

The Secret Papers of **HARRY L. HOPKINS**

BY ROBERT E. SHERWOOD

The war in the Pacific becomes desperate. Roosevelt's suggestions on India arouse Churchill. The British agree to 1943 invasion of Europe

PART VIII—WE PREPARE FOR A SECOND FRONT

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT and Winston Churchill announced at the beginning of 1942 that the United Nations had formed a great coalition against the Axis but within one month there were alarming evidences that it was about to be knocked to pieces. The danger came from blows delivered by the reinforced Germans in Africa and the staggering procession of Japanese conquests southward and westward.

The most dreadful of all prospects, which came perilously close to realization, was that of a German breakthrough into the Middle East and a Japanese march through India, which would have enabled the two powerful Axis partners to join up and pool resources. This, of course, did not happen; but there were many moments in subsequent months when the "best

informed sources" would not dare to bet against it.

Harry L. Hopkins was very much worried about public morale. (He always worried a lot more than Roosevelt did.) He was afraid that the flood of bad news would produce a resurgence of isolationist sentiment.

Hopkins at this time was virtually hospitalized, but on January 24th, he drove to the White House for an evening with the President and subsequently noted:

It is perfectly clear that the President is going to have to go through just what Lincoln had to go through with this Senate committee on the war and I fancy he is going to do it with the same imperturbability as did Lincoln.

He is going to have many of the same problems that Lincoln had with

generals and admirals whose records look awfully good but who well may turn out to be the McClellans of this war. The only difference between Lincoln and Roosevelt is that I think Roosevelt will act much faster in replacing these fellows.

This war can't be won with . . . men who are thinking only about retiring to farms somewhere and who won't take great and bold risks, and Roosevelt has got a whole hatful of them in the Army and Navy that will have to be liquidated before we really get on with our fighting.

Fortunately he has got in King, Marshall and Arnold three people who really like to fight.

At this time the Russian front provided almost the only good news of a military nature and Roosevelt kept pressing to get supplies to the Red

Army. In mid-January, he wrote to Admiral Land saying:

I am still terribly disturbed about the fact that an adequate number of ships are not available for Russia. . . . This government has made a firm pledge to Russia and we simply cannot go back on it. . . . You simply must find some ships that can be diverted at once for this Russian business.

Roosevelt cabled Stalin as to progress and added:

Our reports suggest that you are getting on well in pushing back the enemy. I believe that despite our Far East difficulties, we will have that area reinforced in the near future to such an extent that we can stop the Japs, but we are prepared for some further setbacks.

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When President Roosevelt brought MacArthur (shown arriving in Melbourne) from Corregidor it was like ordering the captain to be the first to leave a sinking ship, but Roosevelt did it to bolster the morale of the people of Australia and New Zealand

ON BAKEOVEN GRADE

Web Gordon had the common disease of the country: He thought old. But Ellen had the cure: She acted young

AT ELEVEN o'clock, with September's aromatic heat full upon the land, the Antelope stage appeared on the bench rim five miles above John Whitman's ranch and swept along the loops of Bakeoven Grade.

John Whitman stood in the barn's doorway and felt a puff of hay-fragrant air come from the loft. Every driver has his own style and, noting the reckless way the stage traveled, Whitman guessed it would be Ek Long at the ribbons; someday Ek would turn a stage over on that grade and kill his passengers. The road, leaving the hairpin curves, traveled beside Bakeoven Creek—meager waters now, moistening a rocky bottom—and split the yard of John Whitman's ranch, separating the barn from a long, low house weathered into the universal tan-gray of the country. He saw his wife's face at the kitchen window and he called, "Stage in sight."

She gave him a short glance from a face more thoughtful than usual. Something worked on her mind and would come out when it suited her to let it out. His daughter Ellen stood in the young orchard with Web Gordon, who had come from his father's ranch two miles away; in the last few months Web had done a lot of aimless riding in this direction, and rather suddenly it occurred to John Whitman that his daughter was nineteen and ready to have men on her heels. He thought to himself: Hard to think time's gone that fast, and returned his attention to the stage and to the land, which, rising bench on bench, knew no flatness till it reached the high, rolling desert ten miles away.

That was eastward. To the west, it pitched down over other successive benches until it reached the deep canyon of the Deschutes twenty miles distant. In any direction from this ranch the land was up or down, never level, and though John Whitman had lived here for ten years he still had the occasional feeling that he walked with one leg braced against a tilted earth.

When the stage was two miles away he observed that nobody rode on the boot with Ek Long. He called to his wife, "Light load today," and went into the barn to water and harness the fresh relay horses.

Ellen said in her quietest, gentlest voice, "I wish for the rain to come," and looked beyond Web Gordon to the parched row of fruit trees jammed like spikes into the iron-dry ground. They needed water soon, she thought; it was a quick thought that broke into her other thoughts and went away, leaving her discontented with herself and with Web. What had begun with such rising excitement three months earlier had settled into something silent, something



desperate. Everything turned old too soon in this country; the sun and the wind dried out the grass and the trees and every living thing. Nothing happened on the grade; it was a thousand miles from anywhere. The earth was forever brown and dusty; the ridges lay frozen in shapes that would never change. Even people got frozen into their shapes and lost the power to grow.

Web said, "Never wish for rain. It can drive people crazy."

She knew him, but of late she was uncertain about him. He wasn't talkative. He was a young man with a round hard body and a face made deeper than amber by the sun. It was a restful, easy, healthy face; his eyes had a powdery-blue depth in the sunlight. He looked at her with his honest concern; he felt the change between them, too, and couldn't understand it.

She said, "When we stop wishing, we stop expecting anything—and then we're old."

"No use wishing for things you can't do anything about. Better to keep your mind on things that we know we can get."

"No. People get in a rut by just being practical. You've got to want a lot of things, and want them hard."

His smile came as he watched her with his troubled wonder. "Well," he said, and he had no malice in his voice, "wish for the moon, but you won't get it."

His fingers sought his shirt pocket for cigarette pouch and papers; he rolled a smoke, his calmness not as good a thing to her as it had been before. He liked his life, he endured the monotony and the work and the heat and the dust; he took it all without complaint. She waited for him to say the one

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