

Washington Digest

Overall Mobilization Keeps Nazis in Field

Geared Nation in Peace to Meet Shock of Total War; Learned From World War I Experience.



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(This is the first of two articles by Mr. Baukhage on where Germany continues to get its fighting manpower. The second and concluding article will appear next week.)

Post-mortem arguments over the German winter counter-offensive will probably be fought out from the arm-chairs with almost as much bitterness as that which characterized the actual combat.

Already there are a few who dare insist that the German come-back, morally and physically, was not underestimated. This means that Germany's military preparedness, the extent of which many knew, few seemed to be able to assay. Just how thoroughly the Third Reich leaders had geared Germany's social, political and economic life into total war could be read in terms of facts and figures available to the experts. But since no state in history had ever so nearly approached the absolute in military activity it may have been difficult to



SS guard stands by as Baukhage signs out of radio studio in Berlin in 1939 after broadcast to U. S.

interpret those facts and figures in terms of come-back after the battle of France.

Perhaps one of the most basic datum came, not from plans stolen from the Nazi high command but furnished freely by the association of German tailors. It proves the old adage that exceptions prove the rule.

The rule is that clothes do not make the man. The exception which proves it is the fact that in 1939 one out of every three Germans was in some kind of a uniform, and therefore under some kind of military or semi-military discipline, either of the army itself or of the Nazi party.

Ludendorff Struck Keynote

The day war broke out about one-third of the German people were literally clothed in the panoply of war. This was not an accident. It was part of the Nazi policy. The Allies themselves more nearly reached a state of total warfare at the end of World War I than did the Germans of that time. Ludendorff read this fact out of the bitterness of the defeat of 1918. He said: "total policy must in peacetime prepare for the people's life and death struggle in time of war in such a way that even under the impact of war it cannot be shifted, broken or completely destroyed by enemy measures."

Hitler reaffirmed this thesis and what is more immediately put it into effect as a policy, first by eliminating all organizations not under either the party or the army. A law was passed as early as March, 1935, which stated that "in wartime every German man and every German woman, beyond conscription, is bound to render service to the fatherland."

Let us look at some of the "organizations" which grew up under this policy of total war. First in importance, historically, is the "Sturmabteilung" translated "Nazi Storm Troopers," abbreviated "SA" and usually called the "Brown Shirts." Although this group contained military units, it was planned as a "political army" and was abolished as such after the Roehm purge of 1934. Then it contained three million men. It was shortly reborn and

reformed and starting with a group of a million 200 thousand of the original group took charge of training political soldiers from childhood up, indoctrinating them in Nazi principles and also overseeing military training before service in the army and again after the citizen had passed normal military age.

The second group to come into prominence in the Reich is now by all odds the most powerful group in the country considered from every viewpoint. It is the "SS."

The "SS" are supposed to have had their origin in the group who made up Hitler's bodyguard in the early days of the party. Their number was estimated as 750,000 in 1942, and Heinrich Himmler was from the beginning (and still is) their commander although their oath of loyalty is to Hitler.

This group was originally created to form the nucleus of a new aristocracy. The requirements of entrance are strict. In the first place, the applicant must have been an outstanding member of the Hitler Youth organization. He can apply in his 18th year for SS membership. Out of a hundred applicants usually 10 or 15 are admitted and they stand frequent re-examinations. The applicant's family must show healthy physical and (according to Nazi standards) political background, "Aryan" blood back to 1750 and no hereditary diseases.

An SS applicant must be the "right" height and the "right" build, with the "right" color of hair and eyes. When he marries he must marry a suitable wife according to similar standards. Before he is eligible he must win certain sport awards, serve in the Reich labor service, then in the army. Meanwhile, he must attend special schools of training in Nazi ideology and military and physical training.

When the SS novice finishes his term in the army he goes through more tests and if he passes, is a full member. Then he is under jurisdiction of the special SS court of law and must live up to all the practices and principles of the order. He is compelled to defend his honor with the sword (must take part in duels) and is permitted, if attacked by an ordinary citizen, to use a weapon against the attacker even if it is not necessary.

SS Comes Into Its Own

Gradually from an organization which took over many military, police and other functions, the SS grew to the point where it is the dominating police force in Germany, uniformed and plain clothes (the Gestapo) and now the dominating force in the army and the Reich. It has an entirely military branch, the "SS-in-arms" with its own panzer and other divisions.

I was in Germany when war broke out and it was that winter that the SS-in-Arms was formed, some SS men being released from the regular army to form these units. It was evident when one watched the SS in any military formation from sentry duty up, that they tried to outdo the regular army in snap, and "spit and polish." Their legs were a little stiffer when they did the goose step. Their salutes were as precise as a trip-hammer. They tried to look as mean as they could and often succeeded in looking meaner than that.

There is no doubt that the SS divisions have the reputation of being crack divisions and that they have won at least some of the respect of what is left of the old, professional, military element in the Wehrmacht army which struggled against their rise in power as long as it could. Dispatches from the western front frequently mention SS outfits—recently when they were shooting American prisoners—but the Russians refuse to say they fight any better than other divisions. They have frequently been used as reserves in tight situations and also as a strengthening framework for less fanatical troops.

The "Black Corps," as it is called because of its black uniforms, is described by one authority as embodying "a military fanaticism such as the world has hardly seen from the days of Mahdi and Omdurman."

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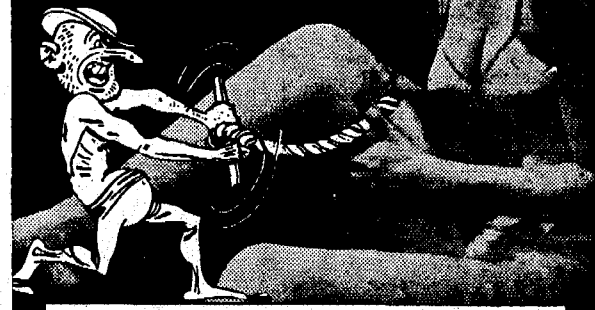
Community singing was unknown in China six years ago, being confined merely to short verses chanted by men at work. Even the operas consisted of solo parts. Today, however, in face of the present crisis, patriotic war songs are popular everywhere, and sometimes as many as 10,000 voices are united in a demonstration.

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BARBS... by Baukhage

The Berlin radio says that Hitler looks "vigorous and healthy." Maybe the Germans have discovered a new method of embalming.

A man in New York lost \$400 out of his sock and was so grateful when it was returned that he said he would put it into a victory bond. That is even wiser than investing in a pair of garters.

The Japanese urge that dolls and flowers be sent to workers in airplanes to boost their morale. What with the present raiding by the superforts we can understand the flowers but why the dolls?

If all the people who get black-market gasoline quit buying, the poor fellows might sell to Hitler direct without risking their patriotism.

