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STUDY OF EXPERIENCE IN INDUSTRIAL MOBILIZATION
IN WORLD WAR II

For Henry, Nov. 46

INDUSTRIAL MOBILIZATION IN THE
U.S.S.R.

Industrial mobilization in the USSR. Industrial College of the Armed Forces. Sep 45. 4p

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THE ARMY INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH

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and new industrial centers were created in the Ural Mountains and Siberia. The third Five-Year Plan, designed to carry forward the earlier movements but also to develop smaller manufacturing plants, might finally have attended to the needs of the consumer if its course had not been interrupted by the outbreak of the war.

National Planning and its Execution The general economic and industrial advance of the Soviet Union under the Five-Year Plan system was such as to permit the country to resist the onslaught of Germany and finally to drive the invader out and pursue him into his own territory. It is of interest, in considering this economic development as a long-continued mobilization for war, to note the strong governmental element of planning and execution that would be expected in such a mobilization. The Soviet leaders initiated the Five-Year projects, determined the goals and the time in which they should be reached, saw to it sternly that the results were attained. Their economic planning prepared the country materially and psychologically for the great and successful military effort. With means of production government-owned and government-operated, with manpower and all phases of civilian economy under close control, the Soviet Union had a good foundation for the economic and military prosecution of war.

Effect of the Collectivization of Agriculture One of the principal aims of the Five-Year Plans was the collectivization and mechanization of agriculture. The regime encountered great opposition for a year or two in the period of the first plan, and it was not until the second was well advanced that success was attained. With the obvious fundamental advantages of an increased, more dependable output of food for army and people, there was an important military advantage that is often overlooked. Thousands of young men from the farms of the country, having learned to handle the tractors and other items of mechanical equipment introduced during collectivization, were far better prepared to operate mechanical military equipment than they could possibly have been under the former circumstances of small individual farm exploitation.

Industrial Standing of the Soviet Union The remarkable advance of the Soviet Union in industry during the Five-Year Plan period can be indicated by a few figures showing her relative standing among manufacturing nations of the world, as well as certain actual quantities produced. In 1928, at the beginning of the specifically planned development, the Soviet Union stood sixth in the production of pig-iron; in 1940 her position was third. In electric power the country moved from tenth place to third. From a still lower place among the nations in general manufacturing and industrial activity she rose likewise to third place.

Coal, Iron, Agricultural Machinery A coal output of around forty million metric tons for 1929 was increased to almost one hundred thirty-three million in 1935, and the output of iron ore from eight million to twenty-six million metric tons. Products of the metal-working and machine building industries were valued at three billion rubles at the period and, with proper adjustments, at thirty-three billion in 1938. The increase of tractors, trucks and combines during the second Five-Year Plan was the chief foundation for the rapid collectivization of agriculture put through during those years; in tractor production itself, the Soviet Union moved from fourth to second place in the world between 1928 and 1940. The tractor plants had an important bearing on war production when the need came, owing to their adaptability for tank manufacture.

Russian Economy in World War I and World War II The conflict with Germany in World War I was lost to Russia, apart from all question of fighting abilities, because the inferior Russian economy went down before the economic superiority of Germany. The striking economic development of the Soviet Union in the inter-war period, taken with the results of the Soviet-German conflict in World War II, inevitably appears as a preparation for war. In the rapid building up of Soviet economy fundamental, widespread aspects were necessarily covered before the aspects that were specifically military. It is difficult to perceive when the general movement, which started slowly but was systematized and energized by the Five-Year Plans, took any specific turn that might be called the beginning of economic mobilization for war.

Strategic Shift of Industry The Soviet Union certainly began to look to her defenses when the menace inherent in the Nazi control of Germany became apparent during the second Five-Year Plan; but no sudden, sharp increase of armament manufacture can be indicated. The shift of industry to the east--a strategic movement that was of almost decisive importance in the success of the Soviet Union over Germany--began as far back as 1930, or before, and was in accord with some of the earliest plans for the development of the country. The founders of the Soviet Union had before their vision a modern, progressive state stretching from the Baltic to the Pacific, with an efficient intermingling of mechanized agriculture and industry; to attain this end it was of little value merely to reconstruct Russian industry in its former, very restricted setting. In 1930 Stalin proclaimed the necessity of creating, in addition to the main existing coal and metallurgical base in the southern Ukraine, a second one beyond the Ural Mountains. He designated as this base the combination of Ural ores with the coking coal of the Kuznetsk region farther east. The preliminary move of what became a vast development was the opening of blast furnaces in the Urals at the end of 1931.

Coal Production East of the Urals As the development of industry east of the Urals was an element of great importance in Soviet economy, great efforts were made to advance all phases of the project as rapidly as possible. The extraction of Kuznetsk coal, as an example, showed an increase from three million tons in 1929 to seventeen million in 1938. In comparison with the principal coal region of European Russia-- the Donets Basin of the southern Ukraine,-- figures show that the new "Kuzbas" produced 8 percent of the Soviet Union total in 1928 as against 77 percent of the older "Donbas". In 1936, with the total production greatly increased, the Kuzbas accounted for 14 percent, and the Donbas for 60 percent; by 1939 the annual production of the newer field was up by two and one-half or three million tons, representing probably 16 percent. Another field, Karaganda, had been opened in the meantime between the Urals and Kuznetsk and was already in good production activity.

Industrial Production of the Ural Region Other statistics indicate the important position reached by the Ural metallurgical industry in total Soviet production before the German invasion. Iron ore production of the new region is given as 29 percent; heavy metals 20 percent; high grade metals 25 percent; electric power 12 percent. The new industrial region had already contributed greatly to the general advance of Soviet Industry. After the invasion it formed an important reserve of industrial potential located in a region that was comparatively safe. Production in the Urals continued to expand during the war, it's percentage of the total Soviet production being greatly increased as the Germans overran the Ukraine and took over the older industrial centers.

Shift of Industry during the Invasion An interesting factor in this eastward expansion, operative after war had begun, was the evacuation of industrial plants from cities threatened by the invading forces to the safer regions beyond the Volga. Following accurate plans, and with considerable efficiency under the difficult transport conditions of wartime, the entire machinery and equipment of many factories, with the operating personnel and their families, were moved from Kiev, Karkhov and other southwestern industrial centers to Kuibyshev, other places on the Volga, and to cities in the Ural Mountains and Central Asia. Hastily constructed buildings took their place beside the busy new factories of the region, shelters were quickly erected for the influx of population, and the transplanted facilities were soon operating to good effect.

Conclusion One might well take the expansion of Soviet industry toward the east as typifying the general economic mobilization of the country. It was a development based on national long-range planning; it was carried to the point of useful productivity in time to strengthen the Russian war effort in the crucial period; it continued, scarcely interrupted by the war, to show striking results and promise for the future. The movement illustrates the Soviet Union's combination of natural resources and great ability in organizing and operating industrial projects. It has been of great importance in bringing the country to its present place of prominence among the industrial nations of the world.