



**Yugoslavia
Liberated**



MARSHAL TITO

WHEN Yugoslavia was established after the first World War there were some who doubted and some who hoped. Some doubted whether unity would ever be possible in a state that included six different racial groups, three religions, two alphabets, and two languages. But others hoped that unity would be forged by the will and determination of the Yugoslav people—a people who knew that their common thirst for brotherhood and freedom, and their common South Slav origin and tradition, could prove stronger than all their diversities of history, language and religion.

For the first twenty years it looked as if all the doubts had been confirmed and all the hopes blighted. Between the two wars Yugoslavia was a prey to continuous crises and upheavals. Political assassinations and economic troubles; dictatorial governments at loggerheads with an embittered and disillusioned people—such was the picture.

No wonder that, when Hitler turned East, in 1941, it looked as if Yugoslavia was finished. Prince Paul, the Regent, went to Berchtesgaden to sign away his country's independence, and the Nazis chalked up another "bloodless" victory. But Hitler and Paul had forgotten the Yugoslav people. On March 27, 1941, they demonstrated in the streets, overthrew their treacherous rulers, and defied the Axis. Hitler's answer was immediate. Ten days later bombs rained down on Belgrade, and the panzer columns of Germany, Italy, Hungary and Bulgaria rolled across the frontiers. In another ten days the war was over.

Under the blows of the Axis, the corrupt, incompetent, undemocratic Yugoslav administration and army collapsed and disintegrated. The peoples' revolution had come too late.

But it had not come in vain. While Hitler carved the country into eight different pieces and set up a Serb Quisling and a Croat Quisling, the peoples' leaders were already planning how to organise illegal popular resistance. A small band of brave men, led by the metal-worker Josip Broz, set themselves the task of rousing the Yugoslav people to achieve their own liberation. Now, after three years, this task has almost been completed and, in the process, the unknown Josip Broz has become Marshal Tito, universally acclaimed as one of the great figures of liberated Europe.

One can give a bald recital of the successive steps in the fight for liberation—the first small sabotage actions, the local sorties to capture arms, the liberation of isolated villages, the linking up of whole areas; the appearance of democratic administrative committees, the granting of equal status to women for the first time, the combat against illiteracy in the backward areas, the development of a regular General Staff and Army Command, the establishment of military liaison with the Allies, the setting-up of AVNOJ—the peoples' parliament, the transformation of the émigré London government into an organ supporting the liberation fight, the final victorious battles with the retreating German and Quisling forces—all these stages can be listed and yet no such list can

adequately convey the magnitude and grandeur of the achievement.

Armed with a few obsolete rifles and machine guns, Tito and his partisans—75 per cent. of whom were under 25 years of age—struck at the most powerful military machine in the world; isolated from all contact with the free world, and hounded by the Quisling mercenaries, they planned and organised and rallied the people though they knew that capture meant certain death at the hands of the sadists whose tortures sicken and numb the imagination; when leaders were struck down, when whole villages were massacred, when they and their families were cold, and homeless, and hungry, when the faint-hearted gave up the unequal struggle in despair, they never lost heart or hope. Undaunted, they fought on, and fought through to victory.

They had to fight not only against the Germans and Italians and Hungarians and Bulgarians, and against the Quisling Nedich and the Quisling Pavelich, but also against General Mihailovich, who, while proclaiming allegiance to the Allies, made common cause with the Italians and finally with the Germans, and who, while using every device of calumny and treachery to weaken and divide and confuse the liberation struggle, brazenly claimed its hard-won military successes as his own. Though the Mihailovich myth is now exploded (and though the General himself is now in flight with the retreating Germans and Quislings), the Yugoslavs will not easily forget the incalculable harm done by him—and by his high-placed backers in the London émigré

cabinets—to the cause of Yugoslav brotherhood and unity.

But, despite every obstacle, this unity has now been achieved. It is an unbreakable unity, forged in the fire of battle and suffering, a unity never previously known in the chequered history of the Yugoslav peoples. In the Liberation Army, Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Montenegrins, Macedonians and Bosnians all fight together in absolute equality. In the Peoples' Parliament, Communists and Catholics, simple peasants and university professors, elderly politicians and young guerrillas all deliberate in unity. This is the unity that guarantees the future reborn Yugoslavia, a Yugoslavia in which the old corrupt centralist dictatorial system is already being replaced by a vigorous democratic local administration and a free federal government that safeguards the individuality of all its constituent members. No wonder that this far-sighted federal unity is already held up as a pattern for a wider Balkan federation, and heralded as the key to a peaceful and prosperous future for the whole of that war-scarred peninsula.

But though the future is full of hope, the present is bleak and grim. The Yugoslav people have made a vital contribution to the Allied cause; but now that the battle is ending, the people are exhausted and their land is exhausted. It is certain that the coming winter will add to their already almost unbearable hardships. We must send them practical help immediately. Thus we can salute a brave people, and help to seal the bond of friendship between our two democracies.

SOME DATES

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|-------|-----------|----|---|
| 1918. | Dec. | 1 | Yugoslav State established |
| 1921. | June | 28 | Centralised Constitution adopted |
| 1929. | Jan. | 6 | Royal Dictatorship established |
| 1934. | Oct. | 9 | King Alexander assassinated |
| 1941. | Mar. | 25 | Prince Paul's Government signs Axis Pact |
| | Mar. | 27 | Peoples' Uprising Overthrows Paul |
| | April | 6 | Axis Invasion: Bombardment of Belgrade |
| | April | 10 | Croat Quisling Pavelich Government proclaimed |
| | April | 16 | Slovene Freedom Front formed |
| | April | 17 | Royal Yugoslav Army capitulates |
| | July | 13 | Montenegrin uprising |
| | July | | First Serbian uprising |
| | August | | Serbian Quisling Government under General Nedich set up |
| | Nov. | | 1st German offensive |
| 1942. | January | | 2nd German offensive |
| | Mar.-June | | 3rd German offensive |
| | Nov. | 26 | 1st Partisan Congress (<i>Bihach</i>) |
| 1943. | Jan.-Mar. | | 4th German offensive |
| | May | | 5th German offensive |
| | Sept. | | British Military Mission arrives |
| | Sept. | | Surrender of Italy |
| 1944. | Oct.-Jan. | | 6th German offensive |
| | Nov. | 29 | 2nd Partisan Congress—AVNOJ (<i>Jajce</i>) |
| | May | | 7th German offensive |
| | July | 7 | Subasich Government formed in London |
| | Aug.12-13 | | Churchill—Tito talks in Italy |
| | Sept. | | Red Army reaches Yugoslav frontiers |

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(British.) Registered under the War Charities Act, 1940.

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THIS EXHIBITION HAS BEEN PLANNED IN ORDER TO BRING HOME TO YOU WHAT THE YUGOSLAV PEOPLE AND THE ARMY OF LIBERATION AND PARTISAN DETACHMENTS ARE DOING; THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO OUR COMMON STRUGGLE; AND WHAT THEY HAVE SUFFERED.

A British Officer, just back from a year with the Partisans says:

“Unless help is sent to Yugoslavia in the next six months this heroic people will be subjected to indescribable hardships The importance of EARLY relief cannot be overstressed.”

Will you help NOW, and thus demonstrate the sympathy and admiration felt by the British people for the heroic fight of Yugoslavia?

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