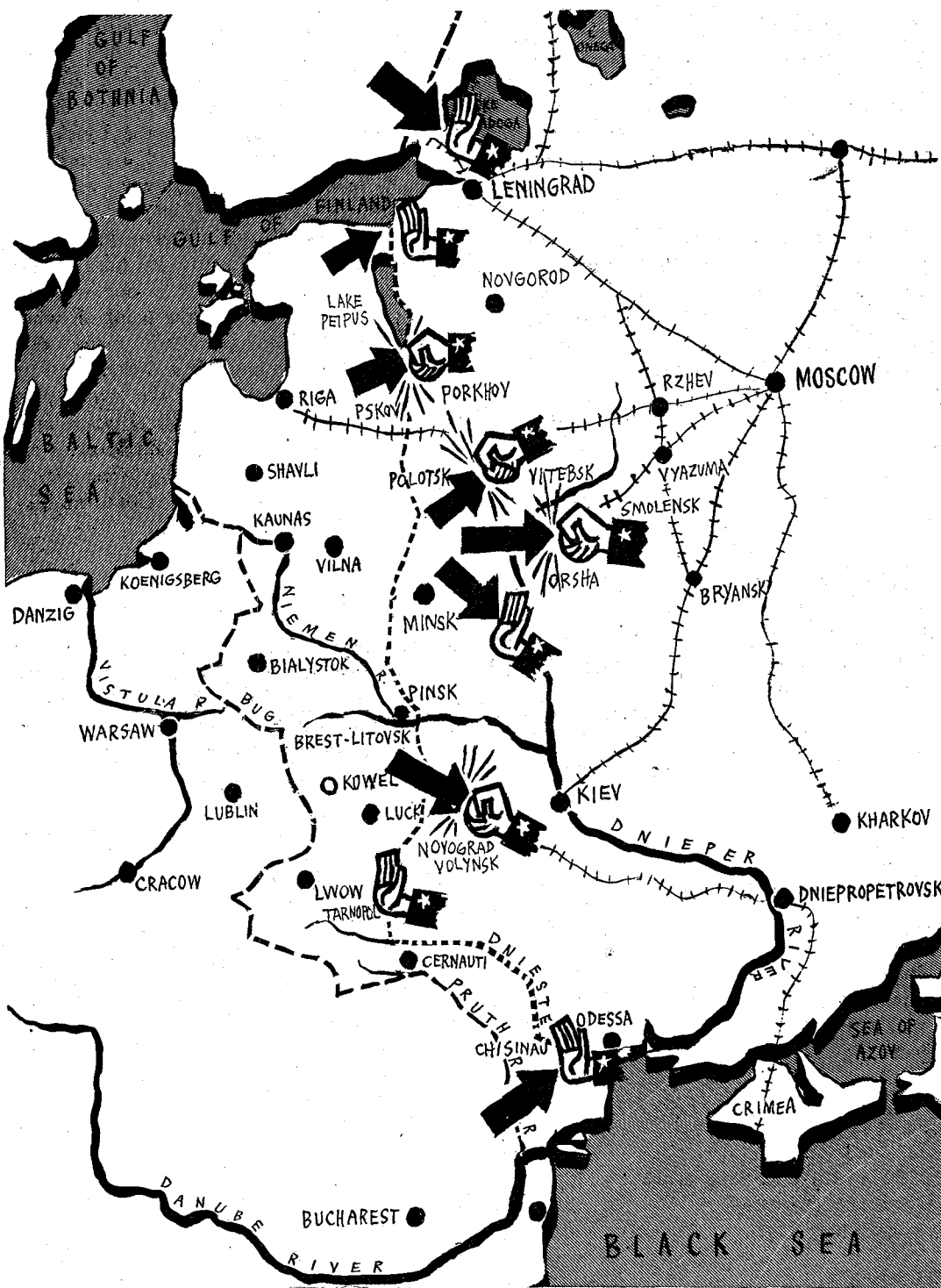


# THE BATTLE FOR THE CAPITALS

The Nazis, Colonel T. writes, suffered heavy losses in their only gains during the fourth week of the war—in the Smolensk area. Hitler loses a quarter of his effectives.



Here's the way things looked after a month of fighting on the eastern front. In the south, where Marshal Budenny is in command, the Soviet troops are holding from the Black Sea to the Galician Ukraine, as shown by the upraised hand of the Soviet soldier. Only at Kishenev (Chisinau) has a Nazi column broken through; at Kiev, where the Nazis claimed to be at the gates ten days ago, there's been hard fighting, as shown by the clenched fist. Up in the north, from Viipuri to the Lake Peipus sector, commanded by Marshal Voroshilov, the Nazis are also being held with hard fighting around the rail-town of Porkhov. In the central zone, commanded by Marshal Timoshenko, fierce fighting has waged around Polotsk and Smolensk as shown by the head-on collisions of the arrows and clenched fists. Late reports speak of the recapture of Smolensk by the Soviets. Not included in the map are the first bombardments of Leningrad and Moscow by the Nazis, and the sinking of some twenty-four fascist transports off the Estonian coast by Soviet naval squadrons.

THE fourth week of the war saw the beginning of what may go down in history as The Battle for the Capitals—Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev.

On the central, or Moscow direction, the Nazis have advanced into the Vitebsk-Smolensk-Orsha triangle, with their right flank abutting the Dnieper River and the left end of the base of the triangle sliding along the upper reaches of the Dvina River. They are being vigorously counter-attacked on both the northeastward and the southeastward faces of the salient.

In the northern, or Leningrad direction, the Nazis have been hammering for five days at the Pskov-Porkhov sector without appreciable success. Here and at the northern end of Lake Peipus they have but barely reached the fortified zone covering Leningrad.

On the southern wing of the line the Nazis seem to be still stalled before the Zhitomir-Berdichev line, while they are apparently making a determined effort along the shores of the Black Sea, in the direction of Odessa.

Roughly, the line connecting the Nazi spearheads links Kingissep, near the Gulf of Finland, with Smolensk, swings back west to Bobruisk, and then runs due south to a point somewhere between the estuaries of the Prut and the Dniester. It is a pretty straight line, offering no threat of pincers. West of this line are two large areas about which there is no exact information from either side. These areas are northwestern Estonia and Galicia, in which Red Army groups seem to remain deliberately in order to conduct guerrilla operations similar to those going on in the wilderness around Bialystok.

During the fourth week of the war the Nazis showed definite progress only in the Smolensk salient (an advance of about seventy-five miles). And in that week they suffered extremely heavy losses, not only in the course of many severe battles on all fronts (in which casualties are not easy to estimate) but, for instance, in two Baltic naval disasters—some twenty-four Nazi transports laden with troops and tanks have been sunk and ten others set afire by the Soviet Baltic Squadron. This accounts for the destruction of two divisions, of which one at least was a panzer division.

Some neutral military observers have made public the information that, following severe losses in their moto-mechanized units, the Germans have reorganized their panzer divisions to include one tank regiment instead of three (plus a regiment of motorized infantry and an artillery regiment). It's certain that in one month of Soviet resistance to sustained attacks, the Nazis have lost no less than twenty-five percent of their effectives on the eastern front (the estimates vary between

thirty and fifty divisions.) The loss of five panzer divisions out of the original twenty can be easily traced to the battles of Minsk (the loss of the Thirty-Ninth Tank Corps, General Schmidt commanding), Lepel, Rogachev, and the naval encounter in the Baltic. On certain sectors of the front—i. e., the Bobruisk-Moghilev sector—the Germans have, during the past week, employed infantry without mechanized support, which would tend to indicate that they might be running short of tanks.

One phrase in the Soviet communiques has become standard for some time: "Our Air Force operated against motorized and mechanized enemy troops and destroyed German aircraft on their airdromes." Now, an attack against an enemy's airdrome and the destruction of his planes on the ground is a sign of air supremacy, at least at a given spot. When this is repeated daily for about three weeks, it at least proves that the Soviet Air Force is pretty free in its movements. Which again shows how preposterously the Germans lied during the first week of the war in claiming to have destroyed that Air Force.

From London we hear that "The Germans are being increasingly harassed by Russian dive-bombers and fighters." The appearance of a new type of Soviet night fighter has also been heralded by the same sources. The news of the week all seems to point toward the development of a definite Soviet advantage in the air.

The question of German gasoline supply suddenly loomed this week when the Italian government forbade civilian use of gasoline.

This must be a direct result of the Soviet Air Force's steady bombardment of the Ploesti oil fields and the oil stores of Sulina and Constanta (including the sinking of an oil convoy in the delta of the Danube). The Germans promptly tried to cover up this distressing bit of news by claiming that the "Russians had bombed nothing but a dummy oil-town near Constanta." In view of the fact that the smoke from the fires was visible for almost forty miles at sea, it must have been a very realistic "dummy"! It should be remembered that supplying mechanized forces over long lines of communications is difficult: a gasoline truck will eat up its own load of gas between Warsaw and Smolensk.

As for railroads in the Nazi rear trained guerrillas take care of that. Obviously the retreating Red Army troops will not leave a single ton of gasoline behind—the destruction of gas is a quick, easy job. It must not be forgotten that an army powered with horses can move on grass (Russian army horses often subsisted on "thatched roofs" in 1914-18), but a moto-mechanized army must have gas and oil.

This is but one example of the difficulties that arise for the Germans in the sphere of military lines of communications. Such lines at present are about 400 miles long on the two main operative directions. The "panting" of the German army may not be noticeable at first glance, but there is no doubt that the Germans are getting winded.

Now the general Soviet plan of defense appears simple and clear: Complete the mobilization of a reserve army, not squandering

it piecemeal. Keep it intact, concentrated, and poised in the vicinity of the points where logistics (the science dealing with the movement of and supplying of troops) show that the length of the enemy lines will be a most decisive factor. Then—attack fast, hard, and *en masse*. For such a concentration of forces the area east of the Leningrad-Odessa line offers an excellent network of railroads with the trunk "rockade" line (parallel to the front) from Bologoye to Briansk and the great line running from Archangel on the White Sea to Sebastopol on the Black Sea. Furthermore there are five radial trunk lines running from Moscow northwest, west, and southwest, and a number of intermediate lines.

Almost a month of fighting has plainly shown that the Red Army fights hard, wisely, and prudently, and that it is one with the people it defends. This is the point on which the German General Staff made their real mistake. They know it and they are driving hard for the Kremlin in the vain hope of forcing the capitulation of a state whose army they could not beat. The push on Moscow and Leningrad is more political than strategic.

COLONEL T.

## Cables

(Continued from page 5)

of the Soviet citizen was shaking the hand of the freedom-loving, proud Englishman. London's courage was the first victory of human dignity over the barbarism of fascism. The huge splendid city was subjected to fearful bombardments. Historians will relate what those long winter nights were for London. Dwelling houses and museums went under. Vandals destroyed the wonderful British Parliament buildings. Populated districts went up in flames, but Britishers calmly answered "No."

Our coalition is the coalition of free, powerful peoples. Hitler has already learned what the Red Army is. Millions of fascist plunderers have been put out of action. And German admirals know what the British fleet is. The inhabitants of western Germany can tell Hitler of the daring of the British airmen.

And in the rear of our coalition is the might of the United States, its inexhaustible reserves, its huge plants, its battleships and bombers, its young, indomitable people. Hitler dreamed of "encircling" the Red Army. He has achieved one thing—the encirclement of Hitlerite Germany. Two fronts? No, dozens of fronts. Daredevil Frenchmen are already fighting under de Gaulle's command. These are only reconnaissance forces. But soon the entire French people, to the strains of the immortal *Marseillaise*, will hurl itself on the conquerors. And Norwegians, Czechs, Poles, Serbs: these enslaved people are waiting only for the first defeat of Hitler's army. That hour is near. The fraternal front of three great freedom-loving countries—this is the force that will crush Hitlerism, so hated by the entire world.

ILYA EHRENBURG.

## Forced Landing

○ HESS has come down like a bolt from the blue,  
And nobody sent him and nobody knew,  
By no one commissioned by no one enticed,  
(It takes one for landing but two for a tryst)  
He had only a map and a name and address,  
There was never a fluke like the coming of Hess.

So timely he crashed near to Dungavel Hall,  
Where no one expected his coming at all,  
His letters unanswered, unguessed his design,  
All the Scots that he knew were the words auld lang syne,  
But his landing occasioned old friends no distress—  
None were ever acquainted with vice-fuehrer Hess.

So costly his clothing, his manners so nice,  
He had plainly no truck with a regime of vice,  
News bulletins blushed to allude to his crimes,  
He was washed white as snow in the ink of the *Times*,  
His horror of bloodshed words could not express—

No ace was the equal of gentleman Hess.  
We are armed against Nazi assaults from the air,  
For peace-flights of Nazis we now must prepare,  
We know what we hear but none say what they know,  
And luckier envoys may still come and go,  
But even appeasers are bound to confess  
There was never a flop like the peace-flight of Hess.

—Sagittarius in the London "*New Statesman and Nation*."



# WATCH FRANCE

A veteran of France's 1940 describes his reaction to the Soviet-Nazi war. "At last Hitler has a war on three fronts." How the French people feel.

*Somewhere in unoccupied France (via Lisbon).*

**D**EAR FRIENDS: I just turned off the radio. It has come. I have heard just one sentence. "The German army has crossed the Soviet border." That's all. That's enough.

We knew it was bound to happen—we have known it for the past twenty years. Now it's here. When I heard the news, I was overcome by a feeling of my own uselessness—not to be there, not to be able to help, to strike. At once I realized my childishness. We all can help, and strike, right where we are. From now on, we all are mobilized "for the duration."

You too must be sitting at your radio set now, as I am, and so are millions of people all over the world. I think of our German and Italian comrades. How elated they must feel, and how conscious of their responsibility. I think of those who have no radios, no newspapers, and will learn the news by grapevine, from the chance remark of a guard. Thanks to Petain, we begin to understand how they feel, we who still are free cautiously to live and silently to hate.

At last Hitler has a war on three fronts. The third front are we, the French, Belgian, Dutch, Scandinavian, Czech, Hungarian, and Balkan peoples, the Italians and the Germans. From this all important front, there will be no communiqués, almost no news—for the time being. I'll do my best to keep you informed about my sector, the French one. Should I be silent for a while, don't let it disturb you. Who knew about the activities of the Bolsheviks a short time before the Revolution, when our late President of the Republic, the fascist Gaston Doumergue, came back from a mission in Russia and declared that all the Russians were solidly behind the czar?

It is too early to tell specifically what the French people will do. What I can try to describe are the promises and the achievements of the Petain government in its first year of dictatorship. Today I don't feel like writing a formal account of what is happening here. After all, these days we have an anniversary to think about, the anniversary of the betrayal of France.

A little over a year ago my unit, which had fought in the North, along the Belgian border, reached Paris. The city was already half evacuated. A steady stream of refugees was rolling southward. After a month of futile efforts to repulse the Stukas and the Nazi tanks with our 1914 rifles, we saw no basic difference between Paris and any other terrain we had to defend and eventually to flee. The bridges over the Seine were just bridges to be blown up, the trees along the avenues just trees to hide under in case of a sudden air raid.

Some shops were still open, but they had been emptied by the fleeing civilians. We



walked around in search of food: we were hungry.

As I was going down a deserted street, I met a worker in blue overalls. We had never seen each other before, but as a rule workers and soldiers do not need a formal introduction.

"Have you heard the news?" he asked.

He was excited and breathing heavily as if he had run for a long time.

"What news?" I asked.

He tried to catch his breath.

"Russia," he managed to say.

"What about Russia?"

"Russia is with us!"

"Russia fiddlesticks!" I answered. "Ask me something else."

He seemed hurt.

"We've just learned it," he said. "Don't you believe me? Just wait and see."

For a moment I fought against a sweeping feeling of animal joy. Nonsense, sheer nonsense, I reasoned with myself. Why should the Soviet Union defend the French fascists against the German fascists?

"Nothing doing," I said finally.

"But listen," he pleaded. "Our boss had a phone call from an officer friend who works at the Invalides, the seat of the Military Governor of Paris. He said it's official." He saw that I was shaken, and hastily added, "I'm an old man, and sick too, too old and sick for their army. But now—give me a machine gun, give me anything, I'll fight. You just watch the workers."

The report about Soviet entrance into the war was false. But the working people of France knew that the USSR was indeed with them. And now it is known even to the most doubtful.

A few weeks later, Marshal Petain became Chief of State. Still a soldier, I heard him outline his program over the radio.

"We shall create an organized France," he said, "where the discipline of the subordinates

will correspond to the authority of the chiefs, amidst equality for all. In every field we shall endeavor to form an elite and entrust them with leadership without taking into account anything but their capacities and their merits. Work is the supreme resource of our fatherland. It must be sacred. International capitalism and international socialism, which exploited and degraded it, both belong to the pre-war period. In our misled society, money, too often the servant and the tool of falsehood, was a means of domination. In a reconstructed France, money will be the reward of effort."

I have just found an old copy of a provincial daily which carried this speech, and remembered the farm on which a few of my comrades and I first heard it. It was at night, we were alone with the old farmer and his wife. The farmer seemed to respect Petain. "He's an old man," he said, "and a soldier. He must know and he won't lie." We, the soldiers, were skeptical: we had seen too many of our officers desert us and run away. "There's no use arguing," said the old woman, "in a year or so, we'll see."

She was right. Today we see.

"We shall create an organized France," Petain told us. Never was France plunged into such a state of anarchy as she is today. Only if organization means bureaucracy, is France organized. Despite the scarcity of paper, heaps, tons, waterfalls of circulars, orders, counter-orders, explanatory notes, inquiries, instructions, rectified instructions, re-rectified instructions, daily pour from the Vichy hotels turned into ministries. No one knows what they mean because no one cares.

Petain promised "equality for all." Well, if you are rich you can buy whatever delicacy you like and even never notice that there is such a thing as restrictions. But if you are poor, be content with half a pound of meat a week, with a pound of sugar a month. If your aristocratic ancestors fought, back in 1792, in the ranks of the Prussians and the Austrians against the armies of the Republic, and if you happen to be a Gentile, you may learn and teach, and work in whatever field you want to. But if your family which helped to build France for ten generations is Jewish, you may as well stand on the next street corner and beg. However, it is still better to be a rich Jew than a poor Christian. "Equality for all!"

"In every field, we shall endeavor to form an elite," the Marshal boasted. You know, of course, that Professors Jean Perrin, the Nobel Prize winner, Paul Langevin, and dozens of others were dismissed. Romain Rolland's *Jean Christophe* is banned by the censor. Georges Duhamel's last novel is not going to be printed. In schools they teach sports