

JAPANESE BRUTALITY TO WAR PRISONERS

Eden's Revelations

LONDON, January 28.—“I regret to have to tell the House that information which has just been received by the Government no longer leaves room for doubt that the true state of affairs is very different so far as the majority of the prisoners in Japanese hands is concerned,” said the Foreign Secretary (Mr Eden) in the House of Commons today.

“Although a large number of postcards and letters recently received from prisoners and internees generally suggested that the writers were in good health and being well treated, there was no doubt that the terms of these communications had been dictated by the Japanese.”

“A very high proportion, perhaps 80 or 90 per cent of the prisoners and internees is located in the southern area, comprising the Philippines, Dutch East Indies, Borneo, Malaya, Siam, and Indo-China,” Mr Eden continued.

“In Siam there are many thousands of prisoners from the British Commonwealth, including India, who are being compelled by the Japanese military to live under tropical jungle conditions without adequate shelter, clothing, food, or medical attention.

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“These men are forced to work on buildings, railways, and road making. Their health is rapidly deteriorating, a high percentage is seriously ill, and there have been some thousands of deaths, yet such deaths reported to Britain by Japan totalled just over 100.

“One eye-witness reports of a camp in Siam: ‘I saw many prisoners clearly. They were skin and bone, unshaven, had long matted hair, and they were half-naked.

hair, and they were half-naked. They wore no hats or shoes.

"Many prisoners in Java are confined in camps with inadequate protection against malarial infection, and lacking proper sanitation.

"Except insofar as the prisoners may sometimes obtain food from local resources, their food and clothing are insufficient to maintain them in health.

"Reports from the northern area refer to the emaciated state of the prisoners arriving from Java.

"A civilian officer in the Shanghai municipal police force, together with some 300 other Allied nationals, was interned in a detention camp for so-called political suspects in Shanghai. He was taken to the office of the Japanese gendarmerie. When he emerged from the building he was practically out of his mind. His arms and feet were infected where ropes had left deep scars. He lost 40 lb. in weight and died one or two days after his release.

"In the Philippines three British subjects, who escaped from an internment camp, were recaptured, flogged, and later sentenced to death by a military court, although international law prescribes the imposition of only disciplinary punishments for attempts to escape."

SYSTEMATICALLY BAYONETED

"A number of Indian soldiers captured in Burma had their hands tied behind their backs and were forced to sit in groups by the roadside. Then they were systematically bayoneted from behind in turn, each man apparently receiving three bayonet thrusts.

"Another case concerns an officer of a well-known regiment of the line who was captured in Burma. He was clubbed across the face with a sword, then tied to a stake, a rope passed around his neck. Only by raising his body could he get enough air to keep him alive. He was then subjected to further torture. Fortunately an Allied attack developed, and the Japanese fled, and the officer was rescued by a British patrol.

LOSS OF 800 PRISONERS

"The transport, Lisbon Maru, was used for conveying 1800 Brit-

ish war prisoners from Hong Kong. Conditions on board were almost indescribable. The prisoners were seriously overcrowded, and many were under-nourished, and had contracted diphtheria, dysentery, and other diseases.

"When this vessel was torpedoed by an Allied submarine on October 1, 1942, the Japanese officers, soldiers, and crew kept the prisoners under the hatchways and abandoned the ship forthwith, although it was 24 hours later before the vessel sank. A total of 800 prisoners lost their lives.

"I have said sufficient to show the barbarous nature of our Japanese enemies. They have violated not only the principles of international law, but also all the canons of decent civilised conduct.

"We have repeatedly made the strongest possible representations to Japan through Switzerland. Such replies as have been received have been evasive, cynical, and otherwise unsatisfactory.

"We had the right to expect that once it was aware of the facts the Japanese Government would rem-

edy this state of affairs. The Japanese know well what are the obligations of a civilised Power to safeguard life and health of prisoners. This was shown by their treatment in the Russo-Japanese war and in the war of 1914-18.

"The Japanese Government should reflect in time to come that the record of its military authorities in this war will not be forgotten.

"It is with the deepest regret I have been obliged to make such a statement to the House, but after consultation with our Allies, who equally are victims of this unspeakable savagery, the Government felt it its duty to make public the facts."

BRANDED WITH V SIGN

JOHANESSBURG, January 29.

—It is disclosed that a nun, at present an inmate of a sanatorium at Johannesburg, was branded with a V sign on her back and arms in

a V sign on her back and arms in a Tokyo prison... She was arrested after Pearl Harbour, after having lived 48 years in Japan. The authorities offered her her freedom on condition that she renounced Christianity for Shintoism. She refused.

PRIEST FLOGGED

LONDON, January 30.—A priest who was thrown into prison at the same time as the nun who was branded with the V sign, was frequently flogged. He died from his injuries. Japanese soldiers one day ordered the prisoners to leave the prison. They fired two volleys into the crowd, killing 300. The slaughter stopped only when officers arrived.

AVIATORS TORTURED

NEW YORK, January 29.—The Associated Press says: "Mr J. B. Powell, former editor of the 'China Weekly Review,' said: 'The Japanese not only executed American fliers after the Tokyo raid, but unmercifully tortured at least six of them.'

"Mr Powell, who returned to the United States in the first batch of the Gripsholm's exchanges in 1942, is still in hospital. He lost both of his feet as the result of treatment at the hands of the Japanese. He said: 'I was imprisoned at Shanghai with 40 others, mostly Chinese, in a 12 x 13 ft. cell, where we were forced, day in and day out, to sit with our knees hugged to our chests. In the next cell six American aviators were tortured daily. The Japanese seemed to take a delight in torturing them. Two or three of the aviators were later taken to Tokyo and executed. I am glad that the Army and Navy have released the atrocity material because the torturing of Americans, British and Chinese has been going on since the war started. We received regular daily beatings with a thick pine stick. I was forced to write letters, stating I was well treated and well fed, despite the fact that my daily ration of one bowl of rice was cut by half. I really was more dead than alive. Gangrene set in my feet because of malnutrition and

feet because of malnutrition and the cold weather and the way I was forced to sit. Finally I became unconscious with pain and was taken to hospital, where my feet were amputated."

500 FILIPINO BODIES

The Los Angeles correspondent of the Associated Press says: "Captain Samuel Grashig, of Spokane, during an Army-sponsored Press conference, said: 'I escaped after a year in a Philippines prison camp. The Japanese never gave the prisoners the slightest medical treatment. Once I counted 500 Filipinos' bodies being carried out of Camp Proburare.'"

SCOFFED AT REVELATIONS

The Tokyo radio's spokesman, scoffing at Mr Edens revelations of Japanese atrocities, said: "If the British and American leaders are so ready to raise a hue and cry over the maltreatment of prisoners, why don't they teach men to stand up and fight to the finish? The way the Americans threw up their hands at Corregidor, the way the British gave up Singapore on the heels of loud-mouthed assertions that they would fight to the finish, surely show that these men must

carry on their backs a pretty wide streak of yellow."

NOTICE OF QUESTION

LONDON, January 29.—Mr G. H. Shakespeare, MP, has given notice of question: "In view of the great atrocities which put Japan outside the community of civilised nations, will Mr Eden consult with the United States Government with a view to issuing a warning that
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the procedure agreed at the Moscow Conference for the trial of German war criminals after the war will be applied to Japan?"

BRITISH PRESS COMMENT

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LONDON, January 29.—The British Press has seldom spoken its mind with such force and unanimity as is seen in today's comment on Japanese brutalities to prisoners. "Revenge" and "outlawry" are words often repeated in soberly constructed articles.

The "Daily Express" says: "If there lingered in any man's mind a thread of doubt that Britain would throw the whole terrible weight of her military power against Japan the day Hitler was dead and done for, it must snap now. The bestiality of our other enemy commands the full hatred of all Englishmen. We shall avenge these deeds."

"The Times" crystallises opinion in terms, perhaps more damning for their restraint. It says: "It can only be a remote hope that publication of their shame to the world will avallawhere all else has failed to recall the Japanese Government to a sense of decent behaviour to helpless men whom the fortunes of war have placed at their mercy. Certainly, the only final remedy lies in eradicating for ever the regime that is capable of these infamies. The hideous cruelties that have now been revealed lend new meaning to the word 'liberation' as applied to the re-conquest of Far Eastern lands."

The "Daily Mail," in an editorial, says: "Let us resolve to outlaw the Japanese when we have beaten them back to their own savage land. They have proved themselves a sub-human race. It is in that regard they must be treated in future. They can be no place for them after the war in the course of civilised nations or in common relations between human beings. Let them live there, in their own land, in complete isolation from the rest of the world. They should not be allowed to trade with any other part of the world, to travel outside Japan, possess means of communication, or have any sort of friendly intercourse. The rest of the world will want nothing from them, and will be better without them."

AMERICAN INDIGNATION

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NEW YORK, January 29.—A spirit of revenge is sweeping Washington following publication of Japanese atrocities against American and Filipino prisoners in the Philippines.

The wave of indignation caused by the report has brought demands for accelerating the pace of the war against Japan, says the Washington correspondent of the "New York Times."

The Secretary of State (Mr Cordell Hull) said that the United States was gathering all possible information about the treatment of American prisoners held by the Japanese so that war criminals might be punished when the war ended.

Giving his view on the Philippines atrocities, Mr Hull said: "It would be necessary to assemble together all the demons available anywhere and combine the fendishness which all of them embodied to describe the conduct of those who inflicted these unthinkable tortures."

Japanese responsible for the torture or mistreatment of war prisoners are liable to whatever punishment, including the death penalty, an American military commission might find proper, according to an interpretation of international law by Major Willard Cowles, of the Judge Advocate-General's Division.

The atrocities report is believed in Washington as likely to offset a growing feeling that the war is already won.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT

Interviewed in Rockhampton on Mr Eden's speech, the Minister for the Army (Mr Forde) said that such an important statement in the House of Commons by the Foreign Secretary showed what a barbarian race the Japanese were, and how important it was that an all-in war effort must be maintained by Australia and the other democracies until Japan had been crushed.

"The more intense the war effort in Australia," Mr Forde said,

fort in Australia," Mr Forde said, "the sooner will the many thousands of Australian prisoners of war in Japanese hands be freed. We owe it to the gallant sons of Australia and the British Empire who were taken prisoners of war in Malaya to accept gladly any necessary restrictions imposed by the Australian Government on the civil population in the way of meat and butter rationing, so that we may help the Mother Country to continue her great industrial war production of fighters and bombers, ships, and other weapons of war so necessary to bring about victory for the Allied cause."

Mr Forde said that the Government had been in close touch with the British Government on the question of prisoners of war in Japanese hands. Ever since the fall of Singapore the Government had been endeavouring to get authentic reports in regard to conditions in prisoner of war camps and through the International Red Cross and the independent protecting powers endeavoured to get supplies to Australian prisoners of war.

"The endeavour to improve the conditions of Australian prisoners of war in Japanese hands is a major policy of the Government," Mr Forde said, "but unfortunately our experience has been, similar to that of the British Government, that Japan has not been prepared to observe the international agreement invariably followed by all decent civilised nations. In the handling of enemy prisoners of war under the control of the Australian Government, the provisions of the international agreement are invariably followed in the spirit and in the letter, firstly, because it was our duty to honour the agreement entered into, and, secondly, because it should cause any decent civilised country to treat Australian prisoners of war likewise."