

# Laval's Trial Opens Like Scene in Bedlam

PARIS, Oct. 4 (AP).—Pierre Laval, abandoned by his counsel, was expelled in a tumult of shouting from his own trial for his life today, but the presiding judge tonight reversed his decision and decided to permit the former Vichy Premier to return to the courtroom tomorrow. Guards armed with tommy-guns dragged Laval from the courtroom in the uproarious climax of the opening day of his trial on charges of intelligence with the enemy and attacking the security of the State.

"Guards! Expel that man from the court room!" shouted Presiding Judge Paul Mongibeaux. "This trial will continue without his presence. We will proceed to the witnesses tomorrow in his absence."

Tonight, however, Laval had both permission to return to the court room and assurance that his three defense counsel would be at his side.

## One More Chance

"I will give the defendant one more chance," Judge Mongibeaux explained to The Associated Press. "Because of the importance of the trial and the fact that the prisoner's life is at stake, I feel and I know the jurors feel that he should be given a complete and full hearing."

"I will not, however, permit insolence or emotional outbursts. If the defendant does not compose himself calmly and in accordance with the solemnity of the trial, I will expel him again and that time it will be definite."

Both Mongibeaux and defense counsel denied that Laval had apologized for the remarks which led to his expulsion.

Defense Counsel Albert Naud said that he, Jacques Baraduc and Jean Jaffry would appear at tomorrow's session "because we won't be allowed to practice any more if we don't." They withdrew at the start today in protest when Judge Mongibeaux refused their plea that the pre-trial examination of Laval be reopened.

The first day of the trial ended as it began—in a storm of protests and recriminations.

In between, the man who was three times Premier of France and 14 times a Cabinet Minister, led the High Court of Justice through a discourse on 25 years of French history, high politics and statesmanship.

## Dominates Court

Laval dominated completely the debate and judicial proceedings up to the dramatic moment when, after an emotional and high-pitched argument with Judge Mongibeaux, he hurled his briefcase onto the table and shouted:

"Well, condemn me right now, then! At least things will thus be clear!"

He was like the Laval of old.

the stormy figure of Third Republic politics.

Today he is doubtless one of the most hated men in France, but he won the grudging admiration of even the resistance jurors for his brilliant repartee and self-possession.

A group of lawyer-spectators, who marched out of the courtroom in protest against Judge Mongibeaux's handling of proceedings, paid Laval the tribute of returning in order to hear his debate.

Laval defended himself alone after the three lawyers, appointed by the court to defend him, withdrew in protest.

It was this that forced the first suspension, half an hour after court opened.

Arguments and recriminations became hotter until Laval, who admits saying he desired a German victory, shouted: "I am a Frenchman! I am a patriot, and I will prove it!"

## Session Suspended

Pandemonium broke loose as jurors, judges and Prosecutor Andre Mornet attempted to shout Laval down. Judge Mongibeaux finally suspended the session.

When court resumed again after a short delay Judge Mongibeaux began a resume of Laval's life, noting that he sprang from humble origins and rose to the highest posts in France.

The chain-smoking, short, swarthy man from Auvergne was completely at ease by now. He joked with foreign and French newspaper men, and frequently interrupted Judge Mongibeaux with corrections or additions to the resume.

He leaped to his feet frequently to launch into lengthy discussions of international politics and statesmanship.

He repeated declarations made in the same courtroom and before the same judge in the trial of Marshal Petain that his prewar policies were dominated by his desire to encircle Germany.

He said he had repeatedly warned his colleagues that "Hitler would set fire to Europe."

He said that one of the Soviet conditions in signing the Franco-Russian Non-aggression Pact of 1935 was that France arrive at an arrangement with Italy so that French troops would have a bridgehead to Eastern Europe.

## Italy's Importance

"The importance of Italy was not Mussolini, but her position on the map and her fleet," Laval declared.

Four hours after the trial began there was another suspension, in order to give the court and spec-

tators a breathing spell.

When the court returned after half an hour, Laval asked for definite suspension for a day on the grounds the withdrawal of his counsel forced him to plead his own case and he was worn out.

Judge Mongibeaux replied: "You have asked for a suspension on two grounds: The first legalistic, and I refused it. The second on humanitarian grounds, and I . . ."

Here Laval jumped to his feet and began a long tirade against the court for cutting short his pretrial examination, and attacking Judge Mongibeaux for promising yesterday to the jurors that the trial would end before election day, Oct. 21. Many jurymen are candidates.

It was then that the heated dispute began, with jurors and M. Mornet joining in. It ended with Laval's expulsion and the arrest of the young son of Pierre Cathala, former Vichy Minister of Agriculture, for shouting "Vive Laval!"

## "Why the Hurry?"

On several occasions Laval hinted that there were "certain" persons who wanted to rush his trial through, but he made no direct charges. He asked only, "Why is there such a hurry to end my pre-trial examination?" He maintained throughout that his counsel had been given insufficient time to prepare his case.

He denied having anything to do with France's 1940 armistice, saying it had been already decided when he arrived at Bordeaux in June, 1940. He denied also "manoeuvring" the National Assembly which met July 7 in Vichy to accord Petain full powers to reform the French Constitution.

Laval declared he would explain himself fully during the course of future hearings, and promised many "revelations."

After the reading of the indictment against him he said he would prove who was "truly responsible" for France's predicament when the second Great War began, and "add names to the list of the accused."

He asserted: "All I ask is to be liquidated with that list myself."

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