

Air Power Given High Praise For Role in Soviet Successes

Maj. De Sevresky's column appears on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

By MAJ. ALEXANDER P. DE SEVERSKY.

In his speech on the 26th anniversary of the Soviet Revolution, Premier Stalin acknowledged the contribution to Russian victories being made by Allied air attacks against the common German enemy. Since Russian recognition of this factor has been grudging in the past, such acknowledgment by the top man helps to put the military picture in better perspective.

Russia is the one battle arena where vast ground operations on the orthodox mile-by-mile pattern have been under way. Because of the paucity of detailed information about the aviation phase of those operations, the role of air power has remained badly blurred. Yet it is possible to show that even on the great Russian front, United Nations aerial superiority has been directly and indirectly, a decisive force.

Clear-cut Soviet aerial control undoubtedly has been a major element in shaping the magnificent Russian victories. Had the Germans been able to capture dominance in the skies, the rapid advances of the Red Army would have been impossible. Writing recently in Red Star, organ of the Red Army, a Lt. Col. N. Denisov attested:

"From the first hours of the offensive to this day, the Soviet airmen, despite the utmost complexity of the situation in the air, remain

the unchallenged masters of the skies over the battlefields and German rear services."

U. S. Aided Situation. The fact that we have been able to supply Russia with many thousands of our best tactical aircraft helps explain that crucial mastery. True, the Russians have produced some excellent airplanes themselves, but the Allied contribution provided the large margin of superiority—the balance of power, to use a political phrase—that clinched their advantage of the skies.

In a sense Russia is the beneficiary of mistaken military thinking on our part. Because we visualized the war we were going to fight as an old-fashioned surface struggle between great armies and navies, our aeronautical industry was geared primarily for the production of great masses of small tactical airplanes to assist such surface actions. When war started, it became apparent that there was no work for our vast output of tactical aircraft. There were no major land fronts in the Russian mass of accessory airplanes could be used.

Russia's entry into the struggle on our side, however, offered vital employment for these planes. Germany and Russia are on the same continent, without any water barrier, and the struggle has been one for occupation and possession of territory. That sort of war called for large armies, which in turn required huge quantities of precisely the kind of auxiliary aviation we could most readily spare. Our strategic misfortune, it may be said, thus served to bolster Russia's surface war.

British Build Bomber Force. After the Battle of Britain, the British grasped the decisive possibilities of strategic bombing and began construction of a great bombing force which by 1942 undertook the assault on German industries on a large scale. American participation at that time was very slight, as we

did not really swing into full production of heavy bombers until that year. As late as February, 1942, it should be recalled, we were still giving battleships, tanks and even trucks higher priorities than the four-engine bomber. But with the growing realization that the continent could not be invaded until Germany was sufficiently softened from the air, American strategy was revised and construction of heavy bombers increased. As a result, we were able recently to undertake direct bombardment of Germany and German-held industries on a scale comparable to the British. Thus the United Nations have been taking part in the Russian action in two ways. On the one hand we were providing aircraft to strengthen the aviation umbrella over the Russian battlefield without which the Germans could never have been defeated. On the other, we were reducing Hitler's airpower through the destruction of its industrial sources, lines of communication and supply. In other words, we were raising Russia's air potential and simultaneously lowering Germany's air potential. Without in any way detracting from the amazing skill and heroism of the Red Army, fairness to the common effort requires that this two-way squeeze be recognized and accorded its due share in the Russian triumphs.

Planes Aid War on U-boats. The part played by the Allied airpower in defeating the submarines and keeping supply lines to Russia open is another element that should not be overlooked. Until we finally understood that the submarine was a problem for airpower and equipped ourselves with long-range bombers to destroy the submarines in operation all over the seven seas and began heavy bombardment of submarine bases and installations, as well as the plants making various component parts for U-boats, we could not cope with the undersea menace to our shipping.

Even in purely land warfare in Russia, it thus appears, victory must be credited in large part to air all over the face of the globe. Without the Allied contribution of auxiliary airplanes, without our strategic bombardment of Germany without the aerial offensive against the U-boat menace, Russia's chances of licking the invaders would have been greatly, perhaps fatally, undermined.

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Heating Engineers to Hold Fuel Conservation Forum

Four authorities on fuel in the war effort will present a fuel conservation forum at a public meeting of the District Chapter of the American Society of Heating and Ventilating Engineers Wednesday at 8:15 p.m. in the auditorium of the Potomac Electric Power Co., Tenth and E streets N.W.

The speakers and their subjects will be: Walter Hochuli, national director

of Marketing, Petroleum Administration for War, "Petroleum Has Gone to War"; Allen W. Therson, head conversion engineer, Solid Fuel Administration, "Fuel Saboteurs"; David M. De Bard, deputy director, conservation division of War Production Board, "Can Voluntary Conservation Save Fuel?" and Brooks Darlington, program manager OWI Fuel Conservation program, "Review of National Information Efforts Behind Fuel Conservation."

The Fuel User's Pledge, sponsored by the American Society of Heating and Ventilating Engineers, will be discussed at the meeting. Started last winter in the interest of national security and for greater personal comfort in the Nation's home, the pledge involves measures to conserve heat and fuel at all times.

The heating engineers point out that fuel oil will again be rationed, and that anthracite coal in the Northeastern States also will fall under the rationing program.

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Dr. Maze to Address Office Manager Group

Dr. Coleman Maze, director of the Department of Management, School of Commerce, New York University, will address the Washington National Office Management Association at 7 p.m. Wednesday at the Hotel Lee Sheraton, it was announced today.

Dr. Maze will talk on "Stimulating High Employee Morale in Wartime."

Course to Open Here on Parliamentary Law

Miss Miriam T. Rooney will give a five-week course in parliamentary law under the sponsorship of the District Chapter of the International Federation of Catholic Alumnae, 1015 N street N.W., Miss Kathryn E. Bowers, governor of the Federation, announced today. Alumnae members may register Wednesday at 8 p.m. at Carroll Hall, 924 G street N.W.

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Maj. De Sevresky.

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