

(Continued from page 5)

tests of theirs regarding political prisoners. Today their efforts, and those of all Americans, should be redoubled to give strength to the democratic forces bearing the brunt of the burden in Argentina.

### Justice Scores a Point

IT is exceedingly good news that an order staying the execution of the sentence against Morris U. Schappes has been signed by Associate Judge Loughran of

the New York Court of Appeals. It will be even better news when the US Supreme Court agrees to review Schappes' conviction for "perjury." The application for such review, as Judge Loughran notes, "raises questions of law affecting the rights of the defendant under the Constitution of the United States." These questions relate to the withholding of prior contradictory sworn testimony which raises doubts as the credibility of William M. Canning, chief witness against Schappes. The Rapp-Coudert committee refused to submit to

the court the record of prior hearings at which Canning had given this contradictory testimony.

IN arguing before the Court of Appeals for a reversal of the conviction, Henry Epstein, former Solicitor General of New York, described the original trial as "a travesty on justice" and the record of the proceedings as a "judicial lynching." We trust that the Supreme Court will agree not only to review but to reverse the conviction of the lower court.



## THE WEEK IN LONDON by CLAUDE COCKBURN

# ENGLAND LOOKS AT QUEBEC

London (by wireless).

THE public movement in Britain reported in my last dispatch developed on a somewhat sensational scale in the course of the week. More resolutions and telegrams than ever before come in from the factories pledging support of the government for the immediate opening of a second front adequate to withdraw at least sixty German divisions. Among the most recent telegrams was that sent from one of the most important Metro-Vickers factories to Churchill in Canada, asking for the immediate launching of a European offensive and expressing enthusiasm over the possible results of the Churchill trip and the Sicilian campaign.

Simultaneously workers at the great Handleypage Aircraft factory called on the government to "Make full use of this situation for an immediate mass invasion in Europe." This resolution was accompanied by a pledge of utmost support from all the Handleypage workers. The latest list of resolutions includes the shop stewards of the English Steel Corp., Blackburn Aircraft factory, and the Sheffield District Committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union. These are only a small number of the total of similar expressions of opinion.

In fact, since last week we have witnessed an extraordinary awakening of British opinion to the realities of the situation and a corresponding slump in the wishful thinking which swept the country immediately following the fall of Mussolini. It is a fact that the Duce's fall was widely though mistakenly viewed as the collapse of a Humpty-Dumpty following a brief and costly jolt in Sicily. Only now, when the character of the succeeding regime in Italy is seen more clearly, the public is in a better position to appreciate the fact that Mussolini's tumble was due primarily to the failure of the German Eastern Front offensive.

While there has been some natural disquiet here aroused by the storm of rumors regarding Soviet non-participation in the Roosevelt-Churchill talks, most people are considerably less interested in that than in the question of the concrete decisions to be taken by the Western Allied chiefs. It is sensibly pointed out that Stalin has already made perfectly clear his view of the necessity for a Western offensive to withdraw sixty divisions. It is, in fact, more than a year since America and Britain publicly and officially recognized the urgency of establishing a second front. And it is argued here that if President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill are going to adjust Casablanca strategy to the new situation, it is unnecessary for Stalin to participate in the conference—it is only essential that there be subsequent military coordination. If, on the other hand, they are not proposing to adjust strategy in this sense, then it is clearly worse than useless for Stalin to sit in on such a conference.

IT is also noted that Axis propagandists and dupes in neutral and Allied countries are particularly active in efforts to suggest that Stalin's absence is a sign of a rift in the United Nations. The feeling here is that this type of propaganda is only wishful thinking. However, there is increasing anxiety for improvement in the general relations between the Western allies and the Soviet Union. And it is pointed out that those who seem to gravely underestimate the urgency of such improvement have been having something of a field day.

The latest example is a mysterious mix-up regarding Benes' proposed visit to Moscow, which, according to *Pravda*, has been postponed because certain British circles are unwilling for Benes to go to Moscow to sign a mutual assistance treaty between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union.

Those people here in a position to understand the enormous value such a treaty could have as a cornerstone in the constructive settlement of East European postwar problems are frankly dismayed at the news. The encouraging feature of this disagreeable affair is that there has been a really astonishing demonstration of unity on the question of Czechoslovak-USSR relations by all Czech and Slovakian political opinion in London. Persons ranging from the Communists to the Slovak agrarians have expressed unanimity on the necessity for the earliest possible signing of the treaty.

This fact has bearing beyond the immediate issue; it is considered an enormously encouraging sign by many people in touch with the opinion of the exiled governments and the many resistance movements in Europe. This is especially so because of the mutual agreement of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia as to the right of the peoples in the Nazi-occupied nations to determine their own system of government after liberation. For that agreement offsets doubts and suspicions regarding certain other aspects of United Nations policy, doubts fostered partly by recollections of North African events and partly by the uncertainties of organizations like Amgot.

It must be emphasized that while questions concerning the character of Amgot and the general policy of the Anglo-Americans in Italy occupy considerable space in the British press, the general trend of opinion that evolved very rapidly this past week is toward regarding these questions as entirely subordinate to the real, dominant question. And that question is: how far, on a military plane, the British and Americans are able and willing to undertake those drastic reshaping of policy which are increasingly essential if apparent advantages are to be exploited to a point where victory is achievable this year.



## FRONT LINES

by COLONEL T.

# FROM SICILY TO POLTAVA

**M**ORE than a month ago I wrote an article for these pages which was entitled "Sicily to Orel." Only the latter part of the title has to be changed today—"Sicily to Bryansk and Poltava." That  $(n + 1)$ 'st front is still in Sicily, while the strategic situation on the Eastern Front has been completely reversed. In order to understand *how* completely, just get your copy of *NEW MASSES* for July 20 and look at the map which accompanied my article. Now, if you could cut out the big fat arrows, turn them around 180 degrees (i.e. make them about-face), and push them somewhat toward the rear of the enemy, you would have a picture of the situation today.

The fact that these arrows have been reversed is a graphic illustration of the phenomenon which has taken place on the Eastern Front. In its essence, the phenomenon boils down to this: the German Army cannot advance any more even in the summer, while the Red Army can advance in both winter and summer. Thus an entirely new balance of forces has emerged from under the hammerblows of war.

The following table gives a clear picture of what has happened in these two years:

	German penetration (Miles)	Front of offensive (Miles)	Duration of offensive
Summer, 1941	600-700	1,000	5 months
Summer, 1942	300-400	500	4½ months
Summer, 1943	18	50	7 days

There is the essence of the whole story of the armed contest between two diametrically opposite social systems.

German armor, with the new Tiger tanks and Ferdinand self-propelled guns, has done no better than penetrate the forward zone of the Soviet defenses at Belgorod and Maloarchangelsk to a depth of less than twenty miles, and has been able to keep up the effort for exactly seven days.

The Luftwaffe has lost the initiative on the Eastern Front and is now busy fighting off the Soviet Air Force instead of attacking the Soviet troop concentrations and communication centers. Right now it is strategically passive and tactically on the defensive while the Soviet Air Force, which is using a number of new type planes, is tactically *and* strategically on the offensive.

In this connection it is worthwhile pointing out to those who express disappointment at the comparative absence of long-range Soviet air raids against German objectives, that the Red Air Force has a great battle on its hands and naturally must concentrate on the enemy operational rear

(say between the front and the line of the Dvina and Dneiper) instead of going out to bomb Ploesti, Silesia, and East Prussia. The Soviet Air Command obviously figures that 240 enemy divisions packed in a zone 1,000 miles long and 200 miles wide are more important than the objectives that feed those divisions. In other words they consider that breaking the enemy's "gun-hand" is more important than slowly ruining his "stomach."

**T**HE German infantry and artillery have never been able to develop the teamwork which their Soviet counterparts have achieved. One example will illustrate the latter. Just before an attack on a German stronghold the Soviet artillery lays down a short, powerful barrage which drives the German defenders into their dugouts. While the barrage is still on, the Soviet infantry advances to the forward zone of the German defenses. Up to here everything has been happening according to standard rules. However, at this point things become "original." Instead of laying low and waiting for the barrage to be lifted and moved back to the enemy tactical rear (which would give the enemy at least several minutes to re-man his guns and machine guns) the *Soviet infantry moves right into the barrage, between shellbursts* so that when it is lifted, the German gunners rushing to their stations are confronted with the cold steel of Russian bayonets. Of course, the Soviet infantry suffers losses from its own barrage; however, it has been calculated that such losses are always much lighter than would occur if the enemy could man his guns.

Such tactics are possible only when the following conditions have been fulfilled: (1) the training of the troops in split-second maneuver; (2) both arms—infantry and artillery—have been virtually *brought up together*, like brothers, and (3) the infantry troops are of the highest caliber in training, morale, and discipline. Marching into your own barrage without flinching is probably one of the greatest military feats. Mass performance of such a feat is something almost unique in military tactics.

Taking the Soviet artillery alone, we must recognize that it is far superior to its German counterpart, both qualitatively and quantitatively. For instance, it has just been reported that on the Bryansk Front the Soviet High Command concentrated fire-power at the rate of 3,000 gun-barrels per kilometer. (I use the ex-

pression "gun-barrels" because it seems that the barrels of multiple guns are being counted singly; so that a six-barrel mortar would count as six "barrels.") This is several times more than was seen on the Western Front during the first world war, including Verdun and the Allied offensive in the summer of 1918.

Such artillery and infantry-artillery tactics were responsible, among other things, for the comparatively rapid reduction of the Orel defense complex which the Germans had been building for almost two years and were defending with at least a score of the best divisions.

So far it is known that the Germans, in their offensive-defensive fighting between July 5 and August 5, lost 120,000 officers and men killed and more than 12,000 captured; over 5,000 tanks destroyed and captured; 1,700 guns destroyed and captured; and 2,500 planes brought down. Now, these losses, together with the wounded Germans—calculated at the rate of 2:1 to those killed—represent the elimination of about 400,000 men, or more than half the number Moscow has been asking the Allies to draw off from the Eastern Front. Just imagine what would be happening *in Germany* today if that 750,000 German troops were missing today from the front between Leningrad and Novorossisk. There is little doubt that Allied armies would be battling within the bastions of the inner Fortress Europa.

**I**N SICILY the Allies have all but closed a ring around the Mt. Etna *massif* and to all practical intents and purposes the front now (August 15) stretches from Patti on the north coast to Taormina on the east coast. It is clear that the Axis is giving up Sicily, and the only question now is, how many Germans will succeed in escaping to the mainland? Probably a good portion. Determined small rearguards fighting on the two coastal roads can give the others a good chance to flee across the narrow Straits of Messina at night. All in all, the Axis by defending Sicily will have paid with some ten unreliable Italian divisions and not much more than one German division for a delay of six weeks in the invasion of Europe—that is, if the invasion of Europe should follow the close of the Sicilian campaign immediately. A reasonable price indeed. We achieved a logistical wonder and tactically a good job, but strategically we are still "in the sticks." Or on the rim, if you prefer.

