

Café Casablanca *The World*

Casablanca

Casablanca (or Dar-el-Beida, as the Moslems call it) was founded by the Portuguese in 1645 over the still-smoking ruins of the ancient port of Anfa. It is the fourth-largest city in Africa, with a population of over 250,000 before the war, about 30% European. In the past two years the European population has swollen with the influx of refugees fleeing the fascist armies. Many are Jews from all over Europe, hoping to find a safe haven among Casablanca's large Jewish community. Most of the refugees would like to continue their flight to North or South America but are stranded in Casablanca by lack of funds or proper documentation.

In layout, Casablanca is really two cities: the crowded, labyrinthine old town, the Casbah, is surrounded by the new, more open French-built city. (The streets of the Casbah are so constricted that automobiles cannot even enter the district.) The central point of the new city is the Place de France, from which all the main streets radiate. At the Place de France can be found the Hotel Casablanca and the Police Headquarters.

Since the installation of the Vichy government Casablanca has been virtually under police rule. The Vichy police are an arm of the military, and can call upon reinforcements from the nearby Army barracks if required to maintain order. A concentration camp has been erected outside the city for the incarceration of Resistance troublemakers and political prisoners. There is a curfew on the streets of Casablanca from midnight until dawn (except in the Casbah, where it cannot be enforced). Anyone found on the streets between these times is subject to arrest.

Police Headquarters

Police Headquarters is one of the busiest places in the city. Most bureaucratic business of interest to foreigners and refugees must be conducted at Police Headquarters. The Headquarters building was once a Portuguese fortification, and its basement is a vast, commodious, and impregnable jail.

The Prefect of Police is the most powerful man in the city. The Prefect has the first voice in day-to-day matters of law and order, though it is known that he must defer to the Sureté (National Police) on matters of national importance — and if the German Commission of the Armistice asks for anything, the Prefect generally supplies it. Still, the Sureté and the Nazis do not concern themselves with everyday affairs, and there the Prefect is paramount.

Rick's Café Américain

"Everybody comes to Rick's": *Rick's Café* is the social center for the city's expatriate Europeans. Located on the edge of the Casbah, it is the place where the two worlds of Casablanca meet to discuss business of all sorts, where criminals from the Casbah consort with naval officers and European aristocrats. The police find it useful to have a known center for refugee business, so they turn a blind eye to the café's illegal gambling tables and tolerate a certain level of illicit transaction.

The Blue Parrot

Located deep in the Casbah itself is the legendary *Blue Parrot*, an innocent-enough café by day that becomes a wide-open gambling hell by night. (It is said that *anything* can be gotten at the Blue Parrot — for the right price.) The Blue Parrot is reputed to be a hangout for all the Casbah's most notorious criminals, a place where even the police dare not go. Law-abiding Europeans are advised to avoid the Blue Parrot — but there are always thrill-seekers who will visit the place despite all warnings. Frequently, they receive more thrills than they bargained for.

The Bazaar

Though prices of everyday goods are low in Casablanca — a person can live comfortably on 50,000 Fr. (about \$650) a year — prices of goods and services in high demand among the refugee population may be wildly inflated. Merchandise with military value is available only on the black market, if at all.

To buy things on the black market in the bazaar, *you must know the name of the business you want to buy from*. The names of bazaar black market locations are an information commodity.

Some typical Casablanca prices:

Hotel room (daily): 200 Fr.
Good cigar: 10 Fr.
Decent meal: 50 Fr.
Gourmet meal (for two): 1,500 Fr.
Bottle of champagne: 350 Fr.
Moroccan *vin ordinaire*: 20 Fr.
One dozen roses: 250 Fr.
Box of chocolates: 200 Fr.
Diamond ring:
 1/2 carat: 10,000 Fr.
 1 carat: 50,000 Fr.
 2 carats: 250,000 Fr.

Man's suit: 1,500 Fr.
Tuxedo: 8,000 Fr.
Evening gown: 10,000 Fr.
Native garb: 500 Fr.
Tailor, per hour (rush job): 200 Fr.

Boat rental for sport fishing (daily): 1,500 Fr.
Camel for ride into desert (daily): 100 Fr.
Motorcar: available only to authorities due to critical gasoline shortage.

Train ticket to Oran: 2,000 Fr.
Plane ticket to Lisbon: 12,000 Fr.

Typical bribe for minor official: 1,000 Fr.
Pistol: not available
Medical supplies: not available

Leaving Casablanca

Exit Visas: By order of the Police, no one may leave Casablanca without an official Exit Visa, obtainable only at police headquarters. Those leaving on short local excursions may apply for a Day Pass.

Leaving By Train: The train runs only to the northeast, to Algeria and the port of Oran (i.e., back toward the war zones). It arrives every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday at noon, and leaves every Sunday, Wednesday, and Friday at noon.

Leaving By Road: The coastal roads to the North are closely guarded, and only local and farm traffic is allowed. The roads to the interior dwindle to nothing a few miles after entering the territories of the nomadic tribes. South of Casablanca the road leads to Marrakech, beyond which is nothing but the trackless Sahara.

Leaving by Sea: Since the war no passenger lines dock at Casablanca, and the local fishing-fleet is rigidly regulated with Day Passes. Cargo ships still use the port (one of the largest artificial harbors in the world), as the demand for phosphate from Morocco's mines has only increased, but cargo ships accept no passengers from this port, and each is inspected by customs agents before it leaves. There is still a substantial French naval presence in the port, dominated by the mighty battleship *Jean Bart*, which has recently completed repairs to the damage it sustained in the British torpedo attack last August.

Leaving By Plane: Only one regular flight still serves Casablanca's Cazes Airport: the bi-weekly Air Portugal flight to Lisbon. This flight leaves Wednesdays at 9 p.m. and Sundays at noon. These days, it is never overbooked.

Vichy France

The Vichy French government rules in Casablanca. When France fell to Hitler's armies in 1940, about 60% of it was occupied by German troops. The remaining (largely southern) portion of the country was allowed to maintain its own government as long as it was organized along fascist lines and was largely subservient to Germany. The government of unoccupied France was established in the city of Vichy, and Marshal Philippe Pétain, beloved military leader of World War I, was selected as its head. The 84-year-old Pétain was largely a powerless and

befuddled figurehead who could do nothing to prevent the reorganization of France into a fascist state. The Republic was declared dead, and the traditional slogan "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" was replaced by the ominous "Work, Family, Fatherland". Anti-Jewish laws have been passed, and the Sureté (the French national police) has begun spying on its own citizens.

A few French Army units have fled to Britain, and these, under General Charles De Gaulle, form the Army of Free France. The Free French are most powerful in the French colonies and possessions in Africa and Asia, where many governors have refused to accept the rule of Vichy. Most units of the famous Foreign Legion declared for the Free French. But De Gaulle's forces are too few to be more than a nuisance to the fascist powers.

The powerful French Navy remained loyal to Vichy, and swore to remove themselves from the war — but the British, fearful that France's modern warships would fall into German control, attacked the French fleet in the Algerian port of Oran last July and largely disabled it. The Vichy government was incensed, and declared Britain the enemy of France — and indeed, many Frenchmen turned against their old rival, sublimating their anger and shame at defeat by Germany with outrage at the "treachery" of Great Britain. This feeling has been encouraged by the intensely anti-British Admiral Jean Darlan, who is currently premier of the Vichy government.

Most French citizens regard the Vichy government as a necessary evil. They don't like it, but there's not much they can do about it, and at least they're not being ruled by *foreigners*. The French are a practical people, and make do where they must. Those who cannot tolerate fascism, regardless of what face it wears, commit solitary acts of sabotage or join the nascent French Resistance movement. The members of the Resistance engage in anti-German espionage and sabotage while preparing for the day when the Allies will return to France.

French Morocco

French Morocco is a large nation situated on the northwest coast of Africa. It is bordered on the west by the Atlantic Ocean, on the north by Tangier (Spanish Morocco), on the east by the rugged Atlas Mountains (and beyond them Algeria), and on the south by the vast Sahara. It is populated mainly by the Berbers, a fractious tribal people converted to Mohammedism in the 7th century. Stable farmers near the coasts, the Berbers are mainly nomads in the interior.

Until this century Morocco was ruled by an independent Sultan. Around 1900 the French and Germans began a rivalry for influence in Morocco, with the French gradually gaining the upper hand. France wrung a series of trade concessions from the Sultan. Moroccan resentment of the French presence grew, until a series of incidents in 1912 gave France the excuse she needed to impose "Protectorate" status on Morocco. After that, the Sultan still ruled in theory, but the French ruled

in fact. Moslem law still applies to “native Moroccans,” but a separate French judiciary handles all cases involving Europeans.

Historical Background

The Recent Past

For most people, the last dozen years have seen the world go from bad to worse. The Great Depression, global in scope, threw untold millions out of work and cast a pall over everyone. It seemed to many that capitalism was in its death throes, that democracy had had its day, that the only hope for progress was in new socioeconomic systems. Some turned to socialism and communism as the only rational alternatives, believing that power must be put in the hands of all the people, but Stalin’s oppressive regime in the Soviet Union was a poor advertisement for these remedies. More successful was fascism, a system of tight economic and social control governed by a small group, usually with a single powerful leader. Fascism was attractive because it was nationalistic, arousing powerful feelings of national pride; it offered an end to economic chaos through state control of business; and it tolerated no disruptive social change or dissidence, removing all those who differed in opinion or behavior from the majority.

Fascism’s goal was universal conformity, and thus it was the natural enemy of pluralistic democracy. Its espousal of power-from-above also made it the enemy of all socialists and communists. But fascism needed enemies to survive; its aggressive nationalism worked to turn its people’s anger toward enemies from outside the state, who were held to be inherently inferior. Citizens of fascist states were led to believe that they were destined to conquer all such inferiors, and extend their rule until the world inevitably bowed to the superior fascist system. In order to facilitate this process, the fascist nations formed an alliance that came to be known as the “Axis”.

The militarists who ruled Japan were the first of the Axis powers to go to war, invading Manchuria in 1932, and central China in 1936. The democracies showed little interest in Japanese ambitions at first, preferring to pay attention to events in Europe, where the Spanish Civil War provided a conflict in which the supporters of socialism and fascism could vie for supremacy.

With Germany’s invasion of Poland the Axis had finally pushed France and England (the “Allies”) too far. The Allies declared war on Germany, but they were unready for conflict, and avoided attacking Germany directly until the Germans took the initiative and invaded France itself. The French and British armies were defeated by the German *blitzkrieg*, and France fell to the Nazis. Most of the country was occupied by Germany; the rest, “unoccupied France”, was allowed to rule itself under a puppet government established in Vichy. Those who would still fight for freedom had to leave the country or join the French Resistance.

The World in 1941

By late 1941 nearly the entire Eastern hemisphere is at war. This is a war of ideology: fascism (the Axis nations) opposed by democracy (led by the British) and communism (the Soviet Union). Neutrality, an easy position to take when one is far from the conflict, has become ever more difficult to sustain as the war draws more and more of the world into its vortex. Every day more people are pressed to decide whether they stand for Order or Liberty.

Japan controls most of China and Indo-China but has not yet attacked the British enclaves of Hong Kong and Singapore. Japan replies to American protests that its only interest is the creation of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere, and it has no intention of interfering with American Pacific trade.

Germany is riding high as a result of its victories of the past two years. Hitler controls almost all of Europe: in the East his armies have pushed to the gates of Moscow, while in the West only Great Britain still holds out. Germany clearly has the finest army in the world, and Hitler seems to many to be a military genius. German victory seems inevitable, and Nazism looks like the wave of the future. Most Germans who do not support the Nazi party wholeheartedly have been cowed into submission and will not oppose it. Hitler’s “final solution” to the Jewish “problem” — genocide — has not yet been implemented, and no one would believe in such a program if they were told of it.

Italy failed in its invasion of Greece and has suffered repeated military defeats at the hands of the British. Mussolini has clearly become the junior partner of the Axis.

Hungary, Bulgaria, and Rumania have all become “allied” to Germany, Rumania less willingly than the other two, who have been awarded parts of Rumania in return for their cooperation with the Axis.

Austria, Poland, and Czechoslovakia have been absorbed wholly or partially into the Third Reich. The remaining parts are occupied by German troops or ruled by puppet governments.

Norway, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Yugoslavia, and Greece have all been occupied by German troops. Resistance movements in all these countries are just beginning to appear. Perhaps the fiercest Resistance movement is that of the Yugoslav partisans. The spirit of the Greeks has been largely broken by an intense famine caused by crop failure and the shipping of what little food was harvested to Germany.

Sweden, Switzerland, Ireland, Turkey, Spain and Portugal remain neutral. Spain’s fascist government is definitely pro-German, but Franco has so far resisted Hitler’s attempts to draw Spain into the war on the side of the Axis. Portugal maintains trade with Great Britain but will not join the Allies for fear of Spain. Turkey nervously watches both the Germans across the Greek border and the Russians across the Caucasus.

The Soviet Union has suffered incredible losses in its defense against the German invasion, and the victorious Germans have pushed to within a few miles of Moscow. Few western observers believe Russia can hang on against the *blitzkrieg* much longer.

Great Britain still holds out despite the daily pounding of massive German bombing raids and the steady loss of her merchant marine to the depredations of the U-Boats. Outside the Soviet Union, Britain and her Empire is the focus for anti-fascist resistance around the world. She has no friends left in Europe, and looks in hope to the Western hemisphere for support and succour. Britain will surely fall if her lifeline to the United States is cut. Even if the convoys keep coming in; when Russia is conquered the collapse of the Eastern front will release scores of divisions for use in an invasion of Britain.

The United States, though increasingly pro-British and anti-Axis, stubbornly maintains its neutrality in the hope of keeping out of the cataclysm that grips the eastern half of the world. Europe has fought its own wars for hundreds of years — it's no business of Americans if they want to fight again.

Timeline

1939, September: World War II Begins

September: Germany invades Poland and annexes Danzig. In accordance with their treaties with Poland, Britain and France declare war on Germany. President Roosevelt declares the United States is neutral.

After two weeks, the Polish defenses completely collapse. The Soviet Union invades Poland from the East, and Russia and Germany split the country.

December: The Soviet Union invades Finland in an open land grab. Surprisingly, the heroic Finns hold out until March, when they agree to peace terms ceding part of their territory to the Soviets.

1940:

April: Germany invades and conquers Denmark and Norway. Victor Laszlo begins organizing Resistance groups in Nazi-conquered territories.

May: German troops invade Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg, then attack France from the north. The Allied armies are unable to halt the progress of the German *blitzkrieg*.

June: The French and British armies are defeated by the *Wehrmacht*; the remnants of the British army are evacuated from the port of Dunkirk. France surrenders.

July: The British Royal Navy shells the French Fleet in the harbor of Oran, largely disabling it. The French battleship *Jean Bart*, in Casablanca harbor, is attacked by British torpedo planes and put out of action for months.

August: The German air offensive known as "The Battle of Britain" begins.

Germany annexes Luxembourg and the province of Alsace-Lorraine.

September: The U.S. and Great Britain conclude the "Lend-Lease" agreement, whereby obsolete American

destroyers, desperately needed by the British to keep their naval supply lines open, are traded for British military bases in the Western hemisphere.

The "London Blitz" begins: Hitler attempts to destroy London, and the British will to fight, through massive air attacks. The attack fails to achieve its goal, and Hitler's planned invasion of Great Britain is postponed indefinitely.

Germany, Italy, and Japan sign the Tripartite Pact. Italy invades Egypt.

October: German troops "invited" to enter Rumania. Germany needs Rumanian oil.

Hitler tries to persuade Franco's Spain to enter the war on the side of the Axis. Franco demurs.

November: Hungary and Slovakia join the Axis.

December: The British force the Italians to abandon Egypt.

1941:

January: The British pursue the Italians into Libya and Tunisia.

February: The German Afrika Korps arrives in Libya and attacks the British forces. Germany occupies Bulgaria.

March: British troops arrive in Greece to help against the Italians.

Spain annexes the Territory of Tangier, north of Morocco.

April: German, Italian and Hungarian troops invade and conquer Yugoslavia. Greece, which had held out for months in the face of a massive Italian attack, falls in three weeks when the Germans invade.

May: German paratroop forces land in Crete and defeat the island's British defenders.

June: Germany begins a massive invasion of the Soviet Union; Hitler's forces make rapid progress.

July: The Japanese occupy Indo-China; the Vichy government has no choice but to concede it to Japan.

August: Active French Resistance, largely organized by Victor Laszlo, begins in occupied and unoccupied France.

September: Kiev falls to the Germans.

October: The French Resistance assassinates a German officer in Nantes; in reprisal, the Germans capture and kill 50 suspected Resistance members, including Victor Laszlo.

November: The Germans close in on Moscow. Heavy fighting between the British and Germans in North Africa.

General Weygand, Delegate-General of Vichy France in North Africa, is dismissed for non-cooperation with Germans. He is replaced by General Nogués.

November 25: Marshal Pétain meets with Hermann Goering to discuss the integration of France in the European "new order."

Friday December 6th Today.