

# PANZERS WITHOUT OIL

*Colonel T. draws attention to Hitler's desperate need for oil. The meaning of the Rostov campaign. Why Japan drives toward the Dutch East Indies.*

WITH the fateful "7-11" throw of the Axis dice (Japan declared war on the U. S. on December 7 and Germany on December 11), the second world war has thrown a girdle of fire around the entire world. And out of the welter of fronts, sectors, operative lines, communications, sea lanes, threats, and potentialities, there emerges one simple fundamental pattern: the actual fighting on large scales centers in two zones. These zones are limited by the meridians 20 and 40 longitude east and 100 and 120 longitude east. The great bulk of the Axis fights in the first zone, its Japanese appendix in the second. In this article I want to discuss one phase—to me an important one—of the present fighting.

What is the invisible magnet which attracts the fighting forces of the contending sides to these particular zones? Without discussing the whole complex of factors involved, the question of oil, it seems to me, is a fundamental one, militarily.

The fundamental elements of warfare are *movement* (maneuver), *fire*, and *shock*. Modern war combines the three with a preponderance of the first. While maneuver retains its fundamental purpose, which is to get into the most advantageous position for striking, an army also fires as it moves (tanks and planes); the concept of shock, of course, is indivisible from the concept of movement.

The movement of modern armies is created by the internal combustion motor. This means that all three elements of warfare are dependent on oil. Now oil is not found everywhere. There are two great oil centers (so far discovered) on this earth. One is in the Western Hemisphere (North, Central, and South America). This center yields probably some 100,000,000 tons a year, the major part of which is produced by the United States. The other great center is located between the Black Sea, the Caspian, and the Persian Gulf. We might call it the Caucasian-Iranian center. This center can produce about 50,000,000 tons per year with more than one-half belonging to the USSR, and the rest to countries cooperating with the anti-Axis powers. A third center is in the Dutch East Indies.

These are the principal centers. The first (American) is not within Axis reach. The second (Baku-Mosul) is the object of Ger-

many's attack. The third (East Indian) is the object of Japanese attack. However, the above three centers are not the only ones in the world. Germany and its immediate satellites have some oil at their disposal. In order to get an idea of things to come, it is interesting to analyze these reserves.

IT IS KNOWN that the combined output of Germany, Poland, Rumania, Albania, and other occupied countries is about 7,000,000 tons yearly. Germany can produce a maximum of 3,500,000 tons of synthetic oil. Another 1,600,000 tons of substitute (alcohol and benzol) can be produced. It is now known that Germany had a reserve of some 7,000,000 tons of oil, accumulated for this war. In other words, the western part of the Axis has, for one year of war on the present scale, some 19,000,000 tons of fuel of various types.

But what is the scale of this war? Here are a few calculations. In the forty-five days of the German campaign in the West in 1940, the *Wehrmacht* used up 1,500,000 tons of petroleum products in military operations alone. This took care of 135 infantry divisions, about twelve armored divisions, and about 10,000 planes on active duty. Considering the gigantic scope of operations on the Soviet Front, it is quite on the safe side to say that the Axis forces in the East need at least 2,000,000 tons of fuel per month. Add another 500,000 for the communications in areas behind the lines (Italy, etc). In other words, during one year of war on the present scale, the Axis will need 30,000,000 tons of fuel in all forms. (Pre-war General Staff calculations were about 20,000,000 tons per year.)

On the other hand, we saw above that the Axis had only 19,000,000 tons for a year of war. This means that Hitler's quartermaster-general is faced with a yearly deficit of 11,000,000 tons. It must also be pointed out that all these calculations do not even take into consideration the possible, and probable, damage caused to German oil production by both British and Soviet air action.

Thus a monthly drain of 900,000 tons per month is placed on the German oil resources, and this means that less than eight months after the invasion of the Soviet Union began, the German reserves will have been depleted and a certain number of tanks, trucks, and planes will have to be immobilized. This

approximate date can be set at March 1, 1942.

The Germans figured that they would have the Caucasus by spring. Baku alone could have kept their war machine rolling. Their offensive against Rostov was a direct bid for oil. The stab at Leningrad and Moscow and Vologda was a bid to cut the communications of the Soviet Union with its Allies and thus to weaken the Soviet defense, protecting, among other things, the oil of Baku.

This combined offensive has proved a fiasco. Toward the end of the sixth month of the war the German armies are reeling back on the entire front. Not one of the three objectives has been achieved. There will be no Baku oil for Hitler this year. Two "locks" are hanging on the "door" to Baku—Rostov and Sebastopol, the door itself being formed by the huge Red Army front—Murmansk-Leningrad-Moscow-Rostov.

What is Germany to do? It must again turn its attention to the Iraq-Iranian oilfields. Two avenues of approach are possible here; a march through Turkey and another through Egypt. The Egyptian plan appears to be washed up. So the Turkish route seems to loom menacingly.

Meanwhile the Japanese are stabbing toward the East Indian oilfields. The way is barred here by the quadrangle of powerful fortresses and bases — Manila-Hongkong-Singapore-Surabaya. The Japanese are now attacking the first three, of which Manila and Singapore are the most important. We do not know, of course, what the Japanese oil reserves are. The export divisions of Standard Oil can perhaps supply Washington with the figures. In any case it is probable that the Japanese can endure a war on the present scale in the Pacific longer than the Germans can on the Eastern Front. But the capture of the East Indian oil by the Japanese would not help Germany, as far as oil is concerned.

THE GENERAL PICTURE, as the war approaches the end of the sixth month of its most active and decisive phase, is this. The Soviet Union, while guarding the approaches to the oil of Baku and thus parching the Axis to death, is holding in its grip some 300 German divisions; at the same time it immobilizes no less than one-third of the Japanese land forces and probably half of their air force through the mere presence of the great crescent of its Far Eastern armies.

The British are holding off some ten Axis divisions in Libya and guarding the approaches to the oil of Iraq and Iran. In the Far East the ABCD powers are striving to keep Japan from the oil of the East Indies. The United States is guarding the entire oil supply of the Western Hemisphere, against which passes have been made repeatedly by the Axis. The United States is getting into its stride.

The Red Army has seized the initiative along the entire 1,800-mile front after shattering about half of the Axis military strength during twenty-five weeks of incessant fighting. It seems that the Axis "7-11" throw was an unhappy one, for once. COLONEL T.

# ONE MIGHTY TORRENT

## An Editorial

A POWERFUL current, a rushing of mighty waters, has welled up from the hidden springs of American life these first days of the war. It is a current of national unity and determination so surging and so strong that all the inertia of the past has been swept away overnight. The war has become real. National unity has become real. The doubts and disputes have gone under. The enormous problems which face us have become easier of solution because unity and determination are the real moods of America and govern everything.

Three mainstreams of popular initiative have already flowed together: first, the spontaneous increase of enlistment in the army and navy, hundreds of thousands of young men jamming the recruitment offices seven days a week to offer their lives for the battle. Second, the decision of literally millions of trade unionists to forego strikes for mediation and arbitration, devoting every energy to a big boost in war production.

And the third stream embodies the civilians, those hundreds of thousands of nameless citizens from all walks of life who have been learning how to fight fires, how to watch for enemy planes, how to organize the blackout, what to do about the children. *Participation* has become the key word. The tradition of the town meeting, the tradition of all able-bodied men rallying to defend the stockade, the tradition of Betsy Ross has been revived. The participation of the people corresponds to the character of the war, and in itself makes this a people's war.

America's spirit is not one of elation; the excitement after the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, the details of which have been reported by Secretary Knox, has given way to a certain calm, even a grimness. The average man knows that great adjustments of personal life will be necessary. There will be taxes; there will be shortages; and unless price control is instituted immediately, the gap between income and the cost of living will grow. In some fields unemployment may rise, a consequence of the fact that many industrialists have placed business-as-usual before the job of beating Hitler; great occupational shifts may be necessary as some kinds of work become useless and war work demands more labor power.

But all these uncertainties are now resolved within the framework of a basic certainty, namely that this war is a just war, that it can be won by the overwhelming resources and stamina of all the nations now ranged against the Axis. Thus there is a sense of relief. The atmosphere has cleared; the overtone of sorrow has been submerged in the desire to get on with the fight, to plunge into the struggle, to see it through to a victorious finish. America has matured overnight.

WHILE OUR SOLDIERS and sailors hold off the invader in the Pacific with incredible bravery, the nation also watches the other fronts, where men are dying and men are winning in a fight which the President told us was our battle, too. It is only if we see the "one-ness" of the war, and if we remember that we will not lose it in the Pacific provided that we win it in the Atlantic and in Europe—only in this way will we Americans understand and appreciate the President's advice. Consider Russia, for instance.

Too many people had been falling for Hitler's propaganda about Soviet Russia. Just as Hitler tried to befuddle the West with the hoax of the "anti-Communist crusade" when he attacked Russia in June, so now, as the Soviet *Pravda* puts it, Hitler is trying to drive "a diplomatic wedge" between ourselves and our Soviet ally. The *New York Times* in particular has placed itself in the contradictory position of emphasizing the unity of the war, while undermining confidence in the USSR with almost every editorial. And the *Times* persists in its embittered suspicion-mongering, even though newspapers like the *Herald Tribune* take a

more sensible, sober line, and public figures like Joseph E. Davies, Dorothy Thompson, and others are hailing our great ally on the continent of Europe.

Look at the matter simply. The Russians have been fighting Hitler with all their strength for six months. They have suffered enormous losses in men and materials. They have scorched their own earth, their people have suffered indescribable horrors. Singlehanded, without reproaching us or the British for the failure to relieve them by a second front, the Soviet people are now pushing Hitler back for the first time in his infamous history.

How can we ask them to do more? How can we ask them to do what we were unable or unwilling to do? Would it not be to our interest, as Americans, to have them gain second wind, to recuperate their losses? Would it not be in our best interests as Americans for them to keep after the main enemy now that they have him on the run—and especially at a moment when this enemy is obviously threatening both the British and American positions in the Near East, in the Mediterranean, and West Africa? If we agree that Japan's attack is intended to divert us from the Atlantic, then we would only be helping Hitler to attack us in the Atlantic if we encouraged the Soviet Union to dissipate its energies and turn to the Pacific at this time. Instead, we ought to encourage Russian pressure on Germany in Europe so that Hitler will not be able to open or to complete his expected attack in the Mediterranean region. As Maxim Litvinov pointed out in a lengthy statement to the American press, "It is Hitler who is the chief culprit in all the present wars, the inspirer and moving spirit of the whole gang, and the destruction of Hitler would mean the end of them all."

In view of all this, to continue its campaign against Soviet Russia would leave the *New York Times* open to the suspicion that its editors are more interested in separate interests—namely weakening Russia—than they are in the common interests of our country and all its allies. Let us remember that we achieved unity with Britain and Russia only after years of suffering and blunders: this unity is too precious to be bargained with.

ALL OF WHICH raises the larger questions of *initiative* in American foreign policy. What is needed today is a full-fledged alliance of the anti-Hitler nations. Such an alliance has become a military necessity, but it is also vital for ourselves and our allies. Should China, for example, be temporarily cut off from the west by Japanese successes at Singapore, Manila, and Burma, the existence of a full understanding among all the powers would be decisive for her morale; should Britain face heavy pressure in the Near East, the Mediterranean, as well as in Southeastern Asia, the existence of a common strategy might be worth another lend-lease act to America.

A similar initiative is necessary against Portugal, Spain and Vichy France—we can no longer afford to give Hitler time for a thrust across Gibraltar, or down the west coast of Africa. It is good to see that the *Normandie* and other French ships have been taken over by the navy, but it is well to remember that Hitler may be taking over the whole French fleet, with all that would mean against the British and ourselves in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. If we wait until Hitler takes over the Azores, the Cape Verde Islands, and Dakar, it will be harder by far to pry him out. But if we step in first, take over Martinique, French Guiana, the Azores, and the other islands along the west African coast, and take over Dakar as well—the impact within France, in South America, in Spain would be enormous. We would have stolen a march. We would have gained the initiative. And with the pressure of our Soviet ally on the continent, we would have brought Hitler's doom—and Japan's also, many months closer.