



# THE DRIVE IN AFRICA

*How the British people feel about it. The acid test is still Europe. . . . Revolt in France? Estimates of the underground's strength in the coming showdown.*

London (by wireless).

THE situation in public feeling has been transformed by the news of the offensive in Africa. Here at least is definite proof of the beginning of that "offensive phase," about which Prime Minister Smuts spoke last week. Whatever may happen and whatever may be the profound differences of opinion regarding the larger strategy represented by this development, the public certainly is more definitely from Missouri this time than it was in June, when the communique on the second front was issued. It will have to be shown. It is true that the public is suspicious of offensives anywhere as a substitute for action on the continent of Europe. The public has a straightforward, shrewd, and instinctive understanding that Europe is the decisive factor.

That is not to say that the British people are not enthusiastic and deeply aroused by the news of the African attack. But it would be foolish to underestimate the effect upon public opinion of the long months of delay while the Germans were allowed to concentrate their forces at Stalingrad. It would be foolish to underestimate the effect upon public confidence of the legalistic evasions practiced by the British government in the case of Rudolf Hess. The British people are not only deeply affected by these facts, just as they are affected by the unsavory episode of the Bank for International Settlements, but they have necessarily acquired a pretty sharp skepticism with regard to all statements made by the authorities.

Therefore, while the news that an offensive has started at last has enormously lifted spirits here and has tended to decrease the feeling of shame and frustration, the acid test in the mind of very large numbers of men and women in the factories will be the pace of the offensive, and what it eventually becomes. The test will be whether the Anglo-American strategists have appreciated the fact that since Germany now controls a manpower greater than Russia's, the Allies are able quickly to divert and to split in two the main forces of the German army before Hitler has time to organize the manpower which is theoretically at his disposal.

The interest of the British public in Europe as the decisive front is enormously increased by the news from France. When the thing we have all talked so long and so much about—an earthquake upheaval in western Europe—begins to happen under our very eyes, we have difficulty in realizing that a

"leap" in history is perhaps about to be made. There has been some natural misunderstanding regarding the policy of de Gaulle and the Fighting French about the situation in France. The Fighting French Committee has not called for a general revolt. General de Gaulle's last speech has to be read more exactly, whence it can be seen that he is calling for maximum resistance in response to the measures of the German and Vichy governments, but not for general insurrection.

ACCORDING to competent French Fighting circles in London, their position is that if the German government actually insists on driving matters to a showdown, then what is referred to here as "the underground" will respond with revolt in the full sense of the word. It is not pretended that this is an ideal situation. It is frankly realized that in these circumstances the ideal situations are not very apt to occur. The harsh facts, the swiftly changing forces, are what have to be dealt with. Therefore, the problem of the underground is the problem of how both to meet and to defeat the successive aggressions of Hitler and the successive betrayals of Vichy. This means at the same time not throwing away any cards and above all not failing to exercise the utmost vigilance in coordinating the effort of the underground with the effort of the Allied forces from overseas.

The factors, however, which Hitler's desperate manpower shortage have now introduced into the situation have produced a certain change in the whole position. Hitherto it has always been the Anglo-American assumption that as and when Britain and America were ready to cross into France, the underground would be ready to organize the uprising. Now a somewhat different situation occurs. Now the underground is faced with threats by Hitler and Laval which must compel resistance on an enormous scale. Obviously it is impossible for anyone to regulate as though it were a matter of bookkeeping the way in which resistance of that kind once organized and developed will extend or direct itself. Obviously, therefore, a situation exists wherein it is no longer entirely a question of the underground waiting for the Anglo-American attack. It is a situation in which the obligation of the Anglo-American forces to cross the water to assist their hard-pressed allies in France has to be seen in a new and more urgent aspect than ever.

Fighting French circles in London are

positive they are not acting on a basis of wishful thinking when they declare that an entirely new stage has been reached in their country. Equally, of course, they are not making any prophecies about details or about the immediate course of events. Nevertheless, they see in all the information reaching them powerful invitations. They also see the degree to which the underground has developed itself, the degree of unity existing in the underground among members of all anti-Nazi parties. And they also give as a definite statement of fact their estimate that so far as Vichy and the unoccupied zone are concerned, there is no question that the underground is enormously stronger than the Vichy authorities.

NATURALLY nobody suggests that to defeat Vichy is the same thing as to defeat the Germans. Obviously the German power might still and probably would still—in the absence of action by the British and Americans—be capable of dealing with a revolt in unoccupied zones. It is, however, of the greatest significance that it should now be possible, as it certainly was not possible six or nine months ago, to calculate quite soberly the preponderance of the underground forces over the forces of Vichy. Equally significant are some of the almost pathetic hints being let out through the Axis-controlled radio regarding the possible reaction of Vichy to the situation now developing. I think it was the Berne radio which suggested that if the situation became totally impossible by the beginning of November there existed the possibility that the Vichy government might make a dignified retirement to North Africa. It hardly need be emphasized that hints of this kind are directed especially to Washington. For the suggestion obviously is that if the workers of unoccupied France made matters impossible for Vichy, whereupon German troops of the army of Gestapo men would take over, then Vichy would still seek to maintain links with the United Nations by once again adopting an apparently equivocal position. And after all, by adopting an equivocal position, Laval and his predecessors have already secured for themselves a long period of highly valuable collaboration with the United States.

All these calculations and speculations are, of course, at this moment, dominated by the launching of the attack in Africa and by the determination of the people that this attack must be made to be something within the framework of a larger offensive strategy.



## IS TIME AN ALLY?

*Stern statistics and the breathing spell Hitler needs to convert them into war materiel. . . . Second front currents in Washington. Admiral Land comforts the appeasers.*

Washington.

**I**T IS imperative to realize that time is *not* on the side of the United Nations. The first three years of war enormously improved the Axis position both in manpower and materials. The chart which appears below tells most of the story almost at a glance. One element alone is lacking: the time element. A good part of what the Axis gained remains only a potential; lands and mines, factories and power plants must be repaired and worked before the enemy can benefit from his conquests. The chart, based on figures compiled by E. W. Pehrson, chief of economics and statistics, US Bureau of Mines, shows Axis increases in materials and manpower—if the Axis is allowed to realize them. True, the figures are only comparative, based on 1940 production levels. Since then, the United Nations have intensified their production methods so that in many instances the ratios have improved for the Allies. But then, the Axis has also upped its rate of production. The

statistics do not take into account Axis advances since April of this year; fortunately these gains were not too considerable, though the Nazis did win another two or three percent of the world's petroleum, thereby improving supplies of their most critical war deficiency.

Clearly, the Axis has done well in three years—alarmingly well. Crucial war shortages have been satisfactorily overcome. Wollman Bostrom, Swedish minister to the United States, recently told newspaper reporters: "The export [from Sweden to Germany] of iron ore is less now than before the war. . . . Germany is able to cover its requirements of iron ore more conveniently from Axis-controlled sources." The Axis war machine is daily becoming better able to renew itself. For their part, the United Nations have suffered grievously when it comes to supplies of rubber, tin, tungsten, and antimony.

The Axis, of course, needs time to cash in on the loot, especially in eastern Europe and China where the Soviet and Chinese peoples have followed a scorched earth policy. Wrecked mines are useless until pumped out and equipped with machinery. Rich agricultural lands once scorched will not yield until the following season. However, allow the fascists the chance to plant new crops, and the chance to work mines and oil wells, and the Axis war potential is dangerously expanded.

A United Nations' offensive in the West, a land front in Europe striking at the heart of the Axis, can prevent the enemy from enjoying this needed leisure. While the scorched earth policy does not keep land out of production forever or render mines and factories useless indefinitely, it does prevent immediate strengthening of the enemy's war capacity. "Thousands of enterprises and factories, canneries, flour mills and so forth—all that must be put into operation," said Hitler in his latest speech. "All of it is destroyed," he complained. And then he expressed the Nazi hope: "While we are on the defensive

### AXIS RESOURCES BEFORE 1939 AND AT THE PRESENT TIME

(In percentages of world total)

BEFORE THE WAR	NOW	BEFORE THE WAR	NOW
3% Land area .....	13%	6% Tungsten .....	60%
10% Population .....	35%	11% Copper (refining capacity) .....	17%
5% Mineral resources (total) .....	33%	10% Zinc (refining capacity) .....	44%
6% Iron ore .....	46%	1% Nickel .....	5%
20% Steel production capacity .....	34%	53% Mercury .....	68%
1% Petroleum .....	7%	2% Antimony .....	32%
27% Coal .....	53%	33% Aluminum .....	54%
5% Copper (mine production) .....	10%	12% Bauxite .....	50%
7% Lead .....	22%	0 Rubber .....	90%
16% Zinc (mine production) .....	27%	0 Cotton .....	13%
1% Tin .....	73%	10% Wheat .....	40%
2% Manganese .....	30%	14% Sugar .....	36%
3% Chrome .....	30%		

Figures based on statistics of US Bureau of Mines and on production figures for 1940.