

Saturday, Aug. 19, 1944

Rats Deserting Sinking Paris

Laval and Japs Reported Fleeing; Radio Silent In Threatened City

Word from Paris via enemy and neutral sources yesterday was that French collaborationist officials and Japanese diplomats had fled, that the city's police were still on strike and that Parisians thronged all the churches as American armored columns swept closer.

The German-controlled Paris and Vichy Radio networks had been silent since Thursday evening.

Vichy Radio was back on the air at 7.30 PM yesterday, but Paris Radio remained silent.

Laval, Darnand and other Vichyites fled from Paris to Metz, according to a United Press report quoting a French resistance leader who reached the British front from Paris. The whereabouts of Marshal Petain were not known.

Japanese diplomats and other Japanese nationals left Paris for Berlin Thursday, according to a Tokyo broadcast recorded by U.S. monitors and quoted by Associated Press.

Short of Food, Coal

Food and coal shortages in the capital were increasingly serious, gas and electric power were cut off, traffic was paralyzed and communal kitchens were set up in the streets, according to German reports reaching Stockholm and quoted by UP.

A spokesman of the Allied Supreme Command, speaking over ABSIE radio, exhorted:

"Policemen of Paris: In case Darnand should order you to Nancy, refuse to obey. Hide in Paris. Do not leave the capital under any pretext. The day is not far off when you will have to rise and chase out the enemy and his accomplices."

As to the Vichy government, Reuter's continental observer wrote: "There is some doubt whether the Vichy government still exists at this moment—even formally. It has certainly ceased to exercise effective authority in any part of France, or even to have a declared policy."