BRITAIN AWAITS ORDEAL.

It is now inevitable that the Germans will gain possession of the entire Channel coast from Abbeville to Zeebrugge. They already command the North Sea waterfront of Holland; Denmark is in their grasp, and so is all of Southern and Central Norway. Unless every sign is meaningless, Hitler is bent upon capitalizing these advantages for a determined attempt to subjugate the British Isles.

The British people are reconciled to the ordeal and are ready for it. Apparently nothing has been left to chance. The entire nation, civil and military, on the sea and in the air, is geared to the last detail. Indeed, it might almost be said that Britons, by and large, will be disappointed if Hitler fails to go through with it. Last September they steeled their nerves in expectation of an immediate aerial blitzkrieg. If there was to be a showdown, it were best over and done with. Even if that philosophy did not impress responsible authorities, conscious of Britain's unpreparedness at the time, a lot of people felt let down.

Now they stand again under the same shadow, and with a tense feeling that this time the storm is bound to break. But there is calm, courage and stoicism; the imperishable feats of heroism of the British Army in Flanders are alive in every mind and there is a yearning to be worthy of great traditions so nobly upheld.

Above everything there is curiosity. With complete faith in the Royal Navy, which now faces the supreme test of its history; in the Royal Air Force and the Army, and in their own tenacity and faculties of endurance, the British people today are wondering just how Hitler proposes to launch his heralded invasion.

Talk of a secret weapon leaves them cold. Whatever it may be, there is confidence it will be countered. It is conceded that a certain number of Nazi troops may gain a footing on British soil, but nobody can visualize a substantial force. Hitler's fifty-ton flame-throwing tanks may be amphibious, but Britons will not believe it until they see one swimming the Channel.

Nor can they figure out just how the Germans can mass the necessary troops and the vast quantity of material they will need on the opposite coast without inviting their destruction by the Royal Air Force and the guns of the fleet. They feel, too, that the moment the Nazis move against the British Isles, that will be the moment of a great offensive by the Allied armies across the Somme and the Aisne.

Many competent observers believe that Hitler is at the point of committing his first great blunder, one that may mark the turn of the tide of war and ultimate disaster for German arms; it may be the beginning of the end of Hitler's grandiose bid for world hegemony. He started on the road to defeat, says George Bernard Shaw, when he frightened the British people.

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