

Rumanian divisions (of very low fighting value) some were engaged in the Kuban and the rest in police duties behind the lines.

The Finnish divisions were almost inactive last year. The loss of the other satellite forces—Italian and Hungarian—was again, according to Russian claims, made more than good by the addition of 33 German divisions to the 179 divisions used in the offensive of 1942.

Last year, however, the German corps and divisions were very often merely nominal units; and Russian reports have frequently spoken of "detachments whipped together from auxiliary forces."

Even on the basis of nominal figures the Russian margin of superiority in man-power has been of the order of 50 per cent.; actually it has been substantially larger.

The other factor which has contributed to the continuous Russian attack has been a change in the technique of fighting. Reports have repeatedly suggested a considerable "demodernization" in the weapons employed by the enemy. Fewer tanks and fewer aeroplanes have been employed by the Germans than at any time before.

On the Russian side the latest victories have been the triumph of the gun. The concentration of artillery fire on some sectors of the front has been described by Russian Commanders as ten times stronger than the concentration at Verdun in the last war. This is not to say that the tank and aeroplane have been absent from the battle. The Russians seem, in fact, to have attained at least equality in these weapons. But tanks and aircraft have been much less conspicuous than the gun. For the conquest of open steppe the Russian Command relied on the tank; for the reduction of strong points and fortresses, on the gun; and for the forcing of swamps and forests round Bryansk, on cavalry.

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On August 22 last year the Council of People's Commissars issued a decree on "immediate measures for the restoration of national economy in the districts liberated from German occupation." The decree, which filled several closely-printed pages in the newspapers *Pravda* and

Izvestiya, is in many respects a unique document. It marks the beginning of the "journey back" of the civilian population to the liberated areas.

It also reveals something of the desolation and impoverishment which those areas have suffered through war and the German occupation. Their economic restoration has been centrally planned, and though the instructions say very little about the general principles on which the work of reconstruction is to be based, they provide an enormous amount of the most detailed and meticulous information about the first steps which are now to be taken.

Strikingly the decree contains no hint about the restoration of the industrial life in the liberated towns. It deals almost exclusively with the rehabilitation of agriculture and railway transport, and with elementary tasks of housing and sanitation, without which no start can be made with reconstruction.

The first chapter of the decree provided for the return of evacuated cattle to the collective farms in the provinces of Kalinin, Smolensk, Kursk, Orel, Voronezh, Rostov, Stalingrad, and Stavropol.

The total number of cattle, horses, sheep, and goats to be re-evacuated was about 600,000; and in the last days of August an extraordinary and dramatic trek started from the remote interior of Russia, and even from Asia. Throughout September droves of cattle were moving steadily westward, and the trek was due to end on October 15. Shortage of transport accounted for the fact that the animals could not be carried by rail; they had to be driven on foot for hundreds of miles, sometimes for more than a thousand miles, as, for instance, from Kazakhstan to the district of Voronezh.

The extent to which the returned animals will meet the needs of agriculture in the liberated areas can only be properly judged by comparing their total numbers with the pre-war numbers of cattle in the districts. The Orel district possessed 857,000 horned cattle in 1938; under the decree it received 21,000. The Smolensk district had 889,000 horned cattle and received 48,000; it had 394,000 horses and received 7,000.