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by Lieut. Col.
H. KAHLE

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STALIN *the* SOLDIER

DON BROWN

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STALIN, THE SOLDIER

by Lt. Col. Hans Kahle

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STALIN THE SOLDIER

I. THE MAN OF STEEL

ON the 27th birthday of the Red Army the whole democratic world pays tribute to the unique military and political leadership of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union—Marshal Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin—in the common battle of the United Nations to overthrow German Fascism. It pays tribute to the man who in the words of the great French writer, Henri Barbusse, " is as strong and yet as flexible as steel," and whom Winston Churchill after their first meeting in Moscow described in the House of Commons on September 8th, 1942, as follows :—

> " He is a man of massive and strong personality, suitable to the stormy times in which he has lived. He is a man of inexhaustible courage and will power, a man direct and even blunt in speech . . . Stalin also left upon me the impression of deep, cool wisdom and complete absence of any illusion of any kind."

As the supreme commander of the Red Army he has won the world's respect and admiration for the skilful defence operations which culminated in the battle for Stalingrad, the great turning point of the war, and the sensational offensives which followed that great battle, and in which the whole of Soviet territory and that of Rumania, Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, part of Norway, and half of Yugoslavia were liberated from the German Fascist yoke.

As one of the three great leaders of the anti-Hitlerite coalition, he has demonstrated to the democratic world a consistency and far-sightedness which millions upon millions are coming to understand more clearly with every passing day.

On this 27th anniversary the admiration of the world for the Red Army's achievements rises to new heights at the great new sevenfold assault on the Russian front which led to the fall of Warsaw within its first week, and has since swept on to further mighty conquests.

The great leader of the Soviet peoples in war and peace, whose power—to quote Henri Barbusse again—" lies in his formidable intelligence, the breadth of his knowledge, the amazing orderliness of his mind, his passion for precision, his inexorable consistency," was born 65 years ago in the Georgian village of Gori, beyond the snow-clad mountains of the Caucasus.

His father was a shoemaker, his mother took in washing, and the family home was as small and severe as the log cabin where that great American democrat, Abraham Lincoln, was born. His parents went hungry so that he might attend an ecclesiastical school and later a seminary at Tiflis.

There, at the age of 15, he joined an illegal Marxist study circle and by the time he was 18 he headed the revolutionary groups at his school. The next year he was expelled as an enemy of the Czarist regime. Stalin was thinking along the same lines as Lenin, and the Marxist Social Democratic organisation which Stalin headed broke with the legalistic Marxists and urged the Social Democrats to reach beyond the limited study circles, to undertake to bring out a newspaper with a wide circulation, organise strikes to achieve political demands, and to mobilise the people for the open struggle against Tsardom.

A HUNTED MAN

In 1900 Stalin became for the first time a hunted man. He began to live the illegal existence of a full-time revolutionary. Exiled in 1903 to the village of Novaya Uda, in Siberia, he managed to establish contact with Lenin and his newspaper, *Iskra* (*The Spark*). Stalin escaped and returned to Batum and then to Tiflis. There he took up his revolutionary activities and in the following months led a great strike of the Baku oil workers which won the first collective agreement in the history of Russia's working class.

Stalin and Lenin met for the first time in December, 1905, at the All-Russian Conference of Bolsheviks in Tammerfors, Finland. Recalling this meeting, Stalin told how he was impressed with Lenin's simplicity and modesty, qualities which characterise Stalin too. A close friendship grew between these two men.

Stalin led the workers and peasants of Trans-Caucasia in the 1905 uprising. After its defeat, despite violent Czarist reprisals and frequent arrests, Stalin always managed to escape from exile. He built in Trans-Caucasia a powerful trade union movement, a Bolshevik organisation and a press. He was in London for a short time in 1907, attending the Conference of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party.

In January, 1912, Stalin was elected at the Bolshevik Conference in Prague to head the Party's work inside Russia.

He helped to found *Pravda*, the central organ of the Party, and became its editor. Working in St. Petersburg, he guided the Bolshevik representatives in the Russian Parliament, the Duma.

In 1913, Stalin completed his most famous book, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, which still helps peoples everywhere to establish their right to self-determination.

Arrested and exiled in the spring of 1913, Stalin spent four years in far-away Arctic Siberia, whence escape was impossible. Even there he studied and wrote, exposed the imperialist aims of the First World War and like Lenin came to the conclusion that it must be transformed into a civil war.

Liberated in spring 1917 by the February revolution, Stalin returned to Petrograd and became Lenin's right-hand man in all the stormy years of civil war and intervention in Russia. From 1917 to 1923 Stalin was People's Commissar for the Affairs of the Nationalities, where he undertook the tremendous task of forming the national Soviet Socialist Republics and then later, of uniting them all in one federal State, the U.S.S.R.

GENERAL SECRETARY

During the civil war Stalin, with Lenin, organised the Red Army from the workers' Red Guard detachments and the guerilla groups, and organised the defeats of the armies of the White Guards and of the foreign interventionists. In 1922 he was elected General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, which position he holds to this day.

Since Lenin's death in 1923, Stalin has been leading the peoples of the U.S.S.R. along the road mapped out by Lenin.

It was Stalin who inspired and organised the fundamental reconstruction of the entire national economy of the Soviet Union on Socialist lines. Under his leadership, by a tremendous effort of the Soviet people, their country was transformed into a land of large scale Socialist industry, the triumph of the collective farm system was ensured, and there was built up the impregnable military might of the Soviet Land.

Stalin is the author of the 1936 Constitution of the U.S.S.R., which marks a new stage in the development of the Socialist State as a democratic political system. It defines with great clarity and precision the fundamental rights and liberties of the Soviet citizen and stresses and guarantees the ways in which these rights can be exercised. It does not merely proclaim democratic liberties, it secures them by material means for their enjoyment.

Stalin is the organiser of the armed forces of the Soviet Union. He it was who lovingly reared the Red Army, saw to it that it was supplied with first-class military technique, trained its groups of officers and armed them with a progressive science of war elaborated by him.

On May 6th, 1941, he was appointed Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R., and on the outbreak of the Patriotic War, he was appointed Chairman of the State Committee of Defence, Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the U.S.S.R., and People's Commissar of Defence.

From that day on the supreme political and military direction of the war against the German Fascist invaders of the U.S.S.R. has been in his hands.

In recognition of his exceptional services in the organisation and direction of the offensive operations of the Red Army which have resulted in major defeats for the German Armies and in a radical change of the situation on the Front, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. awarded to Marshal Stalin in November, 1943, the Order of Suvorov, First Class, and on July 29th, 1944, the Order of Victory. In December, 1943, he was appointed Marshal of the Soviet Union.

Stalin is the greatest strategist and leader of the Red Army. His strategy is built on a thorough knowledge, not only of warfare, but of his own people, in whom he has unshakable faith. This, together with a knowledge of the methods of struggle, and a sober estimation of his own forces and those of the enemy, is a strategy which wins.

II. THE CIVIL WAR

STALIN began his military career in the Russian civil war almost by chance. In June, 1918, he left in his capacity of Commissar General for Food Supplies in South Russia for the Tsaritsyn (the present day Stalingrad) Front. He found a very critical situation. White Cossack bands had seized a number of points near Tsaritsyn and thereby not only made it impossible to organize regular procurements of grain for the starving workers of Moscow and Petrograd, but also placed Tsaritsyn and the whole Volga district in extreme danger.

The loss of this key-town might involve the loss of the rich North Caucasus and Don granaries. The military headquarters and the local political organisations appeared to be unable to solve the rapidly deteriorating situation. Stalin sent urgent wires to Lenin informing him of the state of affairs and the necessity to purge the military command. His wire of July 11th, 1918, to Lenin states :—

> " Matters are complicated by the fact that the military headquarters of the North Caucasus area has proved to be utterly incapable of adapting itself to the requirements of combating counter-revolution. The fact is that our ' experts ' are not only psychologically incapable of combating counter-revolution, but likewise, being staff-workers who only know how to make ' field sketches ' and draft plans for re-alignment, are absolutely indifferent to actual operations . . . and, in general regard themselves as outsiders, as guests. The military commissars have been unable to fill the gap. . . ."

He did not confine himself to this devastating characterisation ; in the same memorandum he drew his own practical conclusion :—

"I shall correct these and many shortcomings on the spot; I am taking a number of measures—even to the point of removing the officials and commanders who ruin matters—and shall continue to do so, in spite of formal difficulties which I shall brush aside when necessary. It is understood that I shall assume full responsibility before all higher bodies."

Thus the Commissar General of Food Supplies became the actual leader of all the Soviet forces on the Tsaritsyn Front. This state of affairs received official recognition in Moscow and Stalin was charged in a telegram of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic with the superscription: "The present telegram is sent with Lenin's approval, ... with establishing order, consolidating the detachments into regular units and establishing a proper command after dismissing all subordinates."

AN ARMY ORGANISED

Stalin set to work immediately. A Military Council was formed with him at its head, which undertook the organisation of a regular army. In a short time the Red Guard and Partisan detachments were transformed into divisions, brigades and regiments. The headquarters, the commissary and ordnance departments were thoroughly purged of counter-revolutionary and hostile elements.

Tsaritsyn improved beyond recognition, following Stalin's taking over of the command. It was prepared for the concentric assault of Krassnov's White Cossack Army, and when it took place it was beaten off. The enemy was crushed and flung far back towards the Don.

Stalin's organisational capacity had laid the foundation for the victory in his first battle.

Lenin appreciated greatly Stalin's capacity to see to the bottom of military problems and to find a solution quickly. Since his intervention at Tsaritsyn he was shifted about from front to front, selecting the most vulnerable spots, the places where the threat to the Red Army was most imminent. Voroshilov characterises Stalin's activities during the period of 1918 to 1920 on the various fronts of the Civil War as follows:—

"Stalin was never to be found where things were comparatively quiet and going smoothly, where success was attending our arms. But wherever, for various reasons, the Red Army suffered reverses, wherever the counter-revolutionary forces pressing their successes, threatened the very existence of Soviet power, wherever alarm and panic might at any moment develop into helplessness and catastrophe—there Comrade Stalin was always sure to appear. During endless nights forgoing sleep, he organised things, took the reins of leadership into his own firm hands, and ruthlessly broke down all obstructions. He was unsparing, and achieved the necessary change and improvement in conditions. Comrade Stalin himself wrote of this in one of his letters to the Central Committee in 1919, saying that he was being 'turned into a specialist for cleaning out the stables of the War Department.' "—(From an article by Marshal Voroshilov on the occasion of Stalin's fiftieth birthday—December 20, 1929.)

During these years Stalin gained a large amount of military knowledge and experience and developed from a military organiser into a far-sighted strategist, who conducted in 1919 on the Southern Front his first large scale campaign. When he arrived in autumn, 1919, in the capacity of a member of the Revolutionary Military Council at the Southern Front, he encountered on the extensive front extending from the Volga to the Polish-Ukrainian border which comprised several hundred thousand troops, a most uncertain and precarious situation. On the main front—the Kursk-Orel-Tula line, the Red Army was suffering heavy reverses, while the eastern flank was marking time.

The plan of operations provided that the main attack which should relieve the pressure of the Whites on Tula and Moscow, was to be launched by the left flank from Tsaritsyn towards Novorossisk across the Don steppe.

IN THE DON

After acquainting himself with the situation, Stalin categorically rejected the old plan and formulated new proposals, which he submitted to Lenin with the following memorandum,

which clearly displays Stalin's deep understanding of strategic principles adapted to the particular conditions of the Civil War, that it should be quoted extensively :—

"The other day the Commander-in-Chief gave orders to Shorin to advance on Novorossisk across the Don steppe, along a line which our aviators might find convenient to fly but which our infantry would find impossible to trek. It requires no proof to show that this hare-brained (but proposed) advance amidst hostile surroundings, with roads totally lacking, threatens us with complete disaster.

"It is not hard to understand that, as recent experience, has shown, this campaign against the Cossack villages can only serve to antagonize the Cossacks towards us and make them rally around Denikin in defence of their villages ; it can only create a Cossack Army for Denikin, that is to say can only strengthen Denikin. It is therefore necessary right away, without loss of time, to alter the old plan, which experience has already discredited and replace it by a plan according to which the main attack will be launched on Rostov—by way of Kharkov and the Donetz Basin.

"Firstly, here we shall be in surroundings which are not hostile, but on the contrary sympathetic to us, a circumstance which will facilitate our advance. Secondly, we will secure an extremely important railway system (that of the Donetz Basin) and the main artery feeding Denikin's army—the Voronezh-Rostov line. . . . Thirdly, by this advance we will cut Denikin's army in two. One part of the Volunteer Army we shall leave for Makhno to devour, while the other, the Cossack Army, we will threaten with an attack in the rear. Fourthly, we shall be in a position to set the Cossacks quarrelling with Denikin, who, if our advance is successful, will try to move the Cossack units to the West, to which the majority of the Cossacks will not agree. . . . Fifthly, we shall secure coal, while Denikin will be left without coal.

"This plan must be adopted without delay. . . ."

Stalin chose for the attack on the south the longer route—that from Tula to Novorossisk, because it went through working-class Kharkov and the colliery districts of the Donetz Basin. This longer route proved in fact to be shorter than the

Tsaritsyn-Novorossisk road, which, in spite of a shorter mileage would have turned out the longer one because it was advantageous in many respects to the enemy.

The results of Stalin's decision, which was accepted by Lenin, led to the turning point in the civil war. Denikin's forces were hurled back to the Black Sea and the Ukraine and the North Caucasus was liberated from the dominance of the Whites.

In the course of the campaign against Denikin, Stalin realised the necessity for carrying through swift and decisive manoeuvres in order to outflank the enemy and prevent him from recovering. As the available infantry forces were much too slow for these tasks and the Red Army did not possess at this stage of its development any armoured forces of importance, he proposed the formation of a large Mounted Army, capable of executing swift manoeuvres, to deal surprise blows to the enemy and to exploit the successes of slower moving forces.

Stalin's proposal was the first attempt to combine cavalry divisions into so large a unit as an army. Stalin saw the power of massed cavalry at that stage of the civil war in Russia. The past however could provide no precedent for such an experiment as the placing of mounted armies in the field. Nor was there anything on this subject in scientific works, and it therefore gave rise to criticism.

The Mounted Army was formed regardless of obstacles, and even in spite of the desires of General Headquarters. Its first commander was Budenny, and his closest collaborators were Voroshilov and Shchadenko.

The First Mounted Army became the decisive military factor on the Southern Front, which acted according to Stalin's tactical directives : " Choose the main line of attack, concentrate the best detachments at that point, and crush the enemy."

After Denikin's defeat Stalin's authority as an outstanding military organiser and leader became indisputable. Lenin appointed him both in the campaign against Wrangel and in the Polish campaign as a member of the Military Council on the

decisive fronts, where he gained additional experiences and influenced the course of military events.

Throughout the whole civil war Stalin displayed a great ability as a strategist under varied and complex conditions. He always determined the line of the main attack and by his masterly application of tactics suited to the circumstances he achieved the desired result. During that period under his direction, as the examples of the defence of Tsaritsyn and the creation of the First Mounted Army have proved, the Red Army as an organised fighting force was built up in the very struggle to attain victory.

"Either we create a real worker and peasant—primarily peasant—strictly disciplined army and defend the republic or we perish," were Stalin's words on the Eighth Congress of the Bolshevik party.

And this army was created under the direction of Lenin and Stalin, with the active support of Voroshilov, Budenny, Timoshenko and Frunze.

III. BUILDING AN ARMY

IN the years following the Civil War, Stalin devoted much of his attention to the growth and strength of the Red Army. As it became clear that the territorial militia system of recruiting to the Red Army did not correspond to the necessities of the defence problems of the Soviet Union, Stalin announced his desire to see a law promulgated requiring universal military duty, to the drafting of which he contributed a great deal of effort.

The principal problems that had to be dealt with in building up a powerful Red Army were those of the cadres, of technical equipment and of organisation.

He formulated the famous slogan—"Cadres decide everything"—in his address to the graduates from the Red Army Academies in 1935. "If our Army possesses genuinely steeled cadres in sufficient numbers," he said on that occasion, "it will be invincible."

Already in 1939 the Red Army was training its cadres under the supervision of the proved leaders of the civil war and former Tsarist generals and staff officers who had proved their loyalty to the Soviet State, in fourteen military academies and six special military faculties. These cadres, the majors and colonels of 1940, who won battle experience at the forcing of the Mannerheim Line and in the battles of Lake Hassan and of Khalkin-Gol, are to-day the Marshals and Army Generals of 1945 who in two years have led the Red Army from the Volga across many hundreds of miles through the greatest battles of this war to the borders of East Prussia and Austria and Germany.

The astounding victories of the young Marshals and Generals of the Soviet Union, the great military feats of Malinovsky, Rokossovsky, Chernyakovsky, Bagramyan, Petrov, and many others are the living proofs that Stalin's cadre schools of the Red Army have surpassed the standards of St. Cyr, of the Military Academy of Berlin and of other famous military schools.

RE-EQUIPMENT

The technical equipment of the Red Army, like the industrialisation of the Soviet Union as a whole, is closely connected with the name of Stalin. He led the titanic struggle for the technical re-equipment of the entire Soviet national economy on the basis of that industrialisation. It is only thanks to this that the Red Army is now technically better equipped than any other army in the world.

This was achieved in the mighty efforts of the Soviet peoples in the three Five Year Plans and through the still bigger efforts under the adverse conditions of the Patriotic War against the German invaders.

Stalin has always taken a personal and direct part in deciding the questions pertaining to the technical reconstruction of the armed forces of the Soviet Union, such as the introduction of new armament designs, of armaments or the improvement of older weapons.

Stalin followed closely the events of the Spanish War and studied carefully the reports of the Soviet Military Mission to the Spanish Republican Government regarding the latest

developments of German tactics and weapons. He also noted to what degree the Soviet war material sent to the Republican Government stood the test of modern battle.

He and the leading Soviet generals drew many conclusions from the German and Italian blitzkrieg rehearsal in Spain, and the offensive and defensive tactics developed by the Spanish Republican Army and the International Brigades. The military lessons of the Battle of Guadalajara, where the strongest Italian concentration of tanks, motorised infantry and artillery was smashed from the air after it was immobilised on the ground by the heroic stand of the IVth Army Corps of the Republican Army (with which the most famous Republican Divisions and units of the International Brigade fought), were well digested under Stalin's direction in the Soviet Union. The world's first great demonstration of attack aviation at Guadalajara led to the most advanced development of the attack-plane in the Red Air Force at the expense of bomber development.

Based on the experiences of Guadalajara the famous Soviet designer Iliushin developed the Stormovik or attack plane, the Soviet Union's most substantial contribution to air support tactics. It is armed with various but always heavy combinations of cannon, machine guns, rockets or bombs. It is heavily armoured as a protection from machine-gun fire. At its favourite operational altitude—150 ft. or less—it is almost impossible to hit with large calibre anti-aircraft shells. If the sky is disputed by enemy fighters Stormoviks have their own fighter escorts. Co-ordinated with the massive Russian artillery, Stormoviks have played a proud role in the German downfall and the destruction of the most powerful German fortifications and tank concentrations.

THE OTHER R.A.F.

Neither Stalin nor the air experts of the Red Army—Chief of Aviation Marshal Alexander Novikov and the great team of Soviet air constructors, Yakovlev, Lavochkin and Iliushin, believed that " bombing can win the war " but built up the Red Air Force mainly as an air support armada.

They had to give their utmost attention to the development of fighter aircraft both for defensive purposes and for the protection of their ground support planes.

Alexander Yakovlev and Semion Lavochkin both designed a series of excellent fighter types in constant consultation with Stalin and Alexei Shakurin, the People's Commissar for Aircraft Production. As "Creators of Stalinist Aviation" they were awarded prizes of 100,000 roubles each.

Stalin devotes much of his attention and care to the work of military inventors, helping them by discussing their problems with them and encouraging them when faced with difficulties.

Stalin, who has read the standard works on armoured warfare by Fuller, de Gaulle and Guderian and who collaborates closely with the great Soviet tank expert Marshal Rotmistrov, realised very early the revolutionary effect of the tank and of tank armies on strategy and tactics. Their speed and firepower are capable of solving military problems, which appeared insoluble during the civil war.

A tank army is in a far higher degree than a mounted army capable of carrying out bold manoeuvres and of dealing crushing blows at the enemy. Thus Stalin, who formed the First Mounted Army in the Civil War—long before Guderian created the German Panzer Army—supported the formation of strong armoured units in the Red Army. He also foresaw the race between anti-tank weapons and the armour of the tank and thus decided that simultaneous with the construction of fast tanks, very heavy, strongly gunned, and thickly armoured models had to be created for the destruction of obstacles and the crushing of anti-tank artillery. Thus, thanks to Stalin's foresight the Red Army is to-day well provided with extra-heavy tanks and self-propelled guns, able to cope with the German Tiger and King Tiger tanks which have proved to be a temporary problem to American and British armour during the battle of the Ardennes.

AIR-BORNE

Stalin also watched carefully the development of Soviet airborne troops, who have become the model for the formation of the great British and American Airborne armies, which

played such a decisive part in the operations of D-Day during the landings in Southern France and in the battle for the Rhine Delta.

Stalin always believed in the dominant role of artillery in warfare and together with Chief Marshal of Artillery Nikolai Voronov, saw to it that its development was not, as in other armies, neglected at the expense of the building up of tank armies.

He also realised that neither heavy bombers nor ground support planes are a substitute for heavy artillery, which is more accurate and allows a more continuous fire. Stressing the necessity of the utmost concentration of weight and fire-power for the attack, the artillery textbooks of the Red Army have been re-written in the light of the employment of large masses of guns of all calibres for barrage and support.

Since the days of the great Russian captains, Suvorov and Kutuzov, and also during the first World War, Russian artillery has had a very high reputation. Russian Army tradition considered it as the "God of War." These standards have been maintained and largely improved by Stalin's artillery expert, Voronov. Thus already in summer 1941 the Red Army possessed a powerful artillery organisation and the devastating fire of Russian guns broke up the mass assaults of German tanks and infantry during the battle at the gates of Moscow, and was a tremendous help during the defence of Stalingrad. The fire-power of Soviet artillery has in the course of the victorious Russian offensives, broken the most powerful and elaborate German defence-belts at Stalingrad, Orel, Leningrad, on the Dnieper, in White Russia, and recently in Southern Poland.

Neither in quality nor quantity is German artillery in a position to counteract the effect of Soviet guns. The German Command neglected the development of artillery because they believed they could win their campaigns with rapid blitz thrusts carried out by panzers, dive bombers and motorised infantry. Stalin's foresight, his deep understanding of the effect of weapons on strategy and tactics prevented the Red Army from making a similar mistake and led to the build up of the powerful Soviet artillery, whose main features are outlined by Marshal Voronov as follows :—

"Our artillery is strong, because of the high standard of training of both officers and men and their quite unbounded devotion to their country; because of the achievements of Soviet industry; because of the correct organisational structure, expressing itself in the embodiment of the artillery in the formations of the Red Army; because of the correct operational and tactical development at decisive points, specially during the break-through; and finally, because of the co-ordination, calculated with the minutest exactitude, of the artillery with all other arms, particularly the infantry and tanks."

Stalin not only—in the words of W. Averill Harriman, President Roosevelt's special envoy to Moscow—"shows amazing knowledge of the details of equipment, but also knows about the problems of supply of his armies." He gained this knowledge in the years of the Civil War, when he started his military career as Commissar for Supplies of the Southern Front.

TRANSPORT

In the Soviet Union transport depends to an overwhelming degree on railways which have to overcome the tremendous distances within a country comprising one-sixth of the earth. The Soviet Union is rightly called a railway-power. Thus Stalin has always taken a particular interest in the development of the Russian railway system, whose perfect functioning is the precondition for the maintenance of the supply organisation of the Red Army in war time.

Already in 1935 Stalin told a delegation of railwaymen: "The U.S.S.R. would be inconceivable as a State without first-class railway transport linking its main regions and districts into one whole."

By the outbreak of the war, the Russian railway system had been largely renovated and re-equipped. During the years of Stalin's Five Year Plans 17,500 miles of new track were laid down and the power of the locomotives had been doubled. And so the Soviet railways could cope with the biggest population move in history—of whole industries and peoples east-

wards to the lands beyond the Volga to the Urals, to Central Asia, and, of troops with their vast equipment, westwards to the front.

Since then the volume and scale of Soviet railway transport has been considerably increased. The freight turnover for the first half of 1944 was 24.6 per cent. higher than for the first six months of 1943. The speed of dispatch and transit of freight trains has been increased by 10 per cent. over the time-table. Truck turnover has been speeded up by about 24 hours. These victories of the Soviet railway workers are the reason why the Red Army is capable of carrying out offensive operations on an ever-increasing scale 2,000 miles away from the production bases in the Urals.

IV. RUSSIA INVADED

STALIN'S greatest strength as a military leader lies in his ability to weigh up the objective dispositions and relation of forces, to grasp actual conditions in their entirety, to recognise actual possibilities. He thus was able to foresee the general trend of the main events and base his strategy upon it.

One of the essential conditions for making such forecasts is the knowledge of the laws of social development and in particular of the laws governing warfare. When army leaders ignore these laws and base their forecasts upon no real foundation they are apt to make very serious mistakes.

Napoleon announced, shortly before embarking on the campaign against Russia : " Another three years and I shall be the master of the world." Scarcely a year later he had suffered the severest defeat of his whole campaigns in Russia.

The German Emperor Wilhelm II told his army when it embarked on the invasion of Belgium and France in August, 1914 : " You will return home victoriously before Christmas." Some of them came home four years later as a beaten army.

HITLER'S PROPHECIES

In November, 1941, Hitler, in reviewing the invasion of the Soviet Union, said : " So gigantic a country has never been defeated in so short a time." A few weeks later his troops

were routed at Moscow. In September, 1942, he risked another prophecy. " We Germans will finish off the Stalingrad affair ; you may rest assured that no human power can turn us back." Six weeks later the Russian offensive began, in the course of which the Wehrmacht suffered the greatest defeat any German army has yet suffered in history.

Stalin's forecasts, however, have been fulfilled with astonishing accuracy. The whole course of the war of the Soviet Union against Hitlerite Germany has confirmed their profundity.

In the early days of the war he appealed to the Red Army and to the Soviet peoples with words full of confidence in the future victory of the Soviet Union. " Our forces are numberless. The overweening enemy will soon learn this to his cost." The Soviet people celebrated the 27th anniversary of the Great October Revolution in the knowledge that as Stalin had prophesied, the enemy had been decisively beaten. The Red Army had driven the invaders out of the Soviet Union and forced the wounded beast to fall back into its lair.

At the beginning of the war Stalin addressed words of historic significance to the Red Army and the Soviet guerillas.

> " The whole world is looking upon you as a force capable of destroying the plundering hordes of the German robbers. The enslaved peoples of Europe who have fallen beneath the yoke of the German robbers look towards you as their liberators. A great liberating mission has fallen to your lot. Be worthy of this mission."

To-day the Red Army having liberated its own peoples, is helping the peoples of Poland, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia to regain their liberty and independence.

THE LOGIC OF THINGS

How true was Stalin's forecast concerning the formation of a strong anti-Hitler coalition. On July 3rd he said : " In this war of liberation we shall not be alone. In this great war we shall have true allies in the peoples of Europe and America." In their efforts to sow dissension among the members of the Anglo-Soviet American coalition, the Hitlerites pointed to the ideological differences which would prevent

the Allies from co-ordinating their activities. But as Stalin said : " The logic of things is the strongest logic of all." And the logic of things imperatively dictates to the members of the anti-Hitler coalition the necessity for joint action against Hitler Germany and has led to the Teheran agreements and the invasion of Europe from the West.

Stalin's forecast of the progressive isolation of Hitler Germany has been fulfilled with astonishing exactness. Italy, Finland, Rumania and Bulgaria have not only dropped out of the war, but have declared war on Germany and linked up with the common front of the United Nations.

But Stalin, as a really wise military leader, never underestimated the strength of the enemy. Last February on Red Army Day he reminded his victorious soldiers, that the enemy was not yet smashed.

He said :

" The Hitlerite bandits . . . are resisting with the fury of doomed men. . . . Precisely for this reason, and no matter how great our success, we must as before soberly appraise the enemy's strength and be vigilant, not allow over-confidence in our ranks or complacency or heedlessness."

And in his last May Day address, Stalin observed that :

" The German troops now resemble a wounded beast which is compelled to crawl back to its lair, Germany, in order to heal its wounds.

" But a wounded beast which has retired to its lair has not ceased to be a dangerous beast."

FORESIGHT AND WILL

Rundstedt's counter-offensive in the Ardennes with all its consequences has brought this lesson sharply back into the minds of many people.

But to foresee the future is not enough. The future must be won in struggle or battle.

As Stalin said in 1931 :

"In the history of States, in the history of countries, in the history of armies, there have been cases when all possibilities of success and for victory existed, but remained unexploited because the leaders did not notice them, were unable to take advantage of them and their armies suffered defeat."

To Stalin's foresight is added the mighty will of the Soviet peoples and that of the Red Army ; this enables the great potentialities of the Soviet system to be thrown into the scales of battle. Professor Mikhail Leonov, of the Soviet Academy of Science, says :—

"Stalin's strategy is invincible because it makes the maximum use of the advantages inherent in the Soviet system, military, political, economic and cultural : because it is directed towards converting the moral, political and economic advantages of the Soviet system into military advantages."

These great potentialities upon which Stalin's strategy is based, have been used in masterly fashion by the Soviet High Command and Stalin's closest collaborators, Marshals Voroshilov, Budenny, Timoshenko, Vassilievsky, Voronov, Novikov and Rotmistrov. The space of this pamphlet is much too limited for a full description of Stalin's victory strategy.

V. FUNDAMENTALS OF STRATEGY

BUT some of the main features should be outlined here, nevertheless. As early as the year 1919, during the Civil War, Stalin pronounced himself strongly against any dispersal of forces, which has proved recently to be so fateful in the operations on the Western Front during the late autumn. He urged the military commanders to concentrate their forces for one main effort and pursue the objective of the effort most decisively.

If we review the main operations on the Eastern Front from summer 1941 right up to this year's winter offensive, we find that Stalin both in defence and on the offensive concentrated his forces on one main front. Other operations, even when their scope was much larger than that of similar operations in the secondary European theatres of war, were minor efforts.

During the defensive struggle in 1941 the central front, which protected the approaches to Moscow, was definitely the main front. At the expense of the Ukraine, where the Red Army fought with less armour than at either side of the Smolensk road, and in spite of the heavy losses of extremely valuable industrial areas, whose industries were either evacuated or destroyed—the best equipped units of the Red Army were concentrated before Moscow, for the protection of the administrative heart and the greatest rail hub of the Soviet Union.

This correct estimation of the main German blow proved right. With the defeat of the German armies at the gates of Moscow and the subsequent Russian counter-offensive in the centre, the German advance came to a standstill on the other fronts, where the Red Army was also able to reduce the most dangerous German penetrations.

STALINGRAD

At the end of 1942 Stalin concentrated the available reserves of the Red Army exclusively on the Don and Stalingrad front, where they dealt the Wehrmacht the most severe blow of the war. Only when Stalingrad was firmly encircled and the offensive well on its way on both sides of the Don, did the Red Army strike at Leningrad and breach the ring around that heroic city. But while this limited operation was being completed the main drive towards Kharkov and Rostov was being continued, and large industrial and agricultural areas of the Soviet Union were liberated and won back for the war effort of the Soviet Union.

The main operations of the summer of 1943 (after the last German attempt to gain the initiative on the Eastern Front was foiled in the battle of the Kursk bulge) took place on the central front and the northern section of the southern front, and carried the Red Army to Smolensk and Kiev.

Once these objectives were achieved, the main effort of the Soviet armies shifted farther south in autumn, 1943 and led in early spring, 1944, to the liberation of the Ukraine.

In the summer of 1944, when the Red Army had considerably grown in strength and Western Europe had been invaded by the Allied armies, Stalin's strategy distinctly foresaw two main efforts, which, however, took place consecutively.

The first took place in Byelorussia, being supported and followed up by blows on the Baltic front. This led to a catastrophic defeat of the Wehrmacht between Bobruisk and Minsk and brought the Red Army towards the Vistula, the Narev and the Niemen. During the last phase of this drive, however, the Red Army struck at the extreme south of the front and started its second main operation—the drive for the Danube. During the course of this operation, Rumania and Bulgaria changed over from the side of the Axis to that of the United Nations, large parts of Yugoslavia and Hungary were liberated, and the front moved up towards the approaches to Austria.

In the Red Army winter offensive, which is the greatest effort the Red Army or any other Allied force has undertaken in this war, the main direction is clearly recognisable. It is directed against Silesia, Germany's greatest industrial area in the east and might even crash, once the Oder has been crossed, into the immediate approaches to Berlin.

Another feature of Stalin's strategy is the most careful preparation of each blow. This was the secret of the offensive in November, 1942, when the Red Army did not yet possess numerical superiority. By carefully massing what could be spared from other sectors of the front and having the reserves at hand for the exploitation of the success, the breaks through on the Don and south of Stalingrad could be exploited for the encirclement of the German Sixth Army.

VISTULA PAUSE

Last autumn, after an advance of several hundred miles, the Red Army halted along the Vistula and the Narev. This halt lasted several months and was interpreted by wrongly-informed military observers as a sign of weakness in the Red Army, which, as they erroneously thought, had spent in 1944 the maximum of their effort.

The contrary, however, was true. Stalin did not attempt to break through the strongest German fortifications along the Vistula and in Southern Poland, before a powerful assault force could be massed and their supply system was in perfect working order.

As the Red Army is operating now at a distance of about 2,000 miles from their main production centres in the Urals, great supply problems had to be solved—mainly the repairing of the railways in Poland and Byelorussia, which had been systematically destroyed by the retreating German armies. Once this work was achieved, Stalin struck—and with forces which had never been so numerous and well equipped in any previous operation. Within a week of the opening of the Soviet offensive, Warsaw was in Soviet hands. Within another fortnight Marshal Zhukov's troops entered Brandenburg, and were within 90 miles of Berlin.

Another outstanding feature of Stalin's strategy is the merging of military strength and the people's patriotism into a tremendous striking power, this creating the conditions for democratic "total war."

This finds its foremost expression in the co-ordination of the guerilla operations with those of the Red Army. The most perfect example of such a combined operation was the crossing of the Dnieper in October, 1943, when the Red Army attacked against an enemy in powerful positions overlooking the wide bed of a swift flowing river. This difficult task was made easier by the full support of the civilian population and of guerilla units on the other side of the river which at zero hour attacked the rear of the enemy's defences.

The same co-ordination of guerilla action with the blows of the Red Army was one of the main characteristics of the operations in Byelorussia and on the Leningrad front.

As early as the dark days of 1941 the readiness of the Soviet collective farmer and worker to burn their farms and grain and to demolish the Dnieper dam and many other industrial plants helped the Red Army to carry through its strategy of attrition in 1941 and 1942.

These fundamental points of Stalin's strategy were determined as early as July, 1941, when Stalin called upon the Soviet peoples to rise as one man against the German invader, to "scorch their earth," to form guerilla detachments and to give their last ounce of strength for the defence of their country.

Stalin also realised the great potentialities of political warfare. From the early months of the war, not only the political departments of the Red Army but also German political

refugees carried out very effective propaganda and started to work among the many thousands of German prisoners-of-war.

GERMAN DESERTERS

The propaganda of the Red Army at the front saved the lives of many Soviet soldiers, by inducing an increasing number of German soldiers and officers to lay down their arms and desert to the Red Army.

With the consent of Stalin and the Soviet Government the work of the German political refugees in the Soviet Union was intensified when, after the Stalingrad battle many tens of thousands of German prisoners were taken by the Red Army. The result of this work among generals, officers and soldiers of the Wehrmacht was the formation of the Free Germany National Committee in Moscow, which to-day with its strong appeals to the German Army and the German people to rise against Hitler and thus to end the war shows to masses of Germans the only alternative to the self-destruction offered by Hitler's catastrophic policy and strategy.

INVINCIBLE ARMIES

In his first public pronouncement after the Soviet Union was invaded—a broadcast speech delivered on July 3rd, 1941—Stalin said :

"History shows that there are no invincible armies and never have been. Napoleon's army was considered invincible but it was beaten successively by the armies of Russia, England and Germany. Kaiser Wilhelm's German army was also considered invincible, but it was beaten several times by Russia, Anglo-French troops and finally smashed by the Anglo-French forces. The same must be said of Hitler's German Fascist army of to-day. This army has not yet met with serious resistance on the Continent of Europe. Only on our territory has it met with serious resistance and if as a result of this resistance the finest divisions of Hitler's German Fascist army have been defeated by our Red Army, this means that it, too, can be smashed, and will be smashed, as were the armies of Napoleon and Wilhelm."

The " invincibility " of Hitler's armies is a myth which to-day no longer deceives anybody. They have been defeated in Africa and in Western Europe as well as on the Eastern Front. They have been defeated by British and American armies as well as by the Red Army.

From Tsaritsyn to the last great battle that has still to be fought on German soil, the name of Joseph Stalin will for ever be associated with imperishable victories in battles that have been fought that mankind might be free. He has met in battle the most brilliant products of the Prussian military academies, and has defeated them individually and collectively.

Unlike other great military leaders Stalin has no liking for war for war's sake. Prior to 1941 he battled for peace as strenuously as he has fought since to defeat the German enemies. He has resorted to arms only in the defence of his country and not in aggression against other lands. He has fought that peace may triumph throughout the world, that his country might pursue once more its peaceful path of socialist construction.

THE AUTHOR

Lieutenant-Colonel Hans Kahle was a young infantry officer in the German Army and fought during the last two years of the first World War on both the western and eastern fronts.

Later he worked as a journalist in Germany, but was exiled by Hitler and deprived of his German citizenship because of his opposition to the Nazi regime.

He fought in the Spanish War, first as a battalion commander, then as brigade commander, and finally as divisional commander, in both the International Brigades and the army of the Spanish Republic. He has lectured extensively in Britain on military and other subjects.

In 1943 *the Russia Today Society published his* UNDER STALIN'S COMMAND *of which Gen. Sir Hubert Gough wrote :*

> *" This book ought to be in the hands of every officer, and it should also be read by every citizen."*

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