

# That Finnish Fantasy

Major Allen Johnson tells how the Mannerheim Line was cracked. Artillery bombardment greater than at Verdun.

**T**HE bubble of Finnish invulnerability has burst. Not all the fantastic tales from the typewriter tacticians seated in Helsinki, Stockholm, and Copenhagen can conceal the fact that their deepest wishes have been thwarted. In a previous piece I pointed out the terrific difficulties which faced the Red Army in this most difficult of all winter campaigns. It was not Finnish resistance, or the ectoplasmic Finnish skiers, that prevented a quick success in the attack across Finland's "waist" from the Salla sector. The weather and terrain created untold problems which had to be overcome by building roadways and clearing woods over hundreds of miles of wild country. Add to such obstacles the fact that transportation by railway was limited to the Leningrad-Murmansk line and the military problem was doubly difficult.

The Finns have been able to operate from an internal transport system, with the possibility of moving troops easily from one front to another, thus utilizing fewer men to defend their many lines. To prevent this the Red Army placed pressure over all fronts, using the supply bases created by its first advances. Thus the Finnish forces were compelled to fight on many fronts at once, occupying their reserves, and hampering their movement. As long as their troops were fresh, and their internal transport system remained intact, they were able to put up a strenuous defense. But as the effects of the Soviet aviation upon their transport and supply depots became more evident, as their troops were being worn down by fatigue, nervous strain, and the weather, it became clearer that the Red Army would soon break through at some vital point.

The pressure upon the Mannerheim Line was continuous, but in no case were disastrous frontal attacks carried out. Terrific artillery bombardment, acknowledged as greater than at Verdun in the World War, was followed by an infantry infiltration. Soviet troops moved around the strongly defended blockhouses and cut them off rather than attack them frontally and suffer serious casualties. These carefully calculated tactics permitted the penetration of this strongest of all defensive positions and the occupation of all its outer defenses. The problem at Viborg involves the occupation of islands in Viborg Bay and mopping up minor points of resistance. Beyond this, supply and transport problems have to be solved before the attack can be pushed forward in force. Serious advances by the Red Army in the Salla, Sortavala, and Petsamo sectors will then develop.

The seriousness of the situation in the Mannerheim zone may compel the Finns to withdraw their reserves from other sectors. Such an eventuality immediately creates the

possibility of pushing forward in those sectors to an immediate and successful conclusion. But if the Finns receive enough British and American assistance, the war may be prolonged for some weeks more. If spring should come before Finnish resistance is broken, operations in the swampy earth will become very much more difficult. Soviet aviation attacks will continue to cripple the Finnish transport system; during the spring thaws this will iso-

late numerous communities and increase the Ryti government's supply problems. Undoubtedly, the developing political situation within Finland against the war will become unfavorable to the Ryti-Mannerheim clique and will itself be a serious military factor within the next few weeks.

It is very nearly impossible for the Allies to give Finland the assistance she needs without involving the whole of Scandinavia in war. Any movement by the Allies through Scandinavia to Finland, or any action by Allied naval forces against Norwegian neutrality, or even Murmansk, may very well alarm the Germans. They can hardly afford to have their iron ore supplies jeopardized, or permit Allied troops to outflank them. Hence,

## Offensive Widens, Russians Hitting Line at 4 Points

Finns Fighting With Bayonets—Invaders  
in Determined Push on 60-Mile Broken Front

By EDWARD W. BEATTIE, JR.  
HELSINKI, Feb. 10 (UP)—

Russian troops, attacking the Mannerheim Line in fullest force for the tenth straight day, broadened their offensive today and hit the Finnish defenses at four main points.

Despite their losses, the Russians seemed determined to smash the Mannerheim defense line at any cost.

They had been striking, day after day, at the Summa sector toward the west end of the line.

### 60-Mile Broken Front

Today they attacked there, in the Punnusjoki and Pasuri sectors and in the Taipale river sector opposite Lake Ladoga, so that their offensive, with four spearheads, had an intermittent front of 60 miles.

There was no information to indicate that the Russians were meeting with more success in this second battle of the Mannerheim line than during their opening offensive in the early days of the war, which cost them thousands of men.

The sudden broadening of the attack came after two days during which there had been some signs that the offensive in the Summa sector might slacken, and the intensification was taken here to mean that the Russian high command had

## Reds Suffer New Defeats, Finns Claim

Mannerheim Groups  
Score Triumphs

By EDWARD W. BEATTIE

HELSINKI, Feb. 10 (U.P.)—New major defeats inflicted on Red Army forces by Finnish troops were reported in an official Finnish communique today as Russian units, attacking the Mannerheim Line in full force for the tenth successive day, broadened their offensive.

Northeast of Lake Ladoga the Finns yesterday inflicted considerable losses on the Russians, the communique said.

### Trucks, Tanks Destroyed

About 800 Russians were reported killed and a column of 60 motor trucks and two tanks were destroyed in some of the hardest fighting of the war.

Russian pressure continued to be heavy in the Summa sector of the Mannerheim Line, where the Reds were attacking in a stubborn attempt to break through the Finnish defenses.

All Red army attacks in the Summa sector were repulsed and 30 Soviet tanks were destroyed, the communique said.

The communique said Colonel Borisov, commanding the Eleventh division of the Russian army, had been killed in battle on February 8.

### Offensive Broadened

The communique said the Russians had broadened their offensive, hitting the Finns at four main points, despite heavy losses suffered in being repulsed for 10 straight days.

TAKE YOUR PICK. Not content with contradictory news from various sources, the New York "Post" (left) and the Washington "Times-Herald" (right) confuse the war by using the same dispatch of Edward Beattie of the UP. Both appeared in late editions the same day. What did Beattie write?

Swedish and Norwegian declarations of neutrality are based on very sober reasoning.

In any case it is highly improbable that the Allies could give Mannerheim sufficient aid in men and material to do more than prolong the conflict. Finland was only a stalking horse for British-American diplomacy, foredoomed to failure. As soon as the final Red Army operations begin, the Finnish bourgeoisie will probably bolt as their Polish brethren did. That the initial blow by the British interventionists has failed is important. That they will try again in other sectors should not be doubted.

MAJOR ALLEN JOHNSON.

## Sour Grapes of Wrath

PERHAPS the greatest Soviet victory in Finland has been at the expense of the American press. The typewriter strategists and semicolon generals have all suffered setbacks in the Red Army penetration of the Mannerheim zone. In the first weeks of the war, the American press "destroyed" Soviet military strength; by now, they have succeeded in destroying what confidence remains in American journalism. Two battles were lost: one for the socialist frontier, the other for the American public. One item last week tells the story. According to the New York *Herald Tribune* for March 2, the Helsinki censors have issued direct instructions to correspondents with the following revealing passages:

Exaggerated descriptions of our own achievements must be avoided, especially if the information is vague. . . . All information and all criticism and mockery which might benefit the enemy should be carefully avoided. . . . Any undervaluation of the enemy, of his fighting capacity, his supply of war materials, and of the possibilities open to him in general, should be avoided. Disparagement of the enemy is not founded on reality. On the contrary, several proofs of his capacity have recently been received.

## The Man Who Came Back

HERBERT HOOVER remembers his past. But he is thinking of the future when he suggests that Congress appropriate ten or twenty million dollars for humanitarian relief in Europe. "I have no doubt," he said, "that the whole of Europe will be an area of starvation when the war is over." What Mr. Hoover means, if we understand his own past, is that the whole of Europe may be struggling to maintain revolutionary governments, at the end of, and in that way ending, the war. Mr. Hoover is thinking ahead toward this eventuality. Not that helping the peoples of Europe with food isn't a good thing. Not that there aren't peoples who have been plunged into disaster and starvation by their criminal rulers. But from the way Mr. Hoover employed food supplies as a weapon to smash the Hungarian people's revolution in 1919, from the way he tried to do the very same against the Russian people, we are suspicious. Like any elephant, Mr. Hoover remembers.

# You Paint It Red, It Looks So Grand

A short story by Cora MacAlbert. When the World War entered the classroom.

WHEN the World War came to the classroom, Carol found going to school bearable for the first time. From that morning when Miss Eckstein announced to the class, in what should have been the mental arithmetic period, "We teachers have decided that the nicest thing you children can do to help our boys is to make them comfy kits," the fascinations of war were self-evident to Carol.

The morning passed quickly and happily, while Miss Eckstein expounded the nature of war and of comfy kits. The little girls nudged one another and whispered delightedly:

"Now it's too late for mental arithmetic!"

"We won't have time for spelling!"

"We won't have to do anything this morning!"

It was already lunch time when Miss Eckstein and the class had decided that a proper comfy kit was made of gray cotton cloth, nine inches long by twelve inches wide, and that it contained:

- 2 pairs of woolen socks
- 1 pair of woolen gloves
- 2 khaki colored handkerchiefs
- 1 washcloth
- 1 package of toilet soap
- 1 package of shaving soap
- 3 packages of chewing gum
- 3 bars of chocolate
- 1 nice letter from the little girl who made up the comfy kit.

Miss Eckstein was very particular about the letters. She said that if the little girls wrote really nice letters in good Palmer penmanship, the soldiers would answer them. She wrote the model letter on the blackboard in yellow chalk:

Dear Soldier:

I am the little girl who sent you this comfy kit. My name is Mary Smith. I am seven years old. I am in class 2-A. My teacher is Miss Eckstein.

I hope you will like this comfy kit. Miss Eckstein says that it will help you to be comfortable while you are fighting for us.

I hope that you will write me soon.

Your well wisher,

Mary Smith.

During the four-week period set for the completion of the comfy kits, whole mornings were spent checking up each little girl's progress in collecting her material. Whole afternoons passed in trying to achieve a copy of Miss Eckstein's letter without inkblots. Carol and many of the little girls copied Miss Eckstein's letter too faithfully, including Mary Smith's name, and then had to do the letter over again.

The comfy kits were only a foretaste of the sweet distractions that war was to bring

to the tiresome routine of the classroom. School assemblies, formerly dull once-a-week affairs, at which the little girls had wiggled as restlessly as in the classroom, were now exciting daily events. The slow songs so laggingly droned about, "The shy baby buds, bashfully pe-ee-ping, out of their brown little beds," were replaced by popular war songs which the little girls sang loudly and enthusiastically.

They sang "Over There" with five different fast verses. They sang "Smiles" with a special tributary line to President Wilson, which always made the little girls giggle because the words had to be said so fast to get them into the music:

. . . there are smiles which have a tender meaning  
which the eyes of love alone can see  
but the smiles we get from President Wilson  
are the best smiles of all, you see!

Best loved by Carol and the little girls was the song "Camouflage." Camouflage itself was such a strange big word and the whole song had such fine words:

Camouflage, camouflage, that's the latest dodge,  
Camouflage, camouflage, it's not a cheese or lodge,  
You buy a Ford, it's secondhand,  
You paint it red, it looks so grand,  
And near a Stutz you let it stand—  
That's camouflage!

Even the recitations in assembly were interesting now. Before the war, all the lower grades had recited, "I shot an arrow into the air, it fell to earth I know not where." Now the little girls had new ones—"In Flanders Field the Poppies Grow," and "Only God Can Make a Tree." And the upper grade boys recited "On the Road to Mandalay" with fierce faces and savage gestures which tickled the little girls.

Special entertainments were now a frequent feature of assembly. Carol's class gave "Nanette and Rin-tin-tin" as the story of two brave Belgian children who outwitted the Huns. Carol was picked for the part of Rin-tin-tin, and was excused from class nearly all the time during the two weeks' rehearsal. The little girls adopted Nanette and Rin-tin-tin as their favorite war heroes, and wore tiny woolen Nanette and Rin-tin-tin dolls around their necks and wrists.

Pat Rooney's little boy became very popular at assembly entertainments. Every week he was called on to dance. He was ten or eleven years old and small for his age, and all the teachers said he looked very cute when he imitated his father's imitations of George Primrose and George M. Cohan.

There was another exciting innovation at this time which was eventually incorporated into the regular ordinary of the assembly.