed in New Zealand, Java, and Northern Ireland, not to mention Iceland and Greenland, and soon they may be sent to South Africa. Each expedition is a far cry from “Hemispheric Defense” and an example of the abnormal geography of our times.

THE SEVEN SEAS

When on January 26 two merchant ships were sunk in the Indian Ocean, probably by Japanese submarines, the last of the seven seas had been invaded by war. Step by step the present conflict has spread the war from one ocean to the next. In the fall of 1939 it was the Atlantic; Italy’s entry added the Mediterranean; Russia’s entry the Black, Baltic, and Arctic Seas; and Japan’s entry the Pacific. By the middle of December 1941 only one ocean had been left in peace, the Indian. There, too, occasional sinkings and minor naval en-
gagements had taken place, but on the whole the ocean was quiet.

Compared to the other great oceans, the Indian Ocean is far less important. In peace time it carried only about 10 per cent of the world's sea freight as compared to the 70 per cent of the Atlantic and the 20 per cent of the Pacific. But even these 10 per cent were a lot, and it took an average of 27 to 30 million tons of shipping every year to move them. Since the outbreak of the war in 1939 its importance had increased, for it was the only ocean left where no convoys were needed and through which almost to Calcutta and southeastward to Fremantle have become gravely endangered owing to the neighborhood of the new Japanese bases. Only two remain more or less intact, Colombo-Capetown and Capetown-Fremantle, as well as the line Capetown-Aden-Persian Gulf.

With the Red Sea route practically lost due to the situation in the Mediterranean, and with Japan's moving into New Guinea and the surrounding archipelagoes, there are only two relatively safe entrances to the Indian Ocean left today for the Allies. One is south around Africa, the other south entirely safe lanes ran to the British Near East and through Iran to the Soviet Union.

The situation after the conquest of Malaya and Singapore is shown on our map which takes Colombo as the hub of the wheel. Some of its spokes have now lost their former significance: the one to the Red Sea because of the fact that the Suez Canal is closed for all practical purposes (although it is still important as a route to the British Near East), and those to Singapore, Rangoon, and Batavia because of the conquests or the proximity of the Japanese. Two other spokes, those through the Sea of Bengal around Australia. In view of the tremendous distances involved and the serious shortage of shipping space, the amount of Allied shipping on the few remaining lanes of the Indian Ocean is bound to drop rapidly.

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MADAME JACQUER'S SEVEN CHILDREN

"Vichy, February 2.—One of the proudest women of France today is Madame Jacquer who at the age of 21 is the mother of seven children and has been awarded the valuable Cognacu
Prize of the Académie Française. Marshal Petain is also personally interested in the well-being of the woman and her children. Madame Jacquer married when 14 years old and has given birth to a child every year.

So in France, that sophisticated country, the Académie Française, one of the most sophisticated institutions in the world, has awarded a prize to a woman because she has seven children at the age of 21. This shows indeed the change that has taken place in France since her military collapse in the summer of 1940. Obscured by the bitter and ironical hostility of the Anglo-American and de Gaulist press, France is returning to peaceful pursuits and is more interested in birth than death.

The other day a Frenchman remarked: "We were the first to get into this war and also the first to get out." That is true, and France is on her way to recovery. Compared to the Great War the blitzkrieg has its advantages even for the defeated countries, once it is over. It is much shorter and it brings about a final decision with far less destruction to life and property. According to a recent statement by the French Reconstruction Office, 70,000 houses were destroyed in France during the present war. This is a large number in itself, but small when compared with the 375,000 houses destroyed in the Great War. On February 6 M. Barthelot, French Secretary of State for Communications, declared that 80 per cent of the destroyed railway bridges were back in use and that by 1944 the ravages of war will be repaired.

Do the British and Americans really think that the French, under these circumstances, would wish to go back into the war and turn their country into a battlefield for the German Army and an American expeditionary force (supposing that such a force could land on the Continent)? France's mission today, it seems to us, is not to re-enter the present war, but to help prepare the future peace. Removed from active participation in the war, France has started to patch up her wounds while the other great powers are still occupied in inflicting wounds on each other.

WHO IS HELPING WHOM?

Early in January it became known that Great Britain had asked Chungking for aid in Burma, and in the middle of February Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek appeared in India to mediate between the British Government and the Indian people. These facts are a clear admission that Britain alone was unable, first, to defend Burma, and second to arrange her relations with India. The dependence of Great Britain on Chungking in two such vital matters demonstrates the amazing decline of British power and must lead to a serious loss of face.

As for Burma, England's request for Chinese troops means the end of her position there. No matter how the war will end, the question there will only be one of Japanese or Chinese control, certainly not of British. As for India, the Generalissimo's trip demonstrates the bankruptcy of British India policy.

In these circumstances it sounds strange, and to Chiang Kai-shek it must have sounded like a bad joke, when at a dinner in his honor in New Delhi the Viceroy of India, Lord Linlithgow, promised British help for Chungking and stated that Great Britain was "standing by China through rough and smooth, fair and foul weather."

THE PINK BARONET

A little less than two years ago in Honolulu I received an invitation to a small dinner at the Pacific Club in honor of a British gentleman passing through Hawaii. Such dinners for passers-through were frequent, for the people of Hawaii were eager to compensate their geographical isolation by meeting those who stopped over for a day on their way across the Pacific.

As usual there was first a dinner, then a talk by the guest of honor—he had
just completed an interesting plane journey to Moscow and Chungking—followed by a lively discussion. The gentleman was a typical English intellectual, clever, skinny, and bespectacled. He spoke words of reason but no magnetism, and as a personality he was rather colorless. When we parted I said to him that Hawaii was one of the few places left in the world where an Englishman and a German could still talk to each other. He looked surprised. He hadn't known, he said. A minute later I heard him complain to the host: “Really, it might be most embarrassing for me if it became known in London that I shook hands with a German.”

Pretty small, I thought, of the great Sir Stafford Cripps.

Since that evening Sir Stafford has risen like a meteor in the British political sky. On February 19 he became Lord Privy Seal of the War Cabinet. Next to Churchill no British statesman has been more frequently mentioned during the last few weeks. What caused his popularity? This in itself is an interesting story.

When Berlin and Moscow in August 1939 concluded a pact, this was one of the worst blows for London. But the hope that the USSR might some day be on the side of Britain was not abandoned. Someone had to be sent to Moscow to mend the fences. Who? In the spring of 1940, Sir Stafford Cripps, Member of Parliament since 1931, returned from a trip around the world on which he had also visited Moscow. There he had made contacts with a number of Bolshevist leaders. To the Bolsheviks, Pinks always seem slightly ridiculous, and I have known many Bolsheviks who preferred a black reactionary or a plain White. But Pinks can sometimes be useful to Moscow, and the shade of Sir Stafford’s pinkness, who among other things has advocated the abolition of the British monarchy, was so deep that the Labor Party had excluded him in January of 1939. He has not been readmitted to this day. He also had political influence as the son of Lord Parmoot, who had sat in two MacDonald cabinets, and he was one of the highest-paid lawyers in all London. England had nothing to lose and much to win. There was no one who seemed to have a better chance, and so in June 1940 Sir Stafford was sent as His Majesty’s Ambassador to the Kremlin.

Exactly one year later the German armies crossed the Soviet border. Automatically the Soviet Union and Great Britain found themselves allies. Then two strange things happened which do not fit together, which, in fact, even contradict each other. Ever since the British press has declared, on the one hand that the Soviet Union was the innocent victim of unprovoked German aggression, and on the other that Sir Stafford Cripps is a great statesman who has brought England an ally in her hour of need.

Only one or the other is possible: if Hitler attacked the Soviet Union without justification, then Sir Stafford Cripps had nothing to do with Stalin’s becoming an ally of King George’s. The same thing would have happened if a Duff-Cooper had been ambassador. On the other hand, if Sir Stafford is a great man who has won the Soviet Union over for Great Britain, then the German attack was justified.

We are inclined to believe Sir Stafford when a few days ago he said in a public speech in England that, early in 1939, Stalin had tried to come to an agreement with Great Britain and France, only concluding the pact with Germany after this attempt had failed. He added that, immediately after signing the pact with Hitler, Stalin put Soviet production on a war basis in order to prepare for war against Germany. This statement fits in with the rest of the picture which has been revealed during the last eight months. In June of last year Stalin was getting ready to march. But this does not mean that Sir Stafford Cripps is the big man who accomplished this. If ever you have seen both Stalin and Cripps, you know without a moment’s hesitation who exerts influence on
whom. To us there can be no doubt: Stalin would have acted as he did, Cripps or no Cripps.

The British

"On the Rebound"

After the loss of Singapore, Western Libya, and the Battle of the Channel, the British people are today, as far as Churchill is concerned, "on the rebound." Disappointed in their confidence in him, they are looking for a new hero. Enter Sir Stafford, at exactly the right moment. British feelings are aptly described by a Russian newspaper in Shanghai: "Henderson failed in Berlin, Samuel Hoare did not succeed in Madrid, Duff-Cooper was a miserable fiasco in the Far East. Only Cripps got an ally for England, and what an ally! After June 22 everybody at once breathed more freely in England—the air raids almost ceased, one could sleep again . . . . The Red Army has been doing the fighting now for almost eight months. This is very pleasant for the British and such an undeserved gift from heaven that they need not get too excited over Hongkong and Malaya. (Those places, after all, are far away, and heaven knows when their loss will hit the Londoner's pocketbook.) And who did all this? Cripps! Who saved England from the horror of air raids? Cripps! Who filled the British with confidence that during the spring and summer of 1942 Hitler will be busy with Russia? It is always Cripps."

One thing is certain: the more enthusiasm the British work up for Sir Stafford, the better it is for Stalin. By now Sir Stafford has become much more valuable to the Bolsheviks than the usual run of Pinks. He has, in Stalin's eyes, two advantages which, for the moment, no one else possesses to the same degree.

In the first place he is not, like Churchill, a personality of the self-confident type that cannot be influenced. He has no machine behind him, neither the trade unions nor the Labor Party.

To handle him will be one of Stalin's easier tasks. In the second place, he happens to be England's man of the hour from whom the British, in their despair, are willing to accept advice. The many speeches which Sir Stafford has made in England since his return from Moscow are filled with praise for the USSR and reproaches for England. Again and again he has attacked Britain's lack of urgency and determination. He demands more help for Russia, and he reminds his listeners that, while they are sitting in comparative safety and comfort, the people of the USSR are suffering. On February 9, for instance, according to Reuter Sir Stafford said in a broadcast: "Russians will tolerate nothing that decreases their war effort or the efficiency of their fighting forces. Hoarders of food and black-market operators who try to take advantage of the difficult conditions in the country are given short shrift when they are discovered. It would be difficult for Russians to understand the tolerance which is shown in this country to these fifth columnists."

The Voice of Moscow

In his speeches Sir Stafford Cripps uses almost the same words as Stalin's official emissaries to England. The output of British industry is not what it should be, declared Madame Nikolayeva, a Soviet delegate at a trade union meeting in London; and the head of the Soviet trade unions, Shvernik, could find only reproachful words to describe his impressions of British industry gathered during a
recent visit to England. "The British industry must gather speed in its work in one way or the other. It is hard to list all the many things which the industry still possesses in the way of unused reserves. In a number of plants the existing equipment is used insufficiently. Not enough women are drawn into industry." And so he goes on. Shvernik has a simple solution for these ills, and although he clothes-for the time being-his advice in cautious words, the ruling class in England, unless it is blind, knows what he means when he says: "The reason for all this is to be found in the wrong attitude of the factories to the initiative of the workers, in the refusal to listen to the voice of the workers. To find out what is wrong, all that is necessary is to talk a little with the workers. They will show where and why mistakes are being made."

The London Trade Federation echoed on February 14 by blaming the lack of war material on "the politicians who were supporting capitalistic interests of the war industry instead of furthering the latter's employment for war purposes." The resolution passed by them read: "The war will be prolonged and human life and material unnecessarily sacrificed as long as these tendencies are not suppressed."

**Leading or Led?**

In one of his most recent speeches Sir Stafford said that he did not wish to introduce Bolshevism into Great Britain. Assuming that he spoke the truth, how much weight do his intentions carry? If he were a British labor leader of great stature, a man with the ability and power to introduce true socialism into Britain, if he could replace a charming but incapable feudal class with new and vigorous leaders from the nation as a whole—then the rise of Sir Stafford Cripps would be the best thing that could have happened to England. But is he? How great is the political wisdom of a man who now bitterly criticizes Churchill for the conduct of the war in the Far East but who himself said less than two years ago, when asked in an interview in Shanghai about a showdown between Great Britain and Japan, that Great Britain could easily afford a showdown if it were necessary, and he had taken the same view since the beginning of the Manchurian incident; moreover he felt that there was little chance of losing Hongkong if such a showdown occurred. (According to the British *North China Herald* of March 20, 1940.)

Defeats have always bred revolutions, and Great Britain has suffered one defeat after another. The great danger for England is that Sir Stafford Cripps, by suggesting the idea of a moderate and orderly revolution to the people, will open the door for the revolutionary forces in the country, and will then be pushed aside by men and organizations incomparably more ruthless, determined, and revolutionary than he and his Pink friends. Then the British would find themselves the victims not only of a world war but also of a world revolution.