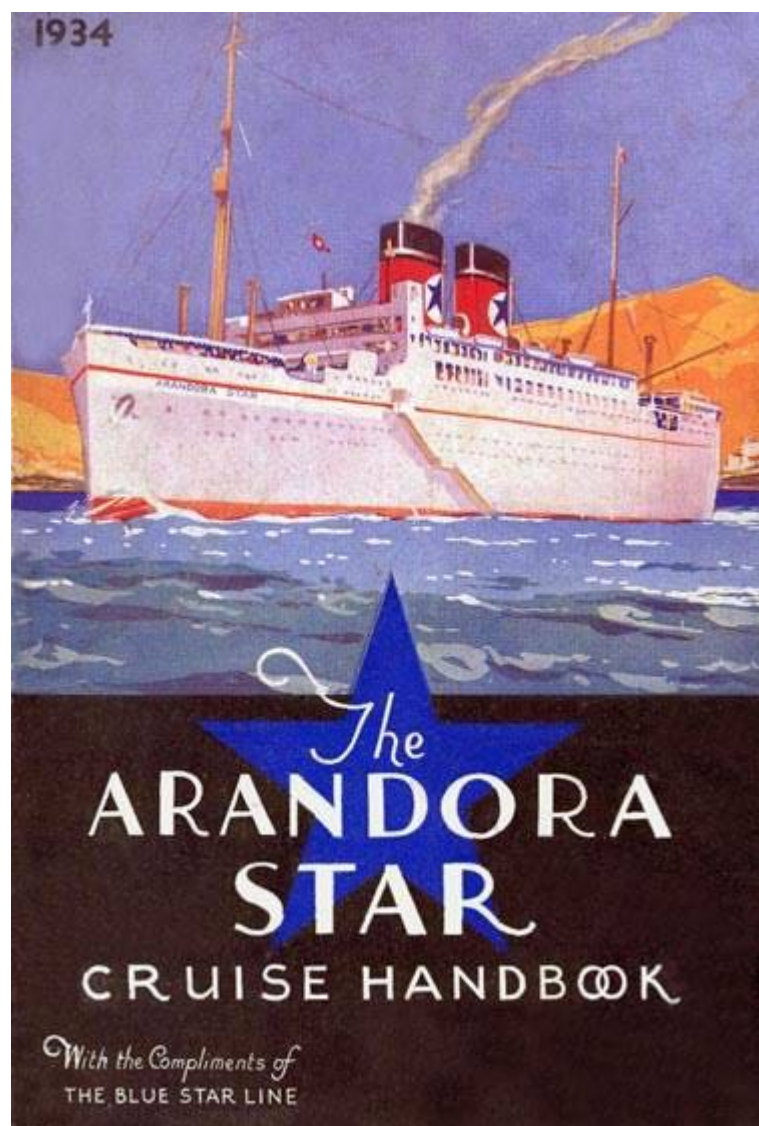


## L'affondamento Arandora Star: strage di internati italiani in Gran Bretagna

Quando il 2 luglio del 1940 la nave da crociera britannica Arandora Star, requisita per esigenze belliche, affondò nell'Atlantico silurata da un sommergibile tedesco, una forte ondata di commozione scosse il nostro paese, perché gran parte delle vittime, 476 su 865, erano di nazionalità italiana.



Furono ben 48 i morti nel solo comune di Bardi, presso Parma - tutti uomini che si erano trasferiti prevalentemente nel Galles decenni prima - e 11 le vittime friulane. I caduti, uomini di età compresa tra i 16 ed i 68 anni, provenivano

tuttavia un po' da tutta la penisola, come l'ingegnere napoletano Guido Maiuri, oppure come Cesare Vairo, di Milano, o Stefano Ceresa di Bollengo, in provincia di Torino, o ancora come Giovanni Moretti, della provincia di La Spezia.

Ripercorrere, a distanza di ottanta anni, gli eventi che condussero all'ultima, fatale traversata dell'Arandora Star, equivale a gettar luce su uno degli aspetti meno noti del secondo conflitto mondiale, quello della sorte dei Civili Italiani nel Regno Unito, dopo la dichiarazione di guerra di Mussolini alla Francia e alla Gran Bretagna del 3 giugno del 1940.

*Allo scoppio della seconda guerra mondiale quella italiana in Gran Bretagna era una comunità piuttosto numerosa*

L'emigrazione dal nostro paese verso l'isola d'oltremania risaliva addirittura all'epoca imperiale, quando numerosi coloni decisero di trapiantarsi nella Britannia Romana, allettati dalle possibilità di guadagno offerte da quelle terre remote. Italiana era stata una personalità di spicco del Medioevo inglese, quella del teologo e filosofo Anselmo d'Aosta che, Arcivescovo di Canterbury dal 1093 al 1109, rivestì un ruolo chiave nella lotta per le investiture che vide contrapposti i sovrani d'Inghilterra e il papato.

Sempre nel Medioevo si distinsero per il loro ruolo cruciale nell'economia inglese i finanzieri italiani, la cui influenza è attestata nella toponomastica londinese dalla presenza, nel cuore della City, di "Lombard Street", che deve il suo nome alla concessione da parte di re Edoardo I (1272-1307) del terreno omonimo ai banchieri provenienti dall'Italia settentrionale (allora chiamata genericamente "Lombardia"). Giunti in città dopo l'espulsione degli Ebrei

dall'isola, i "Lombardi" non furono sempre visti di buon occhio dalla popolazione, che li considerò a volte stranieri inaffidabili, che si arricchivano ai danni degli Inglesi.

Maggiore stima guadagnò durante il Rinascimento la piccola comunità italiana, cara alle corti dei Tudor, composta da artisti, mercanti e umanisti, che inaugurò una tradizione destinata a durare sino alla fine del Settecento, quella che individuava nell'Inghilterra una delle mete europee preferite dei nostri musicisti e letterati.

Nel XIX secolo la Gran Bretagna restò la destinazione privilegiata di espatrio di molti intellettuali, spesso perseguitati per ragioni politiche (basti ricordare, a tal proposito, Ugo Foscolo e Giuseppe Mazzini) mentre dalla seconda metà dell'Ottocento il flusso migratorio mutò completamente fisionomia, divenendo un fenomeno di importanti proporzioni, che interessò soprattutto la manodopera giovanile alla ricerca di una nuova collocazione lavorativa a Londra e nelle grandi città industriali del nord. Certo è che nel 1901 si stimavano già più di 24.000 italiani residenti nel Regno Unito.

L'avvento del Fascismo arrestò il flusso di spostamenti all'estero, ma la Gran Bretagna restò comunque un luogo di rifugio sicuro per molti Ebrei e antifascisti.

Generalmente ben integrata, allo scoppio della seconda guerra mondiale la comunità italiana presente nel regno di oltremania soffrì restrizioni e internamenti che colpirono duramente anche coloro che avevano avversato il regime di Mussolini.

La celebre espressione di Winston Churchill "*collar the lot*", "*metteteli tutti al*

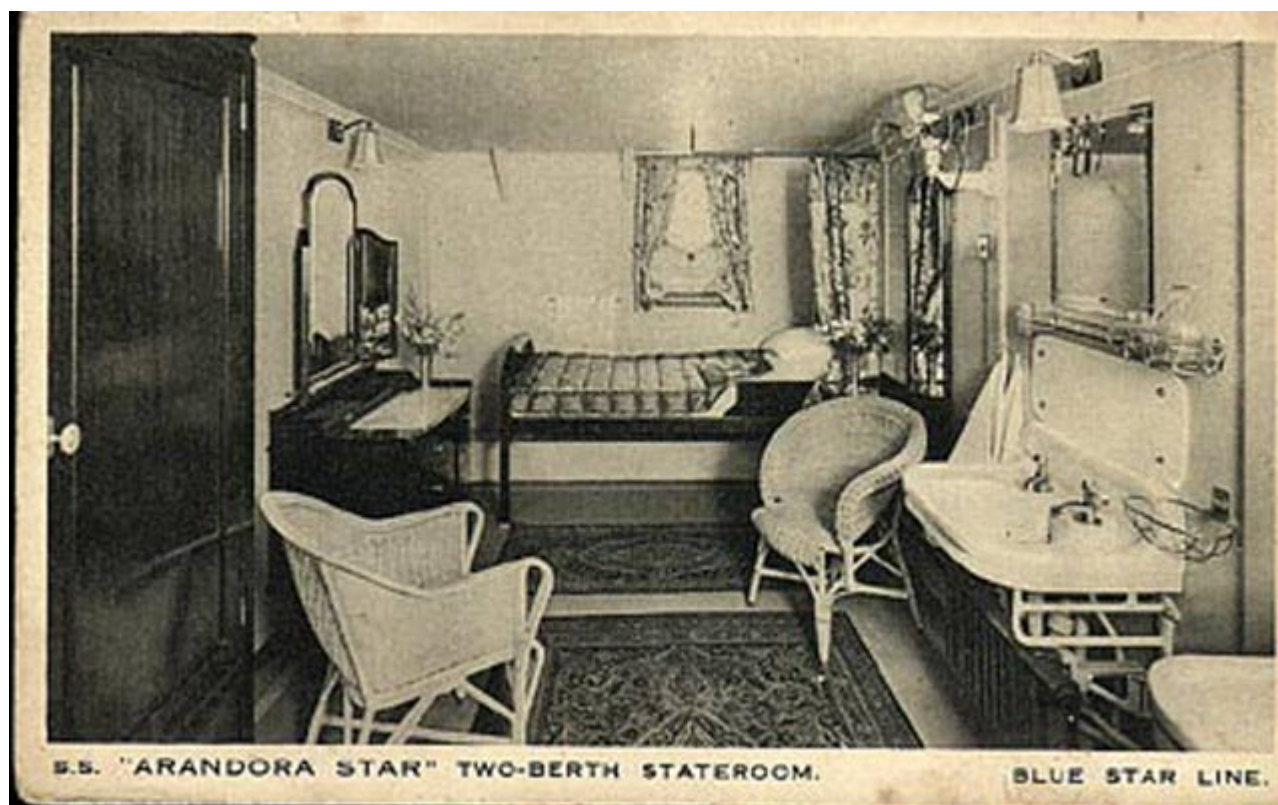
*guinzaglio*", sintetizza molto bene quegli anni di grande incertezza in cui la Gran Bretagna temeva un'invasione tedesca ed entrambi gli schieramenti applicarono l'internamento dei cittadini originari dei paesi nemici come misura preventiva contro lo spionaggio.

Sorpresi dal conflitto in un'isola divenuta improvvisamente sospettosa ed ostile, i Civili Italiani si trovarono così nella scomoda condizione di stranieri indesiderati nel paese in cui si erano integrati e in cui avevano, talvolta, figli che militavano nelle forze armate.

*Privati dei diritti civili e politici, si videro spesso confiscare le proprietà*

Anche le loro famiglie residenti nelle città britanniche costiere furono oggetto delle misure restrittive adottate dal governo inglese e, costrette a trasferirsi in città, finirono prive di sostentamento e di assistenza, ignare della sorte dei congiunti deportati.

Il paradosso fu che, a differenza dei soldati che, una volta catturati, assunsero lo status di prigionieri di guerra e poterono comunque appellarsi ai diritti riconosciuti dalle Convenzioni internazionali, i Civili Italiani, privi di norme di tutela, furono internati tra il 1940 ed il 1945 in vari paesi (quali Gran Bretagna, Francia, Grecia, Jugoslavia, Unione Sovietica, Stati Uniti e territori coloniali), esposti all'arbitrio dei governi locali.



Molti dei residenti nelle isole britanniche furono internati nell'isola di Man, tra di essi Alfonso Conti, padre dell'attore e regista britannico Tom Conti che, anni dopo, ricostruì il dramma vissuto dalla sua famiglia in quegli anni in un'intervista alla BBC.

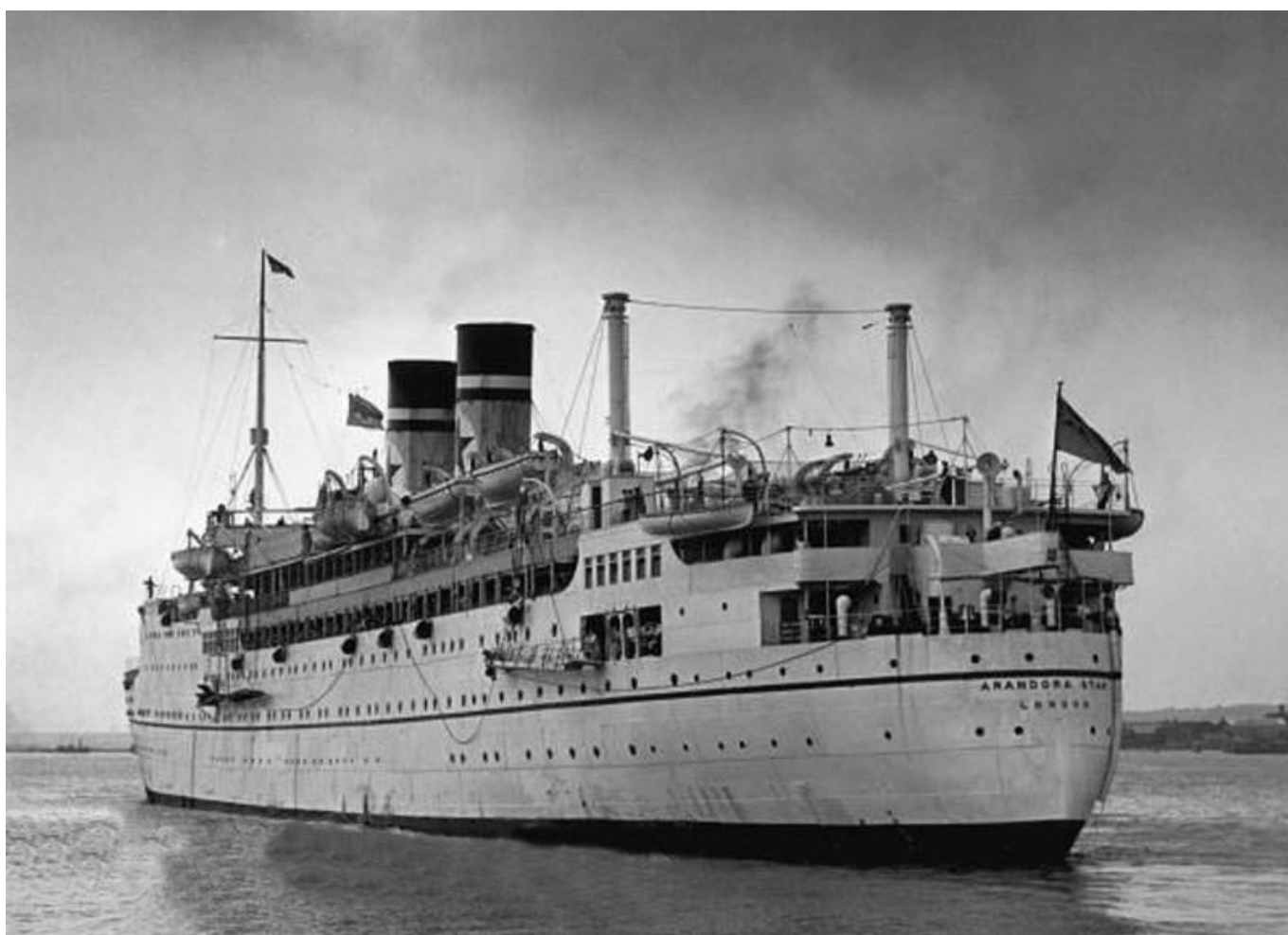
Alfonso Conti fu tra coloro che ritornarono dalla prigionia.

Altri non furono altrettanto fortunati, come i civili presenti sull'Arandora Star, finiti sulla nave in seguito al tentativo britannico di inviare in campi di concentramento in Canada un vasto numero di civili italiani, tedeschi ed austriaci di sesso maschile.

La nave era sovraccarica di prigionieri ammassati nelle cabine, alcuni persino

## L'affondamento Arandora Star: strage di internati italiani in Gran Bretagna

costretti a dormire, per mancanza di spazio, nella sala da ballo. Ridipinta di grigio, la nave non mostrava segni che ne potessero identificare la funzione, ad esempio mancava il simbolo della Croce Rossa. Non a caso l'equipaggio del sottomarino tedesco che l'aveva colpita dichiarò in seguito di essere stato tratto in inganno proprio dalla livrea grigia, che faceva apparire la nave da crociera un mercantile provvisto di armi in dotazione alla marina britannica.



Né all'equipaggio, né agli internati furono impartite istruzioni sulle procedure d'emergenza. Il comandante Otto Burfeind della nave tedesca Adolph Woermann, che era tra i prigionieri, rimase a bordo della Arandora Star per

## L'affondamento Arandora Star: strage di internati italiani in Gran Bretagna

organizzarne l'evacuazione, ma alla fine risultò disperso.

*La richiesta di soccorso da parte della nave fu raccolta dal cacciatorpediniere canadese St. Laurent, che riuscì a raccogliere 850 naufraghi, all'incirca la metà delle persone presenti a bordo. Su un totale di circa 800 vittime, 470 erano italiani*

Agli internati superstiti non vennero riconosciuti i diritti civili e molti furono deportati nelle colonie britanniche dell'Oceania. I famigliari delle vittime non hanno mai ricevuto scuse ufficiali, né un risarcimento.



Il primo documentario sulla vicenda dell'Arandora Star è stato presentato a Lucca nel 2004, realizzato da una emittente televisiva locale. L'affondamento della nave britannica rappresenta il più tragico evento nella storia della popolazione italiana nel Regno Unito

L'affondamento Arandora Star: strage di internati italiani in  
Gran Bretagna

*Nessun'altra comunità italiana nel mondo, infatti, ha sofferto un disastro  
di simili proporzioni*



**This is the Gin**  
Ask for it by name  
**Gordon's**  
Standard Gynepine

**BLACKOUT**  
ZERO HOUR  
TIGHTEN UP  
UNTIL 4.22 A.M.  
MOON RISES AT 4.45  
MOON SETS AT 5.15

# Daily Express

Thursday, July 4, 1940

One Penny

**Headaches & Rheumatism**  
For 12 Months

## 1,500 aliens panic as U-boat sinks Arandora Star

# GERMANS TORPEDO BRITISH GERMAN SHIPS

## Only one enemy hero in mad rush for lifeboats

### Civildigger army will build defence

**MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL'S** statement on the war, to be made in the House of Commons this afternoon, is likely to cover, among many questions—

Preparations for defence against invasion; and the diplomatic situation in Europe, and the Balkans in particular.

There will be a debate, but whether in public or secret will be left for the House to decide.

Elaborate arrangements have been made to convert every town, village, coast and road in Britain into a fortified zone. Troops will be used as far as possible, but will also be thousands of civilian volunteers to be digging and building.

If necessary, the Government's powers to convert civilian labour will be used.

A high Army officer is in charge of the plans, which are proceeding rapidly, ready for any emergency.

**Without warning, in the sunlight of Monday morning, a U-boat torpedoed the British liner Arandora Star off the west coast of Ireland, it was revealed last night.**

That torpedo killed more than 800 Germans and Italians, for the Arandora Star had aboard 1,500 of them on their way from internment camps in Britain to internment camps in Canada.

One hundred Britons are missing, too—soldiers aboard as guards and members of the crew of 300.

Captain E. W. Moulton and several officers were last seen on the bridge and are believed to have gone down with their ship.

More than 900 survivors were landed at a Scottish port yesterday.

**COWARDS**

Soldiers and seamen among them told of the panic among the aliens when they realised the ship was sinking. All condemned the cowardice of the Germans, who fought madly to get into the boats.

"The Germans fighting with Italians to escape, were great thinking brutes," said one soldier. "They punched and kicked their way past the Italians. We had to restrain them forcibly."

The Italians did not stand a chance against the Germans, according to a seaman. "The Germans made it clear nobody was going to stand in their way of being rescued."

That the Italians were just as bad. The whole mob of them thought of their own skin first. The scramble for the boats was sickening.

"SCREAMING"

"At one time I saw thirty of them fighting to slide down a rope to a boat."

A young officer said several German screams with fright and jumped overboard when the torpedo exploded. "And the pity was that some of our men were drowned trying to save their lives."

German. "A crowd of lives was packed at the ship's bows as he said, 'and shouting. No room! No room!'"

Ironically, the hero of the sinking was a German.

His lifeboat capsized and three fifty people into the sea. He swam around in the sea, and was helped by British seamen, reported.

BACK PAGE, COL. FOUR

These men left for Canada . . .



WHERE Daily Express picture from a Scottish port: Men saved from the Arandora Star-incident of these were housed when they landed. A meal they badly needed. Hundreds of Germans were killed by the torpedos that sank the liner. . . .

And these men got there . . .



Here are the first of the German prisoners of war to reach Canada. . . . Here are the first of the German prisoners of war to reach Canada. . . . Here are the first of the German prisoners of war to reach Canada. . . .

## MINE SINKS FRENCH LINER

**THE liner Champlain—28,124 tons—**one of France's fastest passenger steamers, struck a mine off the west coast of France and sank, according to a German report.

The Champlain was completed in 1932—Brest.

French reports received in Berlin, adds A.P., said that the Champlain was on her way to the United States with passengers, all of whom were saved.

A few members of the crew were drowned.

## Packard gets order for Rolls engines

### 6,000 for Britain

**WASHINGTON, Wednesday—Six thousand Rolls-Royce Merlin aircraft engines—engine type used by Britain by Packard Motors, Inc., announced in Washington today.**

The engines will also be used by the United States Government.

Packard will supply engines for the month as first, but will reach a total of six engines a month in fifteen months—B.P.P.

## Molotov sees Dane

### Moscow, Wednesday—Premier Molotov yesterday received at Black Chamber of the Danish Trade Mission



THE ARANDORA STAR, FAMOUS CRUISE LINER.

## FRANCO BANS GERMAN ARMY PARADE IN SPAIN

**GENERAL FRANCO today issued instructions that the parade of German troops, planned to be held in San Sebastian, is to be cancelled.**

It is said that he feared the parade would violate Spain's status as a non-belligerent.

At the same time, official statements have been put out by Madrid denying reports of German troop concentrations on the Franco-Spanish frontier.

The invitation to the parade in San Sebastian, says the Spanish official statement, came solely from Spain to thank them up.

## COAST TRAIN BOMBED

**HITLER'S hit-and-run raiders bombed a train travelling between two south coast towns last night. The driver and guard were injured—the only passengers, two women and two children, escaped unhurt.**

It was the climax of a series of every-hour raids on England and Scotland in which six of the Nazi bombers were shot down—making a total of 110 raiders claimed by the R.A.F. in coastal raids.

One of the women passengers in the bombed train, Mrs. P. Howard of Brighton-road, Newhaven, Sussex, said: "I saw a plane fly over the train. There were two explosions then. I saw the plane sweep down. We crouched on the carriage floor, but the top of my right shoe was blown off. The windows were smashed, and the carriage was . . ."

BACK PAGE, COL. THREE

## Mystery: Where is Belgium's Cabinet?

The Governments of Poland, Norway and the Netherlands are established in the United Kingdom, Mr. Butler (Under Secretary, Foreign Affairs) said in Parliament yesterday.

He was asked, "Is a Belgian Government established?"

Mr. Butler replied: "The Belgian Government was reported in Portugal. One member, Mr. M. Morel, I believe, recently arrived in London. Later it was reported that he came without a mandate from his colleagues."

## SAVE THAT WASTE—OR GO TO JAIL

**MR. HERBERT MORRISON, Minister of Supply, is ready to deal drastically with wasters of useful raw material—whether they are householders or local authorities.**

I understand he is going to make an order compelling householders to sort out into separate bags such things as rags, paper, damp refuse and food waste.

Local authorities who do not make proper provision for the collection and sorting of waste will find themselves sharply fined, or even in extreme cases, suspended.

## Germany threatens Eire now

**GERMANY'S Press today accused Eire of not observing strict neutrality, and added: "Sooner or later Germany may have to act as in the case of other small European neutrals."**

The Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung says: "The Irish Free State does not realise that, by offering shelter to the British merchant navy in its ports, it is encroaching on strict neutrality."

The Eireann Government yesterday made an order concerning the import of Dublin, Donegal, and Cork to military centres.

An Army officer is to be placed in charge of each port and ordinary port officials must obey his orders.

A scheme for the evacuation of Irish schoolchildren was announced in Berlin yesterday.

## 5 a.m. Edition

# BRITAIN SEIZES FRENCH FLEET

## Action in Britain and Africa

**ACTION by the British fleet against French warships which refused to accept conditions was offered to keep them out of German hands was described in an official statement issued at 5.32 this morning.**

The Ministry of Information stated—

"It will be recalled that the French Government, relying on the promises of Germany and Italy not to use her Fleet against France's former ally, undertook by the terms of the armistice to allow their Fleet to pass into the hands of the enemy.

"His Majesty's Government, having lost all faith in promises made by the governments of Germany and Italy, felt that they were compelled not only in their own interests but also in the hope of restoring the independence of France and the integrity of the French Empire, to take steps which it was too late to ensure that the French Fleet should not be used against them by the common enemy.

"With this object in view steps were taken in the early morning of July 3 to place in French ports of war in British port under British control."

"This operation was successfully carried out with only two casualties, which occurred owing to a misunderstanding. At the same time French vessels in ports of North Africa were offered certain conditions designed solely for the purpose of keeping them out of German hands.

"It was explained to the officer in command that if some of these conditions was accepted Great Britain was prepared to take every step in order to ensure that none of these vessels should be used against her for the future prosecution of the war.

"His Majesty's Government regretted that the French Admiral in Command at Oran refused to proceed with the inevitable result that action had to be taken against the French vessels in this locality.

"These operations are still proceeding. A statement will be made to Parliament later today by the Prime Minister."

## Hitler refuses aid to save Rumania

**BUCHAREST, Thursday morning.**

"THE German Minister who returned yesterday to Bucharest after a hurried visit to Germany was told to instruct the Rumanian Government that Germany for the present was unable to offer Rumania a treaty of alliance or military assistance.

The impression in Bucharest is that the Reich is anxious to avoid any action which would involve her in open conflict with Russia.

Rumania is reported this morning to have imposed new regulations on the civil population to guard against invasion.

Posters notify the public to hold by force any parachutist who lands. Citizens are required to deposit their firearms with the police, and foreigners are forbidden to travel between towns—Brest and A.P.

New frontier fortified—Page Two.

## Churchill has long talk with Maiky

### Week's second parley

**Mr. Ivan Maiky, Soviet Ambassador in London, had a long talk with Mr. Churchill, the Prime Minister, last night.**

This is the second interview the Ambassador has had with a British Minister this week. On Tuesday evening he saw Mr. R. A. Butler, Minister of War.

In Moscow this week Sir Stafford Cripps, British Ambassador, had a long conference with M. Molotov, Soviet Foreign Minister.

## Public must run some risk

"The Ministry of Information has announced that the R.A.F. have been 'operating' night and day for the past month."

"Germany is having a bad time from our bombers. Yesterday the industrial life of the country would be severely disrupted were it not for the fact that we are not bombing them."

"However there is a good reason to suppose there is a threat of serious damage to the R.A.F. if we do not run some risk, in this greater aim than to the nation as a whole."

## Neutrals banned from the Ruhr

Neutral journalists were banned last night from the Ruhr, the Rhineland and north-west Germany, where the R.A.F. have been 'operating' night and day for the past month.

"Germany is having a bad time from our bombers. Yesterday the industrial life of the country would be severely disrupted were it not for the fact that we are not bombing them."

"However there is a good reason to suppose there is a threat of serious damage to the R.A.F. if we do not run some risk, in this greater aim than to the nation as a whole."

## JAPAN REBUFFED

### Britain said to have refused to close arms route

**It was reported from Tokyo last night that Britain had officially answered "No" to Japan's demand that the Burma route to the armies of Chiang Kai-shek should be closed.**

Sir Robert Craigie, British Ambassador to Tokyo, was expected to head in the British reply last night.

Hongkong blockade flimsy—Black Page.

## Restaurants told 'Cut courses'

**People who eat in expensive restaurants and hotels must take fewer courses in future.**

Lord Woolton, Food Minister, announced that he means to cut out "ostentatious eating," and he is holding conferences with representatives of the trade on the best methods of enforcing restrictions.

If necessary a compulsory order will be issued.

Mr. Robert Boothby, Parliamentary Secretary to the Food Ministry, told the Commons last night that he hoped to make a statement on the discussion next week.

## New food price order

**Lord Woolton, Food Minister, has decided to impose price control on beef and prepared peas at once. It was announced in Parliament yesterday.**

"The Government is aware of the complaints of unjustified increases in the price of peas."



Did you MACLEAN your teeth to-day?

**A.T.S. so!**

**MACLEANS**  
PEROXIDE  
TOOTH PASTE

Obtainable everywhere  
6s. 10p. 6-18

Macleans peroxide pure white tooth paste keeps teeth clean fresh and clean from the moment you use it.

Tuttavia la condizione degli Italiani, non dissimile da quella di altre comunità sorprese dal conflitto nei territori dello schieramento opposto a quello del proprio paese di origine, come ad esempio quella nipponica negli Stati Uniti, induce ad interrogarci se sia possibile, ricorrendo a leggi internazionali, se non evitare almeno contenere gli “effetti collaterali della guerra”, le vessazioni e gli abusi, commessi ai danni delle popolazioni civili inermi, colpevoli solo di essere troppo spesso il lato fragile e privo di voce della Storia.