THE FIRST FRONT

By KLAUS MEHNERT

Much has been said and written during the last few months about the problem of a second front—where it should be established, when, by whom, and with what aim. But there has been no discussion about the first front. What it consists of is so obvious to everyone that the expression “first front” does not even exist. It is the front that reaches from Murmansk to the strait of Kerch.

The war of the European armies against the Soviet Union represents the greatest sequence of the greatest battles in history. In masses of men and material involved, in the extent of destruction and in number of prisoners, and, above all, in its significance for the future of mankind it overshadows everything the world has hitherto experienced. For uncounted millions of inhabitants of Europe and the Soviet Union it is the primary subject of their thoughts. It is their first thought in the morning and their last thought before falling asleep. But also for the remaining part of humanity which is not directly involved this is the first front of our times.

Yet the course of the war on the eastern European front is less known than the campaigns from 1939 to 1941. These latter were of short duration and took place in a small area that afforded a good view of the whole. Even without special study, any newspaper reader could reproduce the course of the Norwegian or French campaign. The theater of war in Eastern Europe, however, is so vast, the territory so unfamiliar to most people, and the duration of the battle so much longer that it is far more difficult to gain a clear conception of the developments there. Add to this that the war on the eastern front has not yet been ended. Hence comparatively little material for its study is available. Both sides are taciturn and limit themselves in their reports to a minimum of information.

In the following article an attempt has been made to describe the past course of this battle, not its background and origin. Their discussion we leave to later historians who, we feel sure, will come to the verdict that the Führer’s decision of June 22, 1941, was justified and right.

To the best of our knowledge, a similar review in English has not yet been published in East Asia. Our map facing page 110 was specially drawn for this article.

WILL anyone of our generation ever forget the fateful moments of our time as he experienced them in his own little life? No, for the rest of his days they will be engraved in every detail on his memory. In the early morning of December 8, 1941, I myself, for instance, first noticed that something unusual was taking place by the fact that my shoes had not been cleaned. I was staying at a German boarding house in Peking at the time, and if the shoes have not been cleaned in the morning in a German boarding house, it means that at least a war must have broken out. Nor will I ever forget September 3, 1939, when after a hike over the lava of a Hawaiian volcano I heard the British and French declaration of war on Germany over the radio. And even less will I forget that afternoon on June 22, 1941. Together with a friend with whom I had spent several years in the Soviet Union, I had taken a weekend motor trip to the beautiful Izu peninsula. Driving back to Tokyo we noticed a newsboy in a small Japanese town running through the streets with a bunch of bells and a handful of extras and yelling at the top of his voice. Our chauffeur translated the world-shaking contents of his words. Since that day
the war on the European east front has been in all our thoughts, and each of us has, in his own way, tried to gain a picture of its course and its significance.

"KEIL" AND "KESEL"

When on June 22, 1941, the news of the war flashed around the globe, the world could fairly accurately predict the method that would be used by the German command in this war. It had already proved itself in the campaigns of 1939, 1940, and the spring of 1941, and had been developed to perfection. It consisted of a combination of Keil (wedge) and Kessel (pocket). It has stamped the warfare in Europe since 1939 to such a degree that we shall employ the German terms. Again and again the same picture presented itself: armored detachments supported by motorized infantry drove one or more Keils into the enemy lines; then, through a Keil breaking through to a coast or through two Keils meeting in a pincer movement, Kessels were formed in which the enemy troops were split up by the formation of further, smaller Kessels and then destroyed. Later we shall discuss the functioning of the Keil-Kessel method in its most outstanding example, the battle of Kiev.

In the eastern war the German methods themselves were not new. What was new was the tremendous extent of their employment, which went far beyond anything experienced in previous campaigns.

This method was very appropriate for the aim in view. The final goal of the allied European armies is the freeing of Greater Europe from Bolshevism. The destruction of Bolshevism requires that the forces supporting Bolshevism in the Soviet Union be transformed or destroyed. Bolshevism has succeeded—and from the point of view of the present struggle this is its most important achievement—in making the Red Army an instrument of its power. Hence, as long as it is in the service of Bolshevism, German strategy must be directed mainly toward crushing the Red Army. Should the Red Army declare itself one day against the Bolshevist leadership, then the whole picture would immediately be fundamentally changed.

Just as the method of the German command was firmly established from the first moment of the war, the quality of the German soldier, German leadership, and German weapons was known to the world. What was new was that in the course of the months the eastern war assumed more and more the character of a struggle of all Europe and that the sons of almost all European countries took part in it. By undergoing this psychological change and turning more and more into a Pan-European affair, it has created a new spirit which takes hold of all participants. To give an example: the Rumanian people, which till now has not made a name in the military sphere, has in this war supplied an army which has proved itself outstanding in many battles and recently in the conquest of Sevastopol. Through their achievements, the nations participating in the war against Bolshevism are earning their place in the new Europe.

THE KREMLIN’S CHOICE

As well known as were the German methods and forces before June 22, as unknown were those of the USSR. What was the Red Army likely to do?

As soon as the Soviet High Command had realized that the tremendous thrust of the German armies and their allies had forced it into the defensive, it could seize one of two strategic possibilities:

1. The Red Army could resume the tradition of the Russian Army in the Napoleonic War and retreat without fighting far into the interior of the country in order to weaken the enemy through distances, climate, and guerrilla warfare. It is difficult for an outsider to imagine how alive the memory of Napoleon’s campaign and his catastrophe is in Russia even today. The national war against Napoleon has become almost a Russian legend, and any military decision which takes the experience of 1812 as a precedent can count upon Russian understanding. Moreover, Peter the Great had also destroyed his adversary Charles XII
of Sweden at Poltava by employing similar methods. The decision to evade serious fighting with the German troops and, instead, to retreat slowly should have been all the easier as the new territories occupied in 1939/40 were not yet fully fortified, and the real belt of fortifications lay behind the Soviet border as it had been before 1939/40.

2. The Soviet armies could oppose the German armies from the first moment of their crossing the Soviet border. Although this would have gone against the traditions of Russian warfare, it might have offered the possibility of saving Soviet territory from German occupation. But here we have an essential difference between the campaigns of Peter the Great and Kutusov on the one hand and the present war on the other. Up to the second half of the nineteenth century, Russian territory had hardly been opened up industrially, and it consisted mainly of agricultural settlements whose temporary loss hardly influenced the striking power of the Russian armies. Modern war, however, is based on industrial production, and a very considerable part of Soviet industry was in the western part of the USSR. The loss of territory today no longer means the loss of villages as much as that of industrial districts. This is especially so in the case of the great industrial districts around Leningrad in the north, around Moscow in central Russia, and in the Ukraine in the south. In order to remain in possession of these centers of production, the front would have to be kept as far west as possible.

A TRADITION IS BROKEN

Those who had followed the development of military thought in the Soviet Union had to conclude that, forced into the defensive, the Soviets would probably decide for the second alternative. Those who have lived in the USSR know on how many millions of posters and banners one could read the two quotations by Stalin and Voroshilov: "We shall not cede an inch of our soil," and "Our borders are sacred and inviolable. We shall allow no one ever and under any circumstances to transgress them." And in the Soviet Union a Stalin quotation carries more weight than a law.

Today we know that during the First Year of the war the USSR did indeed decide not to retreat but to take up the battle. At no place did she, as in former wars, withdraw her forces voluntarily and according to plan. Again and again she opposed the European armies, and in every case where she retreated she did so under the pressure of her adversaries. This has been frankly acknowledged by German authorities. One of the best-known German military authors, Lieutenant Colonel Soldan, wrote on December 17, 1941, in the central organ of the National-Socialist Party, the Völkischer Beobachter:

"No one can claim that the Russians have tried to avoid battle. Orders issued by the Soviet High Command which have fallen into German hands have left no doubt that the Russians never had any intention of evading a battle but have always tried to offer stubborn resistance from strongly fortified positions, in order to prevent the German troops from further penetration into the interior of the Soviet Union . . . . The Russians have fought for every inch of ground, even when the situation was entirely without hope."

The tactics followed by the Soviets during the first five months consisted in not retreating but standing up to the adversary, even when the latter had succeeded in breaking through, and continuing to fight as long as possible at the same place instead of choking the roads in headlong flight, as was the case in Holland and Belgium. These tactics can be employed to such an extent only in a country like the Soviet Union. They call, first, for so huge a mass of troops and material that losses need not be considered, as they can always be replaced for a certain length of time; and secondly, for soldiers with a nerveless steadfastness and patient capacity for suffering, tested in many wars, which enables them to hold out longer than French or British soldiers at a lost post and go on fighting.
TIMOSHENKO CHANGES HIS MIND

Only future war historians will be able to decide whether the method chosen by Stalin was the correct one, or whether it would have been better to continue the tradition of Poltava and of the Napoleonic campaign. One fact, however, can already be established today, namely, that the decision to accept battle everywhere has led to huge losses for the Reds without having prevented the European armies from penetrating deeply into Russia. Perhaps Timoshenko’s new order, which became known a few days ago, means an admission that the method originally chosen was wrong. It indicates a radical change in Soviet tactics and reads:

“You have two tasks: to inflict on the enemy the highest possible losses, first of all in material and secondly in men, and to conduct operations in such a way that encirclement is avoided. This is of greater importance than defending every inch of soil if it involves high casualties. Under all circumstances the front must be kept intact, and contact with neighboring units must be ensured. Troop commanders should not devote their ambition to holding positions at any cost but should retreat, if this cannot be avoided, in elastic defense whereby the enemy is to be kept under fire by constant counterattacks of special commands.”

It seems more than doubtful whether such a change in tactics can still be of any help at this stage of the war, after the European armies have used the winter and spring to move their supply bases a thousand miles further east. It hardly makes sense: at a time when the German armies were still hundreds of miles from vital Soviet centers, the Red armies were ordered to fight to the last without giving ground, and now, with the enemy deep in the heart of the USSR, they are ordered to retreat. Is Stalin beginning to run short of soldiers? Or is this simply another proof of the inadequacy of the Soviet High Command?

THE PALACE OF THE SOVIETS

More than about the methods the world had been guessing about the fighting value of the Red armies. Since the beginnings of the Soviet regime, opinions have ranged between the extremes of contemptuous underestimation and rapturous praise. While all friends of Communism throughout the world on principle always only believed the best about the Soviet Union, cursory capitalist observers who only saw the picture of want and misery offered by the Soviet Union were usually led to the conclusion that the army, too, could not be much use.

In years of living and traveling in the Soviet Union I, too, had constantly observed the huge discrepancy between the official figures of Soviet production and the standard of living of the Soviet population. However, visits to many of the great industrial centers of the USSR had convinced me that the Soviet statistics on the production of pig iron, steel, oil, machinery, etc., could not be simply dismissed with the word “propaganda,” and that indeed a large part of the alleged production is actually being produced. On the other hand, there is the terribly low level at which the population is forced to live.

There was a very simple answer to what seemed to many an insoluble paradox: in spite of the large production, the standard of living was low because the entire production, as far as it did not have to serve the absolutely indispensable requirements of the population, went into arming the Soviet Union. All that was lacking in goods for daily use, that was causing Soviet shops to decorate their windows with busts of Stalin and rubber plants instead of goods, that was forcing people to live in overcrowded houses, in worn-out clothes, and with inadequate food—in short, all that the Soviet citizen did not have, had for years been given to the Red Army.

An example of this has only recently gone the rounds of the world’s press. It was reported that the Soviet Government had decided to suspend building operations on the “Palace of the Soviets” in Moscow in order to use the material for war purposes. Since the early thirties, the plans for this building had been drawn, speeches had been made, fat books published containing drawings of
future aspects, and newspaper articles written to praise the construction of this palace, which was to become the largest and most imposing building in the world, overshadowing even the skyscrapers of New York. The people were intoxicated by the idea.

When excavation work was begun on the square beside the River Moskva, where once the great Church of the Redeemer had stood before it was blown up by the Soviets, some of the foreigners living in the vicinity moved away, because they were afraid that the enormous weight of the building going up would lift the neighboring blocks of houses and cause them to collapse. They could have saved themselves the trouble; for, according to the news report mentioned, up to now—that is, in more than seven years—only three of the proposed hundred floors had been completed in rough. This was only to be expected; for at a time when all life in the USSR was directed toward war preparations, it would have been inconceivable that hundreds of thousands of tons of steel and other material could have been put into a building of a purely propagandistic nature.

But even for those who were under no illusion regarding the extent of Soviet war preparations, it was impossible to form an idea of the actual strength of the Red Army. The failure of the Red troops in the war against little Finland contributed toward a general underestimation of the Red Army. Chancellor Hitler was the first frankly to admit in his speech of October 3, 1941, after the first few months of war:

"We have, it is true, erred on one point. We had no idea how gigantic had been Russia's preparations."

**THE PLAN OF A DEAD MAN**

With this army, which represented a huge question mark for the whole world, the Soviet leaders decided not to retreat but to fight. From the very first day, the Red Army accepted battle, as a whole as well as in its units down to the individual man. It employed tactics which had been worked out by the Red Marshal Tukhachevsky, who was "liquidated" some years ago by Stalin. His plan provided for the Red Army to be deployed in depth instead of in breadth. In contrast to the military leaders of other states, Tukhachevsky had the advantage of years of personal contact with the German military staff. For this reason, the basic ideas of the German tactics were doubtless known to him, long before they proved themselves in Poland, Norway, and France. After his death, the new leaders of the Red Army developed the Tukhachevsky tactics further on the basis of the lessons given by the German campaigns from 1939 till the spring of 1941.

The Red armies were taught to oppose the enemy, not in a wide front, but deeply staggered toward the rear. For example, an army composed of three divisions consists at the moment of battle of a mass—roughly eighty miles deep—of small and large field positions, each single one of which must be overcome. It cannot, therefore, simply be penetrated in one thrust, as was the French front at Sedan. The Russian Army possesses a great tradition in the laying out of fortifications and in their defense. This tradition is developed and exploited to the utmost in the Tukhachevsky system.

Moreover, the Red Army was the only army beside the German one to possess a vast number of tanks at the outbreak of the war. This fact enabled it to offer additional resistance to the German armies even after they had forced their way through the deeply staggered Soviet fortifications. The final report on the battle of Sevastopol gives an idea of the almost incredible extent of Soviet fortifications. In the narrow space around Sevastopol alone, the German and Rumanian troops had to overcome 3,577 pillboxes and fortifications one by one and remove 137,000 land mines. The fantastic quantities of arms possessed by the Soviets can be inferred from the fact that even Moscow numbers the Soviet losses in the first year of the war at 15,000 tanks, 22,000 guns, and 9,000 planes. (German figures of Soviet losses for the first five
“VERDUNS”

An advantage for the Soviet defense are the numerous rivers that usually run parallel to the front. In the French campaign the German troops had to cross only three or four rivers before the final decision was brought about. In the vast areas of Eastern Europe, however, the rivers to be crossed can hardly be counted, and the Red Army has made a new stand at each of them.

On the other hand, the number of large fortresses in the way of the German advance was not very great. Those designed for resistance, like Leningrad, Odessa, and Sevastopol, did offer extremely stubborn resistance. In the Red Army’s theory of war, the idea of “Verdun” plays an important part. For years it has been one of the favorite ideas of the Red military experts “to prepare a Verdun” for the opponent, where he will suffer such terrible losses that he has no strength left for further war actions. Leningrad, Odessa, and Sevastopol had been chosen as such “Verduns.” If they have not fulfilled the expectations placed in them, and if two of them are already in German hands, this cannot be blamed on insufficient preparation on the part of the Soviets.

In the present stage of general secrecy, the layman cannot form any judgment on the advantages and disadvantages of the armaments on both sides. But it can be said in general that the Soviet weapons were far better than the world had supposed.

On the whole the Reds proved themselves to be very inventive, as was shown, for example, by the employment of 800 mine-carrying dogs in the battle of Kharkov. To each dog had been fastened high explosives which were to be discharged when the dogs crawled underneath enemy vehicles or armored cars. However, not all original ideas turn out successfully. Frightened by the German defensive fire, which broke loose unexpectedly, the dogs turned tail and fled back into the Soviet positions. They leaped at Soviet soldiers and caused their charges to explode.

WAS THERE A STALIN LINE?

There have been many discussions in the world’s press as to whether there was, on the western border of the Soviet Union, a Stalin Line which could be compared with the Maginot, Mannerheim, and Metaxas Lines. In answering this question, one must differentiate between the old and the new Soviet western borders. There can be no doubt that there was no such line on the Soviet border newly created by the occupation of parts of Eastern Europe in 1939/40, however much had been done in that short time. (In less than two years the number of airfields in the new areas had risen from 90 to 814!) Things are different, however, with regard to the old Soviet border. Even before 1936, when I crossed this border more than twenty times at different places by train, airplane, and motorcar, there were extensive fortifications there. A strip 30 to 75 miles wide running along the border had been cleared almost entirely of the civilian population formerly living there. It had been transformed into a war zone designed according to the requirements of modern warfare, where the latest and best means of defense were being erected. Therefore this defense belt reaching from the Gulf of Finland to the Black Sea did not resemble the rigid Maginot Line, and only in this respect were the Soviets perhaps justified in disputing the existence of a Stalin Line.

As the old frontier had been drawn haphazardly in 1918/20 and did not follow any natural border, the belt of fortifications, later dubbed the “Stalin Line” by the world’s press, did not run exactly along it. It followed the border from Narva in the north down to Polotsk and was backed in the northern part of this section by the Narva River and Lake Peipus, and in the southern part by the River Duena between Drissa and Polotsk. From Polotsk, however, it separated from the border, which was hard to defend.

months only: 21,391 tanks, 32,041 guns, 17,322 planes.)
German infantry marching through a Soviet village

Marching . . .

An Italian detachment leaving for the eastern front

Red prisoners. One of them is wearing a British steel helmet, while another has a German steel helmet of Great War vintage
It curved along the Duena towards the southeast, crossed the Duena/Dniepr gap between Vitebsk and Orsha, and then followed the upper reaches of the Dniepr as far as the level of Gomel. The next section to the south was protected by the Pripet and Rokitno Marshes. South of the marshy region the belt of fortifications was continued more or less along the line Korosten/Jitomir/Berditchev/Vinnitsa to the middle reaches of the Dniestr and along the east bank of this river down to the Black Sea.

PARTISAN METHODS

Beside the traditions of the destruction of Napoleon and the battle of Verdun, the tradition of the partisans (guerrillas) plays an important part in the Red theory of war. During the time of the Russian civil war, the Bolsheviks had to thank guerrilla warfare for many of their successes, and therefore included it as an integral part of their military thought. One can probably say that no other state has ever prepared itself so consistently for guerrilla warfare. Whole troop units were trained for it and purposely left behind after June 22 in pathless sections of the areas occupied by the European troops. From there they were to harass the allied armies from the rear and disrupt their communications. The participation of the civilian population in the partisan war, about which so much is written in the Red and Anglo-American press, is exaggerated. However, the struggle against these guerrilla formations, some of which fight in civilian clothes, is often mentioned in the communiqués of the German High Command. Although they do not represent an actual danger they are a serious nuisance, whose existence also retards the return of normal life among the Soviet population that has remained behind in the occupied territories.

The great emphasis on the partisan tradition has led the Soviet leaders to conduct the training, not only of troops destined for guerrilla service, but of the entire Red Army, from a guerrilla point of view. This has proved to be a great mistake. That which was effective in civil war with comparatively small units and in the absence of heavy weapons is of no use in the battle against motorized masses. The partisan training of the Red Army has, it is true, led to successes for the individual soldier or small units, but it has also hindered the combined operation of large armies. The second explanation for the poor result of the course of the war up till now in comparison to the quality of the individual soldier is Stalin's great purge, to which the flower of the Soviet military staff and superior officer corps fell victim in the years from 1936 to 1938.

"NO ROOM FOR REGRET"

In one point, however, the Soviets have not only taken over the Russian tactics of the Napoleonic War but even extended them immeasurably: the scorched-earth policy. It was proclaimed by Stalin on July 2, 1941, and still more sharply formulated by Kalinin, the President of the USSR, when he ordered:

"When the enemy advances, everything of value must be destroyed. One must not let oneself be disturbed by the thought that those are values created by us. There is no room for pity or regret in such cases. To destroy everything, to leave nothing behind for the enemy, that is true patriotism."

In view of the rapidity of the German advance, by far the greater part of the conquered Soviet territory would have remained unscathed. But the scorched-earth policy employed by the Russians has reduced almost the entire country to rubble and ashes. In "Inside Russia" (February issue, 1942) we spoke about the psychological exploitation of this policy. Even the Allies of the Soviet Union have recognized this. In the issue of September 22, 1941, of the magazine Life, the following text accompanies two half-page photos of the destruction in Minsk (one of them is reproduced on p. 95):

"Scarcely a bomb landed on these two devastated areas of Minsk, capital of White Russia, with a population of 200,000 White Russians, Jews and Poles. Russians themselves burned down the city as part of the
same 'scorched earth' policy as defeated Napoleon.

"Clear streets in Minak, without bomb pits or rubble, show that this was 'scorched earth' destruction. Fires were lit by the Russians in the stairwells of the modern stone buildings, gutting them so completely as to make them useless as German troops barracks."

A NEW FORMULA

One point in which the campaign against the Soviet Union differs entirely from the previous campaigns of the present war is the absence of bordering seas against which the opposing army could be pushed back and forced to a "Dunkirk." Wherever there were such coasts, Dunkirk took place: in Reval, in Odessa, and in the Crimea. With these, however, the Dunkirk possibilities offered to the European armies are exhausted. They are now confronted by a mass of land where there is nothing more against which they could push the Red armies. This fact complicates the German tactics. Now it is no longer enough to drive Keils, as in previous campaigns, through the enemy armies to a coast and then to press together and finally to "Dunkirk" the armies enclosed between Keil and coast. The formula Keil + coast = Kessel has been replaced by a new one: Keil + Keil = Kessel. For the missing coast must be replaced by a second Keil which meets the first one in a pincer movement somewhere behind the enemy armies, as happened over and over again in the eastern campaign. Although this renders the task of the European armies considerably more difficult, it also prevents the escape of large enemy troop contingents over the sea (as was possible at Dunkirk) and makes the annihilation of the surrounded troops complete.

THE SULTAN'S JANIZARIES

Considering the role hitherto played by the Red soldier in this war, we shall have to study his character a little more closely. We must proceed from the basic fact that Bolshevism has ruled the soul of the Soviet population for a quarter of a century. It will soon be exactly twenty-five years since the Red Flag rose over the Kremlin. Ever since then, a mass of what eventually amounted to 170 million people has been worked on day in and day out with the double means of propaganda and terror with a consistency and brutality never before seen in history. Only those who have lived for years in the Soviet Union can imagine the influence that twenty-five years of terror and propaganda can have upon people. Everything publicly written or spoken in the USSR during this time was part of the Bolshevist world of ideas. And anything written or said in private that did not agree with the Bolshevist world of ideas or, within that world, diverged ever so slightly from the general trend of that time, led sooner or later to Siberia or to the grave. For a quarter of a century everything was "liquidated" that seemed suspicious and everything encouraged that fitted into the Bolshevist conception.

There is a famous example in history of troops who fought bravely for a cause they should have hated—the Janizaries of the Turkish sultans. Taken away in early youth from their persecuted Christian parents, they were trained relentlessly, with unbending severity and propaganda, to become the fierce guards of Islam against the Christian nations.

At the outbreak of the German-Soviet war there were approximately a hundred million people living in the Soviet Union who were born after the revolution of 1917, a hundred million people who had not known a single day of the pre-Bolshevist world. If we add to this those who, though born in the years before the revolution, were too young to be influenced by the pre-revolutionary world, i.e., those born between 1901 and 1917, we reach a figure that probably seems fantastic but that is based on official statistics: namely, 140 million people. On June 22, 1941, there were 140 million people under the age of forty who had grown up entirely under the influence of Bolshevism and had to a large extent become its obedient tools.
THE FIRST FRONT

These are the men fighting in the Red armies and working in the factories and kolkhozy of the Soviet Union. In previous articles in this magazine ("Inside Russia," February 1942; "The USSR Faces Spring," May 1942) we have shown with what skill Soviet propaganda has whipped up feelings of hatred and revenge in these men against the armies of Europe, and even of self-destruction, feelings which find their ghastly expression in actions such as the willful blowing up of 2,000 women, children, and wounded in Sevastopol by a Soviet commissar.

One need hardly consider the remaining twenty per cent who are over forty years old. Scared, prematurely aged by privations, bewildered by the radical changes in their life, they are no match for the Bolsheviks.

To all this must be added the frightful pressure of terror which weighs upon every inhabitant of the Soviet Union and which can force him to do almost anything demanded from him, as has been shown by countless examples in the last few years, especially the famous staged trials. Revenge on family members has proved to be a particularly effective scourge for the Soviet Government to use upon its citizens.

THEY FOUGHT WELL

It is hard to say to what degree the attitude of the Red soldier is composed of terror, of being accustomed to the Bolshevist ideas or even belief in their truth, and of the traditional bravery of the Russian soldier. Whatever may be the reasons, the Germans have frankly admitted that—while the Soviet High Command has proved inadequate—the Red soldier has fought better than any other of Germany's opponents in this war. Lieutenant Colonel Soldan, the German military author we quoted before, wrote that the Red Army had on all fronts shown an almost unimaginable power of resistance. Even the heaviest losses had simply been ignored by the Soviet command. The individual Russian soldier had proved himself to be an excellent fighting man, and his tenacity and power of resistance were really unbelievable. It was of no importance by what means discipline was maintained among the Red soldiers; the main thing was that it was being maintained. Even in the great battles, when countless Red soldiers had fallen or been taken prisoner, the Soviet commissars had succeeded in re-establishing discipline among the soldiers, Colonel Soldan concluded.

Even if, for instance, in Sevastopol the Red defense finally collapsed, although, as was found afterwards, there was still enough food and ammunition for several months, this was not a result of the cowardice of Red soldiers but of the fury of the German weapons of attack and the courage of the German and Rumanian troops.

After the great defeat Timoshenko suffered in the battle of Kharkov in May 1942, a correspondent of the Japanese paper Asahi, who inspected the battlefield immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Kessel, wrote:

"The Soviet forces, after rejecting the German demand for surrender, had fought bitterly. Those who surrendered did so not voluntarily but only after being deprived of all means to continue resistance."

NO TECHNICAL ABILITY?

In many circles all over the world the opinion was held that the Russian had no ability for technical things and therefore could not wage a modern war. Indeed, until a few decades ago the empire of the Tsars was composed of inhabitants who, in their large majority, were peasants and lived in villages far from all modern technical influence. They did their work with the primitive methods which had already been used by their ancestors in the times of Ivan the Terrible. However, the Bolshevization of Russia was marked in the economic sphere by the mechanization and industrialization of the country. In my opinion, the sociological revolution of the Soviet Union was greater than the political. For instance, the number of city dwellers, who are far more exposed to the influence of the machine age, rose in the Soviet Union
from 15.8 millions in 1897 to 39.1 millions in 1932. During the same time, the number of cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants grew from 14 to 46. Naturally, almost the entire increase in the number of city dwellers came from the human reservoir of the peasant population. Among those, for example, who in 1931 entered the metal industry of the Ural district and the Ukrainian coal-mining industry, 70 and 80 per cent respectively were of peasant origin. To become an engineer was now the ideal of Soviet youth.

At the same time the peasant population was “proletarianized” through the transformation of former individual small farms into large enterprises, which were given the significant name of “grain factories.” The driving and repairing of hundreds of thousands of tractors, combines, other agricultural machines, and trucks, and the presence in the villages of radios, typewriters, etc., have also accustomed the remaining rural population to technical matters more and more every year. We know from the first few years of mechanization in Soviet agriculture that innumerable machines were ruined as a result of lacking experience on the part of the peasants. But the peasant who had made a mess of the first tractor learnt from its wreckage how to work the second; and when the third one came, he faced it, no longer with the almost superstitious fear he had shown at first, but with a certain measure of technical experience.

WATCHING THE “OSSOAVIAKHIM”

As an example of how the Russians have been systematically accustomed to modern weapons, I shall take the most modern of them, aviation. In the autumn of 1932 I spent several months in the Soviet Union studying the Ossoaviakhim. This mass organization was at that time headed by one of the most efficient officers of the Red Army, General Eidemann (later executed by Stalin), who gave me permission to study it, accompanied by a young Red officer. I was free to decide upon my route of travel myself. I chose the Ukraine and the northern Caucasus.

The Ossoaviakhim was organized for the military training of the Soviet population, especially its youth, outside of the Red Army. One of its tasks is to train future aviators. This training is carried out on a very broad basis and begins in earliest youth. The youngest boys, pupils of the primary classes of village and city schools, are combined into groups which are occupied with “aeromodeling,” that is, building small airplane models according to plans distributed from headquarters and testing these models in competition among each other and against other schools. This game automatically acquaints the children with certain aerodynamic laws. Next comes the building of kites, at first only two-dimensional ones like we have all played with as children; then more and more complicated ones which contribute towards familiarity with the air. Then follows gliding and soaring, a sport taken over from Germany which very quickly became most popular with the young people of the Soviet Union and led to numerous outstanding records. Glider factories were established with a yearly production of thousands of planes.

Every autumn I visited the broad valley of the Moskva River near the small town of Tushino to watch the competitions held annually by the Ossoaviakhim. For months the best “aeromodelists” and glider pilots had competed in local contests all over the USSR, and the most successful ones had been invited to Moscow by the Ossoaviakhim. Those who came were the vanguard of hundreds of thousands of young Soviet citizens who spent much of their time studying flying problems. As a result, the performances were quite impressive. There were little boys and girls with small plane models which could fly as much as 300 yards; others who had built tiny motors of about one pound in weight capable of propelling models through the air. Kite enthusiasts were able, by linking a chain of kites to one rope, to lift one of their group high into the air, and
the gliders performed complicated loops and flew on their backs.

PARACHUTES FOR FUN

Beside this, the Ossosaviakhim encouraged parachute jumping as a sport. In 1932, the Red Army was the first to have employed mass formations of parachute jumpers in its large-scale maneuvers in the vicinity of Kiev. Parachute jumping became a sport for the masses. Towers were erected in every city, and sometimes even in the country, from whose topmost platform one could jump off with a parachute. Of course, the parachute was already open, as it would not have had sufficient time to open at so low a height. But, nevertheless, the jumper had first to fall clear through the air before he floated down to the ground with his parachute. The popularity of these jumping towers was immense. In the main public park of Moscow there was always a queue of hundreds of people patiently waiting their turn.

The highest step in aviation training in the Ossosaviakhim was motor flight and parachute jumping from airplanes. The whole of the Soviet Union was covered with a network of aviation schools, and everything which had to do with flying was popularized with all the means of propaganda. Many of these aviation pupils were then taken into the army. By such means, the long road from the backwoods peasant child to the modern flying officer was systematically shortened and a huge reservoir created of men who had already become accustomed to the air before entering the army. It is true, in the course of the war up till now the Soviet pilots have proved to be vastly inferior to the German ones and have, as a result, suffered terrible losses. In a single week of the battle of Kharkov (May 14-21), for instance, they lost 452 planes. However, if only on account of its mass, the Soviet air arm is an important factor in the fighting on the eastern European front.

THE MARCH OF WAR

After this analysis of the most important factors in the war in Eastern Europe, we can glance at the development of this war during its first thirteen months. It falls automatically into four phases. The first was from June 22 up to the declaration of the winter defensive on December 8, 1941; the second embraces the period of winter and rasputitsa (the "waylessness" following the thaw); the third stretches from the beginning of the battle of Kertch on May 8 up to the start of the summer offensive on June 28; and the fourth has at present reached its first climax.

The military development in the vast expanse of the USSR becomes clearer if it is subdivided geographically. In accordance with the fact that the German armies held the initiative up to the declaration of the winter defensive, it should be divided according to the three main German armies, which, during the first few months, were under the commands of Field Marshals von Leeb in the north, von Bock in the center, and von Rundstedt in the south.

VON BOCK’S FIRST 500 MILES

During the first four weeks, the main thrust was carried out by von Bock’s army group in the direction of Moscow. Its right flank was bordered by the trackless Pripet and Rokitno Marshes, while its left flank was covered by von Leeb’s army. Von Bock’s army group had obviously been ordered to move as fast as possible along the main road to Moscow, destroying the greatest possible number of enemy troops. It advanced in two mighty columns, the left one coming from the Suvalki corner in East Prussia, the right one from occupied Poland. First it was essential that the Soviet border fortresses of Grodno and Brest-Litovsk be destroyed. This took place on June 23 and 24. Now the armored columns, followed by motorized and marching infantry, stormed eastward in two almost parallel Keils, approximately up to the level of Minsk. There the points of both Keils swung inward and met roughly at the spot where the Warsaw/Minsk/Moscow railway crosses the Beresina River. Together they then crossed the Beresina at Borissov on July
4, and a few days later they were facing the Stalin Line at its strongest point.

Meanwhile, the huge Kessel between Suwalki, Brest-Litovsk, and Borissov had been subdivided into two Kessels centering around Byalystok and Minsk. This is where the first two great battles of annihilation in the eastern campaign took place. The two Kessels were compressed into a constantly diminishing space by the surrounding German troops, while at the same time they were cut up like a cake into smaller slices by armored Keils thrusting toward their center and destroying the Soviet units one by one or leading them off into captivity. On July 11 the German communiqué announced the conclusion of the twofold battle of destruction, with 324,000 prisoners and 3,332 armored vehicles captured.

Without waiting for the conclusion of these two Kessel battles, the advance formations of von Bock’s army group had broken into the Stalin Line. This line was strongly fortified in the gap between Vitebsk on the Dniepr and Orsha on the Dniepr. (There is a detailed description of the historical and strategic importance of this gap in the article “Three Against Moscow” published in the issue of November 1941 of our magazine.)

After a short and bitter struggle the German armies broke through the Stalin Line in three Keils. On July 4, Mogiliev fell before the advance of the right wing; on July 11, Vitebsk was taken by the left wing; and on July 16 the main column took Smolensk. (In view of the seriousness of the situation, Stalin made himself People’s Commissar of Defense a few days later.) Through joining the three Keil-heads east of Smolensk, a further number of Kessels was created, the most important of which are shown in our map.

TOWARDS MOSCOW

Now only, after a distance of almost 500 miles as the crow flies had been covered against fierce resistance in just four weeks, was the thrust temporarily halted. First of all the Kessels formed in the area around Smolensk had to be destroyed, a process which was concluded with the liquidation of the last of these Kessels, that of Roslavl on August 9; secondly, the columns that had advanced so far had to wait for supplies and the infantry to catch up with them; and thirdly, Timoshenko, who at that time commanded the central sector on the Soviet side, had succeeded in bringing up large quantities of troops and armaments on the close railway network surrounding Moscow which favored the Red armies. In stubborn counterattacks involving great losses for his men he threw these reserves against the German troops. The Red Army fought with the greatest possible fury in its attempt to prevent a further advance toward the triple capital—that of Russia, the Soviet Union, and of world Bolshevism.

During September, von Bock allowed the Red armies to dash themselves in vain against the German positions. That was the time in which the Soviet and Anglo-Saxon press gave free rein to their imagination and spoke of the German offensive getting stuck and of the beginning of trench warfare. Even during this period, von Bock’s army group did not limit itself to defense, as was shown by the conquest of Vyazma on September 10. But its actual fighting activity began again on October 2. It formed a big new Kessel east of Vyazma and went on to penetrate deeply into the advance positions of the defense of Moscow. By the middle of October, Kalinin, Rjew, Volokolamsk, Mojaisk, Serpukhov, and Kaluga were captured and huge numbers of prisoners taken.

Meanwhile, the army group von Bock had driven several Keils southeastward from its right wing which led to the formation of the Kessels of Gomel (liquidated on August 21) and of Bryansk (liquidated on October 19) and to the fall of Oryol on October 3.

However, this swing to the south—we shall still have to speak of another especially important one in connection with the battle for Kiev—did not alter
The first religious service held in a church in a Russian town after the entry of German forces. This church had been used by the Bolsheviks as a barn.

**Destruction and Rehabilitation**

"Scorched earth." This is what the city of Minsk looked like when it fell into German hands. Note the complete absence of any shell holes or bomb craters, a proof that the fire was deliberately set by the Soviets. (Taken from *Life* and mentioned on p. 89)

A German army surgeon treating the children of Russian peasants.
A German gun being ferried on collapsible rafts across one of Russia's countless rivers

Conquest of Space

A German pilot. Like many of his comrades he has made hundreds of flights against the Bolshevist enemy

A German bicycle squadron crossing a Russian river
the fact that the main thrust of this army group was directed at Moscow. The stubbornness of the resistance and the strength and density of the fortifications grew with the closer approach to Moscow. The Reds were fighting on the close network of railways radiating in all directions from Moscow and on the advantageous inner line in proximity to the factories of the Moscow industrial district. The unexpectedly early beginning of an exceptionally cold winter caused the German High Command on December 8 to order the offensive to be suspended and the troops to adopt a defensive war of the winter.

VON RUNDSTEDT PUSHES INTO THE UKRAINE

While the advance of the army group von Bock almost up to the outskirts of Moscow was, seen from a military point of view, the most important event of the first few months of war, the advance of the southern armies under von Rundstedt had the greatest economic consequences. Besides destroying the Red troops, the goal of this army group was to occupy the grain, raw-material, and industrial region of the Ukraine. This army group was composed of German, Hungarian, Rumanian, and later also Italian troops. Its left flank was covered by the Rokitno Marshes and its right flank by the Black Sea. Owing to the main effort being concentrated on the drive on Moscow, the advance of the southern armies got under way somewhat more slowly. Nevertheless, the western projection of the Soviet border in Galicia had already been cleared early in July by the cooperation of German troops advancing from occupied Poland and Hungarian troops who crossed the passes of the Carpathians. Przemysl fell in the first drive, Dubno on June 27, Lemberg on June 30, Lutsk, after a severe tank battle, on July 1, and Stanislawov and Kolomea on July 4. The further advance of the German-Hungarian armies took place in three main columns: the left one drove just south of the Rokitno Marshes via Lutsk and Korosten through the Stalin Line towards the Soviet defense lines backed by the Dniepr north of Kiev; the middle one, coming from Lemberg, penetrated the Stalin Line at Jitomir and had already reached the advance defenses of Kiev by the middle of July; the third one, consisting of Germans and Rumanians, advanced to the River Bug and followed it southward.

THE DNIEPR'S RIGHT BANK

Instead of immediately attacking Kiev, as had been expected by the Red High Command — which had concentrated strong forces in the sector of Kiev—the German armies swung to the right in a southeasterly direction. Some of these troops, together with the German-Hungarian armies, formed the *Kessel* of Uman, while others occupied the west bank of the Dniepr in a rapid advance and made preparations at several points to cross this river, which is among the broadest in Europe. The *Kessel* of Uman was cleared on August 8, and the troops that had now become available again advanced so rapidly along both banks of the Bug towards the southeast that the fall of the great port of Nikolayev at the mouth of the Bug could be reported as early as August 17, that of Kherson, on the right bank of the mouth of the Dniepr, following four days later. At the same time, another part of the troops available from the Uman *Kessel* had driven toward the iron-ore district of Krivoy Rog, had taken the city on August 15, and, together with the *Keil* advancing along the Dniepr, had formed a new *Kessel* in the territory between Krivoy Rog and the Dniepr bend of Dniepropetrovsk, Zaporojye, and Nikopol. On August 26, the bridgehead on the left bank of the Dniepr at Dniepropetrovsk fell into German hands.

In the meantime, a combined Rumanian-German army under the Rumanian Marshal Antonescu on the outermost right wing had advanced across the Prut and, divided into three columns (a northern one going through Czernowitz and the valley of the Dniestre, a central one through Kishinyov, and a southern one through Galatz and Bolgrad), had freed Bessarabia and reached the shores of the Black Sea. On July 27, Akkerman at the
mouth of the Dniestr had fallen, and by August 14, Odessa, on the other side of the river, had been surrounded. After two months of stubborn resistance, this strongly fortified city fell on October 16.

TWO PAIRS OF "KEILS"  

By the end of August we have the following picture in the Ukraine. The German troops had taken the entire right bank of the Dniepr (with the exception of Odessa and the fortified belt of Kiev) between the Pripet Marshes and the Black Sea. North of Kiev the Dniepr line had already been penetrated, and the Red troops had withdrawn to the Desna line. Thus the front was shaped like a gigantic "S" whose upper third was formed by the Desna and its lower two thirds by the Dniepr. Hence the Reds had been able to maintain two advance positions far forward in the region overrun by the Germans: one at Kiev and another on the left bank of the mouth of the Dniepr. The Russians held these two positions, supplying Kiev especially with large masses of troops, because they obviously hoped to be able later on to start a counteroffensive from them and surround the German armies occupying the triangle of the lower elbow of the Dniepr in a pincer movement.

So there were two Keils on each side facing each other: going from north to south, the first (on the right bank of the Desna) and third (in the elbow of the Dniepr) were German, the second (around Kiev) and fourth (on the left bank of the mouth of the Dniepr) were Russian. The question was which of these Keils would be able successfully to carry out their function, i.e., to close in upon and destroy the opponent—the Keils of von Rundstedt or those of Marshall Budyonny, who was then in command of the southern sector of the Soviet front.

"KEIL" TURNS INTO "KESSEL"  

On August 21 the Kessel of Gomel, which had been formed by troops of the army group von Bock, was liquidated, and a part of the troops then available received orders to march south. In the first days of September, Tchernigov on the Desna was taken, and the Desna was crossed 75 miles east of Tchernigov by strong German detachments headed south. Immediately after that, the Dniepr was crossed in a wide front to the right and to the left of Kremenchug in a northerly direction, and on September 13 the two Keils coming from the north and south met at the little town of Lokhvitea. The mightiest of all Kessels had thus been formed. On September 19, Kiev fell, and on 27th the conclusion of the greatest of all battles of annihilation fought on the Soviet front could be announced, together with the capture of 675,000 prisoners. Another proof of the superiority with which the German command handled the Keil tactics is the fact that, a few days after the two Keils had met in Lokhvitea, German troops occupied Poltava (September 18), thus preventing a Red drive from the Donets region. The northern one of the two Russian Keils had lost the game through the concentration of its center of gravity at its head in Kiev and through the neglect suffered by its over-estimated flanks on the left banks of the Desna and the Dniepr. The Keil of yesterday had turned into the Kessel of today.

The transition of an army from a Keil into a Kessel position can take place within a few hours. A Keil remains a Keil only so long as it can hold its sides against the enemy. At the moment in which its flanks are pierced, it turns into a Kessel.

ALONG THE SEA OF AZOV  

On the very day on which the conclusion of the encircling battle of Kiev was announced, the right wing of the allied southern army turned against the southern Soviet Keil. On September 27 the lower Dniepr was crossed at Berislav and the Sea of Azov reached on the following day. On October 2 began the offensive eastward along the north coast of the Sea of Azov. In Mariupol a juncture was effected with another Keil marching south from Dniepropetrovsk, and thus a new Kessel was formed in the area between Zaporojye, Nikopol, Melitopol, and
Mariupol. Without allowing this to delay them, the German columns reached Taganrog on October 16.

Meanwhile, the troops that had become available through the liquidation of the Kiev Kessel had turned east in a wide front. With the fall of Belgorod (north of Kharkov) on October 24 and of Kursk on November 2, a more or less straight front Kursk/Belgorod/Taganrog had been formed.

The drive from Berislav to the Sea of Azov at the end of September had cut off the Crimea from its mainland connections. On October 24 the Crimean offensive began with sanguinary fighting on the narrow Isthmus of Perekop. On November 1, Simferopol fell, on 4th Feodosiya, and on 16th Kertch. Only the naval port of Sevastopol, which the Russians had transformed into one of the strongest fortresses in the world, withstood the German attack.

This concluded the large-scale actions of the southern army. Although one more drive was undertaken at the end of November towards Rostov on the lower Don and the city taken, this extremely advanced spearhead was withdrawn after a few days, so that, when the winter defensive was declared, the southern front stretched fairly straight from Kursk to Taganrog.

VON LEEB’S THREE TASKS

The army group von Leeb obviously had a threefold task: (1) to free the Baltic States, which had been occupied by the Soviet Union in 1939/40; (2) to isolate Leningrad from the rest of the Soviet Union; and (3) to cover the left flank of the main attack directed at Moscow by an advance in the direction of Lake Ilmen and Lake Seliger. In accordance with this threefold task, the advance of the army group von Leeb was carried out chiefly in three columns.

The first of these, effectively supported by the German Navy, advanced northward by Riga, the capital of Latvia, which was taken on July 1, through the territory between the Baltic Sea and Lake Peipus, and reached the line Pernau/Felin/Dorpat ten days later. From here the advance was slowed down, as the Soviet armies, pushed against the Gulf of Finland northwest of this line, offered stubborn resistance. On August 6, Taps fell, and on 8th Wesenberg. Immediately following this, the Gulf of Finland was reached, and a week later the Kessel formed by this in northwestern Estonia around Reval was annihilated. The last remnants of the Reds were wiped out on September 1 by the conquest of Hapsal. By September 22 the island of Oesel was firmly in German hands. Simultaneously with the advance of these columns, a smaller column on their left wing had moved along the coast and occupied Windau on July 1. Through this the retreat over the sea had been cut for the Red troops in western Latvia. The Kessel formed here was soon destroyed.

The central drive of the army group von Leeb went through Lithuania via Kovno (taken on June 24) and Duenburg (June 26) against the Stalin Line south of Lake Peipus. On July 9 the Stalin Line was pierced at Ostrov. This resulted in the Red troops west and southwest of Lake Peipus being cut off, and the Kessel formed here was announced by the German communiqué as having been destroyed by August 3. After having penetrated the Stalin Line, this column split up into three sections. The
left one marched due north and, by reaching the Gulf of Finland at Narva on August 21, cut off all of Estonia from the Soviet Union. The right one drove northeastward toward Lake Ilmen, which it circumvented from both sides, thus forming another Red Kessel, and on August 21 occupied the venerable city of Novgorod. A further advance took it on August 30 along the River Volkov northeast of Novgorod to the important Leningrad/Moscow railway, which was cut on August 30. The central column, whose drive was directed against Leningrad, defended like Moscow by a vast belt of fortifications and with great stubbornness, was the slowest to advance. Luga was taken on August 26. From there onwards, every step of the ground had to be fought for, until, through the occupation of Schloesselburg on September 9, Leningrad’s land connections with the rest of the Soviet Union were cut. A few days previous to this, the former War Comissar Voroshilov had assumed the supreme command in Leningrad. During the next few weeks the German troops gradually worked their way closer and closer to the city. Apart from this, there were no major actions in this sector of the front, with the exception of a drive to Tikhvin on the Leningrad/Vologda railway, which was taken on November 9. After the declaration of the winter defensive this spearhead was withdrawn.

The right wing of the army group von Leeb marched through Vilna (taken on June 24) and pierced the Stalin Line at the beginning of July. After stubborn fighting, the belt of fortifications was penetrated on July 16 with the capture of Polotsk. Nevel was taken on July 24. With the advance further east a Kessel was formed east of Velikiye Luki, Kholm occupied on August 6, and the Valdai heights, where the Volga has its source, were reached. By this maneuver the Soviet armies were robbed of the possibility of becoming dangerous to the left flank of the army group von Bock.

The number of prisoners taken by von Leeb’s army group (June 27 to October 22: 300,000), which represents only a fraction of those taken in the central and southern sector, go to show that the Reds had placed comparatively weak forces in this sector, except at Leningrad.

In all the areas occupied by the troops of Europe, every effort was immediately turned toward reconstruction and the return of normal life.

THE FINNISH FRONT

The area north of Leningrad is a theater to itself. Here the Finnish divisions under Marshal von Mannerheim, in spite of their terrible losses in the previous Finnish-Russian war, not only recaptured the territory lost to the Soviet Union in the treaty of March 13, 1940, with the city of Viborg (retaken August 30), but also occupied beyond that large areas on the Karelian Isthmus (between the Gulf of Finland and Lake Ladoga) and the Aunus Isthmus (between Lake Ladoga and Lake Onega).

In September the Finnish troops reached the River Svir, which flows from Lake Onega into Lake Ladoga, thus disrupting traffic on the Stalin Canal, and the southern end of the Murmansk railway. With the occupation of Petrozavodsk in the beginning of October, the southern part of the Murmansk railway was rendered useless, so that the armaments coming from Murmansk had to be transported on a line recently built by the Soviets (shown on our map), which links up the Murmansk railway with the Arkhangelsk railway. Even under the midnight sun beyond the Polar circle up to the Fisher peninsula, fighting went on between the Finns, supported by German troops drawn from Norway, and the Soviets. However, the rest of the Murmansk railway, north of Lake Onega, remained in Soviet hands, although it was frequently disrupted by air bombings.

IS MURMANSK A RIDDLE?

The question has often been asked: Why have not the Finnish-German troops established themselves on the northern Murmansk railway? After all, it is only some eighty miles from the Finnish border
to Kandalaksha Bay on the White Sea. The capture of Kandalaksha would render Murmansk useless as a port of entry for British and American war materials.

There are several answers to be given to this question. In the first place, the region between the Finnish border and the White Sea is covered by innumerable lakes and bogs which greatly favor the defender—as the Soviets found out in their war against Finland in 1939/40. During the winter, when the waters are frozen, the arctic night makes military operations exceedingly difficult. In the second place, the little country of Finland sacrificed much of her best blood in the war she fought single-handed against the Red colossus two and a half years ago.

However, neither terrain nor exhaustion have prevented the Finnish forces from occupying large parts of the Karelian and Aunus Isthmuses. The fact that the Murmansk railway has not been cut in its northern portion may therefore indicate that this has been done on purpose. For, what is the advantage to be gained by cutting the Murmansk railway? This would still leave untouched one railway link from the White Sea to Central Russia, namely that from the port of Arkhangelsk. The cutting of the Murmansk railway would cause all British and American shipments to be directed to this port, which is much farther away from the German and Finnish air bases than Murmansk. It might also discourage America and Britain from sending large convoys to northern Russia, which, from the German point of view, would not necessarily be an advantage.

Nowhere are conditions during the summer months more favorable for the German attack on Allied shipping than in the Arctic. Here the convoys must pass through relatively narrow waters, bordered by Scandinavia on the one hand and by Spitzbergen and the arctic ice cap on the other, and along the Norwegian coast, the hideout for German planes, subs, and other craft. All these can operate twenty-four hours a day without letup, as the arctic summer knows no night, and they are always close to their prey without having to travel thousands of miles as in the case of the Caribbean Sea or the waters off the US east coast. Never before in the history of convoying has one single convoy lost as many as 35 out of 38 merchantmen, as happened in the arctic waters early in July of this year. Although sinkings in the arctic are usually not listed separately, even the occasional figures published indicate that, from January to July 10, 1942, at least 96 ships totaling more than 500,000 tons were sunk there. Hence Germany might be interested in keeping this corridor of death open for Anglo-American ships.

Besides, there is no indication that the USSR has been substantially aided in her struggle by war material from her Allies. After visiting the battlefields of Kharkov, a Japanese reporter wired that even there, where the Russians had assembled their most powerful forces for the attack planned by Timoshenko, the proportion of Anglo-American tanks was not more
than twenty per cent, and that the number of American-made planes had been negligible.

**THE FROZEN FRONT**

If one wants to visualize what the front looked like on December 8, 1941 when the German High Command proclaimed the transition from the offensive to the winter defensive, one must draw a straight line from Schlüsselburg near Leningrad to Taganrog on the Sea of Azov. The front more or less followed this line with two exceptions—the small point towards Tikhvin and the large one towards Moscow. These two points were now withdrawn, first, to shorten the front, and secondly, to force the Reds in the exceptionally important region west of Moscow to return to the territory they had destroyed on their retreat. The shortened line created by these moves was held for the next five months.

The Red High Command did, of course, attempt to exploit the winter. With its troops, who were better accustomed to the climate and who, in part, had been brought from Siberia, it sought to penetrate the German lines and to destroy the European armies through a combination of winter and war, or at least to weaken them to such an extent that they would no longer be able to resume large-scale operations in the following summer. The chances of the Reds to break through were all the better because their enemies' front had been thinned considerably in order to withdraw as large a part as possible of the armies from actual fighting so as to prepare them for the battles of the coming year. The determination and ruthlessness with which the Red troops, in spite of their huge losses, were continually thrown against the German positions, as well as the exceptional cold of the bitterest winter in a hundred and forty years, were a severe test for the fighting qualities of the European armies. Chancellor Hitler, who, in view of the difficult position, himself took over the Supreme Command of the German Armed Forces on December 19, 1941, said in his speech of March 15, 1942:

\[ \text{"By superhuman effort and by putting into the scales their last ounce of energy of body and soul, German soldiers and their allies have stood this test and overcome it."} \]

**MAN AND MASS**

During those months, the press of Germany and Europe was filled with accounts describing the bitterness of the struggle without euphemism. We quote here as an example the account of a young German front-line reporter:

"People at home can hardly imagine the demands in hardship, will power, and personal sacrifice made on our soldiers by the defensive battle in the east. Above all on our infantry. They form the foremost line, they are the nearest to danger. They see nothing these days but snow and ice and desolate vastness. They know nothing but danger and struggle against Man and Nature. Cold and blizzards shake them, and, when they eat, one hand still holds the rifle. It is a struggle against the forces of Nature, against snow, cold, and ice, a struggle to safeguard their supplies. There are difficult hours when ammunition runs low and the enemy constantly sends new waves of men into the attack, hours when the soldier in the foremost line waits in vain for food and drink, because the supply column has got stuck in the endless sea of snow and blizzard.

"Again and again the Bolsheviks employ the combination of artillery, tanks, airplanes, and infantry. Mass seems to be the god the Bolshevist command is serving. They believe that sheer numbers are of decisive importance. But it is just here in the east that it has become apparent that Man, that the value of the individual soldier decides in the battle against the majesty of numbers and mass. This struggle has proved how decisive a role is played by the spiritual determination of each single soldier."

**THE UNBROKEN CHAIN**

We have not shown on our map the changes in the eastern front during the winter and spring because there are no clear details available concerning them. It is known, however, that the Red troops succeeded in penetrating deeply into the territory occupied by their enemies at various points of the northern sector, for
Rumanian air officers, who fly German Heinkel bombers against the Soviets, chatting with a German comrade.

German sappers smoking out the enemy with a flame-thrower.

A German infantry corporal with his pet, a buzzard caught in the front lines.

A moment’s rest for the infantry man on the march.
Getting ready for the morrow. Polishing his boots is the last job in a soldier's day.
instance, at the Volkhov front between Lake Ladoga and Lake Ilmen, and at the sector between Lake Ilmen and Lake Seliger, in the vicinity of Rjev, as well as on the southern front in the vicinity of Lozovaya and on the Kertch peninsula. But nowhere did they manage really to make use of their successes, and the chain of important bases which the European armies had occupied after the transition to the winter defensive—Schlusselburg, Novgorod, Kholm, Rjev, Vyazma, Oryol, Kursk, Belgorod, Kharkov, Slavyansk, Taganrog—remained firmly in the hands of the latter throughout the winter. The Reds succeeded nowhere in breaking through on a wide front, much less in rolling it up. They were able on no single occasion successfully to carry out the German Kessel tactics. Wherever they penetrated, they left behind them the doorposts of those strongholds just enumerated, whence in early summer the European armies could close the gates behind those Red troops which had penetrated.

The fact that, through the transition to the defensive, the German High Command left the initiative for several months to the Red armies, encouraged the Kremlin and its Allies in their hope of assuming a large-scale offensive in the summer against their enemies weakened by the winter battles. For this purpose, all the human material still available in this great country after its heavy losses in the previous summer was mobilized in a manner unique in history and put, on the one hand, into the production of armaments and, on the other, into newly created army formations.

NEW MASSES MOBILIZED

While millions of Red soldiers were battering the enemy positions during the winter, new armies of millions were organized. The following is taken from another German front-line report of that time:

"In the staff offices of our armies, whose main duty it is to collect and study enemy news, the reports coming in daily from countless sources constantly reveal the results of this ruthless employment of the millionfold reserves of human life, which have been sent to their doom since the middle of December by those in power in the Soviet Union. Based on the questioning of prisoners and deserters and supplemented by the results of patrol actions and air observation, a gigantic picture arises of what the Soviets have assembled in the months since the smashing battles of destruction of the summer and autumn campaign.

"Far behind the battlefront, behind the Volga and the Ural, in Siberia and at the borders of the Near East, formations are active which, in numbers, represent an entirely new army of attack against the countries of allied Europe. Sometimes it is the fragments of infantry divisions destroyed in the first Kessel battles which were led back in September and October into the districts of replenishment in the central parts of the Soviet Union and which have been used as the framework for such new formations. In many cases trained soldiers, noncommissioned officers, officers, and civilians were withdrawn from troops still standing at the front and used as a core for training entirely new formations. Such new Siberian or Ural divisions contain no more than ten per cent of thoroughly trained men. More than two-thirds are newly conscripted reservists, many of them older men, who have had a rough training—usually without weapons—lasting several weeks. The rest is made up of absolutely untrained, recently called-up recruits who have been enrolled to fill up the ranks without any regard to their fighting experience or fighting value.

"The old catchword of the Russian steamroller is now being revived by the Bolshevists in a manner only possible in the world of Lenin and Stalin. Here the human being, the European or the nomad from the Siberian tundra, the peasant or the worker, no longer counts as an individual. It is only the herd which is valued according to its numbers and the pressure of its masses."

However, Europe was not idle either. Throughout the winter, new weapons were forged all over Europe with an eye to the experiences gained during the first few months of the war; troops were trained; roads, bridges, and railways were built in the occupied territories; and large depots of war material were established. When one considers what it means to prepare over a terrible road system a
1,200-mile front, situated 750 miles and more from the centers of armament, for a vast offensive with millions of men, the miracle of German organization seems almost greater than that of German fighting power.

Then came summer

As was to be expected after an exceptionally severe winter, summer came exceptionally late. The ground had been frozen so deep that it took longer than in normal years for the water of the melting snow to run off and for the vast morass, of which all of Eastern Europe consisted for weeks, to dry to a war theater suited for large-scale movements of motorized mass armies. The delay in the German offensive was regarded and celebrated by the Soviet and Anglo-American press as a proof of the exhaustion of the European armies. But the German command did not allow itself to be disconcerted by this. It knew what it wanted. With purposeful methodicalness it prepared its action. When it saw that the moment had come, it began its operations, not with a great new drive, but by consolidating the territories already conquered, by reoccupying the Kertch Peninsula, by destroying the Red troops who had penetrated during the winter into the occupied territory between the German strongholds, and by the capture of Sevastopol.

We have already briefly dealt with the battles of Kertch and Sevastopol in "The March of War" of our July issue. With Sevastopol, the Soviets lost the only real naval port on the Black Sea. Although their fleet in this sea was never very large (1939: 1 battleship, 1 aircraft carrier, 2 heavy and 4 light cruisers, 2 large and 9 medium destroyers, about 30 motor torpedo-boats, as well as submarines, minelayers, minesweepers, and other small units), it was considerably superior to the fleets of the other nations on the Black Sea and, for that reason, an important factor. Since the Dardanelles are closed to the passage of warships, the Axis powers had no means of bringing their warships into the Black Sea and putting an end to the superiority of the Red fleet. It is true that a number of Italian speedboats were brought overland from Italy to the Black Sea which proved very valuable in the fighting around Sevastopol. But the main blow against the Red fleet was the capture of Sevastopol, as the ports remaining to the Soviets in the eastern part of the Black Sea cannot be considered seriously as bases for a naval fleet.

Closing the gates behind the Reds

Of all the actions taken against the Red armies that had penetrated the German positions, that on the Volkhow River front was the most characteristic and important. In this sector, Red troops had advanced during the winter behind the rear of the German ring surrounding Leningrad from the south. By making use of the numerous frozen rivers, they had received a steady supply of men and material in this trackless area of forests and swamps. The German command had carried out an elastic defense in the face of the Russian inroads; at the same time, however, it had successfully defended the bridgeheads on the Volkhow north and south of the points of penetration. A sort of rubber balloon was created, which was blown up bigger and bigger behind the German front through filling it up with Red units, but which had only a narrow mouth on the Volkhow itself. When the melting snow and ice drove the Red troops out of their swamp hideouts, the German command closed up this mouth. According to the familiar method, the Reds, whose further supplies had thus been cut off and whose weapons got stuck in the thawing bog, were split up into several parts of a Kessel and systematically annihilated. On June 28, the German High Command announced the liquidation of this Kessel, which had cost the Red armies 50,000 prisoners besides large losses in dead and in material. Events took a similar course at Rjev (40,000 prisoners).

In an attempt to derange the German plans and to snatch the initiative, Timoshenko began a major attack of vast
proportions south of Kharkov, which, however, led to a catastrophe for the Red armies and whose course and collapse we have described in our July issue. The weakening of Timoshenko enabled the German troops to cross the Donets at Izyum in the second half of June in preparation for large-scale action, and, by penetrating into the area of the lower Oskol near Kupyansk, to form starting bases for new attacks.

THE SUMMER OFFENSIVE

With the capture of Sevastopol on July 1, the last of the great Soviet strongholds behind the German front—except Leningrad—had fallen.

For months the world had been talking and writing about the coming great German offensive. But, except for a small circle of men around Hitler, no one, not even the Soviet High Command, knew when and where the offensive would take place. Perhaps Germany would prefer to build an Ostwall (East Wall) along the existing front and use the military forces freed thereby in other regions, for example, in the Near East or against the British Isles? So they were kept guessing. In any case, during the long winter months the Red Army had prepared itself for a German attack and, on the basis of its experience in 1941, had built a mighty defense belt between Lake Ladoga and Rostov. It had to attempt to make up by fortifications for the first year's huge losses in men.

On June 28, that is, six days later than in the year before, the storm broke.

Up to the moment of our going to press no comprehensive report has yet been issued by the German High Command regarding the course of the summer offensive up till now. And it can hardly be expected before the present fighting has been completed. Nevertheless, the developments of the past month are more or less known in their large outlines, although reports vary greatly about the methods used by the European troops.

Only the future will show what the final aims of the great summer offensive are. But its course so far reveals two goals: first, the complete occupation of the Donbass (Donets Basin), whose western half (center: Stalino) had already been occupied in the autumn of 1941, and whose eastern half (main centers: Voroshilovgrad and Shakhty) represented the most important of the industrial areas remaining to the Soviet Union in Europe; secondly, the occupation of the great elbow of the middle and lower reaches of the Don and its transformation into a glacis, from where the European troops could advance either northwards (into the hinterland of Moscow), or eastwards (toward the Volga), or southwards (to the Caucasus). The two goals were combined in an ingenious, bold manner by circumventing the Donbass from the north and reaching an area (Bogutchar and Millerovo) whence both goals could be aimed at simultaneously.

THE BIG DETOUR

After the true German intentions had been cleverly camouflaged, the campaign started under the leadership of Marshal von Bock, the commander of the European southern armies, in an easterly direction at the juncture between the central army of General Jukov and the southern army of Marshal Timoshenko, a place where it had apparently not been expected at all. Within a single week, the whole defense system laboriously erected by the Reds in the triangle Kursk/Belgorod/Voronej was overrun and the Don crossed in its upper reaches. On July 7, Voronej fell and was made the corner tower which was to cover the left flank of the advancing European armies. Bridgeheads were formed on the east bank of the Don. While small detachments advanced towards the last remaining Soviet north/south railway line in European Russia (Moscow/Borisoglebsk/Stalingrad), the main body of the Germans turned at right angles and marched southwards along the Don. Blow followed upon blow. On July 9, Svoboda fell, on 10th Rossosh, and on 11th Bogutchar. Here the armies split up, and, while one army proceeded further eastwards along the
Don toward its elbow, the other army advanced southwards toward Millerovo.

Shortly after the left wing of the army group von Bock had set out from Kursk, the central sector at Belgorod/Kupyansk/Izyum had begun its attack toward the south-east. On July 10, Starobelsk fell and on 11th Lisitchansk, the terminus of the Caucasian oil pipe line. Under the combined pressure of this army and the columns moving southwards from Bogutchar, Millerovo fell into German hands on July 16 and Voroshilovgrad on 17th.

At the same time, and without pausing for breath, other European armies freed through the capture of Millerovo moved southeastwards by the most direct route to the Don, which was reached on 18th between the Don Cossack villages of Tsymlyanskaya and Konstantinovskaya. Here for the second time the German troops made a right-angled turn to the right and stormed along the right bank of the Don toward Rostov from the east.

One might ask in surprise why the Germans, instead of advancing from Taganrog, less than forty miles away from Rostov, had marched on Rostov from Kursk by a detour of seven hundred miles. But the purpose of this extraordinary maneuver became clear when Rostov, attacked simultaneously from the east, the north, and the west, fell into German hands after a few days on July 24.

A CLASSIC EXAMPLE

One can already predict that this campaign lasting less than four weeks (June 28-July 24) will go down in history as a classic example of a battle of en-circlement. In an exemplary co-operation of all the fighting branches, a gigantic action was carried out with fascinating efficiency and so smoothly that it might have been a maneuver without an enemy. The clockwork precision of this movement, involving millions of men, vast equipment, and tens of thousands of square miles, is almost miraculous.

The armies which, on their march from Kursk via Voronej/Rossosh/Millerovo/lower Don to Rostov, had to cover a distance equal to that from Berlin to Paris, were the first to have started. The next to get under way were the armies from Belgorod, Kupyansk, and Izyum, which had to cover only half the distance; and the last (not until July 21) were the troops at Taganrog. They all arrived, one might almost say, to the minute at the great rendezvous before Rostov and, through their encirclement, they captured the city within a few days, a city which the Anglo-American press had prematurely celebrated as a second Sevastopol. Just as happened once before with the Maginot Line, so the Timoshenko Line had become worthless through the appearance of German troops in its rear.

Simultaneously, and without losing a single day, a number of bridgeheads on the left bank of the Don were captured between Tsymlyanskaya and the mouth of the Don, the town of Bataisk which lies opposite Rostov was taken, and the advance towards the railway line Novorossysk/Salsk/Stalingrad begun. On July 30, this line was cut by the German forces north east of Salsk.

The encirclement and capture of the eastern Donbass was only one of the tasks of von Bock's army group. The second, the drive into the Don elbow, was carried out simultaneously from Bogutchar and Millerovo. On the day on which Rostov fell, the European armies crossed the River Tchir, and two days later they reached the high right bank of the elbow.

RED SOLDIERS GROW SCARCE

As far as the course of the summer campaign of 1942 up till now can be surveyed, it seems to differ from that of 1941 in that no Kessel battles of large extent have taken place. The number of prisoners taken announced by the German High Command (119,000 up to July 15) is very much lower than the figures for the preceding year. The Soviet Union seems no longer to have such large masses of troops at its disposal as she was able to sacrifice so recklessly last year. This has led to Timoshenko's decision, revealed in the order of the day quoted by us, to
withdraw his troops from hopeless positions instead of letting them fight to the last in Kessels. The shortage of men on the Soviet side, a characteristic of the battle of the last four weeks, is proof that the German figures on Soviet losses in the battles of Kertch and Kharkov (see "The March of War," July 1942) were not exaggerated. The 750,000 men and the thousands of tanks, planes, and guns Timoshenko lost in these two battles were a great deficit for him during those last four weeks. Even the study of the Soviet communiqués does not offer a picture of organized Soviet defense in the Donets/Don area.

The only points where the Red armies have been fighting furiously during the last four weeks and have gained some ground are on the central Russian front, which was not affected by the bloodletting of Kertch and Kharkov. Since the Red High Command could reply to the German thrust into the Donets/Don area only by rapid retreats and comparatively short rearguard actions, as in the case of Rostov, it attempted to endanger the left flank of von Bock's armies. Since the beginning of July, the Red armies have carried out ceaseless attacks with large masses of troops and material against all three towers sheltering this left flank—Bryansk, Oryol, Voronej. However, they were not able to interfere with the march of the German armies in the Don loop.

During the first part of July the Soviets and their Allies tried to convince themselves that Timoshenko's newly adopted tactics of "elastic defense" and voluntary withdrawal were just the right thing as they considerably decreased the number of prisoners falling into German hands. But the resulting rapidity of the German advance has thrown them into a panic, and they again have changed their mind. Only a few weeks ago Timoshenko had told his troops that they "should not devote their ambition to holding positions at any cost but should retreat," yet on July 30, the most influential newspaper of the USSR, the Pravda, wrote exactly the opposite when it implored: "Every shred of territory given up weakens us, and he who abandons positions without having done everything to defend them is a criminal in the eyes of the Soviet people."

THE SECOND FRONT

Exactly two months ago, on May 26, the Soviet Union signed a treaty of alliance with Great Britain in which the latter undertook "to render all possible military or other assistance in the war against Germany." Molotov returned from the same journey with a promise of Roosevelt's to open a second front. This promise was incorporated in the official communiqué in Moscow (June 11) in the following words:

"During these conversations [between President Roosevelt and Foreign Commissar Molotov] a full understanding was reached on the urgent need for the creation of a second front in Europe in 1942."

In the two months which have passed since Molotov's return, the Soviet Union has had to suffer the catastrophe of the Kharkov battle and the loss of Sevastopol and the Donets/Don area. What have her Allies done to carry out their promise? The USA has not yet undertaken any military action whatever; and the British, apart from air raids on German cities and a serious defeat in North Africa, have also nothing to show.

It is an inherent weakness of the so-called "united nations" that each of them would like to burden the other with the main load of the war. Just as the Soviet Union hoped from 1939 till 1941 that Germany and the western European powers would destroy one another while she would be the winner in the end, England and the USA now hope that the Soviet Union and Germany may bleed each other to death. By the promise of a second front they have encouraged the Soviet Union to continue her fight against Europe, which has resulted in terrible losses for Russia.

If no serious efforts are undertaken soon to create a second front with at least a quarter to half a million men, the
moment will come when the Red soldier will feel more hatred for his faithless Allies than for his brave opponents. On July 8 the chief newspaper of the USSR, the Pravda, vigorously attacked "hesitating, cowardly, and incapable people who do not realize that, by delaying their attack, they give more chances to the enemy." Although we do not overestimate the personal feelings of the Red soldier in their effect on Stalin's policy, yet they are not quite without influence. We might, perhaps, point out that, after all, the desire for separate peace represents an old tradition of Russian foreign policy (St. Petersburg 1782, Tilsit 1807, Brest Litovsk 1918).

WHAT LOZOVSKY HAS TO SAY

We have based our review of the course of the fighting mainly on the German communiqués and on commentaries appearing in the world's press. The army communiqués of the Soviet Government, issued twice a day by the Soviet Bureau of Information (Informbureau) through the Soviet Tass News Agency, have proved too unreliable. In order to enable our readers to form their own idea of the quality of the official Soviet reports, we quote here some of them from the time of the final struggle for Sevastopol. During those days, when the attention of the whole world was directed at the fortifications around that naval port and a battle of unprecedented fury was taking place there, the Soviet Informbureau had the following to say:

On June 5: "During the night of June 3/4 there were no important changes at the front." (This was when the main attack on Sevastopol began.) We find exactly the same words in communiqués of June 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 18, 19, 20, and 23.

The name of Sevastopol appeared for the first time in the communiqué of June 8: "In the sector of Sevastopol, serious fighting has been going on for three days. All attacks are being repulsed successfully and with great losses for the Germans." From then onwards the stereotyped phrase was constantly repeated that the enemy attacks on the Sevastopol sector were being successfully repulsed and that the Germans were suffering great losses, as, for example, on June 9, 11, 15, 17, 18, 20, 22, 29.

AS EASY AS THAT

On June 20 a little variation appeared when it was said that the enemy was continuing his attacks "in spite of his extremely high losses," but was being repulsed. (A regular study of the Soviet communiqués shows that the situation at a given sector has always become particularly critical for the Soviets when emphasis is placed on the extremely high losses of the opponent.)

On the evening of June 22 the Informbureau admitted for the first time a German success. Although the report began with enemy attacks being repulsed, the sentence was added: "At the cost of enormous sacrifices, the enemy succeeded in penetrating our defenses."

In the communiqués of June 24, 25, 26, and July 1, the "superior forces" of the enemy were referred to which had been repulsed.

On June 23 and 29 and July 1, 2, and 3, only "fighting" was mentioned in the Sevastopol sector. From time to time heroic deeds of individual soldiers and officers or individual small detachments were reported instead of comprehensive communiqués, as, for instance, on June 24, 26, 27, 28, and 30.

On the evening of June 30 it was said: "The enemy has brought new reserves into the battle, and at the cost of heavy losses he succeeded in pushing forward slightly. The fighting is of an extraordinarily bitter nature."

On July 2: "In the Sevastopol sector the enemy succeeded in advancing at the cost of tremendous losses. Bitter hand-to-hand fighting is taking place."

On July 3: "In the Sevastopol sector our troops carried on bitter hand-to-hand fighting with the enemy at the city limits."

On the morning of July 4: "In the Sevastopol sector fighting was continued in the streets of the city."

On the evening of July 4: "After eight months of heroic defense, our troops have given up Sevastopol."

So the study of the official Soviet communiqués results in the following picture:
Up to the morning of June 22 the German attacks had always been repulsed; on June 22, June 30, and July 2, the Germans managed to advance slightly; on July 3 there was hand-to-hand fighting at the city limits; and on July 4 one of the strongest fortresses in the European war theater had fallen. Just like that!

Official communiqués which remain silent on important events such as the successive captures of one Soviet fort after another (Fort Stalin fell on June 14, Fort Siberia on June 17, Fort Maxim Gorki on June 18, Fort Lenin and Fort Molotov on June 21, Sevastopol itself on July 1), and which content themselves with vague phrases, can neither be taken seriously nor considered as good propaganda from the Soviet point of view, as, in such circumstances, these communiqués are no longer regarded as authoritative even by the Allies of the Soviet Union.

We have chosen Sevastopol as an example because this was a comparatively short compact battle in a small area, so that the reports can fairly easily be surveyed and compared to actual events. But other reports of the Informbureau offer the same picture.

We have limited ourselves purposely to the official communiqués of the Informbureau. The reporting of less official organs is even more incredible. On June 30, that is to say, a few hours before the fall of the city, a Russian-language Soviet paper in Shanghai, for instance, still carried the chief headline "Sevastopol is impregnable (nevyyazvim)."

THE PRICE

On the anniversary of the outbreak of war on the eastern front, the German High Command announced the losses of the German Army during the first year of war to have been 271,000 killed and 66,000 missing. At the same time Romania announced that her army had suffered approximately 45,000 killed and missing and about 105,000 wounded. There are no comprehensive figures available yet on the losses of the other allies. But on the basis of the German and Rumanian figures one can approximately estimate that Europe’s campaign against Bolshevism has cost her some 350,000 to 400,000 dead during its first year. As appalling as these figures are, as irreplaceable as each single one of these dead is for his relatives and for the future reconstruction of Europe, they are nevertheless surprisingly low compared to what has been achieved and compared to the losses of the Great War, or if one compares them to the fact that, according to American statistics, 102,500 people were killed in 1941 by accidents in the United States.

The much higher losses during the war of 1914/18, in which Germany and Austria-Hungary alone lost an average of three quarters of a million every year, are to be explained by the fact that, except for short periods of movement, the front was rigid during those years, and that the war consisted mainly of masses of infantry dashing themselves against fortified enemy positions, which caused terrible sacrifices in men. In the present war the situation is quite different. On the one hand, the war consisted of continuous movement, with the exception of the winter months, when the European armies wisely limited themselves to the defensive and hence suffered comparatively small losses. On the other hand, the attacks were chiefly carried out, not by the infantry, but by mechanized and aerial forces. Above all, the training of the German armies and the co-operation of the various armed formations have reached so high a level that even the most difficult actions, such as the capture of Sevastopol, could be carried out with a minimum of losses.

We do not know the total number of European troops involved in the struggle against the USSR, but we do know that additional millions are guarding the frontiers of Europe from the North Cape to Crete.

As regards the losses of the Red Army, the Soviet Government announced on June 23, 1942, that they amounted to four and a half millions in dead, wounded, and prisoners. As, according to German
reports, the Soviet losses in prisoners alone surpass the figure named by Mos-
cow, the latter appears to be several
times too low. But even if, as will be
the case in the anti-Axis camp, it is con-
sidered to be correct, it shows the extent
of Red losses. Whatever the correct
figure, the losses of the Soviets were in-
comparably higher than those of their
opponents. They suffered them, first, in
the endless succession of Kessel
battles, in which, without ever having had the
initiative or being able to move properly,
they were destroyed or captured by the
superior arms of their enemies, and then
during the winter, when, although they
finally gained the initiative, they had to
attack the strong positions of their
enemies, which again caused them to
suffer terrible losses.

As a result of the Kessel battles, an
endless stream of Soviet prisoners has been
moving westward. According to German
reports, the Soviets have so far lost ap-
proximately five million men in prisoners.
This figure is not as fantastic as it may
seem at the first glance, if one bears in
mind that a single Kessel battle, that of
Kiev—the most successful one, it is true
—brought in 675,000 prisoners.

In view of the nature of the war, the
number of prisoners taken by the Soviets
is small and probably limited to a part
of those reported as “missing.” Un-
fortunately the International Red Cross
has tried in vain to obtain information
on their fate. The Soviet Government
has refused to supply such information,
which gives reason for gloomy conjec-
tures.

THE PERSPECTIVE

In this long article we have retraced
the steps of the last thirteen months at
the eastern front. We have not glossed
over facts but have tried to represent
them as they appear from a serious study
of all available material. To under-
estimate the strength of the Soviet Union
during the past thirteen months or even
today would be not only stupid but an
injustice toward the European soldiers
fighting against her. Only if one fully
realizes the severity of the struggle against
the Red Army, against the almost endless
space and the rigor of its climate, can
one appreciate the greatness of what has
been achieved by the European armies
in their victorious march from the Memel
to the Don.

The force and impetus shown by the
armies of Europe since the resumption
of the offensive in 1942 justify even the
most sober and cautious observer in
coming to the following conclusion:

It is only a question of time before Bolshevism is destroyed in Europe, before
the Russian people with all its valuable
attributes wakes up from the nightmare
of Bolshevism and returns to the fold of
the European nations, and before the
last opponent of a new Europe on the
Continent has disappeared. The best of
Europe's sons are not staking their
lives in vain to regain for Europe the
beautiful and fertile country which Bol-
shevism has torn from the community of
peoples. From the graves of those fallen
in this struggle will arise the seed of a
new era.