

# "OPEN IT NOW!"

"EVERY day on waking," said the school director, "the first question I ask is whether a second front has started. When I learn there is no second front, my heart sinks."

So Maurice Hindus reports a conversation with a school director on some far-off collective farm near Kuibyshev. And the school director quietly added: "We are all like that."

YES, we are all of us like that, millions of people throughout the world whose hearts sink as one day after another passes, with no action in western Europe. Never, not even in the days of the Munich crisis, not even in the hours immediately after June 22, has there been such a universal tension. The delay on the second front creates not only the supreme military and political crisis of the whole era in which we live, but an emotional and psychological strain that is insufferable.

Citizens in Moscow have been stopping American reporters on the streets to ask: *Kogda zhe budet vtoroy?* When will the second front be opened? In Britain another Cabinet upheaval looms, the chorus of newspaper demand reaches a new crescendo. Premier Benes of the Czechoslovak government-in-exile expresses the hope, after reviewing a legion of Czech soldiers, that he may see them next in France. Millions of soldiers in the V-countries, says Colonel Britton over the radio, are awaiting the second front signal. And in our own country one powerful newspaper after another has recognized the urgency of immediate action. "It is absolutely imperative," says the *New York Herald Tribune*—no irresponsible paper—"that our people, our commanders, our heads of government appreciate the extreme gravity of the situation." A group of readers sends us a telegram calling for more energetic editorials. A friend calls up in panic to say that "It looks as though we are being taken for a ride." A Chinese newspaper, the leading conservative paper in Chungking, remarks that "There is plenty of noise on the staircase, but nobody comes down." People feel guilty to be going on vacations. A writer who fought in Spain comes into the office and says, "Give me a machine gun, and I'll open a second front by myself. . . ."

This is a war, said Earl Browder recently, in which "morals and morale play an evermore decisive part." Instinctively the democratic world realizes that everything hangs on immediate, decisive action. Not only the war, not only the fate of our country as well as Russia, not only the future of the United Nations, but the fate of everything our generation has been fighting for these last twenty-five years hangs in the balance.

SUPPOSE it had been the other way round. Suppose somehow that our own country had been invaded, from Canada in the north, perhaps after fifth column upheavals in Latin America. Suppose Hitler had only moved a little way into Russia, and then turned the weight of his juggernaut against us, smashing through the British Isles, cutting our communications with Iceland, sending his wolf-pack of submarines into the Caribbean, manipulating his puppets in Brazil, his candidates for the Vichy squad as in Argentina; suppose his armies were now battling their way down the Mississippi, having desolated the blue-grass of Kentucky, the green hills and neat farms of Vermont, shattering the industrial cities of the Ohio valley; suppose our capital were surrounded, outflanked on the Chesapeake Bay, two-and-a-half million of our brothers and fathers dead and dying, and Japan, facing us on the Pacific, with its fleets, and submarines and planes. . . .

Our newspapers would be appealing to Russia to realize how fatal was this moment, not only for our own sake but for Russia's. Would it not be clear to our Soviet allies that delay, delay, delay would only create a situation in which the Axis would gain the inexhaustible resources of the Americas, only to turn in full force against the Ukraine and the Caucasus? Wouldn't a voice be heard here and there, insinuating that the Soviets were only trying to have the capitalist powers exhaust themselves so that the Bolshevik colossus could pick up the pieces? Would it not be clear that to risk a week's delay might risk the whole future of the world, for with America conquered, how long could Russia survive?

It did not happen that way. But the issue is the same. America's future and the future of the whole world is being decided on the lush banks of the winding Don river. If today our territorial waters are unsafe for our own shipping—twenty-five more ships sunk in a week—then tomorrow, unless the second front is hastened, we shall face the full force of German submarines and planes literally sinking our ships as they come off the ways. If today another island off Alaska has been captured, then is it not clear that tomorrow—unless the second front becomes real—the Axis will have gained the positions from which to squeeze us and our allies out of the oceans, and back to our shores, back to the wall?

Unthinkable yes, but no more unthinkable than this incredible delay on the second front. Unthinkable that the Axis should regain the political as well as the military initiative, but it is only unthinkable if Britons and Americans will stand up in the next few weeks and act on that homely and American truth: unless we hang together, we shall all hang separately.

# — THE WORLD DEMANDS

IT is not enough any longer to compliment the Soviet Union on its bravery, on the self-sacrifice of its millions of young men, whose life's blood has been drained in this bitter year of single-handed battle. That applause was fine last November; it was fine on the June 22 anniversary. Not enough any longer to calculate with map and ruler how much more territory the Russians can still afford, the favorite solace of some newspapers. Such confidence in Russia's vast spaces, in the resources of the Urals, was fine—last September. Not enough any longer to honor the valiant fight of a brave people, to thank them for the time they gave us—*unless we use the time that is now at hand for the decisive thrust at the throat of the ugly enemy.*

THE issue is not, as some newspapers say, for the military men to decide. Of course, the orders must be carried out only by those who are technically competent. But military men are notoriously cautious, especially in the face of such problems. Yes, and they were cautious too about the invincibility of the Nazi armies until the Soviet soldiers showed them otherwise. It is understandable also that men with a stake in empires would be hesitant, should want to ride out the storm, hold on as long as possible. But the issue is bigger than that—it involves the very meaning of democracy. It is a crisis in democracy itself.

For what is the use of silver-dollar language about democracy when what faces us is to implement the democratic will of the overwhelming majority of the American and British peoples?

Do the majority of Englishmen favor a second front: yes, they who will really take the risks, they whose flesh and blood is at stake have repeatedly demanded the opening of a front. Then under what interpretation of democracy does a handful of Tories in the 1922 Committee hold back an entire people from action?

Are Americans everywhere in favor of a second front? Yes, by the most pragmatic of American tests, by the figures of the Gallup poll last week, forty-eight percent believe that a front must be opened now. Then by what interpretation of democracy can a second front still be debated, still be talked about as a luxury, still be argued in the face of the will of the nation?

Democracy is not a word in a dictionary. In times of war above all, democracy is the living action of the millions. It is the instinctive good sense, the instinctive moral conviction, it is the readiness of the masses to act on a course which they have arrived at through hard experience. Have we learned that defense does not pay? Yes,

we learned it the hard way. Have we learned that the enemy will defeat us one by one? Yes, we learned that the hard way. Would it be nice to wait until a year from now, two years from now? *Yes, it would be nice, but it wouldn't be war.* Shall we adhere to the neat, easy-going calendar, already outmoded, and be defeated, or shall we face up to the ruthless timetable our enemies have imposed upon us—in this there is no freedom of choice, there is only the freedom of recognizing the war's brutal necessity. And whereas failure to open up the second front leads to demoralization and defeat, opening a front leads to the vast release of the peoples creative energies. If the essentials of leadership are provided, said the *Herald Tribune* last week then "there is no demand which that leadership can make which the people will not be ready to fulfill whatever the risks or losses."

NEW MASSES believes that at such a grave and critical hour both panic and complacency are out of order. We do not judge our course by the headlines nor are we impressed by the line which a few correspondents are getting from questionable sources in London. Last week they said there would be no second front; this week the matter is evidently being "reconsidered." But we do say that the time for gentle words, sweet-reasoned argument, and discussion is over. The case for the second front was closed with the President's and Mr. Churchill's communique after Molotov's visit. But it has been made amply clear that the voice of the millions who are convinced and ready for action—the democratic voice of the people—has got to make itself heard, for only this voice can end the hesitations, and dispel the confusions in the nation at large. Our Commander-in-Chief made a pledge—not to the Soviet Union—but to the American people. It is unthinkable that this pledge was made with anything but the most serious intentions. But to end the delay, the pledge must be echoed and re-echoed by the people themselves.

The great CIO rally in New York on July 22 showed the way. It was proof that national unity can be strengthened, where labor takes the leadership in articulating what is on the minds of millions. It is proof that all national forces are available, once labor takes the initiative, to realize the indispensable policies of this crucial hour.

AUGUST is already at hand. It is late. But not too late to raise our voices, to isolate the defeatists in all their forms, to discharge the supreme responsibility which is America's for the sake of all peoples, the American people above all.

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## HOW STRONG IS HITLER TODAY?

*An estimate of the men and materiel now engaged on the Eastern Front. If Hitler achieves his objectives in this campaign, he can throw 200 divisions against Britain.*

AS THE popular clamor for the immediate opening of a second front in Europe reaches gale proportions in England and continues to rise in the United States, it is important to try and appraise the *moment militaire*, to understand why it is time to strike now. And by "now" I do not necessarily mean tomorrow morning or even next week; by "now" I mean *before the Red Army has been forced to commit its strategic reserve to the battle of the Don-Volga*.

At this writing (July 19) the big German offensive has been going on for four weeks. To get a certain picture of the German effort and the results attained, we should compare the progress of German armies in the first four weeks of the first year of the war and the first four weeks of the second year.

This was the situation in 1941:

By the end of the fourth week of the war the German armies had reached the vicinity of Dorogobuzh on the central front—a march of 450 miles. On the Leningrad front they were at Kingissep, Porkhov, and Nevel—a march of 350 miles on the average. Along the operational direction Lvov-Kiev-Kharkov, they had reached Zhitomir—a march of 300 miles counting from the San and 200 miles counting from the Bug.

After four weeks of sustained offensive this year the Germans, instead of advancing on three major fronts, as shown above, are advancing only in one sector, i.e., instead of attacking on a front of roughly 1,200 miles they are now attacking on a front of some 250 miles (this will probably be 300 miles by the time this reaches the reader because it is to be expected that the Germans will attack around Taganrog before long). Thus we see that the scope of the effort has been reduced "in width" approximately four or five times.

But what about the results of the thrust "in depth"—what about the penetration?

The greatest penetration—and this only along the line Kupyansk-Boguchar—is a little less than 150 miles. Along the line Kursk-Voronezh it is 100 miles. On the line Lisichansk-Millerovo it is about 130 miles, and along the northern fringe of the Donbas (Kramatorskaya-Voroshilovgrad) it is barely 100 miles. Every indication points to the fact that Stalino was never liberated from the Germans during the winter offensive, and Rostov is only 100 miles west of the railroad Rostov-Voronezh.

In other words, four weeks of all-out

offensive have produced on the average a penetration three times less in depth and on a front four times less wide than last year. *This means that in square mileage of territory gained, the result of the German offensive is twelve times less effective* (about 20,000 square miles against some 240,000 square miles gained between June 22 and July 22 of last year). So much for mileage and average speeds which can be calculated from the above data by anybody familiar with simple division. Suffice it to say that *the rate of progress of the German Army is about three times less than last year at this time, on the average*.

BUT space and territory are not a complete yardstick of military success or failure.

It has been announced that between May 15 and July 15, i.e., between the start of the Kerch battle and the capture of Millerovo, the Germans had lost nearly 1,000,000 men. During the first eight weeks of the war last year, according to the same Soviet sources, they had lost about 2,000,000 men. Double the amount of men on a front four times longer. In other words *the rate of German losses per mile of front is double that of last year, at the same time*.

At the same time the Red Army has lost twice less men in killed, wounded, and missing during the two-month period this year as compared with the two-month period of last year. The rate for both sides is the same.

The Germans, on the other hand, have lost twice less tanks this year, less than twice less planes, and five times less guns. The Red Army has lost six times less tanks, three times less planes, and about four times less guns than during the equivalent period last year. As a whole, the German "edge" on the Red Army has been reduced by about 500,000 men, 2,000 tanks, and 1,500 planes. The losses in artillery guns were about equal.

What does the reduction of German numerical superiority in manpower by 500,000 men mean? What are the human reserves available to both sides?

The Veteran Commander in the *Daily Worker* has pointed out that the human pool available for mobilization by the Germans is about 24,000,000 men, including Germans mobilized at the rate of twenty percent of the population and replaced by 8,000,000 from forced labor from the conquered countries, plus satellite troops, mobilized at the rate of ten percent in the countries military al-

lied to Germany. Of this pool some 8,000,000 have been killed, captured (comparatively few captured), and *permanently* incapacitated (about 2,500,000 having probably been returned to the ranks after being wounded). This leaves to the Axis a total manpower reserve of about 16,000,000.

After deduction of about 4,000,000 permanent casualties, including the last figures on losses, the Soviet High Command probably disposes of about 10,000,000 (or a little less) for operations on the Eastern Front.

One cannot estimate the number of divisions in actual combat today, but it is plausible to suppose that the Germans, using about 100 divisions south of Kursk, must have about 300 divisions in action against probably 200 Soviet divisions engaged. This is calculated on the basis of a German 3:2 numerical superiority.

Both sides, probably, have one quarter of their total divisions in strategic reserve, i.e., the Germans about 100 such divisions, while the Soviet High Command has about seventy divisions tucked away for future use. It would seem from the violence of von Bock's onslaught that he has wangled some of those reserves from Hitler or Brauchitsch, or whoever runs the Nazi *Wehr*-show at present.

MAJOR ELIOT in the *Herald Tribune* (July 18) estimated the number of divisions available to both sides: the Germans, he said, have from 270 to 290 divisions available for the Russian campaign, of which about 100 divisions are kept back as a striking force, or strategic reserve; the Red Army has somewhere in the neighborhood of 250 divisions "stronger in manpower, but inferior in equipment," of which some seventy divisions are being kept in strategic reserve. I disagree somewhat with the major in his absolute and relative figures and have shown why. I further disagree with him in his evaluation of Soviet divisions. These are normally of 18,000 men as compared with the German division of 15,000; in this respect they are "stronger in manpower," but the major's inference that the Russians have more men than the Nazis is incorrect. Furthermore the Soviet High Command will hardly send into battle a division which is equipped less well than the enemy. No doubt they have less tanks, planes, etc. (*not* guns, though) than the Germans: because of that, they have less divisions (just as I said), but what they have and use

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