

The Western Experts

Look at Soviet Strength

COLONEL W. R. KINTNER

THE RED ARMY. Edited by B. H. Liddell Hart. Harcourt. Brace. \$6.

The brutal suppression of the Hungarian revolution by Soviet forces was doubtless made possible by occupation soldiers who "could be depended on to carry out and enforce orders without regard to sense or personal feeling." The fact that the Red Army, prime instrument of Soviet Power, has apparently changed so little in fundamental character makes B. H. Liddell Hart's latest book, from which the above observation is taken, particularly timely. As long as Soviet military leaders continue to support Communism, this ideologically tattered movement can survive in eastern Europe.

Despite the efforts of the western world to produce a military strategy geared primarily to nuclear warheads, supersonic aircraft, and ballistic missiles, western statesmen and strategists have not been able to exorcise the specter of the Red Army from their counsels. Soviet success in developing strategic air forces and the world's largest submarine fleet was not achieved at the expense of ground troops. True, there has been some reduction in their numbers, but this has been balanced by a steady program of army modernization. On the strength of the manpower reduction the British are said to have suggested, at the December meeting of the NATO Council, that SHAPE land forces be reduced so that only a thin line—a "trip wire"—would divide the West from the land striking power of the Soviet Union—a concept implying a belief that the Kremlin has no intention of again making book on the Red Army.

LIDDELL HART's effort represents a counterbalance designed "to provide a reliable account, and comprehensive picture, of the Soviet Army in all its aspects." The services of many outstanding writers were enlisted in this attempt to piece to-

gether "the knowledge of . . . experts in various countries who have made a special study, or have had direct experience, of particular aspects and organs of this Army." The roll call is impressive, including such notables as Generals Maxime Weygand, Heinz Guderian, and A. Guillaume, and many other British, French, and American students of the military art.

I read the work with considerable expectation, seeking insight into what Marshal Zhukov meant when he told the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party in February, 1956, that "we are building up the armed forces on the basic assumption that the means and forms of the future war will differ from past war in many respects."



But this survey of the revolution of the Red Army proved to be far more of a history than an acute analysis of the present organization or a presentation of concepts for future developments. Its chief value lies in revealing those aspects of Soviet military tradition and the psychology of the Russian soldier which we are likely to face in the future, regardless of the tactics, organization, or weapons the Soviet forces may employ.

Contention and Contradiction

Since 1945 the Soviet Army has undergone two major reorganizations. Supposedly, the changes effected in the tactics and organizational structure of the Red Army were designed to give it much greater tactical flexibility and adaptability for meeting the requirements of atomic conflict, while at the same time retaining its power for conventional operations. It would be almost too much to expect a clear picture of the significance and scope of these reorganizations to emerge from the twenty-odd separate chapters that make up the second half of the book, particularly when individual contributions vary in quality and in perception. Furthermore, there are a number of readily apparent contradictions.

Some of the authors contend that although the Soviet high command is well aware of the need for making changes in both organization and tactics, it has been impossible for the Kremlin to make more than marginal improvements. On one extreme we are told that the Soviet system cannot adequately foster the individual initiative and decentralization of command that modern warfare requires. On the other hand, from the record of the last war we are advised that "the Soviet command has shown that it was willing to learn from experience" and that "the Germans often paid the penalty for failing to realize this Russian ability to effect a change."

SOME excellent thumbnail sketches of the various Red Army combat arms and supporting forces are included: "The Soviet Army's tank forces are the best of all the branches of the Soviet land forces and constitute their real striking forces . . .

the tactics and techniques employed by Soviet infantry will be only slightly modified from the techniques employed in the Second World War. The artillery is a highly significant element of the Soviet combat team . . . greater emphasis on anti-aircraft artillery of air defense of tactical troops is also indicated."

The treatment of Soviet air defense is outdated, in view of what is known publicly regarding Soviet developments of guided missiles for air-defense purposes. The fact that the book was planned for earlier publication may explain the failure of any of the authors to consider the impact of guided missiles on the Red Army. The neglect of army tactical air forces, which in 1945 comprised the entire Soviet air force, seems a notable omission.

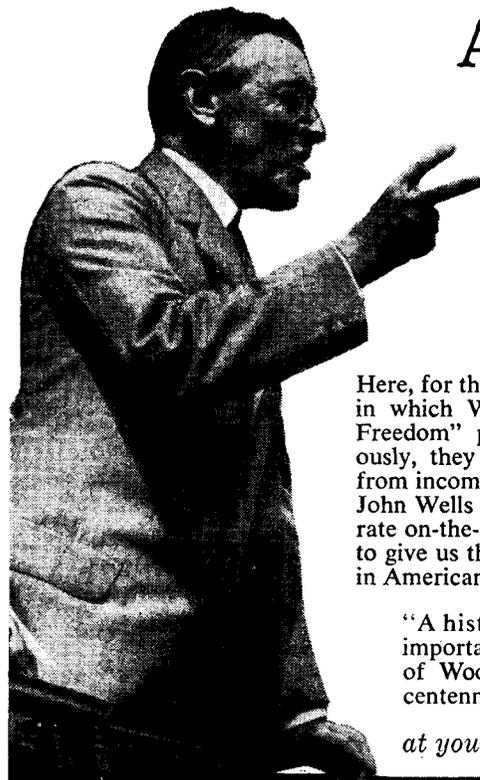
Morale and Education

The state of morale of the Soviet forces and the continued necessity for political indoctrination of the Soviet soldier are well presented. The soldier in the Red Army is characterized by a quip supposedly current among its men: "What is a soldier? A piece of flesh wrapped in a greatcoat and dirty foot-rags." We are well advised that the Soviet soldier "has not the same intense resentment toward authority which the free-born Westerner would feel," even though some Soviet soldiers reportedly balked at playing the butcher in Hungary.

In discussing the significant relation between the Soviet educational system and the effectiveness of the Red Army, one writer contends that "poor educational qualifications of the Soviet people disclose a weakness in their reservoir of officer material." Yet Sir Eric Ashby's chapter on "Science and the Soviet Army" asserts that "the first cause of the Soviet ascendancy in science and technology" can be found in a highly effective and directed educational system.

The New Weapons

The American authority on atomic warfare, Colonel George Reinhardt, had the primary task of analyzing the crucial impact of these new weapons on the Soviet Army, a question also treated in some detail by Colonels Louis B. Ely and F. O.



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Miksche. Colonel Miksche uses this forum to urge once again that the western powers abandon their emphasis on "bombs that are too big" at the expense of "armies that are too small," since the Soviet Union has both. Colonel Ely believes that most of the advantages in atomic conflict will continue to accrue to the West, since the rate of changes in the military art will be more advantageous "to the flexible personnel of the Western armies." Colonel Reinhardt contends that "Russian Communist military stature has not diminished with the advent of nuclear weapons, which it has apparently absorbed as efficiently as the West—and with less disrupting repercussions." It would seem that the atomic experts are also up in the air.

A Comprehensive Strategy

Outstanding among the many lessons contained in the book is Guderian's warning that "Russian strategy, hitherto continental, will automatically become global. Based on a large and secure land mass, a strong air force and navy will enable Russia to conduct far-reaching operations overseas." Guderian concurs in Marshal Zhukov's statement to the Twentieth Congress: The Soviet government is "devoting a special attention to the development of the air force, as the most important means of insuring our mother-land's superiority. . . . In building up the navy, we assume that the naval fighting will acquire immeasurably greater significance." In the future, therefore, we can assume that the Red Army operations will be integrated in a comprehensive Soviet strategy, consistent with Zhukov's words: "Without their well-organized co-ordination [of all three services] it is impossible to wage a modern war successfully."

IT is unfortunate that the editor of this book made little effort to present the many interesting facts covered by the individual contributions into an integrated analysis of the potential role of the Red Army in the emerging Soviet strategy. But that would be almost another volume. Liddell Hart's *The Red Army* whets the appetite, but we must still look elsewhere for the main course.

The Pound, the Dollar, And World Trade

AUGUST HECKSCHER

STERLING-DOLLAR DIPLOMACY — ANGLO-AMERICAN COLLABORATION IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF MULTILATERAL TRADE, by Richard N. Gardner. Oxford. \$6.75.

This well-organized and carefully written work is a study of Anglo-American economic co-operation from the start of the Second World War to 1947. Mr. Gardner is a reflective scholar, able to see things in their broader context, sensitive to both sides of an argument.

The start of the war found an emphasis on economic co-operation, which, in view of the issues that subsequently developed, seems somewhat unrealistic. Mr. Gardner points out shrewdly that such basic American tendencies as universalism and anti-colonialism fed the enthusiasm for multilateral financial and commercial arrangements. The ever-wily Churchill was quite prepared at the Atlantic Conference of 1941 to use economics as a lever for the broad political support he was seeking. These first stages are marked by the influence of Cordell Hull, to whom it seemed that freer trade would solve almost all of the world's ills.

Keynes and White

Among the experts, two men, whose pictures are shown together facing the title page, played a crucial role. They were both academicians who showed a surprising aptitude for negotiation and institution building. On the British side the protagonist was, of course, John Maynard Keynes. On the American side it was Harry Dexter White. Mr. Gardner deals prudently with White, recognizing the ambiguity which attaches to his name, yet asserting that he may well have "put forward his financial plans in the sincere belief that they would further the interests of the United States." Keynes and White laid the basis for multilateralism and shaped the institutions of practical co-operation between Britain and the United States. The

Bretton Woods organization, the Anglo-American financial agreement, and the charter of the International Trade Organization all bore the stamp of their labors.

THE trouble with these plans, as Mr. Gardner points out, is that they overstressed the role of economics; they assumed that economic policy could by itself determine political realities. Moreover, there was a constant tendency to bridge over real differences in the British and American viewpoints, substituting legal formulas for true consensus. When the war ended, it was clear that emergency financial measures of a kind not heretofore envisaged would be needed if the burden of the fighting was not to prove disastrous to the very fabric of British life. The British loan agreement, signed in December, 1945, formed a new chapter and showed how far the underlying assumptions of the war years had altered. By 1947 the emphasis had shifted away from the pursuit of multilateralism to a feverish attempt to shore up the western cause through such measures as aid to Greece and the Marshall Plan.

Mr. Gardner's closing chapters are a rather melancholy account of plans running out: "The End of Bretton Woods"; "The End of the Loan"; "The End of the I.T.O." The author concludes on a note of moderate hope. The years since 1947, he says, have seen an expansion of world trade, a more secure balance of payments for Britain, and an increased awareness on the part of the United States of the actual conditions, political and economic, that face its allies. Yet the goals of the early war years are still far from realized. Perhaps in the nature of things they must remain unrealized; but it is well to recall that these goals existed and that men strove unremittingly, and for a while with surprising success, to attain them.