

Nazis Outwitted, Outgeneraled And Outfought By Russians

One year ago the headlines read: "Manila, Cavite Lost; MacArthur Fights On" and "Malaya Battles More Invaders." It was the opening of a grim year, says the New York Herald Tribune. Disasters piled upon one another at Singapore and Java, in Burma, Libya and Russia. By summer Hitler's armies were sweeping into Egypt and the Caucasus, and people talked gloomily of a ten-year war.

This year of 1943 opened with the gloom on enemy faces. Experts had said Hitler would have to win in 1942 or he never would. He didn't. And the United Nations were on the march.

Hitler and Goebbels, although naturally sticking to their predictions of victory, were less buoyant than usual. Der Fuehrer said Germany would win no matter how "severe the struggle is and will be and no matter how often the scales seemingly tip in favor of our war enemies." Said Goebbels: "Germany has more or less succeeded in overcoming certain mili-

tary difficulties which have arisen. . . . Even counting the changing luck in such a gigantic battle as that in Russia, we can look with confidence into the future."

The Japanese nation, which had been fed on news of big victories, suddenly received from Premier Tojo a warning that the war would be long and hard, and that the United Nations were preparing to deliver counter-blows of "great importance."

Allied Outlook More Cheerful

On the other hand, the British War Office, issuing its third annual review of the war, permitted rays of cheer to shine through the official stodginess. The first signs that the Axis flood "might be turning to ebb" came on Aug. 31, the review said, when Rommel was rebuffed at the gate of Egypt. But it was not until the night of Oct. 23, when Montgomery struck, that "the United Nations may be said to have begun demonstrably to capture the initiative." The Royal Air Force noted that its

strength rose one-third in 1942 and was now superior to the combined air might of Germany and Italy.

In America Donald Nelson reported that war factories made in November the largest production gain of any month since the United States began to rearm in 1940. About four and one-third times as much war material was turned out as in November a year ago.

Red Army's Triumphs

The Russian year-end review made the finest reading of all. From it emerged the picture of Soviet strategy, and the conclusion to which it pointed was that the German Army had been outwitted, outgeneraled and outfought. Der Fuehrer's grand campaign for 1942, said Moscow quietly, had been formed "without taking into account the Germans' actual resources and the Soviet reserves."

Evidently the Red Army had used the barest minimum of troops to hold at Stalingrad during the fall, biding its time and building its reserves against the moment to strike. The moment came on Nov. 19. Soviet troops were ordered to surround the main body of German troops before Stalingrad. "The aim was accomplished," said the review. Thus for the first time Moscow made the flat assertion that the ring around the Nazi

forces besieging Stalingrad had been closed. Within the trap were twenty-two enemy divisions. "In these engagements our troops wiped out 55,000 Germans and took 72,400 prisoners."

Having achieved the encirclement before Stalingrad, the supreme command ordered the Red Army to launch the second phase of the offensive in the last two weeks of December. The objective here was to break through the enemy defenses in the region of Boguchar "and to come out into the rear of the German Fascist army operating in the greater bend of the Don, so as to prevent the enemy troops surrounded before Stalingrad from getting away and from receiving help from outside." This aim, too, was "completely carried out." In these engagements the enemy troops lost in killed 59,000 men and 60,050 officers and men were taken prisoners.

German Losses

In the meantime the Germans had concentrated along the Stalingrad-Tikhoretsk railway to the north of Kotelnikovskii in a desperate attempt to liberate the surrounding divisions. The third assignment for the Red Army, then, was to break up that counter-offensive. It did so. Last week the Russians captured Kotelnikovskii,

which the Germans had made into one of their most important bases for the drive on Stalingrad. In this phase, "The German Fascist troops lost in killed alone 21,440 men, and 5,260 enemy officers and men were taken prisoners."

Moscow put the grand total of Germans killed or captured since Nov. 19 at 312,650. Of course, the number of enemy killed is bound to be an estimate, and may be too high. On the whole, however, Moscow's official communiques have a good reputation for factual accuracy. The picture as drawn in the review is one of ghastly losses for the German Army.

Velikie Luki Falls

In the North, the Germans are in another tight place through the capture of Velikie Luki which controls railroads running from Moscow west to the Latvian border and from Leningrad to Odessa. Despite German denial of the Russian claims to have taken so important a center, the Russians maintain that not a single German remains in the city and that large quantities of supplies and equipment have been taken over.

Assuming the Russian claims to be accurate, another large block of German troops, that for months has been stationed around Rzhev, will be in serious danger.

The Russian aim is clearly to

make the most of the winter season to drive back the Germans from their spearheads at Rzhev, Stalingrad, and Nalchik. From these points Hitler would launch a new offensive in spring. Should his troops be forced out of them, a serious rearrangement of German plans clearly will be needed.

Mazdok Captured

Capture by the Russians of Mazdok near the Grozny oil fields in the Caucasus threatens to entrap a large force of Germans in that area. Some 400 miles to the north are the 300,000 or so Germans under General von Hoth already surrounded around Stalingrad.

Hitler appears to be breaking all military tradition by refusing to operate retreats from advanced positions, where supplies are threatened, or completely cut off. Whether he expects the forces at these points to hold their ground until relief can be organized, or whether they are to be sacrificed in order to delay as long as possible the Russian advance remains to be seen.

That the Russian Army can be retarded considerably is clear both from the want of railroad connections between their forces and from the winter rains that in the Caucasus are softening the surface of the ground.

ADVERTISEMENT

ADVERTISEMENT

ADVERTISEMENT

ADVERTISEMENT

AN ALTERNATIVE SPEECH ON TEMPERANCE

On Wednesday, December 16th, the Prime Minister broadcast a speech on Temperance. Canadian Breweries Limited respectfully submits to the Prime Minister what it considers would have been a more suitable speech. It does so, not from any profit motive, since its profits are already controlled by the excess profits tax, but out of a desire to retain the public's respect for its industry and those engaged in it.

THE use of beer, wine and spirits has for long been a controversial subject in Canada and from time to time your government is called upon to find a point of harmony between those who do not drink at all and would like all those beverages prohibited; and those who drink moderately and resent any interference with their liberty. If such a point of harmony could be found; and the whole subject put outside politics and religion; it would be a good thing for Canada's unity in wartime; and later, in peace.

It is important to decide whether or not this should be a moral issue or whether we should look upon drinking in the same light as eating and smoking. The evidence before me shows that many Canadians indulge moderately in beer and spirits. These consumers; as well as those who manufacture the beverages, resent the implication that they are not good Christians.

I think the issue becomes a moral one only at the point where individuals drink excessively and become a nuisance. All parties should be able to agree on this: Let us say therefore, that moderation is the ideal which all good Canadians are eager to attain:

The next thing to determine is whether or not ours is a temperate nation: I have every reason to believe that it is. I know that we consume less beer in Canada, per capita, than they do in Great Britain and the United States: This being so, the problem reduces itself to one of dealing with a few irresponsible people who give the advocates of prohibition a falsely dramatic impression of current conditions.

My attention is drawn to the increased sales of beer and spirits since the beginning of the war, but these increases are only at half the rate of the rise in the National income. Many workmen are now busy who before were idle and penniless:

Let me say at once, there's no question of any unwillingness on anyone's part to make sacrifices for the war, least of all among the brewers who have co-operated in every way possible and I am sure will continue to do so. But it should be pointed out here that fifty men can produce a million gallons of beer, and the basic raw materials necessary to supply the whole of Canada's need of beer are available locally in abundance. Any curtailments that do become necessary we will make with precisely the same attitude and impartiality shown to other consumer goods: The one thing I always regret when restrictions are made is that moderate people are invariably the ones to be deprived:

There is a great deal of medical evidence to prove that a hard-working man who drinks beer moderately, not only nourishes his system, but relieves the nervous and physical strain of his busy day. No one will want to deprive him of this form of relaxation, nor to make its availability so difficult that a

worker on a night shift will have to resort to a bootlegger to get his drink! It is important that in this part of the British Empire we retain as high a reserve as possible of physical and nervous energy. We must encourage every form of wholesome relaxation to relieve the strain of war.

So far as the army is concerned I am certainly not going to put myself in the position of saying that a soldier who is old enough to fight and kill is too young to choose his refreshments with good judgment. Here again the reputations of many are spoiled by the few.

It has been suggested to me that I should ban liquor and beer advertising but how could I in fairness do that when we continue to permit other manufacturers, whose goods are rationed or in short supply, to maintain their advertising in order that they may keep their trade names before the public. Furthermore, no one will want me to banish English and American periodicals from Canada. Most of them carry advertisements for brands on sale in this country. How could we ban such advertising in our own publications and allow them in those from the United States.

In conclusion let me say this: Everyone of us has his own ideas of what character our fast growing nation should develop. As our urban centres grow there are bound to be differences of opinion between people of some rural districts and those in the large cities of what civic rights shall be allowed to the people. Our laws must be so designed as to allow to each as much freedom of choice and self reliance as possible. Some sections of the population look askance on dancing, theatres, smoking, drinking and many types of literature.

Let us resolve therefore not to force the views of one section of the community on the other. When a reasonable self-reliant people have an unreasonable law imposed upon them they simply ignore that law with disastrous results to the legal institutions of the country. We learned this at bitter cost during prohibition years. The greatest friend of temperance would not want to greet our men's return from abroad with the evil spectacle of prohibition.

I am convinced we cannot force the principle of moderation but we can teach it. I appeal to all in this nation to be temperate in everything they do in order that we may exert the maximum impact on the enemy. In particular I appeal to brewers and distillers and those interested in true temperance to join forces and use every additional means at their disposal to spread the principle of moderation. I appeal to the provincial authorities to so frame the regulations for retail sale that the business will be conducted in the open and on the highest ethical standards and not driven underground and to the bootleggers. Surely this is an effort to which all parties can agree harmoniously.

Canadian Breweries Limited