THE MARCH OF WAR

THE SOVIET FRONT

(September 1 to December 1, 1942)

STALINGRAD

THE struggle for Stalingrad stands unrivaled in the history of war. In order to understand it, one must study a map of this curiously shaped city. Originally a small settlement on the Volga, Tsaritsyn—as the town was known before the Revolution—quickly developed into a trade center during the nineteenth century because of its position on the chief artery of communications in the Russian Empire. Towards the end of that century it had a population of 50,000. Since the town owed its existence to its position on the Volga, it extended in a very long, narrow strip along the river.

Under the Bolsheviks, the town, now called Stalingrad, was developed into one of the most important industrial centers in the Soviet Union. To the north of the old center of the town, entirely new industrial cities arose with their workers' settlements around the four great plants of the oil refineries, the iron foundry "Red October," the armament plant "Red Barricade," and the tractor (in war time, tank) factory "Dzerjinsky." These plants, too, were erected along the Volga, in order to facilitate the transport of raw materials and manufactured goods. In this way, the city with its suburbs reached a length of 65 kilometers during the last few years.

The city was connected with the railway network of the country by three main lines: towards the north to Moscow, towards the west to the Don, and towards the southwest to the Black Sea. Ferries maintained the traffic across the Volga, which at this point is nearly a mile wide and in which there are large islands. Across the river on the east bank there lies Krasnaya Sloboda, the terminus of a railway leading towards the east, where it connects up with the line Astrakhan/Saratov.

A FORTRESS, NOT A CITY

At the end of August and the beginning of September 1942, the European armies moved into position to attack Stalingrad. On August 31, German troops reached the Volga above the city near Dubovka, and on September 3 below Stalingrad at Krasnoarmeisk, thereby cutting off the isthmus between the Don and the Volga from the north and from the south. Thus Stalingrad's only remaining connection with the rest of the USSR was across the Volga. Then the semicircle around Stalingrad was systematically tightened. It now became evident that the Red Army had surrounded the entire outskirts of the city as far as the Don and far to the north and south with a gigantic and effective defense belt made up of innumerable small defense positions. Hence the battle for Stalingrad broke out many miles from the edge of the city, and the European armies succeeded only by splendid co-operation among all the various arms in working their way up to the city itself. Towards the end of the first week of September, the suburbs were reached, and the struggle for Stalingrad proper began.

Since all the Soviet cities captured by the European armies, with the exception of Sevastopol, had fallen within a few days, the world at first expected the fall of Stalingrad to be only a matter of days. However, the very first attacks proved that in Stalingrad the European armies were confronted, not by an ordinary city like Kiev, Kharkov, or

Rostov, but by the greatest single fortress in the world. Probably the Soviets had realized the hopelessness of holding the west bank of the Don soon after the German thrust in June 1942 and had concentrated all their strength on the defense of Stalingrad. A large part of the Red artillery, which had been swept eastward during the rapid German advance in the summer, was now in Stalingrad.

THE MOST DIFFICULT TASK

The example of Stalingrad shows that a large city which is determined to defend itself at all costs represents a far greater obstacle for an attacker than a river, a strait, or a mountain range. The technical and tactical superiority of the attacker cannot be put into operation in street-fighting, where friend and foe are closely interlocked. Bombers and heavy artillery can only help prepare the ground for attack; they cannot participate in it. Moreover, the tank loses much of its effectiveness in narrow streets. Often the battle boils down to hand-to-hand fighting, which gives far less chance for the display of superior leadership than a battle in the open field.

The entire Russian genius for defensive warfare, known to the world for many centuries, as well as the experience gained since June 22, 1941, were made use of in Stalingrad. Not only the approaches to the city, even the city itself was mined every foot of the way. Every district, every block of houses, indeed, every house, had been turned into a stronghold. The Red staffs sat in deep cellars and directed the defense with the aid of an intricate system of subterranean passages and telephone systems. The Dzerjinksy factory manufactured tanks in mass production and, in order to hasten production, the tanks were taken out in a half-finished condition without motors and buried in the ground with only their firing turrets showing. The Soviets had concentrated a large number of troops in Stalingrad even before the battle, and during its course new masses of troops, including Siberian regiments, were pumped into the city across the Volga. Night after night, a stream of evacuating civilians moved eastward and a stream of reinforcements westward across the Volga, on ships, small boats, and even on a bridge skillfully built half under water so that it was not visible from above. All able-bodied civilians were armed and thrown into the battle. (There are no reliable figures available regarding the number of troops employed on each side. However, they were probably smaller than originally assumed.) The Red Volga Flotilla took a hand in the battle from the river, and Red artillery participated from the east bank. Day and night, the Soviet radio appealed to the defenders of Stalingrad and fired them to fanatical self-sacrifice. Soviet newspapers continuously published short stories, articles, sketches, and poems about Stalingrad. The Red troops' power of resistance was reinforced with every method of propaganda and terror, in which the Bolsheviks have developed an accomplished technique during the last twenty-five years.

But just as Stalingrad represented the peak of Russian defensive ability, it also became a peak of German power of attack.

THE FIRST 33 DAYS

Faced by the greatest and most difficult obstacle the German armies had met with in this war, they worked themselves step by step, in close co-operation between ground and air formations, into the southern part of the city. Whereas during the first weeks of the summer campaign in the vast Donets/Don plains the daily German advance had been counted in tens of kilometers, here in Stalingrad a whole day had sometimes to be spent in advancing 100 meters and capturing a single block of houses.

The main German thrust was first directed at a height to the west of the oil refineries, whose possession meant a great aid in the flat surrounding country. Another thrust had as its aim the main railway station, situated in the center of the old part of the city. The height was stormed on September 14, the station on September 15. From here, the attackers managed to break through to the river bank. The southern part of the city, which by this means had been cut off from the rest of Stalingrad, was then systematically cleared of the enemy.

THE THREE PLANTS

On the evening of October 6, the first task, namely, to reach the main artery of communications of the Soviet Union on a wide front, had been accomplished. The Germans held the bank of the Volga from the oil refineries southward as far as Krasnoarmeisk, while the Reds still occupied the three large factory districts in the north. On October 7, the German High Command published a statement which announced a radical change in the further battle for Stalingrad. It read:

No need is now seen of sending further infantry and engineering corps for the reduction of that part of the city remaining in Soviet hands. Heavy guns which have been placed in position can be counted on to destroy this portion systematically.

It has ceased to be a matter of importance to us when the remaining portion of the large industrial area in Stalingrad will fall.

From that day on, the number of German troops employed was reduced considerably, and the battle was borne mainly by Stukas and the artillery. On October 15, the Dzerjinsky plant fell into German hands. Three days later, the "Red Barricade" plant was stormed (on the following day, October 19, the first snow fell at Stalingrad), and on October 23 the "Red October" plant was taken. After that, only a small section north and south of the "Red October" plant, with a river front of not more than two kilometers, remained in Red hands. In the ensuing weeks the battle was continued for this section.

It appears as if the German High Command has turned the city into an open and profusely bleeding wound on the body of the Red Army. After conquering over ninety per cent of Stalingrad, the Germans have left a fraction of the city to the Reds, thus forcing them, in their stubborn desire to defend the city at any cost, ceaselessly to pour new troops into the death trap of these few blocks. A gruesome comment on the success of this policy was Berlin's announcement on December 7 that the Germans had buried the 100,000th dead Red soldier found amid the ruins of Stalingrad.

By the middle of November the first ice floes appeared on the Volga, which rendered communications across the Volga even more difficult. However, the situation will change as soon as the Volga is entirely frozen over, which usually happens around Christmas. On the one hand, the Volga loses all importance as an artery of communications for the next few months; on the other hand, the Reds can more easily bring troops across from the east bank.

Throughout this time, the Soviets attempted again and again, from the north as well as from the south, to break through the German flank-protecting lines in order to relieve the defenders of Stalingrad. However, all these attempts were in vain.

WESTERN CAUCASUS

While the world was breathlessly watching the gigantic struggle for Stalingrad, important attacks were taking place in the western and central Caucasus.

In the western Caucasus, the object of the European armies was to occupy the Soviet coast of the Black Sea. The first two goals were Novorossyisk (after the fall of Sevastopol the base of the Soviet Black Sea Fleet) and Tuapse.

The attack on Novorossyisk began on September 1 from three sides: (1) through the capture of Anapa by Rumanian troops and their advance towards the south, in which they were supported by German troops who had come across the Strait of Kertch from the Crimea; (2) through the advance of German and Rumanian troops from the region of Krymskaya; and (3) through the landing of German troops south of Novorossyisk, first in Gelendjik, later south of Novomikhailovskoye. The city of Novorossyisk fell to the concentric attack of these forces on September 7.

The battle for Tuapse was more difficult, since the town is surrounded by high mountains and can only be reached by the narrow coastal strip that runs between the steep slopes of the western Caucasus and the Black Sea or by a road from Armavir across the Goitkh Pass. Although this pass is only 409 meters high, it is encircled by high mountains. Both approaches were fortified by the Soviets with their customary skill. For this reason, the advance can only progress slowly and must be fought for every step of the way. On October 17, Shaumian fell (so called in memory of a Bolshevist commissar shot in Baku by the British during the Revolution), and on November 8 the Goitkh Pass. In this way, the European armies are gradually approaching the port.

THE SOVIET BLACK SEA FLEET

Because of the proximity of German troops, Tuapse can even now no longer be used as a naval base by the Soviets. Thus that part of the Black Sea coast remaining in Red hands has shrunk to about 400 kilometers and possesses only two naval ports that are of any use at all to the rest of the Red Fleet: Poti and Batum. Wherever the Red Fleet still tries to be active—as, for instance, in covering a few unsuccessful Red landings on the coast north of Tuapse—it is being attacked by German planes and Italian speedboats, which latter have been taking a hand in this fighting since September 9. According to the an-

nouncements of the German High Command, the Soviet Black Sea Fleet suffered the following losses up to October 20: 1 cruiser, 7 destroyers, 1 torpedo boat, 2 submarines, 6 gunboats, 40 speedboats, and 3 other small vessels, totaling 60 ships.

The fact that, through the loss of the greater part of the Black Sea coast, maritime traffic across the Black Sea has come to a complete standstill has had very unfavorable consequences for the Soviet Union. Before the war, the Soviet Union possessed a merchant fleet of almost half a million tons in the Black Sea. What remains today—according to German figures, some 75,000 tons—is condemned to inactivity.

THE TIGHTENING RING AROUND ORDJONIKIDZE

In the central Caucasus, mountains and rushing mountain rivers impede the European advance. The Caucasian river that was mentioned most often during the last few months was the Terek. It has its source in the glaciers of the Kazbek, and on its way northward to Ordjonikidze it forms the famous Daryal canyon, through which leads the Georgian military highway. From Ordjonikidze (formerly known as Vladikavkaz) the Terek makes a wide curve to the west through Beslan, Elkhotovo, and the town of Terek, to Mozdok, from where it flows eastward (north of the Grozny oil fields) via Kizlyar into its swampy delta on the Caspian Sea. In its upper reaches it is joined by equally torrential tributaries coming from the mountains on its left. The chief of these are the Ardon, on which Alagir is situated, and the Naltchik, with the town of the same name.

The goal of the German operations in the central Caucasus is the town of Ordjonikidze, the political and economic center of this region, and the Georgian military highway, the main road which crosses the Caucasus from north to south (from Ordjonikidze to Tiflis) through the Daryal canyon and the Krestovy Pass. The attack on Ordjonikidze is being conducted by the European armies simultaneously from three sides.

In the north the Terek was crossed on September 3 near Mozdok. The path through a strongly fortified region toward the south was cleared and Malgobek occupied on October 7. From the northwest the advance followed the course of the Terek. The town of Terek fell on September 24, Elkhotovo on October 4. The third arm of the German advance reached out eastward, cut the railway Grozny/Ordjonikidze on November 5, and is now pressing toward Ordjonikidze from the northeast.

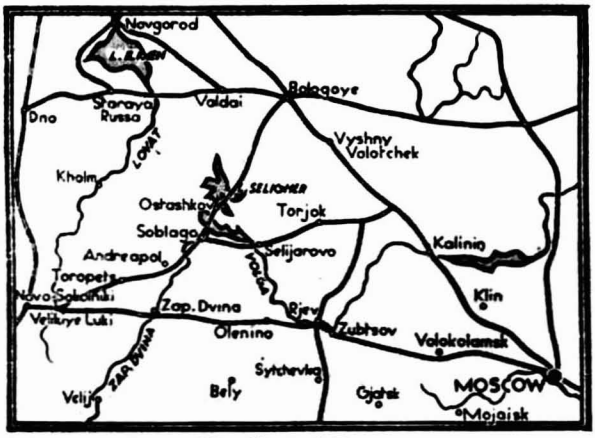
In order to protect the right flank of this thrust into the heart of the Caucasus, troops were made to branch off southward into the

Western and Central Caucasus

valleys of the Naltchik and the Ardon. The town of Naltchik fell on October 29, Alagir on November 2. With the capture of Alagir, one of the most important trans-Caucasian highways, that leading from Kutais across the Mamisson Pass through the Ardon canyon to the Terek valley, was cut. Tens of thousands of Red soldiers were either taken prisoner here or encircled.

THE CASPIAN SEA

The most obscure of all the battle theaters in this region is that in the Kalmuck steppes in the region between the Caucasus, the Caspian Sea, and the Volga. It seems that at one place the German advance forces have penetrated as far as the Caspian. In this barren steppe country, the Kuma is the only large river, originating near Mt. Elbrus and flowing through the Kalmuck area into the Caspian. The Kuma is a true steppe river, drying out for long periods during the year over large stretches and for that reason without any shipping. Nevertheless, it is the main source of life in these salt steppes.



The Central Front

The Caspian itself has so far not become an actual scene of war. However, its shipping routes are already within range of German bombers. The Caspian Sea, the largest lake in the world without an outlet to the sea, lies 26 meters below sea level. The northern part, most important from the point of view of communications since the oil-shipping line Baku/Makhatch Kala/Astrakhan runs through it, is very shallow, so that not the entire sea but only certain channels can be used by ships, which facilitates the task of the German bombers. Moreover, the Caspian Sea, which has a very low salt content, freezes over in its northern parts for three or four months. This further impedes shipping.

The importance of shipping on the Caspian Sea to the economic life of the USSR can be judged from the fact that the ports of Baku, Astrakhan, and Makhatch Kala had an annual turnover of respectively 12, 6, and 5 million tons. The merchant fleet at the disposal of the Bolsheviks on the Caspian Sea at the beginning of the war was estimated at 75 tankers and 45 other ships. According to the German communiqués, many of these vessels have already been destroyed by the Luftwaffe.

FROM STALINGRAD TO LAKE LADOGA

On the rest of the Soviet front, the autumn months of 1942 were characterized by a number of Red attacks against the German positions. The front between Lake Ladoga and the Arctic Ocean remained quiet, while between Stalingrad and Lake Ladoga the German troops limited themselves mainly to defense operations. No major actions took place on this sector up to the end of November; and the intention of the Red High Command to force the Germans to employ large bodies of troops and thus to weaken their operations around Stalingrad and in the Caucasus was not accomplished.

The sectors on which the fighting was relatively severest were Voronej, Oryol, Rjev, and the areas south of Lake Ilmen and south of Lake Ladoga, where at the beginning of October two Central Asiatic army corps paid for their attacks with complete annihilation. South of Lake Ilmen especially, the Red Army made preparations for a large-scale winter offensive, for which it concentrated considerable masses of troops in the regions of Bologoye, Ostashkov, Toropets, Selijarovo, Soblago, and around Rjev.

WHEN WINTER CAME

When winter closed in on the vast spaces of Eastern Europe, it found the European armies here in an incomparably better position than at the same time a year ago. On a large part of the front, from Lake Ladoga to Oryol, the front line had hardly changed. That gave the European troops plenty of time to prepare their winter positions and

measures of defense, so as not to be surprised by winter as they had been the year before. Berlin reported that, during the summer and up to the end of September, 2,583 trains had supplied the depots behind the eastern front with altogether 1,162,350 tons of winter equipment.

In the area south of Oryol, the front has been advanced tremendously in the course of this year. For a long distance it follows the River Don. It is only on the isthmus between the Don and the Volga that there are no geographical aids which might be used by the European troops in their defense system. Then come the desolate and almost uninhabited steppes, and in the south the mighty mountain wall of the Caucasus forms the front.

Within this front, which has been created by the armies of Europe since June 1942, there are rich agricultural and industrial regions of the Soviet Union, among them the industrial center of the Donbass, the grain areas of the Kuban, and the oil fields of Maikop. All these treasures were taken by the campaigns of 1942 out of the Soviet side of the scales and placed into that of Europe.

In a desperate effort to change this situation, the Red Army started a large-scale winter offensive near Stalingrad on November 20 and another one in the region south of Lake Ilmen on November 25. At the cost of huge losses in men and material these operations scored some initial successes. But, as we go to press, they seem to have come to a halt.

NORTH AFRICA

THE BATTLE OF EGYPT AND LIBYA

THE latest battle in Egypt began on October 24, when the numerically superior British Eighth Army, estimated at some 200,000 men and commanded by Lieut. General B. L. Montgomery, launched a violent offensive against the Axis lines at El Alamein. It was supported by very strong armored forces and air formations. After inflicting heavy losses upon the attackers, Marshal Rommel withdrew his troops on November 4. Since that time, the Axis forces have been fighting continuous rearguard actions, successively evacuating all positions in Egypt and Cyrenaica. By adopting a "scorched-earth" policy, which contributed towards hampering the British advance, Marshal Rommel retained his freedom of action and kept the bulk of his fighting forces intact. He is apparently preparing to make a stand at some place of his own choosing. Meanwhile, Lieut. Gen. Montgomery seems first to be organizing new bases and his long supply lines before attacking the present Axis positions.

THE GATHERING CLOUDS

Late in October, Gibraltar, British bastion at the narrow entrance to the Mediterranean, was teeming with American, Canadian, and English troops. Warships were coming and going, and an ever-increasing number of merchantmen assembled at the anchorage or berthed alongside the congested quais. Overhead, the droning roar of airplanes—fighters and bombers—never ceased. Something was about to happen, there was no secret about that, for Gibraltar is a small place and accessible to view from all sides. There were also other indications that heavy clouds were gathering over the French colonial empire in Africa. On November 2, Admiral Lützow, German naval expert and, incidentally, one of the contributors to this issue of *The XXth Century*, gave warning that there was a danger of direct attack on the Moroccan coast from the sea.

When, some weeks earlier, Allied forces had been concentrated south of Dakar, the French Chief of State, Marshal Pétain, aware of a possible new threat to French possessions, had sent Admiral Darlan on an inspection tour of the defenses of West and North Africa. On this tour, the Admiral made impassioned speeches about the irresistible will of the colonial empire to defend itself against all aggression. Owing to the leniency of the stipulations of the 1940 Armistice, the army and navy contingents in French North Africa had remained intact and could, indeed, have given an unpleasant reception to any attacker.

THE INVASION OF FRENCH NORTH AFRICA

Suddenly, on November 8, between two and three in the morning, simultaneous landings were carried out by Anglo-American forces along the Moroccan coast near Safi, Casablanca, Fdala, Rabat, and Mehediya (Pt. Lyautey), and on the Algerian coast east and west of Oran and Algiers (see our

map on p. 373 of the December issue). The transports were under heavy naval escort and protected by strong air formations. Parachutists were also used by the invaders. The Commander in Chief of the entire operation was Lieut. General Dwight Eisenhower (American), the army being commanded by Major General Mark W. Clark (American) and the air force by Brigadier General James Doolittle (American). The army groups in the Morocco, Oran, and Algiers sectors were headed by Major General George S. Patton, General Lloyd Fedendall, and Major General Charles W. Ryden (all three Americans), while the naval forces on the Moroccan and Algerian seaboards were under the command of Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham (British). The British Expeditionary Force, called the First Army, is led by General Anderson (British).

The population in the invaded territories was showered from the air with pamphlets containing an appeal by the President of the USA not to hinder his "great cause" and the declaration that the occupation was staged to prevent an invasion by the Axis Powers. The Sultan of Morocco was the recipient of a message containing similar assertions. These assertions were discredited a few days later by Prime Minister Churchill, who declared that the invasion had been launched in order to gain a new base of attack against the Axis.

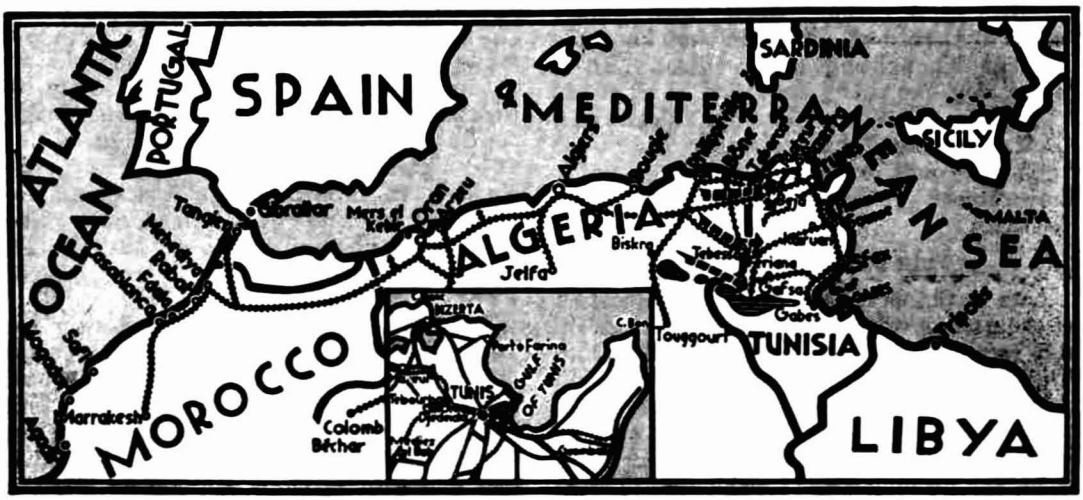
In some places, notably at Casablanca, the French forces fought bravely against an enemy superior in numbers and equipped with far more modern weapons. Units of the French Navy participated in the fighting. The French losses on land amounted to 479 killed and 872 wounded, while the French Navy suffered 1,151 casualties and lost 16 naval units, among them the battle cruiser *Jean Bart* and the cruiser *Primauguet*.

Soon, however, dissension in the French ranks impaired the fighting strength and spirit of the defenders, and treason played into the hands of the aggressors. In Algiers, where Admiral Darlan happened to be at the time of the invasion, a local armistice was concluded after a sham battle on November 9. This permitted the Anglo-American forces to push further eastward, with landings being effected in Bougie and Philippeville. On November 11, the fighting was over, except in isolated places, after an agreement had been reached between Darlan and Eisenhower. The treachery of Darlan, whose part in the Algiers armistice had already been ambiguous, became more and more evident.

Marshal Pétain, in his reply to President Roosevelt's message regarding the Allied occupation of French North Africa, had censured the unjustified pretexts for the attack and had ordered relations with the USA to be broken off. He vainly tried to counteract the unauthorized conclusion of a general armistice by commanding continued resistance.

THE AXIS ACTS

Meanwhile, the Axis did not remain idle. As soon as it became clear what was going on, German and Italian submarines and bombers from near-by bases in Sicily and Sardinia attacked enemy convoys and mer-



chantmen on their way to, or anchored in, Algerian ports. Numerous transport vessels and warships were sunk or damaged. On November 11, German and Italian troops entered Corsica and the hitherto unoccupied part of France. Two days later, the occupation was more or less completed, only Toulon, the strongest French naval base, being excepted owing to the French Navy there having assured its loyalty to Marshal Pétain. But here, too, treason was at work. In order to prevent the defection of the French naval units to the Allies, the Germans, on November 26, were forced to take over Toulon and to order the general demobilization of the French armed forces. The French warships at Toulon were scuttled by their crews, and only a few submarines managed to escape to the enemy or to neutral ports.

While events in Europe were taking this turn, new developments were foreshadowed by British reports to the effect that Axis troops were moving into Tunisia. During the first days of the Allied invasion, President Roosevelt had addressed a message to the Bey of Tunis requesting him to grant free passage through Tunis to the American troops. He never received a reply from the Bey. Instead, the answer was given by German troops under the command of General Nehring who seized control over vital parts of Tunisia, among them the strong naval base of Bizerta and the capital, Tunis. Other Axis formations entered the French protectorate from Tripolis. By November 24 the entire east coast of Tunisia with all its lines of communication was occupied by the Axis, whose control extnded inla nd as far as the oasis of Gafsa.

From their newly won bases in Tunisia, Axis aircraft now pounded the Anglo-American supply lines and troop concentrations in Algeria, while the Allies pushed into Tunisia in four main directions. The first one followed the coastal road towards Bizerta and the second a road that runs some 50 kilometers south of and parallel to the coast to Tunis. The third line of attack was apparently directed via Tebessa towards the railroad leading inland from Sousse, while the most southerly drive headed for the Gulf of Gabes.

According to BBC and Reuter reports, British troops crossed the border from Algeria into Tunisia in the early morning hours of November 14. One month later their advance units on the coastal road were only at Tabarca, some ten miles inside the border, while those on the road to Tunis had only reached Tebourba. The fact that the rapid occupation of Morocco and Algeria within less than a week was not followed by an equally rapid occupation of infinitely more important Tunisia seems to indicate that the Axis, without wasting many words, counteracted the Allied move very quickly. Besides, the distances to be covered by the Allied troops and supplies are comparatively long and dangerously exposed to Axis air and submarine attacks. Finally, inefficiency on the part of the Anglo-American command is likely to have had its share in frustrating the swift occupation of this strategic key territory.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PICTURE

One thing, however, seems certain. The necessity of maintaining supplies for the Anglo-American forces in French North Africa will expose the depleted tonnage at the disposal of the Allies to added dangers. According to the German High Command, 43 Allied warships were sunk or damaged and 23 merchantmen of altogether 165,000 tons sunk in the short period from November 7 to November 25, in the waters off the French North African coast and in Algerian harbors; another 76 units, aggregating 498,000 tons, were damaged, 11 of them (about 100,000 tons) so heavily that they are likely to have sunk.

There are other difficulties for the Allies. In his agreement with General Eisenhower, Admiral Darlan did not hand over the French North African possessions without assuring himself of a dominating position. This has led to serious squabbles between Darlan and de Gaulle. The latter was supported by the British, since there are few men who, during the last two and a half years, have attacked the British more bitterly than Admiral Darlan. However, Britain, being the weaker partner in the Anglo-American coalition, had to give in and acquiesce in the American recognition of Admiral Darlan. Vernon Bartlett, in an attempt to console his countrymen, called Darlan a "useful instrument;" and President Roosevelt did his bit to calm British public opinion by calling the agreement with Darlan "only a temporary expedient justified solely by the stress of battle." If the British are satisfied with this situation, not so General de Gaulle. He was heading for Washington to have it

out with President Roosevelt when the latter declared that he had not invited the General.

In French West Africa everything had remained quiet during the first two weeks of the Allied invasion. Then it was taken over by an American military mission, by agreement with Admiral Darlan, who still claims to have his authority from Marshal Pétain.

Spain and Portugal were assured by Roosevelt and Churchill, through their ambassadors in Lisbon and Madrid, that the territories of both countries would be left untouched. While both countries have taken cognizance of these assurances, General Franco has ordered partial mobilization in Spain.

PLUS AND MINUS

Drawing the balance of the first four weeks of war in French North Africa, we obtain the following picture:

Under pressure from Stalin and public opinion at home, the Allies have established one more garrison against Europe, and again—as in Iceland, Syria, and Iran—at a respectful distance from the walls of the European fortress. They can now claim at home and abroad that they are doing something, even though it is, for the time being, only to conquer the colonial territory of their ex-ally.

But the Allies are paying a heavy price for this, not only in ships already sunk in connection with their North African venture, but also in future opportunities offered to the Axis submarines and bombers in the narrow waters of the western Mediterranean. The percentage of losses among the ships sent to French North Africa is likely to be far higher than it has been among the ships sent to the Near East around Africa. The experiences in the narrow waters of the Arctic are an indication of what is to be expected.

Finally, the Allied action has enabled the Axis to occupy southern France and Corsica and thus to close the last gaps in the defense of Europe. Indeed, the Axis has even been enabled to gain a foothold in Tunisia, an area of the greatest strategical importance.

It is still to early to pass final judgment on the gains and losses of both sides. However, it already appears that the balance of their strength has been far less affected than the excitement over the North African affair seemed at first to indicate. To use the words of Hanson Baldwin, the *New York Times*' intelligent observer, "Algeria and Morocco have been political events, but not military battles."

THE BATTLE OF TONS

(October/November 1942)

With every month that the war lasts, the tonnage problem is becoming a more important factor. We have, therefore, devoted much effort and space to presenting our readers with the most accurate available material on this subject.

Readers who have followed our series on the Battle of Tons (August/September, October, November 1942) may have noticed that the assembling and analyzing of available facts and figures can be compared to the work of an industrious detective who must build up his reasoning on clues rather than on knowledge of the true facts. As new clues appear, the picture changes.

A semiofficial Berlin announcement of September 4, 1942, gave the total tonnage sunk up to August 31, 1942, as 20,294,353 tons, and this figure has been used by German commentators ever since. Our figure for that time, based on a similar announcement at the beginning of May 1941 and on the monthly announcements by the German High Command, was 20,772,387 tons. We have, therefore, carried out a corresponding adjustment in the present review. The monthly sinkings remain unchanged, but the totals, starting from January 1941, have been lowered by 478,034 tons.—K.M.

THE TOLL OF TWO MONTHS

THE German High Command announced the sinkings for October to have been 111 ships (109 by submarines, 2 by the Luftwaffe), aggregating 730,575 tons, and those for November to be 166 ships, aggregating 1,035,200 tons, of which 148 ships with a total of 975,000 tons were sunk by U-boats. The Japanese Admiralty declared on November 7 that the total of enemy merchant ships sunk through Japanese action was 391 ships, aggregating 2,200,000

tons, the sinkings since the last announcement of July 18 having been 34 ships of 252,400 tons. According to the latest Italian statistics, the total losses inflicted on the enemy by the Italian Navy and Air Force up to December 7, 1942, amount to 337 merchant ships of 1,764,184 tons.

An interesting partial confirmation of Axis claims came from America when *Time* (TO, Lisbon, 11.12.42) stated that 3,801 Allied ships or ships sailing in the service of the Allies had been sunk by the Axis, with 63,154 sailors having lost their lives or been reported missing. If we take an average of 5,500 tons per ship, the Allies would, according to *Time*, have lost 21 million tons. Taking into consideration the Allied policy of only admitting such losses as they cannot hide, the total figure reported by the three Axis powers—27,036,012 tons—does not appear quite so fantastic as it may seem to some.

BALANCE SHEET OF ALLIED TONNAGE AS PER NOVEMBER 30, 1942

		Tons
In service on September 3, 1939....		39,000,000*
Total replacements to date.....		8,800,000
Total to date.....		47,800,000
Losses since September 3, 1939		
Through action of:	*Tons*	
German forces	23,071,828	
Italian forces.....	1,764,184	
Japanese forces.....	2,200,000	
Through mines (approx.)	2,000,000	
Through ordinary hazards and depreciation (approx.)	1,800,000	
Ships permanently under repair (average)	2,000,000	
Ships seized by Axis nations (approx.).....	2,000,000	
Total losses		34,836,012
Left in service on November 30, 1942		12,963,988

*Since our last balance sheet was published, the French merchant marine in Allied ports has been requisitioned by the Allies. Hence we have increased our former figure of 38,384,000 tons to a round figure of 39,000,000 tons.

The recent German sinkings were surprisingly high. Weather conditions in the Atlantic during the autumn and winter months are extremely unfavorable to submarine warfare. The rich booty of October was due to the constantly growing number and efficiency of U-boats and to preparations for the Allied landings in French North Africa. The extraordinary November sinkings, which made last month the second most successful of the entire war, were, of course, in the first place the result of the landings of American and British troops and supplies in North Africa. This military enterprise exposed a large number of ships to great risks. It has also increased the permanent demand of tonnage for military purposes to a considerable extent, thereby imposing further restrictions on civilian demands.

THE LANDINGS IN NORTH AFRICA

Captain Oliver Lyttelton, British Minister of Production, is reported to have declared during a visit to Washington that 500 transports were employed for the carrying out of the Anglo-American action in French North Africa and to have added that "this fleet of transports was escorted by a total number of 350 warships." (TO, Lisbon, 12.11.42.) Commentators have since increased the number of transports which are supposed to have taken part in the landing operations to more than 600 and even as much as 800.

Remembering Churchill's declaration in the House of Commons on November 11 that "it is perfectly justifiable to deceive one's enemy even if at the same time your own people [and your allies] are misled," we may not be far wrong in presuming that Captain Lyttelton's declaration, too, was so worded as to deceive the general public. In the first place, we cannot believe that a landing fleet of 500 transports, escorted by 350 warships, could have crossed the ocean practically unnoticed in one or more convoys at about the same time.

In the second place, Captain Lyttelton's 500 transports, if we take an average of 6,000 to 8,000 tons a ship, would bring the total tonnage used for the enterprise to between 3 and 4 million tons. From all that we know about the forces landed, it seems most unlikely that such tonnage was necessary.

The German claim is that over 400,000 tons, or about 40 per cent of the landing fleet, was sunk or badly damaged during the first days of the operations. This claim indicates a fleet with a total tonnage of about 1 million tons, or a fleet of from 125

to 170 ships with an average tonnage of from 6,000 to 8,000 tons. Considering the French figure of some 140,000 landed Allied troops, the German estimate appears to us nearer reality than the 500 ships of Captain Lyttelton.

Official statements made in Britain and America have confirmed the heavy losses suffered by this landing fleet which, during the first few days, was crowded together in a few ports. As supplies and replacements for the Allied forces in North Africa must be kept up, further heavy losses are to be expected. The supply ships must converge on known points and reach known ports, many of them having to negotiate the bottleneck of the Strait of Gibraltar. Furthermore, the Germans have now established new bases in southern France and on Corsica from which their U-boats may operate with better facilities.

Colonel Stimson, US Secretary of War, has said that the Germans had previous knowledge of the enterprise; yet it is a fact that the Anglo-American landing fleet, favored by weather conditions adverse to submarine activity and speed, succeeded in reaching the west coast of Morocco and the Strait of Gibraltar. These factors may not always obtain, but there is one factor which will remain in favor of Anglo-American convoys or singly sailing ships—the vastness of the seas in which the German and Italian U-boats must operate at present. Their surface is over 100 million square kilometers, i.e., no less than 1,000 squares of 100,000 square kilometers each. If we imagine one U-boat in the center of each of these thousand squares, and if we presume that its range of vision is 30 kilometers, then each of the thousand boats would only control about three per cent of the surface of its square.

These figures illustrate the hardness of the task the crews of the few hundreds of U-boats are performing, and it bears witness to the good training and fine spirit they must have to obtain the successes brought to notice every day.

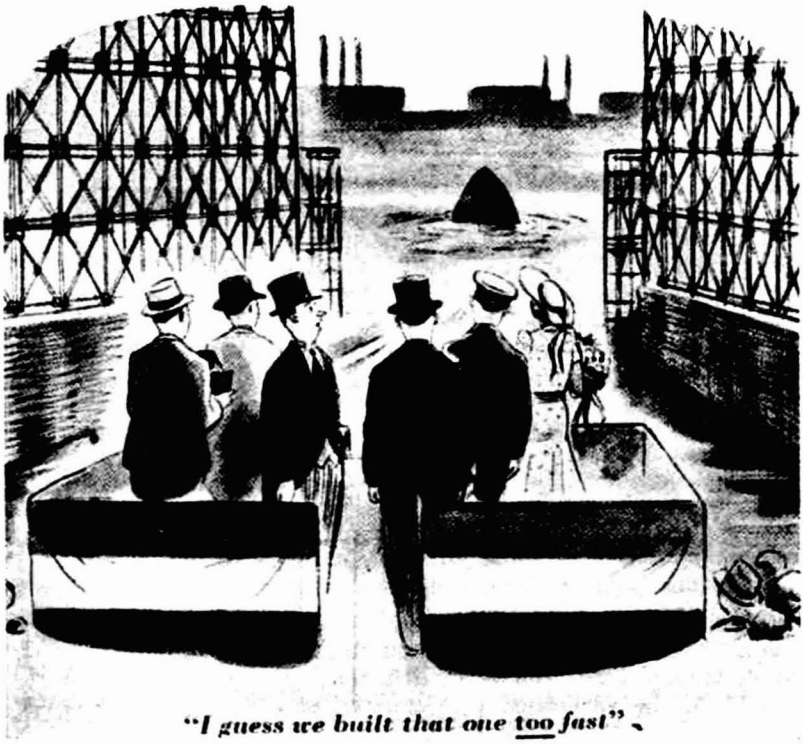
Nothing succeeds like success! The following figures will illustrate the point better than words. The average monthly tonnage sunk was :

	Tons
Up to the end of 1940 (15 months)	530,000
In 1941	654,500
In the first 11 months of 1942	760,870

A TIP FROM ADMIRAL LAND

The two chief factors in the valuation of the tonnage situation are sinkings and replacements. While we have detailed information concerning the sinkings through German action and some figures also on those through Japanese and Italian action, the difficulties in determining the amount of new construction on the part of the Allies are very great. Since our last review, a few new "clues" have come to light.

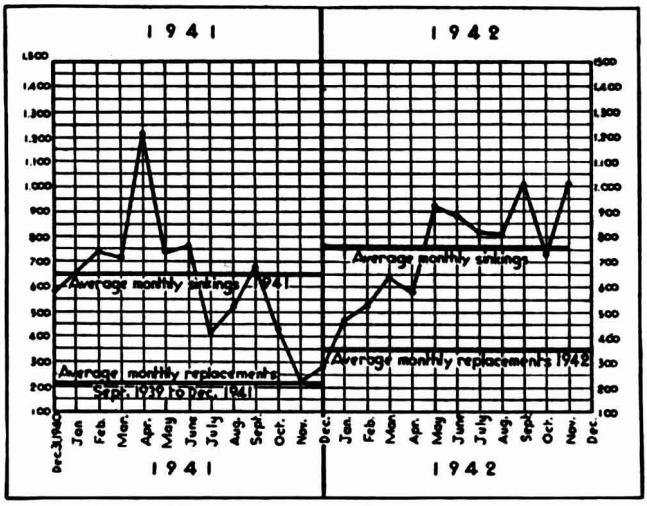
Rear Admiral Land, Chairman of the US Maritime Commission, announced on November 12 that the USA built 6 million tons of



"I guess we built that one too fast"

(From the American magazine *Esquire*)

cargo shipping space up to November 1. He also declared that it was the President's "intention" to deliver about 8 million tons in 1942 and added that the original shipbuilding program for 1942 and 1943 had been enlarged from 12 to 24 million tons. He went on to say that American shipyards are at present engaged in developing a new type of ship which would have more cargo space and a higher speed than the present "liberty ship." (TO, Lisbon, 13.11.42.)



MONTHLY ALLIED SHIPPING LOSSES
as announced by the German High Command
(in thousands of tons)
Losses through mines not included

The Rear Admiral left the public guessing whether these 6 million tons were built since September 3, 1939, or in 1942 alone. Our balance sheet is based on that figure for 1942 alone, but the other version is possible. Incidentally, the change to a new type means new planning and loss of time again.

We must remind our readers that the Americans use dead-weight tonnage when speaking of shipbuilding. The dead-weight tonnage is the *deplacement* of a ship loaded to the waterline. Gross registered tonnage is the *loading capacity* of a ship measured in cubic tons of 100 cubic feet each. There is no fixed relationship between these two measurements. The difference between the generally used coefficients is unimportant in the case of freighters, but it becomes great in the case of liners, since the facilities for passengers are included in the gross registered tonnage. The coefficients used by commentators vary between 1.4 and 1.6. Shipping people usually take 1.5 when comparing these measurements, i.e., 3,000 gross registered tons are equal to 4,500 dead-weight tons. We shall do the same.

Thus, in terms of gross registered tons, the above-mentioned 6 million tons dwindle to 4 million tons, the 8 million tons to 5,333,333, the 12 million to 8 million, and the 24 million to 16 million gross registered tons.

If it depended only on the President's "intention", whether 8 million tons of ships are delivered in 1942 or not, there should hardly be any shortage of ships. In reality, the President's intentions are the least of many conditions required for turning out such a large number of ships. We learned from the Vice-Chairman of the US Maritime Commission, Admiral Howard L. Vickery, writing in *Fortune* of July 1941, that at that time the President's order of 472 emergency ships of the so-called "ugly duckling" type (now known as "liberty ships") nicely filled the headlines, but that "the problem, the overwhelming problem, is to build new yards, new ways, new Morgan cranes, new welding machines, and to train 450,000 new shipyard workers to get the job done." If in July 1941 all this remained to be achieved for the construction of about 3½ million gross registered tons, what then, we ask, remains to be done in order to deliver 16 million tons or 2,140 ships in 1942 and 1943?

Besides this formidable merchant fleet which the President intends to deliver, his "two-ocean navy," which is supposed to be ready by 1946, has had to be speeded up, thanks to the fact that America found herself at war with Japan. This again absorbs a good deal of additional labor, material, and equipment. And in the meantime, the Axis navies have inflicted such tremendous losses on the Allied navies that an additional heavy burden has been placed on the shoulders of American and British shipbuilders. We know that the President had even to borrow corvettes and other small craft from England for the defense of communication lines along the east coast of America. This fact indicates that America must also have a heavy program on hand for the building of antisubmarine vessels.

A CLUE FROM ZÜRICH

The *Züricher Zeitung* has a report dated Washington, July 17, stating that, up to

July 1, 1942, America succeeded by mass construction in delivering 153 of the 10,000-ton vessels ("liberty ships"), has launched a further 183 of them, and has another 287 under construction. The total number of these vessels proposed to be delivered by the end of 1943 is estimated at 1,600. In Canada, shipbuilding has made such progress that one of these 10,000-ton vessels is finished every four days. (It is not said since when this schedule has been possible.)

So far the Zürich report. As one of few with concrete figures, it is worth analyzing:

According to this report, there were on July 1, 1942:

		Dead-weight Tons		*Gross Reg. Tons*
153 ships @ 10,000 tons	delivered	1,530,000	or	1,020,000
183 " " " "	launched	1,830,000	"	1,220,000
287 " " " "	under construction	2,870,000	"	1,913,333
	Total....	6,230,000	or	4,153,333

Since this is the only type of ship in mass production, and the majority of shipyards are busy with this type, we can more or less ignore what other ships and tankers are still being built in America. Thus our estimate (August/September issue, p. 142) of about g.r.tons 3,850,000 *delivered* in the USA up to June 30, 1942, was more favorable to America than the Zürich report by 2,830,000 tons.

It is quite probable that the 6,230,000 dead-weight tons of the Zürich report are identical with Admiral Land's six million tons. In that case, the Admiral's figure would include the 183 ships launched and the 287 ships under construction on June 30. While part or all of the 183 might have been delivered on November 1, we may be certain that not all of the 287 under construction were delivered on this date. From the Zürich report it also becomes clear that these 6,230,000 d.w.tons (or 4,153,333 g.r. tons) represent the total American contribution to replacements from the beginning of the war up to July 1, 1942.

The Zürich figure tallies not only with that of Admiral Land but also with a new Havas report from Berlin (10.12.42). According to this, the US Navy Department has revealed that, between January 1 and November 30, 1942, American dockyards have built 625 ships displacing 3,750,000 g.r. tons.

If we consider that the German armed forces during these same eleven months have sent 8.3 million g.r. tons to the bottom, and the Axis as a whole about 10 million g.r. tons, the Allies' chance of catching up with such terrible losses seems quite remote. In order to win the Battle of Tons, the Allies must not only catch up with their losses but greatly surpass them by replacements. All the data available up till now speak against this possibility.

Besides, the great quantities of material and labor must be considered which are lost with every ship sunk and which must be replaced just as urgently as the ships themselves. They mean a tremendous increase in the labor and material needed for the fulfillment of all the various programs on hand. In other words, the increased production of war materials necessitated by the sinkings will finally result in reduced deliveries for the shipyards. And there is a fixed relation between ships and the production of war material.

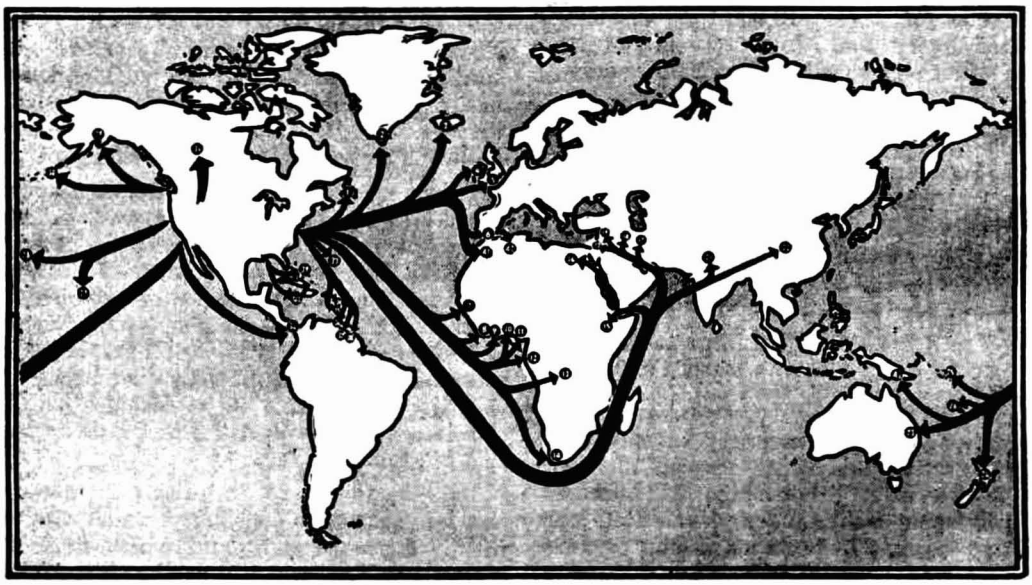
Ships without cargo are as useless as cargo without ships.

No More Counterfeiters

In 1933, almost 800 people were found guilty of counterfeiting in Germany. Six years later this number had shrunk to a total of 27. The decline in counterfeiting has far surpassed the general decline in crime in Germany. The change from unemployment to full employment of all available labor, which is an important reason for the disappearance of crime, has had its most obvious effect in the field of counterfeiting. The successful counterfeiting of money, especially of bank notes, demands skill as well as technical knowledge. Looking through legal files, one finds that the majority of counterfeiters were recruited from the ranks of unemployed skilled workers such as photo-engravers, skilled mechanics, etc. These are the very professions which, during the last few years, have not been able to complain of lack of work. To this must be added the fact that counterfeiting is one of the riskiest crimes. Not only does the counterfeiter require secret premises such as are otherwise only found in the movies, but he also needs assistants for his technical work and, for the most dangerous job of all, for passing out the product of his labor.

UNCLE SAM'S SCATTERED SONS

The following map speaks for itself. It shows to what extent the USA has scattered her armed forces over the entire globe, perhaps more in an effort to stake out her claims in as many places as possible than in the belief that this will have any real influence on the course of the war.



1. Newfoundland
2. Greenland
3. Iceland
4. Ulster
5. England
6. Gibraltar
7. Gambia
8. Sierra Leone
9. Liberia
10. Gold Coast
11. Nigeria
12. French Equat. Africa, Cameroons
13. Belgian Congo
14. South Africa
15. Eritrea
16. Egypt
17. Iran
18. Iraq
19. Syria
20. Palestine
21. British India
22. Chungking China
23. Australia
24. New Zealand
25. Solomon Islands
26. New Caledonia
27. Hawaiian Islands
28. Midway
29. Alaska
30. Aleutian Islands
31. Canada
32. Panama Canal
33. Bermuda
34. Antigua
35. St. Lucia
36. Trinidad
37. Dutch Guiana
38. British Guiana
39. Bahama Islands
40. Jamaica
41. Morocco
42. Algeria
43. New Guinea

STALIN'S ORDERS

Section 4 of Order No. 130 of the People's Commissar of Defense, May 1, 1942:

I command the entire Red Army to make 1942 the year of the final annihilation of the German-Fascist armies and of the liberation of the Soviet soil from the Hitlerite villains!

J. Stalin