

REPORT ON THE RUSSIANS.....



W. L. White

INSTALLMENT EIGHT

Considering only military effectiveness, the miracle is that any German soldier was able to set foot on Russian soil. They were able to penetrate to the suburbs of Moscow and Leningrad and range as far as the Caucasus (1,500 miles from Berlin) not only because of Russia's technical poverty and the disorganized state of her industrial development, but also because at the time the Red Army lacked experienced officers. Her initial air force, for instance, could not compare in quality with that of the Germans. Much of it was smashed in the first few weeks of fighting.

If the Russian air force is primitive, this is no reflection on the skill of Russian pilots, who rank among the world's best. But Russia lacks the skill to turn out good planes. Of all branches of any air force, long-range bombers such as the British Lancaster and the American Fortress and Liberator require the highest degree of industrial skill for production and operation in large numbers. They are almost totally absent in the Red Air Force.



Russian pilots ranked among world's best.

The men who plan the Red Air Force have skillfully designed it around the country's many shortages; they have concentrated on production of the Stormovik, a slow, low altitude strafe plane. Since it's efficient little tank buster usually operates at treetop level, the Soviet fighters which protect it have no need for high altitude equipment.

Of the 10,000 planes which America has delivered to the Soviet Union the Russians like best the Bell Airacobra, which is a light, low altitude, ground co-operation plane, similar in function to the Stormovik. It is standard Red Air Force procedure immediately to remove all high altitude flying equipment from most American planes, replacing the weight with extra ammunition.

Lacking night fighters and radar, Soviet targets within range of the Luftwaffe are particularly vulnerable to night bombing, and the standard Russian method of defense is ground fire from anti-aircraft batteries, such as was used to protect Moscow. However, lacking radar to guide their fire, the gunners can shoot only at the sound, which is a rough indication not of where the bomber is, but where it was several seconds ago. Therefore, to be effective, batteries must be massed about the target, vomiting continuous fountains of fire during a raid, an expensive procedure.

Katyn Forest is near Smolensk and to the grave of some 10,000 Poles, mostly officers, who were shot in the back of the head. Whether this slaughter of helpless war prisoners was done by Russians or Germans, there is violent disagreement and evidence both ways.

To understand the complexity of the case, a little history is necessary. When in 1939, the Germans and Russians divided Poland, the Russian share of the loot included more than 180,000 prisoners of war, of whom 10,000 were officers. A few were generals. The most distinguished of these, including General Anders, were confined to Moscow's Lubianka prison. The rest of the 10,000 officers were sent to three prison camps in the Russian towns of Starobielisk, Kozielisk, and Ostaszkov. These camps housed twelve Polish generals, sixty-nine colonels, seventy-two lieutenant colonels and all 5,131 regular army officers and 4,098 reserve officers. Few of the last had been captured in combat. Most of them had not yet been called up for duty, but when Russia occupied her half of Poland, obeyed the Soviet summons to assemble.

The Polish officers were reasonably well treated at the three camps until April, 1940, when the Soviets began evacuating them, telling the men they might be sent back to their homes. They left in groups of from twenty to sixty every few days during April and early May. What became of them after that, the Poles have a few clues. Most of the 10,000 vanished from the earth

except for 400 who were finally taken to a camp at Gryzovets.

On June 22, 1941, Hitler attacked Russia. The Polish government in London immediately offered the hand of friendship to the Soviets, suggesting the formation from prisoners of war in Russian hands, of a Polish army. The Soviets accepted. General Anders was released from his prison cell, installed in a comfortable hotel room with apologies, and with Soviet co-operation began forming his army.

Poles, released from prison camps all over the Soviet Union, began flocking to his headquarters, but there were almost no officers. General Anders was at first not alarmed, believing that they probably had been transferred to some far-away Arctic labor camp and presently would turn up. But as months went by and not one additional officer reported he became concerned.

November of 1941, Polish Ambassador Kot interviewed Stalin on this perplexing problem. The Marshal appeared genuinely astonished.

In Kot's presence, he rang up the NKVD and said the prisoners who had been in those three camps should be released at once.

A month passed, during which the Poles were collecting, from the 400 survivors of the three camps, a list of the names of their missing brother officers. On December 4, when Stalin received Generals Sikorski and Anders, they took with them an incomplete list of 4,500 names. This time Stalin expressed no surprise or indignation. The Poles felt he answered evasively, suggesting that the 10,000 officers might have returned to German occupied Poland or fled over the Manchurian border. Knowing how closely the NKVD supervises all travel in Russia, it was difficult for the two Polish generals to believe such a large number of officers could have accomplished this journey undetected. Picking up his telephone, Stalin called General Pamflov at NKVD headquarters, again issuing orders to release all Poles who had ever been in the three camps.

More time passed but not an officer turned up.

A really disturbing rumor began to circulate. A few months before the German attack on Russia, the NKVD assembled several Polish staff officers, including a Colonel Berling, and suggested to them that possibly a Polish army might be organized to fight the Germans. At a conference with Russian NKVD officials, Beria and Merkulov, Colonel Berling agreed, provided it was organized "irrespective of political creeds," and then added that, at the three officers' prison camps, "we have excellent army cadres." Whereupon, Merkulov answered quickly, with some embarrassment, "No, not these men. We have made a great blunder in connection with them." Only rumors, perhaps, but they disturbed the Poles.

Then on April 13, 1943, the German radio announced that in Katyn Forest, near Smolensk, which they then held, they had discovered mass graves of about 10,000 Polish officers, each killed with a bullet through the back of his head. They said Russian peasants in the vicinity told them these prisoners of war were murdered by the NKVD in the spring of 1940, giving dates corresponding closely to the time the prison camps had been evacuated. The Germans also claimed that letters and papers found in the clothing, as well as the condition of the bodies, indicated that the men had been murdered in the spring of 1940.

Names announced over the German radio corresponded with those of Polish officers missing from the three camps.

Radio Moscow took cognizance of the German charges in a bitter broadcast saying "These German lies reveal the fate of Polish officers whom the Germans employed in construction work in that region." Russian news agency, Tass, issued a communique explaining that these Polish prisoners, who had been employed by the Russians on construction work west of Smolensk, had been captured by the Germans during the Soviet retreat in the summer of 1941.

This explanation did not satisfy all Poles. Their officers had been evacuated in April, 1940. Ever since the Russo-German break in June of 1941, the Polish government had been trying to get from the Russians some hint as to where they had been taken. Only after this German broadcast do they learn from the Soviet government that the officers had been taken to the Katyn Forest region, with the additional statement that in 1941 they were captured and murdered by the Germans.

On April 26, the Soviet government broke off relations with the Polish government in London, and set up in Moscow her own "Union of Polish Patriots" which, according to the London Polish government, was made up of Polish Communists unknown to the people of Poland.

The Red Army reoccupied Katyn, and on January 22, 1944, issued a communique saying that a Soviet investigating commission had been called to settle, once and for all, the Katyn Forest dispute.

The Russian Commission was a 100 per cent Soviet picnic. Their experts - distinguished Russian academicians - determined that the Germans, following their occupation of Smolensk, had carried out the mass shootings in the autumn of 1941, and in 1943, "calculating to set, Russians and Poles at loggerheads, tried to ascribe this crime to the Soviet government." The Russians charged that in the spring of 1943 the Germans had even brought to Katyn Forest, Polish bodies from other districts, and had used 500 Russian prisoners of war in the work of removing from the Polish bodies all documents which would incriminate the Nazis and substituting documents which would tend to incriminate the Russians, after which the Germans had shot the Soviet war prisoners.

The evidence of German guilt, gathered by the Soviet Commission answers all questions but this one: if the Polish officers were still alive in the summer of 1941 and could be captured by the Germans, why were the Poles not told this at once? Why were important Polish government officials allowed to go wild-goose-chasing all over the Soviet Union for nearly two years in search of their army's officers, when the Russians knew the men were already in German hands?

An observant reporter noticed that one Polish body was clad in long, heavy underwear, and mentioned it to the Soviet doctor in charge. The doctor remarked that most of the bodies wore either heavy underwear, or overcoats, or both.

That pointed to the theory that these Poles must have been shot during April, 1940, as the Germans claimed, rather than in August and September, 1941, after the Germans moved in, as the Soviet government was contending.

When this point was raised with the Soviet conducting officers, there was considerable confusion and the Russians finally argued that the climate of Poland is uncertain, so that fur overcoats and long underwear might be worn in September. If a reporter would write "I AM NOT A MEDICAL EXPERT BUT DOCTORS SAY the condition of these bodies proves they were murdered by the Germans," the censorship would strike out the qualifying phrase (capitalized), leaving only the bare charge.

Also stricken out were all phrases indicating any doubt in the correspondents' minds—such words as "in my opinion," "probably," or "evidence we were shown would tend to prove," with the result that the stories as received in America were as firmly damning of the Germans as Pravda's editorials.

In 1939, when the Anglo-French Military Mission was in Moscow trying to negotiate an alliance with the Soviet Union one of the Soviet de-



Russians improved the technique of paratroops that they created.

mands was the right, under certain circumstances, to occupy the three Baltic States.

The British demurred. When I was in London in February of 1940, an intelligent young man in their foreign office gave me their position.

"Here we are," he said, "supposedly defending the rights of small European nations. We could hardly start by delivering three of them to the Russians as a price for their alliance. We have to consider opinion in the States. What would your people have said to that?"

"They would have been in favor of almost anything you had to do to win the war without their having to get in," I said, and I still think I was right.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

By HAROLD L. LUNDQUIST, D. D. Of The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. Released by Western Newspaper Union.

Lesson for May 5

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TWO BROTHERS LEARN TOLERANCE

LESSON TEXT—Mark 3:14-17; Luke 9:40-42; 1 John 4:7, 8. GOLDEN TEXT—And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.—1 John 4:21.

Intolerance is soundly condemned in our day, and we agree that the spirit which hates or hinders a man because he is of a certain race or color is definitely wrong. Even within Christian circles we could well learn more of that fine spirit of Christ which is epitomized in the words, "no respecter of persons."

A word of caution is needed, however, lest we come to extend our tolerance to that which is sinful, wicked or destructive. One should never tolerate poison in a child's food, or in his textbooks. One does not tolerate a fire while it destroys one's house. Nor should one be tolerant of false teaching which breaks down faith in the Bible as the Word of God.

James and John were outstanding in their places of leadership for God. We learn in our lesson for today that

I. God Wants Powerful Men (Mark 3:14-17).

There seems to be an impression current in some places that being a Christian is practically synonymous with being a weak, frightened, negative person without either personality or power.

The fact is that the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ rightly interpreted, and fully received into the heart and life of a man, brings such a tremendously enriching and transforming experience that it appeals to all, including the vital, dynamic type.

These two men were "the sons of thunder"; that is, they had that flashing alertness and power of personality which made them quick to understand and decisive in action. True, it showed itself in an impatience which was wrong and a desire to bring down judgment, when they should have shown compassion, but that was power out of control, always a dangerous thing.

II. God Wants Balanced Men (Luke 9:49, 50).

Power goes to a man's head, and he needs the balance of God to keep him from going astray. Then too, strong men have intense loyalties and are not afraid to assert them, and are prone to condemn all who do not conform.

John was here exhibiting that dreadfully sectarian viewpoint which persists even in our day. To him it was not enough that a man was doing the Lord's work; he must either join their particular circle or quit. He was willing to stop a work of grace because this disciple of Christ was not in the regular group. That same spirit prevails today.

One wonders how some narrow sectarians can read the words of Jesus without blushing in shame and rushing to his feet for forgiveness and cleansing.

God wants dynamic men to work for him; but he wants them to be poised and balanced in their dealings with others, especially with the brethren.

III. God Wants Patient Men (Luke 9:51-56).

The friction between the Jews and the Samaritans dated from the time when the latter—a half-Gentile people—were denied the right to help in building the temple. That became the foundation for long and bitter strife, which showed up in such a discourteous act as to refuse a night's lodging to travelers because their destination was the hated city of Jerusalem.

Their offense viewed from another angle was far more than a bitter lack of courtesy, for they were turning from their door the Son of God, the Lord of glory.

Stubborn prejudice combined with spiritual ignorance to make this tense and explosive situation. The sons of thunder had an answer ready—let's blow them off the earth.

Simple, wasn't it? Yes, but neither right nor kind. These poor people should have drawn forth their compassion, not their hatred or a desire for revenge.

Whenever and wherever you see a man set to get revenge on another, you see a man who knows nothing of the true spirit of Christ (v. 55).

IV. God Wants Loving Men (1 John 4:7, 8).

Love is not merely something that God shows toward men or inspires in their hearts. God is love. Being God, he is love, and that love is not a passive quality but an active one. He loves.

Because he is love, those who profess to belong to him are also to love one another, to love a world lost in sin, yes, to love even the utterly unlovely.

Volumes have been written on this subject, but here we must be satisfied just to state the fact and to ask ourselves the direct question, Do I manifest the love of God in my life? Well, do you?



The President and Horseshoe Pitching

President Truman has decided to build a horseshoe pitching court on the White House grounds. This should make America feel better. Much of the trouble that the world is in today is due to the fact few, if any, rulers have been horseshoe pitchers.

There is something about horseshoe pitching that keeps a man cool, eases his nerves and lessens the chances of his doing anything cockeyed. We had a few horseshoe pitchers among our earliest Presidents, and their administrators were the most peaceful in history.

Perhaps in these troubled times of irascibility, frenzied disputes, hair-trigger decisions, impatience, with the other fellow's viewpoint and the itch to settle everything overnight, horseshoe pitching may save civilization!

Had Adolf Hitler ever gone in for pitching horseshoes the yen to conquer the world would never have developed. In your wildest dreams can you picture Mussolini fooling around with a horseshoe?

On with the horseshoe stuff, Harry! You're no genius in statesmanship. You are not the wisest ruler of the day. But nevertheless—when the atomic bomb crisis agitates the great men of the earth, when pointy noses on all sides are shouting at one another and when so many big men have so many hot ideas for causing trouble, it will be good to know that you spend a little time each day out behind the White House pitching horseshoes.

Circus Memories

The circus is back in New York, and thousands of big city kids will be thrilled no end. But we pity the kid who never knew the circus in a small town. Back home in our boyhood it was the event of the year. The first flush of posters on the billboards kindled our imagination. . . . we were sleepless for nights before the great day. . . . and we were up at 3:30 a. m. the morning the big show arrived. . . . It was always unloaded in the freight yards down at Long Wharf off Water street, and what a thrill it was to hear the locomotive whistles and then see the circus trains pull in, unload and start on the five-mile trek to the circus grounds, which used to be in Elm City park back of the Hubinger mansion.

After the unloading had progressed an hour or so, we hustled to the grounds to see the tents go up. . . . The rat-tat-tat of the stake-driving crews. . . . the rumble of the wagon wheels. . . . the smell of tamarck and hay. . . . the aroma of lamb chops and boiled potatoes from the cook-tent. . . . oh, boy! We generally managed to get a job leading a pony in a parade and got a free pass to the show.

"The O" has been knocked out of "UNO," which now becomes officially "U.N.," which makes it sound like an Italian name. Now if they could only take the "O" out it seems to us it would personalize its message tremendously.

A head of the Mexican baseball league threatens to complain to the American ambassador about an American baseball player who has quit the league. The matter may get before the United Nations security council. Which is a fine idea. It would give the organization terrific press notices, especially if any delegate walked out.

General MacArthur recommends that the Japanese adopt the A.B.C. alphabet. The Japs are satisfied that they were nuts to stage the recent war and they may be ready to admit that the Jap alphabet drove them crazy.

But we still doubt that the Japs will seem any less warlike because they spell, "Does the cat see the rat?" our way.

Soon we shall be hearing of the worthy citizen who started life on a shoestring and ultimately acquired a furnished room.

Isn't it about time the book clubs began selecting the book clubs of the month?

Laugh of the Year—The announcement, with a sober face, by OPA enforcement agents at this late date that wholesale butchers have been forcing retailers to make "tie-in" purchases!

PORTRAIT OF AN AMERICAN "This is an outrage," he declares When in a subway jam; "There ought to be a law!" he screams.

"What do they think I am?" His squawks are terrifying, oh, They can be heard a mile— But at the race track he will stand And take it with a smile.

The old league of Nations is now closing in Switzerland. It is surprising everybody by a display of firmness in this procedure.

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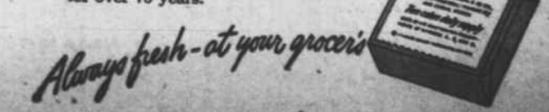
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