THE BOLSHEVIKS' CHANCES IN SIBERIA

By KLAUS MEHNERT

At the moment of this writing the Soviet armies are still holding the line Lake Onega-Moscow-Lower Don. Yet the possibility of their losing their European strongholds and with them the vast and scarcely fortified spaces to the Ural is sufficient to warrant the question: what next?

There is no doubt in our mind that the Bolsheviks would want to continue the war even after the loss of European Russia, for they know that Bolshevism is doomed once they accept defeat. The question is: can they continue the war?

The following pages are not an answer to this question but only material for an answer. In view of the extraordinary secrecy of the Soviets, the difficulties in making this study were considerable. Shanghai is perhaps the best place to undertake such an investigation. News through many channels gathers in this city, and we believe that the information contained in this article and in the various maps is as complete and up-to-date as it is possible to obtain at present.

The area under investigation is the whole of Asiatic Russia, including the Ural but excluding the Central Asiatic Republics of the Turkmens, Karakalpaks, Usbeks, Tadjiks, and Kirghiz. Kazakhstan has been included because its northeastern portion is part of Siberia, although its southern and western parts are not.

A NIGHT AT THE MAGNET MOUNTAIN

Never in the course of some 20,000 miles of travel in the Soviet Union had I felt so strongly the essence of modern Siberia as I did during that first night at the Magnet Mountain. This is how it happened.

On a journey through the southern Ural I had succeeded after much effort in obtaining a Russian Ford from the city soviet of Beloretsk, a mining town in the heart of the Ural. I needed the car to continue my trip to the eastern slopes of the Ural.

It was beginning to get dark as the car climbed over the last pass of the Ural. In front of us there lay only bare, gently rising hills. The muddy road, soft and slippery from the rains of the last few days, followed the course of a river which we crossed at a ford, there being no bridges anywhere near.

Now and again we met natives in fantastic fur caps, on horseback or riding in small carts. At the sight of our car the animals became panic-stricken and reared wildly. The villages were a spectacle of infinite poverty—tiny, ramshackle huts blown askew by the wind, slant-eyed peasants in ragged clothes, lean cows.

Soon the hills lay behind us too. Before us the treeless steppe stretched away in the barren brown of autumn. Only in the distance, directly toward the east, one long, high mountain broke the horizon: Gora Magnitnaya — the Magnet Mountain. This was our goal. The first stars were twinkling, and when I looked closely at the mountain I could see little lights flickering there too, and, growing ever more distinct, a blood-red glow over the plain. Once more into a hollow, then up over the last rise, and a strange picture lay before my eyes.
In the broad valley of the Ural river in which a few years ago there was nothing but a barren, lonely steppe, there lay between our rise and the mountain of ore, brightly illuminated for the work of the night shift, the sea of lights of a large city—Magnitogorsk. Tens of thousands of lamps like a shining white belt surrounded the gigantic works lying in the center of the city. The Kombinat, enveloped in flames and smoke, resembled a volcano in eruption.

At the left the huge blast furnaces, among the largest in the world, glowed dusky-red; to the right of them the yellow flames of the coke works leapt up into the night; next to them shone the Martin furnaces; further on the vast buildings of the rolling mill were spread out. Everything was veiled in a murky smoke that hung over the city like a heavy cloud, tinted the color of blood from below as by a huge conflagration.

BARRACKS AND RED CORNERS

The overwhelming majority of the 100,000 workers and employees (there may be more, no one seems to know exactly) live in barracks. There was no hotel and after some difficulty I too was allotted a camp bed. I stumbled through the unlighted alleys, my high boots sinking up to the ankle in the sticky mud. I had to look out—here was a huge garbage heap, there deep trenches were cut in the ground over which one had to balance on a piece of iron rail (wood would have been stolen and burnt long ago in this treeless district), and large drainpipes lay beside them. Suddenly there was a fence, a little kitchen garden guarded by an old man in a fur coat with a rifle on his shoulder. Sometimes there was a revolting stench, which meant that there was a dimly lit public latrine in the vicinity.

I entered some of the barracks at random. They consisted of large dormitories with twenty or more bunks along the walls and a table with a few chairs in the middle, the whole lit by one or two bulbs. Snorers came from some of the beds—those were probably men of the day shift. Now they were sleeping, exhausted and covered by their sheepskin coats. Others were at work on the night shift (the work is done in three shifts), some were reading. One man squatted on his bed playing an old Russian folk song on the accordion. Next door there was a room hung with political posters and portraits of the Bolshevist leaders, the "Red Corner." Little groups of men were sitting there taking part in some course or other. Some of them were listening to a lecture on Fascism, others to one on metallurgical questions, others again were learning to read and write.

I sat down on a bed here and there and asked the men about their lives. Almost all of them—about four-fifths of the entire number of workers—had come from their villages only a few months before, at most three or four years, having been "mobilized" by professional recruiters. At that time they had never seen a machine, now they were to run one of the most modern plants in the world. Many were simply exiled to Magnitogorsk. By a huge system of courses, schools, and lectures the management was trying to turn them into useful workers. Those who were alert, industrious, healthy, and ready to take part in the Bolshevist activities could become foremen within two years and get on very quickly. The lack of qualified labor in this country of new construction could become foremen within two years and get on very quickly. The lack of qualified labor in this country of new construction led to uncommonly swift careers. The number of new arrivals was tremendous and grew from week to week. The country louts of the day before yesterday were yesterday unqualified workmen; today they have been promoted to construction workers; and, while they are still erecting the building, the best among them are already being trained in courses for running the finished plant as "qualified" workers tomorrow.

A HARD LIFE

Living conditions were bad; the lack of nourishing food, of warm, durable clothes and shoes—that year the first snow had fallen in September—were the source of constant complaint. It
was especially difficult for men with families. There were still barracks in which ten to fifteen families were living in the same room with their children and all their belongings. Many preferred to build themselves mud huts beyond the city and to live there like the cave dwellers of prehistoric times. Later on I had a look at a number of these pitiful Semlyaniki. The majority of the families, however, already had single rooms in the barracks and regarded this as a vast improvement. At my question whether they would not rather go back to their collectivized villages they laughed: “No, we are better off here.” The people demand so little that a bit more space, food, and clothing would satisfy them.

I went on. In one brightly lit barracks the door opened with a loud crash, a man came hurtling out and remained lying on the ground. In the light from the doorway I saw that his face and hands were bleeding. Two men came out and carried him away. The sign on the door indicated that I was at one of the metal workers’ clubs. I entered, and was confronted by a wild uproar and swinging fists. I asked one of the fellows, who wore the badge of a prize-winning Udarnik (shock-worker) on his lapel, what was up. “Drunken dogs,” he said, “all men who have just arrived.”

We wandered together through the club rooms. In one hall movies were being shown, in another Russian dances danced to the accordion. In one corner a group was playing chess. “Come along,” said the boy, “in a club near here it is Udarnik evening, first a talk and discussion, then a play.” I agreed, and we stumbled along the dark streets.

UDARNIK MEETING

In the hall we came to there were about 150 Udarniks of one factory department. An engineer and a foreman had reported on how the work could be further improved. The discussion was on and many of the workers were ready to speak. Everything they said was sharp criticism, above all criticism of the absolutely insufficient qualification of the majority of workers and of the poor organization of the work. Non-delivery of missing parts; rapid wear of the material through wrong treatment; lack of interest and unpunctuality on the part of the workers; frequent changes in personnel and management; the excessive number of accidents; much waste of time—one engineer was of the opinion that on the average only two and a half to three of the seven hours of the working day were really utilized; these were some of the items on the long list of complaints.

THE “SPETSY”
AND THEIR WIVES

I left the hall and moved on. In front of me I heard two Americans; where the alley ran into the street they said good-bye to each other. One of them went on, and we got into a conversation. He was a spets, a technical specialist. He asked me to come to his place for a glass of tea, and I gladly accepted. He did not live in the barracks but in the so-called “Socialist City,” which consists of large, three-storied blocks. Originally the intention had been to build there an entirely new collective type of city, but by now the goal had become more modest. Houses were being built simply with a lot of single rooms, one room for each family, a type of apartment house long in existence in capitalist countries.

In a long line we waited for the bus for Sots-Gorodok (the “Socialist City”). In Magnitogorsk with its large number of inhabitants there was only a single bus line with less than a dozen vehicles. Every bus arrived overcrowded and cut off at most two or three men from the head of our queue. The third bus we waited for stopped altogether: there was no more gasoline. The woman conductor told us that the other busses would have to suspend service for the same reason. No gasoline could be expected in Magnitogorsk before the next forenoon. So we had to walk, forty minutes. Others had further to go.

My American friend was a quiet man. He told me about his experiences during
the three years he had been with the
plant. Many things in his work were
pretty awful, and he had often been
tempted to lose his temper over the
ignorance and lack of organization of
the Russian workmen. The Russians
would probably learn one day, but it
would take a long time. He had not
abandoned hope altogether.

His "better half" did not share his
opinions. She did not mince matters:
bad living conditions, filth and neglect
in the houses, rain coming through the
ceiling, and a thousand other things.
Nor could she offer me any tea. There
had not been any kerosene for the
Primus stove for weeks, and the wood­
burning stove in the only kitchen of
the dwelling-block with its eighty
families was so full of pots and pans
that a number of women were still
standing in line with saucepans in
their hands, waiting for their turn.

RETURN AT DAWN

It was nearing dawn when I started
home. The glare from the works
showed me my way. There was a
cutting north wind, and the puddles
underfoot were frozen. The night was
filled with noise. Constant thundering,
howing, and hissing resounded from
the works, interrupted by the loud
detonations of blastings on the moun­
tainside.

Walking in front of me was a group
of men going to work, some of them
in bast shoes. A barefooted woman
ran across the street with a child.
In some of the barracks there was
still light. From one of them a
drunken song poured forth, from
another a marching tune of the Red
army.

The light was still burning in my
room too. Most of the men were al­
ready asleep, while one was still sitting
up. With some string and newspapers
he had made a sort of tent around
his table so that the light would not
disturb the others. "What, are you
still up?" I asked. "I have to work
out a speech for the literary circle of
the construction workers' club," he
answered. I glanced over his shoulder.

There were several volumes of Schiller
on the table.

I lay down in my bunk, wrapped
myself in my blanket, and slept, bitten
by a few bedbugs and a lot of fleas.

THE LESSONS OF MAGNITOGORSK

This, then, was Magnitogorsk, a place
that had become almost proverbial in
the Soviet Union and that was used
by the Bolsheviks when they wanted
to express something tremendous. In
literary magazines, for example, Russian
authors were called upon to create "a
Magnitogorsk of literature," and people
were heard to say, "I feel like Magnito­
gorsk." And this Magnitogorsk with
its strange mixture of shocking human
misery and gigantic industrial con­
struction is characteristic of the de­
velopment of Siberia during the last
few years. Coal, ore, and human
happiness are all thrown into the
insatiable blast furnaces, and the whip
of the Five Year Plans drives the
people on to ever renewed efforts. At
the beginning of the revolution the
word "soul" was struck from the
Soviet vocabulary. While in old Russia
the inhabitants of a village or a town
were entered as so-and-so many "souls"
(dusky), they are now counted, following
the materialistic way of thinking, as
so many "eaters" (yedaki). In view
of the prevailing food shortage, this
sounds often enough like irony. No
matter by what term the people are
counted, however, they are all just
parts of a machine and a means for
the purpose of turning the Soviet
Union and especially Siberia into an
arsenal for the World Revolution.

Magnitogorsk is characteristic of
Siberian economic development also in
another way. If one looks at this
development more closely, one sees
that it is far more complicated and
problematical than it appeared at the
first glance. One's first impression of
the Magnet Mountain is of its riches.
But when one begins to investigate
the details of Magnitogorsk's iron
production, one finds a number of
considerable difficulties. Magnitogorsk
and the whole of the Ural are as poor
in coal as they are rich in ores. To work the ores of the Ural, coal must be brought from the Kuzbass (Kuznetsk Basin) 1,240 miles away, or from Karaganda, only a few hundred miles nearer. This fact forms the base for the idea of the UKK (Ural Kuznetsk Combine), according to which the ores of the Ural are to be carried east to the Kuzbass and the coal of the Kuzbass and Karaganda west to the Ural. Thus an industrial district is being created whose two poles lie over 1,000 miles apart, connected only by a single railway. Since this railway is at the same time Siberia’s only through railroad, it has a vast number of other freights to carry.

HASTE MAKES WASTE

Karaganda was supposed to relieve the situation. The new Karaganda railway, on which I have traveled, had been built in such haste—in parts the rails had simply been laid on the steppe without a roadbed—that the train could only move slowly and the line had often to be repaired. Every repair creates a new bottle-neck, and the hungry blast furnaces of Magnitogorsk have to wait for coal. Every time the stream of coal from Karaganda or the Kuzbass slackens for some reason or other, coal must be brought from the Donets Basin 1,000 miles away (now in German hands).

"Haste makes waste" can be nowhere applied more often than with regard to the economic development of Siberia in the last few years, or, to use an old Russian proverb:

"Pospeshil, pospeshil, i lyudei nasmeshil."

(He hurried and hurried and made himself ridiculous.)

FORTY MILLION PEOPLE

In the last analysis it is, even in this technical age, still men who carry on a war. In attempting to answer the question of the number and kind of people available for a continuation of the war from Siberia we immediately come up against the greatest of all difficulties in studying questions regarding the Soviet Union: the scarcity and unreliability of Soviet statistical material. We cannot explain here in every instance how we have obtained or calculated the figures used without doubling the length of this article. In many cases they are the result of efforts not unlike those of a detective. We have striven to base our calculations on Soviet statistics. For, however unreliable the individual statements published by the Soviets usually are, a relatively accurate picture may still be obtained through careful and lengthy observation of the Soviet press and literature and through comparison of knowledge thus gained with information from other sources.

One factor which renders the study of the population development of Siberia especially difficult is the constant change in the administrative division of the USSR. Her domestic borders have been altered so often during the last centuries that they are different on almost every map. In the assumption that the existing administrative division of Siberia will be maintained
during the next few months, in which the Siberian problem promises to become acute, we shall take this as a basis for our investigations. On Map II the reader will find a sketch of the present division. For the sake of clearness we have only indicated the larger administrative units, the population figures of which can be found in Appendix I.

For the population movement of Siberia during the last century and a half we have the following table. In considering it one must bear in mind that the term “Siberia” has not always had the same meaning.

Population of Siberia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Russians and Other Non-Natives</th>
<th>Natives</th>
<th>In Concentration Camps</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1796</td>
<td>676,000</td>
<td>863,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>939,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>2,286,000</td>
<td>618,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,906,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>4,890,000</td>
<td>871,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>5,761,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>8,383,000</td>
<td>973,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>9,366,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>c. 25,521,035</td>
<td>c. 7,000,000</td>
<td>c. 5,000,000</td>
<td>35,521,035</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The figures for 1939 include the Ural and Kazakhstan.)

MILLIONS ON THE MOVE

Since the outbreak of the war, many inhabitants, transplanted either voluntarily or by force from European Russia, must be added to this figure. The Soviet press has mentioned the moving of whole industries to the other side of the Ural, and reports of travelers confirm that the eastern part of European Russia and large parts of Siberia are overrun by an enormous number of people moving eastward by rail, horse, or on foot, in the midst of indescribable suffering and sacrifice. As Siberia, especially in the winter months, is totally unprepared for such a sudden influx of people, many will have to pay for this migration with their lives.

From the Siberian city of Tomsk, for example, it has been reported that on August 20 of this year the authorities ordered all those whose presence in Tomsk was not absolutely necessary to leave the city by September 1 and to betake themselves further east. This order affected 40,000 people who were thus driven out of Tomsk within a few days’ time and without any available means of transportation. They were not allowed to take their furniture, and, before they had even left their homes, their successors, evacuated from European Russia, moved in. As far as can be seen, the majority of the people streaming from European Russia into Siberia consists of members of the Soviet bureaucracy as well as women and children, since all able-bodied men are being kept back in European Russia for the time being.

During my years in the Soviet Union I have found again and again that the Russians manage to keep alive even under the most difficult conditions—in Arctic concentration camps, in frost or sandstorms, in half-finished barracks or hastily dug holes in the ground. Hence one may assume that also in the present eastern migration, in spite of its unorganized and desperate character, large numbers will survive the hardships, and that the population of Siberia will increase by next spring to a total, to give an approximate figure, of 40 millions.

EARLY SETTLERS

The structure of the Siberian population can be traced to the history of the colonization of this immense area. It began with the invasion of the conquering, fur-hunting Cossacks at the end of the sixteenth century and was at first very slow. Not until the former serfs of European Russia had been permitted to emigrate to Siberia in 1881, and especially after the Siberian railway had been opened in 1892, did the figures of the annual migrants start to climb rapidly. Within the first five years after the opening of the railway, 600,000 colonists passed through the border town of Tchelyabinsk in the Ural. Siberia became the main goal of Russian domestic migration. To the right and left of the railway, which passes through the only strip of agriculturally useful land on its way to the east, new settlements spread in an ever finer net.
Distribution of the Slavic population in Siberia. It follows the agricultural belt and river valleys.

The black areas are inhabited by Slavs.

MAP IV

FORESTS AND AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS IN USSR.

MAP V
It was only in Eastern Siberia and the Russian Far East that the results were at first disappointing, for here the building of the railway, which was to form the backbone for the colonization of these areas, proved to be of greater attraction for the Chinese and Koreans than for the Russians. Only after the defeat in the war against Japan in 1904-05 had shown the Russian Government how dangerous it was to have a wholly underpopulated frontier, was the colonization of Eastern Siberia taken up systematically. Nevertheless the main stream of emigrants continued to be directed towards Western Siberia, climatically and agriculturally more suited to the Russians. In the years 1896-1909, in spite of all efforts on the part of the Government, only 8% of the total of 3,600,000 migrants reached the territories east of Lake Baikal.

During the years of the Great War the movement of migrants towards Asia more or less ceased. After the end of the civil war, however, and partly as a result of the famines in European Russia, it was resumed in the twenties. Meanwhile the influx of Chinese and Koreans to the Russian Far East had also increased considerably, and their proportion in the total population of this area rose from 17% (1917) to 25% (1923). In the thirties the migration was given a tremendous impulse by the industrialization of Siberia and by the banishment of millions of victims of the "dekulakization" and the various political purges.

One characteristic of the population problem that Siberia has in common with several other colonial areas, as for example Canada, is the very uneven distribution of its population, which is crowded together in relatively small areas while by far the greater part is hardly inhabited at all. Map III shows the situation in the thirties, which has undergone no essential changes.

CAN BOLSHEVISM RELY UPON THEM?

A second characteristic of the Siberian population is its racial diversity. By far the greater part of Russian Asia (left white on Map IV) is inhabited by some dozens of non-Slavic nationalities, together amounting to about 7 millions. The Russian population of Siberia (shown black on Map IV) is again divided into Great-Russians, Ukrainians, and White Russians, among whom the Ukrainians in particular consider themselves a separate group.

One can assume that the percentage of opponents to the Soviet regime is higher in the Asiatic part of the Soviet Union than in the European. The old Siberians (Sibiryaks) have a stronger anti-Bolshevist tradition than the inhabitants of European Russia, as is shown in detail in the next article. Among the people spending their time in the concentration camps of Siberia one can hardly expect much sympathy for Bolshevism. The majority of the camps of the Soviet Union (about forty-five in all) is in Siberia, and the number of prisoners contained in them is estimated at 5 millions. A map of Siberia showing the location of the concentration camps coincides more or less with the Siberian areas of new construction, since the prisoners are all used as cheap labor for the development of Siberia. Whether it be Karaganda or the Kuzbass, the Balkhash or the new East Siberian Railway (BAM), the opening up of arctic regions or the Pacific coast, everywhere these unfortunate people are to be found, forming an essential part of the economic system of Siberia.

The employment of the non-Slavic peoples, even assuming their willingness, is very doubtful owing to their technical and cultural backwardness and their living in inaccessible and relatively unexplored regions.

FOOD IN SIBERIA

At first sight the providing of a population of only 40 millions with food in the vast area of Siberia would seem to be no problem. Actually, however, only a small part of Siberia is suited for agricultural activity. Our Map V shows Siberia from the viewpoint of agricultural utility. According
to latest Soviet figures less than 20% of the total agricultural land of the Soviet Union is in Siberia. This land is to be found mainly in western and southwestern Siberia and is inferior in quality and yield to the soils of European Russia. In the last few years agronomic science has succeeded in expanding the regions for cultivation by breeding species of grain which are cold-resisting and otherwise adapted to Siberian conditions. New crops have been introduced or developed, as for instance sugar beets.

During the last few years the Bolsheviks have often emphasized their success in developing agricultural possibilities on soil formerly considered to be unsuitable. Through the application of modern methods they have indeed succeeded in introducing agriculture, especially vegetable gardening, far up in the north, which fully utilizes the short but intensive arctic summer. I was fed homegrown tomatoes north of the polar circle. Of course the Siberian north will not produce large quantities of food within the near future, but the new production facilitates the feeding of the sparse and inaccessible population of the Far North.

Soviet statistics of agricultural production being one of the most contested and unreliable products of the Soviet Union, we shall refrain from giving new figures. (In 1913 Siberia produced 245 million poods [one pood = 16.3 kilograms] of grain, 118 of oats, 63 of potatoes and 5 of butter.) There seems to be no question that potentially Siberia is in a position to feed the Siberian population, but actually this will only be possible with great difficulties. The destruction of horses during the years of collectivization has yet to be made up. In the territory of the present Soviet Union there were in 1916 35.8 million horses, in 1938 only 17.5 million. Assuming that the ratio of destruction was equal all over the USSR, Siberia, which had 6 million horses before the revolution, would now have only about 3 million. Tractors must take their place, and supplying these with gasoline will become increasingly difficult as the war goes on. Local famines due to the sudden influx of people or to the insufficient performance of the transportation system may be unavoidable. But the continuation of the war from Siberia will hardly be frustrated by the question of food, particularly in view of the recklessness with which the Bolshevist Government sacrifices the lives of people not essential to military purposes.

We have no reliable figures on the cattle stocks of Siberia. Reindeer play an important part in the feeding of the population of the Far North and are estimated at 1.5 million head. The fishing catch of the Pacific Coast represents 25-30% of the entire catch of the Soviet Union. Canneries of various food products have recently been established, mainly in the Far East, Western Siberia, and Kazakstan.

THE TRUTH OF AN OLD JOKE

According to an old anti-Bolshevik joke a foreign capitalist once came to the Soviet Union to see whether he could do some business there. He was shown through the factories, and in the end he had to listen to a flaming speech about the wealth of the country. “Under the ground,” exclaimed his guide, “we have enormous deposits of all kinds of resources, and, standing firmly on the ground, millions of ardent Bolsheviks.”

The capitalist shook his head sadly and replied: “I tell you what: as soon as it is the other way round, you let me know. Then we might be able to do some business.”

The guide’s statement cannot be disputed. The Soviet Union, especially her Asiatic part, possesses vast mineral resources and has, taking the long view, tremendous possibilities for economic development. Every book on Siberia and especially every Soviet publication emphasizes this side of the problem. But the object of this article, dealing with the chances of the Bolsheviks to continue the war from Siberia, is to determine what is available or “on the ground” today and
during the next few months, not what in future times will be brought up from "under the ground."

The two legs upon which stands the Siberian industrial development are the ore deposits of the Ural and the coal deposits of the Kuznetsk basin. Under the name of UKK they form the heavy industrial base of Siberia and, in the eyes of the Bolsheviks, of the entire Soviet Union.

At the beginning of November 1941 the organ of the Red army Krassnaya Zvezda declared that Siberia was ready from the industrial point of view to continue the war against Germany. "Miracles can and will be achieved in Siberia," the article said, and added that the most important armament factories were situated in the Ural, that the no longer available production of the German-occupied areas could be replaced in Siberia, and that the machinery of numerous factories had already been transported from European Russia to the east and had again been put into operation.

Such statements must be taken with a large grain of salt. Whoever has witnessed under what tremendous difficulties and with what waste the industrial development of the Soviet Union took place even in normal times will be skeptical of the boasts of the Soviet press. Let us rather consider in detail what is known about the present industrial position of Siberia.

**BASIC INDUSTRIES**

(1) **Iron:** the most important plants are in Magnitogorsk, Nijni Taghil (producing since June 1940), Verkhisetsk (near Sverdlovsk), Tcheremkhovo (near Irkutsk), Stalinsk (Kuzbass), and Komsomolsk (Lower Amur).

The following figures give an approximate idea of the development of the pig iron industry of Russia, and reveal that its center of gravity is still in European Russia, although the Uralo-Siberian share of the total production has risen from 21.4% to 32.3%. The table also shows that the production of Siberia is negligible if the Ural is not included.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pig Iron Production</th>
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<tr>
<td>in million tons</td>
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<tr>
<td>1913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siberia Proper.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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These are Soviet figures and to be treated with caution. Very likely the percentage of Siberia and the Ural is exaggerated, and, even if it is correct, the quality of the industrial output in Siberia is generally below that of European Russia. As we have shown with the example of Magnitogorsk, the laborers of the new Siberian plants are a motley band, most of them without any technical experience, knowledge, or tradition—things which cannot be acquired overnight.

(2) **Coal:** beside the two most important coal districts, Kuzbass and Karaganda, coal is mined for local consumption in the territory of the Bureya (a tributary of the Amur), in Sutchan (near Vladivostok), on Sakhalin, and in smaller quantities also in other places. The following table shows that the eastward shift of coal production is greater than that of the iron production. Most of the coal comes from Siberia proper.

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>European Russia</td>
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(3) **Oil:** during the last few years oil has been one of the chief sources of worry to the Soviet Union. This is especially true of Siberia. The most important oil fields which the USSR possesses would be of no use to the Bolsheviks in the case of a retreat beyond the Ural—neither the fields of Baku, producing 75% of all Soviet oil, nor those of Grozny (northern Caucasus, 10% of total production), nor those of Emba (northern shore of the Caspian Sea) and the remaining small oil fields scattered over European Russia. Hence the Soviet Government has for years
expended much effort toward the expansion of the so-called "Second Baku," in the area between the middle Volga and the Ural. But the development of the "Second Baku" was a disappointment. After promising beginnings, the oil of the "Second Baku," especially in the oil fields of Ishembayevo south of Ufa in the Ural, proved to have a very large salt and sulphur content. Here, as in Magnitogorsk, the excessive haste in the carrying out of surveys led to the refineries, built on the basis of the first results, being no longer suitable.

The pipe line which pumps the oil from Emba to the refineries of Orsk would, in the event of European Russia being lost, be too exposed to be of much value. Oil production in Ust-Yennisseisk and Voyampolka (Kamchatka) is in the most elementary stages, and that of the Soviet oil fields of Sakhalin (1938: 360,000 tons) cannot be counted on with complete certainty in view of the tension in the Far East. Thus Siberia at present produces about 2 million tons, which is only a fraction of the oil it needs for the normal requirements of its agriculture and industry, not to mention carrying on the war.

(4) Other Metals: here the picture is much more favorable, as the Ural and Siberia possess large resources of the different metals. Copper is mined at Lake Balkhash (Kazakstan) and in Revda (near Sverdlovsk); zinc in Tchelyabinsk and Berlovsk (Kuzbass); nickel in Orsk (30% of the Soviet production); lead in Ridder (Altai); tin in Tchita; and gold in various parts of Siberia, above all in the Aldan area (Yakutia) which provides 25% of the total Soviet production.

ARMAMENT INDUSTRIES

Apart from factories in the Ural started in Tsarist days and further developed by the Bolsheviks, nothing is known about a native armament industry in Siberia. In various places however, e.g. in Orenburg (the Tchkalov of today) and in Komsomolsk on the lower Amur, there are assembly plants for airplanes and other armaments. While in the sphere of heavy industries Siberia is not only potentially but actually quite highly developed, in the sphere of other industries it lags far behind. Of the large tractor factories of the USSR which could be relatively easily switched to the production of tanks there is only one, that of Tchelyabinsk, in the Ural and none in Siberia. The automobile industry is concentrated entirely in European Russia (two plants in Moscow, one in Yaroslavl, and one in Gorky). The same is true of the Diesel industry (Leningrad, Kolomna, Gorky), of the turbine industry (Kharkov), of the manufacture of ball bearings (Moscow), and of the machine tool industry (Leningrad, Moscow, Gorky).

The situation is more favorable in the sphere of machines for mining and heavy industry. Here we have Uralmash in Sverdlovsk, the largest plant in the Ural, said to be big enough to equip every two years a plant of the size of Magnitogorsk with machines, blast furnaces, etc.; also the factories of Novosibirsk and Krassnoyarsk. For the manufacture of instruments the Ural has its own works in Zlatoust, Tchelyabinsk, and Sverdlovsk. In the sphere of chemical production a large plant is under construction in Kemerovo (Kuzbass), parts of which are already in operation.

FEW CONSUMPTION GOODS

In the production of articles for consumption the picture presented by Siberia is dark. While this branch of industry has been very much neglected everywhere in the Soviet Union since the revolution, all emphasis having been placed on heavy industry, this has been particularly the case in Siberia. It is true that reports from the Soviet Union mention a number of new constructions in light industry, but it is apparent from accounts of people living in Siberia and the Soviet Far East that practically all consumption goods purchased by them originate from European Russia. There are, for instance, beginnings of a Siberian textile industry, with factories in Krass-
noyarsk, Novosibirsk, and Barnaul. However, the entire cotton industry of Siberia produces less than one twentieth of the total Soviet textile production. Moreover in its raw material it is dependent on supplies from the cotton areas of Soviet Central Asia via the Turkestan-Siberia (Turksib) Railway, which it probably could also not rely upon in the event of a Soviet retreat.

In spite of its great wealth in lumber, Siberia only provides about 15% of the paper produced in the USSR. In several other domains (shoes, sugar) some efforts have been made during the last few years to create native Siberian industries. These are, however, still in their very beginnings, and nothing is known about the size of their production.

**OVERWORKED RAILWAYS**

The transport system is the decisive bottle-neck in Siberian economy. For the study of this question we refer our readers to Map I, which shows at a glance the communication conditions of this vast space. We have purposely indicated railways, rivers, air lines, and motor roads in different colors, as the relative importance for Siberia of these four means of communication is radically different. All economic and military decisions revolve around the red lines, the railways, which carry 90% of the entire Soviet freight traffic.

In contrast to European Russia, which is covered by a dense network of railroads, Siberia really only possesses a single railway, the Trans-Siberian, in relation to which all others are merely feeder lines (Map VI). During the last few years several such feeder lines have been built. They have contributed to the opening up of new territories, but also to the overloading of the main line. The entire economic and military life of Siberia, the vast requirements of the UKK, the transport of troops, foodstuff, and armaments, of everything necessary for the prosecution of war—all depend on the four and a half thousand mile trunk line of the Trans-Siberian. A glance at the map will show that even the new lines under construction will not change this fact.

Map VI. Railroads of Russia.

Compare the density of the net in European Russia with the single trunk line in Siberia.
The main characteristic of the Soviet system of communications is the terrible overworking of the railroads. While the railroad network has only been expanded 50% since 1913, freight traffic has risen 500%. On every mile of railroad five times as much freight was transported last year in the Soviet Union as was in the USA, and one may say with some certainty that the full capacity of the Siberian railroads has been reached, if not already exceeded to their detriment. One can hardly imagine how a communication system that was already so overworked in normal times should be able to stand up to the requirements of a war in this huge country.

The lessons of the only war fought in Siberia so far, the war between the Whites and Reds in the years after the revolution, clearly showed the superiority of the Red armies operating from the dense network of communications in European Russia against the Whites with the poor communications of Siberia. The White armies, who had at first succeeded in occupying Siberia, found themselves bound to the Siberian railway and hence robbed of all freedom of movement. In its essence the whole war was a war for the railway.

In one respect, however, the position of the Red armies in the Siberia of today would not be quite as unfavorable as that of the Whites twenty years ago. During the last few years a number of large works have been built to supply Siberia with rolling stock: locomotive works in Orsk, Stalinsk (Kuzbass), and Ulan-Ude (Buryat-Mongolia), and the large railway car works in Taghil.

FROZEN RIVERS

On a map Siberia has an ideal network of rivers. For centuries this was her most important means of communication. Not only the Cossacks, the first conquerors of Siberia at the end of the sixteenth century, but later on fur dealers, settlers, tea cargoes, troops, and exiles were transported on its mighty rivers.

In small boats it was possible to traverse the whole of Siberia from the Ural to the Pacific coastal range with only two portages. These were between the system of the Ob, the Yenissei, and the Lena, and in each case only a few miles long. (Meanwhile the Ob and the Yenissei have been connected by the small Ket-Kass Canal, and the Yenissei and the Lena by a new railroad.)

However, what was good enough for the primitive requirements up to the middle of the nineteenth century is entirely insufficient for today. The Bolsheviks have, it is true, opened up long distances of the magnificent Siberian rivers for shipping, as can be seen on our map; but they are covered during a large part of the year by a thick layer of ice. Moreover, with the exception of the Amur they all flow into the Arctic Ocean, which is open only a few months in summer and even then can only be navigated with great difficulty. They do not, therefore represent a reliable means of communication either for Siberian domestic traffic or for connections overseas.

But even in summer the rivers of Siberia cannot for the time being be anything like fully utilized because of the shortage in shipping space. In all of Siberia there is at present only one large plant, at Tyumen, that builds river boats, and those only for the system of the Ob.

PLANES AND AUTOMOBILES

On no phase of Siberian development have more articles been written in the world's press than on the opening up of Siberia through air traffic. Indeed, much has been achieved here, and the development of the Far North would not have been possible without the creation of air bases in large numbers. Our map shows the air net as it exists at present. However, it is hardly of great strategic importance.
in the war against Germany, as fighting is not to be expected in those territories for which the airplane is of special importance as a means of communication, i.e. in the Arctic and in the deserts. To this must be added the already mentioned lack of oil in Siberia, and probably also that of airplane factories. Most of the above facts apply also to the system of motor roads.

The extension of traffic toward north-eastern Siberia, which points toward Alaska, is interesting. Numerous air bases have been established, especially on Kamchatka, as well as on the islands of the Commodore group (Map VII), the Bay of Anadyr, and in Wellen, the Russian settlement nearest Alaska on the Bering Strait. The rapid expansion of American air bases in Alaska and in the Aleutians, and the ever repeated cry of the Alaskan representative in Washington (the last on November 13, 1941) for more airplanes indicate that the USA and especially Alaska, which was Russian territory until seventy-five years ago, are well aware of a possible danger from Siberia, even though they may at present be aligned with Stalin.

MILITARY FORCES

The number and type of troops stationed in Siberia has always been a closely guarded secret. After the outbreak of the German-Soviet war the number of troops was probably tripled through mobilization. It appears that the enormous losses of the Red armies in their battle against Germany have led to veteran Siberian troops being transferred to the European front and that therefore the Siberian and Far Eastern armies have declined in quality although increased in quantity during the last few months.

CONCLUSIONS

Leaving aside the possible attitude of Japan toward the Soviet Union during the next few months, a German victory in European Russia could have two consequences for Siberia. The first would be the collapse of the Bolshevist regime and the creation of a White Siberia. For this, Siberia has, as is shown in the next article, a certain tradition.

Our article, however, deals with the second possibility, namely that even after the loss of European Russia the Bolshevist regime would be able to survive for a while in Siberia. In that case, we believe, a study of the position of Siberia shows that militarily Germany would not be menaced from there. Neither in numbers, nor in means of communication, nor in armaments could a Red army forced out of European
Russia and practically isolated from the rest of the world play an important military role within the near future. And even if aid should appear from somewhere outside, the inherent difficulties of fighting a war from Siberia would remain the same. We have also seen that the possession of the Ural would be indispensable for the Bolsheviks of Siberia.

What then would the Bolsheviks do? Would they try to recapture European Russia? Very likely. But the propaganda of a Bolshevism pushed behind the Ural would hardly have much attraction for the people living in European Russia. During the last twenty-three years it has always been the case in Europe that those nations that became acquainted with Bolshevism through their own experience (Hungary, Italy, Germany, Spain), became, after having overcome it, its strongest opponents. This may also be the case in Russia. Moreover one may assume that, through the war and its terrible losses and through the migration of the bureaucratic and party apparatus from European Russia to Siberia, the Bolshevik elements will be the hardest hit and that their already very low proportion in the population will sink even further.

What then? Would the Bolshevik leaders fold up in Siberia and quit? Anybody who knows them will doubt this very much. They are fully aware that to confine themselves to Siberia would mean their end. Bolshevism can only exist as long as there is the prospect of a World Revolution. Hence we expect that the loss of their military power would lead to new political aggressiveness. In spite of all the recent nationalist phrases and the seeming retreat from radicalism which Stalin has performed for domestic and foreign political reasons we still believe that basically nothing is changed in his and the Bolshevik ideas. For Stalin, himself not a Russian but the son of Caucasian mountain tribes, Bolshevist Russia was a steppingstone toward the World Revolution. In Russia herself he was not interested, and he would just as well have fought from any other state for his aim. Should, therefore, Bolshevism disappear from European Russia but be able to maintain itself for the time being in Siberia, the next step, seen from the viewpoint of consistent Bolshevism, would be to rekindle the burnt-out Bolshevist conflagration of Europe in Asia or America with the aid of the embers kept alive with Siberian coal.

From the moment of their coming into power the Bolsheviks have skillfully continued, in a manner calculated on the long view, to prepare their influence upon the millions of southern Asia and the Far East. India and China were their special goals; in China they were able to gain a strong foothold by taking advantage of her desperate situation. And are not perhaps the growing labor troubles in the USA an indication of their influence in America? We do not think that Bolshevism has abandoned its old double game, of co-operating with capitalist powers, if need be, from without, and of boring simultaneously from within.

The world is at present passing through abnormal times. Enmity against National-Socialist Germany and her allies has brought nations into the same camp that normally would never have dreamt of co-operating with each other. Capitalist Great Britain is fighting on the side of the Red armies, and capitalist America practically considers herself an ally of the USSR. But one day this war will be over, the passion and hatred grown from it and blurring the vision will gradually calm down. Then, we believe, the nations will agree that the rebuilding of a new world on the ruins left by this war will render undesirable the existence of a Bolshevist source of unrest in Siberia.