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**The Largest Conflict in History**

At the beginning of Operation Barbarossa, 22 June 1941, Germany faced a Soviet Army of 5,774,000. The Soviet Union had 316 divisions, 117,600 artillery pieces, 25,700 tanks and 18,700 combat aircraft. The German Wehrmacht at this time had 5,200 tanks, of which only 3,350 were committed to the Eastern front. This gave the Soviets a 4 to 1 advantage in armour. The Luftwaffe had just over 4,000 aircraft to oppose the 18,700 aircraft in the Soviet Air Force. The Soviets therefore had an over 4 to 1 advantage in aircraft too.

**Operation Barbarossa**

Operation Barbarossa was the largest military operation ever launched to that date. It was fought over a 2,900 km front and involved 600,000 motor vehicles and 750,000 horses for the German and European volunteers of this operation to liberate Russia from communism and end the Soviet threat to Europe.

**Unprecedented**

In the first day, one-quarter of the Soviet Union's Air Force was destroyed. The German Blitzkrieg tactics devastated the Red Army and made stupendous progress. By October, over 3 million Red Army soldiers had been taken as Prisoners of War.

**Logistical Nightmare**

However, the further the Wehrmacht advanced into Russia, the more their logistical complications were compounded. The Russian infrastructure was primitive. Their dirt roads turned to mud. To supply the frontline troops became an increasingly impossible assignment. Yet the Wehrmacht was winning and the Red Army was in full retreat.

**American Industry Bolstered the Soviet Union**

What no one had anticipated was the vast amount of aid which the United States of America would give to the Soviet Union. Even before America entered WWII officially, vast quantities of military hardware began being flown via Alaska,

shipped via Murmansk, and trucked through Persia, into Russia.

**Gifts to Stalin**

An official list of military hardware supplied by the USA to the USSR from 1941, includes: 7,056 tanks; 14,795 military aircraft; 51,503 jeeps; 375,883 trucks; 35,170 motorcycles; 8,071 tractors; 8,218 artillery pieces; 131,633 machine guns; 345,735 tonnes of explosives; 1,981 locomotives; 90 cargo ships; 4,478,000 tonnes of food supplies; \$1,078,965,000 of machines and equipment; 2,670,000 tonnes of petroleum products; 49,860 tonnes of leather; 3,786,000 tyres; 15,417,000 pairs of army boots; 106,893,000 tonnes of cotton; building equipment valued at \$10,000,910,000; non-iron metals 802,000 tonnes;



along with 29 tankers; 433 combat ships, as well as mobile bridges, railroad equipment, aircraft radio equipment and many other invaluable items.

**British and Canadian Aid to the USSR**

This does not include the very generous aid given by Great Britain to the Soviet Union. Britain supplied: 5,800 aircraft, 4,292 tanks and 12 minesweepers. Canada supplied the Soviet Union with 1,188 tanks, 842 armoured cars, a million shells and 208,000 tonnes of wheat and flour. There is no doubt that without Western aid, the Soviet Union wouldn't have been able to survive a year. In fact only massive infusions of aid from the West kept the rotten, corrupt and unworkable communist regimes in power throughout the Cold War. Only when Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher and Helmut Kohl turned off the taps and curtailed Western aid for the Soviet Block in the 1980s, did the Iron Curtain finally come crashing down.

**Many Stories Waiting to be Told**

One wonders why no Hollywood film seem to have focused on the largest military offensive in the history of warfare, some of the largest battles in history, and some of the greatest Air Aces and Tank Commanders, which came out of that colossal conflict.

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See also:

font-size: 12pt;"><a target="\_blank" href="index.php/history/333-britain-and-germany-the-best-of-enemies">The Best of Enemies</a></span><br /><a target="\_blank" href="index.php/history/175-how-propaganda-changes-perceptions-and-people"><span style="font-family: arial, helvetica, sans-serif; font-size: 12pt;">How Propaganda Changes Perceptions and People</span></a><br /><a target="\_blank" href="index.php/history/231-the-causes-consequences-and-catastrophe-of-the-first-world-war"><span style="font-family: arial, helvetica, sans-serif; font-size: 12pt;">The Causes, Consequences, and Catastrophe of the First World War</span></a><br /><a target="\_blank" href="index.php/history/174-the-bombing-of-cities-in-world-war-ii"><span style="font-family: arial, helvetica, sans-serif; font-size: 12pt;">The Bombing of Cities in WWII</span></a><br /><a target="\_blank" href="index.php/history/182-the-katyn-forest-massacre"><span style="font-family: arial, helvetica, sans-serif; font-size: 12pt;">The Katyn Forest Massacre</span></a><br /><a target="\_blank" href="index.php/history/235-facts-you-never-knew-about-world-war-2"><span style="font-family: arial, helvetica, sans-serif; font-size: 12pt;">Facts You Never Knew About World War 2</span></a></p><p><span style="font-family: arial, helvetica, sans-serif; font-size: 12pt;"><br /></span></p><p><span style="font-family: arial, helvetica, sans-serif; font-size: 12pt;">A PowerPoint presentation of this article is available on Slideshare. Click <a href="http://www.slideshare.net/frontfel/how-capitalists-saved-communism-from-collapse">here</a></span></p>