

# The Wonders of Russia's Military Strength

(Continued from last issue)

**O**THER nation, other forces, balancing and counter-balancing, will have part in the next world war, but the real adversaries, facing each other directly and with concentrated forces, are the Soviet Union and Germany and they alone can be matched directly with each other.

There are four aspects to the relation of forces, four potential strategies, which held the decision in modern war. These are the material the operative, the aerial, and the social strategy. Each of them has its own special significance, its own answer, and only the sum can throw light on the result. The strategy that reveals most simply the situation is that of purely material force—men, weapons and products, which all together yield the modern fighting army. What armies are Facism and Socialism arraying against each other?

In any case a tremendous human mass must be set in motion, not only to serve and move forward the huge modern machines of war and motors, but also in order, with the help and under cover of these machines, to light, to attack, to storm and to occupy.

A "war without men" is the romantic fiction of the modern military individualists. On the contrary, never will the demand for man-power, and indeed for trained, qualified man-power, be so great as in this mechanized war

of tanks, armoured cars and air-cruisers; just as the introduction of modern machinery into industry during the last century did not diminish the number of the industrial proletariat, but rather increased it immeasurably.

It is probably that Germany will begin the war with a firstline army of 1 800 000 men, consisting of forty six regular divisions, and seventy-two irregular divisions. The irregular divisions will be made up of some 400,000 Brownshirts, 200,000 Blackshirts, 250,000 members of the Militarized Labour Service, 50,000 members of the Militarized Nazi Corps of Motorists, 150,000 policemen, and 50,000 of the "Frontier Defence".

This is an impressive fighting force of well-trained men, but Germany will be less fortunate in her second line. A considerable part of the German nation will actively be against Hitler and his war. In no circumstance will the assembly and addition of fresh divisions go so smoothly for Hitler as for Hindenburg and Ludendorff, and the longer the war lasts, the more will this be the case.

Russia will have the larger army. The peace army of the U. S. S. R. numbers today 1,300,000 men in 139 divisions, and now the age of military service has been lowered so that this number may under go further increase. Russia should be able to throw 400 di-

visions into the war against a maximum of 200 divisions of Germans.

Will at least the *Military* quality of this human mass, that is to say its training, fighting efficiency and powers of endurance, be inferior to that of the German army?

The theory of the "low level" of the Russian soldiers is an old piece of twaddle. The soldiers of the Tsar in 1914 were incomparably worse armed and animated by much less will to victory than the German soldiers; their powers of endurance were greater. The Socialist soldiers of the U. S. S. R. in 1936, in their level of military training, of tactical and technical knowledge, of physical fighting ability and adaptability, take their place at least in the ranks of the ranks of the finest armies in the world.

Today the Soviet infantry is not inferior in battle to the French. The Soviet cavalry is recognized even by Germans as the strongest in Europe, and it is a direct consequence of this recognition that Hitler and Blomberg have provided such a surprisingly high number of cavalry divisions for their new army: twelve of them against twenty-four infantry divisions. This proportion is not even approximated in any other big European army, and its purpose is simply

that of sending some compensation for the possibilities of the Red cavalymen on the wide plains and steppes of inner Russia.

And what of the leadership, what is the Socialist corps of officers worth compared with the Fascist? Here again the strategists of the old school reckon that the 40,000 Soviet officers, young and "inexperienced" Red lieutenants and captains from the villages and factories, will fail miserably in leadership compared with the lieutenants, captains and generals of the classic military power of Germany, the finest military caste in the world.

That sounds serious. But it is a comic fact that in 1793 and later precisely the same thing was thought and written concerning the young officers the French Revolution before their encounters with the worthy generals, princes and other hereditary wearers of epaulettes in the Austrian and Russian armies. This is a very amusing thesis, deriving from those who sincerely believe the military art to be a kind of divinely inherited and inviolable monopoly attribute of a certain caste; instead of knowing that it is the product and achievement of the social class in ascendancy at the time.

In history, in the long run, and its purpose is simply it is always the generals of

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the youthful, rising classes and their states who have been the victors; and always the socially declining, reactionary castes who have lost.

The Socialist officers are the most youthful in the world. They have, however, on their side, not only the experience of the last World War, in which numbers of them fought; they have also the experience of the Russian Civil War, which represented an extraordinarily extensive strategy with extraordinarily small quantities. And 16,000 of them had training in one of the thirteen military academies maintained by the Soviet Union.

What of equipment? It has been estimated that Germany of spending twice as much on arms at present as did the Germany of 1931. German industry is already turning out monthly for the Hitler army up to 500 guns and 200 tanks. After the outbreak of war it will be in a position probably to supply up to 3,000 guns every month, 25,000 machine guns, and 1,000 tanks.

The new German army is equipping its division with 400,450 machine guns and 189 light and heavy guns. There are also special artillery formations for the different corps and army groups. It has created a special tank force under separate command, and, above all, is developing, as a new mass shock-weapon it light two-man tank of special design

(with safety gun slit, revolving firing seat, etc.) with which the of every German motor works is packed out today. The new German machine gun is said to be superior to the French.

When once again this concentrated destructive mass is trained on the Russian lines it will find more than lightly armed men opposing it. In the last war for every shrapnel shell fired by the Russians 300 were fired by the enemy. That will not happen again.

The Russian army is the most extensively motorized in the world, and its equipment is thoroughly modern. The Russian tank-force is unequalled, and there is no army better prepared to wage chemical warfare.

But the front line armies may not be enough. Which of the nations can endure more? The struggle will be so better, so intensive, that even the briefest period will be enough to create an urgent need for all the material that exists at present to be replaced.

A modern "mechanical division", which carries with it 180 200 light and heavy guns, 450 tanks, 2,000-3,000 motor vehicles, ammunition and rations for 20,000 men, telephone and wireless plant, bridging material and the rest—is like some giant octopus, which must uninterruptedly be nourished, put together, transported, and finally sent up in smoke.

And all this material must be produced without pause in the hinterland. The slightest pause in the supply would mean that this mechanical octopus would come to a stop, and at that moment it would be destroyed by that of the enemy.

Every such division develops a demand for foodstuffs, metal, oil, explosives, vehicles, and the raw material known as money, in amounts on which formerly not only entire armies could subsist—but entire nations.

Russia should outlast Germany. Compared with Germany the Soviet Union today commands: 125 times as much petroleum, five times as much grain, three and one-third times as much live-stock, twice as much copper, the same amount of steel, rather more iron and electrical power, half-again as many workers and employees, rather less coal.

Against this Germany possesses in comparison with the Soviet Union a network of railways nearly twice as dense (in proportion to population), a mercantile marine three times as large.

But the Socialist state can supply its troops with more metal weapons with incomparably more motor fuel, and will certainly be able to feed its forces better. Now at last the boundless Russian soil is being conquered. 650,000 tons of meat, 17 million tons of fish, 25 million tons of sugar, 43 million tons of

potatoes, and 102 million tons of grain form the food-basis of the U. S. S. R. in the present year.

Meanwhile Germany still has to import foodstuffs to the value of 1.4 milliard marks a year. She has a chronic deficit on fats: even today her towns have not enough butter and her population is being urged to consume as little tea, coffee, cocoa, rice and other "Semitic" and "Mongolian" produce as possible.

And it must be remembered, when one considers operative strategy, that again geography in the West as in the East, is on the side of the Soviets. The Fascists will find an effective penetration of Russia extremely difficult. They have based their hopes on a surprise attack in which their superior navy would play an important part. Until recently that surprise attack might just possibly have worked. Russia was weak in transport. But now with arterial roads built, with motor cars of all kinds being turned out in vastly increasing numbers, with the intensive improvement of railway facilities, the possibilities of fast, surprise movement on the part of Germany has decreased, for now Russia can bring up force to block it. It is a long road from the border to Russia's vital points, and every week increased the difficulty of that road to an enemy.

(To be continued)

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