

The Armed Forces of Soviet Russia.

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CONTENTS: The Imperial Army; General formation of the Soviet Army; Social and Political Standing of the Soviet Army; Its Racial Composition; Organisation; Commanding Officers; Military Schools; The Food Supply; Military Industries; Conclusion.

THE Imperial Army — which had at times been heavily defeated, but had nevertheless known the greatest victories in having conquered Charles XII, Frederick and Napoleon — ceased to exist in the Spring of 1917.

It is true that the Manchurian campaign, and some of the periods of the Great War proved a failure for us, the reason, however, must be sought in those extraordinary conditions in which the troops had been placed. In Manchuria the army fought at a distance of ten thousand versts from its base, connected only with it by the insufficient tie of the Siberian railway, while the Russian country remained almost entirely indifferent to the war. During the sad year 1915 the army lacked munition, and throughout the whole war it was inferior to the enemy in the matter of technical equipment and means, and as it soon became evident found insufficient moral and material support in its rear. Owing to a number of factors, which it would not do to dwell on here in detail, Russia, as a whole proved unable of developing as full a "potency" of war (to use a current expression) as did her enemies and her Allies.

Now let us try to furnish a short characteristic sketch of the old valiant *Imperial Army*. It was formed on the principle of universal military service, which, however, did not extend to the whole population as an abnormal number of privileges were conceded for family and economic reasons; and moreover, some of the non-Russians were exempt from compulsory military service. Nevertheless, the army of 1 500 000 men represented a solid contingent, partly weakened, however, by the addition of reserves and by the formation of "second turn" infantry divisions when a general mobilisation became necessary.

Thanks to a comparatively long service term, and to the experience which had been acquired in two centuries in training and education, the latter qualification being pervaded by psychological ideas (the bequest of a long succession of generals beginning with Peter the Great and Suvoroff) — thanks to all these circumstances, our permanent army was of a high standard of efficiency. Its backbone, the officers corps, was eager to give its life for Tzar and country, and was bound by those invisible, spiritual ties to the rank and file, which alone can weld a detachment into a cohesive unit. If, in the old Russian army there were defects of a purely military nature, they were redeemed by enormous merits. To sum up; as regards