

MR. ANTHONY EDEN

ON

RED ARMY DAY

The following is the text of the speech of Mr. Anthony Eden, Foreign Secretary, at Red Army Day meeting at the Albert Hall at 3 p.m. today :-

This week our Allies, the people of the U.S.S.R., celebrate the 25th anniversary of the foundation of their heroic army.

His Majesty's Government have asked me to come to this celebration to pay their tribute and also, I know, the tribute of British people everywhere to the valour of the Red Army.

During the long and anxious months of retreat our admiration and our sympathy went out in full measure to the men of this army in their dogged, unbroken resistance.

Today they reap at last the reward of their bitter struggle.

We share their rejoicing that the tide has turned and is sweeping forward in a surge of breathless victories.

Never in all its long proud history has the German army sustained such an unmitigated disaster as the Red Army has inflicted upon it in the Battle of Stalingrad.

Hitler has been out-generalled, out-manceuvred and out-fought.

We have had one bit of really good news lately. It was with a feeling of deep relief that we all read that Hitler was to continue to control the German war machine. We have not forgotten and the Russian people will not forget the boasts of our common enemy.

As long ago as the autumn of 1941 we were assured that the soviet armed had been destroyed, indeed annihilated. Only five months ago Hitler pledged his word to the German people that his troops would take Stalingrad.

Today the armies of the Soviet Union have forced him to stand before Germany as the man who is personally responsible for the slaughter of over a quarter of a million of the best of his own troops.

For it is Hitler's intuition which has broken his army on the rock of Soviet determination and Soviet gallantry.

In three months the Red Army has reconquered all the territory wrested from it by the Germans during the summer of last year, and more besides.

Much more besides, for the Red Army has driven into the minds of the German people the lesson that German troops can be defeated and hurled into the confusion of retreat. We are proud that our own 8th Army has taught Rommel that lesson too.

Hitler's Grand Army, like Napoleon's, has found that there is a deadly risk in a trial of strength against Russian patriotism, against the Russian people's capacity to endure the sternest sacrifice, against the great spaces of the Russian motherland.

On this anniversary occasion we pay tribute to every department of the Red Army, to the High Command, under the supreme direction of Mr. Stalin himself, for their masterly strategy, to the Generals in the field for its brilliant execution, to the junior officers of every rank for their gallant and skilled leadership of the troops, to the non-commissioned officers and men for their stubborn endurance in adversity and the ardour with which they have swung over to the offensive.

To the gallant men of the Red Air Force, and to all those responsible for overcoming the appalling difficulties of communication and supply.

Not least I think this country would wish to pay tribute to the deathless courage of the guerilla forces of the Soviet Union.

And here let me add one other tribute which is of a domestic character.

To the men of the Royal Navy and the Merchant Marine who, in all seasons and in all weathers have braved the perils of that northern route to carry munitions and supplies of all kinds to our Russian allies. Proudly have they maintained the bravest British traditions of the sea.

We recognise in the successful defence of their motherland by the Red Army the triumph of a nation united against the aggressor.

We recognise the spirit of the Soviet peoples as akin to that which filled the hearts of everyone in these islands when after Dunkirk the enemy challenged our own determination never to submit though we stood alone.

But here I must utter a word of warning.

Where Hitler's generalship has failed the wiles of Goebbels are now in play.

Every effort has been made and will be made to foster suspicion and to encourage dissension between the Allies.

All the old paraphernalia is out again.

A part in this puppet show is played by the bogey of Bolshevism.

Fortunately we do not find it hard to recognise this highly-coloured figure.

He is an old friend, a survival from the earliest days of the Nazi regime.

A good deal of the sawdust has run out of him and he does not answer very convincingly to the manipulation of Goebbels, but still it is as well to recall his record.

He was used to frighten Europe while Austria was seized, while Czechoslovakia was swallowed and Poland threatened. Poland to her eternal glory refused to submit.

Now this Red bogey is out again in the company of another figure.

We are asked to contemplate Hitler as the saviour of European civilisation.

This figure lacks something in 1943.

The population of the occupied countries will find this prescription hard to swallow and the neutrals too.

The saviour of civilisation, what a mockery.

Hitler, the only begetter of this hideous war, Hitler who having failed to subdue us in the long months of '40 and early '41 when we stood between him and the dominion of the world, turned upon the Soviet Union and in cold blood, without ever the formality of an ultimatum, attacked the nation with whom he had pledged friendship less than two years before.

Hitler and his butcher followers who have slaughtered hundreds of thousands of innocent Czechs and Poles, Greeks, Norwegians, Yugoslavs, Dutch, Belgians, Frenchmen and Russians.

Hitler the ravager of Warsaw, of Rotterdam, Belgrade and Coventry, and of countless Russian cities.

Hitler the apostle of the doctrine of Herrenvolk, the doctrine that all Europe must slave and starve for the German overlord.

Hitler who has abolished the rule of law even in his own land.

There is only one way that this man can save mankind.

Let him lead this monstrous Nazi machine which he created to utter destruction and let him become for his own Germany and for the world such an awful monument to evil-doing and evil-thinking that men will be forever warned to combine in time to prevent the rise of such another.

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The latest phase of German propaganda has another theme: "Hold on a little longer and the Anglo-Saxons and the Russians will fall out".

As you all know that hope has been dashed already.

In May last we signed here in London the Anglo-Soviet Treaty of Alliance. We are not only agreed to work together for the utter destruction of the Axis in war, we are agreed on the broad principles which will underlie our collaboration in peace.

We are agreed to build up a post-war system which shall be the negation of all that Hitler's new order stands for.

Hitler's enemies are indeed the United Nations. Premier Stalin himself on November 6 gave Hitler a direct answer on behalf of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. He spoke of the coalition of this country, the Soviet Union and the United States which in spite of differences in ideology and structure would fight against Hitler, the common enemy.

The people of this country accept that programme. We endorse Mr. Stalin's statement that the Anglo-Soviet Treaty marked a historic turning-point in the relations between our two countries.

At this moment British and American forces, the comrades of the Red Army, with air and sea power are fighting on the shores of the Mediterranean to drive the enemy back to the continent of Europe where we are eager to strike home upon him.

The air forces of the Allies are pounding with ever-increasing weight the factories and communications which supply the Axis forces.

To-day we salute the Red Army, the true successors of those who fought against the Teuton knights in the days of Alexander Nevsky, against the would-be conqueror Charles XIIth, against the Grand Army of the Emperor Napoleon.

We salute and mourn their gallant dead. They have died defending their motherland against the most treacherous and ruthless of invaders, against the most awful menace that has imperilled western civilisation.

The victories of Stalingrad, Rostov and Kharkov are avenging them. We applaud these glorious feats of arms.

We look forward to the victories that are to come, to the final victory that will be won together.

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FOREIGN OFFICE NEWS DEPARTMENT