

HISTORY AT TUPPENCE A TIME

By "THID"

THE old man with the red sore on his hand where he has jammed it in a door stands every morning in the cold at the corner. There the winds blow and the trams disgorge the blue-nosed plebs at seven-fifty-five, and the white collars at eight-twenty-five, and the bosses at eight-fifty-five, and after that the cars go past with the petrol restrictions and the super-tax.

In one place he stands all the time and his feet get as cold as his nose and his ears and his hands where the bruise is raw. If he moved, it would be better for him but he must be quick to catch the sight of a hand groping into the pocket and have the paper ready folded. He is old besides, and old men do not jump about and enjoy the freshness of the frost when the winter is in their joints and they have a hand that throbs in time to the too-slow beating of a heart that's old and worn like their boots and their coats with the elbow roughly sewn together and the collar edge gaping.

In the morning he must be up before the first light comes over the hills while the frost still presses the smoke down upon the city. In his tiny room the gas ring does not heat much more than the tin kettle perched upon it. His night-wear is his underwear, and he pulls the trousers and the coat over him and hurries shivering with his tea making hot little tunnels down his throat, his backbone bent, and his shoulders hunched against the threat of the enemy cold that invisibly fills the dragged room. His light is dim, and outside there is the darkness of winter, and inside him the darkness of age, too.

Halfpennies for Gas and Tea

But he goes through the grey streets and sees the masts of the ships and the red funnels over the buildings dim in the haze. He gets his bundle of papers, folds them ready for his custom, and stands waiting beside his billboard with the headlines announcing his wares: history at tuppence a time, history at tuppence a time.

SARAJEVO he sells at tuppence, and ARMISTICE and PEACE and VER-SAILLES, and all at tuppence in the morning. FRENCH IN THE SAAR, and another halfpence for his gas-ring and pinch of tea, and BRUENING GOES, and HITLER, HITLER, HITLER, GOERING, GOEBBELS, and all at tuppence, with his sales slowly growing and the years coming harder all the time upon him. DOLFUSS IN AUSTRIA, Mussolini and Austria, Dolfuss Assassinated, and then HITLER IN AUSTRIA.

The Names Grow Larger

All at tuppence, with the early morning crowds hesitating at the billboard and wondering and taking the old man's papers into office and factory. CZECHOSLOVAKIA; the names jump inevitably out of the poster, morning after morning; every year growing larger, and the people more and more go to work with



tuppence in their pockets, to buy POLAND, NORWAY, and to watch the tide flow fast across the dikes; HOLLAND, BELGIUM, QUISLING, Down with the Reds, Reynaud out, Gamelin out, Chamberlain out, Leopold out, Haakon out, Wilhelmina out, and all the time HITLER here, HITLER there, HITLER everywhere, and all for tuppence a copy.

MORE LIVELINESS Conduct of War Urged by Labour M.P.

But that morning his sales are not very high, and that night he wonders if summer in the north will keep him warm when winter comes in the south.

STIRRINGS IN WEST German Units Active

and winter coming to him with spring pushing through the old worn soils of Europe.

BRITISH IN NORWAY To Operate Speedily

Haakon out, Chamberlain out, and in the morning and in the afternoon and all day the trams hesitate beside the poster, and faces with no smiles gaze out to see what the old man sells that day for tuppence.

ENEMY PUSH TO COAST Abbeville Claimed to Have Been Reached

It is butter for the old man, and new bread, and milk and sugar for his tea, the gas alight longer, soles for his boots. It is news for the crowds, news at tuppence a copy.

GERMANS CLOSE IN

It is jam on the bread, and cream on the milk, and a warm wool jersey for the winter mornings, all at tuppence a copy.

DUNKIRK ABANDONED Historic Operation Ended 30,000 British Casualties

It was officially stated, it is categorically denied, it is announced, it is understood, semi-official sources state, a high-placed official says, withdrawal, advance, air battle, sea battle, statement in the

House, Hitler, Churchill, Hitler, Churchill, Churchill, CHURCHILL.

ITALY ENTERS WAR DUCE ANNOUNCES DECISION "Must Solve Problem of Frontiers" Declares Everything Done to Uphold Peace

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And all that day and that night and the next morning the people stick by

the radio and buy it all in black and white at tuppence a copy: tuppence for meat, tuppence for vegetables, tuppence for fruit, tuppence for light, tuppence for clothes, tuppence for heat, tuppence for the old man who stands each morning in the cold with the world flying in headlines all around him and his collar frayed.

PEACE DELEGATES

TERMS ON WAY TO FRANCE FIGHTING CONTINUES

LYONS OCCUPIED BY THE ENEMY

Pétain in the news, Laval, Baudouin, HITLER, Mussolini, CHURCHILL, French Fleet, Italian Navy, scuttling, skulking, Capuzzo, air battles over England, R.A.F. raids, much damage done, no casualties, little material damage, civilians killed, bases bombed, and all at tuppence a copy.

FRENCH PROTEST

BRITISH FLEET'S ACTION

"A Repugnant Act"

Relations Severed

NAZI INFLUENCE SEEN

Roll out the barrel my love will keep me warm, WILKIE FOR PRESIDENT, Tokio, Burma, NOTE TO BRITAIN, all news for the old man, all headlines, all at tuppence.

Some day it will be the end of the world and the old man will see it on his poster

and sell it at tuppence, and wonder as he sells

how well the news will sell next day.

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