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HOW STRONG IS RUSSIA?

(Continued from previous page)

probably consist of 10,000 'planes, and it will then be so strong that no single air power or even combination of air-powers can equal it." "We now know that the Red Air Force reached this strength in 1937" adds Werner, and he assumes that in the event of war in 1939, Russia would be able to put into the air 12,000 machines, including 2000 heavy bombers (each carrying a bomb load of three tons or more). A figure suggested last week in America for the present Soviet air fleet is 30,000 machines. (On the other hand, Oliver Stewart, the BBC air expert, gives his guess as "about 5000 front-line machines.")

Other items on the credit side of Russia's war preparedness, according to Werner, are the Red Army's highly developed chemical arm ("It is interesting to note that whenever German expert literature wishes to give an example of exemplary organisation of the chemical arm, it refers to the Red Army"); literally hundreds of thousands of trained parachutists and air infantry reservists; a minimum of five trained reserves for every active pilot in the air force; and a system of fortifications on the Western frontiers of the U.S.S.R. which was described in 1935 by a high French officer as being equal to the Maginot Line.

Werner speaks highly of the quality both of the Red Army's mechanised units and of their air fleet. "Soviet aeroplanes proved their value under war conditions in the Spanish civil war, where their clear superiority over the German and Italian machines was demonstrated throughout 1936-37." Werner also notes the Red Air Force's phenomenal rate of re-equipment, and presumes that it is keeping abreast of new types.

Points of Weakness

"The military strength of the Soviet Union is, of course, not beyond criticism, and it has its weak sides. The latter are generally speaking more a matter of the military strength of the country in the

broader sense of the terms, i.e., a matter of war potential rather than of the army itself . . . first of all, there is the lack of proportion created by the extraordinarily rapid development of the economic system and the resultant lack of cohesion between its various sectors . . . in addition, in the years 1936-38, the atmosphere of doubt and uncertainty created by political purges adversely affected productions as a whole, and war production suffered as well. Then there is the low level of quality in certain branches of industry caused by the insufficient training and technical skill of the workers employed, and by the insufficient rationalisation of production."

Morale of the Army

It is interesting to note that Werner expresses no doubts about the capabilities of the Red Army's officer corps or about the morale of the ranks. He quotes an article in the conservative British journal *Round Table*, which declared that in the matter of morale, there was hardly another army in the world which would compare with the Red Army.

The overwhelming majority of the higher officers and members of the General Staff, he says, are between the ages of 25 and 40. Purges of the officers corps, however disturbing their effect undoubtedly was, led to no change in the strategic line of the army.

Finally, Werner points out that so far from being a weapon of defence only, Red Army plans are based on counter-offence and attack just as bold in conception as those of the German Army. And surveying at length the main fronts on which a German advance would be likely to take place, he concludes that Germany's position would be less favourable than the situation of the Red Army for a counter-offensive.

Just how accurate is Max Werner's thesis, it is, of course, impossible to say. The issue is being proved in battle even now. Some day, with luck, we shall know the verdict.

Advice On Health (No. 9)

TUBERCULOSIS - [II]

(Written for "The Listener" by DR. H. B. TURBOTT, Director of the Division of School Hygiene, Health Department.)

LAST week I dealt with the origin of tuberculosis, its symptoms, and its easy spread. Now to consider the early detection, before one knows it is in the body, and before it has had time to do much damage! Modern science must help us.

Perhaps a little history will be of interest at this point. There is evidence that tuberculosis — it was known as phthisis (this funny little word is pronounced "thysis") — afflicted the early Egyptians, as evidence of it has been found in mummified bodies. Hippocrates, the renowned Greek physician, who lived from 460 to 377 B.C., and who is called the Father of Medicine, knew about it, but it was not until the end of the seventeenth century that the cause of this malignant disease was first suspected. An English doctor discovered positively that tubercles—little nodules like grains of

sand found in the lungs of phthisis victims—were associated with the malady. Laennec, a Frenchman who invented the stethoscope, and who himself died from phthisis, and Pasteur, the father of preventive medicine, also contributed greatly to modern enlightenment, but it was not until 1882 that a German country doctor, Robert Koch, proved that the tubercle bacillus was the direct and only cause of tuberculosis—in other words, he proved that there can be no tuberculosis without a tuberculosis germ. It was from this point that science moved forward at a more rapid and more confident pace.

The Tuberculin Test

By means of what is known as the tuberculin test, it is very easy to find out whether a person is infected. The test is simple and harmless, and is one of medical science's most valuable aids, particularly in detecting the beginnings of tuberculosis in children. A specially

(Continued on next page)