



THE estimates of Russia's military strength which have been published since Germany's dramatic invasion have, for the most part, been ultra-cautious and conservative, two guesses placing the Soviet's air fleet at 2,500 and 3,000 machines respectively.

While nearly everything connected with the great Socialist experiment in Russia has been obscured by the wishful thinking of both the right and the left, it is interesting to note again the survey of the Soviet's strength made in *The Military Strength of the Powers*, a book by Max Werner, published early in 1939 by Victor Gollancz. Many things in both Germany and Russia have undoubtedly changed since the book was written, and military statistics are seldom easy to assess at any time, much less during a war or a programme of re-armament. Max Werner's book, however, has become almost a military textbook, and is generally accepted as the most complete survey of its kind yet attempted.

Werner's comparisons of the relative strengths of Germany and Poland were proved by the events of September and October, 1939. His emphasis on the theme that Germany and Russia must eventually come to grips and his exhaustive analysis of Germany's chances of waging a successful war on more than one front, seemed to be discredited by the Russo-German Non-Aggression Pact. If it does nothing else, Germany's latest move would seem to bear out his theories in this direction.

The Red Army's Qualities

Early in the book, Werner admits the dispute concerning the fighting qualities of the Red Army. "Three circumstances make it difficult to form an objective judgment on the Red Army," he says. "They are plain ignorance, conservatism in thought, and simple prejudice. As a result, the military experts of Europe and their professional journals are not keeping abreast of Soviet military developments, and even their information is often old. In 1937-38 the European press was publishing figures about Soviet armaments which referred for the most part to the beginning of 1935. There is another factor—the association of ideas concerning the old Russian Army or the Red Army of the Civil War period, with the Red Army of to-day. However, the Red Army of to-day exists in an entirely new military epoch, and it has very few points of contact

Max Werner's Estimate Of Soviet's Military Power

even with the Red Army as it existed in 1929, before the carrying-out of the First Five-Year Plan. Since then, the Red Army has developed in a period of permanent technical revolution."

Statistics and Opinions

The growth of military expenditure in the Soviet budget since 1933 offers us a useful way of gauging the progressive importance placed on defence, says Werner:

| | Milliard roubles |
|-----------|------------------|
| 1933 | 1.5 |
| 1934 | 5 |
| 1935 | 8 |
| 1936 | 14.8 |
| 1937 | 22.4 |
| 1938 | 34 |

When it comes to statistics and opinions regarding quality and performance, Werner is all the more interesting and convincing in view of the fact that he seldom quotes Soviet authorities, preferring the opinions of English, French and, for the most part, German experts. Discussing the quality of Soviet war industries, he quotes the German *Borsen-Zeitung* as follows:—

"Those defects and weaknesses of the Russian economic system as a whole do not apply in the same degree to war industries. Nothing but first-class material, well-trained and highly-skilled workers and



HERE is a photograph of Max Werner, author of *"The Military Strength of the Powers,"* but his name is not really Max Werner. Since he has always insisted that its divulgence would bring totalitarian reprisals on his family, his name has never been divulged. Asked who he is, Werner says in German, "When I write a book, I expect the book to be judged on its merits alone. As to where I was born, what my nationality is, what political positions I may have held—these I consider are my personal concerns."

In April of this year Werner published a second book, *"Battle for the World,"* copies of which have not yet arrived in New Zealand, but which was reviewed recently in *"Time,"* the American news-magazine. According to *"Time"*: "His book is notable for his total grasp of World War II. and the social, political, military and diplomatic forces involved in it; for his smooth organisation of his varied special knowledge. There are excellent chapters on the military preparations for World War II. or the reason for the lack of them; on the diplomatic preparations, on the crisis of French and British war doctrine, on the inter-relation of strategy and politics. Less convincing is Werner's analysis of the Russo-Finnish war."

Werner now claims that Russia's military strength is twice as great as Germany's.

technically highly-developed industrial resources are ever used to satisfy military requirements. That is to say, the Red Army and its economic basis are largely independent of normal economic life as a whole, and they are governed by quite different conditions. The performance of the war industries is therefore very considerably superior to that of the industries working to supply civilian needs."

Oil in Abundance

The self-sufficiency of the Soviet Union, greater even than that of the United States, makes her war economy a comparatively simple matter, Werner points out. The chief factor is the possession of oil in abundance. General Eimannsberger, a German military authority, who is a recognised theoretician of the tank and army motorisation, has written, "a stream, no, a river of oil must flow constantly into the country which wages modern warfare." The Soviet Union is the only big European Power which possesses oil in such abundance.

What is the numerical strength of the Red Army? Guesses have varied from a couple of million to one recent American estimate of twenty million,

comprising six million of a first line army and the rest trained reserves. After a considerable amount of argument, Werner arrives at a figure for the standing army of 100 infantry divisions, 34 cavalry divisions, 20 to 25 tank brigades (not including the tank units attached to infantry formations), about 100 regiments (40 guns to a regiment) of light artillery, and between 60 and 80 regiments of heavy artillery. Probably about one-third of the infantry divisions is fully motorised, and it must also be remembered that this figure is for 1938, since when Red Army leaders have doubtless been quick to appreciate the lightning success of the German Panzer divisions and the Nazis' increased use of these.

After the standing army, says Werner, we must take into account about two and a-half million first line reserves ("among the best trained men in Europe") and other trained reserves to a total of about twelve and a-half million. Every year, he points out, the number of fully-trained reserves thoroughly acquainted with modern military technique will be augmented by 650,000. Altogether, working on these figures, the Soviet should by now have an army of nearly 17,000,000 men, all of whom have received at least some military training. The figure may be even higher than this, as Werner claims that, owing to the calling up of additional classes, the annual manpower resources of the Red Army have for some years been in the neighbourhood of 2,400,000 men.

"Twenty Thousand Tanks"

Number of tanks and degree of mechanisation have come to be accepted as some indication of an army's qualifications to engage successfully in modern warfare. How stands the Red Army? In 1935 the German General Guderian, recognised as one of the foremost authorities on motorisation, observed: "Ten thousand tanks, 150,000 tractors and over 100,000 other motor transport vehicles place the Red Army at the head of all other armies." These figures have probably been increased greatly since 1935, Werner says, and 20,000 tanks for 1938-39 is not in the least exaggerated. "If the productive capacity of the Soviet tractor industry is taken into consideration, it becomes clear that the possibilities of motorisation in the Red Army are practically unlimited."

Argument Over Air Force

It is in regard to the Soviet Air Force that armchair experts have shown most variance. In 1935 the German expert, Colonel von Bulow, wrote: "In a very few years' time Russia's air fleet will

(Continued on next page)