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## THE SECOND PHASE

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*The fifth anniversary and the climax of the European war are approaching as we go to press. Europe is an inferno. Thousands of planes are laying waste her cities. Millions of men are locked in terrible battles. Comparing the present situation with that prevailing in Europe on the first, second, or third war anniversaries, and contrasting the destruction in human lives and material values then and now, one realizes how completely the character of the war has changed. The following essay is concerned with this change, its causes, meaning, and perspectives.*

SO far this war has passed through two phases. The first, lasting thirty-eight months up to the Allied landing in North Africa and the Red counteroffensive at Stalingrad, was one of colossal German superiority, as the campaigns in Poland, Norway, Western Europe, the Balkans, North Africa, and Eastern Europe have shown, when German forces reached Egypt and the Volga and when Allied tonnage was approaching its lowest point of about twelve million tons. During this entire phase, the loss in life and property on both sides was extremely small—small compared with the results achieved and also compared with the losses being suffered by the two camps at present. It was the phase of the German blitzes. Though the fighting never ceased completely, it was concentrated in a few short, highly successful campaigns.

Every war has its horrors, particularly for the defeated side. But if war must be, then the blitz war with small losses and great political results is preferable. This is true also for the defeated side. In a blitz campaign it loses the war, which is bad enough, but in a long-drawn-out war it suffers in addition irreplaceable losses in life and property. Historians, no matter of which nationality, will some day classify the German campaigns of the war's first phase as exemplary military achievements.

Germany's overwhelming advantage lay in her superiority in strategy, leadership, training, arms, economic mobilization, and national attitude toward the war. Apart from periods when objective circumstances

—such as the cold during the first war winter in the USSR—deprived them of it, the German leaders constantly held the initiative in their hands. They used it wisely: after long periods of calm and determined preparation, they carried out brief, decisive thrusts. They never struck unless they were sure of the result and, from the military point of view, they suffered practically no failures. This was also admitted by their foes in every case except in that of the aerial campaign of 1940 against England which, the enemy claimed, had fallen short of expectations.

If the war in Europe had continued with the tempo of the first phase, it would have been over long ago. But for various reasons the first phase ended before the war did.

### NEW FACTORS

Germany went to war with the USSR because she believed that she could no longer afford passively to watch the rise of the gigantic menace of two hundred million people harnessed to Bolshevism. Nobody had pointed out the danger of the Red flood for Europe more emphatically and more consistently than the leaders of National-Socialist Germany. Yet, to everybody's surprise, it was far greater than even they had depicted it.

We must bear in mind that, before 1942, the Soviet Union had been underrated throughout the world as a fighting power:

(1) Militarily: the number of her trained reserves, her available arms, her industrial

capacity to produce more, and her ability to conduct a modern war, were not properly evaluated; and the purge of the Red generals in 1937, as well as the poor showing of the Red Army in Finland in 1939, were over-rated in their significance.

(2) Politically: the long series of purges from 1935 to 1938 was taken as an indication of internal weakness, while actually it was primarily an indication of Stalin's change-over to a new type of world-revolutionary strategy, a change-over with which many old Bolsheviks did not agree. Moreover, the whole world had always made a radical distinction between the Bolshevik leaders and the Russian people, a circumstance which led to the belief that the Russian people would turn against the Bolsheviks after the first powerful thrusts from outside.

(3) Psychologically: the Russians were assumed to be by nature incapable of sustained effort over a long period. After a first flare-up of energy had spent itself, they would, it was believed, relapse into apathy.

These opinions, held by the majority of people everywhere, were due to a faulty evaluation of the USSR as well as of the Russians. The first was chiefly the result of many people in every country continuing to see the Soviet state as it had been in the years of Revolution and Civil War and closing their eyes to the hundred million children born since then and permeated with Bolshevik ideas, to the thousands of industrial plants built, and to the stranglehold which the Bolsheviks had acquired over their people by a ghastly combination of terror and propaganda. The misunderstanding of the Russians, on the other hand, was largely due to the Russian literature of the nineteenth century. In this literature, the classical heroes are the "useless people," from Eugene Onegin to the owners of Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard*. Oblomov, who spends his life thinking out great schemes but never gets out of his dressing gown, became for many the amiable personification of Russia. They overlooked the fact that the Oblomovs represented only a tiny fraction of the people, of whom, as a whole, they knew very little. They forgot that the Russians had conquered two fifths of the Eurasian continent in barely five hundred years. Hence they never suspected that the Bolsheviks would succeed, by a shrewd falsification of history, in merging Russian patriotism with the drive toward a world revolution.

Thus the fight put up by the USSR was greater than anybody had expected. Utilizing the vastness of its area, its manpower, and its resources, the Red Army survived the heavy blows dealt it by the German Wehrmacht. This gave Roosevelt time, with the aid of his huge political machine and thousands of leftist and Jewish intellectuals who control the intellectual life of the country, to bring about a change in the formerly pacifist-isolationist attitude of the Americans toward foreign affairs and to put the entire nation on a war basis.

Germany's blitzkrieg strategy required for its success the unpreparedness of the enemy for this type of war. The longer the war lasted, the more her enemies were able to learn from it. This was the reason why it functioned so smoothly in 1939 and 1940, less well in 1941 and 1942 against the Soviets, who had had two years' time to adapt themselves, and why it did not work in 1943 and 1944, when the Allies were not only familiar with it but even began to employ it themselves, including total mobilization. In other words: in 1939 and 1940 the strategy of the second World War employed by Germany triumphed easily over the strategy of the first World War still employed by the Allies. By 1944 both sides were fully versed in modern warfare.

#### MATCHED POWER

If we add that by means of technical innovations the Allies were able, at least temporarily, to neutralize the German submarines, and finally that they were aided by two cases of treason—Darlan's and Badoglio's—we have mentioned all the principal reasons why the war's first phase came to an end. We see now why Germany, although having many more soldiers, tanks, planes, guns, and an even more determined population than in the days of the French campaign, no longer possesses her unchallenged superiority and why the war entered upon its second phase, that of matched power. By matched power we do not mean that both sides are evenly matched in every respect—the Allies have more men, arms, raw materials, the Germans a higher quality of soldiers and officers and a more favorable strategic position. We mean that both sides are matched from the point of view of their fighting strength as a whole, and that neither side has the overpowering superiority which Germany held during the first years. Just as it was characteristic of

the first phase that on the forty-third day of the German Western campaign the whole of France had to conclude an armistice, it is characteristic of the phase of matched power that on the forty-third day of the invasion campaign the Allies have occupied less than one per cent of France, notwithstanding the fact that Germany is opposing them with only part of her armies, the majority of them being in Eastern Europe and Italy.

Once the war had entered its second phase, a totally new situation arose. The German High Command understood this. It changed its strategy radically. Following the rules of cool reasoning and paying no attention to questions of prestige, it went on the defensive and gradually withdrew its armies from the Nile and the Volga to Central Europe. But this geographical concentration of forces was not enough. The entire German war machine and economy, which had been geared perfectly to the requirements of the war's first phase, had to be changed: the German Army, reared in the spirit of dashing offensive, had also to be trained for the harder task of large-scale withdrawals; new weapons had to be invented and mass-produced; the German nation, accustomed to headlines telling of captured cities and countries, had to adjust itself to the idea of a long war; and the occupied countries had to be mobilized to a far greater degree than before.

To the Anglo-Americans, who had always claimed that the Germans were only able to fight a war of the first-phase type, it came as a surprise when they saw how quickly and completely Germany adapted herself to the requirements of the second phase. Yet there is nothing surprising in this. Had the German nation been fighting in order to win a quick and easy victory, it might have been thrown off its balance by the realization that there was no longer any chance of this. But Germany is not just fighting for *victory*: she is fighting for a *decision*, the decision over her life and her future, the decision whether the Europe of tomorrow will be a Soviet state or an American colony—or a community of nations based on the spirit of neither Marx nor Morgan but on that of a European socialism. In comparison to this goal, the question of short war or long war, yes, even of the temporary loss of German territory, shrinks in significance, and once the Germans realized that the decision could not be brought about by the methods of the first phase they calmly went to work to ac-

complish it by the methods of the second phase. For this they needed time. And so, in this phase of matched power, we find a completely different attitude toward the time factor: now it was Germany who was stalling for time, while the Allies were in a hurry "to finish her off" before she was able to adjust herself to the new situation.

Germany was aided in gaining time by the Greater East Asia War, where two of her enemies are locked in a grim struggle with her ally Japan. After having met with disastrous defeats, these common foes of Germany and Japan were only able to wrest small parts of their former losses from the heroically fighting Nipponese armed forces at the cost of immense effort and heavy losses. The battles in the Pacific contributed appreciably toward delaying the full force of the Allied counter-offensive and enabling Germany to prepare for the next round.

#### THE CHANCES FOR SUPERIORITY

The great question is: how long is the phase of matched power to last? Will it be followed by a new phase of supreme superiority on one side? Let us consider the possibilities one by one.

We can take it for granted that both sides are doing their utmost to gain unchallenged superiority. What are the Allied chances of obtaining it? The Anglo-Americans have been preparing the invasion for years. They waited so long that they became the object of scorn and ridicule on the part of their Red allies. (One of the Soviet jokes told in England before the invasion had it that Churchill was roused from bed at three o'clock in the morning by an urgent telephone call. As he took up the receiver he heard Stalin's familiar voice saying: "Hello, Winnie, I'm in Calais; you can come now, the danger is over.") In the end, many people thought the Allies had built up such overwhelming forces during all this time that they would crush the German armies once the invasion had started. Indeed, we have every reason to assume that since June 6 the Allies have thrown everything they possess—not yet in quantity, but in quality—into the struggle. But the first month and a half of the invasion battle has produced nothing that promises to endow the Allies with the desired complete superiority over the Germans. It also seems unlikely that they still have something up their sleeve which would suddenly give them this superiority. Why should

they be wasting their strength in terrible battles of attrition if they have the power simply to overwhelm the Germans?

In following the battle in Normandy one can hardly escape the conclusion that the Allies greatly underestimated German strength. The German press has probably contributed to this with its realistic descriptions of Germany's situation. Some people might even think that the wicked Germans purposely exaggerated their difficulties in order to make the populations in the Allied camp relax their efforts, deceived by the prospect that "it is all over anyway."

The Germans are more likely than the Allies to have new weapons ready or in preparation which they have not yet thrown into the fray. They have a far better reason for holding them in reserve: to wait until sufficiently large Allied forces have landed to make their employment worth while. The way in which the German High Command postponed the use of the V-1 to just the right moment speaks for the coolness of its decisions. There have been hints from Berlin that the road from nothing to V-1 was far harder and longer than that from V-1 to V-2 and V-3.

#### THAT LAST OUNCE

But in an objective analysis such as this we must state that we cannot know for certain whether such new weapons would be able to end the phase of matched power and reinstall Germany in the unquestioned superiority of the first phase. Hence we must also consider the remaining possibility—namely, that the phase of matched power will continue. In this case, what would be the outlook for Europe, apart from the gradual pulverization of France, Italy, Eastern Europe by the war, apart from the mounting destruction of French, German, and English towns from the air?

If two men of equal strength fight in the ring, the referee awards the victory, after an agreed number of rounds, to the man who has won the most points. But if there is no agreed number of rounds and no referee to supervise the fight—and that is exactly the situation in Europe today—they will fight until one or the other is too exhausted to continue. If they are evenly matched, the chances are that by then the other will also be near collapse, and that it is just the winner's additional ounce of strength which carries him through beyond his adversary's fall. This extra ounce is a

matter of spiritual rather than material strength. Who is more likely to have it?

The Red armies have stepped across their borders into foreign lands. There is dreadful misery at home. Will such ideas as "revenge," "world revolution," or "liberation of the Slavs," be able to give them that last ounce of strength? The Americans fighting on European soil are many thousands of miles from their homes. Even according to their own figures, their losses in the second World War have already surpassed those of the first. The question uppermost in their minds must be: Why do we have to fight and die here in Europe? The attitude toward the war as we found it expressed in recent American magazines and described in our June and July issues is not exactly the one to give that final determination to carry on to the end. Moreover, both the USSR and the USA are huge empires which would remain among the richest in the world even if their armies were not to return victorious.

The psychological situation of Germany is totally different. By their insistence on unconditional surrender and by the widely broadcast discussion of their postwar plans, her enemies have made it quite clear to every German what is in store for him if the Allies should ever be in a position to dictate peace. If a German soldier were to try to explain why he fights the way he does—to his last bullet even when his own position seems hopeless—he would probably give an answer similar to the one *Time's* correspondent John Scott recently received. Scott describes how at a Swedish airport he happened to meet a German who had just arrived by plane from Germany. Their conversation ended in this way:

"We must win," the German said suddenly in a low voice. He looked up at me and repeated: "We've got to win." He raised his voice and struck the table lightly with his hands to emphasize his words. "We *must* win!" The German's face had no animosity, but simply blind resolution.

And if one were to ask that German on what he bases his hopes that his country will win the great decision of this war, he would say, not in these words but to this effect: We will either win back our military superiority and fling the intruders out of Europe in such a way that they will never dare to come back, or, at the worst, we will make them pay such a terrible price for every square mile of European soil that they themselves will decide to get out while there are still some of them left.