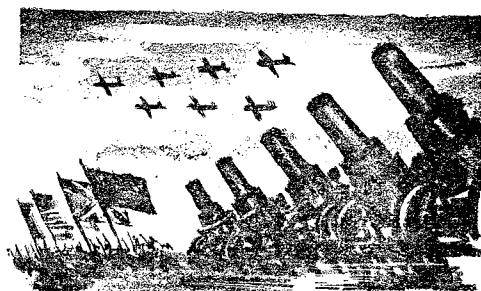


chemical, munitions, and ball-bearing industries thrown in. The characteristic orientation of the attack against aircraft production (especially fighters) tends to indicate that this great air offensive might be the initial phase of the coming invasion of Europe. Aside from the increased volume of bombing, its consistency, as well as the total coverage of all Germany, stands out.

THE fronts in Italy continue in a lull, with no decisive action on either side. In this connection we might point out that many military reviewers, having little to say, revert to piffle. We might point out (with sincere grief) that even such an earnest man as Major George Fielding Eliot succumbed to the epidemic when he wrote in the *New York Herald Tribune* on February 26, after discussing the German situation on the Eastern Front: "One question comes insistently to mind: is it possible that Hitler's insistence on wiping out the Anzio bridgehead at all costs has used up the German reserves which might have been earmarked for a counter-offensive on the Russian Front?" The Major in this instance seems to have lost all sense of proportion. Does he really think that the four or five extra German divisions allegedly introduced by Kesselring into the beach-head fighting could have possibly made an appreciable difference on the huge Soviet Front? The Major again must have been looking at the Eastern Front through the wrong end of his binoculars. This happens to him periodically.

THE Soviet offensive against the key to the northern Baltic area, Pskov, continues with great vigor. The important railroad junction of Dno, fifty-five miles east of Pskov, was captured on February 24.



Since then the armies of General Khozin (Second Baltic Front) have cleared the enemy from the stretch of the trunk line between Dno and Novosokolniki. This gives the Soviets a double-track line between Leningrad and the very outskirts of Vitebsk. This line does not include any large bridges or other engineering works and, therefore, can be put in operation within a few days. Possession of this line will greatly bolster the effort of General Khozin, who heretofore had to operate in a railless area (west, northwest, and southwest of Kholm) and is now thrusting at a good clip toward the rail center of Ostrov, thirty-two miles south of Pskov. Capture of Ostrov would cut off two rail lines running from Pskov south to Polotsk and southwest to Dvinsk (Ostrov is on the latter line) and would outflank hard-pressed Pskov from the south.

Meanwhile General Popov is moving westward from Novosokolniki on the junction of Idriza, or in the Riga direction. The German announcement last week that Vitebsk was evacuated has not found confirmation as yet, but the Germans might be preparing Nazidom for that setback.

At the southern end of the Byelorussian front, General Rokossovsky captured the fortress-town of Rogachev on the upper

Dnieper after having wiped out the Zhlobin-Rogachev trans-Dnieper bridgehead held by the Germans. He is now spreading northward in the direction of Bykhov and Moghilev (after having captured Novy Bykhov), westward in the direction of the triple railroad and triple highway center of Bobruisk, which is the protecting bastion for Minsk, and southward to outflank the stronghold of Zhlobin. The Germans understand the danger of this latest Soviet breakthrough and are counterattacking violently, but so far unsuccessfully. South of Zhlobin no major action has been reported along the entire southern wing of the front, although there are indications that the Germans are trying to reduce General Vatutin's salient in the Lutsk area, not so much to recapture Sarny and Lutsk, as to protect Kovel, Lvov, and Tarnopol.

The Soviet Air Force staged a raid of 600 planes on Helsinki and the town is reported to have suffered greatly, especially the German-operated naval docks. As a rule the Russians do not believe very much in so-called "strategic" bombing. They prefer to use their available planes in tactical support of the land troops, and this departure from the rule may mean that they have decided this time to kick Finland out of the war for good. (Note also that the Soviet High Command, whenever possible, tries to refrain from bombing the cities of friendly German-occupied countries, and does not bomb its own cities-in-German-hands at all, except for precision bombing of railroads and other such clearly defined objectives.)

All in all it is clear that the Red Army is taking advantage of the late frosts on the Northern wing to press home its offensive as far west as possible. It is a race with the thermometer.



AROUND THE WORLD

Belgium: Nazi Headache

London (by mail)

FOR centuries Belgium's strategic position has made it a battleground. Lying directly in the path of the Allied forces that will soon open the second front, it is once again occupying a key position in world history.

A popular resistance movement as great as any in Western Europe is wearing the enemy down, and is ready to strike hard when the Allies invade. Belgium has little rugged territory to conceal guerrilla bands. It is the most densely populated country in the world, and one of the most highly industrialized. But in Belgium, size for size, more Nazis and more collaborators are being killed off and more production sabo-

tagged than in any other occupied country in Western Europe.

The Nazis once dreamed of a trouble-free Belgium as a frontline base, and counted on it to provide them with coal, armaments, and food. Instead, they are experiencing a popular resistance which is getting completely beyond their control. Von Falkenhausen, governor in Belgium and Northern France, has failed to stem the popular tide and has now been sacked by Hitler.

Let a Belgian quisling, de Winter, secretary-general of the ministry of food and agriculture, whose secret report, dated Oct. 7, 1943, on the sabotage of the food

supply, has fallen into the hands of the patriots, bear witness to Belgian resistance.

In the province of Luxembourg, in Liege, Namur, and Charleroi, says de Winter, the collection of essential products for the food supply has become impossible. Many offices and factories have had to close, others work very irregularly, and no action has been taken for some months against cultivators who are in default. He tells of failure to grow special crops, especially rape-seed, from which the Germans obtain oil and explosives; refusal to renew contracts, and destruction of crops even by the peasants themselves. In the province of Hainault, crop deliveries in 1943 were only

12.64 percent of the compulsory minimum.

Dairies and creameries have been burned down, the burning of offices has destroyed documents and made it impossible to take action against defaulters, some of whom have taken part in this sabotage. Insurance companies have received claims for scores of millions of francs for fire damage. Sabotage is done "in a very scientific manner," chemicals "with great destructive power" being used. Cultivators are encouraged to sell their produce direct to the inhabitants or to the guerrilla bands, but "are threatened with serious reprisals" if they charge excessive prices.

"Since the month of August," writes de Winter, "the great majority of the cultivators obey *instantaneously* (emphasis in the report) the orders given to them by the underground organizations." He notes "with horror" that the Walloon part of the country is "moving steadily towards complete disorganization." The increasing boldness of the sabotage organizations he attributes to the solidarity between them and the local population, "who give them help and information, and assist them, sometimes actively, in their exploits." The solidarity of the Belgian countryfolk has brought to nothing the German hopes of food and raw materials.

THE Germans have replied by increasing the terror, and they direct their fiercest blows at the Communists. In August 1943, they were able, as a result of treachery, to arrest the Communist secretary, Relecom, other leaders, and the editors of their underground paper *Le Drapeau Rouge* (the *Red Flag*). A fake issue of *Le Drapeau Rouge* was at once issued by the Gestapo, in which it said that all militants must stop their activity, as it was necessary at all costs to save their leaders from death. But at once a genuine *Drapeau Rouge* called for even harder blows at the enemy. When Belgium collapsed in 1940, only the Communist Party retained its organization. To it fell the task of organizing resistance. As a result of its efforts Catholics, Socialists, and Liberals are today united with it in the *Front de l'Indépendance*, which leads ninety percent of the underground press and all active resistance.

As in some other countries, fear and hatred of the Communists and of the popular forces, and tenderness for the reputation of a king, have held back full support for the people's resistance by the more conservative elements.

King Leopold is supposed to be a "prisoner" of the Germans in the Palace of Laaken, but there is good reason to doubt this. The king surrendered in May 1940. Breaking his oath to the constitution, he refused to accompany the government to London, and was denounced as a traitor by Paul-Henri Spaak, the Belgian foreign minister, and Hubert Pierlot, the prime minister. His action, they said, enabled them to

understand many things that had happened in the past. This can only have referred to the king's earlier unconstitutional intervention in politics, which led to Belgium's foreign policy being changed from support of collective security to "neutrality" and reliance on the promises of Hitler.

IT is being widely alleged in Belgium that the king has twice left Laaken to visit Hitler at Berchtesgaden, and was at the Salzburg musical festival. He is said to be visited regularly every week by Henri de Man, the president of the Socialist Party and a special favorite of his before the war. De Man, who in collaboration with the Germans, created UTMI, the Belgian fascist trade unions, has been regularly in touch with von Falkenhausen. Romsee, the quisling secretary-general for the interior, is also frequently at the Palace, and Belgian industrialists justify working for Ger-

many by quoting the king's approval. *In short, the king is regarded in Belgium as the head of the fifth column.*

Unfortunately, there are Belgians, some of them with influence in the government-in-exile, who regret the government's denunciation of 1940, foster the illusion that the king is a prisoner, and belittle the importance of the Independence Front. No sordid calculations or reactionary fears must be allowed to interfere with the fullest measure of help to the underground fighters, who can add several divisions to the Allied strength.

Both the Belgian and British governments are well enough informed to know that the heart of Belgian resistance is not in the Palace of Laaken, or in the offices of the big employers, but it is in the people themselves. Their policy must be based upon this knowledge.

MALCOLM MACEWEN.

Czechs in Tito's Ranks

THE Nazis themselves were the first ones to break the news of the existence of a Czechoslovak unit fighting in the ranks of General Tito's Army of Liberation. The Nazi controlled press in Bohemia and Moravia announced savage measures of retribution taken against the families of "traitors" who were said to have joined the "criminal partisan bands in Yugoslavia."

This was in August 1943. Some time later, the radio station of the Yugoslav Liberation Front "Slobodna Jugoslaviya" (Free Yugoslavia) confirmed hitherto unconfirmed reports that a whole Czechoslovak unit was incorporated into the Liberation Army. Then, the Czechoslovak Battalion, "Jan Zizka," sent messages of greeting to the president of the Czechoslovak Republic, Dr. Benes, in London, and to the commander of the Czechoslovak Brigade at the eastern front, Colonel Ludvig Svoboda, hero of the battles below Kharkov and Kiev. The greetings were signed by the battalion commander, Josef Ruzicka.

Ruzicka is a Czech worker, one of the many Czech mechanics who went to work in the Balkans. He had formerly been at the famous armament factory of Skoda, at Pilsen, in Bohemia. The battalion under his command (which was given the proud name of the ancient Hussite hero, Jan Zizka, who chased the German invaders from Bohemian soil in the fifteenth century) is composed

of Czech workers who were living in Yugoslavia and of numerous Czech patriots who managed to escape from Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia and make their way through Austria and Hungary to the mountain regions held by the Yugoslav Partisans. Among those escaped from Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia are many officers and men of the old Czechoslovak army with excellent military skill. Artillerists, tankists, sappers, and pilots of the old Czechoslovak army were of special value to the Yugoslav Partisan forces.

The Jan Zizka Battalion is steadily growing in numbers. Many Czechs and Slovaks who lived in other parts of Yugoslavia are trickling through the Nazi Ustashi lines in order to join the battalion. As in the Czechoslovak brigade in the Soviet Union, so also in the Jan Zizka Battalion there are represented all Czechoslovak nationalities and creeds. One of the companies is entirely made up of Slovaks, another one is predominantly Carpathian Russian.

The Czechoslovak battalion has taken part in several of the Liberation Army's big battles. It fought first in the hills in northern Slovenia against German occupation troops and captured much of the Nazis' machine guns and heavier equipment. Later on it fought in Croatia and Dalmatia. Among its proudest deeds was the liberation of a thousand hostages from a Nazi and Ustashi camp in the neighborhood of Karlovac.

READERS' FORUM

Education for Democracy

TO NEW MASSES: This is a little story of a quiet incident in the war against fascism. No guns spoke. A fellow human being was simply restored to the dignity of a free man.

Crew members of a large transport were gathered on a small portion of an after deck, reserved for their special use, one afternoon when one of the Navy hospital corpsmen walked over to a Negro member of the merchant marine crew and said nastily: "Get off the deck, —. Only white folk can come up here." The colored boy naturally leapt to attack his persecutor, but what might have developed into a minor race riot was prevented when a few cool heads separated them. The corpsman was taken bodily to his quarters.

Upon learning of the incident the delegate of the union to which the colored boy belonged issued a call for a membership meeting and asked the Navy doctor under whom the corpsman worked, to attend.

At the meeting the delegate quietly read the clause in the union's constitution which forbade discrimination against any member because of race, religion, or color. He then explained to the doctor, who held the rank of lieutenant-commander, that while the union had jurisdiction only over its own members it is determined to do everything in its power to prevent discrimination against its members by outsiders. In fact it feels so strongly about this issue that it will use whatever power it has to stop discrimination even if its own members are not involved.

He then related the incident of the afternoon. When he had finished the lieutenant-commander, whose suppressed anger was noticeable in the color of his face, sent for the corpsman. When the man came he was placed facing the meeting and asked whether or not he had made the offending remark. He mumbled that it was true and offered to make an apology.

The lieutenant-commander then lashed out against discrimination. "I know, as a doctor and as a Navy man, how base the idea of discrimination is. Disease doesn't discriminate, nor do bullets. We are all here on this ship together and when Tojo sends us one of his silver fish it's not going to pick and choose on the color line, or any other line. I'm no flag-waver, but it is my understanding that we are fighting a war against fascism and it seems to me that we have had a bad example of fascism right here on this ship this afternoon. And as long as I have anything to say on this ship there will be no discrimination here. Navy rules forbid me from putting a man in the brig for a period longer than ten days, but there is nothing in the rules that says I can't put a man in for ten days, let him out for a day and then put him back in again."

Turning to the corpsman he continued: "That will be your sentence until the ship reaches its

home port and then you will get off the ship."

At this point the Negro brother got up and said that he didn't want to be the cause of the man spending the trip in the brig, that no doubt the man was a product of faulty education.

The lieutenant-commander asked the corpsman where his home was.

The man answered: "South Carolina."

"It makes no difference," the officer said. "We are in the middle of a war. We are arguing with Hitler with guns. Some people can only learn the hard way. The sentence stands."

JAMES GANNON.

San Francisco.

Counter Propaganda

TO NEW MASSES: Undoubtedly many readers have been upset by seeing violent attacks on the Jews printed on the walls of public places. What can be done about this? Erasing is not very effective, because the person who made the attack and others who believe it remain unconscious of the fact that they are making themselves dupes of Hitler. A simple and effective way of pointing out that such sentiments are encouraged by our country's enemies is as follows: enclose the offending words or picture within a "balloon" (used in comic strips) and draw a simple picture of Hitler underneath. For example:

A JEW IS
A SONNO



Anyone can draw a simple picture of Hitler such as the one above. This puts the idea over strongly and dramatically.

A READER.

Los Angeles.

Lieutenant Colonel Carlson

TO NEW MASSES: Over the period of the last few years, I have become exceptionally interested in the personality and career of Lieutenant-Colonel Carlson of the US Marines. Especially since my past five months in the Army does this officer seem to me one of the most remarkable men in our armed forces.

My interest was first aroused when in the course of selecting books for student reading I happened to glance through *Twin Stars of China*,

which related Colonel Carlson's experience as an observer with the former Chinese Red Army some years back. At that time the author's attitude and his understanding of the role played by the Chinese Communists were most remarkable. I believe that these were the causes of his resignation from the Marines at that time.

Later he was recalled to active service, and I remember being struck by an article of his which praised trade unionists as making the best soldiers because of their superior understanding of the issues at stake. Within the past few months *Fortune* magazine and the *Reader's Digest* in articles dealing with war exhaustion (or what erroneously used to be called shell shock), made mention of the unusually low incidence of this nervous disorder among Carlson's Raiders and gave as one of the major causes the fact that his men were given a real understanding of what they were fighting for. The *Reader's Digest* went into more detail and mentioned, among other things, Colonel Carlson's source of inspiration in the Chinese Red Army and also his unusual treatment of men and officers and their relationship. It cited his development of initiative in the men through discussion, self-criticism, and understanding.

Altogether, Colonel Carlson seems to be the type of officer from whom all of us can draw both inspiration and much understanding of the problem of morale.

As a soldier in the Army, I have seen with regret many splendid opportunities slip for building a higher morale among men, a deeper appreciation of the issues in the war, and a bettering of the relationship between men and officers. This I believe is true in spite of a splendid program of physical and military education.

For all these reasons, may I suggest that you have an article on this American soldier?

Pvt. B. R.

Doctors of "North Star"

TO NEW MASSES: It seems to me that all of the comments I have read about *The North Star* have missed one important point that Miss Hellman has made. The reviewers question the release of the Soviet doctor after his attempt on the life of the Nazi.

To me, this was no mere dramatic contrivance. The whole character of the "great" Nazi doctor, as built up in the story, was a direct answer to the sort of thing that was criticized so sharply in *The Moon is Down* and the Albert Bein play. Here we have our great scientist, so superior to the ordinary Nazi, so apologetic for what he does, justifying everything on the basis of the needs of the war. The speech of the Soviet doctor at the end gives the true evaluation of such people. We see them, at last, not as mild philosophers, arousing the sympathy of the people of the democracies; we see them, rather, as the beasts they are in reality, the most dangerous of all because of their knowledge; the most brutal because of their conceit.

Miss Hellman has made her point deliberately. The release of the Soviet doctor was in keeping with the character of the "superior" Nazi, his contempt for the man attacked, his arrogant confidence that a fellow physician would never attack him.

Such is my interpretation of the episode. Anyway, what do you think?

BEATRICE BLOSSER.

New York.