

Ostfront 1941/42

**Kampfhandlungen im Bereich der
Heeresgruppe Mitte
(22.6.41-1.5.42)**

Notebook 2:

***„Sowjet-Russland u. die
Rote Armee“***

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**Tehachapi CA
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**“Die Stimme des Blutes deines
Bruders schreit zu mir von der
Erde.“**

Genesis 4:10

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Notebook 3:

“*Sowjet-Russland u. die Rote Armee*“

3.0: *The Soviet State:*

3.0.1: *Crimes of (1917-41):*

Note (C. Luther): During my Ph.D. studies at UCSB, I had a professor – shall go unnamed – who was preparing a book on the history of Socialism (Communism’s not too distant cousin.) In his opening chapter, which I read for constructive comment, he began by pointing out the many putative affinities (or so he thought) between Socialism and Christianity. Just one of myriad examples of the inability of the liberal/left academy to comprehend the truth about Marx/Engels and the Hell on Earth they wrought.

a. *Ukrainian Genocide (1932-33):*

*Semotiuk, Andriy J.*²

Ukraine (Holodomor): What actually happened in Ukraine in **1932-37**? And did it actually amount to genocide? According to the **1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide**, genocide is an act „committed w/ intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group“ and involves such methods as „killing members of the group [or] deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life, calculated to bring about its physical destruction.“

Ukrainian historian *Stanislav Kulchytsky* argues that the way Joseph Stalin dealt w/ the Ukrainian countryside qualified as genocide. In the fall of **1932**, on orders from Moscow, government troops came to villages requisitioning grain to meet Stalin’s quotas. They took away grain at gunpoint, even when peasants did not have enough for themselves. Those peasants who had no grain were deprived of other food stocks. Those who resisted were shot. A **22 Jan 33** directive from Stalin and his protege *Vyacheslav Molotov* sealed off Ukrainian borders to prevent famished peasants from escaping.

These events eventually led **39** UN member countries to sign a **7 Nov 03** statement that read: „*The Great Famine of 1932-33 in Ukraine (Holodomor)* . . . took from 7-million to **10-million** innocent lives and became a national tragedy for the Ukrainian people.“ These numbers clearly show that a deadly tragedy took place in **1932-33**.

To prove genocide, however, the U.N. definition also required *proof of intent* to target a national or ethnic group for destruction. That proof can be found in, among other sources, the post-war writings of *Winston Churchill*. When he visited Stalin in **Aug 42**, Churchill asked: „Have the stresses of the war been as bad to you personally as carrying through the policy of the collective farms?“ „Oh, no,“ Stalin replied, „the collective farm policy was a terrible struggle. . . **10** mil-

² **Note:** This section is gleaned from A. J. Semotiuk’s article posted on “nationalpost.com” on **9 Jul 08**: “*The truth about the Ukrainian genocide.*”

lions," he said, holding up his hands. „It was fearful. Four years it lasted.“ The Soviet leader went on to say that apart from a minority that were exiled, the vast majority perished.

Since **80%** of the population in Ukraine was peasantry, Stalin knew that his policy of collectivization would *wipe out the Ukrainian villages and farmers* that had not already succumbed to starvation, and effectively destroy the political aspirations of the Ukrainian nation. . .

The Soviet leaders were *masters of deception* about all this. As hunger stalked Ukraine, they sold over **1.5** million tons of grain abroad at reduced prices while denying the famine.³ They enlisted help from journalists such as *New York Times* correspondent *Walter Duranty*, a Pulitzer prize-winner who, *knowing otherwise*, wrote that there was no starvation in Ukraine, thus maintaining his privileged access to the Kremlin.⁴ The Soviets employed obfuscation and sanitized language to cover up the fact that they tried to destroy the Ukrainian nation. . . But the facts cannot be erased. It is increasingly clear that those who perished in Ukraine did so as victims of genocide.

End article.

3.0.2: Nature of / Plans for Angriffskrieg:

The USSR was not a “normal” state, and Moscow and Berlin had fateful similarities. Supreme authority was concentrated in the hands of a dictator. Foreign policy was highly ideological. Structures for co-ordinating the activities of different agencies and for fully rational decision-making did not exist. Josef Stalin had consolidated sole power since the defeat of his major rivals w/in the Communist Party in **1929-30** and the purge of tens of thousands of senior officials (and hundreds of thousands of ordinary people) in **1937-38**. By **1939-41**, fundamental issues of foreign and security policy were decided arbitrarily, not even by the party Politburo but only by Stalin and selected members of the Politburo. Especially important was premier and foreign minister V.M. Molotov, described as “one of the most inexorably stupid men to hold the foreign ministership of any major power this century.” Stalin and Molotov were both ignorant of the outside world and, remarkably, they had little understanding of Hitler’s National Socialism. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 13)

Contrary to the historical “revisionists,” Stalin was not the hidden instigator of WWII, nor did he use Hitler as an “icebreaker” [i.e., Suvorov’s contention in his book w/ same title] against the frozen sea of Western Capitalism.⁵ For Kremlin leaders another world war between the capitalist states was inevitable. Such a war presented a grave danger to the USSR; it might be drawn in, or used by one side or other as a prize. Yet, war also presented opportunities, as Stalin explained to his close comrades. . . As things turned out, the Nazi-Soviet Pact and the successful German invasion of Poland and France were nearly fatal for the USSR. Stalin expected a prolonged war

³ **Note:** And, as Bogdan Musial has pointed out (Kampfplatz Deutschland), the Soviets used the foreign currency gleaned from the grain sales to finance their massive arms buildup.

⁴ **Note:** In a book-length study (cannot recall author) it was pointed out some years ago that, during the Second World War, there were but a dozen (**12**) front-page references in the *N.Y. Times* to the Holocaust against the Jews.

⁵ **Note:** Not sure I agree with Mawdsley on this point.

between Germany and the Allies, which would wear both down. (E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 14)

B. Musial: Die ideologische bedingte Expansion war nicht nur eines der Hauptmerkmale, sondern vielmehr das Hauptwesen des ersten kommunistischen Staates [i.e., Russland], u. zugleich identitätsstiftende Grundlage des internationalen Kommunismus. (*Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 463)

1924-41: Ab **1924** schwand in Moskau die Hoffnung auf die Revolution in Deutschland; neue Strategien u. Plaene wurden entwickelt. Ab **1925** setzte sich Stalin mit der Konzeption durch, die Lenin bereits **1915** formuliert hatte: Der erste sozialistische Staat habe notfalls im Alleingang die kommunistische Revolution mit Waffengewalt zu verbreiten. Im Jahre **1927** genehmigte das Politbuero entsprechende Aufruestungsplaene, ihre Realisierung scheiterte jedoch an der unterentwickelten u. rueckstaendigen Industrie der UdSSR.

Nach dem Schwarzen Freitag, dem Beginn der Weltwirtschaftskrise (**25. Okt 29**), intensivierte Stalin, der inzwischen seine Macht zur absoluten Diktatur ausgebaut hatte, die sowj. Kriegsvorbereitungen, die geradezu gigantische Dimensionen annahmen. Ab **1930** wurde die gesamte sowj. Wirtschaft u. Gesellschaft auf die Vorbereitungen zum Angriffskrieg ausgerichtet. Zugleich setzte der Massenterror gegen diejenigen ein, die diese Vorbereitungen "sabotierten" u. im kuenftigen Krieg das eigene Hinterland gefaehrden koennten. In erster Linie handelte es sich dabei um die Bauern, die sich verzweifelt gegen gewaltsame Getreideeintreibungen u. Zwangskollektivierung wehrten. Mit Getreideexporten wollten Stalin u. seine Genossen die gigantische Aufruestung finanzieren.

Ab **1930** erfolgte der rasante Aufbau der sowj. Kriegswirtschaft u. der Streitkraefte, die tiefgreifend umstrukturiert u. umgeruestet sowie massiv ausgebaut wurden. Moderne Technologien, Anlagen, u. Waffenprototypen wurden im Westen eingekauft, finanziert mit Rohstoffexport (u.a. Getreide, Holz) u. sogar mit gesteigertem Wodkaverkauf innerhalb des eigenen Landes. Stalin, seine Genossen u. der gesamte kommunistische Buerokratieapparat verwandelten in den **1930er** Jahren die Sowjetunion in ein gigantisches Zwangsarbeitslager, u. alles nur zu dem einen Zweck, das Land auf einen langjaehrigen revolutionaeren Eroberungskrieg vorzubereiten.

. . . Der grosse Terror der **30er** Jahre hat seine Wurzeln in den nicht wie geplant verlaufenen Kriegsvorbereitungen u. den dabei erlittenen Rueckschlaegen. . . Die sowj. Niederlagen vom Sommer **1941** resultierten aus der sowj. militaerisch-strategischen Konzeption des Angriffskrieges u. den noch nicht abgeschlossenen Vorbereitungen dazu. (*Musial, Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 463-65)

Bogdan Musial sees a strong *continuity* in Soviet Russia's preparation for a war of aggression against the West since at least **1931**. In fact, he sees a continuity in ideologically motivated expansion going back to Lenin. As Schdanow said at a Sitzung des Hauptkriegsrates on **4.6.41**, discussing possible new guidelines for propaganda in the Red Army: „Die Politik der Offensive hatten wir auch frueher. Diese Politik wurde von Lenin festgelegt. Wir aendern jetzt nur die Parole. Wir haben begonnen, den Leitsatz von Lenin zu realisieren.“ Moreover, by **1941**, so Musial: „Stalin glaubte laengst nicht mehr, die kommunistischen Parteien im Westen wuerden imstande sein, die ‚proletarische‘ Revolution hervorzurufen u. sie siegreich zu beenden. Ab Anfang der **30er** Jahre setzte Stalin faktisch nur auf die Rote Armee als Instrument zur Verbreitung der Weltrevolution. (*Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 449-50)

Die internationale Forschung ist sich seit Jahrzehnten darueber einig, dass der dt. Ueberfall auf die Sowjetunion am **22 Jun 41** ein ideologisch bedingter Angriffskrieg gewesen ist, geplant u. durchgefuehrt als Vernichtungs- u. Lebensraumkrieg. . . Die neuesten Aktenfunde in den Moskauer Archiven zeigen naehmlich, dass die Sowjetunion ab Ende der **1920er** Jahre, besonders intensiv nach dem sogenannten Schwarzen Freitag (Beginn der Weltwirtschaftskrise, **25 Okt 29**), zum ideologisch bedingten Angriffskrieg gegen den Westen massiv aufruestete. Im Jahre **1930** entwarf der spaetere Marschall Michail Tuchatschewski die Konzeption des Vernichtungskrieges gegen den Westen, die einen massenhaften Einsatz von Panzer (**50,000**), Flugzeugen (**40,000**) sowie „massiven Einsatz von chemischen Kampfmitteln“ vorsah.

Das Ziel des sowj. Angriffskrieges war, die kommunistische Herrschaft in Europa u. der Welt mit Waffengewalt zu verbreiten. Deutschland kam in den Plaenen der Bolschewiken fuer die Weltrevolution die Schluesselrolle zu, u. zwar aufgrund seines Industriepotentials, der Staerke seiner Arbeiterschaft, der kuenftigen disziplinierten Soldaten der Revolution sowie der geopolitischen Lage im Zentrum Europa. Die Bolschewiken betrachteten Deutschland als den Schluessel zur Beherrschung Europas. (*Musial, Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 9)

Die bisherige Forschung zum Thema ist wenig zufriedenstellend, teilweise spiegelt sie sogar die sowj. Propaganda von der angeblichen defensiven, ja „friedliebenden“ Aussenpolitik der Sowjetunion wider. . . Richard Overy schrieb neulich: „Trotz der vielen Versuche nachzuweisen, dass Stalin in den **1930er** u. **1940er** Jahren revolutionaere Eroberungskriege plante, deutet das Gross der Belege nach wie vor darauf hin, dass er eine defensive, reaktive Haltung einnahm.“ Allerdings fuehrte Overy keinen dieser angeblichen Belege fuer Stalins defensive Haltung an. (*Musial, Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 11)

Ab Sommer 1940 [Stalins Kriegsabsichten]: Ab dieser Zeit verlieh jedoch die Komintern-Zentrale ihren Anweisungen eine immer schaerfere antideutsche Stossrichtung. Das Ziel war die Zersetzung der dt. Besatzung in den betroffenen Laendern. . . Die Absicht Stalins, Deutschland in naher Zukunft anzugreifen, belegt auch die Neuorientierung in der Polenpolitik. . . Spaetestens im Herbst **1940**, noch vor der Reise Molotovs nach Berlin, ueberlegte Stalin, auf sowjetischem Territorium polnische u. tschechische Verbaende aus polnischen u. tschechischen Kriegsgefangenen aufzustellen, die im kuenftigen dt.-sowj. Krieg gegen Deutschland kaempfen sollten. Er beauftragte Berija, sich damit zu befassen. . . Die Aufstellung der polnischen Division zog sich jedoch monatelang hin. Erst am **4 Jun 41** bestaetigte das Politbuero den Vorschlag des Volkskommissars fuer Verteidigung, die **238 ID** in eine polnischsprachige umzuwandeln. . . Der dt. Ueberfall am **22 Jun 41** verhinderte jedoch die Umsetzung dieser Entscheidung. . . Schreibt Musial: „Der Umstand, dass Stalin im Herbst **1940** dabei war, polnische u. tschechische Verbaende aufzustellen, die an der Seite der Roten Armee gegen Deutschland kaempfen sollten, laesst sich nur als ein weiterer Beleg dafuer deuten, dass Stalin bereits konkrete Massnahmen fuer den kuenftigen Angriffskrieg gegen Deutschland ergriff.“ (*Musial, Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 435-40)

5.5.41 [Stalins berühmte Rede]: Am **5 Mai 41** fand im Kreml die in der Forschung so oft diskutierte Festsitzung der Absolventen der Militaerakademie mit anschliessendem Empfang statt. Auf diese Veranstaltung hielt Stalin eine Rede, die letzte vor dem dt. Ueberfall auf die Sowjetunion, auch waehrend des anschliessenden Empfangs ergriff er wiederholt das Wort. Stalin sprach frei u. forderte die Zuhoerer auf, keine Notizen zu machen. Trotzdem wurde ein kurzes Stenogramm der Rede wie auch der Wortbeitraege waehrend des Empfangs angefertigt. . . . Es gibt keinen quellenkritischen Grund, die Authentizitaet des Stenogramms anzuzweifeln. [**Note**: A detailed account of Stalin's speech follows, as well as of Stalin's three (3) toasts. In his final Trinkspruch – in which he corrects the toast of a *Generalmajor der Panzertruppen* auf die

„Stalin’sche friedliche Aussenpolitik“ - he says, „Jetzt muessen wir von der Verteidigung zum Angriff uebergehen. . . Wir muessen unsere Ausbildung, unsere Propaganda, Agitation, unsere Presse im Geist des Angriffs umstellen. Die Rote Armee ist eine moderne Armee u. eine moderne Armee ist eine Angriffsarmee.“ Concludes Musial: „Die hier zitierten Ausfuehrungen Stalins lassen sich nicht anders deuten als mit der Absicht, Deutschland in naher, zugleich jedoch unbestimmter Zukunft anzugreifen.“ (For more details see, *Musial, Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 445-48)

3.0.3: Soviet Union’s Keys to Victory:

After the German invasion, the Red Army was restructured – transforming it from the *ponderous and ineffective force* that suffered devastating losses in Operation “Barbarossa,” to that potent armor-tipped force that traversed Poland in less than **3 weeks** in **1945**.

The three keys to Soviet victory in WWII were a) the strength of its organization; b) the availability of weapons and supplies; and, c) the powerful presence of supporting combat units. . . A Soviet military writer has outlined the factors that determined a nations ability to win a war; they are:

- a) The economic base;
- b) Technological competence;
- c) Military doctrine and tradition;
- d) Geographic environment;
- e) Ability and experience of personnel;
- f) The comparative power of the enemy.

An advantageous position in a majority of these areas was necessary for victory. The Soviet government addressed all of these factors in the **1930s** and early **1940s**, and by early **1943** had achieved an advantage in all areas. (*W. Dunn, Hitler’s Nemesis*, xiii-xiv)

A strong economic base was created by the five-year plans that developed heavy industry and adopted mass-production techniques. In **Jun 41**, Germany, w/ the addition of the economic power of its occupied countries, was *far stronger than the Soviet Union*. The loss of western Russia further depleted the Soviet industrial base. However, by draconian measures and concentrated effort, Russian military production surpassed German production by early **1943**.

Industrial technological competence, the second factor, was acquired from *technical assistance contracts w/ the Americans in the 1930s*. Military technology was gained thru cooperative activity w/ the German Army in the **1920s** at air bases and tank training grounds in the Soviet Union. . .

With regards to the last factor, comparative power, the Russians began an armaments race w/ Germany in the early **1930s**. After eight [**8**] years of investing in heavy industry, Russia switched to manufacturing weapons in **1937**. The Germans had a significant head start and retained their superiority in quality and quantity [?] in **1941**. (*W. Dunn, Hitler’s Nemesis*, xiv-xv)

Two major elements led to Russian victory: production and manpower. The strength of the Soviet economy, created in large measure by *American technical assistance* in the **1930s**, enabled the Russians to outproduce the Germans. . . The Soviet Union outproduced the Germans,

and willing to take losses, overwhelmed them. Was it possible for a country w/ *less than ½ the steel-making capacity of Germany* and its satellites to win the battle of production? Lend-Lease was part of the answer, as it provided Russia w/ trucks, locomotives, rails, and other goods that would have absorbed much of Soviet production capacity. . . The question still remains: How could a country that was *not able to provide rifles for its army in World War I* outproduce most of Europe **25 years later**? (*W. Dunn, Hitler's Nemesis*, xv-xvi)

Foreign assistance⁶ enabled the Soviet Union to advance technologically over a half-century in the course of about 8 years. Copying Western technology catapulted Russian manufacturing acumen into the 20th Century by eliminated the need for R&D and standardizing almost everything from blast furnaces to lathes. Multiple-unit construction reduced manufacturing time and cost. By the late **1930s**, the Soviet Union had the latest designs and the largest factories, primary copied from the best in the United States. . . These factories, although plagued by inefficient operation in the late **1930s**, formed the basis for the Soviet war industry in WWII . . . that defeated the Germans. (*W. Dunn, Hitler's Nemesis*, xvi)

Crux: In quotation below, historian Walter Dunn, Jr., expert on the Red Army, provides one of the best analyses of the Red Army victory I have yet seen:

Whereas the Russians *extracted the last drop from their potential*,⁷ the Germans only talked about total war until late in **1943**. From the very beginning Russia demanded incredible sacrifices from its people. Fourteen-year-old boys, women, and invalids were employed in factories working **10-hour** shifts six or seven days a week to replace the men in the Army. Every possible ounce of human and industrial capacity was devoted to winning the war, stripping the civilian economy of all but the barest essentials.

In contrast until the very end the Germans *still had the highest ratio of personal maids of any country in World War II*. [!] German women were not employed in industry to any appreciable extent and factories worked only one shift. [*accurate?*]. Some teenagers served part time in anti-aircraft units, but the high schools remained open. On the other hand, the Germans continued to manufacture luxuries such as furniture and other civilian goods and obtained most nonessential products from the occupied countries.

(*W. Dunn, Hitler's Nemesis*, xvii-xviii)

Although the industrial base of the Soviet Union was but a fraction of the potential industrial base of the combined industrial nations of Europe under Hitler's sway, what made the difference was the Russian ability to *reduce every weapon and organization to the **minimum standard** to accomplish the mission*. The Soviet government had learned the value of utter simplicity through necessity during the period following the Revolution of **1917** and the Civil War. . . Russian weapons were simple, not because the soldiers were too stupid to operate complex weapons, but because anything that could not offer advantages to compensate for the cost was eliminated.

An example of minimum quality to accomplish the task is the **T-34** tank that was extremely

⁶ **Note:** Such assistance came primarily from American companies, but also from "some German, and a few British, French, Swiss, and others." (xvii)

⁷ **Note:** In contrast, Germany's management of its industrial and human resources was "extremely wasteful and inefficient." (xvii)

uncomfortable for the crews. The men in the turret perched on *seats suspended from the turret side because there was no floor*. The base of the tank was filled w/ shells covered w/ mats. After firing the first few rounds, the loader jumped from his seat and scrambled around on the bottom of the tank while the turret revolved above him. . . Throughout the war the number of man-hours and material needed to produce a **T-34** steadily declined by simplifying the design. Few changes were made to improve the performance at the cost of production. In contrast, German weapons became increasingly complex. (*W. Dunn, Hitler's Nemesis*, xix-xx)

3.1: Red Army:

Note: “For almost **2** years, the Soviet Union tried to fight the formidably modern war machine of Germany⁸ w/ a pattern or model of organization drawn from the far-off days of the Civil War, for this was the only one known at the outset to be viable. Such a *modus operandi* produced a specific and initially disastrous relationship between doctrine, technology and traditions. . . It was to take virtually three [**3**] years of war before these elements were brought more effectively into balance.” (*J. Erickson, The Road to Stalingrad*, vii-viii)

Note: Im Rahmen einer Armeereform in der Sowjetunion vor dem Kriege wurden die Verbaende stark verkleinert u. diese Entwicklung setzte sich waehrend des Krieges fort. Waehrend der Sollstaerke einer sowj. Division vor dem Kriege **8 000** betrug, waren es **1941** nur noch zwischen **2 500** u. **3 000**, also eher der Sollstaerke eines dt. Regiments entsprechend – die Divisions-Kdr. waren oftmals Obristen oder Oberstleutnante. Die Korps der Roten Armee wurden zeitweise abgeschafft, dann wieder aufgestellt. Eine sowj. Armee entsprach bestenfalls der Groesse eines mittleren Korps der *Wehrmacht*. Die „Fronten“ bestanden aus mehreren Armee. In Bezug auf die Fronten kann von einem Vergleich mit Armeegruppen u. H.Gr. der *Wehrmacht* keine Rede sein. Ueber den „Fronten“ standen noch die „Theater“, vorwiegend von Schukow u. Wassiliewski befehligt, die fuer bestimmte Operationen gebilligt wurden. Erst hier ist ein Vergleich mit einer dt. H.Gr. gegeben. (*M. Stein, GFM Model*, 65-66)

Note: The very first days of the campaign brought home the fact that the *Red Army soldier bore little resemblance to the Russian soldier of 1914-17*. The Bolshevik regime had certainly understood how to imbue the Soviet soldier w/ a new spirit over the course of 20 years. This **revelation** was another of the surprises of the Russo-German war. The new masters of Russia had succeeded in rousing the soldier from his *passive stupor*, in giving him a *strong sense of responsibility toward state and nation*, and even in turning him into a *fanatic*. The experiences and practices of the *savage civil wars* undoubtedly had *much to do w/ molding the new Russian soldier and commander*. In **1916** two German cyclists, one at the head of the column and one bringing up the rear, could easily march 500 newly captured prisoners 5 miles to the nearest enclosure. **In 1941**, this was out of the question. (*FMS T-34, Terrain Factors*, 65)

Note: The weaknesses in the Red Army were clear enough: a lack of initiative among junior officers and NCOs, a lack of coordination between combat arms, sloppy staff work, and a supply system that functioned sporadically. (*W. Murray, War to be Won*, 113)

Note: Despite the Germans' best efforts, the Soviet strength at the front grew from **2.9** million men in **Jun 41** to **4.2** million in **Dec 41** and then to **5.5** million in **Jun 42** and to **6.1** million in **Nov 42**. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 514)

⁸ **Note:** This, of course, is not the contemporary (**2009**) assessment of Hitler's Wehrmacht, which tends to stress its flaws, shortcomings and lack of modernity.

The giant encounter between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union saw the Red Army operationally committed for **88%** of **1418** days of warfare, grappling w/ something on the order of **65-70%** of the total field strength of the *Wehrmacht*. The same Red Army was committed to **9** campaigns, involving **7** substantial defensive ops and **160** offensive ops, destroying or disabling in the process **607** Axis divisions. (*J. Erickson, Soviet War Losses, 256*)

W. Dunn: “Many have difficulty comprehending the *miracle* that took place in late **1941** and early **1942** in the Soviet Union. . . The purpose of this work is to detail how the Soviet Union was able to create a new army in late 1941 and early 1942.” (*Stalin’s Keys to Victory, vii*)

W. Dunn [Red Army Unit Lineage]: “More than **9000** Soviet units of battalion size or greater are included in my *computer data base*, which gives a month-by-month history of each unit and its components. Because the Russians *used the same number as many as four [4] times to designate units*, I have created a simplified lineage for each rifle division, rifle brigade, and tank brigade . . . Many of the divisions were originally created as rifle brigades, then built up into rifle divisions, then *renumbered* w/ the designation of a division that had been destroyed, and finally renumbered as guards divisions. A large block of divisions were formed w/ **400** series numbers and then renumbered w/ the numbers of destroyed divisions or those that had been designated guard divisions. In **1941**, some rifle brigades and divisions were in combat a few months after they were formed, but this practice quickly gave way to longer periods of training. *Popular myth* has it that many Russian divisions were sent into battle w/ a few weeks or months of training and were slaughtered by the Germans, because the number had recently appeared in the order of battle even though the unit had been in existence for months under a different designation. . . Often the German intelligence maps would include a notation of the existence of **60** or so unidentified and unlocated rifle divisions. The German task of identifying these units was made immeasurably more complicated by the *Soviet practice of using the same numbers repeatedly*. (*Stalin’s Keys to Victory, viii-ix*)⁹

W. Dunn: The Red Army identified different divisions w/ the same number by adding a *roman numeral* in parentheses: for ex., **34(II)** was the second formation bearing the number **34**. The different divisions were identified in some Russian documents as **137 RD (I)**, **137 RD (II)**, and so on. However, the roman numerals *do not appear in the Russian orders of battle*. German intelligence continued to collect data on the various divisions w/ the same number on the same card but in published lists did identify the new versions of each division. A *common German error* was to designate a unit as a new division when it simply had been withdrawn from combat for rest and rehabilitation and then returned to combat w/ the same leadership. Such errors continue to *obscure the picture for historians and readers*. (*Stalin’s Keys to Victory, ix*)

W. Dunn: “While other countries had surrendered after losing one army, let alone two, the Soviets came back w/ a third that sent the Germans reeling to the rear. . . Soviet divisions, not cold weather, stopped the Germans. The actual reason the Soviets were able to stop the Germans in late **1941** was an *unbelievable mobilization* of men and wpns beginning in **Sep 41**, which created a new Red Army. The Soviets formed and sent into combat in a few months more new divisions than the United States formed in the entire war. . . A major difference between the United States and the Soviet Union was that the Russians had *millions of men w/ combat experience* in World War I and the Civil War that followed. In addition, the Soviet Union had *compulsory military service* between the wars, providing a *vast pool of trained men*. . . During World

⁹ **Note**: “The Soviet decision in late **1941** to give the numbers of destroyed divisions to the new divisions has caused some confusion.” (ix)

War II, the Red Army created more than **10,000** combat regiments, brigades, and divisions. Professor *James Goff* made a pioneer study of the formation in the winter of **1941-42** of the group of **54** rifle divisions that received numbers in the **400** range, but then were assigned numbers of destroyed divisions, which has *confused both German intelligence experts and historians.*” (*Stalin’s Keys to Victory*, 4-5)

3.1.1: Total Force / Mobilization (Force Generation):

a. Total Forces:

Stalin’s purges tend to overshadow the *massive expansion of the Soviet armed forces* in the **1930s**. Whatever his long-term intention, Stalin was amassing the capability to *overrun central Europe*. The Red Army had **1,600,000** men under arms in **1938**, and **5,000,000** by **1941**. (*C. Winchester, Hitler’s War on Russia*, 31)

Hitler’s invasion of the USSR was probably the largest military assault in history, **153** German divisions—about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the *Wehrmacht’s* strength, supported in due course by 18 Finnish, 16 Rumanian, 3 Italian, 3 Slovakian and one Spanish divisions, 3 Hungarian brigades, some Croations and later, numerous Waffen-SS levies from all over occupied Europe—some **3** million men in all. Opposing them at the start of the campaign were **178** Soviet divisions w/ some **4.7** million men. But whereas Germany’s reserves were soon stretched to the limit, *the USSR could mobilize a further 12 million.* (Ed. note, *Berlin Diaries*, *M. Vassiltchikov*, 57)

Soviet Army *front-line strength* (in millions):

06.41 = 4.7

11.41 = 2.3 (lowest figure of war?)

12.41 = 4.2¹⁰

11.42 = 6.1

06.44 = 6.5 (top figure of war)

(Source: *C. Winchester, Hitler’s War on Russia*, 120)

W. Dunn: “Soviet military strength on the eastern front was more than **6** million men from **1942** on.” (*Stalin’s Keys to Victory*, 14)

C. Merridale discusses *foreign views of Red Army*; how little was known to outsiders about it; *how obsessively secretive the Soviet state was about its armed forces.* (*Ivan’s War*, 52-3)

Jan 39-May 41: The Red Army undergoes a massive military expansion, which actually has a greater impact on the *decline in the army’s quality* than the purges. During this period, Red Army adds **111** rifle divisions, **12** rifle bdes plus **50** tank and motorized divisions. Its personnel strength grows from **1.5** to more than **5** million. During this period, the proportion of officers attending [officer training?] who required schooling plummeted, course length shrank from **36** to **24** months and later to **18** months, and the rank of instructors fell from major or captain to senior lieutenant. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 25)

¹⁰ **Note:** Are figures for Nov-Dec 41 accurate? If so, the Russians made a remarkable recovery in a matter of a few short weeks.

Nov 39-Mar 40: (Russo-Finnish War): Resulted in loss of **200,000** Russian dead. Red Army humiliated by tiny Finnish forces. War exposed only too cruelly that Red Army was far from ready counter German threat. Steps thus taken immediately after war to adjust to new situation. Pace of rearmament *sharply stepped up*.¹¹ Workers were subjected to even more *draconian labour discipline* in order to increase arms production. Armed forces were reorganized as some purged officers returned and the next generation of cdrs took up key posts, etc. (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 260, 263)

Russo-Finnish War: In all, the Soviet Union had to mobilise **1.2** million men to beat the **200,000** strong Finnish Army. Unsatisfactory performance of Red Army in Finnish War forced the Soviet High Command to begin a massive program of reorganization. Looking at lessons from German victory in Poland, and later France, the Red Army began to rebuilt its neglected armored force. Hasty reorganization brought together new mechanised corps and tank bdes, but they remained tied to inf. units and widely dispersed throughout the military districts. (*B. Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 7)

According to *David Thomas*, in the spring of 1941 the Red Army possessed some **300** divisions, including roughly **170** divisions in the military districts of European Russia. (*David Thomas*, 297, f.n. 34)

Jun 41: By spring of 1941, its war strength numbered between **230-240** „rifle“ divisions (about **110** in the west), as well as **50** tank and **25** mech. divisions which were *fully equipped* [?]. The Soviet tank park numbered **24,000**. The Red Air Force stood at a strength of at least **10,000** in **1940**. (*Keegan, Second World War*, 178)

Jun 41: The Red Army consisted of **20** armies, **303** division-sized formations, and **29** mech. corps. [See, Figures 27/28, pp. 28-29, for details.] The mech. corps – **20** of which were in the forward area – consisted of **58** tank divisions and **29** motorized divisions (there were several separate tank and mot. divisions). The Red Army totalled some **4.9** million men deployed in what the Soviets called the operating forces – **2** million of which were located in the Western military districts. The Red Army had an estimated wartime mobilized strength of more than **9** million men. Of these **303** divisions, **170** were located in the border military districts (Leningrad, Baltic, Special Western, Special Kiev, Odessa, Crimea).

In addition to this **170** division force, there were **53** border guard detachments, **9** border *komandatura*, and **20** of the **29** mech. corps [**Note:** IAW Figure 28, it appears the **20** mech. corps' **60** divisions – **40** tank / **20** mot. – are counted in the **170**, and are not in addition to the **170** figure!] Of the **20** mech. corps in the border districts, **8** had some new tanks; **7** were at **80-100%** strength; and **13** at only **10-25%** strength. . .

All told, Soviet deployments on **22 Jun 41** showed following picture [i.e., gleaned from Figure 30]:

1st Strategic Echelon: **171** divisions
1st Echelon of Covering Forces: **57** divisions
2nd Echelon of Covering Forces: **52** divisions
Reserves: **62** divisions

¹¹ **Note:** Pace of Russian rearmament increased dramatically after German victory over France in summer of 1940. However, industry was still unable to meet the urgent need for armaments. Grave shortages still existed when Hitler struck. (263)

(**Note:** Figures add up to many more than **303** divisions!)

Looking more closely at actual Soviet force deployment, what is immediately apparent is fact that the *Soviets had been moving forces westward for about two [2] months before Jun 41*. These were prudent defensive measures designed to create a strategic second defensive echelon. . . During **May-Jun 41**, the Soviets began fielding forward additional armies from the interior military districts. . . together w/ several additional mech. corps. . . the locations and greatest densities of Soviet forces should be noted. Look at where the Soviet reserve armies were deployed in **May-Jun 41**, in particular the **21, 16 and 19 Armies** [i.e., in Special Kiev Military District]. The southwestern axis was the expected area of the main German thrust, whenever that thrust materialized. . .

In general terms, the Soviets considered each of the armies along the border as covering armies in much the same sense that Westerners view covering forces. These were armies *designated to absorb the initial shock of the attack*, to inflict damage on the enemy, and to set the enemy up for subsequent destruction by second echelon or reserve forces deploying forward. . . There was generally one mech. corps assigned per forward army. . . These mech. corps were themselves *deployed in echeloned configuration*. The first echelon of mech. corps supported forward deployed rifle corps from positions **80-100** kilometers to the east of the border. Their task was to blunt the initial German offensive spearheads.

Up to **100** kilometers to the east, a second echelon of mech. corps deployed on a line running from Pskov – Minsk – Zhitomir – Berdichev. This echelon, along w/ second-echelon rifle corps, would engage and defeat German forces penetrating into the operational depths. . . A third echelon of mech. and rifle forces, deployed at greater depth, was ready to occupy defensive lines along the Dnepr River, if that was required or, if not, they would join the second echelon in expelling enemy forces from Soviet soil. In essence, the mech. corps and their rifle counterparts *formed a strategic defense in depth*. . . The Soviets positioned their mech. corps in *virtual triple echelon* pattern w/ a first row of corps collocated w/ the covering armies; a second row located roughly on a line running from Dvinsk thru Minsk and down to Korosten; and a third row positioned east of the Dnepr River. . .

The Soviets, however, faced *several problems*. These mech. corps had just been formed, command cadre and personnel were untrained, their installational and field support systems were weak, and they lacked the required level of modern equipment, including most significantly, new tanks and trucks. In the Western military districts, only **8** of the mech. corps had some new tanks, the **T-34s** and **KVs**. Seven [7] of them were at roughly **80-100%** strength; and **13** of them were between **10-25%** strength. If we are to believe Soviet sources concerning the condition of these corps – and wartime performance seemed to bear it out – only **27%** of the older tanks were operable and there were simply no spare parts available to fix those that were not. (For more details see, *Glantz, Initial Period of the War*, 29-33)

22.6.41: Soviet armed forces, at best guess, numbered **4.7 – 4.9** million in all, in **20** armies, broken up into **303** divisions. Of this total force, about **2.5** million men in **171** divisions were on the western frontiers (i.e., in the *first strategic echelon*) and **202** on the Soviet-German front as a whole . . . The Soviet State Defense Plan-41, prepared in early 1941, envisaged four fronts (army groups). These four fronts would comprise **186** divisions in the *first strategic echelon*. The *second strategic echelon* would comprise a further **51** divisions in five (**5**) armies under the centralized control of STAVKA – the Supreme High Command. The first strategic echelon would comprise three *operational* echelons, or belts – a light covering force on the frontier, and then two further echelons to provide „defense in depth.“ (Source? See, *Glantz, Barbarossa*)

22.6.41: Mobilization problems prevent **DP-41** from being fully implemented. By **22.6.41**, **171** divisions and **20** out of the **28** giant Soviet *mechanized* corps were available to make up the first strategic echelon. They were deployed in the western military districts: Leningrad, Baltic, Western Special, Kiev Special, Odessa and the Crimea. In addition, five (**5**) armies of **57** divisions were assembling on the *Dnepr – Dvina* rivers to form the second strategic echelon. This was the result of the movement of forces westward during the preceding two months. (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 166, 175)

22.6.41 [Overview]: Soviet armies were ill prepared to meet the onslaught that struck them. Having annexed large areas of territory between **1939-41**, the Red Army had abandoned its border fortifications to redeploy its armies in the Baltic States, Poland and Rumania. Furthermore, the Red Army was undergoing a *comprehensive restructuring* at time of the attack. Some Soviet units were fully reequipped by the summer of '41 and had a complete complement of men, while others were only partially equipped, some not at all. Moreover, much of the equipment of the army and air force, despite being available in massive numbers, was obsolete and mechanically unsound. Many of the armored units had moved to new barracks in the occupied regions, but their equipment remained to the east, awaiting transportation. Rifle units were in similar straits. Furthermore, the leadership of the Red Army had been *decimated* in the purges...

In all, the Red Army deployed **4.7** million men in **300** divisions, of whom **2.5** million men – a force of **170** divisions – were in the western border regions. These forces also deployed **24,000** tanks, **8000** acft, and **40,000** artillery pieces. However, of the **24,000** tanks, barely $\frac{1}{4}$ were operational at time of German attack, the remainder being in workshops near their units or far to the rear. The few remaining operational tanks consisted in the main of old models, only **867 T-34s** and **508 KVs** were available for action. (For additional details see, *B. Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 30-32)

22.6.41 [Soviet estimates]: „To attack the Soviet Union, the Nazi coalition had put together an enormous force: **190** divisions, more than **4,000** tanks, about **5,000** planes, and over **47,000** guns and mortars.“ (*Marshal S. Sokolov, foreword to: Battles Hitler Lost*, 6)

22.6.41 [Soviets estimates]: ”Germany hurled east **190** divisions – **5.5** million men, **47,000** guns and mortars, **4300** tanks and about **5000** planes. The Soviet Army opposing these forces had **2.7** million men, **37,000** guns and mortars, **1500** tanks and **1600** planes.“ (*Battles Hitler Lost*, 9)

22.6.41: The Red Army has **4.4** million men: **198** rifle divisions and **31** motorized divisions. Of these **229** divisions,¹² **117** were deployed on the eastern front; **47** in the Stavka reserve; and the remaining **65** scattered in the military districts and the Far East. Of these divisions, **47** were formed in **Jun 41**. In reality, the Russians had about **180** rifle and mot. divisions available for combat on **22 Jun 41**. (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 63)

22.6.41 [Red Army Force Structure]: On **22.6.41**, the Red Army's ground forces had total strength of ca. **5** million men, arrayed as followed:

¹² **Note:** Dunn: “Professor James Goff estimated that **229** rifle and mot. divisions were available on **22 Jun 41**, and **483** new divisions were formed during the war, for a total of **712**. Col. David Glantz estimated that the total reached **707**. Both estimates were based on totals published in Soviet sources. Piorier, in his excellent work on the Soviet order of battle, gave **724** as the total number of formations. The steady stream of new divisions enabled the Soviet Union to remain in the war.“ (69)

a) Total Forces:

4 fronts [army groups]
27 armies
29 mechanized corps
62 rifle corps
4 cavalry corps
5 airborne corps
303 divisions
 198 rifle divs.
 61 tank divs.
 31 mech. divs.
 13 cavalry divs.
57 fortified regions¹³
5 separate rifle bdes
10 anti-tank bdes
94 corps artillery rgts
75 **RVKG** (Reserve of the High Command) artillery rgts
34 engineering rgts

b) Western Theater:

Field forces (*Deistvuiushshaia armiiia*) in Western Theater numbered 3 fronts (Northwestern, Western, Southwestern), which were formed on 22.6.41 from the Baltic, Western and Kiev Special Military Districts; a separate army (9 Army), and a fourth Front (the Northern), which was created on 24.6.41 from the Leningrad Military District. These field forces, w/ total strength of about 2.9 million men, contained following elements:

15 armies
20 mech. corps
32 rifle corps
 3 cavalry corps
 3 airborne corps
163 divisions
 97 rifle
 40 tank
 20 mechanized
 6 cavalry
41 fortified regions
 2 separate rifle bdes
10 AT bdes
87 artillery rgts (52 corps / 35 RVGK)
18 engineer rgts.

c) Stavka Reserves:

¹³ **Note:** A “fortified region” was a “defensive formation designed to create a strong defensive barrier and help canalize attacking enemy forces into regions where they could be destroyed by counterattacking mechanized forces.” (See, *Glantz, Red Army Ground Forces*, 34)

6 armies
14 rifle corps
5 mech corps
57 divisions
42 rifle
10 tank
5 mechanized
17 artillery rgts (13 corps & 4 RVGK)

(For more details see, *D. Glantz, Red Army Ground Forces*, 3)

Jul-Sep 41: Red Army undergoes a “wholesale reorganization” during summer of 1941. According to David Glantz, this was “nothing more than a series of stopgap measures forced on the *Stavka* by necessity.” As it surveyed the wreckage that was its army, *Stavka* decided to replace the complex army structure w/ simpler and smaller organizations at every level of command: a force that its inexperienced officers could command and control, and a force that could survive. . . In short, *Stavka* “saved the Red Army by reorganizing it,” all the while abandoning temporarily any hopes of implementing its sophisticated pre-war operational and tactical concepts. The fact that the *Stavka* would gradually rebuild a “heavier” Red Army in the spring of 1942 was indicative of the temporary nature of the 1941 reorganization. *Stavka* Directive No. 01 (15.7.41) and associated instructions began the reorganization and truncation process. (For details of changes see, *Glantz, Barbarossa*, 64-65)

Oct 41: For the Red Army, shortages were everywhere crucial, made worse as falling production coincided w/ appalling battlefield losses. On the Soviet-German front, Red Army strength was falling frighteningly to its lowest ever ebb – 2 3000 000, from the 4 700 000 who were or could be fielded in **Jun 41**. . . The whole massive swarm of Soviet tanks which had existed in **Jun 41**, was now more or less obliterated: those left were “brigaded” very abruptly, but the few divisions left and the current brigades were more often than not mere paper units. . . Red Army artillery compressed into dangerous straits, suffering calamitous losses in guns and gun-crews, so many of whom, as Col.-Gen. Halder noted w/ a surprised respect, were killed at their guns: a high total of guns destroyed or captured, but so few gunners by comparison taken prisoner. Voronov had to persuade Stalin of the need for drastic reorganization of Red Army artillery. . . To fill the gaps in guns, a crash programme to produce mortars went into operation. . . (*J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 225-26)

1.11.41: German intelligence places Red Army strength at 160 divisions and 40 bdes, most at below 50% strength. In reality, on 1 November, the Red Army in the West fielded 269 divisions and 65 bdes in the field forces and the *Stavka* reserve, w/ an overall strength of 2.2 million men. These included 193 rifle, 5 cavalry and 6 tank divisions, 1 mot. rifle division, 3 fortified regions and 14 rifle, 5 airborne and 44 tank bdes in operating forces. Another 22 rifle and 8 cavalry divisions, 1 tank division and 2 tank bdes were in the *Stavka* reserve. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 161; 227, f.n. 4)

1.12.41: Total strength of Red Army [in the West only?] has risen to 343 divisions and 98 bdes, whose strength w/ replacements has increased to over 4 million men. Red Army operating forces include 230 rifle, 43 cavalry and 5 tank divisions, 1 mot. rifle division and 38 rifle, 5 airborne and 47 tank bdes. By now, the *Stavka* reserve includes 44 rifle and 14 cavalry divisions, 7 rifle bdes and 1 tank bde. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 161; 227, f.n. 4)

31.12.41: By end of **1941**, the Red Army order of battle no longer lists **155** divisions, indicating the prewar army has been destroyed. (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 63)

18.1.42: Die fuehrenden Militaers, aber auch Hitler, fanden noch immer keine Erklaerung dafuer, wie eine Armee, die innerhalb von **5** Monaten unerhoert hohe Verluste an Menschen u. Material hatte hinnehmen muessen, innerhalb kurzer Zeit zu einer derartigen Gegenoffensive faehig war. Am **18 Jan 42** lagen der deutschen Fuehrung folgende Gefangenen- u. Beutezahlen fuer **1941** vor:¹⁴

Gefangene	3.355.499 Mann
Panzer	21.973
Art.-Geschuetze	23.917
PAK	6.230
Flak	2.638
Gr.Wr.	3.013
Kraftfahrzeuge	60.342
Flugzeuge	2.319
M.G.	24.085

Wenn mitunter auch Angaben firmieren, die von Gesamtverlusten in der Hoehe von nur **4.5** Millionen Mann sprechen, so kann man mit Sicherheit eine Mindestzahl von **5.5** Millionen Gefangenen, Gefallenen, Vermissten u. Schwerverwundeten, die nicht mehr einsatzfaehig waren, in Rechnung stellen. Da die Rote Armee im **Jun 41** ein Potential von zirka **5.4** Millionen Mann gehabt hatte, war dieses bis zum Jahresende voellig vernichtet worden. Fast die Haelfte [**50%**] der offiziell bis Kriegsende **1945** anfallenden Gesamtverluste in der Hoehe von **11.94** Millionen Mann entfielen somit auf das Jahr **1941**.

Die materiellen Verluste der Roten Armee erreichten bisher unvorstellbare Ausmasse, wobei die beiderseitigen Angaben nicht sehr voneinander abweichen. So verlor die Rote Armee ueber **101,000** Geschuetze u. Granatwerfer, **17,900** Frontflugzeuge sowie knapp **6.3** Millionen Gewehre. Das der Roten Armee anhaftende Geheimnis – wenn von einem „Geheimnis“ ueberhaupt gesprochen werden konnte – lag in der bereits vor dem **22 Jun 41** vorbereiteten u. danach mit aeusserster Konsequenz ungehemmt betriebenen Mobilmachung, die zu einem Dauerzustand wurde. (*H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 218-19)

1.2.42 [Rote Armee]: Die permanente Mobilmachung der Roten Armee lief auf vollen Touren, so dass die erlittenen Verluste ab **Dez 41** nicht nur wettgemacht werden konnten, sondern dass man sogar einen Zuwachs an Staerke verzeichnete. So umfasste die Rote Armee an der deutsch-sowj. Front am **1 Feb 42** – jedoch ohne die Reserven der STAWKA – **46** Armeen, **5** operative Gruppen, eine Verteidigungszone u. eine Pionierarmee. Diese Streitmacht gliederte sich in:

268 Schuetzendivisionen
74 Schuetzenbrigaden
49 Kavalleriedivisionen
1 Skibrigade
2 Skiregimenter
1 Panzerdivision

¹⁴ **Note:** The Germans actually captured over **20 000** tanks!?

51 Panzerbrigaden
4 mot. Schuetzenbrigaden
14 selbststaendige Regimenter
11 Schuetzenbrigaden im Pionierdienst

(H. Magenheimer, *Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 225)

May 42: Red Army now comprises **6.1** million men in **442** rifle divisions, **139** rifle bdes, **24** tank corps, **11** mech corps, **172** tank bdes, **81** tank rgts and **110** tank destroyer rgmts. Total number of tanks and SUs = **6900**. Guns and mortars = **77,700**. And these numbers would only increase in coming months and years! In other words, instead of being worn down by the Germans, the Red Army grew stronger as war progressed. (Dunn, *Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 167)

b. Mobilization (Force Generation):

Summary: While it is true that the Soviet mobilization process ultimately saved the Soviet state from destruction, it did so at an appalling cost in manpower and equipment losses. In fact, rather than preparing the Soviets to conduct war successfully, in **1941** the mobilization system enabled the Soviets to *survive* the war, but only barely. The mobilization system and the forces it produced were severely flawed. The system produced manpower which brought many existing formations near to full strength but failed to provide the equipment and support organs which new formations required to function effectively and survive in combat. Contrary to plan, the civilian economy failed to provide the vehicular transport, tractors, and horses, and, as a consequence, force logistical units could not move heavy weaponry and supply formations w/ critical fuel, ammu-nition, and other provisions. Out of the first wave of mobilized reserves, the **6** armies, **14** rifle corps, and **42** divisions ordered forward on **13 May** and **15 Jun 41**, **14** remained at their point of origin, **19** were enroute to designated concentration areas on **22.6.41**, and only **9** (the **19 Army**) had reached these areas when war broke out. Although some of this movement was by rail, rail capacity was insufficient, and most formations had to move on foot and at night. Mobilization and transport difficulties fed these and other strategic reserves into the theater in piecemeal fashion. This, coupled w/ the rapid subsequent German advance, let to repeated defeats-in-detail of successive lines of defending Soviet strategic reserves. Numerous archival documents underscore the lack of preparedness of the initial reserve armies,¹⁵ which the Stavka committed to combat along the Dnepr River line. (See, D. Glantz, *Red Army Ground Forces*, 36)

Note: The greatest German intelligence error lay in underestimating the Soviet ability to reconstitute shattered units and create new forces from scratch. . . Prewar Soviet theory estimated that the Army would have to be completely replaced every four [4] to eight [8] months during heavy combat [!]. To satisfy this need, the **1938 Universal Military Service Law** extended the reserve service obligation to age **50** and created a network of schools to train those reservists. By the time of the German invasion, the Soviet Union had a pool of 14,000,000 men w/ at least basic military training. The existence of this pool of trained reservists gave the Red Army a depth and resiliency that was largely invisible to German and other observers. . . By **1 Dec 41**, the Soviet mobilization system had deployed **97** existing divisions to the west, while creating **194** new

¹⁵ Glantz: "In fact, most reserve divisions themselves were not combat ready. Up to **80%** of the divisions were manned at a truncated peacetime establishment of **6000** men. Only after full mobilization was declared did they receive new personnel and additional equipment. Even then their personnel strength seldom exceeded **60%** of required. The second wave of divisions mobilized between [**22.6-10.7.41**] were in scarcely better condition." (See, p 38)

divisions and **84** separate bdes from the mobilization base. . . Whereas prewar German estimates had postulated an enemy of ca. **300** divisions, by **Dec 41** the Soviets had fielded twice that number. This allowed the Red Army to lose more than **100** divisions in battle and continue the struggle.

Of course, the prewar and mobilization divisions were not interchangeable. For all their shortcomings, the divisions lost in the first weeks of battle were far better trained and equipped than their successors. The later units lacked almost everything except rifles and political officers. Perhaps most important, they had little time to train as units. (*Glantz & House, When Titans Clashed*, 67-69)

Note: The greatest German intelligence error lay in underestimating the Soviet ability to reconstitute shattered units and form new ones from scratch. Given the German expectation of a quick victory, their neglect of this Soviet capability is perhaps understandable. In practice, however, the Red Army's ability to create new divisions as fast as the Germans smashed existing ones was a *principal cause of the German failure in 1941*. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 66)

Pre-war Soviet theory estimated that the army would have to be *completely replaced every four to eight [4-8] months* during heavy combat. To satisfy this need, the **1938 Universal Military Service Law** extended the reserve service obligation to age **50** and created a network of schools to train those reservists. By the time of the German invasion, the Soviet Union had a pool of **14** million men w/ at least basic military training. The existence of this pool of trained reservists gave the Red Army a [*strategic*] depth and resiliency that was largely invisible to German and other observers. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 68)

The Soviet *mobilization system* excelled in the task of creating new units. The methods of providing replacements, returning wounded to combat, and reconstructing worn-out divisions were all related to the mobilization process. The Russians increased the number of *rifle divisions* rapidly during the late **1930s**, as well as in **1940** and **1941**. . . (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 46)

To overcome catastrophic losses of summer of **1941** Soviets introduced *drastic changes* to replace the destroyed divisions and to maintain them in bloody battles that followed. Calling up reserves and drafting men at a *younger age* provided the manpower to recreate the divisions. The Russians developed a "*sophisticated system*" that churned out millions of soldiers by *lowering the draft age*, reducing the number of men in a division, and *shortening the training cycle* for new recruits. Although the Red Army incurred heavy losses than the Germans, the Russians developed a *more efficient replacement system*. (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 43)

The last half of **1941** was a disaster for the Soviet Union. One-third of the population lived in occupied areas in **Dec 41**. The Red Army had been emasculated once in the summer and replaced w/ the *first wave* of new divisions. The Red Army lost **155** divisions from **Jul-Dec 41**, but created **157** new divisions in **Jun-Jul 41**. Those divisions slowed the Germans, but many were destroyed in **Sep 41**. The *second wave* of **148** new divisions and **88** bdes was formed beginning in **Aug 41**, was able to *stop the Germans*, and counterattacked in **Dec 41**, inflicting the first major defeat experienced by the German Army in World War II.¹⁶ The Russians *accomplished this*

¹⁶ **Note:** A *third wave* of divisions began to mobilize in **Dec 41**. For the remainder of the war, only a few new divisions were formed. All told, the Russians formed **260** new divisions in **1941**, and **158** during **1942**. (95)

feat w/ their own resources. British and American *lend-lease* did not have a significant impact until **1942**. Few nations could have survived such an onslaught. In WWI, the Russians had succumbed under much less pressure. Somehow, Stalin convinced the many Soviet nationalities to fight for their country, which the *czar* had failed to do in **1917**. (Dunn, *Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 93-94)

C. Bellamy: The total mobilized man- and woman-power during the war was **34,476,000**, including the **4,826,907** men under arms (in the army, navy, air force, NKVD and border guards) in **Jun 41**. During the war another **29,574,900** men and women were mobilized. Of those, there was a "turnover" of **21,700,000**. More than half were "irrecoverable losses," although there were *3 sets of figures* for those. The first set, **11,444,100** is the number who became *hors de combat*, for whatever reason, during the conflict; that is, KIA, died of wounds, illness or frostbite, shot by their own side for cowardice or other crimes, taken prisoner by the Germans, or simply disappeared. The second figure, **8,668,400** is the *final demographic loss* – the dead on the battlefield or in German captivity. But nearly **3,000,000** who had been written off as part of the first figure came back, though not necessarily to a hero's welcome. These included soldiers in encircled formations who then reappeared – often to face interrogation and the GULag – and **1,836,000** prisoners released from German POW and concentration camps. The third figure, **12,400,900**, is what author calls the "bean counters'" figure. People were often posted missing w/ more than one organization. Given our modern experience w/ computers, the fact that only an extra million combatants were added to the record because of double counting must count as a triumph for Soviet efficiency. (See, *Bellamy, Absolute War*, 9-11)

Reserves mobilized: In planning *Barbarossa*, the Germans had assumed that after the initial onslaught and the destruction of the Red Army along the frontier, the Soviets would *not be able to field substantial reserve forces* – certainly not in any coherent fashion. In late July and August, the Germans learned the folly of such ill-founded optimism. By end of Jun 41, the Soviets had called up **5.3** million reservists. **13** field armies (a Soviet army roughly equivalent to a German corps) were deployed in July; **14** in August; **1** in September; and **4** in October. Units from Siberia and the Far East would allow the Soviets to move **8** more armies forward in the defense of Moscow, w/ **10** more arriving in spring **1942**. All told, the Soviets deployed **97** existing divisions to the west over summer 1941 and created no less than **194** new divisions and **84** separate brigades. The sheer weight of numbers began to wreck German plans. (*W. Murray, War to be Won*, 125)

Reserves mobilized: The major factor in the resurgence of the Red Army in the fall of **1941** was the *multitude of trained reservists*, many of whom had combat experience in World War I and the following Civil War. These men *did not require basic training* and were quickly formed into rifle divisions and bdes to defend Moscow and Leningrad. By **Dec 41**, a new Red Army had replaced the divisions destroyed in the summer and fall of **1941**. (*W. Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 7)

Soviet Replacement System: Russian replacements normally flowed in companies or battalions from training units to *field replacement rgts* assigned to each front and field army. These rgts also served as processing ctrs for returning wounded, conscripted civilians (booty troops), and stragglers. The number of men processed by a field replacement rgt in a month was often more than **1000**. The replacement rgts transferred men after a short period to the *divisional replacement btns*. Each rifle division incorporated a replacement btn, also called a school btn, for training newly arrived replacements and to hold recuperating sick and wounded...The Soviet *replacement system* trained and sent to the field army a *prodigious number* of replacements in **1941/42**, but in the beginning quality suffered. Replacements for the rifle companies were especially poor in the

early years of the war. In **Mar 42**, the replacements sent to the front were either young recruits w/ a minimum of training or were over age. Some were less than **18** years old; others were over **40**. (Dunn, *Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 49-52)

30.6.41: The replace Red Army losses and create an army to defeat the Germans, Stalin planned in **Jun 41** to mobilize **350** divisions. By **30.6.41**, the Russians had mobilized about **5.3** million reserves from **14** classes (**1905-18**, men aged **23-36**), who had *previous military training*. Along w/ the reservists, *new inductees* were used to create new units. The army would receive an astonishing additional **3,544,000** men between **1.7.-1.12.41** [!]. (Dunn, *Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 69)

Jun-Dec 41: The NKO summoned **5,300,000** reservists to the colors by end of **Jun 41**, w/ successive mobilizations later. In addition to the **8** armies the NKO mobilized and deployed in late June, it raised **13** new field armies in July, **14** in August, **3** in September, **5** in October, **9** in November and **2** in December 1941. The Soviet mobilization system generated a total of ca. **285** rifle divisions, **12** re-formed tank divisions, **88** cavalry divisions, **174** rifle bdes and **93** tank bdes by **31 Dec 41**. At same time, the army's personnel strength rose from ca. **5.4** million on **22.6.41**; to ca. **6.9** million on **31.8.41**; to an estimated **8** million on **31.12.41** [!]. These totals include **97** divisions transferred from the east to the west and **25** "People's Militia" divisions raised in Moscow and Leningrad. Whereas prewar German estimates had postulated an enemy w/ ca. **300** divisions, by **Dec 41** the Soviets had fielded *twice that number*. This allowed the Red Army to lose more than **4** million soldiers and **200** divisions in battle by **31.12.41**, roughly the equivalent of its entire peacetime army, yet survive to continue the struggle. (Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 68; for table of "Red Army Wartime Mobilizations," by army, see, p. 69)¹⁷

Jul 41: During this month, **34** new rifle divisions are formed in the Moscow Military District. (Dunn, *Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 75)

Jul-Dec 41: During the month of July, primarily by calling up reservists, the Russians form another **109** new divisions [!], restoring the number of Red Army divisions to the level of **1 Jun 41**. All told, **156** new divisions are formed in **Jun/Jul 41**; they are assigned to combat formations in **Aug/Sep 41**.¹⁸ The new divisions slow the German advance, replacing the **97** divisions lost between **Jul-Sep 41**. The Red Army actually has *more active divisions* on **1 Oct 41** than it had on **1 Jun 41**. The fierce battles of **Oct-Nov 41** cost the Russians an additional **50** divisions, but they slow the German advance. Meanwhile, a *second wave of 148 new divisions* and **88 new rifle bdes** are created between **Aug** and **Nov 41** and are first sent to the front in **Nov-Dec 41**. In **Dec 41**, w/ the new divisions in place, the Russians launched their counteroffensive before Moscow...Crux: In second half of **1941**, **258** new divisions are formed. The new formations receive the numbers of the destroyed divisions. (Dunn, *Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 63-64, 73)

27.7-5.8.41: Maj-Gen. V.L. Khomenko, **30 Army** cdr, assessed his army's readiness in a 27 July report to the Western Direction Command. In it he catalogued many deficiencies, including the

¹⁷ Of course, the prewar and mobilization divisions "were by no means equivalent. For all their shortcomings, the divisions lost in the first weeks of battle were far better trained and equipped than their successors. The newly mobilized divisions and brigades lacked almost everything except rifles and political officers." (68, 71)

¹⁸ **Note:** Of course, as Dunn points out, the new units – many of which went into combat as early as **Aug 41** and most in **Sep 41** – were short on training, although recalled reservists did not need much. Yet the focus was on defense – protecting vital areas of Leningrad, Moscow, and Ukraine – there was no indication of gathering an offensive force in **Sep 41**. (74)

constant failure of staffs and cdrs to transmit orders properly, poor march discipline, chaotic fire coordination and support, inefficient and ineffective rear service ops, command and staff violations of the most basic combat staff procedures, and, finally ineffective party organ support of combat cdrs. In a lengthy subsequent report prepared on 5 August, Khomenko informed Western Front of the problems his command had experienced since mobilization. He detailed the disorganized process of assigning divisions to the army and the subsequent confused movement and assembly orders. The three [3] divisions ultimately assigned to his army (**242**, **250** and **251 RD**) had to move to concentration areas on foot and, in his words, „were taken from their assembly points in the very midst of assembly and incomplete, they did not approach being „knocked together,“ and went into battle unprepared for combat.“ To illustrate his point, Khomenko cited the case of **251 RD**, which was formed at the city of Kolomna. The division was sent to **30 Army** on foot, understrength, and „totally lacking in cohesiveness.“ Khomenko described the arriving division’s state as follows:

- 1) The division was forced to arrive on foot, and it lacked a number of subunits (artillery, chemical coy, etc.). It had no material support units. . . To date, some of them have still not arrived;
- 2) The division has not succeeded in forming and putting together rear service organs;
- 3) An overwhelming number of division personnel were mobilized from the reserves. The entire division has only about **400** cadre soldiers from the NKVD;
- 4) In the haste of formation, horses were improperly distributed. Artillery horses were left behind, and. . . for this reason, artillery horses were received as reinforcements only after the artillery regiment was loaded on trains;
- 5) Haste of formation led to subunit cdrs not knowing their subordinates and subordinates not knowing their cdrs, and as a result there was poor discipline in divisional units;

These and a series of other instances, which related to **251 RD**, led to the fact that the division entered battle unprepared, badly fulfilled the missions assigned to it, and suffered heavy losses. Khomenko added that **250 RD** was in a similar state, and **242 RD** was only slightly more combat ready. (*D. Glantz, Red Army Ground Forces*, 40-41)

22.7.-1.12.41: Between these dates, **227** rifle divisions are created to replace lost formations, including **84** reformed rifle divisions and **143** new rifle divisions. The reformed units were in fact new divisions that were given the numbers of divisions that had been destroyed. German intelligence identified only **74**, indicating the success of the Soviet system in deceiving the Germans. (*Dunn, Stalin’s Keys to Victory*, 72)

Aug 41: The *second wave* of new units began w/ **78** divisions formed during this month. Few of these formations were formed in the districts attacked by the Germans, including Moscow and Leningrad, although many divisions had been formed in those districts the month before. The major blocks of new divisions were created in the *Caucasus*, the *Ural District*, the *Volga District*, and the *Siberian District* – presumably w/ new recruits as there were few reservists in those districts. Most of these divisions trained for four (**4**) months and were then assigned in **Dec 41** to

the armies that counterattacked the Germans at the gates of Moscow. . . In other words, the divisions and [rifle & tank] bdes created in **Aug 41** formed the armies that launched the Moscow offensive. They had four months of unit training and were *well equipped* compared to the divisions formed in **Jun** and **Jul 41** which were sent into battle as soon as they were formed. (Dunn, *Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 74-75, 79-80)

Aug 41: Large-scale formation of tank bdes begins this month, to replace the shattered tank divisions. Most of the **20** new bdes are formed immediately behind the front lines by reorganizing a battered tank division. All but two (**2**) are assigned before **Oct 41**, indicating they consist of experienced men. Most are assigned to the fronts in the center and the south in purely defensive roles. (Dunn, *Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 77)

Sep 41: The *phenomenal development* in this month is the formation of **34** new tank bdes [!]. New tanks are rolling out of the factories and being formed into bdes that are sent to the field army in the following month in preparation for the counterattack. **12** bdes were formed from the remnants of tank divisions. (Dunn, *Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 81)

Sep-Nov 41: Much of the *second wave* of rifle divisions and rifle and tank bdes is completed in September, and the new divisions formed in **Oct/Nov 41** are “odds and ends” rather than part of a massive mobilization effort. (Dunn, *Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 83)

Sep-Dec 41: Timely bringing up of reserve units and troops from the eastern territories had a decisive effect on Red Army's conduct of battle. The German General Staff believed that the bulk of the Soviet reserves had been employed and that Stalin had no more troops to occupy a new defense line. However, by end of **Sep 41**, the Russian Command was beginning to transfer divisions and cadre units from the eastern USSR to the west to offset casualties suffered in the Battle of Kiev. These units arrived in **mid-Oct 41**, just in time to take part in the battle outside Moscow. Reports from the Soviet spy, Dr Richard Sorge, led to further troop movements. Since beginning of **Jul 41** Sorge had been sending the Soviet leadership a series of radio msgs about the attitude of the Japanese government, which had decided against a military offensive against the Soviet Union in the Far East. . . Sorge's intelligence provided the Russian leadership w/ a valuable vindication of the measures they had already implemented, but was not, however, a decisive factor in these comprehensive movements of troops. . .

The Soviet rail system enabled the transport of about **8** fully-equipped divisions, including **1** tank division, to the western Soviet Union in **12-15** days, more quickly than the Germans had expected at the outset. For one [**1**] rifle division the Russians only needed between **20** and **40** trains, traveling at high speed in close proximity on both tracks of a double-track route. The trains traveled mainly in “packs” of **15-20** in rapid succession. They only traveled at night and were thus not detected by German aerial reconnaissance. . . By **31.10.41**, at least **13** rifle divisions and **5** tank bdes from the Far East, Central Asia and Siberia had been transported to join troops west of Moscow – a move “that contributed significantly to the stabilization of the front.”

Besides this direct replacement for the front a series of divisions which were to form the backbone of armies that were to be raised were transported at the same time to the Volga region. These troops [were] to continue the battle on the Volga, in the event of a German breakthrough near Moscow. This proves that even if Moscow had fallen, Stalin would not have admitted defeat, but was ready to continue fighting in the depth of the country. As the Russian leadership also recognized the futility of sending reserve troops into battle in small groups, as hitherto had been the case, to be wiped out in no time, the Stavka now began to gather troops en masse in the

hinterland, train and equip them at short notice, and then deploy them in closed formation at points of main effort. (K. Reinhardt, *Moscow – The Turning Point*, 104-06)

Oct 41: During this month, only **18** new rifle divisions are created due to a lack of support troops, especially artillery. By **1.10.41**, the Red Army, which has by now received substantial reinforcements, includes: **213** rifle divisions, **30** cavalry divisions, **5** tank divisions, and **7** airborne bdes.¹⁹ The rifle divisions average only **7500** men, and the ground forces opposing the Germans have **3,245,000** men, **2715** tanks, and **20,580** guns and mortars. However, many units are held back for more training. (Dunn, *Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 81-82)

Oct 41: A “flood” of rifle bdes are formed in **Oct 41**, as the Russians strive to ready as many units as possible for the December attack. The **55** bdes formed represent about **220,000** men, but they have little artillery or automatic wpns. The numerous rifle bdes formed in October are mostly *naval personnel w/o service units* and only one btn of artillery. The **55** bdes are formed for the most part in the *Volga, Ural, Siberia, and North Caucasus* districts from naval men who were brought in from Leningrad, the White Sea ports, and the Black Sea ports. They represent a temporary measure to make use of sailors who are cut off from their ships and home ports by the German advance. After creating the many divisions in **Aug/Sep 41**, the Russians are *short of artillery* and support units and resort to the bde organization. These bdes will be trained for three (**3**) months before taking part in the Moscow offensive. The bdes rely on the field army HQ to provide them artillery and logistical support when they enter combat. (Dunn, *Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 83)

5.10.41: On this day, STAVKA ordered the formation of **10** reserve armies east of Moscow. During the course of the Moscow battle, nearly **100** divisions were transferred to the central sector of the front,²⁰ including nine [**9**] from the Far East. (G. Roberts, *Stalin's Wars*, 108)

Oct-Nov 41: The *first wave* of [new] divisions had delayed the German offensive in **Sep 41**. The *second wave* is complete by November. In **Oct 41**, many of the divisions of the *second wave* are formed into nine (**9**) reserve armies. One of the reserve armies (**10 Army**) is formed w/ experienced regular army cadres that make up **15%** of the army. Most of the men are reserves w/ prior military experience. The **9** rifle divisions of **10 Army** come from the Moscow and Orel military districts. The divisions [which it appears also included **2** cavalry divisions] were comparatively well armed for training units. There were more than **65,000** rifles for **100,000** men, **1209** machine pistols, and **2000** heavy and **41** light MGs. The **10 Army** divisions each had about **100** machine pistols and **200** MGs. The army had **249** regimental and divisional artillery pieces, about **1/2** the authorized number but adequate for training. The army had few mortars, anti-acft guns, or AT guns, items that were scarce in Russia at the time, but sufficient in number for training. The most serious lack was *signal equipment*. The army had only **1** signal company, an impediment in training, as msgs had to be delivered by couriers on horseback. The divisions had trained before assignment of **10 Army**. One of the better divisions (**328 RD**) had six (**6**) weeks' prior training. However, only **60%** of the men had completed their rifle marksmanship training, and only **25%** had learned to throw grenades. [!] On **24.11.41**, some of the divisions left for the front. One division which went to the front had four (**4**) months' training; but two (**2**) divisions had less than two (**2**) months. The army's **322 RD** went to **50 Army** at Kaluga. The **329 RD**

¹⁹ **Note:** Were are all the *tank bdes* which Dunn says were formed during **Aug-Sep 41**? Why not listed here?

²⁰ **Note:** I assume the author includes among these **100** divisions the many new units which were created over this time period?

went to **26 Army** at Volkhov. The other divisions remained w/ **10 Army**, except for the **330 RD**, which later served w/ **49 Army**. In late **Nov 41**, the army received tanks, motor vehicles, and artillery and boarded trains for the front. On **28.11.41**, German aerial reconnaissance spotted trains at *Ryazan* that were carrying units of the **10 Army**. (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 87-89)

Oct-Dec 41: In addition to creating entirely new armies, the Soviets rebuilt armies weakened in combat. The **50 Army** was rebuilt at Tula in mid-October. Three (**3**) extremely depleted rifle divisions (**293**, **413** and **239 RD**) arrived from the front, each w/ from **500** to **1000** men. The men were exhausted, their uniforms in tatters, and they had very little equipment. Within two (**2**) months, the three divisions of **50 Army** had been refitted and reinforced to authorized strength. In December, more divisions were added to the army: **4** rifle divisions, **3** cavalry divisions, **1** depleted tank division, and independent tank rgts. The rapid reconstruction of the army was probably typical of many armies in the fall of **1941**. (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 90)

Oct-Dec 41: Stalin methodically *built up a reserve* for the coming counterattack: **4** divisions were in reserve in October; **22** in November; and **44** in December. Despite the severe dislocation and the devastating losses inflicted by the *Wehrmacht* in the first six (**6**) months, the Soviets created a *second new Red Army*. In **Nov 41**, the Red Army stood at **3.4** million men and **1954** tanks at the front. (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 90)

Nov 41: During this month, **11** rifle divisions are formed. Apparently, they are *not* part of the mobilization plan, but merely took advantage of available remnants of divisions and odd rgts. All the divisions are immediately assigned, instead of being held back for more training, as was the case w/ the divisions formed in **Aug-Sep 41**. Also in November, **18** rifle bdes are formed, most of which will be sent into combat in December. These bdes have only a single artillery btn and few support troops. Instead, they receive their artillery support and logistics support from the army to which they are assigned. Most of the bdes are from the *Ural*, *Siberian*, and *Volga* districts; most are assigned to the Western, Northwestern and Volkhov fronts and will take part in the battles around Moscow. Of the few tank bdes formed in November, six (**6**) are created in the Far East. (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 84-85)

3.1.2: Purges (1936-38):

Note: Stalin's purges certainly weakened the senior Soviet military and administrative leadership; but *new scholarship* shows that this **NKVD Ezhovshchina** had *less impact than earlier thought*. Slightly more than **8%** of Red Army officers were purged in **1938** (the worst year) – far short of the **30-50%** previously quoted. Massive Soviet military expansion, esp. after **1938**, had far more impact on the decline of the army's quality. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa* 1941, 25)

Note: The first closed trial of senior leaders of the Red Army took place on **11 Jun 37**. Many arrests followed. In the end, according to the most reliable figures available, **34,000** army and air force "commanders" and commissars were dismissed: of these about **12,000** were reinstated. Some **20,000** leaders were arrested, and the greater part executed. It is sometimes suggested that half the leadership of the Red Army was wiped out, which was certainly not the case. There had been **142,000** cdrs and commissars in **1937**, and tens of thousands of new men entered service in the following years; the command staff numbered **282,000** in **1939**. Many able middle-level cdrs survived the purges. For example, **276** Red Army cdrs who held the rank of colonel died in the purges in **1937-41**, but **1713** men had held that rank in **1936**. . . However, the purges certainly played a "most important part" in what happened on and after **22.6.41**. . . Although the worst of

the terror occurred in **1937/38**, high-level arrests and executions – notably in the Red Army Air Force – continued right up to the eve of the war. The purges of the Soviet military had three [3] results each devastating: 1) indispensable trained leaders were lost at a time when the Red Army was rapidly expanding; 2) the initiative of Red Army leaders was paralyzed, and a mental state imposed which was the very opposite of the German “mission-oriented command system;” 3) finally, the purges made foreign governments – potential allies as well as enemies – assume that the Red Army was a broken shell. (For more details see, *E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 20-21)

Great Terror known in the Soviet Union as the *Ezhovshchina*, “The Reign of Ezhov.” It is undoubtedly true to say that when *Nikolai Ezhov* was in charge of the NKVD (**Sep 36 – Nov 38**), the effects of repression were *felt at every level of Soviet society*, from the Politburo all the way down to simple citizens arrested in the streets. In a series of actions, hundreds of thousands arrested and tens of thousands shot. Those killed included so-called “ex-kulaks,” “criminal elements,” “socially dangerous elements,” “members of anti-Soviet parties,” “former tsarist civil servants,” and “White Guards.” These designations were applied quite freely to any suspect, regardless of whether he was a Party member, member of the intelligentsia, or an ordinary worker. Groups of suspected “spies” or “subversives” also liquidated *nationality by nationality*: Germans, Poles, Japanese, Romanians, Finns, Lithuanians, Latvians, Greeks, and Turks. Over one 15-month period (**Aug 37 – Nov 38**), several hundred thousand people were arrested in these anti-espionage operations. (For additional details see, *Black Book of Communism*, 184-202)

“Where Hitler had tamed his officer caste, Stalin killed his.” The purges of the armed forces were a part of the Great Purge of the civilian and military establishments which Stalin began in **1936**. An officer corps constitutes by its very nature a possible *alternative to civilian government* and Stalin was afraid of it. The Russian army had *no tradition of revolution*; its sole attempt to usurp power – the *Decembrist coup* of **1825** – had collapsed after a day; but Stalin was obsessed w/ the example of *Bonapartism* and he proceeded in the **1930s** to emasculate the *civil war generation* whose leaders, military or civilian, might conspire against him. (*Calvocoressi & Wint, Total War*, 168-69)

Purges and effect on officers: Entire culture of leadership undermined. Suicides, often from fear of responsibility, etc. *Shortage of skilled specialists had reached crisis proportions by 1940*. With huge expansion, desperate need for officers by summer of 1941. Army short by **36,000** officers on eve of German invasion. Officers shadowed and harried by commissars and *politruks*, etc. (*Ivan’s War*, 68-72)

It appears that during **1937-38**, **1,575,000** people were arrested by the NKVD; of these, **1,345,000 (85.4%)** received some sort of sentence and **681,692 (51%)** were executed. The vast majority of these victims were *anonymous*. (*Black Book of Communism*, 190, 195)

The heaviest price of all was paid by the *Polish Communist Party*. In 1937-38, the Polish Communist Part was *completely liquidated*. The military was another sector hit hard in **1937-38**, as carefully kept records testify. On **11.6.37**, the press announced that a military court sitting *in camera* had condemned *Marshal Tukhachevsky* to death for treason and espionage. He was deputy commissar of defense and the *principal architect of the modernization of the Red Army*. Over the next 10 days, another **980** high-ranking officers were arrested, including 21 army corps generals and 37 division generals. The “military conspiracy,” implicating Tukhachevski and his accomplices, had been several months in the planning. The accused were arrested in May 1937. Subject to brutal interrogations led by Ezhov himself (when T. was rehabilitated 20 years later, it

was revealed that several pages of the deposition were *stained in blood*), all were forced into confessions. Stalin personally supervised the whole affair. Around 15 May he had received via the Soviet ambassador in Prague *falsified files compiled by the Nazi secret services containing fake letters* that had supposedly passed between T. and members of the German High Command. In fact, the German secret service *had been manipulated by the NKVD*. In two years, the purge of the Red Army eliminated:

3 of 5 marshals
13 of 15 army generals
8 of 9 admirals
50 of 57 corps cdrs
154 of 186 division cdrs
16 of 16 army commissars
25 of 28 army corps commissars

From **May 37 – Sep 38**, **35,020** officers were arrested or expelled from the army. It is still unclear how many were executed. Around **11,000** (including *Rokossovsky*) were recalled in 1939-41. But a *new wave of purges* began after **Sep 38**, so that according to most serious estimates, the total number of arrests in the army during the Great Terror was about **30,000** cadres out of a possible **178,000**. Though proportionally less significant than generally believed, the purge of the Red Army, notably at the higher levels, *had serious effects on the Russo-Finnish conflict of 1939-40 and the initial phase of the war w/ Germany*, when it constituted *one of the heaviest handicaps for Soviet military effectiveness*. (*Black Book of Communism*, 197-98)

All told, close to **700,000** people shot in **1937-38** and more than **1,000,000** arrested. In all, **34,301** Red Army officers were arrested or expelled from the armed forces in 1937-38. Some **30%** were reinstated by the beginning of **1940**; but **22,705** were either shot or their fate remains unknown. Recovery from such a bloodletting of the leadership of the armed forces could not be speedy. Stalin was overheard asking *Voroshilov* in autumn **1938** whether there were any officers left *capable of commanding a division*. By the summer of 1941, as *Barbarossa* was launched, **75% of field officers and 70% of political commissars had held their posts for less than a year**. Yet far from undermining Stalin's support, the purges *enhanced it*, though mainly out of *awe and fear* of their Leader rather than from warm adulation. The mass purges of 1937 ensured that Stalin would not be threatened, that his *despotism* would not be challenged. (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 246-50; also, *Volkogonov, Stalin*, 369)

Purges: What does seem obvious is that whatever options Stalin might have had *narrowed sharply over time*. Earlier decisions, and the thinking that lay behind them, had necessarily meant that by the eve of the German invasion his *room for maneuver had become greatly constrained*. But some years before this, his hands had been less tied. It was then that he made a **catastrophic error** that limited his later options. With *no external pressure*, he instigated in **1937** the decimation of his army leadership, w/ immeasurably harmful consequences for the rebuilding of a professionalized military force capable of countering the rapidly growing danger from Hitler's Germany. Apart from the phantoms in the minds of Stalin and his *acolytes*, the *purges lacked all rationale*. They were *wholly unnecessary*. Not only did they do incalculable damage to the future construction of Soviet military strength; they also *instilled in Hitler and his advisors an indelible notion of the weakness of the Red Army*. To Hitler, this weakness was an invitation to strike before a powerful military machine could be constructed. In choosing to destroy his army leadership, Stalin removed his most important backbone of strength at a later date, when the crisis unfolded. An immense effort was put into a *crash program of rearmament and militarization in 1940/41*. But too much ground had been lost. It could not be completed before the German

threat became overwhelming. That Stalin left himself w/ too little military room for maneuver in 1940/41 is in good measure attributable to the choice he made in 1937/38 to undermine his own military capacity. (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 292)

D. Glantz: The Great Purges, which were *still continuing when the war began*, had a “lasting impact on the Red Army’s performance in the initial period of war,” since many of the initial Soviet defeats resulted directly from the surviving Soviet officer corps’ inexperience. Field cdrs at every level occupied positions for which they were unqualified, lacked the practical experience and confidence necessary to adjust to changing tactical situations and tended to apply *stereotypical solutions*, distributing their subordinate units according to *textbook diagrams* w/o regard for actual terrain. Results predictable. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 62)

3.1.3: High Command (GKO, Stavka, etc.):

Stavka: “A supreme planning staff which controlled the Fronts – the Russian term for Army Groups.” The *Stavka* consisted originally of a dozen senior officers, but Stalin, Molotov and Voroshilov were added to it soon after the outbreak of the war. [*Accurate?*] (*Calvocoressi & Wint, Total War*, 176)

D. Glantz: Although Stalin and his Stavka were different but overlapping entities, they were “essentially one and the same.” (*Soviet-German War: Myths & Realities*, 16. f.n. 1)

Unlike the Germans, the Soviets could rely upon a *well-established and unified command structure*, the whole being under the watchful eye of Stalin. In war, Stalin was supreme cdr of the armed forces, while Marshal *Timoshenko* was Commissar for Defense and General *Zhukov* Chief of the General Staff. The prosecution of the war was based on *two separate command committees*:

- a) **GKO**: The State Committee for Defense. Stalin was chairman of this committee, which concerned itself w/ the *general prosecution of the war*.
- b) **Stavka**: This second committee organised the planning and implementation of the military direction of the war on land, at sea and in the air. Again, Stalin was chairman, while Molotov, Timoshenko, Voroshilov, Budenny, Shaposhnikov, Zhukov and N.G. Kuznetsov were all members.

(Source: *B. Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 31-32)

Soviet command capabilities: For interesting insights – from German perspective – of Soviet command capabilities from higher levels down to small-unit cdrs see, *Newton, Panzer Ops Raus*, 6-8) Basically, Raus says that the higher command echelon of Red Army „proved capable from the very beginning,“ while the flexibility demonstrated by cdrs of armies and fronts was „not evident at the lower levels.“

While the Soviet strategic **command and control system** met peacetime demands, in no way did it meet the demands of war. No Stavka or High Command nor any strategic system of command posts (CPs) or communications centers existed in peacetime. Constantly changing personnel at the highest level of military leadership also lowered the quality of strategic leadership. Operational C2 orders were also insufficiently prepared for war, both in terms of their organizational structure and in terms of personnel training and readiness. Since **1937**, the military purges had

created immense turbulence in command personnel, and most who occupied command positions were neither trained nor experienced enough to perform their assigned functions effectively. Prepared to command rgts and btns, they were now called upon to command fronts, armies, and corps. The same conditions reduced the effectiveness of staffs at all levels. Finally, on the eve of war, most formations lacked complete OPLANS, and command communications nets. As a result, when war broke out, command organs were forced to improvise against the most experienced army in Europe, w/ understandably disastrous results. (*D. Glantz, Red Army Ground Forces*, 47)

1940/41 [*strategic thinking*]: Planning of *Soviet General Staff* in 1940/41 amounted to a modification, rather than a radical revision of *Tukhachevsky's* „*deep operations*” theories. Even when *Zhukov* took over as chief of the General Staff at end of **Jan 41**, the expectation remained that the Red Army would be able to contain the enemy during its initial attack, then turn defense into attack in a devastating counter-blow. (**Note:** Here also a discussion of Soviet operational planning for war, beginning w/ *Marshal V.M. Shaposhnikov's* war plan of **1938**, and subsequent revisions.) (see, *Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 266-67)

22.6.41 [*Soviet military decisions*]: In early hours of **22 Jun 41** Timoshenko and Zhukov issued a directive warning of a surprise German attack. Border districts of the Red Army were ordered to bring their forces to a state of full combat readiness and to disperse and camouflage acft before dawn. At the same time, commanders were ordered to avoid any “provocative actions.” Following a meeting w/ Stalin in the Kremlin, a second directive was issued by Timoshenko and Zhukov at **7:15** a.m. Reporting on German air and artillery attacks, troops were ordered to attack the Germans where they had crossed the Soviet border but not to cross the frontier themselves w/o special authorization.

At **9:15 p.m.** Timoshenko and Zhukov issued a third directive, ordering the North-Western and Western Fronts to attack, encircle and destroy Army Group North and the South-Western Front to attack and encircle Army Group South. . . The Western Front was instructed to contain Army Group Centre's advance along the Warsaw-Minsk axis while assisting the offensive action of the North-Western Front. This directive was broadly in line w/ the *pre-war plans for Red Army counteroffensive action* in the event of war. It indicates that *Stalin and the High Command fully expected the Red Army would be able to cope w/ the German attack and to carry out its own strategic missions*, including mounting an effective counter-invasion of German territory. Indeed, according to the third directive, the Red Army was expected to achieve its initial objectives in East Prussia and southern Poland within 2 days. [!] (*G. Roberts, Stalin's Wars*, 92-93)

ab 22.6.41: Even though Soviet leadership reacted in wooden fashion [to German invasion], “it did what was prudent and necessary under the circumstances.” Mobilization continued at a frantic pace, Stalin organized central **C2** organizations and organs and, in a steady stream of orders, Commissar of Defense Timoshenko and Chief of General Staff Zhukov demanded Red Army forces implement the *State Defense Plan*. Within only days of the German invasion, this command *troika* ordered the Red Army's forward *fronts* – already savaged by the brutally efficient German war machine – to strike back and drive the enemy from Russian soil. To ensure orders were carried out, both Timoshenko and Zhukov personally visited the operating *fronts*. Yet the orders rang hollow; in vain, and at immense human and material cost, *front* after *front*, army after army, corps after corps of the Red Army's *first strategic echelon* attempted to do what the State Defense Plan required of them and quickly and dramatically perished. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 59)

23.-29.6.41: When the Soviet counter-offensives of **23-25 Jun 41** failed to make any significant progress and the Wehrmacht continued to advance on all fronts, it became apparent that the Soviet General Staff had grossly underestimated the weight of the initial German attack. As Zhukov notes in his memoirs:

We did not foresee the large-scale surprise offensive launched at once by all available forces which had been deployed in advance in all major strategic directions. In short, we did not envisage the nature of the blow in its entirety. Neither the People's Commissar, nor myself or my predecessors – B.M. Shaposhnikov, K.A. Meretskov nor the General Staff top officers – expected the enemy to concentrate such huge numbers of armored and motorized troops and, on the first day, to commit them to action in powerful compact groupings in all strategic directions w/ the aim of striking powerful wedging blows.²¹

For Stalin the awful realization that not all was going to plan came w/ reports that Minsk, the capital of Belorussia, had fallen. . . (*G. Roberts, Stalin's Wars*, 93-94)

23.6/8.8.41: During the first weeks of the war, Moscow made fundamental changes in its command and control (C2). During the first six [6] weeks, the nomenclature and organization of the Soviet Union's national command structure underwent frequent changes, most of which had little practical effect on the day-to-day conduct of the war. On **23 Jun 41**, the War Commissariat's wartime staff, equivalent to a national security council, was activated as the Main Command Headquarters (*Stavka Glavnogo Komandovaniia*); this council was chaired by War Commissar S.K. Timoshenko and included Stalin, V.I. Molotov, and most senior cdrs such as G.K. Zhukov and S.M. Budenny.

After a bewildering series of changes in name and membership, the council emerged on **8 Aug 41** as the Supreme High Command (Stavka VGK), w/ Stalin as titular commander-in-chief. In practice, the term *Stavka* was used loosely to describe both the Supreme High Command council itself and the General Staff that served that council. In theory, the State Committee for Defense (Gosudarstvennyi Komitet Oborony, or GKO) was the highest body, overseeing *Stavka VGK* as well as the General Staff. A separate Air Force Command (*Komanduiushii VVS Krasnoi Armii*) was also established to sort out the wreckage of the Red Air Force. In reality, however, there was no strong central control during the first days of the war. (*Glantz & House, When Titans Clashed*, 62)

23.6./8.8.41: Stalin activates the *Stavka* [HQ] of the Main Command [*Stavka Glavnogo Komandovaniia* – **SGK**], a war council that was the “highest organ of strategic leadership of the Armed Forces of the USSR.” After a “bewildering series of changes,” the council ultimately emerged on **8 Aug 41** as the *Stavka* of the Supreme High Command (*Stavka Verkhnego Glavnokomandovaniia* – **SVGK**), w/ Stalin as titular Supreme High Cdr. . . The *Stavka* worked under the specific directions of the Politburo of the Communist Party Central Committee and the **GKO**; its responsibilities included: evaluating pol.-mil. strategic conditions, reaching strategic and operational-strategic decisions, creating force groupings and coordinating the ops of groups of *fronts, fronts*, field armies and partisan forces. The *Stavka* directed the formation and training of strategic reserves and material and technical support for the armed forces, and resolved all questions pertaining to military operations. Subordinate to the *Stavka* was the Red Army General

²¹ **Note:** Fascinating admission. Indicates how little the Soviets understood the German style of warfare – as executed in Poland, France, etc.

Staff, which *Stavka* relied upon to provide strategic direction for the war. (See, *Glantz, Barbarossa*, 60)

ca. 28.6.41: After a week of war the Soviet leadership had almost no information whatsoever about the situation on the western front. Stalin and several members of the Politburo visited Supreme HQ to find out just what was happening. They were shocked to learn that the General Staff had almost no information. With Stalin and Beria (head of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs [NKVD]) making so many demands, the situation became so tense that General *Zhukov*, chief of the General Staff, according to my father,²² *ran from the room in tears*. The Politburo members left for the Kremlin but Stalin left for his own dacha in the suburbs of Moscow and stayed there in a state of collapse. (*Mikoyan, Barbarossa and Soviet Leadership*, 127)

30.6.41 [Stalin sets up GKO]: Stalin issues a decree establishing a State Defense Committee (GKO – *Gosudarstvennyi Komitet Oborony*) that he would chair himself. . . The GKO stood at the pinnacle of Stalin's decision-making system during the war. As a sort of war cabinet chaired by Stalin, it was a political body charged w/ directing and controlling all aspects of the Soviet war effort. Initial members were: Foreign Commissar Molotov, security chief Beria, Politburo member Georgii Malenkov and Marshal Voroshilov, Stalin's long-time military crony. Although the party's Politburo continued to exist and function in a formal sense during the war, it *rarely met as a body and the GKO in effect took its place as the highest collective body of the Soviet leadership*. Subordinate to the GKO was the Council of People's Commissars and the various government ministries and state planning bodies. . . (*G. Roberts, Stalin's Wars*, 94-95)

30.6.41: Stalin exercised his full wartime powers as chairman of the *State Defense Committee* (*Gosudarstvennyi Komitet Oborony* – **GKO**), a *virtual war cabinet*. Formed on **30 Jun 41** by a joint order of the Presidium of the USSR's Supreme Soviet, the Communist Party Central Committee and the Council of People's Commissars (CNK), "all power was concentrated" in this "extraordinary highest state organ in the wartime Soviet Union." The committee's initial members were: Stalin, V.M. Molotov (deputy chairman), K.E. Voroshilov, L.P. Beria, and G.M. Manekov. The **GKO** directed the activities of all government departments and institutions as a whole, including the *Stavka* and the General Staff, and directed and supported all aspects of the war effort. (See, *Glantz, Barbarossa*, 60)

30.6.41: In Moscow, on 30 June, Stalin created the State Defense Committee (**GKO**), which superseded the Defense Committee of the Council of People's Commissars and became the **war cabinet** that had been envisioned in the prewar plans. Stalin was the chairman; Molotov the deputy chairman; the other members were Voroshilov and G. M. Malenkov, who was the party personnel chief and Stalin's right-hand man. The GKO was the highest wartime organ of the Soviet government, and its decrees had the force of law. Its authority encompassed both the military and civilian spheres, and the *Stavka* was subordinate to it. But the GKO concerned itself mainly w/ directing the nonmilitary aspects of the war effort. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 29)

Jun-Jul 41: In late June/early July, Stalin Timoshenko and Zhukov hastily formed and deployed forward the first of many groups of *Stavka*'s reserve armies. In succession – throughout **Jul/Aug**

²² **Note:** His father was, Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan, who worked w/ every Soviet leader from Lenin to Brezhnev. For several decades he was deputy chairman of the Council of People's Commissars (in effect, deputy prime minister). He was also a member of the Politburo, the highest policy-making body, and during the war a member of the **GKO**. (123)

41, these armies occupied row after row of reserve defensive positions stretching eastward from the Dnepr River to the approaches to Moscow proper. (For more details of deployments see, *Glantz, Barbarossa*, 59; 217, f.n. 1)

Jun-Aug 41: The Soviet high command was *reorganized*, as Stalin recognized how inappropriate to war was the existing machinery. He had recently assumed the formal title of head of government; on **10.7.41**, he created the post of *Supreme Cdr*, to which he had the Supreme Soviet appoint him on **7.8.41**. The *State Defense Committee (GKO)*, consisting of *Stalin, Voroshilov, Beria, Molotov* and *Malenkov* (Stalin's deputy in the party) had been set up on **30.6.41**; directly subordinate to it was the *Stavka* (ops staff), which when reorganized on **10.7.41** included: *Stalin, Molotov* and *Voroshilov* from the party and *Timoshenko, Budenny, Shaposhnikov* and *Zhukov* from the army. The *General Staff*, extended to oversee all branches of the armed forces, was subordinated to the *Stavka* on **8.8.41**. By then, Stalin occupied all the highest appointments in the Soviet state – Chairman of the **GKO**, Defense Commissar and Supreme Cdr – and directly controlled all the rest. (*Keegan, Second World War*, 189-90)

Jun-Aug 41: For detailed overview addressing the reorganization of the Soviet Supreme Command see, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 836-40). This section of Vol. IV. of Germany in the Second World War notes that, by early **Aug 41** Stalin had achieved a position of “unlimited power.” The STAVKA was under his direct control (since **10.7.41**); he held post of a People's Commissar for Defense (since **19.7.41**); and, since **8.8.41**, the post of Supreme Cdr. With his simultaneous chairmanship of the State Defense Committee he therefore held unlimited power. *Joachim Hoffmann*, who wrote this section of the multi-volume history, also notes that the Soviet general staff underwent repeated restructuring. Initially, it was under Army General *Zhukov*, and from **29.7.41** under Marshal of the Soviet Union *Shaposhnikov*. The general staff, working on the basis of HQ [i.e., *Stavka*] decisions, drafted directives to the troops, assigned operational and strategic tasks to the commanding generals of the “fronts” and armies, verified the implementation of HQ orders, assembled strategic reserves, and ensured that the lessons of war were learnt, that the troops were trained for wartime conditions, and that they were adequately supplied w/ wpns and equipment. To facilitate strategic control and co-ordinate the activities of the fronts, three higher commands were set up on **10.7.41** for the principal strategic directions: the North-west Sector (or North-western Direction) Command under *Voroshilov*; the Western Sector Command under *Timoshenko*; and the South-west Sector Command under *Budenny*. (For areas of responsibility and fronts controlled by these “directions” see same, *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 837)

10.7.41: On this day, Stalin established three [3] “*napravleniia*” (literally, “directions,” here translated as “axes”) as intermediate HQs commanding two or more Fronts. Stalin's professional military advisors opposed their formation. The axes were not successful and they were not used after mid-**1942**. (*W. J. Spahr, Zhukov*, 61)

10.7.41: The “cornerstone” of Stalin's new rationalized **C2** system for the Red Army were three (3) theater-level, multi-front strategic commands termed *High Commands of Directions (Glavnye komandovaniia napravlenii)*, which Stalin formed on **10 Jul 41**. These commands were designed to provide *unity of control* over all *fronts* and other forces operating along a single strategic axis. Originally, *Voroshilov* headed the *Northwestern Direction*; *Timoshenko* the *Western Direction* (including Western Front); and *Budenny* the *Southwestern Direction* (including the Southwestern and Southern Fronts and Black Sea Fleet). When *Timoshenko* assumed direct control of the Western Front in late **Jul 41**, Lt-Gen V.D. *Sokolovskiy* nominally became head of the Western Direction. (**Note:** In practice, however, Stalin and *Stavka* frequently bypassed the three Direction Commands by issuing orders directly to subordinate headquarters. This layer of command

proved to be superfluous and ineffective and was eliminated during **1942**. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 61-62)

10.7.41: Part of the new Soviet system of C2 was the creation on **10 Jul 41** of three [3] theater-level, multi-front strategic commands, known as Main Commands of Directions (*Glavnye komandovaniia napravlenii*). These commands were designed to provide unity of control for all *fronts* and other forces operating along a single strategic direction or axis. Originally, they were headed by Marshal K.E. Voroshilov (Northwest Direction), Marshal Timoshenko (Western Direction), and Marshal Budenny (Southwestern Direction). . . In practice, Stalin and the *Stavka* frequently bypassed the three directions to give orders directly to subordinate HQs. This layer of command proved to be superfluous and ineffective and was eliminated during **1942**. (*Glantz & House, When Titans Clashed*, 63)

10.7.41: On this day, the **GKO** authorized theater commands for the main “strategic directions” (*napravleniy*). The theater commands – Northwestern, Western, Southwestern – corresponded roughly to the German army groups, but their roles appear to have been less clearly defined, and the fronts continued as the main operational commands. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 30)

10.-15.7.41 [Red Army reorganization]: On **10 Jul 41** the five [5] “Fronts” of the Red Army (Northern, North-Western, Western, South-Western and Southern) were reduced to three [3] multi-front strategic “Directions” (*Napravlenii*). Marshal Voroshilov was sent to command the North-Western Direction; Marshal Timoshenko to the Western Direction; and Marshal Budennyi to the South-Western Direction. On **15 Jul 41** STAVKA issued a directive abolishing the large mech corps formed only a year earlier and reallocated the reduced-in-size tank divisions to an infantry support role. The Directions were ordered to abolish large, unwieldy armies and replace them w/ smaller and more flexible field armies of no more than **5-6** divisions. The directive also envisaged the establishment of a number of highly mobile cavalry units to strike at the rear of the enemy, disorganizing the Germans’ command and control system and attacking supply lines. (*G. Roberts, Stalin’s Wars*, 97)

10.7.-8.8.41: On **10 Jul 41** the STAVKA, or HQ, of the Main Command was reorganized as the STAVKA of the High Command w/ Stalin in the chair. On **8 Aug 41** it was renamed STAVKA of the Supreme Command (*Stavka Verkhovnogo Glavnokommandovaniya*) and Stalin became Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. Supported by the General Staff, STAVKA was responsible for military strategy and for the planning, preparation and conduct of big operations.

The top level of Soviet war organization was completed by the People’s Commissariat of Defense (NKO: *Narodnyi Kommissariat Oborony*). Stalin was appointed People’s Commissar for Defense on **19 Jul 41**. The NKO consisted of a number of directorates – Artillery, Armor, Airborne, Air Defense, Communications, Reserve Forces, Rear Area Services, Education, Military Intelligence and Counterintelligence, and Propaganda – which served as organs of the GKO.

The effect of this reorganization was formally to unify in the person of Stalin the control and direction of the entire Soviet war effort. Stalin’s personal control over his country’s war effort was *more extensive and more complete than that of any of the other warlords of the Second World War*. (*G. Roberts, Stalin’s Wars*, 95-97; see also, *D. Glantz, Colossus Reborn, Chapter 11*)

Jul-Aug 41: On **10 Jul 41**, Stalin emerged as the supreme cdr of the Soviet armed forces. The Stavka of the High Command then became the Stavka of the Supreme Command w/ Stalin as chairman and the most experienced Soviet staff officer, Marshal Shaposhnikov, was added to the membership. On **19 Jul 41**, Stalin assumed the post of people's commissar of defense, and on **8 Aug 41** he entered the military hierarchy w/ the title supreme high cdr, whereupon the Stavka became the Stavka of the Supreme High Command. Although directives and orders were issued in the names of **GKO** and the **Stavka** throughout the war, neither had any authority independent of Stalin. (See, *Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 30)

Jul-Sep 41 [Soviet offensives in Smolensk region]: The Soviet Yel'nya offensive was one of a complex series of Red Army operations in the Smolensk region in summer **1941**. . . STAVKA did not fight a defensive battle at Smolensk; its strategy was offensive and took the form of numerous counter-strokes, counter-attacks, and counter-offensives like the one at Yel'nya. Often criticized, in retrospect, the *strategy had its successes*. The Germans were *held up at Smolensk for two months and the difficulties experienced by the Wehrmacht persuaded Hitler to delay his march on Moscow and to divert forces to the seemingly softer targets of Leningrad in the north and Kiev in the south.*²³ The psychological boost to the Red Army of halting and in some places throwing back the advancing Army Group Centre was also significant. But the cost of these achievements was very high. Zhukov's **100,000** strong army, for example, suffered **1/3** casualties in the Yel'nya operation and when the Germans resumed their thrust on Moscow at the end of **Sep 41** the Red Army was unable to hold the ground it had recaptured at such great cost just a few weeks earlier. The Red Army's total losses in the two-month struggle w/ the Germans in the Smolensk region approached ½ million dead or missing, w/ another ¼ million wounded. (*G. Roberts, Stalin's Wars*, 99)

10.8.41: Stalin restores some semblance of stability to command & control by appointing *Shaposhnikov* to replace *Zhukov* as Chief of the Red Army General Staff. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 61)

D. Glantz: The Red Army's vigorous but futile attempts to counter Operation „*Barbarossa*“ yield several crystal clear conclusions:

- a) The Stavka well understood the nature of the catastrophe that was taking place across the front and acted forcefully to remedy the situation. It ordered the conduct of virtually all of the counteroffensives, counterstrokes, and major counter-attacks cited above [see p 17], and strove to coordinate these counteractions w/ regard to timing, location and objectives.

²³ **Note:** This assessment is not entirely accurate – While we now know that the several Red Army counter-offensives at this time in the central sector were not uncoordinated events but part of a comprehensive strategic plan, and also that they attained some success, they did not compel Hitler to change his strategy. That had always been to stop at Smolensk and wheel to the north and south. (Again, I see clear continuity in Hitler's strategic thinking.) Moreover, the horrific losses suffered by the Soviets in these offensives actually rendered the Red Army less able to resist a German advance on Moscow in **Oct 41** than it had been in **Aug 41**. In this context, not only Zhukov's army [Reserve Army?], but the entire Bryansk Front were in terrible shape. It should also be noted, however, that the apparent stalling of the German advance outside Smolensk in summer **1941** played a major part (decisive part?) in Japan's final decision to move against the Anglo-American position in SE Asia and the Pacific and not to join in the German assault on Russia by attacking Manchuria.

- b) The *Stavka* woefully misunderstood the capabilities of its own forces and those of the *Wehrmacht* by congenitally overestimating the former and underestimating the latter. As a result, the *Stavka* assigned the Red Army utterly unrealistic missions w/ predictably disastrous results. While *Stavka* planning became more sophisticated as the campaign progressed, the missions it assigned its forces became ever more ambitious and unrealistic, producing even more spectacular and devastating defeats.
- c) The Soviet command cadre, in particular its senior officers, but also the Red Army's more junior officers, NCOs, and enlisted soldiers lacked the experience necessary to contend w/ the better led and more tactically and operationally proficient *Wehrmacht*. The *Stavka* would not fully understand this reality until **mid-1942**.
- d) Finally, the Red Army's logistical and support infrastructure was totally inadequate to meet the requirements of modern, highly-mobile war. In part at least, the *Stavka*'s ultimate realization of these shortcomings prompted the ensuing deafening silence that enveloped the very existence of many of these forgotten battles and ops.

(Glantz, *Soviet-German War: Myths & Realities*, 18)

Okt 41 [Moschaisker Linie]: Da man den befürchteten Angriff auf Moskau schon weit im Vorfeld abwehren wollte, hatte die STAVKA seit Anfang **Jul 41** zahlreiche Vorkehrungen getroffen. Dazu zählte vor allem der Stellungsbau. Mit Hilfe von mehreren Hunderttausenden von Zivilisten, Bausoldaten u. Pionieren waren westlich von Moskau drei Verteidigungslinien entstanden. . . [Note: Of these three lines, the final was the Mozhaisk defense line.] Weiter östlich war seit Mitte **Jul 41** die Moschaisker Linie in einer Länge von **150** Kilometer im Bau, an der im Laufe der Monate bis zu **200.000** Menschen arbeiteten. Sie verlief von Südwestende des Moskauer Stausees, auch Moskauer Meer genannt, entlang der Lama westlich an Wolokolamsk vorbei zum historischen Schlachtfeld von Borodino, westlich von Moschaisk, setzte sich nach Süden fort u. endete schliesslich knapp südlich von Kaluga an der Oka. Diese Linie, von den Deutschen auch als **1. Moskauer Schutzstellung** bezeichnet, stellte die Hauptstellung im Vorfeld Moskaus dar. . . allerdings war sie Mitte **Okt 41**, als sich die Verteidiger dorthin zurückzogen, erst zu **40 – 50%** fertiggestellt. Es fehlt etwa die Hälfte der geplanten Geschützstellungen, der Panzergräben u. Stacheldraht Hindernisse. Hinter der Moschaisker Linie befand sich noch eine vierte Verteidigungslinie in Vorbereitung. (H. Magenheimer, *Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 126-27)

Dec 41-Jan 42 [Soviet plans for general offensive on Eastern Front]: While the Germans were digging into their defensive positions STAVKA was hatching a yet more ambitious project: the launch of a general offensive right across the Eastern Front. The strategic aims were to encircle Army Group Centre and recapture Smolensk; to annihilate Army Group North and lift the blockade of Leningrad; and to force Army Group South back in the Ukraine, relieve Sevastopol and reoccupy the Crimea. The aim was to incapacitate the *Wehrmacht* and deliver a war-winning blow in the course of a single strategic operation – in effect, “Operation Barbarossa in reverse.” The chronology of the emergence and preparation of this grand design is complex, but it seems that Soviet plans began to be drawn up and preliminary orders issued in mid-**Dec 41**. At the same time, elements of the incipient general counter-offensive began to be implemented, although the main effort did not take place until **Jan 42**.

It is common to *ascribe the grand schema to Stalin*. John Erickson, for example, called it “Stalin’s First Strategic Offensive.” Given Stalin’s predilection for gigantic projects . . . it is not difficult to imagine Stalin formulating and driving forward such a plan. However, *there is no evidence – post hoc* memoir claims apart²⁴ – *that Stalin’s generals dissented from the idea of a strategic counter-offensive*. It was an operation that *fitted perfectly the Red Army’s offensive doctrine*, it would provide an opportunity to nullify the failure of previous efforts to win back the strategic initiative and, if successful, would collapse the German invasion. . .

Stalin’s confidence in the coming operation was evident in a conversation w/ Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Secretary, on **16 Dec 41**. [See text for quote.] . . . Eden was in Moscow to discuss the terms of an Anglo-Soviet alliance and postwar co-operation. . . From Stalin’s point of view the *war looked as if it could be over in only a few months*. [!]

Stalin entered **1942** confident of victory. In early **Jan 42** STAVKA regrouped its forces and prepared to launch a counter-offensive to collapse the German position along the Eastern Front. On **10 Jan 42** Stalin issued the following directive to his commanders:

After the Red Army had succeeded in wearing down the German fascist troops sufficiently, it went over to the counter-offensive and pursued the German invaders to the west. . . Our task is not to give the Germans a breathing space, to drive them westwards without a halt, force them to exhaust their reserves before springtime when we shall have fresh big reserves, while the Germans will have no more reserves; this will ensure the complete defeat of the Nazi forces in **1942**.

(G. Roberts, *Stalin’s Wars*, 112-14)

3.1.4: Preparations for War / War Plans:

a. Background:

Note: All in all, Russia went to war *immeasurably better prepared and equipped than it had ever done in tsarist times* and, in quantitative terms, took the field w/ the greatest army in the world. Qualitatively, however, it was, at the time, hardly to be compared w/ the German Army. (A. Seaton, *Stalin as Military Commander*, 270)

Most historians writing about the Russian’s “*Barbarossa*” disaster have made too little use of one crucial factor – Red Army *war plans*. In an extraordinary example of strategic blindness, the Soviet political and military leadership prepared for war on a false assumption: that there would be time to mobilize & concentrate the Red Army before the main fighting began. . . The USSR would choose when war would break out – as had been the case w/ Finland in **1939**. The Soviet generals could not grasp that it was the *Red Army* that could be caught by surprise. The Soviet military leaders also expected – at least until late spring of **1941** – that it would take several weeks for the Germans to concentrate their forces for an attack against Russia. They believed

²⁴ **Note:** In his memoirs, Zhukov makes various claims about how he tried to persuade Stalin to forgo offensive operations in this period. There is no contemporary evidence to support his assertions and every reason to doubt his account since it forms part of a persistent pattern of distancing himself from failed Soviet offensives while at the same time taking most of the credit for the successful ones. In reality, Zhukov was the greatest hawk among Stalin’s generals and it is likely that he was an enthusiast of the winter offensive of **1941/42** not its detractor. (f.n. 128, 392)

that this German concentration could not be carried out secretly. They also supposed that their covering forces on the border could hold any German attack for 3-4 weeks while the Red Army was mobilized and concentrated. These assumptions were not consistent w/ intelligence that was coming in, nor w/ the knowledge of the sudden attacks the Germans had mounted against Poland, Scandinavia and France. By **May 41**, the Red Army had finally concluded that the German armed forces were *already mobilized* and that a large German force had been concentrated in East Prussia and Poland, but Stalin still did not order a change to existing plans.

Behind the planning of **1940-41** was the Red Army's offensive doctrine. Under Marshal Timoshenko, the High Command developed a series of war plans from **Sep 40**. The initial plan was for a massive counterattack into German-held southern Poland (to be mounted after a **30-day** mobilization period). By **May 41**, the planners were proposing a pre-emptive surprise attack, a "sudden blow on the enemy, both from the air and on land," following a "hidden mobilization." Offensive action was tested in the war games of Jan 41, and the offensively-minded Zhukov was appointed Chief of the General Staff after his success in those games. . . Far from ignoring the general German threat in the late spring of **1941**, Stalin and the Red Army High Command were preoccupied w/ it. The Russians were scrambling to reorganize their forces on the ground and in the air. They believed they had the means of dealing w/ the German threat, through a counter-offensive or even a pre-emptive attack. What existed by **Jun 41**, however, was a half-baked Red Army strategy for offensive actions by Soviet mechanized formations and aviation rgts concentrated near the border. The USSR could not simultaneously prepare a defense in depth and an offensive spearhead; in the end, it had neither. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East, 37-41*)²⁵

Note: Soviet planning apparently did not take the possibility of a surprise attack into account. . . In short, the military leadership anticipated a lag between the outbreak of war, declared or undeclared, and the actual beginning of operations. Zhukov mentions "several days." Vasilevskiy says the plans from the summer of **1940** until "Barbarossa" assumed **10-15** days. Ivanov gives "not less than two weeks," and Marshal V.D. Sokolovskiy, in his work on Soviet strategy, specifies **15-20** days. This was the period, Sokolovskiy indicates, in which mobilization was to be completed and the covering plan put into effect. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad, 21-22*)

b. Chronology:

1924-25: Soviet preparations to avoid a repeat of Russia's fate in the First World War – preparations for total, modern, industrialized war – began in **1924-25**. The *visionary* was *Mikhail Vasilevich Frunze (1885-1925)*, a Soviet politician, agitator, military cdr and military theorist, who died under the surgeon's knife in autumn 1925 in what was subsequently called a „medical murder.“ As People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs – War Minister – Frunze carried

²⁵ **Note:** Concerning the Red Army's deployment in western Russian on **22.6.41** Mawdsley writes: "However, the fear for the Ukraine was not the main reason for the concentration of the Red Army there, in the Kiev Military District. From the Russian point of view, the question was not where to defend but *where to attack*." In other words, "Red Army planners looked at the options and recommended an attack [against Germany] along the southern axis [out of the Ukraine]. This variant was approved by Stalin in **Oct 40**. A large force, heavy in tanks and acft, was built up in the Kiev Military District, which would form the offensive fist of a wartime Southwestern Army Group. The plan was tested in the **Jan 41** war games. It was developed by Zhukov in the form of the **Mar 41** and **May 41** war plans when he became Chief of the General Staff." (40)

through the 1924-25 *Frunze reforms*. So, in the relatively peaceful 1920s, Russia embraced *total mobilization*. (see, *Bellamy, Absolute War*, 32-33)

In late **1925** or, at the latest, by early **1926**, the Soviet armed forces and the government had decided that the country must acquire a modern armaments industry. The subsequent development of Soviet industry was heavily one-sided, and this had implications early in the war. In **1928**, the first year since **1913** for which reliable figures are available, **60%** of Soviet industry was *light*, against **40%** *heavy*. In **1940**, on eve of war, the *proportions were reversed*. **Stalin followed Frunze's plan**. (see, *Bellamy, Absolute War*, 34-35)

Soviet economic preparations for war had begun in the late **1920s** w/ the first Five Year Plan. Stalin feared that the capitalist powers were preparing an invasion; not surprisingly, much of the economic buildup took place east of Moscow in the Urals and Siberia. By the late **1930s**, these efforts had created a *military-industrial complex* of enormous potential. In **1939** Soviet industry raised defense production by **46.5%**. From **Jan 39** through **Jun 41**: **105,000** MGs, **100,000** sub-machine guns, **82,000** artillery tubes and mortars, over **1,800** tanks, **15,000** AT guns, and over **2700** acft rolled off the production lines. This economic capacity explains much about the Soviet Union's survival after the grim defeats of 1941. (*W. Murray, War to be Won*, 112)

Russian industry had been *transformed* under Communist rule: coal and steel production vastly exceeded pre-**1914** levels. Oil production figures show that the USSR's oil fields supplied **33** million tons of crude oil in **1941**, compared to Germany's **5.7** million (of which **3.9** million was synthetic oil extracted from coal). Romanian oil added another **5** million tons a year to the Axis side of the equation, but in a war of machines, this was a *staggering imbalance*. Russians massive new factories, like the tank plant at *Kharkov*, were not just building more tanks than Germany; by **1941**, they were building bigger and better tanks. Tank production increased from ca. **1600** vehicles per annum in **1939** to **3000** by **1939**, and **1700** in the first half of **1941**. Russian factories built **5400** artillery pieces in **1937**, **12,300** in **1938** and **17,100** in **1939**. Aircraft production rose from **4400** in **1937** to **10,600** in **1940**. (*C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia*, 30-31)

1936-41: Within the context of a sharply more threatening European political situation after **1935** and the outbreak of a general European war in **1939**, the Soviet Union prepared its armed forces for war.

- General Staff studiously altered its war plans to meet newly perceived threats and changed Red Army's force generation and mobilization system to accord w/ new war plans;
- Between **1937-39**, to increase size and improve readiness of peacetime forces and facilitate transition to war, Soviets converted their traditional territorial-militia force-manning system to a regular cadre system;
- The **1 Sep 39** Law on Universal Military Service provided manpower resources necessary for new system to achieve its ends;
- These measures enable Red Army to "creep up to war" by expanding its peacetime size from **1.5** million men on **1 Jan 38** to **5** million men in **Jun 41** and enabled its mobilization system to expand the peacetime Red Army cadre force to well over **500** divisions of various types in wartime;

- During series of European crisis between **1937-39**, the Soviets extensively exercised their mobilization system. Exploiting these experiences, the Red Army General Staff refined its mobilization and war plans thru **1940** and right up to **22 Jun 41**;
- Failures of Red Army in limited conflicts in Poland, Finland, Rumania, etc., lent new sense of urgency to work of strategic planners and accelerated their attempts to reform, restructure and reequip the Red Army. The ensuing "Timoshenko reforms" were in progress when war broke out in **Jun 41**;
- Prompted by intelligence indicators of growing German threat, between **Apr – Jun 41** the Soviet government partially implemented a "special threatening military period" and accelerated "creeping up to war" by conducting a concealed strategic deployment of forces; this was, in essence, the first stage of a precautionary mobilization process which would accelerate in wartime and continue thru early **1942**. This first stage began in late **Apr 41**, when forces from the Trans-Baikal and Far East regions moved west, and continued in early **May 41**, when smaller forces moved west from the Ural and Siberian Military Districts;
- In **Apr 41**, the Peoples commissariat of Defense (**NKO**) approved an expanded wartime establishment for rifle divisions (**14,483** men) and ordered **99** rifle divisions to be brought up to full wartime strength. Despite this order, only **21** of these divisions had reached full manpower strength by **22 Jun 41**;
- On **13 May 41** the **NKO** issued a decree for mobilization and formation of a 7-army (**67** division) strategic reserve and for deployment of this reserve along the Dvina-Dnepr River line w/in the first **10** days of July;
- In early **Jun 41**, under cover of "large-scale war games" and IAW the State Defense Plan, the **NKO** conscripted **793,500** men to fill out about **100** existing divisions and fortified regions;
- The Soviet mobilization plan (**MP-41**), when fully implemented (after **30** days), was to produce a total force of **344** divisions and **7.85** million men, **6.5** million of whom would be deployed in the Western Theater. Many of these mobilization divisions, however, were not at full strength. These were to complete their mobilization during the initial period of war;
- In actuality, by **22.6.41**, **MP-41** produced an initial combat force in the West of **2,902,000** men organized in **171** divisions out of a total Soviet Armed Forces mobilized strength of **4,829,900** men;
- **Crux:** By **22.6.41**, the Soviet government had implemented many, but not all, of the military requirements of the "special threatening military period." Long-term preparedness programs were well under way, partial mobilization proceeded apace, forces were converting to their wartime establishments, and strategic and operational force concentrations were underway. (For more details see, *D. Glantz, Red Army Ground Forces*, 1-2)

1938: At time of the *Sudeten crisis*, the Soviet Union's own military planning foresaw full readiness for war as attainable only by the turn of the year **1942-43**. (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 255; also, *Besymenski*, 98-101)

Sep 39–Oct 40: Ironically, Ribbentrop-Molotov Non-Aggression Pact actually contributed to the catastrophic defeat the Red Army suffered during initial stages of Operation *Barbarossa*. By signing the agreement, Stalin hoped to forestall a possible German invasion and, while doing so, create a *buffer zone* by seizing eastern Poland and Baltic States. Yet Soviets subsequent occupation of eastern Poland in **Sep 39** and Baltic States in **1940** brought the Soviet Union into direct contact w/ Germany and forced Red Army General Staff to *alter its war plans fundamentally*. Beginning in **Jul 40**, the General Staff developed new war plans identifying Germany as the most dangerous threat and the region *north* of the Pripiat' River as the most likely German attack axis. Stalin, however, disagreed w/ these assumptions and, in **Oct 40**, insisted his General Staff prepare a new plan based on assumption that, if it attacked, Germany would likely strike *south* of the Pripiat' River into the economically vital region of the Ukraine. With minor modifications, this plan became the basis for *Mobilization Plan (MP) 41* and associated Red Army operational war plans. (*Glantz, Barbarossa. Hitler's Invasion of Russia*, 15-16)

Sep 39-Jun 41: Soviet military planning, both for offense and defense, was greatly confused by the movement of the frontier **200** miles to the west, following annexation of the Baltic States, eastern Poland, and Bessarabia in **1939/40**. Before **1939**, the Red Army had prepared defensive positions on the Soviet Union's existing border, in what the Germans would call the "Stalin Line." With a border stretching **800** miles and relatively level terrain, it was impossible to create a defensive position even as solid as the French Maginot Line or the German *Westwall*. Instead there was a string of "fortified zones" (*ukreplennye raiony*), each w/ bunkers, artillery and MG positions, and tank traps. Following the annexations made by the USSR in the west, Stalin and Red Army decided on a high-priority programme to build **20** fortified zones along the new border (what the Germans called the "Molotov Line"), using materiel from the old border defenses. . . The fortified zones provided part of the "screen" behind which the main offensive force of the Red Army could mobilize – so the further west this screen was sited the better. The fortified zones also freed mobile troops for a general offensive, by covering that part of the frontier where the Soviet troops would not be attacking.

There was, to be sure, a more pessimistic side to Soviet strategic planning, which would explain why in **May 41** work began on renovating the Stalin Line and building a new "rear" defensive line (Ostashkov – Pochep Line) just west of Moscow. The Russians would not in the end be given much time to prepare the new fortified zones. From the point of view of fixed defenses the Red Army was in the worst possible position in **Jun 41**: the "Molotov Line" was far from finished, and the "Stalin Line" had been partly dismantled. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 23)

1939-Dec 41: Because of the threat of war in **1939**, the training period for recruits was cut and the *draft age* lowered. In **Sep 39**, the draft age was lowered from **21** to **19**, so that by **Jun 41** four (**4**) classes were in the army instead of two (**2**), as draftees normally served **2** years.²⁶ Each class included about **1.5** million men – thus there were **6** million new men in the army in **Jun 41**. In addition, reservists from **14** classes were called up during the remainder of **1941** to replace the heavy losses of the summer. Because the Revolution of **1917** had eliminated the upper class and

²⁶ **Note:** The Soviets called up about half of the annual class of recruits in the spring and the other half in the fall of each year. (53)

reduced the middle class, few well-educated men were available for the army in **1941**. Less than **12%** of the Soviet soldiers had a high school or higher education, and more than **60%** had completed only elementary school. (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 48)

1939-41: The expansion of the Soviet armed forces accelerated in 1939/40 and became „frenetic“ in **1941**. It is clear from Soviet contemporary writings and archival materials that, by this time, fear, rather than hostile intent, was the driving force. Soviet military assessments appeared in open and closed military journals. They show a clear understanding of superb German military performance and an unmistakable realization that the Soviet military in no way met German military standards. It is no coincidence that many of the articles which appeared in these journals during **1940/41** dealt w/ clearly defensive themes. In short, Soviet military theorists understood what could happen to the Soviet military and the Soviet state. Politicians, including Stalin, must have known as well. This understanding provided necessary context to all that occurred diplomatically and militarily in **1940/41**. At the least, it explains the magnitude of the ongoing Soviet military reform program and the haste w/ which it was implemented. By **Jun 41**, according to every measurement, the Red Army was the largest and most complex fighting force in the world. . . Moreover, ostensibly this entire force was undergoing thorough reform to improve its combat effectiveness. Outside observers such as Germany could scarcely ignore the ultimate consequences should Red Army reforms succeed. . . However, the Soviet political and military leadership, as well as many perceptive military leaders abroad (in particular Germans), understood that the Soviet military colossus was severely flawed. . . The haste w/ which [the Soviets] embarked on military reform underscored their realization that the Red Army was not ready for war. They also knew that the timetable for ongoing reform would not produce a combat-capable Red Army before summer 1942. Above all, they understood and feared the combat capabilities of the German Army and the political forces that drove the Germans inexorably toward further conquest. It was clear that sooner or later the Germans would move east. This understanding provided clear context for the seemingly irrational Soviet diplomatic and military activity from **1939** thru summer **1941**. (*D. Glantz, Red Army Ground Forces*, p?)

May 40-Jan 41: In **May 1940**, Maj-Gen *Vasilevski*, on orders from Timoshenko, completed in his own handwriting one copy (“High priority. Top Secret. Personal only”) of the “*Plan for the Defense of the State Frontier*,” and delivered it to Stalin and Molotov. The plan stated that “it might be possible that the conflict would be limited to our western frontiers only, but the possibility of the attack by Japan on our Far-Eastern frontier is not excluded.” As a result of discussion in the narrow circle of Stalin’s office, the conclusion was reached that the first echelon in the west should contain **57** divisions, the second **52**, and the reserve **62** divisions. Here, under the pressure of Stalin, a *huge strategic mistake* was permitted: the main forces were concentrated on the south-western axis (around **100** divisions). Stringing out divisions of the strategic echelon [*reserve?*] in the interior, frequently far from the frontier, permitted the aggressor to deal w/ separate elements of the defense in *piecemeal* fashion. “The main blow was expected in the southwest, but Hitler attacked in the centre, on the western axis. This should have been expected: in all the previous campaigns, the German forces went into action aiming towards the capitals of the conquered states, along the shortest possible axis.” After the plan of defense was approved, *Zhukov* was appointed chief of the General Staff in **Jan 41**. (*D. Volkogonov, “The German Attack,”* 82)

Mid-1940: Soviets responded to shock of their own failures and German success [France **1940**] by embarking on a crash program to reinvigorate their armed forces. The ensuing reforms, which bore the name of Commissar of War S.K. Timoshenko, affected virtually every facet of the Red Army. Beginning in haste in **mid-1940**, the Soviets attempted to rebuild their mechanized force

structure, expand and modernize their artillery and airborne troops, modernize and strengthen their rifle corps, and create a logistical infrastructure sufficient to sustain so large and modern a force. (*D. Glantz, Red Army Ground Forces*, 13)

Jul 40: For the Soviet Union, the French surrender in **Jun 40** made war w/ Germany a real and distinctly unwelcome contingency. . . In **Jul 40**, the Soviet Army General Staff turned to what from then until the following June would be its priority concern: devising a strategy to meet a German attack. (For Ziemke's account of Soviet planning see, *Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 15-20)²⁷

Sep 40-Mar 41 [*Soviet war plans*]: Seven [7] war plans were drawn up by Soviet High Command between **1928-41**. The next version of the plan [i.e., following the version of **Mar 38**, the last to be drafted before the start of WWII] was prepared in the very different circumstances of summer **1940**. In outline it was very similar to the **1938** document. However, the **1940** version predicted the Germans would attack in the *north* w/ a thrust from East Prussia (now, after the conquest of Poland, reattached to the main body of Germany) into *Lithuania, Latvia* and *Western Belorussia* (all now part of the Soviet Union). Thus, the bulk of the Red Army's forces should be concentrated in the north, said the plan. This later version of the war plan was also prepared by Shaposhnikov's staff officers. However, in summer **1940** he stepped down as Chief of Staff due to bad health and was replaced by General Meretskoy. Further work was done on the plan and a *new draft* dated **18 Sep 40** was prepared.

The September plan repeated the idea that the Germans were most likely to attack in the north but did not exclude the possibility that they might concentrate their main forces in the south, thus reasserting the need for a plan w/ *two variants* of the Soviet strategic response. If the Germans concentrated in the south the Red Army would also concentrate there and launch a *counterattack* that would head for Lublin and Krakow in German-occupied Poland and then on to Breslau in southern Germany. . . If the Germans made their move in the north, the Red Army would invade East Prussia. . .

The **Sep 40** plan was submitted to Stalin and the Soviet leadership for discussion. Out of this consultation there came, in early **Oct 40**, a *crucial amendment*: the Red Army's main attack forces were to be *concentrated in the south* and tasked w/ an advance on Lublin – Krakow – Breslau. Although the reason for this change was not specified in the memorandum that Timoshenko and Meretskoy sent to Stalin, the most likely explanation is the expectation that when war broke out the main concentration of German forces would be found in the south. Certainly in the *next version* of the war plan, prepared in **Mar 41**, the south was identified as the *most likely site for the concentration of German forces*. . . From spring **1941** onwards Soviet intelligence reports emphasised that if the Germans did attack it would mainly be *in the south*. These *misleading assessments* reflected the effectiveness of the *German disinformation campaign* which aimed to cover their real intention: to concentrate their attack in the north along the Minsk – Smolensk – Moscow axis.

²⁷ **Note:** Ziemke's account is based on Soviet official accounts, memoirs of Vasilevskiy, Zhukov, etc. His account depicts Soviet plans as being defensive in nature, but in some cases calling for counterblows into German-held territory. He does not address the **15 May 41** "preventive war" plan, nor the issue of Soviet preventive war planning at all, except for following statement: "The initial three-echelon deployment [in the so-called "special plan for the defense of the state frontier" completed early in **1941**] conformed to the best Soviet offensive doctrine of the time so much so, in fact, that it has been cited occasionally as evidence of a Soviet intention to attack Germany." (19)

The decision to plump [?] for a *southern concentration* of the Red Army was a *fateful one*, which Zhukov and others were keen to explain away in their memoirs. In their version of events the *decision was made by Stalin* who believed that Hitler wanted to seize the economic and mineral resources of the Ukraine and southern Russia, including the oil of the Caucasus. While it is true Stalin thought that the struggle for raw materials would be crucial in the coming war [i.e., *in other words, he expected a long war*], there is *no direct evidence that the decision to concentrate forces in the south was specifically his*, although he must have gone along with it. Finally, there is the more radical and controversial argument that the reason Stalin and his generals chose to concentrate in the south was that the *Red Army was planning a pre-emptive strike against Germany*, and the plains of southern Poland offered an easier invasion route than the rivers, lakes, bogs and forests of East Prussia. (G. Roberts, *Stalin's Wars*, 73-76)

Sep 40- Jun 41 [Red Army's lack of preparedness]: Im **Sep 40** wurde das Volkskommissariat fuer Staatskontrolle unter Fuehrung von Lew Mechlis . . . errichtet. Die Staatskontrolle ermittelte in allen wirtschaftlichen u. auch militaerischen Bereichen, ueberpruefte die Erfuellung der Plaene, die Arbeitsablaeufer, untersuchte Missstaende u. Maengel u. berichtete darueber an die Partei- u. Staatsfuehrung. . . Zahlreiche Berichte der Staatskontrolle von Ende **1940** u. aus der ersten Haelfte **1941** verwiesen auf die katastrophalen Zustaende im Bereich der Versorgung der Armee mit Uniformen, Lebensmitteln u. Treibstoffen, im Transportbereich u. anderswo. [**Note:** Mechlis' reports revealed cases of military clothing, equipment, etc., improperly housed in military depots (clothing/material rotting in the open, etc.); of units seriously short of uniforms, shoes, underclothing, food, equipment; of artillery shells improperly stored and rusting out in the open, etc. Writes Musial: „Es ist hervorzuheben, dass all diese Bericht auf dem Schreibtisch von Stalin u. Molotow landeten.“] (See, *Musial, Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 442-43)

5.10.40: Soviet High Command had watched Hitler dismember Poland, France and many smaller opponents, yet they had no workable plan to counter the *blitzkrieg*. Sensing that an upcoming conflict would be a *war of attrition*, w/ resource-poor Germany aiming for the Ukraine, on this day Stalin orders the main Soviet defensive effort redirected south away from the Moscow axis. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa* 1941, 14)

Dec 40 [*state of Red Army*]: *Timoshenko* presents devastating top secret report outlining the *grave deficiencies* in the nation's armed forces. The lengthy report was compiled on the basis of thorough assessments after *Timoshenko* had taken over from *Voroshilov* as *Defense Commissar* the previous May. It cannot have made pleasurable reading for Stalin: Lack of planning; no updated mobilization plans; serious deficiencies in training of troops; weapons old fashioned; acft out of date; shortage of maps, etc. It was a „*shocking indictment*“ of state of armed forces. Thus, it would take considerable time to make the Red Army ready for major combat. The only option, Stalin and Molotov agreed, was to do everything possible and w/ utmost speed to prepare armed forces for the *inevitable showdown*. In the meantime, it was *crucial to avoid any provocation that might give Hitler the pretext for an attack*. These twin considerations *effectively framed Soviet policy in months before launch of Operation Barbarossa*. (For more details see, (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 264-65)

ab Dec 40: A series of war games from **Dec 40** to **Jan 41** suggested vulnerabilities to a German invasion. But this conclusion only buttressed Stalin's intuition – Soviet forces must reinforce the frontier so that the Germans could not break through. Then the mobilization of reserves would allow a counterattack – no territory lost, no political problems. Throughout the spring [of **1941**], the Soviets steadily enlarged their frontier forces to nearly wartime strength. (*W. Murray, War to be Won*, 113)

1940/41: A huge amount was achieved in **1940/41:** Production of armaments was a third higher in 1940 than in previous year. The armed forces *grew massively in size* to **5,400,000** soldiers in 1941, compared w/ **1,600,000** at beginning of 1938. They were mostly deployed on the Soviet Union's western borders, and became *vastly better equipped*. But morale and discipline was often poor. Relatively few tanks and planes were of the latest models, and there were numerous obstacles to a *smooth flow of production*. Too much ground had been lost, gravely abetted by the purges, to make good the backwardness in technology and organizational deficits. *More time was needed.* (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 265)

1941: Stalin's greatest fear was the political unreliability of the Soviet peoples. Could he trust his citizens to resist a German invasion? From the dictator's perspective, the *regime could not surrender any territory*, including the newly occupied districts in Poland and the Baltic republics, lest such losses undermine the Soviet Union's political stability. Thus, the Red Army *rolled forward to positions on the newly acquired frontier*, while engineer troops demobilized the **Stalin Line** on the old frontier. However, construction of these new defensive positions began only in early **1941**. (W. Murray, *War to be Won*, 113)

1941: Ordered by Stalin and prepared in early **1941** by G.K. Zhukov, the new Chief of the General Staff, *State Defense Plan 1941 (DP 41)* reflected the assumption „that the Red Army would begin military ops in response to an aggressive attack.“ Thus, while defensive in a strategic sense, the plan and the military thought that it echoed was *inherently offensive* in nature. **DP 41** and its associated mobilization plan required Red Army to deploy **237** of its **303** divisions in the Baltic Special, Western Special and Kiev Special Military Districts and the 9th Separate Army, which, when war began, would form the Northwestern, Western, Southwestern and, ultimately, Southern Fronts.

As a whole, Red Army forces in the western Soviet Union were to deploy in *two strategic echelons*:

- The first *strategic echelon* was to consist of **186** divisions assigned to four (**4**) operating *fronts*;
- the second was to include **51** divisions organized into five (**5**) armies under High Command (*Stavka*) control;
- In turn, the **4** operating fronts were to deploy their forces in three (**3**) successive belts, or *operational echelons*, arrayed along and behind the new frontier;
- The first operational echelon formed a *light covering force* along the border; the second and third echelons, each of roughly equal size, were to add depth to the defence and conduct counterattacks.

Mobilization difficulties in early **1941**, however, precluded full implementation of **DP 41**. Thus, on **22.6.41**, the first strategic echelon's three (**3**) operational belts consisted of **57**, **52** and **62** divisions, respectively, along w/ most of the Red Army's **20** mech. corps deployed in European Russia. The five (**5**) armies deployed in the *second* strategic echelon under *Stavka* control, which ultimately comprised **57** divisions assembling along the Dnepr and Dvina rivers, was *virtually invisible to German intelligence*. Its mission was to orchestrate a counteroffensive in conjunction w/ counterattacks conducted by the forward *fronts*. However, by **22.6.41** neither the forward military districts nor the **5** reserve armies had completed deploying IAW the official mobilization

and deployment plans. As in so many other respects, the German attack caught the Soviet Union *in transition*. Worse, Soviet war planners had fundamentally misjudged the situation, not only by concentrating their forces so far forward, but also by expecting the main enemy thrust south of the Pripiat' Marshes. Thus, the Red Army was *off balance* and concentrated in the SW when the main German mech. force advanced further north. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 16)²⁸

Jan 41 [War Games]: Of the two *war games* conducted during the first two weeks of **Jan 41**, the second, which has come to light only recently, was the most significant. In this game, Zhukov let the “Reds” counter-attacking on the South-West Front. This had been the scenario most dreaded by Stalin. The *eventual build-up and deployment of the troops was derived from the games*. When the three operational directives issued on **22-23 Jun 41** are carefully scrutinized, it is apparent that they were *lifted directly from the war game documents*. . . The significance of the war games *can hardly be overestimated*. . . They comprise an accurate representation of the state of Soviet strategic thinking on the eve of the war. Neither of the two major games presumed a Soviet aggressive or pre-emptive strike. On the contrary, “the set-up created for the games,” as attested by General Zakharov, “was marked by dramatic episodes for the eastern side; it very much resembled the events which occurred on our borders in **Jun 41** [following the German attack]. Both games, therefore, postulated a German offensive on various fronts and explored defensive responses.” . . . The unpreparedness of the armed forces revealed by the war games . . . helps explain Stalin’s desperate attempts to postpone the war and his cautious handling of the deployment in the months preceding the war. (For details of the games see, *G. Gorodetsky, Grand Delusion*, 127-29)

Jan-Mar 41: Early in Jan 41, two *war games* conducted by the Red Army. Both were concerned w/ a purely *defensive strategy*. Both games assumed aggression from the west: an invasion of the Soviet Union. Results of both war games views as *unsatisfactory*. Stalin dumps the chief of staff *K.A. Meretskov* and replaces him w/ *Zhukov* – who had proved an effective commander in the war games – as chief of the General Staff. By March, influenced by the war games, a *revised operational plan was ready*. It reaffirmed the decision taken the previous autumn, and seemingly justified in the war games, that the main weight of Soviet defense would be directed towards the expected southern, not northern, variant of German attack. The *assumption was that the key German thrust would be towards the Ukraine*. It would prove a *serious miscalculation*. (see, *Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 268)

Feb 41 [Russian mobilization plan]: The plan outlined a staggering wartime strength of **8,700,000** soldiers in over **300 fully equipped divisions**, **60** of them tank and a further **30** motorized divisions, w/ an air strength of some **14,000** acft. The aims of the plan were meant to be fulfilled by end of **1941**. But the figures concealed much of the truth. Stalin and his inner circle were *fully briefed* on the plans and their practical limitations. They knew any German attack in **1941** would pose extreme danger for Soviet Union. The Red Army would still be ill-equipped to handle the threat. In so many vital spheres – tank and acft production, border fortifications, manpower – completion targets were *scheduled for no earlier than beginning of 1942*. The problems had been compounded by Stalin’s decision, overriding opposition from mil. leaders, to *abandon the system of fortifications, known as the „Stalin Line“*, begun in the **1920s** and stretching across the Soviet Union’s former frontier, in favor of new fortifications to be constructed in *forward positions on the new frontier*. This would prove a serious error in Jun 41. (see, *Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 269)

²⁸ **Note:** See Glantz, p 215, f.n. 9, for details of deployment of Soviet first strategic echelon. The third operational echelon (**62** divisions) was deployed to a depth of **400** km (along the Dnepr and Dvina rivers).

24.3.41: Der Neu- u. Ausbau von militaerischen Flugplaetzen entlang der dt.-sowj. Grenze ging ebenfalls schleppend voran. . . Am **24 Mar 41** ordnete das Politbuero fuer das Jahr **1941** den Bau von **20** neuen u. den Ausbau von **231** Flugplaetzen fuer die Beduerfnisse der Streitkraefte an. **62** dieser Flugplaetze befanden sich im Kriegsbezirk West (heutiges Weissrussland u. die heutigen nordoestl. Gebiete Polens), die meisten in einer Entfernung bis etwa **100** km von der damaligen dt.-sowj. Grenze entfernt. Weitere **63** Flugplaetze befanden sich im Kriegsbezirk Kiev, wobei die meisten von ihnen nah der dt.-sowj. Grenze lagen. Hinzu kam **23** Flugplaetze in den baltischen Laendern, **22** im Leningrader Kriegsbezirk u. **20** im Kriegsbezirk Odessa (entlang der sowj.-rumaenischen Grenze), die uebrigen in anderen Regionen der UdSSR. (*Musial, Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 454)

Spring 41: “The [Soviet Union] was preparing itself for war, but it was not yet ready for it. (D. Volkogonov, “*The German Attack*,” 80)

Spring 41: Much of the Soviet military effort dedicated to construction of *new frontier defenses*, to replace those abandoned by the advance from the **1939** frontier in the previous two years. At the same time the Red Army was deployed so as to defend the „frontier’s every *kink and twist*,” in defiance of all traditional military wisdom about „defense in depth“ and the maintenance of counter-attack reserves. The defenses of the **1939** frontier were actually *stripped* to provide wpns for the new ones; while the *armored formations*, which might have been held in support behind the zone under fortification, were *dispersed piecemeal* throughout the five western mil. districts, concen-trated neither for a counter-stroke nor for deep blocking operations. (*Keegan, Second World War*, 179)

Spring ’41: During the spring, the Soviet armed forces begin the induction of their *reserves*, the strength of the Red Army rising to **4.2** million...Throughout **Apr 41**, the **16.**, **19.**, **21.**, and **22. Armies** marched west, **16.** and **19. Armies** deploying into the Ukraine, **21.** into the Gomel area, and the **22.** marching en route to *Velikiye Luki*. (*B. Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 12)

Apr 41: From the spring of **1941** onward Soviet formations had been moving closer to the frontier. . . A few weeks before the beginning of the war the general concentration of troops on the western frontier was significantly increased. In strictest secrecy, a number of major formations were moved forward after Apr 41 from the interior of the country to the western military districts. . . Altogether, **4** army HQs, **19** corps HQs, and **28** divisional HQs had received reloca-tion orders from the interior of the country to the western state frontier. (Details see, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 84-85)

13.4.41: Russia and Japan sign neutrality pact. (Japan had **39** divisions, **1200** tanks and some **2500** acft in Manchuria in summer **1941**). (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 9)

15.4.41: Am **15. Apr 41** bemaengelte der Chef des Generalstabes, General Schukow, dass die Armee mit Munition, besonders Artilleriemunition, nicht hinreichend ausgestattet sei. Am selben Tag fasste der Hauptkriegsrat der Roten Armee den Beschluss, die Regierung solle dafuer Sorgen tragen, die Armee bis Ende **1941** ausreichend mit Munition aller Kaliber zu versorgen, damit Vorracte zur Fuehrung eines dreimonatigen Krieges angelegt werden koennen. (*Musial, Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 452)

May 41 [*Soviet pre-emptive strike*]: The key piece of evidence for the proponents of the *pre-emptive strike* hypothesis is a new version of the war plan prepared in mid-**May 41**. The status of this particular document – which has been the subject of *extensive controversy* in Russia – is

uncertain. It was a *handwritten document* prepared by General Vasilevskii, at that time Deputy Chief of Operations, in the name of Zhukov and Timoshenko but *not signed by either of them*. It is **not certain that Stalin saw the document** or was even told about it [Note: *Is this a plausible position?*]

This **May 41** document was a *less elaborate and less formally structured version* of the earlier war plans. It has the air of being, as Cynthia A. Roberts has suggested, „less a plan than a working document for one.“ According to this document, Germany and its allies (Finland, Hungary and Romania) would be able to deploy **240** divisions against the USSR and the main German force of about a **100** divisions would in all probability be *deployed in the south* for an attack in the direction of Kovel – Rovno – Kiev. The document further noted that the German army was in a *state of mobilization* and that „it had the possibility to pre-empt us in the deployment and to deliver a sudden blow.“ The document continued:

In order to prevent this (and to destroy the German army), I consider it necessary not to give the initiative to the German command under any circumstances, to forestall the enemy in deployment and to *attack the German army at that moment when it is still at the deployment stage and has not yet managed to organise a front or co-ordinated the different branches of the army*. The primary strategic goal of the Red Army will be to destroy the main force of the German army deploying south of Demblin. . . The main blow of the forces of the South-Western Front to be inflicted in the direction of Krakow and Katowitz, cutting off Germany from its southern allies. . .

The document concluded w/ some requests to Stalin for action, including acceptance of the proposed plan of deployment in the event of war w/ Germany and, crucially, the *secret mobilization* of all of the High Command's reserve armies.

Read as part of the sequence of successive war plans there was *nothing surprising in the May document*. It was a **logical development** of the idea that in the coming war the Red Army would attack the German main force that was being deployed in the southern sector. The document's proposal to preempt the final stage of German mobilization and deployment reflected, no doubt, the anxiety provoked by accumulating intelligence reports of *massive Wehrmacht concentrations* along the Soviet frontier in spring **1941** and the growing realization that *war was coming sooner rather than later*. The proposal to counterattack in the form of an invasion of southern Poland was the *same as before* and the proposed secret movement of the reserve armies was an *extension of existing and ongoing measures of covert mobilization*.

The problem w/ the document was *twofold*: First, it was *deeply ambiguous* about the timing of a Soviet pre-emptive strike. . . Second, there was *no possibility that Stalin would accept the new plan* while he believed there was still a chance of peace. (*G. Roberts, Stalin's Wars, 76-77*)²⁹

²⁹ **Note:** Writes Roberts: „It has been suggested that the appearance of the May plan was linked to Stalin's speech to the **2,000** graduates of the Red Army staff academies on **5 May 41**.“ However, in Robert's view, the truth concerning this speech was „more prosaic than any of the rumors.“ More credible than being a „call to arms,“ is that Stalin „wanted to impress upon his young officers the need for an attacking spirit and probably saw his casual remarks as a boost to morale, a *confidence-building fillip* in face of an impending war w/ Germany.“ After Stalin's speech „the pace of Soviet war preparations picked up but they were not of the scale and character necessary to make a pre-emptive strike in summer **1941**. . . In retrospect the most common criticism of Stalin's behavior during the last weeks of the Soviet-German peace has not been that

8.5.41: Am **8. Mai 41** fand eine Sitzung des Hauptkriegsrates der Roten Armee statt, der dabei feststellte: „Insgesamt entspricht die Kriegsbereitschaft, obwohl sie im Vergleich zu **1940** erhoehet wurde, immer noch nicht den gegenwaertigen Anforderungen, um Operationen durchfuehren u. kaempfen zu koennen, sie [die Kriegsbereitschaft] charakterisiert sich durch die Nichterfuellung der Aufgaben, die im Befehl des Volkskommissars fuer Verteidigung Nr. **30** gestellt worden sind.“ (*Musial, Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 452)

13.5.41: IAW the directive issued by the People’s Commissariat for Defense on this day, four (**4**) armies (**16, 19, 31** and **22**) are to continue the move forward from the interior. The completion of the forward deployment is planned for the middle of July. (*Volkogonov, “The German Attack,”* 84)

17.5.41: Stalin believed, as he stated in his toast on **5 May 41**, that in the event of a German attack – which he *considered unlikely*, as it would have meant war on two fronts – the Red Army would be in a position quickly to shift from “defensive to offensive action.” But did he really *not* know about the “top-secret” directive of the People’s Commissar for Defense, No. **34678** of **17 May 41**, in which the Marshal of the Soviet Union, S.K. *Timoshenko*, had evaluated the results of combat readiness? It stated that the requirement and the provisions for “the winter period of **1941** had not been met in a significant number of formations and units.” The Main Military Soviet, for example, assessed the readiness of the Red Army air force as “unsatisfactory.” The documents w/ these appraisals, which were well known to Stalin, are signed by *Timoshenko*, A.A. *Zhdanov* and *Zhukov*. (*Volkogonov, “The German Attack,”* 79-80)

23.5.-5.6.41: The *special inspection* of the Kiev, the Western and Baltic Special Military Districts, and the Odessa Military District, which is carried out over this period, ascertains the readiness of the forces as *unsatisfactory*. The coded telegram, addressed to the military soviets of the districts and the armies, and signed by *Timoshenko* and *Zhukov*, presents an *alarming evaluation of the condition of the units*. A little earlier, A. *Zaporozhets* had reported the same findings in a special account to Stalin and other members of the Politburo, “concerning the conditions of the *fortified districts* on our western frontiers,” namely that “the majority of the troops deployed in the fortified districts on our western frontiers are *not battle ready*.” Yet only a month and a half before the beginning of the war [i.e., on **5.5.41**] Stalin is insisting that in the event of a German attack, the USSR would quickly go over to the offensive. (*Volkogonov, “The German Attack,”* 80)

May-Jun 41: The military manages to persuade Stalin to undertake a big step: at end of May and beginning of June **1941**, **793,000** reservists are called up for training, which makes it possible to replenish some formations in the front line **2-3** weeks before the start of the conflict. In general terms, at the beginning of **1941**, the strength of Red Army units – measured against a requirement for a full complement (**100%**) – was as follows: medium tanks – **74%**, artillery wpns – **76%**, aircraft – full complement, but in the main these machines consisted of old models. (*Volkogonov, “The German Attack,”* 82-83)

May-Jun 41: In spite of the misgivings of his professional advisors, Stalin had moved forces into newly occupied territories – *Bessarabia, Poland, Finland, Baltic States* – and out of the so-called *Stalin Line* (whose powerful guns and tangles of barbed wire in difficult forest country later impressed the Germans who overran it), until by **May 41** **170** Russian divisions were stationed outside of the pre-**1939** frontiers of the USSR. . . [Thus] the fact is that well over half the Russian

he was preparing to attack but that he refused to bring the Red Army to a full state of alert in advance of the German invasion.“ (79)

army was occupying new positions whose fortifications and rearward communications were incomplete. . . Preparations of the Red Army for war, esp. in frontier districts, were impeded up to the last moment by Stalin's continuing obsession w/ avoiding provoking the Germans and so prolonging the respite. (*Calvocoressi & Wint, Total War*, 166, 170)

May-Jun 41: Am **14. Mai 41** teilte Gen-Lt Fedorenko dem Volkskommissar fuer Verteidigung mit, dass die motorisierten Korps wegen der ungenuegenden Ausruestung der Panzer mit Kanonen u. MGs nicht ganz kreigsbereit seien. Beispeilweise war die Anfang **1941** aufgestellte u. in Hajnowka bei Bialystok stationierte **208. Mot. Div.** im **Jun 41** nur zu **70 bis 80%** bewaffnet. Das **Pz.Rgt. 128**, das zur Division gehoerte, haette **250** Panzer haben sollen, hatte aber vor dem **22. Jun 41** keinen einzigen. Und diese Verbaende waren keine Ausnahme. Im Fruehjahr **1941** befanden sich die grossen sowj. Panzerverbaende in der Phase einer tiefen Umstrukturierung u. Umruestung, ihre volle Kriegsbereitschaft war erst fuer das Fruehjahr **1942** vorgesehen. (*Musial, Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 452-53)

Jun 41: At this time, the Russians were in the middle of a hugely ambitious reorganization plan aimed at creating **60 tank divisions** by the end of the year. These tank divisions would then be combined w/ **30** mot. divisions to form **30** "mechanized" corps. To achieve this, **1940**-vintage tank bdes were re-grouped into divisions, but the process was far from complete in **Jun 41**, and the organized bdes that *had* existed were thrown into disarray. . . The whole process might have been smoother had the four [4] huge "tank corps" created at the end of the **1930s** not been broken up in **Nov 39**, but the Red Army would still have lacked the training and communications to make effective use of such large formations. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 24)

Jun 41: After Stalin's central European land grab in **1939-40**, the Red Army in Poland stood closer to Berlin than to Moscow. However, the bulk of the Western Special Military District (WSMD – "Special" meaning that it could supposedly fight w/o substantial reinforcement) occupies *dangerously exposed positions* in the *Bialystok salient* between East Prussia and occupied southern Poland. Since the acquisition of these new territories signified the high point of Soviet interwar foreign policy, Stalin insists that Col-Gen Pavlov, cdr of WSMD, fight hard to keep them. Yet these Soviet forces in the massive *Bialystok salient* are ripe for v. Bock's picking. The Western Special Military District (WSMD) occupies a **270-mile** front, most of it along this treacherous bulge. The district had issued its Order **008130** on **26.3.41**, ordering all units to achieve full strength by **15.6.41**, but resources fell far short of good intentions. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa* 1941, 8, 15)

Jun 41: According to *R. Kirchubel*, on eve of *Barbarossa*, the **170** divisions in the western USSR are short **1.5** million men [accurate?!]. Even if all **800,000** soldiers mobilized in the spring of **1941** had gone to these units, they would have made up only 1/2 of the shortfall; in fact, half of those mobilized went to the Air Force, and to units deep in the interior of the USSR. (*Barbarossa* 1941, 25)

Jun 41: For good description of *shortcomings of Russian Army* in wake of German invasion see, *Ivan's War* (100-08)

Jun 41 [*State of Red Army*]: Despite imposing size, Red Army „in serious disarray“:

- Conflicting doctrinal concepts; at same time, attempting to expand, reorganize and re-equip armed forces.

- Worse still, the military purges – begun in **1937** and *still continuing* – resulted in severe shortage of trained and experienced cdrs and staff officers.
- In contrast to German belief in subordinate initiative, the purges and other ideological and systemic constraints convinced Red Army officers that any show of independent judgement was hazardous to their personal health [!].
- Red Army troops also suffered from political requirement to *defend every inch of existing frontier* while avoiding any provocation of the Germans.
- Red Army had largely abandoned and cannibalized their pre-**1939** defences along the former Polish-Soviet frontier and were erecting new „fortified regions“ in western portions of the „Special Military Districts.“ Despite prodigious efforts, however, the new defences were incomplete when Germans attacked. Bulk of forward rifle units were garrisoned as far as **80 km (48 miles)** east of frontier, while NKVD border troops and scattered rifle elements manned frontier defenses.
- Red Army logistical system in „disarray.“
- Organizationally, Red Army structure reflected its doctrine and leadership. First, it lacked any equivalent to the panzer group or panzer army which were capable of conducting sustained deep ops into enemy rear. Its largest armored unit was the mech. corps – a rigid structure that contrasted unfavorably w/ more flexible German mot. corps.

(Source: *Glantz, Barbarossa*, 22-24)

Jun 41 [Red Army status]: The Red Army of **1941** was „*in serious disarray*.“ Although its strategy was now defensive, its official operational concepts remained the offensive, deep-operational theory of M.N. Tukhachevsky and V.K. Triandafillov. Like the Germans, the Soviets had neglected the development of detailed defensive concepts and procedures, at least at operational (army) levels of command and planning. The purges had created a severe shortage of trained cdrs and staff officers able to implement official concepts. . . The troops were also handicapped by the political requirement to defend every inch of the existing frontier. One of the scenarios Stalin feared in **1941** was a German provocation, a seizure of some small salient of Soviet territory instead of an all-out invasion. This concern reinforced the tendency to plan a continuous, frontal defense along the border rather than the type of fluid battle maneuver that had made the Red Army so effective during the Civil War.

The prewar defenses of the old Polish-Soviet frontier had been partially abandoned and somewhat stripped of land mines, barbed wire, and guns in order to build **20 new fortified regions** in the territories occupied in **1939**, the so-called Special Military Districts. Despite belated efforts in spring **1941**, these new defenses were *far from complete* when the Germans attacked. Forward rifle forces were garrisoned as much as **80 kilometers** away from the frontier. To avoid any provocation to the Germans, the actual border was thinly manned by **NKVD** security troops, and the forward Soviet defenses were in many instances *overrun before they could be manned* on **22 Jun 41**.

The Soviet defenders shared many of the logistical problems of their opponents but had the inestimable advantage of fighting on their own familiar terrain. . . Soviet military organization

reflected the shortcomings of its concepts and leadership. The Red Army had *no equivalent to the panzer group or panzer army* that could accomplish a large-scale, independent penetration mission into the enemy's rear echelons. The largest Soviet armored formation in **1941** was the mechanized corps, a „rigid structure“ that contrasted unfavorably w/ the easily reorganized German mot. corps. . . Most of the available Soviet mech. corps were scattered in separate garrisons, w/ the divisions of a corps often separated by up to **100 kilometers**. . . making it difficult to concentrate them for army or *front* counterstrokes. The actual strength of these corps varied widely. . .

Soviet infantry organization was superficially similar to that of the Germans, w/ each rifle division authorized **14,483** men organized into three [**3**] rifle rgt. of three [**3**] btns. each plus two [**2**] artillery rgt. and supporting services. Three [**3**] rifle divisions were grouped into a rifle corps, w/ two or three rifle corps and one mech. corps generally composing a field army. In practice, however, the Red Army was woefully understrength, w/ most divisions numbering **8,000** or less, even before the German onslaught. In late **May 41**, the Soviet government had attempted to remedy this problem by calling up **800,000** additional reservists and accelerating the graduation of various military schools. These additional personnel were just joining their units when the attack came. . . In the short-term struggle that Hitler planned, Germany had clear qualitative and even quantitative advantages over the Soviet Union. If the first onslaught failed to knock out the communist regime, however, that regime had the potential to overwhelm Germany. . .

The Red Army in **1941** was just beginning to field a new generation of tanks (**T-34** mediums and **KV** heavies) that were markedly superior to all current and projected German vehicles. . . Few Soviet tanks, however, had radios, and this made C2 in combat difficult, if not impossible. . . Considering the puny AT wpns available to most German infantry units, these two new Soviet tanks were „a nightmare waiting to happen.“ After unusual manufacturing delays in **1940**, **1861 T-34s** and **KV-1s** had been produced by **22 Jun 41**. These new tanks were distributed primarily to five [**5**] mech. corps in the border military districts, over half going to **4 Mech Corps** in the Kiev Special Military District and **6 Mech Corps** in the Western Special Military District. The remainder (**100** each) went to **3, 8 and 15 Mech Corps**. The overall paucity of new tanks in other corps and the logistical and training shortcomings in the corps that possessed them further reduced their combat effectiveness. Where the Germans encountered them in large numbers, however, the tanks caused understandable consternation. (*Glantz & House, When Titans Clashed*, 33-36)

10.-11.6.41: An diesen Tagen berichtete Marschall Timoschenko, der damalige Volkskommissar fuer Verteidigung, u. General Zhukov, Chef des Generalstabes, Stalin ueber den unbefriedigenden Fortschritt beim Ausbau der Eisenbahnlinien, die die wichtigsten Nachschubwege fuer die Truppen darstellten. Sie teilten ihm mit, dass die Erfuellung der Plaene fuer den Ausbau von Eisenbahnlinien fuer das Jahr **1941** ernsthaft gefaehrdet sei: „Beim Ausbau der 11 neuen Eisenbahnlinien im westl. Abschnitt begannen die Arbeiten Ende **Apr 41**, u. bis heute sind sie noch nicht richtig angelaufen. Zum **1.6.41** wurden auf diesen Linien nur **8%** des Jahresplanes erfuehlt. . . Die Hauptursache fuer die Schwierigkeiten war laut dem Bericht ein Mangel an Baumaterial (Zement, Holz, Baueisen). Es handelte sich hierbei um den Neubau u. Ausbau von Eisenbahnlinien, die bis zur deutsch-sowj. u. rumaenisch-sowj. Grenze sowie zur Ostsee (baltische Laender) fuehren. Das Politbuero ordnete diesen Ausbau am **14 Feb 41** an, insgesamt waren dafuer ab **Mar-Apr 41 57,000** Arbeiter eingesetzt. (*Musial, Kampfsplatz Deutschland*, 453-54)

17.6.41: Nicht anders stand es um die Luftstreitkraefte [i.e., in comparison to motorized forces]. Mit ihrer umfassenden Umstrukturierung u. Umruestung liess Stalin erst im Fruehjahr **1941** beginnen. Und die Anfaenge waren schwierig. Die Jagdgeschwader 41, 124, 126 u. 129 der **8. Luftdivision**, die in Weissrussland stationiert war, erhielten im Fruehjahr **1941** im Rahmen der Umruestung der Luftwaffe **240** neue Jagdflugzeuge **Mig-1** u. **MiG-3**. Bis zum **12. Jun 41** ereigneten sich **53** „Vorfaelle,“ dabei wurden **10** Flugzeuge total zerstoert, **5** so ernsthaft beschaedigt, dass sie in Flugzeugwerken repariert werden mussten, **38** weitere benoetigten grosse Reparaturen in Luftwaffenwerkstaetten. Hinzu kam, dass wegen verschiedener Produktionsmaengel, die an den Flugzeugen u. Motoren festgestellt worden waren, ueber **100** Maschinen nicht flugfaehig waren. Aus diesem Grund verfuegten alle Luftgeschwader der **8. Luftdivision** am **17. Jun 41** nur ueber **85** bis **90** einsatzbereite Flugzeuge (anstatt der vorgesehenen **240**) fuer **206** Flieger. (*Musial, Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 453)

22.6.41: IAW prewar planning, the Red Army was echeloned strategically in depth. The first strategic echelon, formed from the field forces in the western military districts. . . consisted of **171** divisions (**104** rifle, **40** tank, **20** mechanized, **7** cavalry) arrayed along a front of **4500** km from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea. They were deployed from the border region to **100** to **400** km to the rear. The second strategic echelon consisted of **57** divisions from six [**6**] *Stavka* reserve armies, which by **22.6.41** were beginning to deploy along the line of the Dvina and Dnepr rivers. Finally the strategic reserve consisted of all forces existing or mobilizing in other military districts and the Far Eastern Front. (For more details see, *D. Glantz, Red Army Ground Forces*, 3-5)

22.6.41 [Soviet frontier deployments]: Although formations had been moving closer to frontier from spring **1941** onward, this activity was evidently not completed by the beginning of hostilities. Comparison of published data shows that of the **170** divisions stationed in the western frontier zone, **48** divisions were positioned **10-50** km., **64** divisions **50-150** km., and **56** divisions **150-500** km. east of the Soviet frontier. Striking, at any rate, was the concentration of Soviet formations in the eastern Polish areas incorporated in the Western and Kiev special military districts. This was true particularly of the salient around Bialystok and Lvov, which projected far into German territory. The bulk of the troops in the Western special military district was concentrated at Bialystok; even mobile formations such as armored, mechanized, and cavalry divisions were in an exposed position. Thus **3** of the **4** armies of the Western special military district and **3** of its **6** mech. corps stood in a semicircle around Bialystok; a further mech. corps was at the starting-point of the salient between Brest and Kobryn.

Not only were the ground forces, including mot. and mobile formations, being moved up close to the new Soviet frontier, but so were the air forces. Since the spring of **1941** efforts had therefore been in progress to set up a dense network of operational airfields in the proximity of the western frontier of the Soviet Union. This project had not been completed by the beginning of hostilities, w/ the result that acft were crowding together on those airfields which had not been completed, offering an easy target to the GAF. Not only had the ground and air forces been moving up close to the new state frontier, but also supply-depots, fuel stores and mobilization supplies; these were nearly all lost at the beginning of the war. (*GSSW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 85-86)

22.6.41: Dies ist ein Missverhaeltnis [i.e., the relative correlation of forces facing each other in **Jun 41**] das nicht allzu gross gewesen waere, haette man die sowjet. Kraefte in einer gut ausgebauten Abwehrstellung zusammengezogen. Nun waren sie aber ganz im Gegenteil in unangebrachter Tiefe aufgelockert, was die vorn eingesetzten Kraefte ausserordentlich schwaechte, das Inmarschsetzen der Reserven verzoegerte u. eine straffe Fuehrung unmoeglich machte. So besass

der dt. Angreifer am **22.6.41** in den fuer den Durchbruch ausersehenen Raeumen eine *betraechtliche zahlenmaessige u. materielle Ueberlegenheit*. (Bauer, Panzerkrieg, 122)

ab 22.6.41: Die Regierungsmassnahmen folgten einander. Die *Mobilisierung* der Jahrgaenge **1905-18** wurde angeordnet, u. zwar nicht nur in den westl. Militaerbezirken des Landes, sondern auch in den fernen asiatischen Gebieten der Sowjetunion. (Gosztony, *Entscheidungsschlacht*, 103)

ab 22.6.41: Stalin's tyranny demanded that the **NKVD** root out all signs of defeatism. Thus, few w/in the military bureaucracy dared to voice their fears. Even the idea that the Red Army might have to fight a defensive war suggested an unacceptably defeatist attitude. As a result, many units involved in the **Jun 41** fighting discovered *they had maps only of German territory*, where they would presumably advance, and not of the home territory they were defending and through which they might have to retreat. [!](W. Murray, *War to be Won*, 114)

Stalin Line: German "*Frontschau*" training video for the *Ersatzheer*, offers interesting impressions of the Stalin Line. On display are, for ex.: tank traps (of various types), water obstacles, wire entanglements, criss-crossed steel beams (tank obstacles), bunkers (concrete, wooden, earthen), earthworks of timber/soil, wide and deep AT ditches; houses/barns used to hide wpn positions, even flamethrowers w/ remote ignition. (*Frontschau Nr. 2, "Russischer Stellungsbau"*)

Stalin Line: An integral part of the shield behind which the Soviets would prepare their strategic counteroffensives were their *Fortified Regions*. Called the "Stalin Line" by the Germans, they were in *no way comparable to the Maginot Line*; the main works consisted of bunkers w/ light artillery and MGs. One of the two oldest Fortified Regions was that at *Polotsk* astride the Dvina River, where the Soviet, Polish and Lithuanian borders come together. Others, at *Minsk*, *Mozyr* and *Slutsk*, dated from the **1930s**. Stalin insisted that the defensive lines move west into Poland in **1939**. In **Jun 40**, a month after replacing Voroshilov, Timoshenko ordered new construction in these areas, including updating Fortress Brest's defenses. On *Barbarossatag*, most divisions manning the Soviet-German frontier lacked their engineer btns which were busy building new bunkers and obstacles, markedly degrading the divisions' combat power. Construction went slowly, partially owing to the same miserable transportation infrastructure that would soon hamstring v. Bock's advance. Prior to *Barbarossa*, Red Army inspectors found the Minsk defenses "deplorable." The German after-action report claimed that only **193** of the **1175** forts throughout the West Front were equipped and occupied. (Kirchubel, *Barbarossa* 1941, 27-28)

3.1.5: Common Soldiers (Attributes & Lives of):

Note: Most of the Red Army conscripts came from the countryside. The more we know about everyday life in the villages and the fiasco of collectivization in **1929-30**, the less support we can assume for the Stalinist regime. The late **1930s** were also a time of Communist terror in the USSR which was much worse for the core population than the Nazi terror was for the core population of the Reich. . . The fast pre-war expansion of the Soviet armed forces created huge problems of quality. The Red Army before the war had difficulties keeping trained personnel, especially junior officers and NCOs. Unit-level cdrs had been through excessively accelerated training, especially six-month courses for junior lieutenants. These, in turn, were the men who were supposed to train NCOs and soldiers within units. In **1941**, **2/3** of the ordinary soldiers in the border military districts were in their first year of service. Of these, **1/2** were untrained raw

recruits, from the special spring draft of **Apr-May 41**. Conscripts called up from the new borderlands were unreliable. In **Jul 41**, Zhukov would report “mass desertion and treason to the Motherland” among conscripts from the western regions of the Ukraine and Belorussia, and from Bessarabia. . . Many Soviet soldiers fought badly or surrendered w/o a fight in **1941**, “demoralized troops in a demoralized society.” Hundreds of thousands of them would even fight *alongside* the *Wehrmacht* in the next 3 years. (E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 30-31)

Note: For an early **1950s** perspective on the “Russian Soldier see, *CMH Pub. 104-22*. Under “*Character*,” for ex., it state: “The *Slav psyche*—esp. when it is under more less *pronounced Asiatic influences*—covers a wide range in which fanatic conviction, extreme bravery, and cruelty bordering on *bestiality* are coupled w/ childlike kindness and susceptibility to sudden fear and terror. His *fatalistic attitude* enables the Russian to bear extreme hardship and privation. He can suffer w/o succumbing. (2-3) In the preface is written: “The chief characteristics of Russian combat methods during World War II were the *savagery, fanaticism, and toughness* of the individual soldier and the *lavish prodigality w/ human life* by the Soviet high command.” (P.M. Robinett, *Brig-Gen. U.S.A. Ret., Chief Special Studies Division*; quoted in: *CMH Pub. 104-22, Small Unit Actions*, preface)³⁰

Note: “Despite *conventional wisdom* that Red Army soldiers possessed natural fieldcraft skills, the Soviet campaigns of **1930-40** revealed a *poor grasp* of personal camouflage, entrenching, river-crossing and other basic tasks. Officers could not read maps, and displayed both *drunkenness* and *naprasnoi smelosti* (futile bravery). All were too prone to panic when confronted w/ opposition, as happened in Poland. The purges had caused a decline in respect for officers. Discipline was *universally poor*.” (Kirchubel, *Barbarossa 1941*, 27)

Note: “The accepted interpretation of a Red Army composed of *masses of poorly armed and poorly led peasants* that overwhelmed the Germans does not jibe w/ details concerning manpower, leadership, and the equipment of the Red Army. . . The general interpretation has been that this inexhaustible mass of men had overwhelmed the German Army through sheer numbers while absorbing huge losses. The true picture is *more complex* and deserves a closer look.” (W. Dunn: *Stalin’s Keys to Victory*, vii)

„The Soviet infantry was willing, undemanding, suitably trained and equipped, and, above all, *brave* and endowed w/ a *self-sacrificing devotion to duty*. The communist philosophy appeared to have become *firmly rooted* among the great mass of the younger people and to have made them loyal soldiers, differing much in their perseverance and performance from those of World War I.“ (E. Rauss, *Russian Combat Methods*, in: *Tsouras, Fighting in Hell*, 34)

„The sum of these most diverse characteristics makes the Russian a *superior soldier* who, under the direction of understanding leadership, becomes a *dangerous opponent*. It would be a serious error to underestimate the Russian soldier . . . The difference between the Russian units in World War I and those in World War II is *considerable*. Whereas in the earlier war the Russian Army was a more or less *amorphous mass*, immovable and w/o individuality, the *spiritual awakening* through communism showed itself clearly in the last war. In contrast to the situation at the time of

³⁰ **Note:** Also addressed in this CMH booklet are the Russian soldiers’ putative “*kinship with nature*,” “*frugality*,” and “*physical fitness*.” For example: “The frugality of the Russian soldier was beyond German comprehension. The average rifleman was able to hold out for days w/o hot food, prepared rations, bread, or tobacco. At such times he subsisted on *wild berries or the bark of trees*.” And: “From the outset of the Russian campaign the German tactical superiority was *partly compensated for by the greater physical fitness of Russian officers and men*.” (3)

World War I, the number of *illiterates* was small. The Russian masses had acquired *individuality*, or at least were well on the way to acquiring it. . . The number of good *noncommissioned officers* was still not large in World War II and the Russian masses had not yet overcome their sluggishness. . . In judging the basic qualities of the Russian it should be added that *by nature he is brave*, as he has well demonstrated in his history. In **1807** it was the Russian soldier who for the first time made a stand against Napoleon after his victorious march through Europe – a stand which may be called almost *epic*.” (See, *E. Rauss, Russian Combat Methods*, in: *Tsouras, Fighting in Hell*, 18-19)

“The German generals’ impressions of the Red Army were interesting, and often illuminating. The best appreciation in a concise form came from *Kleist*: ‘The men were first-rate *fighters* from the start, and we owed our success simply to our superior training. They became first-rate *soldiers* w/ experience. They fought mostly toughly, had amazing *endurance*, and could carry on w/o most of the things other armies regarded as necessities. The Staff were quick to learn from their early defeats, and soon became highly efficient.’ Some of the other German generals *disagreed*, and said that the *Russian infantry* in general *remained rather poor*, tactically and technically, though the *tank forces were formidable*.” (*B.H.L. Hart, German Generals Talk*, 183-84)

Average front-line tour of duty for an infantryman in Russian Army before he was removed by death of serious disability was *three weeks* (16)...Problem on which almost every Soviet source is silent: Trauma, in the Red Army, was all but invisible...Shock, and the distress of all that men witnessed at the front, was virtually taboo...Soviet accounts say nothing about trauma, battle stress, or even depression (17)...Nearly ¾ of the Soviet infantry in WWII “had started life as peasants...their mental universe tightly bound by God and soil...” (21) One common denominator among all who served in Red Army—their almost *complete isolation from the outside world*. They lived in a “sealed universe.” (30) (all: *Ivan’s War*, *C. Merridale*)

Note [Soviet improvisation]: “Once, while marching w/ my company along a narrow, but otherwise open piece of terrain far away from combat, we were suddenly fired upon, although nobody was to be seen. We wondered what had happened. Finally, we realized that a Soviet soldier had hidden his loaded Sten gun in a tree and *tied the trigger by a long cord to the foot of a cow* [!]. When the cow moved the gun fired. We asked ourselves: Had he read Karl May?” [i.e., a German writer who excelled in imagination]. It cannot be denied that the Soviets were very experienced in combat w/in forests and in camouflage technique. They had much more contact w/ nature and knew how [to make better use of it]. . .” (*Col. Dr. A. Durrwanger, “28. ID Operations,”* in: *Glantz, “Initial Period of the War*, 439)

Soviet conscripts: As late as end of 1920s, psychologists had found that the vocabulary of the average infantryman ranged from **500 to 2000** words. Political education was hastily stepped up, and by 1939 fewer recruits were failing reading tests and none were ignorant about Stalin! (55) The most able conscripts were “creamed off” for work in the **NKVD**.³¹ The army got the next-best ones (55). Recruits: The young men were very often drunk by the time they arrived at their units. *The drinking was a tradition, dating back to Tsarist times*. (56) Recruits were never given socks. This was an army that marched in footcloths, or *portyanki*. These strips of cloth, which wound around the feet and ankles, binding them like bandages, were alleged to protect against blisters. They were universal issue and used by soldiers throughout the war. (56-7) Soldier’s kit explained. Men would lick their spoons clean after each meal and store them in the tops of their

³¹ Merridale defines and discussed **NKVD**, the secret police force. By end of 1930s, population of the Gulag, the network of NKVD prison camps and labor colonies, exceeded **1,670,000** (44-5).

boots. (58) Notes that *straw was an ideal refuge for lice* (used in lieu of a mattress). (59) Harrowing account of army life—shortages of food, soap, water, lack of bathing, brushing teeth, the filth, theft, etc. (60-62) (all: *Ivan's War*, C. Merridale)

Kahlgeshoren: Bei den russ. Soldaten war es so, dass bis zum Offizier alle kahlgeshoren sein musste. (*Dr E. Bunke, Das Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, 286)

Daily diet: A bag hung on his belt in which were *millet heads* which when mixed w/ water made a porridge. He carried dried fish as *iron rations*. High percentage vodka filled his field thermos. He rolled his cigarettes in newspaper, using very course-cut tobacco, *Machorka*, which included the stalks of leaves (*Verton*, 92)

When the men fought, they rarely thought of food, but *every other waking moment was tormented by incessant hunger*. Their usual diet, according to a *politruk* who served in the defense of Moscow, was breakfast at 6:00 a.m., including soup “so thick that a spoon could stand in it any way you liked,” a lunch of buckwheat kasha, tea, and bread, and then more soup and tea at nightfall...In 1941, the *daily ration for front-line soldiers* theoretically included: nearly a kilo of bread, 150 grams of meat, buckwheat, dried fish, and a healthy lump of lard or fat. But even the *politruk* conceded that “in battle, it was much harder with food.” What that meant is that most combat soldiers received nothing but dry rations, and sometimes nothing at all, for days on end. (*Ivan's War*, 136)

After start of German attack, it took months to get a valid *supply system* up and running. Some Red Army soldiers in those *terrible early days* actually *marched into battle w/ no food but anchovies*, a particularly terrible thing in light of the heat and the lack of drinking water. (*Citino, Death of the Wehrmacht*, 36)

Verton writes of “uninhibited drunkenness” of Soviet soldiers. When there was a shortage of vodka, they suctioned alcohol from the exhausts of planes, filtered it through filter of their gas-masks; then mixed rest with syrup, etc. (107)

In Red Army, *superstition forbade swearing on the eve of battle*. (*Ivan's War*, 135)

As fighting men in first year of war, Russians had a mixed „report card.” Sometimes fought with fanatical bravery—particularly, if backed up by a commissar; other times, they collapsed. Surrendered in droves. (This “picture” quite evident in Haape's book, *Moscow Tram Stop*.)

They could not see the Russians they were shooting at, but they *could smell them!* The Russian soldiers smelled of *makhorka* tobacco, which had a very strong, unpleasant odor. It was made of the stems of tobacco leaves instead of the leaves (only Russian officers were issued tobacco made of the leaves). This awful smell got into their thick uniforms and could be *smelled for quite a distance*. (*S. Knappe, 87. ID, Reflections*, 225)

H. Haape noted first Russian prisoners (Jun 41) with shabby *khaki-yellow uniforms* and their *clean-shaven heads*. (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 19-20)

Jul/Aug 41: *W.K. Nehring (18. PD)* re: *Russian resistance*: In dem von den Panzergruppen durchstossenen Gelaende war der russ. Widerstand *erstaunlich hart u. zaeh*. (*Nehring, Panzerwaffe*, 225)

Winter 1941/42:

C. Merridale, discusses problems with *frostbite* (Germans not only ones affected by this!) Men were also short of basic clothing. After the Finnish war, the general staff had reviewed the question of cold-weather gear for Soviet troops, and there is no doubt that *valenki*, padded jackets and trousers, fur gloves, and warm hats saved thousands of lives in the Red Army throughout the war. (*Ivan's War*, 137-38)

Not all Russian units adequately prepared for winter when it began. Some suffered as much as the Germans did. Before a Russian attack in *Rshew* area (Nov 41), the soldiers—some of them still in their thin summer uniforms—were each issued **five tablets** which had an effect similar to that of alcohol and a *large ration of sugar cubes*. (See, *CMH Pub. 104-22, Small Unit Actions*, 15-18.)

Russians adept at protecting themselves from *barbaric winter cold*. See F. Strienitz account of his mission behind Russian lines (*Malachovo*, 30.1.42) for great example of how Russians used branches of trees to build improvised tent! (*Strienitz, Sonderfragen*)

Blumentritt: The Russians were far better off [than the Germans were]. Moscow lay immediately behind them, so that the lines of supply to the front were short. Many Russian units were issued w/ *padded fur jackets, padded boots, and fur caps w/ large earpieces*. They had *felt boots*. They lacked neither gloves nor warm underclothes. Their good trains were drawn by *Siberian engines*, specially built to withstand the extreme temperatures. (*Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 63)

21.12.41 [*Moskau/Anecdote*]: „Mit der Verpflegung war es bei uns ganz schlecht. Meistens assen wir bei diesen Schneeverwehungen kalt. Unsere Soldaten bekamen vor jedem Angriff ein volles Glass *unverduentten Alkohol*, den Imbiss dazu liess man sie in den feindl. Stellungen erbeuten. So war auch der Spruch: ‚Getrunken? Ausgezeichnet! Bei der Einnahme der Hoehe X kriegt ihr auch was zu essen! Wenn der Feind dort etwas hinterlaesst...‘ Da der Feind uns 1941 in seiner Bewaffnung noch weit ueberlegen war, mussten wir seine Stellungen *meistens nachts angreifen*. Nachts waren die Froeste am strengsten u. die meisten *Fritzen* zogen sich schon bei Anbruch der Dunkelheit zum Schlafen auf den grossen Ofen, den es in jedem Bauernhauf gab, zurueck...*Nachts waren die Deutschen schlechte Kaempfer*. Diese Tatsache nutzten wir oft aus, um bei dem Feind etwas Essbares zu erbeuten. Der Fritz begriff aber ganz schnell, worum es ging, u. ueberlistete uns oft.

So verlor ich bei *Belew* an der *Oka* kurz vor Weihnachten die Haelfte meiner Kompanie. Wir wussten, dass die Deutschen Weihnachten mit *Schnaps* u. sonstigen *Leckereien* feiern wuerden. Durch das Fernglas beobachtete mein Kommandeur die Ankunft einer langen Wagenkolonne u. wie die Deutschen u. wie die Deutschen ganz froehlich Kisten mit Wein, Kartons mit Schokolade u. Zigaretten ausluden. *Uns lief das Wasser im Munde zusammen*. In unseren Brotbeuteln hatten wir ja nichts ausser *Suchary* (trockenes Brot), die wir behutsam assen, um kein Kruemchen zu verlieren. So bekam ich den Befehl, in der Nacht die feindl. Stellungen anzugreifen, zwecks *gewaltsamer Besitzergreifung der dt. Weihnachtsverpflegung*. (**Note:** His unit makes its way unmolested to the German vehicles, but they had fallen into a trap; they are shot down mercilessly. See, *Lt. Iwan Sawenko*, **332. Schuetzendivision**, *Echolot*, 560-61)³²

³² **Note:** This is a most telling anecdote. German accounts note – often w/ a certain anger – many Russian attacks at Christmas. Maybe this anecdote reveals one reason for those attacks – to capture German provisions!

Like Germans, many Russian soldiers suffered *incredible hardships* during the winter. Russian POWs, interrogated after a failed attack on elements of German **15. ID** SW of Moscow in early **Feb 42**, noted the following experiences during the winter offensive that saved Moscow: Since most inhabited localities had gone up in flames, the Russians were almost *completely deprived of shelter*. HQ staffs were occasionally set up in the cellars of burnt-out buildings, but the *troops remained in the open*. Whenever they were not on the move, they assembled around fires in the forest. The prisoners told of how some of the Russian companies spent their nights in the bitter cold. A company of men would *line up along a long rope* which was then wound up like a skein of yarn. Thus pressed closely together and warmed by the heat of each other's bodies, the men would *sleep while standing on their feet*. Every hour the skein would be unwound and then rewound in such a manner that those on the inside would form the outer ring and those who had been exposed to the cold wind would benefit from the relative comforts of an inside position. (CMH Pub. 104-22, *Small Unit Actions*, 247-48)

Susceptibility to alcohol: About **Mar 42**, Germans used alcohol as a "powerful propaganda improvisation" that eliminated the danger of a local enemy penetration. Red Army infantry penetrates German line south of *Rshew*. Difficult and tense situation. Cdr of local German *Alarmeinheit* sends a civilian w/ a few bottles of liquor to the *Rotarmisten* now behind his lines and invites them to taste the samples. They were told they could drink to their heart's content if they decided to come over unarmed. Slightly inebriated by the first bottles, they began to arrive hesitantly and in small groups w/o wpns. As soon as the first wave had convinced itself that the Germans had no intention of killing them, about **50 additional Russians** turned up to receive their liquor. They indulged so heavily that they forgot all about their wpns, quite apart from fact that they were now physically incapable of returning to them. Meanwhile, a German security detachment collected the abandoned wpns and stopped all further Soviet infiltration attempts. (see, *Newton, Panzer Ops Raus*, 131)

3.1.6: Soviet Officer Corps:

Almost the entire *officer elite* in Stalin's army in World War II had started life as peasants. Mentions Konev, Timoshenko and Zhukov as examples. One of the best routes to a better life, at least for those of humble origins, was the military. (35-6) The crucial generation, the soldiers who would fight at Stalingrad and Kursk, were born into the Soviet system and knew no other...Children's training began from the moment they stepped through the door of the nursery school. (More interesting comments on *indoctrination of children* (*Ivan's War*, C. Merridale, 40-1).

Soviet officers: Few officers knew their men well, and none could have known all of them, so rapidly did whole units dissolve and new ones form...Foot soldiers were coerced because their commanders in turn feared for their skins. Cruelty became a way of life. In Aug 41, the officers' vulnerability to punishment was emphasized again. (*Ivan's War*, 112)

Jun 41: Some **85%** of Soviet officers serving in the Western Military District had only been in their appointment for a year; a direct consequence of the purges of **1937-38**, which had all but obliterated the officer corps. (*Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 27)

Jun 41: Between **1937-41**, the „cream of Soviet military talent perished,“ including those visionaries who had begun transforming the Red Army from a foot and hoof-bound mass army into a modern force capable of exploiting modern 20th Century technology. The senior Soviet officer corps of **Jun 41** consisted largely of political hacks, sycophants, and cronies of Stalin, and a host

of less senior and surviving junior officers, some skilled, but all cowed to some degree by the grisly fate of their predecessors. The incompetence or inexperience of this „truncated and fearful officer corps“ contributed, in part, to the less than stellar performance of Soviet arms during the occupation of eastern Poland in **Sep 39** and during the ensuing Finnish War of **1939-40**. At the same time, the surviving senior military leadership, at Stalin's urging, undid many of the reforms of their purged predecessors (e.g., abolition of the mech. corps in fall **1939**). (D. Glantz, *Red Army Ground Forces*, 12)

At time of German invasion, only **25%** of Red Army officers had been in their jobs for more than **12 months**. The purge was so comprehensive that most senior positions were filled by men *out of their professional depth*. Only **7.6%** of the surviving officers had a higher military education; most had a secondary education and nothing more. The purge exterminated a generation of officers who had developed armored forces integrated w/ air power and even paratroops, and who had gained combat experience since the Russian Civil War. As *Khrushchev* observed after Stalin's death, „The cadre of leaders who gained mil. experience in Spain and the Far East was almost completely liquidated...“ (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 29-30)

In assessing Russian performance in an action near **Olenino (Mar 42)** German author notes: “As in many other instances, the *lower echelon Russian cdrs* revealed a certain *lack of initiative* in the execution of orders. Individual units were simply given a mission or a time schedule to which they *adhered rigidly*... While the Russian soldier has the innate faculty of adapting himself easily to technological innovations and overcoming mechanical difficulties, the *lower echelon cdrs* seemed incapable of copy w/ sudden changes in the situation and acting on their own initiative. Fear of punishment in the event of failure may have motivated their reluctance to make independent decisions.” (See, *CMH Pub. 104-22, Small Unit Actions*, 37)

3.1.7: Discipline (Crime & Punishment):

Recent Russian figures admit that **990,000** Red Army personnel were condemned by military tribunals in addition to the unknown quantity shot out of hand during moments of crisis. A total of **420,000** men were sent to *penal units* during WWII, while **444,000** were dispatched to labor camps. A truly terrifying total of **158,000** men were shot; ten (**10**) times as many military executions as the German army ordered between 1939-45. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 61)

Desertion in Red Army: Large-scale desertions still affecting Red Army in fall of 1941. The number of death sentences passed by military tribunals rose steadily between **Nov 41** and **Feb 42**. Accused mostly charged with desertion and fleeing the battlefield. While all armies take measures of this sort to some extent, *even this leadership was horrified by some tales of its own brutality*. (Ivan's War, 125)

Wo die Disziplin der Truppen zu wünschen uebrig liess, reagierte der Diktator u. seine Helfershelfer wie eh u. je mit eiserner Faust. So liess Stalin bis Kriegsende **158 000** Rotarmisten als vermeintliche Deserteure exekutieren. Politische Kommissare trieben die eigenen Soldaten mit vorgehaltender Waffe in den Kampf. Und mitunter wurden gar die *Tuerme sowjetischer Panzer zugeschweisst*, sodass die Besatzungen keine Moeglichkeit hatten das Gefaehrt bei drohender Gefahr zu verlassen. (G. Knopp, *Die Wehrmacht. Eine Bilanz*, 99)

The Soviets believed that any of their combatants who allowed himself to be captured was probably a *traitor* and a *counter-revolutionary*. After the Soviet-Finish War of 1939-40, many of the **5,000** Soviet soldiers who had fallen into enemy hands were deported and never seen again. **Article 58** of the *Soviet Criminal Code* forbade Soviet soldiers – even the wounded – to allow themselves to be taken prisoner. The Red Army was the only one in the world where being taken prisoner counted as *desertion* and *treason*. The Soviet government and military command had *absolutely no interest* in what happened to Soviet people in German captivity. (Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 21-22)

Oct 41 [NKVD]: NDVK “rear security units” checked panic thru the use of MG-gunners ready to keep the Red Army from any unauthorized withdrawals. . . Not only Russian POWs who had managed to escape from the Germans, but even whole Army units who – as so often happened in **1941** – had broken out of German encirclement, were subjected as suspects to the most harsh and petty interrogation by the O.O. (*Osoby Otdel* – Special Detachment) run by the NKVD. In Simonov’s novel, The Living and the Dead, there is a particularly sickening episode based on actual fact, in which a large number of officers and soldiers break out of a German encirclement after many weeks’ fighting. They are promptly disarmed by the NKVD; but it so happens that at this very moment the Germans have started their offensive against Moscow, and as the disarmed men are being taken to a NKVD sorting station, they are trapped by the Germans, and simply massacred, unable to offer any resistance. (A. Werth, *Russia at War*, 227-28)

Mid-Oct 41: As the Germans approached Moscow, **Beria** received a report showing that since the beginning of the war, **NKVD** troops had detained no less than **657,364** Red Army men who had *deserted or gone absent w/o leave*, of whom **10,201** had been shot. Over the next five days [i.e., roughly in mid-Oct] in the *Mozhaisk* sector of the war zone alone, **23,064** Red Army men, **2164** of them officers, would be detained, retreating w/o permission. (Barber, *Moscow Crisis*, 202-03)

The Red Army shot **167,000** of its own men for alleged desertion or cowardice in **1941/42** alone. (W.P. Reese, *Stranger*, foreword, vi)

The army was held together by *bonds of dread* as well as loyalty. Stalin’s right-hand man was his former secretary, Col.-Gen. L.Z. **Mekhlis**, now head of the Army Political Directorate, who had carried out thousands of executions during the purges. Stalin had sent him to *Finland* during the debacle there in winter **1939-40**, where he had dismissed, arrested and shot failed cdrs. *Under Leninist military law it was a crime to be taken prisoner*. Mekhlis had arranged a grisly scene in **Mar 40**, when thousands of returning POWs were greeted in Leningrad w/ a banner, „The Fatherland Greets its Heroes,“ and marched straight through to railway sidings where they were hustled into cattle-trucks for the camps. Under Stalin’s personal orders, Mekhlis and his assistant, Army Commissar E.A. **Shchadenko**, continued to arrest, imprison and shoot selected officers throughout **1940/41**. The Army Group Cdr in the West, D.G. **Pavlov**, was murdered for „treachery;“ there was another big batch of shootings in **Oct 41** and again in **Jul 42**, the latter to forestall a *coup*. Lesser fry were dealt w/ by a *new and terrifying Field Security Force*, **Smersh**, which cooperated w/ police blocking btms behind the front to prevent any retreat. Relatives of those known to have become POWs were made liable to long terms of imprisonment. With the *prospect of death on all sides of him*, the ordinary Russian soldier had no real alternative but to fight to the last. (P. Johnson, *Modern Times*, 383; also, *Conquest*, 486-90; and, *Seaton, Russo-German War*, 90)

3.1.8: Losses (Personnel & Equipment):

Summary:

D. Glantz: While exact numbers cannot be established, its Great Patriotic War w/ Germany and Japan cost the Soviet Union about **14.7** million military dead. Overall, the Red Army, Navy, and NKVD suffered at least **29** million and perhaps as many as **35** million military casualties. (*Soviet-German War: Myths and Realities*, 9)³³

W. Dunn: “The achievements of the Red Army in World War II *surpass those of any other army in history*. Facing invasion by the German Army at the peak of its performance in the summer of **1941**, the Red Army was *all but annihilated*, losing more than **3** million killed and missing. The Russian reaction was to *create a second Red Army* during the summer of **1941**, **157** rifle divisions, which the Germans again all but destroyed by **Dec 41**. The Red Army lost **154** rifle divisions in the first six [**6**] months of the war. However, the Russians began the creation of a *third Red Army* in **Aug 41** and by **Nov 41** had formed an additional **148** rifle divisions and **88** rifle brigades, which stopped the Germans at Moscow and drove them back. Beginning in **Dec 41**, the Russians formed a *fourth Red Army*, some of which were lost in the Ukraine in the spring of **1942**, but the majority completed their training by the fall of **1942** and stopped the Germans at Stalingrad. No other nation has lost **1/3** of its population [ref. is to millions of Russians caught behind German lines, I believe] and its prewar army and then *replaced it three* [**3**] *times in the course of 18 months*, all the while fighting one of the most highly trained and experienced armies the world has ever seen.” (*Stalin’s Keys to Victory*, 1)

Losses of Soviet Divisions
(Jul – Dec 41)

Month	Divisions Lost
July 41	17
Aug	28
Sep	53
Oct	34
Nov	16
Dec 41	07
Total	155

(Thus the total for six months was a “staggering” **155** divisions of a total of **229** available at the outbreak of the war; nearly equal to the **159** divisions on the eastern front and in the Stavka Reserve at the beginning of the war. The tank corps was “*annihilated*” in the same period. The Soviets had lost their prewar army. Nations that had suffered less had given up and made peace w/ the Germans, such as the French. The *difference was space*, which gave the Russians more time to create new armies. (*Dunn, Stalin’s Keys to Victory*, 64-67)

The ratio of killed and missing to sick and wounded changed considerably [depending on the year and the campaign]. At *Moscow* (**5.12.41-7.1.42**) the ratio was **2:3**. At *Stalingrad* the totals were nearly equal and at *Kursk* **1:1.5**. After *Kursk*, the ratio hovered between **1:3** and **1:4** for the rest of the war. (*Dunn, Stalin’s Keys to Victory*, 57)

³³ **Note:** Glantz’ figures for military war dead much higher than those of Dunn, Erickson, etc. He also gives figure of ca. **20** million civilian dead. (10)

1941-45: The proportion of missing [i.e., prisoners of war] was much higher in **1941/42**, and in the spring of **1943**, when the Red Army suffered a severe setback in the Ukraine. The shifting results of battle are clearly reflected in the *ratio* between permanent [killed/missing] and temporary [wounded/sick] losses:

1941 = 5:2

1942 = 3:4

1943 = 1:2.4

1944 = 1:3

1945 = 1:2.5

The rate of loss per month was **745,000** in **1941**. The total Red Army losses in **1941** were: **3,137,673** killed and missing [mostly POWs] + **1,336,147** wounded and sick = **4,473,820**. (See, *Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 164, for detailed table)

Background [1946-85]:³⁴

Note: Controversy “continues to rage over the question of *direct* wartime loss.” (i.e., over battlefield losses of Red Army, partisans, civilians killed as direct result of fighting). Furious controversy also continues to rage over the *ratio* of Soviet losses to those of the *Wehrmacht*. (*Soviet War Losses*, 258)

“There has been no shortage of numbers, gross numbers, to account for human losses in the Soviet Union. Much of it has been ‘simple arithmetic,’ *prostaya arifmetika*, creating in its wake much political mischief and no small degree of public anguish. Little was done to distinguish between *direct* and *indirect* loss and to indicate what *time-scale* the ‘loss figure’ was intended to cover. Until very recently, the census figures for **1939** were not publicly available, which certainly impeded any closer analysis of population changes over time.” Estimates dealing with ‘direct loss,’ intended to include the armed forces as well as partisans and civilians lost through enemy action, varied between **26** and **27** million, while a figure of **22** million battle casualties and **24** million civilian dead had been advanced as a ‘*global*’ figure, though this seemed to combine (or confuse) direct and indirect losses.” (*Soviet War Losses*, 256)

The first post-war figure for Soviet losses, **7** million, was produced by Stalin in **Feb 46**, no doubt intended to be accepted as a “global” figure though this was a most conservative estimate of battlefield loss. The much-touted and oft-quoted figure of “in excess of **20** million” for *both* military and civilian losses was announced by *Khrushchev* and widely employed by both Soviet and Western commentators in the **1960s**. This seems to have been “*plucked out of the air*” in an act of political convenience. Two decades later [**1985**], the *Encyclopedia of the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945* hardly advanced the cause of exactitude and clarification by simply reasserting the figure of “upwards of **20** million Soviet citizens – *part of them* civilians who perished in the Hitlerite death camps, from Fascist brutalities, illness, hunger.” To displace this *arbitrary* figure of “**20** million plus” has proved to be difficult and not w/o a great deal of controversy. (*Soviet War Losses*, 256-57)

³⁴ **Note:** This introduction gleaned from John Erickson’s article, “Soviet War Losses. *Calculations and Controversies*.” 1994.

Global Loss: Erickson points out that there appears to be “something of a consensus about [a] “global” loss figure in the order of **47-50** million. Recent publication of hitherto *secret figures* for the **1939** census gives a *baseline* of **197.1** million for the population of the Soviet Union in the period immediately preceding the war. Given natural population growth, w/o the intervention of war, and using an officially accepted coefficient of **1.7** growth, we could anticipate a population level of **212.5** million in **1946**, whereas it was only **168.5** million. In **1950**, it had climbed only slowly to **178.5** million. Professor *I. Kurganov* [for whose calculations there are, so Erickson, a “certain vindication,” thanks to the publication of the 1939 census] strikes out boldly for an *absolute loss* figure of **44** million, compounding both *direct* and *indirect* losses, including battlefield casualties, civilian casualties (hunger, disease, enemy action, enemy atrocities), civilian losses (concentration camps), emigration (refugees, defectors) and allowing for a “*natural loss*” due to *wartime diminution of the birth rate*. According to another estimate (*V.I. Kozlov*), over the wartime period and including the first four (**4**) post-war years, the “*population deficit*” was about **45-48** million. In any case, a *mean figure* of about **48** million seems to be the generally accepted “*global loss*,” which, put in other terms and over time, signifies a deficit in the order of **23%** in Soviet human resources, compounded of actual wartime loss, the wartime “*birth deficit*” (set by some at **10** million “not born” babies), together w/ the lower post-war birth rate due to the “male deficit” and drastic alternations in the age-specific sex ratios. (*Soviet War Losses*, 257-58)

J. Erickson (1994): Over the past few years various figures have appeared relating to Red Army losses for the period **1941-45**. It was not until spring of **1990** that some of the mystery was at long last dispelled: Army General *Moiseyev*, then Chief of the Soviet General Staff, reported on the work of *two official commissions*: one dealing w/ human loss, the other w/ losses in *materiel*. Human losses for “the war,” including the Far Eastern campaign of **1945** – and embracing categories of KIA, MIA, prisoners who did not return, those who died of wounds, illness, accident or suicide – amounted to **8,668,400**. Other casualties owing to wounds, shell-shock, frostbite and those taken sick amounted to ca. **18,000,00** (w/ the proviso that here was possibly a certain amount of *double counting* where a serviceman may have been wounded several times – there is one recorded case of a soldier wounded seven (**7**) times and each time returning to his unit. General *Moiseyev*’s figures are supported by the release of the *latest figures* – a process begun by Col-Gen *G.F. Krivosheev*, who began a more detailed analysis of Soviet loss figures in two articles published in **1991**. *Krivosheev*, provided the figure of **27** million for “*direct loss*,” that is, loss due to enemy action, servicemen killed in action or succumbing to wounds, deaths from hunger and disease, casualties among partisans, Soviet civilians killed by bombing or artillery fire, Soviet POWs, etc.; he also supplies the *same total loss figure* for the Red Army (plus internal troops and frontier troops) as General *Moiseyev*. According to *Krivosheev*, medical casualties amounted to **18,344,148** (wounded / shell-shocked **15,205,692**; sick **3,047,675**; frostbite victims **90,880**). (*Soviet War Losses*, 258-60)

Col-Gen Krivosheev also emphasizes that the *relationship of killed to wounded* varied greatly throughout the war – in **1941 4:1** [!!!], in **1942** almost **3/2**, in **1943** a reversal of the ratios to **2/3**, in **1944-45** in the breakthrough and pursuit operations a greater proportion of wounded, fewer fatalities. (*J. Erickson, Soviet War Losses*, 260)

With the recent publication [**1993**] of *Grif sekretnosti snyat* [*G.F. Krivosheev*, ed.], a massive statistical compilation, we have at last a very substantial body of data dealing w/ Soviet losses. Chapter III covers the loss tabulations for the period **1941-45**, w/ a breakdown of losses for all the

ops of the Red Army (defensive/offensive) beginning w/ the defensive ops in the Baltic States (22.6.-9.7.41):

Soviet Losses in Operations³⁵
Jun 41 – Apr 42

<i>Red Army Operation</i>	<i>KIA</i>	<i>Medical Casualties</i>	<i>Combined Total</i>
<i>Belorussian defensive operation: 22.6.-9.7.41</i>	341,073	76,717	417,790
<i>Kiev defensive operation: 7.7.-26.9.41</i>	616,304	84,240	700,544
<i>Smolensk battle: 10.7.-10.9.41</i>	486,171	273,803	759,974
<i>Moscow defensive operations: 30.9.-5.12.41</i>	514,338	143,941	658,279
<i>Tikhvin offensive operation: 10.11.-30.12.41</i>	17,924	30,977	48,901
<i>Rostov counteroffensive operation: 17.11.-2.12.41</i>	15,264	17,847	33,111
<i>Moscow strategic offensive: 5.12.-41-7.1.42</i>	139,586	231,369	370,955
<i>Rshev-Vyazma offensive operation: 8.1.-20.4.42</i>	272,320	504,569	776,889

Soviet losses in WWII: According to the *Deputy Defense Minister of the USSR, Suchorukov*, the Soviet Union lost ,between **27** and **28** million men.³⁶ (*Frankfurter Rundschau*, **21.4.90**; quoted in: *H.J. Schroeder, German Soldiers' Experiences*, 318, f.n. 37)

Soviet Army **losses 1941-45** (in millions):

- 6.8** = KIA
- 2.7** = Died in German captivity
- 15.0** = Wounded
- 3.0** = Sick
- 27.5** = Total

(Source: *C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia*, 120)

³⁵ Gleaned from J. Erickson, "Soviet War Losses," 264.

³⁶ Figure *must* be for total losses – not just soldiers (men).

27,000,000 Soviet people died during war – about **one** out of **seven**. *Demographers* calculate the „*global loss*“ of population, resulting not only from excess deaths during the war, including the direct war deaths, but also the overall impact on the population, resulting from couples who never met and babies not born, to have been in the order of **48,000,000**. Moreover, the Great Patriotic War unquestionably contributed to the *Russian population crisis* evident in 21st Century. (see, *Bellamy, Absolute War*, 11-12, 15)

Red Army losses: Confirmed „irrecoverable losses“ among the armed services – army, air force, navy, border guards, and Interior Ministry – are: **8,668,400**. This figure, revealed in a groundbreaking study published in **1993**, includes dead on the battlefield, MIA and prisoners who did not return. (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 7)³⁷

Red Army losses: Determining extent of losses incurred by Soviet Union is difficult. The changes in boundaries *complicate* the matter. The *official figure* for many years was **20** million military and civilian dead. In an article in *Pravda* on **6 Apr 1966**, *Kosygin* said the loss was *more than 20* million. A Soviet demographer in **1967** estimated the wartime deaths at **21** million. In **1989**, *Gorbachev* raised the total to **27** million killed during WWII. Other computations estimated a loss of **19.6** million men and **6.1** million women. In **1993**, military losses were published: Killed and died of wounds = **6,885,000**; Missing that did not return = **1,783,000**. Total dead and missing = **8,668,000**. (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 14-15)

22.6.-9.7.41: Average *daily losses* opposite German AGC in *Belorussia* during this period amounted to: **23,207** men, **267** tanks, **524** artillery pieces and motors, and **99** acft. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 252; gleaned from: *G.F. Krivosheev, Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses*, 101, 110-121, 260-61)

22.6.-31.12.41: In the second half of 1941, Soviet Russia *juddered* under an attack which eliminated forces equivalent to its *entire pre-war army*, and caused **27.8%** of its total irrecoverable losses (dead and prisoners) in the war against Germany. (Losses against Japan in Aug-Sep 45 are excluded from these figures.) Yet **1942** would be worse – albeit slower – than 1941. In the 12 months of 1942, rather than the 6 of 1941, Russia suffered a further **28.9%** of her entire irrecoverable wartime losses against Germany. With an average strength of just over half a million, the *Western Front* which faced the German attack suffered more than **956,000** irrecoverable losses in the terrible 6 months of 1941. That was **191%** of its strength; and w/ the sick and wounded, some of whom did not come back, it lost **259%** of its strength. In other words, it was *completely wiped out nearly twice over*. The front lost **40%** of its strength every month. Across all fronts, during **1941**, **142%** of Soviet personnel became casualties. In real terms, therefore, the Red Army was destroyed between one and one and one-half times. In **1942**, irrecoverable losses dropped to **56%**, but sick and wounded increased to **77%**. In all, then, the casualty rate [for '42] was **133%**. So, in **1942**, the Red Army suffered one and a third times its strength at the beginning of that year killed or wounded. Without colossal reinforcement and “*force generation*,” no army can sustain that level of attrition. (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 473-76)

³⁷ **Note:** Although no one is completely sure, the most widely accepted estimate for Soviet population at start of WWII is **170,000,000**. The spoils of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact – i.e., the occupation of “western Ukraine” and “western Belarus” in **Sep 39** and formal incorporation of Moldavia and Baltic states probably increased to more than **190,000,000** the population the Soviet government could claim to govern. By **22 Jun 41**, fair to estimate the population in territory between central Europe and the Pacific Ocean nominally controlled by the USSR at **196-197** million. (8)

10.7.-10.9.41 [*Smolensk*]: Average *daily losses* opposite German AGC during this period amounted to: **12,063** men, **21** tanks, **147** artillery pieces and motors, and **14** acft. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 252; gleaned from: *G.F. Krivosheev, Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses*, 101, 110-121, 260-61)

20.7.41: By this date – according to statistics and formulas worked out by *R.H.S. Stolfi* – the Russians had lost **1,169,000** men = **350,000** (killed/wounded), **819,000** prisoners. (*Stolfi, Barbarossa Revisited*, 35)

30.8.-8.9.41 [*Yelnya Salient Battles*]: Average *daily losses* opposite German AGC during this period amounted to: **3185** men, tanks (unknown), artillery pieces and motors (unknown), and acft (unknown). (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 252; gleaned from: *G.F. Krivosheev, Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses*, 101, 110-121, 260-61)

Cream of Red Army in Europe *virtually annihilated three times in a space of four months in 1941*: at *Minsk* in July, at *Kiev* in September, and at *Vyazma* in October. Yet new reserves brought in from the Asian regions of USSR and new recruits always able to fill the gaps. (*Bergstroem, Black Cross Red Star*, 20)

Resurgence of Soviet military capability toward end of 1941 is remarkable. Not only had cream of the Red Army been annihilated during the summer and fall, the territories lost included a very large part of the country's natural resources: Mines w/ **63%** of the coal production, **68%** of the iron mines, and an agricultural area where **38%** of the Soviet grain had been produced were occupied by the *Wehrmacht*. (*Bergstroem, Black Cross Red Star*, 24)

Sep 41: According to Marshal *Konev*, writing after the war, Red Army losses were so heavy that by September there were only **45** serviceable modern tanks between the Germans and Moscow. (*Calvocoressi & Wint, Total War*, 172-73)

30.9.-5.12.41 [*Defense of Moscow*]: Average *daily losses* opposite German AGC during this period amounted to: **9825** men, **42** tanks, **57** artillery pieces and motors, and **4** acft. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 252; gleaned from: *G.F. Krivosheev, Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses*, 101, 110-121, 260-61)

28.11.41: [*Militaer-Wochenblatt*]:³⁸ „November 22nd marks five months since the German *Wehrmacht* moved against the threat of a Bolshevist attack from the east. In that time, it has occupied **1.7** million square kilometers of the territory of the Soviet Union, containing three quarters of its industry and **75** million of its inhabitants. It has simultaneously taken **3,792,600** prisoners and destroyed **389** divisions, including battle casualties, we may estimate total Soviet losses at over **eight million soldiers**. Materiel losses correspond to the human ones: more than **22,000** tanks, **27,452** guns, **16,912** aircraft have been destroyed or captured...It is a balance sheet that represents both a proud success for the German *Wehrmacht* and an *annihilating defeat for the enemy*.“ (*Grossdeutschlands Freiheitskrieg*, pt. 120, „Nach fuenf Monaten Ostfeldzug.“ *Militaer-Wochenblatt* 126, no. 22 (28 Nov 41); quoted in: *Citino, Death of the Wehrmacht*, 48)³⁹

³⁸ “Military Weekly” – the post-1918 professional literature of the German army, w/ its “mixture of war reportage, analysis of campaigns both contemporary and historical, tactical exercises, and book reviews.” It was “eagerly awaited” each Friday by members of the officer corps. (49)

³⁹ *Citino*: “Indeed, by one estimate, the Germans had formed *twelve great encirclements* in the course of *Barbarossa-Typhoon*, from *Bilaystok* to *Bryansk*. In the eastern campaign, the Germans had brought

7.12.41-7.1.42 [*Moscow Counteroffensive, First Phase*]: Average daily losses opposite German AGC during this period amounted to: **10,910** men, **13** tanks, **39** artillery pieces and motors, and **34** acft. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 252; gleaned from: *G.F. Krivosheev, Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses*, 101, 110-121, 260-61)

Jun-Dec 41: Russian tank losses amounted to **22,600** in 1941 alone. (*C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia*, 130)

Jun-Dec 41: In last six (6) months of **1941**, the Red Army lost **5.5** million rifles and **40,000** [!] artillery pieces. (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 165):

Oct-Dec 41: The Red Army and Navy lost **1,007,996** killed and missing and **648,521** wounded during the final quarter of 1941. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 194; see also, *Kirosheev, Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses*, Table 67)

5.12.41-7.1.42:

Red Army Casualties in Moscow Campaign
(5.12.41 – 7.1.42)

Divisions	Men	Killed/Missing	Wounded/Sick	Total	Ave Loss/Day
105	1,022,000	140,000	231,000	371,000	7400

(Source: *Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 58)

31.12.41: The Red Army lost **4,473,000** men in the last six (6) months of **1941**. (*W. Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 9)

31.12.41: Red Army losses total **4,308,094**, of whom **2,993,803** are killed, missing or captured. (*D. Glantz, Soviet-German War: Myths & Realities*, 9)

31.12.41: For detailed breakdown of Soviet equipment losses through end of **1941** see, *E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 47) These losses included: **24,400** artillery pieces, **60,500** mortars, **900** heavy tanks, **2300** medium tanks, and **17,300** light tanks. Aircraft losses included: **9600** fighters and **7200** bombers.

1941/42: Col-Gen *Krivosheev* has supplied figures for total wartime tank losses: **20,500 (1941)**; **15,100 (1942)**; **23,500 (1943)**; **23,700 (1944)**; **13,700 (1945)**. The German files *Panzer-Verluste Ost* compiled by *Fremde Heere Ost (IIc)*, in a report of **26.1.44** summarising *Feindliche Panzer-Verluste 1941-1943*, give the figure of **22,000** Soviet tanks destroyed in **1941**; for **1942**, the figure given by German intelligence for actual losses was **16,200**; in **1943** the figure was **17,300**. Thus, for period **1941-43**, German intelligence arrived at a figure of **55,300** Soviet tanks destroyed. (*J. Erickson, Soviet War Losses*, 268)

Feb 42: According to *C. Merridale*, the Red Army had lost **2 663 000** men KIA by Feb 42. In other words, for every German soldier who was killed, **20** Soviet soldiers had died. (*Ivan's War*, 147)

Bewegungskrieg to a destructive peak that it would never know again. It was as if it had *fought and won Case Yellow twelve times over*. (48)

3.1.9: Intelligence:

Note: Stalin for his part had at his disposal perhaps the most effective intelligence apparatus of any, operating right in the heart of German decision-making, the fantastically well-informed “Lucy,”⁴⁰ whom Stalin personally added to the strength of Soviet intelligence agents in **Jul** or **Aug 41**: instructions dictated by Stalin to this end were passed to Foote and Rado, and thereafter the information assembled by “Lucy” and “Werther” received the highest priority. *Data on German strategic plans, dispositions and operational intentions on the Eastern Front came daily from “Lucy,” whose real identity “the Centre” never learned. . . (J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad, 340)*⁴¹

The Germans masked their preparations well, but they could not completely conceal the movement of very large forces. The failure to detect the change of Nazi intentions, or to respond to those *Wehrmacht* deployments that *could* be seen, came in part from shortcomings on the Soviet side. Stalin’s terror again had a great impact: the USSR had two major foreign espionage organizations, one civilian and one military, but both had been heavily purged of agents and analysts. Timoshenko’s **1940** overall report on the state of the Red Army was damning here: “The organization of intelligence [*razvedka*] is one of the weakest sectors of the work of the Commissariat of Defense. There is no organized intelligence and systematic gathering of information on foreign armies.” General F.I. Golikov, who took over the military intelligence organization in **Jul 40**, had no previous experience in such work. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East, 32*)

Contrary to accepted wisdom, the Russians did not underestimate the potential scale of the German threat; their estimates of German division strengths in the East were very close to reality. The Soviet appreciation of scale was misleading, but not in the way that historians have described it. First of all, Soviet intelligence had exaggerated, not minimized, the pace of the early German build-up in the East. In a **Sep 40** war plan, the General Staff placed “up to” **94** German divisions on the Soviet border. . . In reality, even in **Dec 40** only **36** German divisions were facing Russia, out of a total of **140** combat-ready divisions in the German Army. In **Mar 41**, the Soviet estimate had already risen to **111** German divisions. Thus, the figure of **120** divisions produced by Golikov at end of **May 41** did not seem – as it should have done – an alarming increase; it was only **8%** more than **Mar 41**. More fundamentally, the Russians failed to see that the eastern buildup represented the majority of German divisions. This was because Soviet intelligence greatly exaggerated the overall size of the German Army. It assumed a total strength of **286-96** German divisions, of which **40%** were in the East. In reality, the Germans only had **209**

⁴⁰ **Note:** In [World War II espionage](#), the **Lucy spy ring** was an anti-German operation that was headquartered in [Switzerland](#). It was run by [Rudolf Roessler](#), a [German](#) refugee and ostensibly the proprietor of a small publishing firm, Vita Nova. Very little is clear about the Lucy ring, about Roessler or about Lucy's sources or motives. (*Wikipedia*)

⁴¹ **Note:** Erickson’s account is from the **1970s**. We know now who “Lucy” was; but what was relationship between “Lucy” and ULTRA? From my web search, seems clear that “Lucy” was used to feed Ultra information to the Soviets. Wikipedia, while not always reliable writes: “An additional controversial aspect of the Lucy ring story is the allegation that it was, at its heart, a British [Secret Service](#) operation intended to get [Ultra](#) information to the Soviets in a convincing way untraceable to British codebreaking operations against the Germans.” According to web site (“Answers.com”), ULTRA information was fed to the Soviets via the “Lucy” ring.

divisions, and **60%** were in the East. Another Soviet miscalculation was underestimating the quality of the *Wehrmacht*. (E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 33-34)

Stalin and the Soviet High Command were aware of the scale of the German build-up, but they believed they had matched it and that the Red Army could deal w/ an invasion, if it came to that. I would argue then, contrary to a number of recent historians, that Stalin and the Soviet High Command believed they were dealing w/ Hitler from a position of strength, not from one of weakness. Stalin's sense of weakness is central to the arguments in Gabriel Gorodetsky's book *Grand Delusion*, which stresses the dictator's policy of appeasement. It is important to the thesis of David Glantz's *Stumbling Colossus*, which (like Gorodetsky's book) is partly a polemic against Rezun-Suvorov's Icebreaker argument. Gorodetsky and Glantz are right about the actual shortcomings of the Red Army, but it is not clear to me that Stalin saw these shortcomings before the catastrophe of late **Jun 41**. (E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 34)

Several factors – some logical, some not – prevented a proper Soviet reading of German intentions. To start with, the decision-making structure in Moscow was over-centralized. A great deal depended on Stalin's personal judgement. Accounts vary, but it appears that the Soviet High Command did not receive all the information that Stalin and key Politburo leaders did. It has also been argued that the information and assessments sent to Stalin were tailored by Golikov, the head of military intelligence, to tell the Soviet dictator what he wanted to hear. Much came down to Stalin's personal view. Of course, we do not know what Stalin thought. It would seem, however, that Stalin was both cautious and suspicious. In the background was his perception of the German power structure. Stalin may well have believed that the leaders of the Third Reich were divided between those who wanted immediate war w/ the USSR and those who did not, and he may have placed Hitler in the latter group. Stalin's key assumption was perhaps that German policy was undecided, but that rash Soviet action could bring about an unnecessary, or at least premature, war w/ Germany. Such action would include precipitate mobilization and concentration of the Red Army or changes in the propaganda line towards Nazi Germany. This was also the reason for the harmful military decision not to man the security zone (*predpol'e*) immediately adjacent to the border; indeed the **NKVD** was instructed to insure that Red Army units obeyed this directive.

Stalin may also have taken as a basic assumption Hitler's unwillingness to fight another war on two fronts. Stalin was not alone in assuming this. . . . "Germany is involved up to its ears in the war in the West," Stalin reportedly told Zhukov in **mid-Jun 41**, "and I believe Hitler will not risk creating a second front for himself by attacking the Soviet Union." . . . The warnings received about German intentions, like those about the force build-up on the frontier, could also be interpreted by the Kremlin as the Nazis' diplomatic pressure to force territorial or economic concessions or Churchill's "provocation" to drag the USSR into war. German "disinformation" also played its part. . . . The Kremlin leaders may also have thought – correctly, as it would turn out – that the end of June was too late to mount a war-winning attack in **1941**. (For more see, E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 35-37)

3.1.10: Soldiers (Biographies):

BUDENNY, Marshal Semen:

Russian *Southwest Front* at beginning of Russo-German war commanded by Marshall Budenny. A famous old cavalry hero of the Civil War, he was most aptly described to *Rundstedt* in 1941

by a captured Russian officer as „a man with an immense moustache, but a very small brain.“ (L. Hart, *History of Second World War*, 165; also, C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 37)

On **10 Jul 41**, the Stavka set up the Southwestern Theater as a HQ to co-ordinate Southwestern and Southern Army Groups [Fronts]. In command was Marshal Budennyi, whose post was comparable to the one Marshal Timoshenko held in the Western Theater. Marshal Semen Budennyi was the extraordinary Tsarist trooper who had risen from the ranks to command the war-winning cavalry formation of the Civil War, the Konarmia. For Stalin, Budennyi's assets were his known reliability and his aura of victory. Budennyi was **58** years old and belonged to an older generation than most other Red Army leaders. . . A forceful and probably a genuinely popular figure, Budennyi was in over his head as a strategist. (E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 78)

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EREMENKO, Gen.:

He was referred to by his Soviet peers as the „Soviet Guderian.“ (D. Glantz, *Forgotten Battles*, Vol. I, 92)

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KONEV, Ivan Stepanovich:

The new cdr of Western Front [as of **Oct 41**] was an „officer destined in the long term for great things.“ By the end of the war, Marshal Konev would race Marshal Zhukov to Berlin. A peasant boy from northern Russia, born in **1897**, Konev was conscripted into the Tsarist Army too late to see action in World War One (he was an NCO in the artillery). However, he took a very active part in the Civil War fighting in Siberia, where he served mainly as a Red Army political commissar; he joined the Communist Party in **1918**. A cdr of various divisions in the **1930s**, he also received abbreviated higher military training, at which he excelled. *Komdiv* Konev came under some suspicion in **1937** due to his previous service connections and his suspected social background (his father was said to have been a *kulak* and his uncle a Tsarist policeman). But Konev survived this and the Red Army purge. . . In **1938**, he was given command of a rifle corps in Mongolia, in **1938-40** of the **2 Army** in the Far East, and in **1940-41** of the whole Transbaikal Military District. In **1941**, he came back to Europe to take charge of the Northern Caucasus Military District, w/ rank of Lt.-Gen. He brought the **19 Army** from the North Caucasus to the Western Army Group [Front] at the start of the war. This formation fought stubbornly under Timoshenko in the Battle for Smolensk. (See, E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 93-94)

Oct 41: The task of holding the last line [before Moscow] fell to General Ivan Konev, who took over from Timoshenko on **13 Sep 41**. . . He was a tall, rather ascetic-looking figure, w/ a distinctive bald head and piercing eyes and a reputation for severity. He abstained from drink and disliked drunkenness in others: in front of his troops he adopted a simple, austere life-style. He read widely from Russian literature, which he quoted as he talked, and carried his own library w/ him at the front. He was regarded as a devoted Communist. He ended his career as C-in-C of all Warsaw Pact forces in the **1950s**. (R. Overy, *Russia's War*, 92; see also, A. Werth, *Russia at War*, 785-86)

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PAVLOV, Col-Gen Dmitrii G.:

One of the few Soviet veterans of Spanish Civil War to survive Stalin's purges. Pavlov's was a secondary command, since Stalin expected the Germans' main blow to fall in the Ukraine. Stalin had him shot in late **Jul 41**, but Khrushchev posthumously rehabilitated him in **1956**. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa* 1941, 8, 18)

Pavlov's was the only Soviet army group staff to be arrested and executed during the war. Their fate reflected the shock and scale of the military disaster in Belorussia. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 65)

Oct 41: In one of his interviews w/ Konstantin Simonov, Zhukov related that in that same telephonic conversation, Stalin told him Konev was to be tried by a military court martial after a government commission, headed by Molotov, completed its investigation. Zhukov protested that another trial would only have a negative effect on the army. He recalled that the execution of D.G. Pavlov had not helped the situation at the beginning of the war. *Pavlov did not have the capability to command anything larger than a division and everyone knew it. . . Konev, however, was more capable than Pavlov.* (68)

General of the Army Dmitrii Pavlov was only **44** years old when he was shot. Molotov, who knew Pavlov well, described him patronizingly as a "sturdy peasant," loyal and brave, but "not clever enough, and something of a blockhead." Pavlov had unusually wide experience of war, and his personal courage was proven. A veteran of the Russian Civil War, he had also commanded Republican tank forces outside Madrid in **1937**, for which he was made one of the first "Heroes of the Soviet Union." During the Winter War w/ Finland, Pavlov led one of Timoshenko's corps in a daring march across the frozen Vyborg Bay to outflank the defenses of the Mannerheim Line, an action which forced the Finns to make peace. By pre-war (and post-surge) standards, Pavlov was well trained. He had had a "proper" military education at the Frunze Military Academy. He was brought back from Spain at the height of the purges in mid-**1937** to take over the Directorate of Armored Forces. . . Like Zhukov, he had been an example of the kind of brave, energetic, youthful – and ruthless – middle-level leader that Stalin liked to pick out and promote. He was probably "no better and no worse than the other generals commanding army groups and armies on the western frontier in **Jun 41**." Pavlov's blunders before, during, or after **22 Jun 41** were not the root cause of the debacle. (For more biographical details see, (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 61)

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ROKOSSOVSKY Lt.-Gen.:

The capable Rokossovsky, just promoted to lieutenant-general (i.e., about **Dec 41**), was once Zhukov's superior officer, but had lost seniority when in a concentration camp during the time of the Great Purge. He was a Russian, possibly of White Russian stock (since he had been born in Velikiye Luki), and not a Warsaw Pole, as was subsequently claimed by the Soviet Union. He was a quiet, cultured, well-mannered man who would always patiently hear out his subordinates. This, admittedly, was not a Russian characteristic. (*A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 195)

Rokossovskii was highly critical of Zhukov's command style and *personally offended by it*. (W.J. Spahr, Zhukov, 50)

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SHAPOSHNIKOV, Marshal Boris M.:

Red Army chief-of-staff (replaced Zhukov in **Jul 41**).

Boris Mikhailovitch Shaposhnikov ([Russian](#): Бори́с Миха́йлович Ша́пошников) (Oct 2 [O.S. Sep 20] **1882** — **26 Mar 45**), [Soviet](#) military commander, was born at [Zlatoust](#), near [Chelyabinsk](#) in the [Urals](#). He joined the army of the [Russian Empire](#) in **1901** and graduated from the [Nicholas General Staff Academy](#) in **1910**, reaching the rank of colonel in the Caucasus Grenadiers division during [World War I](#). In **1917**, unusually for an officer of his rank, he supported the [Russian Revolution](#) and in **1918** joined the [Red Army](#).

Shaposhnikov was one of the few Red Army commanders with formal military training, and in **1921** he joined the Army's General Staff, where he served until **1925**, when he was appointed commander of the [Leningrad](#) military region. From **1928** to **1932** he commanded the [Moscow](#) military region, then the [Privolzhsk](#) military region. In **1932** he was appointed commandant of the Red Army's Frunze Military Academy, then in **1935** returned to the command of the Leningrad region. In **1937** he was appointed Chief of the General Staff, in succession to [Mikhail Tukhachevsky](#), a victim of [Stalin's Great Purge](#) of the Red Army. In **1940** he was appointed a [Marshal of the Soviet Union](#).

Despite his background as a Tsarist officer, Shaposhnikov won the respect and trust of Stalin. Ironically his status as a professional officer—he did not join the [Communist Party](#) until **1930**—may have helped him avoid Stalin's suspicions. The price he paid for his survival during the purges was collaboration in the destruction of Tukhachevsky and many other colleagues. Stalin's admiration was shown by the fact that he always kept a copy of Shaposhnikov's most important work, *Mozg Armii* (Мозг армии, "The Brain of the Army") (**1929**), on his desk.

Fortunately for the Soviet Union, Shaposhnikov had a fine military mind and high administrative skills. He combined these talents with his position in Stalin's confidence to rebuild the Red Army leadership after the purges. *Mozg Armii* was for decades required reading for every Soviet officer. In **1939** Stalin accepted Shaposhnikov's plan for a rapid build up of the Red Army's strength. Although the plan was not completed before the [German invasion](#) of **Jun 41**, it was sufficiently advanced to save the Soviet Union from complete disaster.

Shaposhnikov resigned as Chief of the General Staff in **Aug 40**, officially due to ill-health but in fact as a result of Stalin's displeasure with the results of [Winter War](#). At the time of the German invasion, he was reinstated as Chief of the General Staff (until **Nov 42**) and also became Deputy People's Commissar for Defence, the post he held until his career was cut short by ill-health in **1943**. He held the position of commandant of the Voroshilov Military Academy until his death in **1945**. (*Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*)

Boris Shaposhnikov, **58**, tough-faced and mild-mannered as a bulldog, planned the Finland strategies, which were lauded by most neutral observers and bungled in the field handling. He is the only Red officer to have been decorated by the Tsar, Trotsky, Lenin and Stalin—testimony to a political nature as canny as it is adaptable. (Without batting an eyelash, he sat on the tribunal

which court-martialed and condemned eight of his old Army colleagues, including the late, great Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky.)

Son of a minor civil-service employe, Marshal Shaposhnikov was born in the town of Zlatoust in the Urals, in **1910** was top man at the Moscow Imperial Academy. By **1917** he had become a Tsarist colonel. The next year he joined the Red Army and became a prime strategist of the war on the Whites. He has been an active Commander of the Leningrad, Moscow and Volga military districts, Chief of Staff, head of the Frunze Military Academy (Soviet West Point), and he joined Comrade Stalin at the signing of the Russo-German Pact (see cut). But his reputation has always been technical, bolstered by his authorship of several volumes of military history and strategy. (<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article>)⁴²

22.12.41: General Batov was summoned to meet w/ Marshal Shaposhnikov. He found S. gloomy and preoccupied, brooding over the difficulties of the offensive in which tanks, lorries, and equipment in general were lacking to facilitate rapid Soviet manoeuvre. “We still need,” said the marshal, “to assimilate the experience of modern war,” adding that though the Germans had been thrown back from the capital, “neither here, nor today, will the outcome of the war be decided;” on the contrary, in Shaposhnikov’s view, “the crisis is yet far off.” And so it proved to be.⁴³ (*J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad, 287*)

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TIMOSHENKO, Marshal Semen:

One of the most interesting personalities in the Russian High Command. Born in **1895**; Son of a *landless peasant* in *Bessarabia*. Grew up as a farm laborer and received scarcely any education in his youth. In **1915**, he was drafted into service in the Tsarist Army. He distinguished himself in the chaotic fighting after the Russian Revolution to such a degree that he was given command of the **6th Red Cavalry Division** at the *age of 23* and attracted the attention of both Stalin and Lenin. It was said that he could *not read or write* when he was a division cdr. At the War Academy, under *Frunze* and *Tukhachevsky*, he had a chance to make up for what he had missed in his youth. From **1925-30**, he was both commander and political commissar of the **3rd Cavalry Corps**. He was in command of the military district of *Kiev* when the war w/ Poland broke out in **1939**. His loyalty to the Stalin regime was *considered so staunch* that he was untouched while heads were rolling all around him in the *great purge* of the armed forces in **1937**. After the poor showing of Russian troops in the in the first phase of the war w/ Finland, Stalin appointed him C-in-C at end of **Dec 40**. After a month’s preparation, Timoshenko took the offensive, and his complete success in breaking through the *Mannerheim Line* won him the title of “*Hero of the Soviet Union*,” appointment as Defense Commissar, and membership in the Supreme War Council. According to Assmann, Timoshenko was the “*born defensive fighter*.” (*Assmann, Battle for Moscow, 318*)

Voroshilov’s successor as People’s Commissar [minister] of Defense, serving to the outbreak of the war and promoted to the rank of Marshal, was Semen Timoshenko. He was a professional by Red Army standards, but like most of the Soviet military leaders he had been only an enlisted soldier in the First World War. In the coming Russo-German War he would prove to be a cdr of limited abilities. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East, 22*)

⁴² **Note:** Shaposhnikov was on the cover of Time Magazine on **16 Feb 42**.

⁴³ **Note:** In other words, as Erickson points out, Shaposhnikov did not share the heady optimism of his Supreme Commander, Josef Stalin.

Der sowj. O.B. im Mittelabschnitt der Ostfront, Marschall Timoschenko, einst Schueler des Lehrers Rudolf Schmidt an der Berliner Kriegsakademie...(Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam, 110)

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VASILEVSKY, General Aleksandr:

Operation “Uranus,” the Stalingrad encirclement, was under the command of General Vasilevsky.

After the war, Stalin had **10** marshals from whom to chose his military advisor in Moscow. Having little regard for Zhukov’s intelligence, he assigned the popular marshal to Germany to restore order and put an end to the marauding, looting, raping, drunkenness, and general anarchy that was besmirching the image of the Red Army and the Soviet Union. For his personal advisor, Stalin chose Marshal Aleksandr Vasilevsky, perhaps the most talented of Russian generals. (D. Michaels, “Zhukov: A Career Built on Corpses”)

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VOROSHILOV, Marshal K.E.

In **1934**, apparently for no better reason than *Tukhachevsky’s* advocacy of the independent armored force, he argued: „It is almost axiomatic that such a powerful force as the tank corps is a very *far-fetched idea* and we should therefore have nothing to do w/ it.“ Immediately after T.’s removal [shot at outset of the mil. purges, on **11.6.37**) he *abolished* all tank formations larger than a brigade. (Keegan, *Second World War*, 176)

The pre-war Stalinist “leader-state” lacked effective overall military leadership. This paradox was not just a product of the purges. The People’s Commissar (Minister) of Defense from **1925** and up until **May 1940** was Voroshilov, an incompetent crony of Stalin’s. Voroshilov was an uneducated worker who had joined the Bolsheviks long before the **1917** Revolution. He became one of Stalin’s “team” in the Civil War, and helped the dictator in his rise to power. Voroshilov was rewarded by a seat on the party Politburo from the **1920s**. It was Voroshilov who oversaw the Red Army purges of **1937/38**. Stalin had held him responsible for the Red Army’s poor performance in the Winter War w/ Finland and sacked him as a People’s Commissar, but Voroshilov kept his position on the Politburo and was one of the five [**5**] members of the all-important State Defense Committee (**GKO**) which was formed in **Jul 41**. (E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 21-22)

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ZHUKOV, General Georgi Konstantinovich:

Note: Author W. J. Spahr emphasizes the role of Stalin in shaping Zhukov’s leadership style, combining ruthlessness w/ an absolutely iron will. Zhukov’s use of abusive language toward his senior subordinates seemed to be almost chronic. (Zhukov, 269-71)⁴⁴

⁴⁴ **Note:** Unclear if Spahr’s latter remark (re: “abusive language”) referred only to Z.’s post-war stint as Defense Minister, or also to his behavior during war.

Note: He was probably the *greatest commander of the war*, yet his feats of arms were achieved by the exercise of a *ruthlessness* unthinkable to Dwight Eisenhower's armies. When Zhukov led the defense of *Leningrad*, he stationed tanks behind his own front not to kill Germans but to shoot down any of his own men who sought to flee. (*W.P. Reese, Stranger*, foreword [*Max Hastings*], vi)

Note: Despite his reputation as a supreme military cdr, seems clear that Zhukov could be *very wasteful of human material*. This becomes apparent in his handling of operations associated w/ Operation "Mars," in Nov-Dec 42. As *D. Glantz* writes at one point: "Although it had been bloodied in heavy combat, Zhukov permitted the 20th Army to fail and flounder in the Vazuza bridgehead for five more days. He continued issuing attack orders, sending Soviet infantry into the teeth of the German defense...as if to punish the army and its commander for its dismal failure..." (*Glantz, Zhukov's Greatest Defeat*, 183, 190)

Note: He may have been the greatest operational commander of the war [for Red Army, or for all nations?]. He was *ruthless and harsh* w/ his subordinates and earned the *deep enmity* of most of his colleagues. But he was *enormously competent*, brave, and sophisticated in understanding what was possible. (*W. Murray, War to be Won*, 134)⁴⁵

Zhukov's battles were all characterized by the *wanton expenditure of human life*, his overruling of subordinates who were better informed of front-line realities, and his keen instinct for political advancement. His *reckless squandering* of more than **1,000,000** lives in futile attacks on the Moscow front in early **1942** adds up to the greatest defeat suffered not just by the Russian army, but by any army in history. (*C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia*, 39)

"What sort of a man was Zhukov at this period and what of his relationship to Stalin and the subordinate generals? . . . He had either failed, or had been found inconvenient, as a Chief of the General Staff. He just did not fit in. Yet he was a man of proven command experience, and Stalin found for him a fitting and essential role as a trouble shooter, a fixer, someone who could take command in moments of crisis. His strength apparently lay not only in his *operational* ability, but in his *ruthless inexorable determination*. For Zhukov was a *true Russian w/ all the Russian's inborn respect for brutal authority*. His responsibility was to Stalin, Party and self, in that order; like his fellow generals he felt himself in no way answerable to his subordinates or to his troops. The only criterion was success, and it was immaterial how this was achieved. He who was so careful and diffident, even in the presence of minor political figures like Vishinsky, was frequently a bawling, raging tyrant in the field. When the mood so took him, everything was wrong and nothing could please. Yet he was not so stupid that he would not listen to his staffs or subordinates. . . He was overbearing and contrary w/ his inferiors. . . The descriptions of western observers in 1945 bear witness to the *cold blooded inhumanity of the man*. His detractors say further that he was vain, self-seeking and anxious for fame and glory." (*A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 189-92)

Stalin's *premier military advisor*. Had begun the war as a "southerner," conditioned by his cavalry training and duty in the Ukraine to appreciate the critical strategic importance of the region. Was former cdr of the *Kiev Military District* (1940) and *chief of the General Staff* on the eve of the war, Zhukov's prewar plans, IAW Stalin's desires, had given priority to strategic defenses in the Ukraine. During the terrible fighting of summer and fall of 1941, however, he had *recognized the error of his ways*. As *Reserve Front* cdr after **30.7.41**, Zhukov's attentions shifted

⁴⁵ **Note:** Compare W. Murray's judgment of Zhukov w/ that of D. Glantz.

to the front's *central sector*. There, in **Jul-Aug 41**, he *orchestrated the Soviet counteroffensives around Smolensk*, whose ferocity contributed, in part, to the German High Command's decision to halt the drive on Moscow and instead encircle Soviet forces defending stubbornly in the *Kiev* region. Zhukov had later crossed swords w/ Stalin over the necessity for defending *Kiev*, and when Zhukov's recommendation to abandon *Kiev* was overruled, Stalin "exiled" him to *Leningrad*. In the disastrous October days, after the Germans resumed advance on Moscow, Stalin summoned Zhukov to Moscow to help the *Stavka* stave off impending disaster. Commanding in succession the *Reserve and Western Fronts*, Zhukov restored order from confusion and was *instrumental in bringing the German advance to a halt at gates of Russian capital*. In close coordination w/ Stalin, Zhukov then **organized and conducted the Dec 41 Moscow counteroffensive** and, in **Jan 42**, expanded that offensive into a grand, although ultimately futile attempt to *destroy German Army Group Center*. The glorious but frustrating Moscow episode *converted Zhukov into a convinced "northerner."* Thereafter, **Army Group Center became his nemesis**, and Zhukov remained *preoccupied w/ the task of its destruction*. (Glantz, *Zhukov's Greatest Defeat*, 15-16)

Stalin was *mildly criticized by Zhukov* in winter 1941 for mandating an offensive on too broad a front. (Glantz, *Zhukov's Greatest Defeat*, 20) Later, Glantz writes: "Only eight months before [i.e., late winter '41] he had *boldly rebuked Stalin himself* for establishing goals [for the winter counteroffensive] that were too ambitious." (31)

"Like Stalin, Zhukov kept close track of developments and was *not reluctant to become involved in tactical matters*. Zhukov well understood that operational and strategic success often depended on tactical details. (Glantz, *Zhukov's Greatest Defeat*, 175)

"Anyone who had fought Zhukov knew how *stubborn, tenacious, and ruthless* he was. He had lost this battle [Operation Mars / Nov-Dec 42] and w/ it the lives of tens of thousands of Red Army soldiers. But experience had clearly demonstrated that, to Zhukov, *lives were cheap* and Russian manpower resources virtually unlimited." (Glantz, *Zhukov's Greatest Defeat*, 282)

Zhukov was just **43** years old, two decades younger than his opposite number, GFM v. Bock. The son of poor peasants, w/ little formal education, he served w/ distinction as a rank-and-file cavalryman in the First World War. In his mid-**20s**, he fought as a squadron cdr in Budennyi's Red Cavalry in the Civil War. He was a demanding and committed leader, and by the start of the **1930s** he had risen to command a cavalry division. He had his faults; he could be vain, and he was brutal. His accelerated promotion owed something to the **1937-38** destruction of the top tier of cdrs of the Red Army. The **1 Cavalry Army** veterans like Zhukov were the army faction that Stalin and Voroshilov most trusted. *Komdiv* Zhukov was made cdr of **3 Cav Corps** in Belorussia in **Jul 37**. It was important, too, that Zhukov had served in the **1930s** under Budennyi and Timoshenko. This protected him during the purges. . . What did the most to advance Zhukov's career was his victory over the Japanese in the division-level battles at Khalkin Gol in eastern Mongolia in summer of **1939**. In the command shake-up of the summer of **1940**, following the Winter War, Stalin and Timoshenko gave Zhukov one of the Red Army's three most important field commands: the Kiev Military District. This was followed by an even more extraordinary jump to the post of Chief of the General Staff in **Jan 41**, replacing General Meretskov. Zhukov combined a sound tactical sense w/ self-confidence, energy, and a demanding personality. He had established the all-important personal link w/ Stalin; he had the courage to disagree w/ the Soviet dictator on military questions. One of Zhukov's strength – and perhaps part of his attraction to Stalin – was his ruthlessness. . . He was undoubtedly the **outstanding military cdr of the Second World War**. (E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 114)

Outcome of 1941/42 Winter Battles: In a draft of his memoirs Zhukov was bitter about what had happened:

The History of the Great Fatherland War still comes to a generally positive conclusion about the winter offensive of our forces, despite the lack of success. I do not agree w/ this evaluation. The embellishment of history, one could say, is a sad attempt to paint over failure. If you consider our losses and what results were achieved, it will be clear that it was a Pyrrhic victory.

(Quoted in: *E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 127)

D. Michaels, “*Zhukov: A Career Built on Corpses*” (review of biography of Zhukov by Viktor Suvorov):⁴⁶

Viktor Suvorov, arguably the foremost revisionist of the Russo-German War, attempts in his most recent book – Marschall Schukow – Lebensweg ueber Leichen – to show that Zhukov was neither a genuine hero nor a great strategist. Not only, Suvorov contends, was Zhukov the *only general in world history to be honored for losing more than 5 million of his men in combat*, but he was also an unscrupulous commander who squandered the men serving under him through gross incompetence and callousness. As to the character of the man, Suvorov argues that Zhukov was by no means an honorable soldier, but, as the Russians say, a “*soldafon*,” – a crude, loud-mouthed martinet.

The legend of Zhukov’s genius, Suvorov writes, was an invention of the Communist Party and the marshal himself in his memoirs. . . Essentially a crude and unprofessional soldier, Zhukov was held in low regard by his fellow Soviet marshals. . . Suvorov cites descriptions of Zhukov by these colleagues – among them, Bulganin, Vasilevski, Yeremenko, Konev, Rokossovsky, Timoshenko – and the adjectives most frequently used to describe Zhukov are *crude, brutal, sadistic, vainglorious, obtuse, morbidly narcissistic, overrated*. They also employed the terms *butcher, drunk, braggart, careerist, fraud*, and the like. Nor were these epithets simply a matter of professional jealousy. Unfortunately for Zhukov, first Stalin and later Khrushchev concurred in this evaluation.

Victor Suvorov argues forcefully that a general who lost **5.3** million men in the first year of the war and that number again in the remaining years of the war; a general who had no regard for the lives of his men; a general who needed an advantage of **5-10:1** just to stay even w/ the enemy; in short, a general like Zhukov, cannot possibly be considered a military genius or a great strategist. Zhukov’s was a career based on stacks of corpses, mostly those of the men under his command. Like almost everything and everyone else in the former Soviet Union, Zhukov was a fabrication. In reality, he was more one of Stalin’s willing executioners than he was a professional soldier. He was a master of what the Germans refer to as leading your soldiers to the slaughter. (*Soldaten im Kriege verheizen*.)

Writing today, Russian military historian Pavel N. Bobylev of the Russian Ministry of Defense Institute of Military History admits that “in his memoirs Marshal Zhukov concocts a mainly self-

⁴⁶ **Note:** This review is well-sourced w/ Russian language materials. Appears to be scholarly and well-researched. That said, it is much too uncritical of Suvorov.

serving, self-exonerating version of what actually occurred in mid-1941 and on the eve of the war.”

Marshal Zhukov was not, as the media has depicted him, the master strategist and architect of most of the Soviet battlefield victories. He was, instead, one of Stalin’s brutal executioners – a ruthless individual given plenipotentiary powers to ensure that the military strategies and tactics developed by Stalin and the Supreme High Command (Stavka) were successfully executed, regardless of the cost in men or materiel. *At time the marshal used to weep uncontrollably for no apparent reason.*

As to Zhukov’s modus operandi, Marshal Rokossovsky wrote: “Zhukov much preferred to give orders than to lead his men. At difficult moments no subordinate could expect any support from his side – the support of a comrade, leader, or an encouraging word of friendly counsel.”

There is no evidence that Zhukov ever tried to spare the lives of his men or reduce casualties on the battlefield by brilliant tactics or subterfuge.⁴⁷ Of some **6.5** million Russians who died on the battlefield and are known to be buried, the names of only about **2.3** million have ever been found. Mass graves were the norm for the fallen. In many cases they were not even buried, but left where they fell. The profligacy and indifference w/ which Zhukov wasted lives and his disregard and disrespect for the fallen simply reflected the Communist Party’s attitude toward the individual.

Moscow 1941:

While it is true, Suvorov concedes, that the Germans were stopped at the gates of Moscow, Zhukov had little to do w/ it. First, the German forces had been depleted after **5** months of uninterrupted combat; they had also exhausted their supplies. . . Second, Stavka, not Zhukov, had transferred **39** more battle-ready divisions and **42** brigades from Siberia, the Urals, and Kazakhstan to the western front. Soviet defenses along the Lama River, running just west and NW of the Soviet capital, proved particularly difficult to overcome. For the first time in the Russo-German war, Soviet defenses were managed w/ consummate skill. The Russian commander who accomplished this was given no credit. That general’s name was Andrei Vlasov, and he later defected to the German side.

German losses were indeed grave in the Battle of Moscow, and in many sectors of the front they were forced to retreat. Marshal Zhukov, according to Suvorov, then falsely exaggerated to Stalin German losses and the extent of the German retreat. Zhukov convinced Stalin that a major offensive along the entire Western Front would completely rout the Germans. However, instead of concentrating their forces into a fist and smashing the main German force strength, the Soviets attacked all along the front, like the fingers of a hand. Red Army losses were staggering as the German lines stiffened. Zhukov lost **3** more armies and **2** corps. “*Nicht kleckern, sondern klotzen*,” – “Don’t piddle away your strength; concentrate it for smashing an important target!” – is a famous German adage Zhukov apparently ignored.

Stalingrad / Sychevka - Rshew 1942:

⁴⁷ **Note:** But did not Zhukov, shortly after the start of the **Dec 41** counteroffensive, order his subordinates to stop making costly frontal attacks against the German lines and, instead, to seek a decision via attacks against the flanks?

The legend of Marshal Zhukov's genius also gives him credit for the Soviet victory at Stalingrad. Suvorov points out that Zhukov spent very little time at Stalingrad. His first visit was **31 Aug 42**, when he proposed counterattacks. After two weeks he returned to Moscow. His last visit to Stalingrad was on **16 Nov 42**. The main Soviet offensive began on **19 Nov 42** without Zhukov. The marshal was mostly concerned w/ launching unsuccessful offensives in other sectors of the front, especially in the direction of Sychevka – Rzhev – Vyazem. [sp?] For these failed operations, Zhukov was provided more men and materiel (**10** armies, plus **5** more under Marshal Konev) than were allotted to the successful Stalingrad operation.

Operation Mars: When the Stavka planned its Fall **1942** offensive, it had in mind several major offensives named after the planets Mars, Uranus and Saturn. Operation "Mars," also known as the "Rzhev – Sychevka Offensive," was primarily Zhukov's responsibility; Operation "Uranus," the Stalingrad encirclement, was under the command of General Vasilevsky; and finally, Operation "Saturn," was intended to be a drive to Rostov. All three simultaneous operations, the Soviets hoped, would result in the total collapse of German Army Group Centre. [not in the total collapse of entire eastern front?]

The forces allotted to Zhukov were about equal to those assigned to Vasilevsky. "Mars" began on **29 Nov 42**, "Uranus" on **19 Nov 42**. To Operation Mars Zhukov committed about **670,000** men and **2000** tanks; while Vasilevsky could commit about **700,000** men and **1400** tanks to the Stalingrad encirclement. Stalingrad, of course, was a major Soviet success and a turning point in the war. Operation Mars, under Zhukov, was a total failure. Zhukov failed to break the German defense line and lost most of his tanks and **200,000** dead in the attempt. To cover this failure, Stavka later claimed that Mars had only been carried out to divert forces from Stalingrad. In reality, Stavka's original plan placed its greatest hopes on Zhukov. Because of this failure, Army Group Centre managed to regroup and hold the line for another **18** months. This little known battle had been referred to as "Zhukov's greatest defeat." David Glantz had written a solid work on this one battle. [**Note**: In fact, title of Glantz's book calls Operation Mars the "Red Army's Epic Disaster."]

Kursk: Precisely the same sequence of events occurred during the great tank battle at Kursk. According to Suvorov, Zhukov had almost nothing to do w/ either the preparations or conduct of the Kursk battle. Years later Marshal Rokossovsky recalled: "Comrades who had participated in the Kursk battle have come to me w/ questions: Why has Marshal Zhukov *distorted history in his memoirs*, claiming credit for things he never did? He shouldn't be permitted to do that!"

Berlin: Zhukov's final claim to fame on the battlefield was the storming of Berlin. To take Berlin – w/ an advantage of ca. **10:1** in men and arms, and w/ U.K. and U.S. air forces pounding Berlin, Dresden and other cities in the Russian path – Zhukov's forces suffered **1/3** of a million casualties and lost two tank armies. For him it was a typical victory w/ Russian casualties far higher than they need have been.

Occupation of Germany: After the war, Stalin had **10** marshals from whom to chose his military advisor in Moscow. Having little regard for Zhukov's intelligence, he assigned the popular marshal to Germany to restore order and put an end to the marauding, looting, raping, drunkenness, and general anarchy that was besmirching the image of the Red Army and the Soviet Union. For his personal advisor, Stalin chose Marshal Aleksandr Vasilevsky, perhaps the most talented of Russian generals. In charge of the German occupation, w/ HQ in Wuensdorf, Zhukov gradually restricted the lower ranks to barracks life.

He indulged his own greed, however. . . Zhukov became, as Suvorov puts it, Russia's first oligarch by looting things of value (jewelry, furs, carpets, paintings, rare books, etc.) and shipping them home or presenting them as gifts to friends in high places. Suvorov's search of the archives revealed that in **Aug 46** General Bulganin reported to Stalin that "*seven train cars containing 85 crates loaded w/ furniture belonging to Marshal Zhukov were being held up in the Yagoda customs.*". . . Stalin, fearing that the behavior of his marshals, troops and political officers was soiling the image of the Communist Party, took action against Zhukov.

In **Jun 46**, Stalin stated: "Marshal Zhukov, having lost any sense of modesty and obsessed w/ personal ambition, considers that his services have been insufficiently appreciated. He, in conversations w/ subordinates, *claims to have led all the major operations in the Great Patriotic War, even those in which he had not the slightest connection.*" However, when Stalin in that same year proposed to his leading military figures that Zhukov be relieved of all his commands, imprisoned, and possibly shot, the generals and marshals unanimously advised against it. According to Suvorov, they feared that if Stalin purged Zhukov, they might well be next in line. . . . As it was, Stalin reduced Zhukov in rank (up to that time the marshal had been second only to Stalin in power), and assigned him to command the Odessa Military District.

In **1957**, when Khrushchev, who unlike Stalin did not murder the opposition, was in power, the generals and marshals unanimously agreed that Zhukov should be relieved of all his offices and commands. And so he was.

Nuclear Test in 1954: A particularly graphic example of Zhukov's vaunted "love" of his homeland and the soldiers under his command, Suvorov reveals, occurred in **Sep 54**, in a military exercise reported decades after the event. For the purpose of studying the effects of a nuclear blast on ground forces, an experiment was conducted at **0953** hours on **14 Sep 54**. Under the direction of Marshal Zhukov, a bomber flying at an altitude of **13** kilometers dropped a **40-kiloton** nuclear bomb (the explosive power of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs combined) timed to detonate at a height of **350** meters over **45,000** maneuvering troops. At the time, the medical facilities in the Soviet Union had no means whatsoever of protecting against or treating the consequences of exposure to a nuclear blast. At the instant of the blast, Suvorov recounts, some **45,000** young men were rendered sterile, countless numbers suffered radiation sickness, bloody flux, leukemia, and other debilitating and fatal diseases. The troops involved in the experiment were sworn to secrecy. Zhukov chose as the site of the experiment the Totskoye test range, situated in the Southern Urals Military District – an especially fertile agricultural area between the Volga River and the Urals on the Samara River. The farming folk who lived in the surrounding area were not evacuated before the experiment and suffered the same dire consequences as the troops.

End Michaels article.

3.1.11: Peoples' Militia Units:

15 of the divisions mobilized by **10 Jul 41** were peoples' militia divisions formed largely by party organizations in the Leningrad and Moscow Military Districts. These divisions consisted largely of volunteers or conscripted factory workers between **17** and **50** years of age, who had only limited reserve military training. The first **3** divisions formed in the Leningrad Military District had a strength of **8700** to **12,100** men, or **80%** of required strength. The **12** initial Moscow

peoples' militia rifle divisions counted between **7500** and **15,000** men each and averaged about **10,000**. All of these divisions later received the numerical designations of divisions destroyed in earlier combat. While their personnel strength was adequate, since these divisions relied on local sources for their equipment, they were often deficient in weaponry and logistical support. The **32** and **33 Armies** of Stavka reserve were manned almost exclusively w/ peoples' militia divisions. For example, the **33 Army**, which was fielded in late **Jul 41**, consisted of five [**5**] militia divisions and two antitank artillery rgts. It possessed no organic tanks or field artillery to support its estimated **60,000** men. Combat reports from these armies eloquently speak to their condition. (*D. Glantz, Red Army Ground Forces*, 39)

Opolchenie (Home Guard):

--Heroes of Soviet victory at Moscow include the *twelve reserve armies that were brought to the front that October*. Capital also defended by conscripts from the hinterland, even by intellectuals, old men, and students. In July, Stalin had called on people to join a *levee en masse*, and plans for Moscow's citizens' defense, the ***opolchenie***, swung into operation at once. Each district of the capital raised its companies of volunteers. Their ages ranged from **17-55**...By August, *opolchentsy* had joined the defense of the strategic highway leading into Moscow...In many places, these militias would show courage, but wherever they were made to fight, unprepared and unmilitary *opolchentsy* would die in the 1000s. (*Ivan's War*, C. Merridale, 120-22)

--***Opolchenie***: C. Merridale discusses militia volunteers at *Kursk*. Then discusses destruction of **113th Rifle Division** (formed from very poorly trained militiamen; who like many other *opolchenie* groups, was absorbed into the Red Army in **Aug 41**, taking the Red Army oath and *exchanging their black uniforms for the infantry's olive green*). This division wiped out in **Oct 41**, in the *skeletal woods of birch and pine that line the Warsaw highway leading to the capital*. (*Ivan's War*, 123)

--[He] was now [**Oct 41**] one of **4 million people** to come forward to join the *opolchentsy home guard*. These *scandalously ill-armed forces* were thrown into utterly hopeless attacks against Wehrmacht and SS divisions and *suffered terrifying casualties*. Many of the men were still in civilian clothes and risked being shot out of hand as partisans. (*A. Beevor, Mystery of Olga Chekhova*, 170)

3.1.12: Medical Services:

Sajer comments that, despite improvements in Russian materiel, their *medical services barely functioned*. He notes that, „as always the Russians left all rescue efforts [ref. is to Russian wounded left on the battlefield] to us.“ Says that Russian wounded were left dying where they fell.“ (*Sajer*, 329)

3.1.13: Logistics:

Note: For a brief discussion of Soviet rear services see, *D. Glantz, Red Army Ground Forces*, 35. As he writes: “Numerous combat reports describe the paralysis of rear service support and its debilitating effect on unit combat readiness and performance. In short: ‘As a whole, operational

rear service organs were insufficiently prepared for a major war and were not mobilized in timely fashion.”

Note: German logistic pressures were *insignificant* compared to those experienced by Russian armies enduring bottlenecks under relentless air attack. In addition, the Soviet rail network was engaged in the migration of whole factory complexes complete w/ workers. These were transported eastward as countless troop trains moved west. (R. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 168)

3.1.14: Women Soldiers:

Estimates of the number of women in front-line fighting jobs during the war vary from **490,235** to **800,000**. They include snipers, tank cdrs, aircrew – including the famous “*night witches*” night-bomber squadrons – military police, signalers, interpreters, doctors and nurses. As far as the Soviet authorities were concerned at the time, they were combatants, just like the men w/ whom they lived, fought, won medals, often died, and were buried, as can be seen from the feminine endings to the names on the *blue concrete crosses* topped by red stars in Soviet war cemeteries from Moscow to Berlin. (Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 11)

41% of the Red Army’s doctors and **43%** of its front-line medical personnel were women, working under heavy fire and up front w/ the rifle btns, often caught up in hand-to-hand fighting. After **1942** the *Komsomol* sent no less than **247,551** young women to the front w/ a further **85,921** assigned to support roles in the military districts. (J. Erickson, *Soviet War Losses*, 261)⁴⁸

2,000,000 females served in the Soviet armed forces. They provided most of the medical staff, from base hospitals to front-line infantry companies, 3/4 of the gunners in anti-acft batteries defending the cities, and many radio operators, including those of the partisan and special forces raiding teams. Some even served as tank crew and snipers. (C. Winchester, *Hitler’s War on Russia*, 119-20)

Women’s battalions: „I had to do w/ Russian women’s battalions for the first time near *Velikiye Luki*. Yes, there were women fighting! But they *fought much more fanatically than the men*. And because they had started firing again from an ambush these women were attacked w/ *flame-throwers*. They jumped back into the trenches and the whole mission was help up – engineers were brough up w/ flame-throwers, and they fluhsed the women out of the trench w/ them. The women came out then w/ their hair and clothes on fire. And I don’t reckon many got out alive. I saw it all w/ my own eyes. I was there.“ (Max Landowski, **AR 253/253. ID**, quoted in: *H.J. Schroeder, German Soldiers’ Experiences*, 316)

Many women served in a wide range of military tasks. Women provided a large portion of personnel in the *medical units*, the *communications units*, and *traffic control*. Women served as *military police*, directing traffic and guarding prisoners and installations. Rifle companies had at least one or two women. The divisional signal company had **10** women; and at the army level, the signal rgt had up to **200** women radio and telegraph operators. Women were part of the rifle rgt medical unit, placing them directly on the battlefield. Women also assumed *combat roles*. The major contribution by women was manning the anti-aircraft guns that defended Russian cities and

⁴⁸ Erickson: “It is extremely difficult to obtain data on the losses of Soviet women or even on the numbers of women serving in the Soviet forces.” (275, f.n. 14)

factories. In **Mar 42**, **100,000** women were serving in the home air defense organization (**PVO**) – **20,000** of them in Moscow. They also flew transport and combat acft and drove trucks and tanks. A unique roll that women played in the Red Army was *sniping*. Sniping was as much a psychological wpn as a means of killing Germans. Every soldier who served in the front line in World War II shared a fear and *intense hatred* for enemy snipers. The Soviet snipers caused severe emotional pressure on the frontline German soldier. Women, esp. those who had been raped or abused by Germans, were among the most successful snipers in the Red Army. In **1943**, there were **1061** women snipers and **407** sniper instructors. During the war, women snipers were credited w/ killing **12,000** German soldiers. [!] More than **2,000,000** women served in the Russian armed forces by **1945**. (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 13-14)

3.2: Doctrine/Training & Tactics:

3.2.1: Doctrine:

Note: The Red Army was committed to fighting a war offensively but the posture of its foreign policy in **1941** was defensive, as Stalin remained determined not to provoke Germany. Moreover, it was deployed on territory newly acquired in **1939-40**, and as yet poorly integrated into the defensive arrangements of the state. By committing its resources close to the frontiers, it played into German hands, creating great pockets to be encircled, and failing to exploit the inherent advantages of time and space which geography had vouchsafed Russia. (*General Editor's Preface to: E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, xviii)

Note: Soviet military doctrine was more stable than Soviet military leadership. It was a "combined-arms" offensive doctrine, which had much in common w/ that of the *Wehrmacht*. Red Army doctrinal innovation was driven forward by considerations which were not solely military, notably enthusiasm for the advance of the Communist revolution and for mechanization. In the early **1930s**, the Soviet Army had been ahead of the other armies in thinking about new ways to overcome the strategic gridlock of the First World War and of reviving offensive war. This doctrine has been linked to Voroshilov's one-time deputy, Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevskii, and was built on the concept of "deep battle:" the enemy would be attacked in depth, w/ tanks and acft paralyzing his defenses. The Kremlin had been generous in providing the appropriate equipment for such a war. With huge – for the time – tank, artillery and acft programmes, Russia was the first of the European powers to rearm.

Some historians have argued that the problem in **1941** was that Soviet offensive doctrine was watered down after the trial and liquidation of the Tukhachevskii group in **1937**, and in light of the experience of Russian "volunteers" in the Spanish Civil War in **1936-39** and of the advance into Poland in **1939**. But in reality the Red Army held true to its offensive doctrine, and its new leaders' biases were only reinforced by seeing the German panzer campaigns in Poland and France in **1939-40**. The real problem was the mismatch between doctrine and capability. On paper, large amounts of equipment were available, but the Red Army did not have the leadership or organization – esp. after the Purges – to carry out offensive ops against a first-class enemy. The offensive doctrine also exposed the Red Army to a surprise attack. Meanwhile, serious thought about, and training for, defensive ops were neglected. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 22-23)

Gabriel Gorodetsky: In the **1920s** and early **1930s** the architects of the Red Army had conceived an entirely original doctrine which addressed both universal requirements and the specific

features of Soviet national needs. These radical innovations were developed by the prodigious trio of Generals Tukhachevsky, Triandafilov and Isserson. The salient characteristic of the doctrine was the refinement of the prevalent Clausewitzian categorization of warfare into strategic and tactical levels by the *introduction of an intermediate level*, labeled the “*operational*.”

What distinguished the doctrine was not only the invention of a new “*operational level*,” comfortably tucked in between “strategy” and “tactics;” it was the theoretical assumption of the existence of ingrained tension between the two levels, between the “goal” and the “means” used to accomplish it, between pinning down the enemy (*skovyvanie*) and the strike (*udar*). Thus, unlike the European notion, which distinguished rather mechanically between defensive and offensive means of war, the Russian established a *cognitive harmonious relation between the two*. . .

In **1936** Tukhachevsky published his Problems Concerning the Defense of the USSR. . . There was nothing sinister, aggressive or ideological in the comprehensive association of defense and offense; the two were in fact intertwined. Even if the strategic goal was defensive in nature, the operational manoeuvres of “deep operations” employed in achieving it could assume a dynamic orientation. Thus, *Soviet strategy in the event of an invasion was committed, rather ambitiously, to the prompt transfer of the war to the enemy’s territory*. The objective of the defense was to seize the initiative from the opponent and establish preconditions for a counter-offensive. These concepts were incorporated in the 1936 Field Regulations, which visualized the “simultaneous use of tank, mechanized, air and air assault forces to strike and penetrate the entire depth of the enemy’s defenses, through its tactical defenses, into its operational depths.” The prerequisite for the successful implementation of such a goal was the creation of an effective mobile force, which in turn necessitated rapid industrialization and a major reform of the armed forces. This in itself required a major expansion of the armored corps and the creation of airborne divisions co-operating w/ the ground forces. . . By **1933** the change was marked by the development of multiple groupings of mechanized and tank forces which were to be engaged in both operational and tactical combat.

The concept reached its maturity w/ the introduction of “deep operations,” which exploited the tension inherent in the operational level. It envisaged the deployment of armored and mechanized formations, echeloned in depth, co-operating jointly w/ infantry and artillery in an attempt to break through the enemy lines and subsequently to exploit the initial success by developing operational manoeuvre activities in the rear of the enemy’s deployment. To break through the impasse, the theory created suitable conditions for the covering forces on the border to initiate a swift counter-offensive w/ the aim of destroying the main body of the enemy’s forces on his own territory. The key to the effective conversion of tactical successes into victories lay in the pursuit of successive operational manoeuvres. The army was therefore *deployed in depth to start with*. (*Grand Delusion*, 115-17)

G. Gorodetsky: Despite the taboo against Tukhachevsky, Zhukov as well as Timoshenko, *clung to his theories like a life belt*. They expected the Red Army to be able to contain the enemy in the initial phase of the war and later to exploit the success while inflicting the “main strike” (*udar*). However, confidence in the doctrine had been somewhat undermined by fear of Stalin and even more so by fascination w/ the *Blitzkrieg* tactics employed in the West. Worse still, since most of the architects of the novel theory had been purged, the *ability to grasp the doctrine fully and translate it into action was limited*. It was not until the Battle of Kursk in summer of **1943** that it was finally restored to its full scope, paving the way for impressive Russian victories. . . (*Grand Delusion*, 126)

Note: Soviet doctrine was “essentially offensive:” after a defensive along their borderlands, the Red Army would attack into the enemy’s home territory. Even after the fall of France (1940), Soviet leaders – ignoring both the lessons of the *blitzkrieg* and their own maneuver doctrine – thought in anachronistic terms of a lengthy border battle followed by breakthrough operations. The assumption that the Red Army *would have time to mobilize* before launching its counter-offensive stands out as a critical failure of the **Oct 40** and **May 41** State Defense Plans. The Red Army gave little thought to the defense, and so had no shield behind which to prepare. They also failed completely to anticipate the nature of a potential German attack. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa* 1941, 27)

Jun 41: Red Army *doctrine* called for an enemy attack to be met by an all-out counteroffensive – in some ways not unlike the French Oplan for 1914. The Red Army was deployed *close to the frontier*, ready to take the battle to enemy territory from the first. Thus, it found itself hopelessly „wrong-footed“ when the invasion came. Its forces along the frontier were positioned for an attack; no defensive measures had been taken [*exaggeration, I believe*]; bridges had not been prepared for demolition; fall-back positions were neither scouted nor prepared; and fuel and ammunition were stockpiled too close to the front line. (*C. Winchester, Hitler’s War on Russia*, 44-45)

J. Erickson: “The analysis of Soviet battlefield techniques and ops is too vast a subject to broach [here]. In general terms, there can be no doubt that in most instances Soviet divisions (whose strength and organization varied enormously) were *over-tasked and under-manned*. Looking at patterns – or typologies – over time, there is a marked contrast between German and Soviet practice. Soviet tactical handling was *too often wasteful*, to the point of *profligate*, but virtually any price was paid to attain operational success. On the other hand, *German tactical brilliance* and effectiveness inflicted brutal losses, but this alone did not guarantee operational success. Yet another criticism leveled at Soviet wartime performance is that Soviet *doctrine* was itself defective. However, once the requisite ‘armament norms’ were reached – as they were by 1943 – the doctrine proved to be both *sound and innovative*.” (*Soviet War Losses*, 267)

Org Changes: While the Germans employed army groups as their premier strategic force, the Red Army employed fronts, which initially were roughly equivalent in size and mission to [German] army groups. After the 1941 campaign, the Red Army reduced the size and increased the number of its fronts, making them roughly equivalent to German armies. (*D. Glantz, Soviet-German War: Myths & Realities*, 15, f.n. 1)

Hew Strachan: The awareness of the Soviet Army’s operational strengths, its development of the ideas of “deep battle” in the 1930s, colors [*Evan Mawdsley’s book*] Thunder in the East. Evan Mawdsley connects the performance of the Red Army in 1944-45 w/ the doctrines of the previous decade, developed through the writings of thinkers like V.K. Triandafilov and applied by M.N. Tukhachevskij as chief of the Red Army’s General Staff. . . To make the connections w/ the innovations in operational thought pioneered by the Soviet Union in the inter-war period and its triumphs in the later years of WWII,⁴⁹ Mawdsley puts the 1937 army purges in context. . . The causes of the Russians’ early and well-nigh catastrophic defeats in 1941 lie not in the purge but elsewhere. (*General Editor’s Preface to: E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, xviii)

⁴⁹ The deep battle fought by the Red Army depended, as *Thunder in the East* stresses, on American trucks, supplied through Lend-Lease, to sustain its logistics needs. (xix)

G. Roberts: “To say that the Soviet Union was preparing to take offensive action against Germany is not to endorse the idea that Stalin was preparing a *preventative war* against Hitler and intended to launch a *pre-emptive strike*. Stalin’s political and diplomatic maneuvers show that he was *desperate for peace in summer 1941*. Had Stalin succeeded in delaying way until **1942** it is possible that he might have decided to take the initiative and strike first, but his *inclination was always to postpone war for as long as possible*. . . His generals, however, were focused not on defence but on their own plans for attack and counterattack. There was, in practical terms, a *mismatch between Stalin’s diplomatic strategy and his generals’ military strategy*. Arguably, this ***dangerous disconnection between political strategy and operational doctrine***, plans and preparations was *the most important factor in the calamity that befell the Red Army on 22 Jun 41*.

“The source of this disconnection was the *offensive-oriented military doctrines of the Red Army dating back to the 1920s*. The Soviet High Command intended to fight the next war by taking the battle to the enemy, by launching attacks and counterattacks and by the *deep penetration* and invasion of the opponent’s territory. This policy commitment to offensive action was *reinforced by interwar developments in military technology* – by the increase in the power, mobility and reliability of tanks, planes and artillery – which made feasible highly mobile attacks and rapid flanking movements and the breaching of even the best-prepared defenses. In *Red Army doctrine*, defence was definitely second best to attack, a mere phase in the preparation of offensive action. . .

“In **Jan 41**, two sets of *war games* were played by members of the High Command. Both games were based on offensive actions and manoeuvres on the Soviet Union’s western borders. The victor in each case was Zhukov, who was then made Chief of the General Staff. As Evan Mawdsley says, ‘it is difficult to see Zhukov’s appointment as anything other than Stalin’s endorsement of the *offensive orientation* of the Red Army.

“***Stalin was steeped in the doctrine of offensive action***. As well as sharing the military rationale for the strategy he had a long-standing commitment to the aggressive defence of the sacred Soviet soil. . . Offensive concepts and themes – dating back to the civil war – were also pervasive in Stalinist political culture. . .

“But the Red Army’s commitment to offensive action and the counter-invasion of enemy territory was *primarily driven by strategic not ideological considerations*. Quite simply, attack was seen as the best defense. . . Strategically, the Red Army’s offensive orientation was embodied in its war plans. . . Seven [7] such plans were drawn up between **1928** and **1941**.” (G. Roberts, *Stalin’s Wars*, 70-71)

G. Roberts: “Whatever its alleged intrinsic merits, the concept of strategic defense *had no place in the doctrinal universe of the Soviet High Command* at the time. As Zhukov admitted in his memoirs: ‘At that time our military-theoretical science generally did not consider the profound problems of strategic defense, mistakenly considering it not so important.’ When the Germans attacked on **22 Jun 41** Timoshenko and Zhukov responded by issuing orders for the implementation of long-standing plans for *offensive action*. Even as the Germans drove deep into Soviet territory and arrived at the gates of Moscow and Leningrad, the Red Army’s preferred counter-measure was to *attack when and where they could*. Eventually the Red Army learned the virtues of defence but only because it had to, and the *doctrine of offensive action persisted throughout the war*. In strategic terms the Red Army ***conducted a wholly offensive campaign on the Eastern Front***. Only during the Battle of Kursk in summer **1943** did the Red Army temporarily adopt a *strategic defence posture*.” (G. Roberts, *Stalin’s Wars*, 80)

Dec 41 – Jan 42 [Soviet shock grps]: The process of Soviet adjustment to the challenges of war continued during the winter and spring of 1941/42. Throughout 1941, most Soviet cdrs had attempted to apply the prewar concept of the deep operation w/o having sufficient forces to achieve the necessary concentration at a critical point. In **Dec 41**, Zhukov ordered the creation w/in the Western Front of shock groups to concentrate the few available full-strength units at specific weak points in the German defenses. . . This technique, plus fresh troops from the Soviet eastern military districts, allowed the Moscow counteroffensive to achieve initial success. By **Jan 42**, however, the attackers were spread out and lacked the mobility to move faster than their German opponents during the exploitation.

While Stalin never admitted his failure to mass forces, the Red Army institutionalized such concentrations for future ops. *Stavka* Directive No. **03**, dated **10 Jan 42**, repeated Zhukov's *front* order of the previous month. All *front* and army cdrs were required to use shock groups for offensive action, focusing their forces on a narrow frontage to achieve overwhelming superiority of strength against a single German unit. Ideally, a *front*-level attack would now have a width of only **30** kilometers, while a rifle army would concentrate on only **15** kilometers. The equivalent frontages in **Dec 41** had been **400** and **80** kilometers, respectively. Thus began the slow process of creating overwhelming concentrations of force to achieve initial penetrations at a few specific points. . .

In the same document, the *Stavka* also addressed the use of artillery. [**Note:** For details, see p. 100.] The artillery directive resulted in a significant improvement in the effective concentration and use of artillery. During 1941, an average kilometer of Soviet front line troops, even in the offensive, was supported by only **7-12** gun and mortar tubes. By the summer of 1942, this average would increase to between **45** and **65** tubes/km. This was still far less than the densities achieved later in the war. . .

In addition to endorsing the concept of massing forces in depth for offensive breakthroughs and exploitation, Soviet cdrs embraced the idea of density and depth in defensive systems. The successful defense of Moscow and Leningrad, in which dense, integrated trench systems were first used, set a precedent in the neglected field of defensive tactics. . . In practice, of course, most cdrs, lacked the forces necessary to establish such defenses until 1943, but the concept and first few tentative experiences were in place by the spring of 1942. (*Glantz & House, When Titans Clashed*, 99-101)

Winter 41/42 [Shock Armies]: “Shock” (*udarnaia*) armies were conceived as a force designed to break thru the tactical zone of the enemy's defenses and clear the way for the introduction of armored units to exploit the gap. Those armies created in 1941 and early 1942 were weaker than pre-war theory had proposed. Members of shock armies received extra pay. (*W. J. Spahr, Zhukov*, 75)

Overview of Soviet Military Doctrine: 1926-41:

(From Hitler's Nemesis, by *Walter S. Dunn*, pp. 1-5):

Soviet military doctrine incorporated strategy, operational art, and tactics. Strategy was designed to achieve long-range objectives and was based on a realistic assessment of resources, strengths and weaknesses, as well as potential enemies. Operational art was the Soviet term for the methods between grand strategy and small-unit tactics. Tactics were the means to achieve short-range goals necessary to reach the long-range objectives. . .

Soviet strategic doctrine treated peace and war as integral parts of a whole. . . During the **1920s** the Soviet Union was weak, lacking many resources, even sufficient food. In **1926**, A.A. Svechin, chief of staff of the Red Army, advocated the strategic defense. A strategic defense absorbed the first blow w/ covering forces and then the reserve would attack. The **1929** Soviet field regulations established the strategic defense as doctrine.

Svechin fell out of favor in **1931** when he attacked the commissar system that shared command of a Russian unit between the military commander and the political officer. Stalin send Svechin to a labor camp and promoted Tukhachevskii, who had objected to Svechin's defensive ideas, from command of the Leningrad Military District to the General Staff in **May 31**. To correspond w/ the growth of industrial strength, Tukhachevskii developed a doctrine for deep penetration w/ a mechanized army that he had proposed in the **1920s**. V.K. Triandafilov and G.S. Isserson had published the doctrine in a book in **1929**. . .

The major controversy centered on the objective of the mechanized and cavalry units. The conservative doctrine was to turn in quickly and encircle the enemy in the forward defense line. In a blitzkrieg the tanks penetrated deep into the enemy communications zone, destroying the rear services, and finally turned to surround entire armies. Tukhachevskii supported the theory of deep penetration. The more traditional approach called for tactics to destroy the enemy forces piecemeal. The conservatives feared that the exploiting forces w/ open flanks would be exposed to counterattack by enemy reserves. Therefore, the exploiting force should turn in quickly while it still had sufficient forces to guard its flanks. The organization of the Red Army was profoundly influenced by the choice of theory. The Field Regulations of 1936 reflected Tukhachevskii's ideas of deep penetration. . .

Experiments w/ new weapons in the **1930s** also modified Soviet military doctrine. . . Tukhachevskii began the task of retraining the army in **1935**, forming military academies to teach the new doctrine. In the same year, the Kharkov Tank Factory began mass producing tanks to provide the weapons.

In **1931** Stalin said that Russia had been defeated in World War I because it was backward. . . Stalin recognized that the new Soviet Union had to change, and Russia began to prepare for war in the **1930s** w/ the five-year plans. By **1937** Russia, w/ **10%** of the world's industrial production, had become the third greatest industrial power behind the United States and Germany. . .

The conservative group opposed to Tukhachevskii was still powerful. In **1934** Voroshilov had proposed a system of fortifications along the entire border to ward off the German attack and construction was initiated. The line would absorb the first blows and give the Red Army time to mobilize according to Svechin's ideas of strategic defense. Still, the emphasis was on offensive action.

The purge in the late **1930s** removed Tukhachevskii and advocates of the large independent tank force. . . In **May 37** Tukhachevskii was arrested and later executed. . . By the end of **1938** the senior members of the officer corps were either in prison or dead. . . The conservative friends of Stalin led by Voroshilov dominated the army.

Marshal B.M. Shaposhnikov became chief of the Soviet General Staff in **1938**. A new military doctrine called for offensive rather than defensive action, but the emphasis was on turning in quickly rather than deep penetration. In **1938**, S.N. Krasil'nikov wrote "A Prospective Plan for the Development of the Red Army between **1938** and **1942**." The plan, approved by

Shaposhnikov and Voroshilov, called for an increase in offensive forces. Large tank units were created for strategic purposes. Parachute troops, additional infantry, and artillery were designed for offensive use.

On **24 Mar 38**, Shaposhnikov completed his strategic plan calling for an offensive strategy and reshaping the army to accomplish this goal by **1942**. In **Nov 38**, the Main Military Council approved a strategic deployment plan submitted by Shaposhnikov. The plan, *anticipating an attack by both Germany and Japan*, would contain the Japanese in the east while the main force defeated the Germans in the west. To accomplish the objective, a large, well-equipped force would be maintained in the west aided by a belt of fortifications. The covering force would defend until the mass of the army mobilized and launched a counteroffensive. . .

A major setback to strategic planning occurred when General D.G. Pavlov returned from Spain in **1939** and, based on his experience, recommended the *elimination of large mechanized units*. After the German campaigns in Poland and France proved the efficacy of the blitzkrieg, Stalin reversed course and authorized the creation of a deep-penetration tank force. In **1940** Stalin ordered the formation of **29** mechanized corps, including **60** tank divisions w/ a total of **30,000** tanks. [!] . . .

In **1941** the Soviet military position was weak. Although the large size of the Red Army had a deterrent effect on Hitler [?], the *rapid expansion had resulted in a low level of training*. New Russian units were equipped w/ obsolete weapons because the production of modern weapons could not match the increased requirements. In **1941**, Soviet industry was still testing new weapons and shifting to mass production of new models. In **1941**, **78%** of the aircraft and **50%** of the tanks in the border districts were either obsolete or obsolescent. Another disadvantage was that the purge had removed most of the leadership of the army. Overconfidence further impaired the Russians. Even in **Mar 41** the Russians believed that they could halt the German attack and assume the offensive. This confidence *led to offensive troop dispositions unsuitable for defense in June*.

End Dunn notes.

3.2.2: Training:

1939: Army still labored under the *constant political interference*. Ideological indoctrination took place every day during training. Political commissars operated at the regimental and battalion level, and political officers—the Soviet term is *politruk*—worked within the companies and lower units. A second tier included young Communists, komsomols, whose representatives among the men were known as *komsorgs*. (*Ivan's War*, 63-6)

Training in the army: Discusses how inefficient it was. The only skills most recruits had time to learn were very basic ones. (*Ivan's War*, 66-8)

During WWII, the *training status* of different Russian units showed such *great variations* that generalizations based on the performance of individual units are not permissible. (*CMH Pub. 104-22, Small Unit Actions*, 40)

Anecdote: [German defense of village “T.” north of *Olenino*, 27.2.-6.3.42] Russain attack methods demonstrate **lack of adequate training** of Red Army troops: “The infantry units emerged from their jumpoff position in a disorderly manner, having the appearance of a *disorganized herd* that suddenly emerged from a forest. As soon as the Germans opened fire [elements of **II/IR 464/253. ID**], panic developed in the ranks of the attack force. The *infantrymen had to be driven forward by three or four officers w/ drawn pistols*. In many instances any attempt to retreat or even to glance backward was *punished w/ immediate execution*. There was virtually *no mutual fire support or coordinated fire*. Typical of the *Russian infantry tactics* was the *tenacity w/ which the attack was repeated over and over again*.” (CMH Pub. 104-22, *Small Unit Actions*, 32-37)

3.2.3: Tactics:

Note: Most of the great changes in Soviet operational and tactical concepts and practice did not occur until 1942/43, but, during the crisis of 1941, the *Stavka* began the first steps in this process. Many of the instructions issued at the time [i.e., 1941] seem absurdly simple, underlining the inexperience of the cdrs to whom they were addressed [examples of *Stavka* directives follow] . . . Whether attacking or defending, many Soviet officers tended to manoeuvre their units like *rigid blocks*, making *direct frontal assaults* against the strongest German concentrations. The **Dec 41** Soviet counteroffensive at Moscow suffered from such frontal attacks, exasperating *Zhukov*. Thus, on 9.12.41, he issued a directive that forbid frontal assaults and ordered commanders to seek open flanks in order to penetrate into the German rear areas. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 66)

Note: Contrary to the German *Auftragstaktik* style of leadership, Soviet formations were committed to battle as *large closely supervised blocks*. German contemporary accounts constantly dwell on the “unpredictability” such methods conferred. General von *Mellenthin*, a panzer cdr emphasizing this characteristic, remarked: “today he is a hero attacking in great depth – tomorrow he is completely afraid and not willing to do anything.” Panzer General *Hermann Balck* was to comment after the war:

The Russians are astonishingly unpreclicable and astonishingly hard for a Westerner to understand. They are a kind of herd animal, and if you can once create panic in some portion of the herd it spreads very rapidly and leads to a major collapse. But the things that cause the panic are unknowable. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlandsi*, 197)

The one feature distinguishing [Russian] operations throughout the war was their *total disregard for the value of human life* that found expression in the employment of mass formations, even for local attacks. Two other characteristics peculiar to the *combat methods* of the Russias were: a) their *refusal to abandon territorial gains*; and, b) their ability to *improvise in any situation*. Infantry, frequently mounted on tanks and in trucks, at times even w/o weapons, was *driven forward wave upon wave regardless of casualties*. These tactics of mass assault *played havoc w/ the nerves of the German defenders* and were reflected in their expenditure of ammunition...The Russians were *masters at penetrating [infiltrating] German lines w/o visible preparation* or major fire support and at airlanding or infiltrating individual squads, platoons, or companies w/o arousing suspicion. They swam rivers, stalked through forests, scaled cliffs, *wore civilian clothing* or enemy uniforms, infiltrated German marching columns—is short, suddenly they were there! (CMH Pub. 104-22, *Small Unit Actions*, 4-6)

Critique of Soviet defeat in Operation “Mars” (Nov-Dec 42), shows that while Red Army had made palpable progress since Jun 41, it still suffered from numerous shortcomings in leadership and tactics – excessive *rigidity*, lack of proper training, poor combined arms cooperation, resort to endless, mass frontal attacks against fortified positions, etc. Also, even this late in Russian campaign, some Red Army units sent into combat w/o requisite cold weather garb. (see, *Glantz, Zhukov’s Greatest Defeat*, 291-304)

The Russians chose for their most determined efforts *swampy, forested terrain* where superiority in materiel is least effective. For example, north of **Gomel** in the autumn of **1941** they attempted to establish a continuous line of strong points in the very *thickest part of the forest*. Many of these strong points consisted of disabled tanks dug in and arranged for mutual support. (see, *FMS T-34, Terrain Factors*, 67)

Russian forest tactics: The Russians favored forests for their approach marches and as assembly areas for attacks. They appeared and disappeared invisibly and noiselessly through the woods. Narrow strips of woodland leading to the outskirts of villages were utilized as concealed approaches by reconnaissance patrols. The woods also indicated the logical course to be followed for the forward assembly prior to an attack, as well as for infiltrating into German positions. Outskirts of woods were a *preferred jump-off position* for Soviet mass attacks. Wave upon wave could surge out of the forests. Even the smallest clearing found use as artillery firing positions; when necessary the Russians created such clearings by rapidly felling trees. They quickly and cleverly constructed positions for heavy wpns and observation posts in the trees...In contrast to our own difficulties, bringing up even medium artillery and tanks through almost impenetrable forests presented no problem to the Russians. (*Newton, Panzer Ops Raus*, 3-4)

The Soviets also proved *exceptionally adept at preparing towns and villages for defense*, converting them into *virtual fortresses* very quickly. Wooden houses sported *well-camouflaged gun ports* almost flush w/ the floor, their interiors reinforced w/ dirt or sandbags, and *observation slots* cut into the roofs. Bunkers were excavated into the floors and connected w/ adjacent houses or exterior defenses by narrow trenches. Although almost all inhabited places were crammed w/ Red Army troops, they *appeared deserted* to German reconnaissance units, since even water and food details were allowed to leave their shelters only after dark. The Russians blocked approach routes w/ well-camouflaged antitank guns or dug-in tanks, esp. favoring the use of knocked-out tanks as observation posts or heavy wpn emplacements. When the front line neared a village, the inhabitants carried their possessions into the outlying woods or bunkers for safekeeping. (*Newton, Panzer Ops Raus*, 4)

1941/42: Die Sowjets hatten in den Jahren **1941/42** noch in der aus dem Ersten Weltkrieg bekannten Taktik des wellenweisen Vorgehens auf breiter Front angegriffen. Mit wirklich erstaunlicher Hartnaeckigkeit hatten sie dabei immer wieder neue Menschenmassen in die gleichen Frontabschnitte hineingebracht u. dem deutschen Abwehrfeuer geopfert. Die anfaenglichen Misserfolge u. ungeheuren Verluste hatten der sowj. Fuehrung jedoch Anlass geboten, nach einer neuen Strategie u. Taktik Ausschau zu halten u. – was nahe lag – das deutsche Vorgehen in Sowjetrussland strategisch u. taktisch zu analysieren. Die deutsche Fuehrung hatte bereits im Polenfeldzug u. spaeter im Frankreich-Feldzug die Taktik des Angriffs an schmaler Frontstelle mit ueberlegenen Kraeften, Durchbruch von Panzerkraeften in die Tiefe des fdl. Hinterlandes, ohne nennenswerte Ruecksicht auf eine Flankenbedrohung durchgefuehrt. Sie hatten jeweils die fdl. Verteidigung ins Wanken gebracht u. fuer den Feind verlustreiche „Kessel“ gebildet. Die Sowjets wandten diese Angriffstaktik erstmalig bei Stalingrad an u. waelhten hierzu als abwehrschwach erkannte Frontabschnitte mit rumaenischer u. italienischer Truppenbesetzung aus. In kraeftigen Vorstoessen durchbrachen sie die Linien der Verbuedeten

Deutschlands u. fuehrten die Einkesselung einer ganzen deutschen Armee in u. um Stalingrad herbei.

Aus diesem ersten Erfolg lernte man u. wandte die gleiche Taktik auch bei spaeteren Grossangriffen, anfangs zoegernd, spaeter ohne Ruecksicht auf eigene Verluste, an. So kam es zur Einkreisung einiger dt. Divisionen in der Mitte der Ostfront 1943 (Tomachowka), spaeter zum Kessel von Tscherkassy u. schliesslich zum sog. „Hube“-Kessel in der Ukraine. In allen drei Faellen gelang es jedoch den eingeschlossenen Truppen, unter allerdings erheblichen Menschen- u. vor allem Materialverlusten aus der Umkreisung auszubrechen. Immerhin erwies sich diese Taktik des Vorgehens fuer die Sowjets als Verluste sparend, Boden gewinnend, u. damit als vorteilhaft. Sie bot sich fuer weitere Vorhaben an. (R. Hinze, *Zusammenbruch der H.Gr.Mitte*, 12-13)

Winter 41/42 [Dec 41 Counteroffensive]: Russian officers and NCOs were tactically amateurish compared to their German counterparts. Cdrs tended to assign wide frontages, as much as **9-14** km for a rifle division, dispersing forces, equipment and tanks evenly across the front. Tanks were placed in support of infantry, in preference to concentrating on narrow breakthrough areas or massing on main advance routes. Such shortcomings diluted combat power and weakened the Russian capacity to strike swiftly into German rear areas w/ sizeable mobile forces. Snow, ice and near-Arctic conditions impeded cross-country mobility. The result was frontal headlong assaults against flimsy German positions, which could have been infiltrated or simply bypassed. General Zhukov felt obliged to issue a curt directive to West Front cdrs w/in three [**3**] days of the offensive to desist from profligate frontal attacks. The German strongpoint system maximized German resources and experience, effectively networking their automatic wpns and artillery w/ a few tanks in a way the Russians could not. Many German units owed their survival, despite a considerable mauling, to Soviet tactical failings and inexperience at the higher operational level to combine resources effectively enough to create successful encirclements. (R. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 229-30)

Winter 41/42: Zhukov, for one, appears to have had greater confidence in frontal assaults that had served well enough on the approaches to Moscow than in the more elegant but also more demanding envelopment. Regardless of the envelopment being attempted, his command, the West Front, **never ceased battering the whole length** of **4 Army**, **4 Pz Army**, and **3 Pz Army** lines. Konev's Kalinin Front did the same against German **9 Army**. (Ziemke & Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 125)

a. Infantry tactics:

The *unorthodox Russian tactics* w/ which the Germans were not familiar were equally disturbing, and Russian *deception and trickery* caused many German casualties. (CMH Pub. 104-22, *Small Unit Actions*, 1)

Russian ***infiltration tactics*** were most effective in winter, because the German defense system, based on strong points, practically invited such tactics. The Russians always sought to *split and annihilate* defending forces, and to this end cavalry, ski units, airborne troops, and above all, partisans were used in great numbers. (CMH 104-6, *Effects of Climate*, 16)

During Winter, would use snow storms to silently approach German trenches (Verton, 95). Also notes that Russians were “underground fighters in every sense of the word.” Burrowed through snow to reach German lines (97). According to F. Strienitz, “mit der grimmigen Winterkaelte

verstanden die Russen gut umzugehen. Eis u. Schneesturm wurden von ihnen als Teil der Angriffsvorbereitung gezielt beruecksichtigt.“ (Strienitz, Sonderfragen)

Typical of Russian combat methods in winter, was the *exploitation of snowstorms to conduct surprise attacks* without any artillery or mortar support. Also, the appearance of a *Russian reconnaissance patrol in German uniform* was a frequent occurrence. On other occasions, Russians demonstrated *extraordinary skill in approaching thru snow-covered forests w/o attracting attention of Germans*. (CMH Pub. 104-22, *Small Unit Actions*, 18, 22, 36)

Numerous accounts of German soldiers note that, during attacks, not all Russians carried weapons: “Dazu zaehlte z.B. die Tatsache, dass ein Teil der anstuermenden Russen keine Waffe besass. Fiel oder war ein Russe verwundet, so stuerzte sich der naechste “Waffenlose” auf die frei gewordene Waffe.” (Strienitz, Sonderfragen)

b. Armored Tactics:

In 1941, the Russian armored command was in the process of *reorganizing and converting to new equipment*. Only selected personnel were assigned to this arm of the service. Before 1941, the principal function of the Russian tank unit was to *support the infantry*. The successes by German armor during the *blitzkrieg* of 1939-41 led the Russians to *reevaluate the armored doctrine*, and they turned to the idea of using armor in a *strategic role* along German lines. During this *transitional period*, the Russian armored command was suddenly confronted by the German invasion. The first year saw the Russians suffer heavy losses in desperate attempts to stem the tide while at same time trying to carry out fundamental changes in their armored tactics and equipment. In hastily passing from one stage to the next, *Russian armored tactics and techniques developed along lines that seemed, at least to the German foe, entirely unorthodox*. It was this very unorthodoxy that *baffled the Germans* and enabled the Russians to achieve successes, which began to sap German strength long before Russian armor reached its full effectiveness. At the beginning of the campaign, the Russians were *forced to commit their armor piecemeal*, usually in units no larger than a regiment. By *early 1942*, the *independent tank bde* appeared on the battlefield, and eventually the Russians organized tank armies. (CMH Pub. 104-22, *Small Unit Actions*, 74)

c. Engineers:

Well-anchored *underwater bridges* rendered excellent service even under flood conditions. They were widely used by the Red Army. According to author, Germans were unfamiliar w/ this type of bridging. *FMS T-34, Terrain Factors*, 39, 46)

3.2.4: Organization/Reorganization:

1920s/30s: For a detailed examination of changes in Soviet force structure from the **1920s** through the **1930s** see, Glantz (ed.), *Initial Period of the War*, 1-20. As Glantz writes, the „Red Army of the **1920s** was essentially a *foot-and-hoof army*: an infantry and cavalry force w/ very limited capability for developing tactical success into operational or certainly strategic success.“ However, ”by the mid-**1930s**, the Soviets had fully developed and implemented the *concept of deep battle* (*glubokii boi*). They had also constructed a force structure that could actually translate those theories into practice.“ (2-3)

Reorganization of field army:

It was not only the central command apparatus of the Soviet forces that underwent fundamental reorganization. The grave setbacks of the initial phase of the war also called for changes in the organization of the field army. The price was now being paid for the liquidation by Stalin of the most experienced military leaders and his lack of interest in the development of suitable means of communication:

- The front commands were not up to their tasks; the fronts, therefore had to be reduced in size and their number increased. In **Dec 41**, instead of the earlier **5**, there now existed **9 active fronts**;
- In **Jul 41**, the lack of senior officers and communications equipment and the heavy losses of artillery pieces and engineering material were major reasons for the abolition of the rifle corps as intermediate command levels between armies and divisions;
- This, however, did not overcome the difficulties in the communications field. Most of the rifle divisions were thenceforth placed directly under the armies, whose number was simultaneously increased. A beginning was also made in the process of considerably reducing the combat strength of rifle divisions; the personnel and material thereby released served to establish new units;
- The mechanized corps, set up as recently as **Jul 40** on the basis of the lessons of the German campaign in France, had similarly to be abolished “to facilitate command“ and also because of a lack of tanks and motor vehicles. In their place armored divisions w/ a reduced number of tanks were established, as well as armored bdes and tank btns;
- To increase the manoeverability of Soviet forces a large number of smaller cavalry divisions were set up, even though the disadvantages of cavalry formations in modern war were being fully realized;
- The rapid advance of the Germans into the interior of the country urgently demanded an intensified construction of fortifications and defensive positions. To this end no fewer than **9** independent engineering armies were created by the end of the year under the new Chief Directorate for Defense Construction; and finally;
- In the big cities, such as Moscow, Leningrad, Smolensk, Kiev, Odessa and Sevastopol, detachments composed of civilians were created under the old title of „narodnoe opolchenie“ [People’s Army, used in **1812**].

(Source: *GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 838-39)

15.7.41: *Stavka* Circular **01**, dated **15 Jul 41**, began the reorganization and truncation of the Soviet force structure. Field cdrs received instructions to eliminate the corps level of command, evolving to a smaller field army that had only **5-6** rifle divisions plus **2-3** tank bdes, **1-2** light cavalry divisions, and several attached artillery rgts. of the High Command reserve. This allowed

more experienced army cdrs and staffs to have direct control over the rifle divisions. Those divisions were also simplified; in the process, the authorized strength of a rifle division was reduced from **14,500** to just under **11,000**. The authorized number of artillery pieces in the division was reduced to **24**, while the number of trucks dropped **64%**. The actual strength of most divisions was much lower, and, as time passed, many of these weakened units were redesignated as separate bdes. In fall **1941** and early **1942**, the *Stavka* formed about **170** rifle bdes (each of **4400** men), in lieu of new rifle divisions; they were significantly easier for inexperienced Soviet cdrs to control. . . The **15 Jul 41** circular also abolished mechanized corps, which seemed particularly superfluous given the current shortage of skilled cdrs and modern tanks. . . In fact, **tanks were so scarce in summer and fall 1941 that the largest new armored organizations formed during this period were tank bdes**. . . The same circular also directed a massive expansion of cavalry units, creating **30** new light cavalry divisions of **3447** horsemen each. Later in the year, this total rose to **82** such divisions, but because of high losses the divisions were integrated into the cavalry corps by late **Dec 41**. . . Just as independent operations for mech. forces were sacrificed, so the Red Air Force abolished its Strategic Long-Range Aviation command temporarily. Tactical air units were reorganized into rgts. of only **30**, rather than **60** acft. (*Glantz & House, When Titans Clashed*, 65-66)

Jul-Dec 41: As early as late **Jul 41**, the Soviets began truncating their force structure in attempt to create a force which their inexperienced commanders could actually operate w/ more effectively on the battlefield. Basically, force structure truncation involved the abolition of a level of command in both rifle and armored forces. The abolition of the rifle corps and the mech. corps, or at least those that had not already been destroyed, ensued. Hence, by **Oct 41**, rifle armies were made up of only rifle divisions, which themselves had shrunk in size, and of rifle bdes, which were, in essence, light divisions w/o a regimental link – a simple grouping of artillery and rifle btns. Tank bdes, which replaced mech. corps, were small armored outfits w/ an initial strength of **65** tanks. This became the largest armored unit in the Soviet force structure by the later fall of **1941**. Cavalry crops continued to be made up of cavalry divisions, but even here the Soviets lightened their structure by creating light cavalry divisions, whose strength was roughly half that of the regular divisions. This restructuring was a temporary expedient. The Soviets had no desire for it, and they realized that one of its implications would probably be very high losses. However, this was a structure the Soviets had to have in order to train their cdrs and allow them to grow in scope and capacity so they could take command of larger units in the future. . . At the highest level, the Soviets **centralized control and planning** by creating a STAVKA to coordinate operations and three [3] distinct strategic direction headquarters. These HQs controlled operations along the Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev approaches. (**Note:** See, Table on p. 446 for changes in Red Army force structure from **Jun-Dec 41**. *D. Glantz, Initial Period of the War*, 465-68)

3.3: Service Branches/Weapons & Equipment:

3.3.1: Infantry (Rifle Divisions):

Note: For table, „Vergleich der Divisionsstaerken see, *H. Mageneheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, p. 12. For example, this table illustrates numerical strengths of Wehrmacht infantry divisions of **1**, **2**, and **3**. **Welle**, as well as the changing strength of Red Army rifle divisions.

Jun 41: Soviet rifle divisions were short on men, wpns and vehicles. Each was supposed to have **14,483** men, but in fact their strength varied from **8400 – 12,000** men, w/ most between **8000 – 10,000**. The biggest shortfall, however, was in „soft-skinned“ motor vehicles – trucks. Each rifle division had only **10-25%** of the motor vehicles it should have had, because any new vehicles available were directed towards the massive, newly formed mech. corps. (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 176)

Jun 41: Traditional rifle forces predominated in the Red Army force structure. The **62** rifle corps, **198** divisions, and **3** bdes of rifle forces comprised **65%** of the total Soviet force. . . The basic operational-level formation in the Red Army was the combined arms (rifle) army. . . On **22.6.41**, most Soviet rifle forces were well below full wartime strength; had wpns shortages, etc.⁵⁰ For example, the average strength of rifle divisions in Western Special Military District was just **9327** men (against the new **Apr 41** wartime establishment of **14,483**). (For details on size, organization, weapons tables of rifle divisions/armies see, *D. Glantz, Red Army Ground Forces*, 13-15)

The standard Soviet infantry division was similar to the German: **9** btns. in **3** rgts., w/ an artillery regiment of **36** guns (in theory, **24** 76mm guns and **12** 122mm howitzers) plus supporting troops. Yet most divisions were significantly under strength in the summer of **1941**. On average, they had ca. **8000** men vs. an authorized strength of **14,483**. (*C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia*, 28)

Jun 41: At the beginning of the war, the Soviet rifle division with *enormous variations in strength*, represented the equivalent of **1/3** of a fully manned German infantry division. Only toward the end of the war was anything approaching parity reached. (*J. Erickson, Soviet War Losses*, 267)

Jun 41: 1941 Rifle Division:

- 3 Rifle regiments
- 2 artillery regiments, etc.
- 14,483** men
- 294** guns [?!]
- 150** mortars
- 16** light tanks
- 13** armored cars

Soviet rifle divisions were each supposed to have a strength of **14,483** men. In fact, they averaged between **8400** and **12,000** men, w/ the weakest being in the Special Kiev and Baltic Military Districts. . . The rifle divisions had between **80-90%** of their weaponry as required by **TOE**, but a major deficiency was the poor status of vehicles in those divisions. They had only between **10-25%** of the vehicles they were supposed to have, because of the crash program to rebuild the mech. corps on eve of war. This program deprived the infantry and cavalry forces not only of their armor but also of much of their mobility. (See, *Glantz, Initial Period of the War*, 19, 34)

⁵⁰ For example, production of the new „Maksim“ MGs and machine pistols lagged, depriving Soviet infantryment of critical firepower against their German opponents. Moreover, most rifle corps and divisions had only one **[1]** artillery rgt instead of the required two **[2]**, and anti-tank and AA artillery units were either entirely absent or sparsely equipped w/ antiquated wpns. (14)

Jun 41: Soviet rifle division had *authorized* strength of **14,483** men organized in three (3) rifle rgts of three (3) btns each plus two (2) artillery rgts, a light tank btn and supporting services. On paper, a Soviet rifle corps contained two to three rifle divisions; a field army consisted of three (3) rifle corps (with 3 divs. each), one mech. corps, several artillery rgts and an AT bde. In practice, however, the Red Army was *woefully under-strength*, w/ most divisions numbering **8,000 – 10,000** men or less even before the German onslaught. In late **May 41**, the Soviet govmt attempted to remedy this problem by calling up **800,000** additional reservists and accelerating the graduation of various military schools. These additional personnel were just joining their units when the attack came. In practice, most field armies mustered only **6-10** divisions organized in two rifle corps, w/ an incomplete mech corp and little maintenance support. (Source: *Glantz, Barbarossa*, 24)

It comes as no surprise to learn that rifle troops *suffered the heaviest losses*, particularly in the **28-month** period from **1943-45**. Old soldiers will recall the brutal adage: “the artillery is for killing, the infantry for dying.” During the period **1943-45**, casualty figures reached **16,859,000** of which **4,028,000** accounted for those killed or missing in action and **12,831,000** for battle casualties. The rifle troops, the inf. btns, rgts and divisions suffered no less than **86%** of this loss; the armored force **6%**, artillery **2.2%** and the air force **0.29%**. (*J. Erickson, Soviet War Losses*, 261)

In view of the losses in the rifle divisions and the [eventual] increase in armored and artillery units, the Russians did not maintain the rifle companies at the same strength. In **Oct 41**, the rifle divisions averaged only **7500** men. The *authorized strength* of the rifle division dropped from **10,566** in **Jul 42** to **8000** in the summer of **1943**, and then to **6800** in **Oct 43**. In **1943** and during the first half of **1944**, the bulk of the divisions were seldom involved simultaneously in active operations. The replacement system was able to maintain the rifle companies at about **100** men. However, in **1944** practically all the armies were engaged and the bonus of booty troops had been exhausted. The artillery and armored units had first call on the available recruits both as replacements and to create new units. The inevitable result was the continued shrinkage of the rifle units. In **Mar 44**, the rifle division was down to **5400** men w/ only **2200** riflemen. Actual strength was even lower. In the last six months of the war, the Russians reduced the size of the divisions to create new armored and artillery units. In **Feb 45**, there were three (3) authorized levels of rifle divisions: **4500** men, **4000** men, and **3600** men. At the end of the war, the average rifle division had only **4000** men. Divisions became the equivalent of rgts in their rifle strength but were *heavily armed w/ automatic wpns* and had the support of a divisional artillery rgt, not a bad situation. (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 60-61, 82)

Oct 41: Russian rifle divisions were not as large as German infantry divisions. On **1.10.41**, the average size of a rifle division on the West Front was **8000** men; on the Reserve Front **10,500** men; and on the Bryansk Front **6600** men. Konev wrote that his divisions had no more than **4-5000** men; and according to Sokolovsky, the average size of the rifle divisions on all three [3] fronts was **5-7000** men. The authorized strength of a rifle division was **10,859** men. (From Soviet sources in: *K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 77, f.n. 29)

Late '41: The defeats of the summer of **1941** lead to reductions of the table of organization of the rifle divisions, esp. in *automatic wpns*. The number of *machine pistols* in the rifle division is reduced from **1200** to **171** [?!]; MGs from **558** to **270**. The number of men authorized was reduced to **10,589**. The rifle company had only **6** machine pistols and **6** light MGs. The howitzer rgt was removed from the rifle division to provide army artillery. (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 91)

Like the German Army, *Soviet Army also dependent on horses*. The *standard Soviet rifle division of 1941* contained some **14 500** men and **3500 – 4000** horses. (*DiNardo, 45*)

3.3.2: Artillery (and AT Artillery):⁵¹

Note: *John Erickson* notes the “*absence of adequate artillery support*” for the Red Army in **1941/42**; and that to “*hold off a German advance [during this period in the absence of such support] the only answer had to be perform an infantry mass.*” (*J. Erickson, Soviet War Losses, 267*)

Note: Both prior to the war and throughout its initial period, the **NKO** and *Stavka* woefully *underestimated the role and importance of artillery*, engineers and communications forces throughout the force structure and this, too, significantly decreased the resilience of the army’s strategic, operational and tactical defenses. (*Glantz, Barbarossa, 209*)

Jun 41: Soviet artillery was comparable to that of the Germans, with **76mm, 107mm, 122mm,** and **152mm** types, a mix of guns and howitzers, and a mix of obsolete, modernized and new models. Most of the Soviet artillery was horse drawn, and there were very few tracked artillery pieces that could operate off roads. This, however, was also true of the *Wehrmacht*. Altogether, the German Army in Russia initially fielded about **7000** light and heavy [?] artillery pieces. Red Army strength for the whole of the USSR was four or five times that – at **33,200** artillery pieces. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East, 26*)

ab 22.6.41: The absence of transport vehicles and the shortages of communications equipment curtailed ammunition resupply and the evacuation of damaged equipment and made delivery of effective artillery fire impossible. Corps artillery rgts had no target acquisition equipment and could not mass their fires on enemy objectives. In addition, corps and divisional artillery staffs were short of trained personnel and functioned poorly.⁵² (*D. Glantz, Red Army Ground Forces, 17*)

Of all the Soviet ground forces, the best-equipped and most professional arm (as of **Jun 41**) was the artillery. With an unbroken *tradition of excellence* throughout Russian history, the Russian artillery deployed superb guns – some updated **1930s** versions of excellent Tsarist wpsns, others new models, under very professional officers. Whereas the Germans parcelled out their artillery for close support, the Russians *had so much of it* that they could, and did, do that at regimental and divisional level, but were also able to retain large concentrations of medium and heavy artillery for concentrated firepower strikes under control of corps, armies and fronts. (*Bellamy, Absolute War, 176-77*)

Most of the Red Army’s artillery (**92%**) was found in **94** corps artillery and **75 RVGK** artillery rgts allocated to support armies, corps, and divisions. On paper, the corps artillery rgts totaled **1320 107-122mm** guns and **2220 152mm** gun-howitzers organized into three types of rgts. The

⁵¹ **Note:** From my research to date (**Jan 08**), it appears that the Soviet artillery played a significant – perhaps decisive? – role in wearing down and attriting the *Wehrmacht* in summer of **1941**. Their artillery was abundant, technically good, and very well-led. In the *Tagesmeldungen* of Army Group Center, there appear to be almost *daily* references to the Russian employment of artillery (see, *K. Mehner, Die Geheimen Tagesberichte*).

⁵² **Note:** To what extent was the prodigious, almost reckless, expansion of Red Army beginning in late **1930s** (see Dunn’s book) responsible for this state of affairs?

RVGK artillery rgts consisted of large caliber gun and howitzer systems organized into **61** howitzer and **14** gun rgts. Most of the RVGK rgts assigned to reinforce armies were better equipped than their corps artillery counterparts. However, even they lacked up to **85%** of required special tractor systems for movement, and on **22 Jun 41** most of their vehicles required capital repairs. Contemporary Soviet archival reports and after-action assessments noted several major deficiencies in artillery systems. Inspections conducted in **spring '41** indicated that regimental personnel, in particular junior and mid-range cdrs, were poorly trained and unable to employ their artillery effectively in combat. Firing units experienced major difficulties in target acquisition and fire direction and were unable to coordinate their fire w/ that of supposedly cooperating units. The most serious deficiency found in gun artillery units was their inability to bring effective fire to bear on enemy tanks, which was one of the most critical tasks assigned to artillery units by pre-war regulations. (D. Glantz, *Red Army Ground Forces*, 29)

Anti-Tank Artillery: In **May 41** the NKO began forming **10** specialized antitank artillery bdes in the border military districts. Assigned generally on the basis of **1** bde per forward rifle army, each bde consisted of **120 – 76mm** and **85mm** AT guns and **16 – 37mm** AA guns organized into two subordinate rgts. The new bdes experienced the same sorts of problems as the mech. corps w/ which they were supposed to cooperate. By **22.6.41**, the bdes had only **30-78%** of their required guns and, like the mech corps, insufficient vehicular transport and logistical support. On **13 Jun 41**, **4** of **10** bdes had between **4** and **46** of their required **189** tractors, and the remaining bdes had no tractors at all. Predictably, when war began, they were quickly destroyed. (D. Glantz, *Red Army Ground Forces*, 29)

„The efficiency of the Russian artillery varied greatly during the various stages of the war. In the beginning it was unable to achieve an effective concentration of fire, and furthermore was unenthusiastic about firing on targets in the depth of the battle position even when there was excellent observation. . . On the other hand, the Russian artillery liked to *distribute its fire over the front lines*. . . During the course of the war the artillery also developed to a high degree the *use of mass* as a particularly characteristic procedure. Infantry attacks w/o artillery preparation were rare. . . Russian artillery fire often had no primary target, but covered the entire area w/ the same intensity. The Russian artillery was *most vulnerable to counterbattery fire*. It ceased firing or changed position after only a few rounds from the German guns. The *rigidity of the fire plan*, and a certain immobility of the Soviet artillery – at least during the first years of the war – was pronounced. Only in rare cases was the artillery successful in promptly following the infantry. Most of the time the artillery was unable to follow up; it remained stuck in the old positions, leaving the infantry w/o fire support. This practice frequently took the momentum out of the Russian attacks. Attack tactics of Russian artillery improved constantly during the war. . . However, despite many shortcomings, the Russian artillery was a *very good and extremely dangerous arm*. Its fire was effective, rapid, and accurate.“ (E. Rauss, *Russian Combat Methods*, in: Tsouras, *Fighting in Hell*, 37-38)

Note: “I asked *Rundstedt* what he considered were the strong and weak points of the Red Army, as he found it in **1941**. His reply was: ‘The Russian heavy tanks were a surprise in quality and reliability from the outset. But the Russians proved to have *less artillery* than had been expected.’ . . . On the equipment side *Kleist* said that the Russians’ weakest period had been in **1942**. They had not been able to make up their **1941** losses, and throughout the year were *very short of artillery* in particular. ‘They had to use mortars, brought up on lorries [i.e., *Stalinorgel?*], to compensate for their lack of artillery.’” (B.H.L. Hart, *German Generals Talk*, 185)

The Red Army entered WWII with an *excellent arsenal* of artillery pieces that had been designed or improved in the **1930s**, increasing the range, the rate of fire, the accuracy, and the destructive force of all their artillery. The Red Army *relied on artillery more than any of the other major armies in WWII*. During the war, the Soviet Union produced more than **500,000** guns and mortars. The Soviets referred to artillery in terms of the unit size to be supported: btn guns (**37** and **45 mm**); regimental guns (**76 mm**); division guns (**76** and **122 mm**); and corps guns (**107** to **152 mm**). The cannon companies in the rifle rgts had regimental guns; the divisional artillery rgt had light or field artillery; and corps and armies had medium and heavy artillery. The field, medium and heavy artillery included both *guns and howitzers*, all designated by the diameter of the bore. A gun had a *flat trajectory* and long range stemming from its high muzzle velocity; the howitzer had a lower muzzle velocity, resulting from a smaller powder charge. A shorter barrel was adequate as the powder burned in less time. The advantage of the howitzer was that it could be fired w/ a high trajectory over hills and other obstacles. The plunging shell struck the target from a nearly vertical angle, an advantage when shelling troops in dugout shelters. The destructive power of artillery *dominated the battlefield*. A **76 mm** shell created a crater **1** meter in diameter and **.5** meters deep; a **122 mm** shell, a crater **3** meters in diameter and **.7** meters deep; and a **152 mm** shell made a crater **5** meters in diameter and **1.8** meters deep. During the war, the Russians concentrated on producing artillery designs in existence in **1941**, w/ minor improvements. (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 29)

In **1941**, the Red Army still used the civil war *tachanka*, a *three-horse cart*, to draw some of its lighter guns to the front line. (*Ivan's War*, 103)

Jun-Dec 41: In last six (**6**) months of **1941**, the Red Army lost **40,000** [!] artillery pieces. (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 165)

ab 5.12.41 [3 PzGr at Klin]: Zhukov has assembled **3** armies (**1 Shock, 20** and **30 Armies**) for a concentric attack toward Klin. The heaviest blow fell initially on **36 ID (mot)**, north of Klin in **LVI PzK** sector; the overstretched German lines there buckled in less than **36** hours, w/ Soviet troops on snowshoes and skis breaking thru between Rogachev and Borshchevo on 7 December. About noon on 8 December, Red Army troops retake Spas-Zaulok and Yamuga, just **5** miles north of Klin. The only major road thru which the **3 PzGr** could hope to retreat out of danger ran directly thru Klin. The Soviets were now well w/in artillery range, although the relative weakness of the Red Army's artillery park around Moscow ruled out effective interdiction fire. (*Newton, Hitler's Commander*, 160)

22.6.44 [Sowjet Grossoffensive „Bagration“]: Auf sowj. Seite standen den deutschen Truppen der H.Gr.Mitte fuer die Offensive **166** Schuetzen-, Panzer- u. Kavalleriedivisionen mit **2,200,000** Mann, **31,000** Geschuetzen, **5000** Panzer u. **6000** Flugzeugen gegenueber, aufgeteilt in vier [4] Heeresgruppen. . . In den Durchbruchabschnitten . . . war es moeglich, eine grosse Artilleriedichte zu schaffen. **151-204** Geschuezte u. Werfer mit einem Kaliber von **76-mm** u. groesser je Kilometer waren im Durchbruchabschnitt konzentriert. [!] (*R. Hinze, Zusammenbruch der H.Gr.Mitte*, 32-34)

3.3.3: Mechanized Units:

Tukhachevksy had pioneered the creation of the army's tank arm and the organisation of the large mech. corps whose existence had by **1935** put the Red Army at the very forefront of modern mil. development. (*Keegan, Second World War*, 173)

In **1934**, apparently for no better reason than *Tukhachevsky's* advocacy of the independent armored force, *Voroshilov* argued: „It is almost axiomatic that such a powerful force as the tank corps is a very *far-fetched idea* and we should therefore have nothing to do w/ it.“ Immediately after T.'s removal [shot at outset of the mil. purges, on **11.6.37**) he *abolished* all tank formations larger than a brigade. (*Keegan, Second World War*, 176)

Joachim Hoffmann: Writes that decision of Soviet leadership to abolish the mechanized corps was one of the conclusions drawn from fighting against the Japanese at Lake Khazan in **Jul-Aug 38**, on the Khalkin-Gol river in **May 39**, and in particular from the Spanish civil war. In Spain, tanks had been used mainly in support of infantry, and it was therefore thought that in future, too, they were primarily designed to ensure the success of conventional attacks. The fact that armor and acft were wpns which fundamentally changed the character of an offensive, or that they were of strategic rather than of merely tactical importance, had been completely forgotten. That assessment of experience in the Spanish civil war was to result in the abolition of the mechanized corps. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 72)

Marshal *Tukachevsky's* remaining disciples managed to reverse an earlier decision to break up the mechanized corps and distribute the tanks piecemeal among the infantry. Eight (**8**) mech. corps were authorized in the summer of **1940**, and another **21** ordered in **Feb 41**, but they would not be combat-ready by the time of the invasion. (*C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia*, 38)

The large mechanized corps – strength on paper of **36,080** men and **1031** tanks – were *not ready for war*. As Popel's graphic account of **8 Mech. Corp's** experience makes clear, the Germans caught the Red Army in the *middle of a major restructuring*. After the triumph of German armored forces in the West in **1940**, the Red Army began to assemble these giant formations. (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 176)

Formed hastily in late **1940** and still forming when war began, each mech. corps contained two (**2**) tank divisions and one (**1**) mot. division. On paper, each of the „unwieldy“ mech. corps totalled **36,080** men and **1031** tanks. Worse still, most of the mech. corps were badly deployed, occupying scattered garrisons w/ the corps' divisions often up to **100 km (60 miles)** apart. Some corps were subordinated to army HQs w/ mission to conduct local counterattacks in support of army's rifle corps, while others were to conduct major counterstrokes under *front* control. This made it impossible for the corps to perform the decisive offensive ops required by the State Defense Plan. (Source: *Glantz, Barbarossa*, 24)

1939/40: The events of **1939/40** shattered Soviet confidence that they had made the right decision in abolishing their tank corps. They looked upon German operations in Poland w/ wonderment and awe. They later looked at German operations in France, and in several superb articles published in late **1940** and **1941**, the general Soviet comment was, „*My God, they picked up on our ideas and are effectively implementing them while we have gone in the opposite direction.*“ These were excellent analytical articles. Consequently, the Soviets very hastily began an attempt to recreate a large armored force structure in late **1940** and in **1941**. (*Glantz, Initial Period of the War*, 16)

1941 Tank Division:

- 2 tank regiments
- 1 mot. rifle rgt.
- 1 artillery rgt., etc.

10,940 men
375 tanks

(See, *Glantz, Initial Period of the War*, 20)

Jun 41: The Red Army possesses **22,600 tanks** – **21,200 light tanks** and **1400 medium and heavy models**. (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 34)

Jun 41 [Status of Mech. Corps]: Shocked by the sensational performance of German tank forces in the **1940 French campaign**, in mid-**1940** the Soviets frantically attempted to atone for the mistakes they made in fall **1939** when they had abolished their **5 mech. corps**. On **6 Jul 40**, the **NKO** ordered creation of **9 new mech. corps** and, in **Feb-Mar 41**, began forming an additional **20** such corps. . . The total paper strength of each new mech. corps was **36,080 men**, **1031 tanks** (including **126 new KVs** and **420 new T-34s**), **358 guns** and mortars, **268 armored cars**, **5165 vehicles**, and **352 tractors**. These new corps were the „armored heart“ of the Red Army, and the Soviets correctly felt they were vital to achieving offensive or defensive success in modern war. The Soviets hoped to complete creation of their immense new armored and mech. force by summer **1942**. Despite attempts to accelerate the program, by **22.6.41**, most of these corps were still woefully understrength in manpower, equipment, and logistical support,⁵³ and the officers and men who manned them were largely untrained. . . New **KV (Klementi Voroshilov)** heavy tanks and **T-34** medium tanks were in especially short supply, w/ only **1861** in service on **22 Jun 41**. Of this total, **1475** were distributed unevenly to corps in the western military districts. The corps were equipped largely w/ older light **BT** and **T-26** models; many of these had fallen into disrepair in expectation that new models (**KV** and **T-34**) would soon replace them. On **15 Jun 41**, **29%** of the older model tanks required capital repair, and **44%** lesser maintenance. (See, *D. Glantz, Red Army Ground Forces*, 20-28)

Jun 41: To meet the German invasion, the Soviet Union had **171 infantry [rifle] divisions** in the western USSR, w/ new armies assembling further east along the Dnepr and Dvina rivers. There were also **20 mechanized corps** – „tank heavy“ formations, each w/ two tank divisions (w/ a total authorized strength of **750 – 1000 tanks**), a single truck-borne inf. rgt. and supporting troops. However, the corps organization had only just been introduced, many corps had their component divisions widely separated, and few had ever functioned together. Not many of the tank divs. were at full strength. Their vehicles were mostly light tanks – poorly protected and thinly armored. Lacking *radios*, they communicated w/ *signal flags*. Low standards of maintenance meant that many of them broke down the moment they had to deploy in Jun 41. (*C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia*, 27-28)

Jun 41: Gegenuber den **3332 dt. Panzer**, die zu Beginn der Operation *Barbarossa* eingesetzt wurden, verfuegten die sowjet. Panzertruppen ueber eine zahlenmaessige Ueberlegenheit von **3:1** u. ueber eine technische, die nicht weniger beachtlich war (**1475 Kanonen 7,62 cm/Kal 30,5** gegen **439 Kanonen 7,5 cm/Kal 24** [i.e., **Pz IVs**]). Aber am *Tage X* waren nur **29%** der sowjet. Panzer voll einsatzbereit (Hauptinstandsetzung durchgefuehrt) u. nur **44%** waren durch die

⁵³ **Note:** For manpower and equipment strengths of Soviet mech. corps on **22.6.41** see, Table 8, p 21. This shows that **5** of the **6 mech. corps** in Western Special Military District had been formed in **Mar 41** and were woefully understrength, w/ exception of **6 Mech Corps** (formed in **Jul 40**) None of the other **5** corps had more than **518 tanks**; two corps had less than **100**. Complicating org/equipment problems was fact that these corps were maldeployed to conduct either defensive or offensive ops. They were based from **40** and **180 km** from one another, their component divisions were also scattered in a fashion that prevented rapid concentration.

mittlere Instandsetzung gelaufen. Auch bei den Ersatzteilen war die [sowjet.] Lage *katastrophal*. (Bauer, *Panzerkrieg*, 126)

Jun 41: The armament industry had only been able to deliver **5500** new tanks instead of the **16,000** required [over what time period?]. Tractors, motor-vehicles, repair equipment, and other material had likewise not been available on the necessary scale, w/ the result that the mechanized corps stationed near the frontier had only **50-80%** of their authorized strength in combat vehicles. (GSWW, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 89)

ab 22.6.41 [Soviet tank ops]: German reports reiterate Soviet lack of fuel and ammunition and repeatedly report Soviet tank crews unable to drive and maneuver their vehicles. . . Prisoners of war reports indicate that Soviet tank drivers had not received requisite driver training,⁵⁴ and their officers were totally unfamiliar w/ the terrain or the consequences of leaving the road in swampy regions. As a result, entire btns became helplessly mired in the mud and swamps. . . Example of Lt. H. Ritgen's [**6 PD**] experience on second day of war against Soviet tanks on outskirts of Raseiniai in Lithuania [H.Gr.Nord]: Soviet **KV** tanks ram his reconnaissance unit's lightly armored vehicles and, w/o firing a shot, run over and crush them in the mud of a nearby river bed. After hours of desperate combat, the Soviet tanks suddenly grind to a halt in an array of menacing, but immobile pillboxes. Over a period of two days, German sappers engage the immobile iron monsters one by one, blowing them up w/ satchel charges. Once the brave occupants of the tanks have been killed or captured, the Germans discover the tanks had run out of fuel and ammunition and had been ordered to „ram“ the opposing German tanks. Moreover, the guns on the Soviet **KVs** had not even been bore-sighted prior to battle. (D. Glantz, *Red Army Ground Forces*, 27)

ca 22.-25.6.41 [**7 TD/6 Mech Corps**]: Unlike many other divisions, **7 TD** was nearly full strength at start of war. Its **348** tanks included **51 KVs** and **150 T-34s**. The **7 TD's** „Achilles heel“ was its supply condition. When it began its march into battle it possessed only one to **1.5 combat loads** of **76mm** ammunition, no armor piercing ammunition for its tanks, three [**3**] refills of gasoline, and a single fill of diesel fuel. Confused orders required the division move to three new assembly areas during the first two [**2**] days of the war. Given these excessive movements, the fuel ran out quickly and the division was soon immobilized south of Grodno. (D. Glantz, *Red Army Ground Forces*, 23-24)

Jul 41: In den ersten Julitagen fuehrte die allgemeine Aufloesung der Armeekorps auch zur Aufloesung der mech. Korps, waehrend die Verlagerung der Fabriken vor dem dt. Angriff nach rueckwaerts die materielle Auffuellung der Grossverbaende verhinderte, die an der Front dezimiert worden waren. So kam man also auf das System der *Panzerbrigaden*. (Bauer, *Panzerkrieg*, 126)

Summer/Fall '41: For Red Army, tanks were *so scarce* in the summer and fall of **1941** that tank bdes were the largest new armored organizations formed during this period. Some of the bdes had as few as **50** newly produced tanks, w/ minimal maintenance and other support. (Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 65)

Late '41: Russia's top [production] priority in late **1941** was to replace the thousands of tanks lost in the first months of the war. Many Soviet tank factories were captured or evacuated. To provide the most tanks in the shortest time, the Russians concentrated on building four (**4**)

⁵⁴ **Note:** A Soviet **8 MC** report prepared by the corps cdr, Maj-Gen D.I. Riabyshey, confirmed that **KV** and **T-34** tank drivers had only **3-5** hours driving training. (27-28)

existing types: the medium **T-34**, the heavy **KV**, and the light **T-60** and **T-70**. The designs were *simplified* and any unnecessary variations or improvements were prohibited. Changes were made only to reduce the cost of manufacture. Soviet tanks appeared rough and poorly made, but a higher standard was used to finish important parts. The *ideal design* was one *just good enough*; anything better was wasted effort. The outstanding characteristic of Soviet tanks was *simplicity*. The Red Army began the war w/ **22,600** tanks, almost all of them varieties of light tanks. They lost **20,500** in **1941** and manufactured only **5000**.⁵⁵ In **1942**, losses decreased to **15,000**, while production increased to **27,900**. By **Jun 43**, the Red Army had **20,600** tanks on hand [!]. (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 33)

While the Russians possessed a large numerical superiority in tanks, their total quantity of *motor vehicles* was so limited that even their armored forces did not have a full scale of motor transport. That proved a *vital handicap* in manoeuvring to meet the German panzer drives. (*L. Hart, History of Second World War*, 158)

”The heart of the Russian armored force was the well-known **T-34** tank. Because of its *wide tracks*, its *powerful engine*, and its *low silhouette*, the performance of the **T-34** in Russian terrain was frequently superior to that of German tanks, particularly w/ respect to cross-country mobility...Not until late did the Russians decide to launch concerted attacks by large tank forces. During the first years of the war, Russian tanks generally were used for *local infantry support*. . . Tank attacks generally were not conducted at a fast enough pace. . .The training of the individual tank driver was inadequate; the training period apparently was too short, and losses in experienced drivers were too high. The Russian avoided driving his tank through hollows or along *reverse slopes*, preferring to choose a route along the crests which would give fewer driving difficulties. This practice remained unchanged even in the face of unusually high tank losses. Thus the Germans were in most cases able to bring the Russian tanks under fire at long range, and to inflict losses even before the battle had begun. Slow and uncertain driving and numerous firing halts made the Russian tanks good targets. . . On the whole, *the Russian armored force was not as good as the Russian artillery*. Limited flexibility, and the inability of the subordinate cdrs to exploit favorable situations rapidly and adroitly, were evident and frequently prevented the Russians from achieving successes almost w/in their grasp.“ (*E. Rauss, Russian Combat Methods*, in: *Tsouras, Fighting in Hell*, 39-40)

3.3.4: Cavalry:

„In the campaign the Russian cavalry, despite many changes in tactics and equipment, achieved a *significance reminiscent of old times*. In the German army, all cavalry units except *one division* had been replaced by *panzer* units. The Russians followed another course. The German **53. AK** quite often encountered Russian cavalry divisions, and once a cavalry corps comprising three cavalry divisions. . . Under conditions as characterized in Central Russia by great forest and swamp areas, muddy periods, and deep snow, cavalry is a useable arm. When the German motor failed, the Russian horse's legs continued to move. The tactical employment of the cavalry forces was, however, not always suited to the situation and sometimes was even awkward. Leadership and training in the Russian cavalry were *not up to the World War I standard*.“ (*E. Rauss, Russian Combat Methods*, in: *Tsouras, Fighting in Hell*, 40-42)

⁵⁵ **Note:** Later in text, Dunn states: “Soviet industry produced more than **6500** tanks in the second half of **1941**.“ (77)

Beginning in summer of **1941**, Red Army expands its number of cavalry units, creating initially **30** new light cavalry divisions of **3,447** horsemen each. Later in the year, this total rose to **82** such divisions, but because of high losses, by late **Dec 41** the divisions were integrated into the cavalry corps. During winter of **1941/42**, when all mech units were immobilized by cold and snow, the horse cavalry divisions (and newly created ski btns and bdes) proved effective in the long-range, guerilla warfare role that Stalin and Budenny envisaged. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 65)

Other branches of the Red Army shared the same deficiencies as rifle and mech. forces. The cavalry, Stalin's favorite combat arm, was one of the few exceptions. Cavalry forces shrank considerably in size in **1940/41**, since the **NKO** used many cavalry corps and divisions as nuclei for the new mech. corps. By **Jun 41**, of the **7** cavalry corps and **32** cavalry divisions which had existed in **1937**, only **4** corps and **13** divisions (including **4** mountain cavalry divisions) remained in the force structure. On paper, a cavalry division consisted of following:

4 cavalry rgts
1 tank rgt,
artillery and AA btns
support subunits

total strength =

9240 men
68 guns
64 mortars
64 light tanks
18 armored cars
555 vehicles
7940 horses.

A mountain cavalry division was somewhat lighter; it had only **3** rgts. Because they had not been subjected to wholesale reorganization by the Timoshenko reforms, the **4** cavalry corps and **13** cavalry divisions which existed in **Jun 41**, were more combat ready than rifle forces. However, they had only **45-50%** of their required vehicles; lacked any AA defense; and had few tanks since all existing armor went to the newly forming mech. corps. (See, *D. Glantz, Red Army Ground Forces*, 28)

Jul 41: Three weeks into the war the Stavka, over Zhukov's name, issues a directive to senior cdrs about the main organizational lessons learned so far from the battle in Belorussia (and the western Ukraine). The implied lesson is that the Red Army leaders had been much too ambitious. They got a healthy dose of "de-modernization." . . . Another extraordinary revival in this "war of motors" was that of the cavalry horse:

Our army has somewhat under-estimated the significance of cavalry. Given the present situation at the front, where the enemy's rear is spread out over several hundred kilometers in wooded locations and has not been at all secured against major diversionary action by our side, raids by Red cavalymen against the extended rear of the enemy might play a decisive role in disorganizing the administration and supply of the German forces, and in consequence, in bringing about the defeat of the German forces.

The army was to form light cavalry divisions which would harass the enemy's rear. (E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 64)

3.3.5: Airborne:

Among the most elite of Soviet combat forces were the five [5] Soviet airborne corps, which formed by **1 Jun 41** from the **5** existing airborne bdes and personnel from **11** rifle divisions. The personnel in these corps were among the best trained and most highly motivated troops in the Red Army. The new **10,400**-man corps consisted of **3** air assault bdes of **2634** men each and a separate light tank btn. The subordinate bdes had **3** parachute assault btns., an artillery btn., and reconnaissance and AA coys. Again, lack of fire and logistical support and, in particular, dedicated air delivery units when war broke out forced the corps to be employed as infantry in "fire bdes." (D. Glantz, *Red Army Ground Forces*, 28-29)

Jan 42 [Soviet air landing ops]: In der Nacht vom **27-28 Jan 42** landeten sowj. Fallschirmjaeger im Abstellraum **B**, **25** km suedwestlich Wjasma, in Naehе von Asstaschewka, dem Standort der **1./Fla 601** mit den abgestellten Teilen des Btns. Das war kein Absprung einiger Fallschirmer zur Unterstuetzung der Partisanen, sondern ein Luftlandeunternehmen von **3000 Mann**, gezielt auf Wjasma. Ein dilettantisch durchgefuehrtes Unternehmen ohne durchschlagenden Erfolg. Auch die katastrophale Luftlandeoperation westlich Kanew im Sommer **1943** beweist, dass die *Russen auf diesem militaerischen Sektor nichts zu bestellen hatten*. Marschall Woronow schreibt in seinen Memoiren resigniert: „Es ist traurig, feststellen zu muessen, dass bei uns, den Pionieren der Luftlandung, keine praktikablen Plaene zum Einsatz dieser Truppe bestanden.“ Anscheinend erwiesen sich die technischen, materiellen u. personellen Probleme dieser Waffe fuer die Rote Armee als unloesbar. (H. Freter, *Fla nach vorn*, 445)

3.3.6: Engineer/Sapper & Signal Troops:

a) Engineer/Sapper:

On eve of war, Soviet engineer forces were also in midst of reformation. From **Feb** thru **May 41**, the **NKO** formed **18** Engineer and **16** Pontoon-Bridge Rgts from existing engineer btns and coys. These **1000**-man rgts were supposed to generate **156** engineer rgts, btns, and coys between the 2nd and 10th day of mobilization. In reality, most of these rgts devoted their efforts to the construction of new fortified regions rather than support of operating forces. On **22 Jun 41**, all of the **160** corps and division sapper btns and **9** of **10** engineer rgts in the Western Border Military Districts were working on the construction of border defenses, along w/ the **41** sapper btns from internal military districts. This deprived all operating forces and many reserves of any engineer support when war began.

When war broke out, the engineer mobilization system failed. The few new units which were created lacked trained personnel and had only **50%** of their required bridging and engineer equipment. As a result, such critical combat functions as mining, restoring damaged bridges, constructing new defensive lines in depth, and supporting mech. corps' counterattacks were simply not performed. (D. Glantz, *Red Army Ground Forces*, 32)

b) Signal Troops:

Signal forces suffered from similar problems [as engineering forces, noted above]. In **Jun 41**, the signal btns assigned to rgts, divisions, and corps were responsible for communications w/in and between their parent organizations. In peacetime, each army HQ was served by a separate signal btn, which, upon mobilization, was to expand to a full rgt. Each military district (wartime front) was served by its own signal rgt. Signal forces were equipped w/ insufficient quantities of largely obsolete radios. And Soviet industry lagged severely in the production of all types of modern communications equipment. In **Jun 41**, mobilized signal units were at **39%** fill in **RAT** radios, **46%** in army and airfield radios, **77%** in regimental radios, **35%** in telegraph sets, and had only **43%** of their required telephone wire. Mobilization failed, and forces went into combat w/ insufficient quantities of largely obsolete communications equipment. Countless Soviet archival reports document the gruesome consequences. (For more details see, *D. Glantz, Red Army Ground Forces*, 32)

3.3.7: Weapons & Equipment:

Note: For background on Soviet wpns and equipment see, *Ziemke & Bauer*. Among interesting points noted here: Soviet artillery used ordinary farm tractors as prime movers; the motorized divisions had less than half their planned allotments of trucks; the army was weak in all kinds of motor vehicles, except tanks. Another weakness was signal communications. Moscow had contact w/ the military districts by telephone, telegraph, and radio but mainly by telephone, apparently over the lines of the civilian system. Communications in the field were uncertain. The radio networks were thin. The masses of booty the Germans took in **1941** contained only **150** radio sets[!]) (*Moscow to Stalingrad*, 10-13)

Note: For a good overview of Soviet military equipment see, *Evan Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 26-29. Key points include the fact that Germans had substantially more motor vehicles at start of campaign than did the Russians (**600,000** for the Germans, against **272,600** vehicles both in Europe and the Far East and **204,900** mobilized from the Russian civilian economy). The Soviet lorry park was more standardized than its German equivalent, but the basic vehicles, such as the **ZIS-5** and **GAZ-AA**, were copies of **10**-year-old Western designs and relatively small. Another significant Red Army shortcoming was the lack of armored personnel carriers (APCs) for the infantry, vehicles comparable to the German **SdKfz 251** half-track. If Soviet infantry rode into battle, it was on the hulls of tanks or sitting in unarmored civilian lorries. (26)

Note: Attuned to the adverse conditions of climate and terrain, the Russians manufactured trucks, tanks and other vehicles w/ good ground clearance which were also serviceable under the most rigorous combat situations. (*K. Uebe, Russian Reactions*, 6)

Note: The German Army in the first weeks of the Russian Campaign had learned the virtues of Soviet automatic rifles and sub-machine guns. The lack of equivalent German wpns led to the widespread use of Russian small arms by German troops. (*S.J. Lewis, Forgotten Legions*, 149, f.n. 11)

Anti-tank guns:

--The standard Soviet **45mm** Model **1937** AT gun had limited effectiveness against newer tanks, but the Red Army had **15,000** of them (of which **12,000** were lost in **1941**). (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 27)

--„The same was true for the Russian *antitank gun* [i.e., as w/ the mortar wpn], which at the beginning of the campaign *considerably surpassed* the antitank gun of the German infantry divisions in efficiency, and therefore was readily put to use whenever captured. The antitank gun was an auxiliary wpn from which the Russian soldier never separated. Wherever the Russian infantryman was, antitank defense could be expected from the enemy. At times it appeared to the Germans that each Russian infantryman had an antitank gun or antitank rifle, just as infantrymen of other armies had ordinary rifles.“ (*E. Rauss, Russian Combat Methods*, in: *Tsouras, Fighting in Hell*, 36)

Artillery:

--“During *Barbarossa*, Soviet artillery did not yet play the decisive and dominating role that it later would. During the summer and autumn of **1941** Zhukov husbanded his artillery for the battle that he knew would develop around Moscow.” (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa* 1941, 29)

--Soviet artillery “varied widely in quality and quantity.” In **1941**, three (**3**) artillery programs developed the standard wpns of the Red Army, but these wpns were not available in **Jun 41**. The *enormous losses of artillery* in the first six (**6**) months of the war forced the Russians to search their depots for every serviceable wpn. Among the many older guns were the following: *French guns* included the **75 mm M1897**, the **120 mm M1878**, the **155 mm M1877**, and the **280 mm** Schneider mortar. British types included: Guns of **4.5** inches, **6** inches, **8** inches,, and **9.2** inches, and the **12-inch** howitzer. Pre-World War One Russian types were: The **76 mm M1913** short gun, the **107 mm M1910** gun, and the **105 mm M1915** Obukhov howitzer. Other types included: the Austrian **47 mm** Bohler AT gun, and the Lithuanian **105 mm M1935** Skoda gun. (*Dunn, Stalin’s Keys to Victory*, 93)

Maxim M1910 MG:

--Author speaks of the “ubiquitous” Maxim **M1910** machine-gun, which apparently had a two-man crew. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa* 1941, 29)

--For sustained heavy fire, the Russians continued to use the Maxim MG copied from the British Maxim in **1905**. Production increased from **53,700** in **1941** to **458,500** in **1944** [!]. (*Dunn, Stalin’s Keys to Victory*, 27-28)

Molotov Cocktails:

--According to *C. Merridale*, they were actually invented by the Finns! (*Ivan’s War*, 50-51)

--A new close-combat wpn, which to this day has kept its German nickname. The wpn has an interesting history. (See, *P. Carell, Hitler Moves East*, 80-81)

--It became clear very soon after the war began that tank-panic (*tankoboiazn'*) was a major problem in the Red Army. In early **Jul 41**, the **GKO** had to order the production of **120,000** "Molotov cocktails" a day, for use against tanks. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East, 27*)

--German tank cdr (**Pz IV**) describes in oral history interview being hit by two Molotov cocktails: "Before we knew what happened two explosive fireballs hit our panzer! Fire and burning liquid were seeping into the panzer. The cdr's cupola does not have an air-tight seal, and the panzer itself was not air-tight either. Smoke was coming inside and we backed out **20** or **30** yards. We had to get out of the panzer because we couldn't breathe anymore. . . Two Molotov cocktails had hit our panzer and it was still burning, primarily on the panzer's paint. A Molotov cocktail is a glass bottle w/ phosphorus and gasoline in it, which is ignited by a fuse which is set on fire. The Russians would light the fuse on these Molotov cocktails and when it started to burn they would throw it on a panzer. When the bottle broke the liquid started burning and it would spread over the panzer. It was not nice! As it was, it was a very effective close-range wpn! It was smoking like crazy and it looked really bad. We were wondering how we would get the panzer out of there. Sticky stuff from the Molotov cocktails was running all over our necks, shoulders, and arms. It was hot in [**Aug 41**] so we weren't wearing our jackets, just our grey uniform shirts. It burned us, so we made a mixture of some pills that we had to fight against mustard gas. We dissolved them in some tea and smeared it on ourselves until our doctor came and put something else on it. (*R. Hertenstein, Experiences of a German Panzer Cdr, 33*)

Mortars:

--„The *mortar* also proved highly valuable as the idea wpn for terrain conditions where artillery support was impossible. At the beginning of the Eastern Campaign, Russian infantry *far surpassed* the German in mortar equipment and its use.“ (*E. Rauss, Russian Combat Methods, in: Tsouras, Fighting in Hell, 35-36*)

Russische Granatwerfer: „Diese Geschosse haben mit ihrem empfindlichen Zuender, sie platzen bei geringster Beruehrung, u. mit ihren unzaehlichen Splittern eine grosse Wirkung.“ (*F. Belke, „Infanterist, 37*)

PPSh-41:

--Very good Russian submachine gun that had a round drum magazine. Coveted by the Germans. (*Steinway, "German Horse Soldier, 40*)

--In **1940**, George E.S. *Shpagin* designed the PPSH 1941, and mass production began. Stampings replaced machined parts, making the gun simple to manufacture. Also, the PPSH was easy to disassemble for cleaning and delivered a high rate of fire from a **71**-round drum. The use of the machine pistols expanded dramatically during the war. In **1941**, **99,000** were in use; in **1942**, **1.5** million; and, in **1944**, **2** million. In **1942**, the **PPSH-2** was issued w/ a curved **30**-round magazine similar to an **AK-47** instead of the drum. The machine pistols provided the Soviet infantry w/ heavy firepower to replace the reduced numbers in the rifle companies. (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory, 27*)

--Neben ihnen liegen viele Gewehre. . . u. auch einige der so begehrten russ. Maschinenpistolen. [I assume reference is to the **PPSh-41**?]. Die sind praktisch besser als unsere! In der Trommel sind **60** bis **70** Schuss! Und die Dinger schiessen immer, selbst wenn sie Mal tagelang im Schnee oder Dreck gelegen haben. (*Dr. H. Rehfeldt, Mit dem Eliteverband des Heeses „GD,“ 80*)

Ratschbumm (7.62mm field gun):

--so-called, because one on receiving end heard explosion of the shell before the actual fire! “The shell had a terrific velocity and an almost flat trajectory.” (*Moscow Tram Stop, 127*)

--“put fear of God” in the German soldier. (*Verton, 101*)

--„Die ‚**Ratsch-boum**‘ war die berühmte sowjetische Infanterie- und Panzerabwehrkanone (76,2), deren Geschoss so schnell war, dass der deutsche Soldat den Einschuss noch vor dem Abschuss hörte., (*La Guerre a l’Est, August v. Kageneck. 60*)

--(*Anecdote*): It was Jan/Feb **42**. *E.M. Rhein* was in the *Koenigsberg-Stellung* between Rshew and Staritza, in village of *Krupzowo* (on a small river 3 km east of *Malchowo*, where Rgt. HQ was located. From second story of a house, he observed Russian positions w/ his field glasses. Was spotted and fired on by a **7,62**. First shot just over his head; second just beneath him, after which he took cover; third salvo would have *obliterated* him! (*Intvw, E.M. Rhein, IR 18/6. ID*)

Snipers:

--Germans give much praise to Russian snipers. For example: “Grosse Beachtung genossen die *russischen Scharfschuetzen*.” (*Strienitz, Sonderfragen*)

--Germans also angered by activities of Russian snipers (*franc tireur*) Signified a new, and ruthless type of warfare (*Moscow Tram Stop, pp 37-8*).

--German soldiers were *incensed by snipers*. Driver Helmut K., writing to his parents on **7 Jul 41**, complained that his unit transporting material from Warsaw to the front had suffered **80** dead, “**32** of them from snipers.” [partisans, in this case] (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands, 141*)

--Russian Snipers w/ their excellent automatic rifles w/ telescopic sights. They would pick off the drivers of supply vehicles, officers and orderlies on motor-cycles. (*P. Carell, Hitler Moves East, 29*)

Stalinorgel:

--*Stalinorgel*: Finally, the chorus ended w/ salvos of *massed rocket fire*. Once *paralyzed w/ fear over the sound and fire of these rockets*, by fall 1942 the *Germans realized how*

inaccurate the fire of these terror wpns was. Moreover, the final screams of the rocket salvos was a terrifying indicator of the impending infantry assault. (*D. Glantz, Zhukov's Greatest Defeat*, 80)

-- *Albert Seaton* writes that the "poor splinter effect of the rocket projectiles" saved many German lives. (See his, *Russo-German War*, 187)

--"Hier sehe ich auch erstmals aus der Naehة unsere "Do-Geraete," die den weichenden Russen noch Beine machen! Unheimlich das Abschussgeheul, u. dann sieht man noch lange am Himmel die Rauchspuren der Rakteten. Das fuehrt oft dazu, dass die Stellungen, weil erkannt, dann auch beschossen werden. Das rauchlose Pulver gab es erst spaeter. Iwan hatte aber bei seiner Stalinorgel schon gleich rauchloses Pulver!" (*Dr H. Rehfeldt, Mit dem Elitverband des Heeres „GD,*" 61)

-- *Stalinorgel* was a rocket mortar and usually **75mm** or **82mm** in caliber. The launcher for the *solid-fuel, fin-stabilized rocket* was mounted on tanks, trucks, carts and even river vessels or ground mounts. *Katyushas* were grouped in 32 and 48 together. The range was about **6500** yards. (*For Germany, Skorzeny*, 110, f.n. 1)

--Overrated wpn, according to *Verton*. Demoralizing at first, but Germans quickly realized that *psychological effect* was greater than actual effect (accuracy, etc.) *Enormous racket* of the wpn out of proportion to damage it caused; made a hole in ground no more than 30-40 cm deep (102).

--"Wieder Orgeln. *Sie sind schrecklich.*" "Ich glaube, das Trommelfeuer des Weltkrieges ist auch nicht schlimmer gewesen als das *Orgelpfeifen der Raketengranaten*. Unsere Ausfaelle sind jetzt schon recht betraechtlich." (*Tagebuch Richter*, 29.11.41) (Note: See, *Tagebuch Richter*, 25.11.41..., for numerous references to the weapon and impact on his unit, which was constantly harried by the weapon at this time. (*Richter*, **AR 74 / 2. PD**)

--H. Haape (during fighting at *Gridino*) refers to *Stalinorgel* as "terrifying." "While the 'Stalin-organ' was playing its devilish tune, every man in the battalion lay flat wherever he was and prayed that none of the shells from the battery of destruction was inscribed with his name." (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 314)

--Daneben (neben dem T-34) tritt jetzt *massenweise* ein Raketengeschuetz bei ihm auf, das gleichzeitig 16 Schuesse vom Kaliber 13,7 cm abfeuert, *rauchlos arbeitet* u. unser sonst aehnliches Do-Geraet [38] (6 Schuss vom 15 cm aber mit *Rauchrakete*) *erheblich an Schussweite uebertrifft*. (*H. Stieff, Briefe*, 19.11.41, 136)

--When we [*SS-Das Reich*] continued our advance [after fall of *Gshatsk* in Oct 41], we noticed that the *Russians were relying more heavily on the well-known and much feared "Stalin Organs."*⁵⁶ This weapon was similar to but much less sophisticated than our "*Nebelwerfer*" (rocket launcher). The Russians had simply mounted adjustable rails on their trucks; missiles resembling bombs were then placed on the rails...Because they were so mobile, it was difficult to hit them w/ our artillery fire. *The effect of these*

⁵⁶ It does appear from a number of accounts that the *Stalinorgel* became much more prevalent on central front during the fall of 1941. Note: See also, *Tagebuch Kummer* (**18. PD**) entries for 11.10.41, 16.11.41, 30.11.41.

missiles when fired in bunches was devastating. (Note: Days later *Skorzeny* injured during a bombardment w/ *Stalin Organs*. He was buried in his fox hole w/ only his right hand remaining above the ground to guide his rescuers! Only years later—after the war and during captivity—would he learn that he had suffered a permanent injury—a skull fracture that had pinched off the auditory nerve in one of his ears.) (*For Germany, Otto Skorzeny*, 110-11, 114-15)

--Feind schießt mit Werfern (auf Lkw) "Stalinorgel," *wenig Wirkung* u. daneben. (*Tagebuch Kummer*, 11.10.41, **18. PD**)

--The wpn covered a large area; not very accurate. Confirmed my impression that, if troops adequately sheltered, they had little to fear from the wpn. (*Intvw, E.M. Rhein, IR 18/6. ID*)

--"Ich werde ihn nie vergessen, diesen Winter 1941/42 in Russland...Hinzu kam die sogenannte „Stalinorgel“, ein Serienabschussgeraet, das wegen der grossen *Splitterwirkung* besonders bei unserer Infanterie gefuerchtet war.“ (*Wagner, Tage wie Jahre, 263 ID, 46*)

--„...es war gegen sieben Uhr, als ich in der Stille des erwachenden Morgens aus Richtung Beresino, dem naechsten Ort unseres Vormarsches, die Abschuesse der leichten „Stalinorgel“ hoerte, die ihre kleinen Raketen mit einem Geraeusch auf den Weg schickte, das aehnlich klang wie *das Husten einer Kuh*. Die Warnung gab mir Gelegenheit, Deckung zu nehmen, bevor das *Gekrache* der ueber **30 Einschlaege** in der naechsten Umgebung auf mich niederging...“ (*H. Martin, Weit war der Weg, 77*)

--**24.10.41 [I/IR 109]**: . . . Batl. wird zum ersten Mal von russ. Raketenwerfern beschossen. . . Die russ. Raketenwerfer (auch „Stalinorgel“ genannt) waren auf einem LKW montiert, hatten ein Kaliber von **8.2** oder **13.2** cm u. konnten Salven von **16** Raketen (**13.2** cm RakW) oder **30** Raketen (**8.2** cm RakW) abfeuern. Mit schrecklichem Pfeifton u. wie **Kometen** mit rotem Schweif sausen die Raketen durch die Luft. Beim Auftreffen explodieren sie mit donnerndem Kracken. Gross ist ihre moralische Wirkung, wie auch die Wirkung der Vielzahl der Explosionen auf kleinstem Raum. (*KTB, I/IR 109*, quoted in: *A. Gutenkunst, Die 3. Kp. des IR 109, 255*)

--**26.12.41 [vor Moskau]**: „Am 2. Feiertag machten wir die erste Bekanntschaft mit der *Stalinorgel*, das war eine neue Raketenwaffe der Russen, die er in dieser Zeit zum erstenmal einsetzte. Man hoerte *42 Abschuesse* ganz kurz hintereinander, u. dann rauschten die Geschosse heran, die auf kleinem Raum einschlugen. Wer das Pech hatte, direkt im *Wirkungsbereich* dieser Waffe zu liegen, hatte wenig Chancen davonzukommen. Doch *der hohe Schnee war unsere Rettung*, er *daempfte die Splitterwirkung* stark ab. Wenn man nicht einen Volltreffer bekam, war die Sache nicht so gefaehrlich, wie sie immer dargestellt wurde. Im freien Gelaende ohne Schnee war die *Wirkung natuerlich verheerend*.“ (*Uffz. Fritz Huebner, Echolot, 629*)

--*Droegemueller*: „The worst things the Russians used on us [during retreat w/ Hr.Gr.Nord in 1944] were what we called "Stalin Organs." It was not as precise a wpn as artillery. With it, volleys of rockets were fired covering a wide area. The rockets would pour down on top of us. (*Steinway article, "German Horse Soldier," 40*)

Sub-machine guns:⁵⁷

--Germans coveted these wpons and took them off Russian dead whenever they could. (*Schneider, Siege*)

--„The best wpn of the Russian infantryman was the *machine pistol*. It was easily handled, equal to Russian winter conditions, and one which the Germans also regarded highly. This wpn was slung around the neck and carried in front on the chest, ready for immediate action.“ (*E. Rauss, Russian Combat Methods*, in: *Tsouras, Fighting in Hell*, 35)

Tanks:

--Soviet state had *more tanks at its disposal than rest of world combined in 1941*. (*Ivan's War*, C. Merridale, 33)

--German tanks operated w/in a *comprehensive radio net*, whereas the Russian tanks had few radios and hardly any below btn level. Control was executed by using *signal flags*. Responsiveness to rapidly changing situations was thus cumbersome for Russian mech units. (*Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 70)

--**25.6.41:** In his diary on this day, Army Chief of Staff Halder mentions appearance of two new types of Russian tanks: a) one = „Gewicht **52 t**, Bewaffnung **15,2 cm**, etc. After noting characteristics of wpn he puts in parenthesis „noch fraglich.“ In other words, he was skeptical of this report; b) he also notes: „ein weiter neuer Type wird gemeldet mit einer **7,5 cm K u. 3 MG**.“ This would be the **T-34**. (See, *Halder KTB*, 14)

--Ein Panzeroffizier schimpft recht stark...Im Wald an einer Stelle sieht es furchtbar aus; Fahrzeuge des II. Btls., ausgebrannt, niedergewalzt, zertrümmert liegen und stehen herum; im Wald und auf der Strasse 28 Fahrzeuge sind zerstört, eine 8,8-Flak und eine Pak... *das ganze Unheil ist von 2 russ. Panzern angerichtet worden, von zwei 50to-Panzern*. Einer ist gekippt und liegt auf dem Bauch. Als er gekippt war, konnte er erledigt werden. Er hat einfach die Fahrzeuge in den Boden gewalzt ist hinüber und herüber gefahren...Wir warten auf einige Fahrzeuge, damit keines alleine fahren muß und fahren weiter...gegen o2.30 Uhr *kommen wir nach Briansk*. (*Tagebuch Rupp*, 6.10.41, **17. PD**)⁵⁸

KV-1 & 2 tanks:

--The Red Army's heavy tank in **Jul 41** was the **KV-1**, weighing **47.5 tons**, with a crew of **5**, an **M1940 41.5-caliber 76 mm** gun, **75-100 mm** of armor, and a speed of **35 km** per hour. (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 93)

⁵⁷ See also **PPSh-41**.

⁵⁸ Example of havoc even a couple of the heavy Soviet tanks could cause at this time, when *Wehrmacht* w/o adequate AT defenses.

--The **KV-2** had a **152 mm** howitzer for destroying bunkers. The Russians made only a few of the **KV-2** because the tank was difficult to manufacture and there was limited need for the heavy projectile. (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 93)

--Dr. Showalter: "Clumsily handled by inexperienced crews, they nevertheless *shocked the Germans* by their virtual invulnerability to existing tank and AT guns at ranges as short as 50 to 100 yards. To knock them out it was necessary to maneuver to their flank or rear, taking advantage of the thin armor there." (*K. Fuchs*, 123)

--By now [Aug 41] the Germans were *astonished at the quality of Soviet equipment*. A single **KV-1** broke into the rear of the German forces driving on *Leningrad*, parked itself athwart the main supply route, and cut off the mot. bde of **6. PD** for two full days. The Germans wheeled up everything they could find, batteries of 50mm AT guns and then some high-velocity 88mm AA guns, drilling the tank at point blank ranges. After a good long while, the infantry approached it and crawled on top of it. Eventually, took engineers armed w/ hand grenades to destroy the tank. (see, (*Citino, Death of the Wehrmacht*, 41; see also, *Raus, Panzer Operations*, 26-33)

--[*Anecdote*]: **6. PD** encounters Russian **KV-1s** – for first time – at Lithuanian town of *Raseinai* on third day of war, **24.6.41**. KV-1s wreak absolute *havoc* – counterattack by division's tank rgt has little impact; even a **150mm howitzer** firing direct-on over open sights was unable to stop one of these „*steel pachyderms*,“ as Col Raus christened them. However, direct fire by a **100mm** battery finally succeeded in destroying a few of the Russian heavy tanks at *point blank range*. Another KV-1 immobilized w/ a *concentrated charge of five AT mines*. Awareness that these tanks were not invulnerable after all, resulted in immediate improvement in German morale. After that, an **88mm Flak battery** brought forward as relief and stabilizes situation. For amazing story – as well as a *second story* where a *single* KV-1 blocks a key supply route! – see, *Newton, Panzer Ops Raus*, 21-4; 26-34)

Mark II tank:

--W. Heinlein (**2. PD**) writes of „*erstmals auftauchenden englischen Mark II*“ in second half of Nov. 41, during final push for Moscow. (*Memoiren, W. Heinlein, AR 74/2. PD*, 67)

T-26 tank:

--On paper, the main Russian tanks of **1941**, the **11-ton T-26** and the **14-ton BT**, were comparable at least to the German **Pz II**, and most carried a similar gun to the **Pz III**, a **45mm**. Both tanks were available in much greater numbers than their German equivalents. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 26)

--Elderly T-26 tanks, according to **10th Army** commander, had proved themselves good "only for firing at sparrows." (*Ivan's War, C. Merridale*, 87)

T-34 tank:

--Over **50,000** were produced during WWII.⁵⁹ (*For Germany, Skorzeny*, 100, f.n. 6)

--“I have done two histories of the **T34** in English and much research in Russian and German language sources. I do not think the German Army was totally unaware of the **T34**. Documents in the archives in Washington identify it by the prototype number **T32**. So German intelligence did know the Soviets had a new medium tank **T32**, but they did not know the significance of it. . . There was a German study of the Soviet war industry in **1941** immediately before the outbreak of war w/ Russia. The study went down factory by factory and indicated what each factory produced. It listed in the factory at Khar’kov, which did produce the **T34**, the designation **T32**, medium tank – new tank in production. They obviously had a source. **T32** was the early prototype designation for **T34**. When in testing it was **T32**. When it went into production it was **T34**. Thus a German source knew it was produced at Khar’kov, which was correct. There is a great difference between knowing the number and knowing its capabilities.” (*Steven Zaloga*, in: *Glantz, “Initial Period of the War,”* 452)

--A crudely finished design; its turrets were rough-cast. It had *wide tracks* to reduce their ground pressure and give better grip on snow and muddy surfaces. Its cross-country performance was superior to **Pz.III** and **Pz.IV**. There was no *turret floor*, and the loader’s life was a hazardous one as he (or she) scrambled around for ammunition, ducking to avoid the breech of the 76mm gun. Its tracks were *not rubber-clad*: this, and its unmuffled *diesel* [engine], made it *one of the loudest tanks* ever to rumble into action –in its own way a formidable psychological wpn. (*C. Winchester, Hitler’s War on Russia*, 132)

--Like the Soviet troops, the Soviet **T-34** tank was also proving itself in the winter. Its compressed air starter could turn its engine over in the coldest weather, and its broad tracks could carry the **T-34** across ditches and hollows holding **5** feet of snow. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 90)

--The turret of the **T-34** had no floor, greatly simplifying production at the cost of crew comfort. The tank crew had to perch on seats hung from the turret ring. The floor of the main part of the tank, which did not rotate along w/ the turret, was stacked w/ shells for the **76 mm** gun. In combat, the loader had to scramble around the floor of the tank for shells while the turret moved around him. [!] (*Dunn, Stalin’s Keys to Victory*, 25)

--The **T-34** medium tank weighed **30.9** tons, carried a **76 mm** gun, had a crew of **4**, speed of **55** km/hr, and armor from **45-52 mm**. The **M1939 76 mm** gun was a *high-velocity piece*, w/ a **30.5**-caliber barrel. The early **T-34** w/ its two-man turret required the tank cdr to be the gunner. The turret provided *little vision for the cdr*. The tank was *exceedingly uncomfortable* for the crew, w/ the gun loader seat attached to the turret, as the bottom of the compartment was filled w/ ammunition. In a drawn-out engagement, the loader would have to scramble around on top of piles of shells. There were also problems w/ the *transmission*, and the tracks had a brief life expectancy. (*Dunn, Stalin’s Keys to Victory*, 92-93)

--It’s **76mm** gun was the largest tank armament (apart from the **15 cm KV-2**) then mounted. It’s **60%** *sloping armor* was *revolutionary* in terms of the increased armored protection it offered against flat trajectory AT shells, which often simply ricocheted off.

⁵⁹ **Note:** I think this figure might be too high.

Adapting the American Christie suspension system, the **T-34**, w/ extra-wide tracks and a powerful lightweight *diesel engine*, possessed an enormous relative *power-to-weight ratio*, conferring superior mobility on the Russian vehicles. (*Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 69)

--**1938** wurde von den Russen ein neuer raumsparender **V-2-Dieselmotor** entwickelt mit einer Bosch-Einspritzpumpe, die diesen **T-34** Typ ungemein robust machte u. wegen des Dieseltreibstoffes eine **geringere Brandgefahr** bildete. (*Dr Bunke, 31. ID, Der Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, 194)

--[*After firing*]: Spent shell cases clatter to the floor of the turret and begin rattling around, as w/ each *concussion and recoil* of the gun the fighting compartment fills w/ *fresh cordite fumes*. (*Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 71)

--With low silhouette, it melted into the battle area very well. Its track, half a metre wide, tramped through the toughest bog, while the German *Panzer IV* with its 36cm, protested and stopped. T-34 was strong, robust, maneuverable—moved over snow and soft ground w/o any problem. (*Verton*, 108)

--According to German training video, the back and side of the **T-34** were its most vulnerable areas, along with the *turret ring*. (*Frontschau Nr. 5/6*)

--Tank came as a *complete surprise to the Germans*, even though information on them should have been available to German intelligence: The Japanese had faced them in **Aug 39** at **Khalkin-Gol**. However, there is no indication that the German High Command ever took any great interest in this battle. (*Megargee*, 114)

--At start of campaign, impact of available **T-34s** seriously diminished by lack of experience of Soviet tank crews w/ the new tank. Photo shows several **T-34s** that had been lost in a bog – driven there and abandoned by incompetent crews. (see, *Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 35)

--**June 41**: “Don’t hold me to these next numbers, but if you place the armor at about a **30** degree angle you double the strength of your armor. This is because the shells tend to glance off it rather than penetrate the armor. The **T34s** had very powerful **76mm** guns which were about twice as long as ours. Generally speaking, the longer your gun barrel is the higher your muzzle velocity will be, and therefore the higher your penetrating power is against enemy armor. The **T34** had a **12-cylinder diesel engine**, we used gasoline in our engines. . . . Keep in mind that our short barreled **Panzer IV** was our heaviest tank. **T34s** could easily knock out our panzers from **1000** yards, but for us to have any chance at all we had to get as close as about **200** yards.” (*R. Hertenstein, Experiences of a German Panzer Cdr, 26-27*)⁶⁰ (**Note**: Hertenstein served in a medium tank coy (**Pz IV**) w/ **13. PD** of H.Gr.Sued.)

--**23.6.41**: A handful of **T-34s** made their combat debut on 23 June. The AT gunners of the German **197. ID** discover to their dismay that their **37mm** AT guns make no

⁶⁰ Hertenstein: “Soon a new type of anti-tank ammunition was introduced on our side: shaped-charge rounds. . . . I remember being told that the Russians complained about these shells. They said these shells were against the Geneva Convention, but they were the only thing we had at the time that worked [against heavier Soviet tanks].” (See p 72 for more details.)

impression on them at all. Germans were lucky that they tended to face the T-34 in *small numbers* at this time, and that coordination between Russian tanks and infantry was very poor. Low standards of junior leadership and *lack of radios* largely negated the T-34s daunting superiority in firepower, protection and mobility. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 50)

--ca. **28.6.41**: Great account of first encounter w/ **T-34**. Elements of German PzJgKp, eight (8) **3,7 Pak** in all, are defending along the road from Rozana to Slonim against Russian breakout attempts from the Bialystok Kessel. They quickly dispatch a number of Soviet **T-28s** at range of about **800 meters**. They beat back several other attacks. Then, late in day, they hear a strange motor noise; it turns out to be a **T-34** – a “Koloss” which is completely unknown to them. They fire w/ all **8 Pak** on the Soviet tank, to absolutely no effect. The tank is only stopped because it drops into a well-concealed tank trap set by the Soviets to capture German tanks. (For this account see, *Dr E. Bunke, PzJgAbt 31 / 31. ID, Der Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, 257-64)

--**2.7.41**: According to K. Kummer, **18. PD** first encountered T-34s on this day. (*Tagebuch Kummer*)

--**22.7.41**: Waffen-SS Division „*Das Reich*,” fighting in the *Yelna salient*, encountered **T-34s** for the first time and stopped the last of a pack of three on that day by artillery fire a scant **15 feet** in front of a **105mm** howitzer in firing positions w/ a battery of similar howitzers. The Soviet tank physically ran over a German **37mm** AT gun 300 meters in front of the artillery position. (*Stolfi, Chance in History*, 225; *Weidinger, Das Reich*, Bd. II, 451-52)

--**Jul-Aug 41**: In *Jelna bridgehead*, soldiers of **SS „Das Reich**“ fought against **T-34s** with „Molotov cocktails.“ (For details, see *Skorzeny entry* in “*Chronology*” for **Jul/ Aug 41**)

--ca. **Aug 41**: German tank cdr w/ **13. PD** near Dnjepropetrowsk describes destruction of a single **T-34** tank. His entire tank btn., which was made up of **25-30** tanks (**Pz II/III/IV**) fired on this single Soviet tank. It advanced about **100 yards** before turning around in retreat; then it started burning and crew bailed out: “The next morning we went over to the **T34** to see what happened. Of all our **25 to 30** tanks that had been firing on that thing not a single shell had gone through it. None of our **75 or 50 mm** shells had penetrated its armor. But how did it burn then? In the engine compartment of the **T34** we found a spent 20 mm tracer bullet from a **Pz II**. It had gone in through a slit somewhere; it did not penetrate the armor. It went through an air hole or something. The tracer must have ignited something. It was a diesel engine and s.th. started burning. A **Pz II** killed a **T34** (laughing).” (*R. Hertenstein, Experiences of a German Panzer Cdr*, 35-36)

--„Der russische Panzer **T-34** gegen den die Truppe keine Abwehrmittel hat, da der Führer die Rotk[o?]pfgranaten verboten hat, *ist zum Panzerschreck geworden*, vor dem die Leute ausreißen.“ (*Gyldenfeldt Tgb*, 13.12.41)

--Early reports made tank out to be *invincible*. **T-34** was lower than anything produced until then; had much heavier armor and body constructed at angles so shells would ricochet off it. Like wildfire, tales of the **T-34's** exploits raced across the German front. Battalion officers (**6. ID**) at once set about developing methods to combat it. Platoon

cdrs experimented with *concentrated explosives* (i.e., heavy T-Mines bundled with one or more hand-grenades). (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 154-5, 161)

--**Oct 41: 4 PD** runs into **T-34s** in fighting around Mzensk. Suffers serious losses as well as deep psychological shock. Guderian urges that commission be sent immediately to his sector to examine problem; he also requests rapid production of a heavy AT gun. He writes: "Up to this time we had enjoyed tank superiority, but from now on the situation was reversed." (See, *Panzer Leader*, 237-38)

--**Oct 41:** The first Russian **T-34** tanks appeared during the Battle of *Vyasma*...A very serious state of affairs arose for the inf. divisions, which felt themselves naked and defenseless against this new tank. At *Vereya*, the Russian tanks simply drove straight through the **7. ID** to the artillery positions and literally ran over the guns. The effect on the infantryman's morale was comprehensible. This marked the beginning of what came to be called the „tank terror.“ (*Blumentritt, Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 56)

--**Oct 41:** For sobering account of encounter w/ **T-34s** near *Rollbahn* on road to Moscow (mid-Oct. 41), see: *Memorien, W. Heinlein, AR 74/2. PD*. He relates attack by several **T-34s** and inability of nearby 3,7 Pak to knock them out: "Ihre Leutspurgeschosse liessen schoene Treffer an den Panzern erkennen – aber es gab keinerlei Wirkung...In dieser Zeit wurde der Name "Panzeranklopfgeraet" begruendet." (64-65)

--**Oct 41:** At several critical junctures, the German divisions stopped the small packs of **T-34** tanks, which the Soviets had begun to introduce into the fighting in **Oct 41**, with the *direct fire at close range of 105mm* howitzers. (*Stolfi, Chance in History*, 225)

--**Oct 41:** Action involving **T-34s** and **101. "Light" ID** near *Poltava*. This account fascinating because it demonstrates that, even at distance of just **50 meters**, the German **50mm AT gun** was not effective against this tank, until it was finally hit in the rear, where its armor was relatively weaker. (for great quote see, *Citino, Death of the Wehrmacht*, 41-42.)

--**Oct 41:** Attack of **T-34s** on the boundary of **IR 289** and **290 (98. ID)** caused some of the men to panic, and it was only the personal intervention and presence of the regimental colonel which persuaded the troops to return to their positions. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 187; also, *Gareis, Kampf u. Ende der 98. Inf.-Div.*, ca. 150-60)

--**17.11.41:** The **137. ID** documented a case of a **T-34** breaking into the rear of the division at *Wyssokoje* on 17 Nov 41 and physically running over two **105mm** howitzers before being stopped by infantry w/ hand grenades. (*Stolfi, Chance in History*, 225)

--**23.11.41 [2. PD]:** Ein gefaehrlicher Gegner ist aufgetaucht: **T 34**. Der erste dieser neuen sowjet. Panzer abgeschossen bei Turicina am **23 Nov 41**. (*Steinzer, 2. Pz.-Div.*, 125)

--**Jan 42:** *Heinlein* describes another **T-34** attack. One after another, they are knocked out by a Battery of 8,8-cm-*Heeresflak*. He notes that the Russian tanks following being the first ones to be destroyed could not be warned to withdraw—*sie hatten untereinander keine Funkverbindung*. (*Memorien, W. Heinlein, AR 74, 78*)

--Von Kagenek berichtet von der neuen sowjetischen Waffe: der **T34**. Keine Panzerabwehrgranate unter Kaliber 88 konnte ihm schaden. Die Gleisketten des Panzers waren so breit, dass der Panzer nie im Lehm steckenblieb. Noch dazu war seine Kanone eine ‚Ratsch-boum‘. Er meint, dass dieser Panzer ein Wunder für Russland war. (*La Guerre a l'Est, August v.Kagenek*. 61)

--Seinen immer mehr auftretenden Panzer modernster Art stehen wir fast machtlos gegenueber, weil sie eigentlich nur noch durch *Zufallstreffer* der 8,8 cm Flak zu erledigen sind. Die andern Abwehrwaffen *einschliesslich 10,5 cm Feldhaubitze schlagen einfach nicht durch*. (*H. Stieff, Briefe*, 19.11.41, 136).

--Russian **T-34** tanks “were shooting up our tanks like rabbits. We were powerless to do anything about it w/ our light guns. At one point, deployed under good cover, we let the **T-34s approach to within 40 yards before opening fire**, and our shells just bounced off them.” (*Karl Rupp, 5. PD*, in: *Voices from the Third Reich*, 128)

--**10.1.42**: *H. Martin (14. ID (mot.))*, describes unsuccessful attempt to destroy **T-34** at very close range w/ a **3,7-cm-PAK** employing the *Panzergranate 40* (eine mit *Stahlkern* versehene Geschosse). At time, Martin was injured (frostbite), and was an observer to this spectacle, which took place at or near town of *Goloporowo* on this day. (see, *H. Martin, Weit war der Weg*, 108-10)

--**ca. Jan 42**: Tanks were the German army’s most important wpn in continental warfare; however, there is *little doubt* that an extra year’s production of the *revolutionary T-34* tanks might have given the Soviets an *insuperable advantage* in ground combat [ie., as of **1942**]. In winter of 1941-42, a *German technical team* in East Prussia conducted the first detailed examination of a Soviet **T-34** (version „A“) tank. The armor, main cannon, engine, and certain details of the track and suspension system were *superior to those of any German tank* in existence in **Jan 42**. (*Stolfi, Barbarossa Revisited*, 30; see also, *Rudolf Steiger, Panzertaktik im Spiegel Deutscher KTBer 1939-41*, pub. 1973. Steiger argues in an „impressively documented work,“ that the **T-34** can perhaps be considered the „*kriegsentscheidende*“ wpn in the war in the east, responsible for saving the Soviets in autumn of 1941 and swinging the entire war in their favor.)

T-60 tank:

-- As a stopgap measure [due to break in production of Soviet medium and heavy tanks, whose assembly lines had to be moved to the Urals], large numbers of the **6.4 ton T-60** light tank were produced over the winter of **1941/42**. Powered by a lorry petrol engine (rather than by a diesel), the **T-60** could be built by automobile plants, but it was smaller even than the **T-26** and the **BT** and mounted only a **20mm** gun. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 27)

Trucks (Transport):

--Red Army collapsed in the first weeks of the war...*Lack of transport*, for instance, which was identified by nearly every front-line officer as the reason the retreat turned into a route that June, was a long-standing concern of units based along the Soviet border...For months later, when the crippled armies of the western region needed

transport to bring fresh reserves to the front, they found themselves short by a least a third...(100) Notes that, after **22 Jun 41**, Soviet Army could not even requisition trucks, for their were almost *no civilian cars in Stalin's Soviet Union* (85). (*Ivan's War*)

3.3.8: T-34 in Action:

Note: This entire section (3.3.8) gleaned from: T-34 In Action. Soviet Tank Troops in WWII (A. Drabkin & O. Sheremet):

- Peculiarities of design which made the **T-34** so remarkable compared to other combat vehicles of the time: a) its sloped armor plates; and, b) its **V-2 diesel engine**. [**Note:** In first years of war, the model was the **T-34/76**. The first tanks armed w/ **85 mm** guns – the **T-34/85** – left the conveyors of Plant No. **112** “Krasnoye Sormovo,” in **Jan 44**. (22, 32)

- At the beginning of the conflict, the well-armored **T-34** w/ its imperfect transmission, unable to sustain long marches, proved a good infantry-support tank. As the war went on, the role of the **T-34** gradually changed. The power plant and transmission in particular were upgraded until they could perform almost faultlessly. All this allowed later **T-34s** to do things that were unthinkable in the early war period; for example, to sustain long marches of several hundred kilometers. That said, marching towards Dubno in **Jun 41**, the **8. Mech Corps** lost nearly ½ its vehicles. (43)

- Unlike the transmission, the **T-34 engine** aroused practically no criticism among its crews.⁶¹ Burtsev considered it extremely reliable. . . Of the entire power plant, only the air-filter had design deficiencies requiring serious revision. The old-type filter installed on **T-34s** in **1941/42** did not work very well and impeded the normal functioning of the engine, which led to rapid wear of the **V-2** diesel. (41)

Soviet tank crews saw the lower noise level of German tank engines as their only advantage over the **T-34** power plant. . . (25)

- The diesel engine was another obvious and confidence-building element of the **T-34s** construction. . . Most Soviet tank crews knew very well from their own experience that petrol was volatile, highly flammable, and would burn very fiercely. . . Diesel engines gave the crews confidence that they had far fewer chances of dying in a blazing inferno than their adversaries, whose tanks were fueled w/ hundreds of liters of volatile and highly inflammable petrol.

*But in reality . . . statistics showed that diesel-powered tanks were actually **no safer** in regard to fire risk than tanks fitted w/ carburetor engines.⁶² Data compiled in **Oct 42** showed that diesel-powered **T-34s** had burned even more often than **T-70** tanks w/ engines driven by aviation fuel (**23%** vs. **19%**). (24-25)*

⁶¹ **Note:** However, the **T-34** engine was apparently much louder than German tank engines.

⁶² **Note:** Information provided by authors on this key point appears somewhat contradictory. Yet they appear to support viewpoint that diesel engines did not catch fire as readily as the German gasoline (petrol) engines.

- Soviet-made wireless sets installed on **T-34s** did not have a telegraph mode and could not transmit Morse. . . In the early stage of the war **T-34s** were equipped w/ two-way **71-TK-3** radios, but not all machines had them. . . The Red Army had a concept of “radio” and “linear” tanks. The crews of “linear” tanks had to operate by watching the manoeuvres of the unit commander or by responding to orders transmitted via flag signals. As of **1 Jun 41**, there were **671** “linear” **T-34** tanks and **221** “radio” ones.

But the main problem of the **T-34** signalling system in **1941/42** was not the quantity of the radios but the quality, the **71-TK-3**’s capabilities being quite limited. “It worked for about **6** kilometre distance on a march,” reported Kirichenko,⁶³ and similar opinions were expressed by other tankmen. “The **71-TK-3** set was a complicated, unstable two-way,” said Bodnar. “It frequently broke down and it was very hard to fix.”

It nevertheless to some extent compensated for its shortcomings by enabling crewmen to listen to broadcasts from Moscow. The radio situation deteriorated seriously during the evacuation of Soviet radio manufacturing plants between **Aug 41** and the middle of **1942**, when the production of tank wireless sets practically ceased. (39-40)

- The ammunition of a **T-34** consisted mostly of high explosive and anti-personnel shells. In **1942-44** the regular ammunition allowance of a **T-34** w/ a “screw nut” turret [?] comprised **100** shells – **75** of them antipersonnel/high explosive and **25** armor-piercing. . .

The balance between armor-piercing and antipersonnel shells largely reflected the conditions under which the **T-34s** fought. Under a hail of artillery fire the crew in most cases had little time for aimed firing, and shot on the move or during short halts w/ the goal of suppressing the enemy by the volume of their fire or hitting him w/ a series of shells. “Seasoned guys who’d been in combat before told us: ‘Never stop. Shoot on the move. Sky or earth – no matter where the shell flies – you shoot and press on,’” remembered Krivov. (33-34)

- Fields of vision: The first **T-34s** had mirror periscopes for the driver and in the turret. These consisted of a box w/ mirrors installed above and below at an angle to each other, made not of glass (which might burst from shell shock) but of polished steel. It’s not hard to imagine the quality of the image provided by such a periscope. Similar mirrors in periscopes on the turret sides were one of the main means by which a tank commander viewed the battlefield. . .

The tanks were only provided w/ steel mirrors during the first year of the war. . . In **1941/42**, other than a “mirror” on the turret shoulder the tank commander had only a fixed periscope, formally called a periscopic gunsight. By turning its

⁶³ **Note:** According to another Soviet tank veteran: “The communication range of the radio on the move was about **6** kilometres, so communication between tanks was rather poor, especially if one takes into consideration uneven ground surfaces and forests. On the other hand, it could pick up the news, both from Moscow and from abroad. . . As soon as there was any break in the fighting the commanders and political officers would gather to listen to the *Sovinformbyuro* news summaries.” (111)

vernier this had provided him w/ a quite limited view of the battlefield. . . All the tankmen interviews admired the gunsights of German tanks. V.P. Bryukhov's recollections are typical: "We always noted the high quality of the Zeiss gunsight optics. . . We had nothing like that." . . . Still there were no major differences in the information provided by German and Soviet telescopic gunsights. (35-37)

- Statistical research conducted by NII-48 (Scientific Research Institute **48**) in **Sep-Oct 42**, regarding the combat damage incurred by **T-34** tanks then being repaired in maintenance workshops No. **1** and No. **2** in Moscow, showed that out of **109** hits on the upper front part of the tanks **89%** had had no effect, but that destructive penetrations had been achieved by guns of **75 mm** caliber or greater.

Of course, the situation had become more complicated by then w/ the advent of German **75 mm** AT and tank guns. Their **75 mm** shells would normalize – i.e., would maintain a straight path – when impacting w/ armor plates and would pierce the frontal armor of a **T-34** from a distance of **1200** metres. The **88 mm** rounds of AA guns and hollow-charge shells were also insensitive to the sloping of armor. But up until the Battle of Kursk in **Jul 43** the proportion of **50 mm** guns in the Wehrmacht had been significant, and belief in the sloping armor of the **T-34** had been largely justified. (23)

- Statistically, in the earlier part of the war *most of the hits were on a tank's hull*. According to the report of NII-48, **81%** of the hits were on the hull and **19%** on the turret. However, more than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the hits were harmless (non-penetrating or only partially penetrating): **89%** of hits on the upper front portion, **66%** of hits on the lower front portion, and about **40%** of hits on the hull sides did not penetrate. Of the last, **42%** were on the engine and transmission compartments, hits on which were harmless to the crew. The turret, by contrast, was pierced relatively easily, its softer cast armor providing poor resistance even to the **37 mm** shells of automatic AA guns. (27)

- The function of a loader in battle was simple but physically challenging: He had to push the round into the breech of the main gun and throw the empty cartridge out thru the hatch after it was extracted. . . Sometimes the stress of battle was so high that *loaders passed out after breathing too much of the **gun's exhaust fumes***. Besides that, their *hands were burnt almost continuously*, as they had to throw out the red-hot cartridges right after each shot so that they didn't fill the battle compartment w/ smoke. (13)

- Despite its innovations, there were real design deficiencies: One of the problems encountered by tank designers in the **1940s** was the accumulation of fumes from the guns in the fighting compartment. The breechblock would open after each shot to eject the empty shell, and gases from the gun and the ejected shell flooded into the crew compartment. . . Sometimes the gun loader would be *poisoned by the fumes and lose consciousness*. Electrically-driven suction fans were used to removed gunpowder and fumes and to ventilate the battle compartment. [**Note:** But the fan in the early **T-34s** – inherited from the BT tank and positioned not above the smoking breechblock, but above the gun barrel

– was of dubious utility. In **1942**, at the peak of shortages of component parts, it lost even this fan.] (38)

- Early **T-34s** had a four-stage gear box. . . Changing gears in the earlier four-stage transmission was very complicated and required a lot of physical strength⁶⁴ – Maryevski remembered that “it was impossible to shift the gear lever w/ one hand, and I had to help myself w/ my knee.” . . . Apart from the difficulties in gear-changing, the four-stage transmission was characterized [i.e., by the tank veterans interviewed for this book] as weak and unreliable, and frequently broke down. . . (14, 29-30)

- For many tankmen the outcome of battle was death or a wound. . . The main killers were the splinters of armor that flew around the inside of a tank after it was hit by an armor-piercing round, and the fire that started if the fuel system was damaged. A hit by an armor-piercing or fragmentation round, even one that didn’t penetrate the armor, could cause shell-shock or break the crewmen’s arm bones. The smaller armor splinters smashed between the tankmen’s teeth and hit their eyes, while large splinters could cause serious wounds. (14-15)

Natalia Nikitichna Peshkova, *komsorg* of a motor rifle btn. of the **3. Gds Tank Army** recalled: “I had a special sympathy towards tankmen . . . they suffered such awful deaths. If a tank was knocked out, and they often were, it meant almost certain death: one or two men could bail out, but no more . . . The most awful thing were the burns they had. In those days burns of **40%** of the skin area were lethal.” (15)

- A **T-34** was a very bumpy vehicle to drive. Bruises were unavoidable when driving and stopping a tank. Only their *tankoshlems* (as the veterans called their helmets) saved the crewmen from serious head injuries. . . Helmets also protected the head from burns if a tank caught fire. (16)

- In wintertime the cold inside a tank turned it into “a real refrigerator.” . . . They also had “tons of lice, especially in wintertime.” . . . The appearance of tankmen was far from fancy, as their *uniforms, faces, and hands were all **stained w/ grease** and the smut from exhaust pipes and explosions*. Forever digging trenches for their tanks did little to help. . . Overall a tankman’s living conditions were not so different from those of infantrymen. “In the winter we were all filthy, covered w/ oil and grease, our entire bodies covered w/ boils as we all had flu,” explained Bryukhov. (16-17)⁶⁵

- Alcohol was also present. “The whole war ran on Narkom vodka!” claimed Bodnar. “It was the same w/ us and the Wehrmacht. You can’t live in a war w/o

⁶⁴ **Note:** Writes one veteran: “The **T-34/76** was equipped w/ a four-speed transmission, and it took enormous effort to change gears. The driver would set the lever in the right position and start to pull it, and I had to grasp the lever and pull it as well. It used to take several seconds. We had to perform this operation all the time during the march, and it was exhausting. During a prolonged march the driver usually lost 2 or 3 kilos.” (112)

⁶⁵ **Note:** Recollects one veteran: “As we were getting ready for the offensive [i.e., summer **1942**] we got our winter outfits of quilted jackets and *valenki* boots. Unfortunately inside the tank *any clothes were worn out very quickly*. . . Nor was there any escape from the lice.” (113)

a vodka shot. It stimulates you before a battle and helps you relax after it.” . . . There was a lot of war booty alcohol too. Every available container was used to hold it, even fuel tanks. [!] (20-21)

- The caterpillar tracks were the most frequently repaired part of a **T-34**, and spare tracks were even taken into combat. . . The caterpillars were also a serious give-away, as Rodkin explained: “A **T-34** didn’t only roar w/ its engine, it also clanged w/ its caterpillars. If a **T-34** was approaching you’d hear its pillars clanging first and then the engine. . . The lack of rubber tyres on the [5] road wheels because of wartime shortages increased the tanks’ noisiness. (42)

- Painting of **T-34** tanks: The tanks were largely used just as they were delivered from the production plants, painted plain green outside and inside, though in wintertime technical deputy cdrs were set the task of painting their units’ tanks white. (24)

- Rodkin recalled how the **T-34** produced terrible amounts of dust because its exhaust jets were directed downwards. (26)

- A tank commander was normally a lieutenant or a junior lieutenant. . . However, in the early years of the war a sergeant or a sergeant-major could be a tank commander; (9)

- Unfortunately, the average marksmanship level of tankmen was weak. (13)

3.4: Soviet Air Forces:

Note: Convention wisdom appears to be that the VVS was *swept from the skies* in the opening days of “Barbarossa.” Of course, the Germans did inflict a catastrophic defeat on the VVS in the first **48-72** hours of the campaign; however, my reading of literally hundreds of primary accounts (unit histories and war diaries, personal diaries, FPB, etc.) leads me to a *different conclusion*: On the main, central front, Germans indeed established *air superiority*; however, they rarely – if at all – enjoyed total *air supremacy* (may have attained the latter for a very short period in immediate wake of invasion). Soviet air forces remained active – at some level – throughout the campaign. The Luftwaffe was spread thin, and could not be everywhere at once. VVS focused its efforts on German motorized spearheads, with occasionally effective results. By **Oct-Nov 41**, the VVS was making an amazing recovery, and air superiority on central front was shifting to the Russians. Of course, in opening months of war Soviet aircraft were mostly outmoded and pilots poorly trained; by fall of **1941**, however, the initial signs of a dramatic “comeback” were becoming apparent. German accounts are clear that, by fall of **1941**, the Red Air Force was becoming much more active and effective.⁶⁶

3.4.1: Background:

Soviet Air Force was *not an independent branch of military*, but part of the army. The Red Army had more than **10,000** acft in **1941**, but many were obsolete and serviceability was poor (about **50%**). Since *few acft had radios*, and there was *no radar system* to coordinate them, tactics were

⁶⁶ C. Luther, **31.3.09**.

primitive by the standards of 1940. Barrier patrols, of the sort flown in the First World War, absorbed large numbers of acft but failed to intercept German raids. Even if the Russian fighters did find the enemy, their pilots were *trained to fly the sort of tight formations* that the RAF had favored in 1939 – a system rapidly discredited in action against the loose formations of German fighters. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 28)

The Russian air forces were the *largest in the world*, and Russian acft production was, like the Red Army, in a stage of re-equipment and expansion in the years immediately before war came. Although markedly inferior to German and British air forces – in machines, output, design, technical equipment, training, maintenance, ground organization and airfield construction – the Russian air forces had reached a point where improvement in all these departments could be rapid. The most important feature of the *air war in the east* after **1941** was that this improvement was not only astonishingly rapid but far more so than the Germans or anybody else had believed possible. (Calvocoressi & Wint, *Total War*, 173)

Soviet official historians candidly admitted that „the war caught the air forces of the border military districts during a period when they were undergoing *extensive reorganization and retraining of personnel*. The acft types present in the greatest number in Jun 41, including the *Polikarpov I-15* and *I-16 biplane fighters*, and the *DB-3* and *SB-2* medium bombers, were of outmoded design. *Luftwaffe* veterans had encountered most of these types in the *Spanish Civil War*. Soviet training and operational proficiency were well below German standards; lack of adequate *radio equipment* was a particular shortcoming. That said, an *entire new generation of Soviet combat acft* appeared in **1940/41**, including the *Yak-1*, *MiG-3*, *Pe-2*, and *Il-2*; these new models were generally absent from GAF intelligence estimates and recognition manuals prior to the invasion. (Muller, *German Air War*, 40-41)

The opposing German and Russian air forces were organized on broadly similar lines. The *Luftwaffe* building blocks, the *Gruppe* and *Geschwader* (respectively about **30** and **90** acft of the same type), were matched by the air regiment and air division of the Red Army Air Force (VVS). The *Luftwaffe*, however, was in **1941** better organized to mass its forces, w/ large air corps and air fleets. This complemented the German advantages in equipment, training, and communications. Larger Soviet formations did exist, air corps of medium bombers tasked for semi-independent ops under the direction of the Red Army High Command. These, however, were thrown away, w/o fighter support, in **Jun-Jul 41**. Only from the summer of **1942** did the Russians concentrate their air strength effectively. . . (See, E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 25)

Given the lack of readiness of the Soviet armed forces, Stalin cannot be faulted for hoping to postpone a conflict w/ Germany until at least 1942. That said, other policies of the Soviet leader clearly complicated and retarded the [VVS] restructuring process and otherwise helped maximize the *Luftwaffe's* initial success [same can be said of success of *Wehrmacht* in general]. First and foremost are his acquisition of eastern Poland and the Baltic republics after the Aug 39 pact w/ Hitler and the resulting *forward deployments required to defend this border glacis*. Whatever his strategic motives, this imposed a major additional strain on the resources of an air force that already desperately required reorganization and reequipment [*recapitalization*]. Thereafter, for example, two-thirds (or some **200**) of the airfields built or renovated were in the newly expanded western districts to support the aerial concentrations required to win air control in a future conflict. Because this work remained unfinished in Jun 41, the newly enlarged VVS units were often deployed on crowded primary airstrips or unfinished airfields, which complicated efforts at dispersal or camouflage. (D.R. Jones, in: *Why Air Force's Fail*, 275)

VVS in 1941: In 1937, there were **13 000** air force officers in Red Air Force; by 1940, figure had grown to **60 000**. By 1939, the Red Air Force was *recognized as the world's largest* and, given the reserve created by its vast pool of *paramilitary programs*, apparently faced an even brighter future. Yet *deep flaws existed beneath this superficial strength*. These became obvious on 22.6.41. By that date, the VVS had some **400 000** personnel and **10 – 15 000** acft. Of these, only **7 500** planes were deployed in the Soviets' western theater.

As of Jun 41, Soviets involved in *major overhaul of its air forces' organization and force structure*—based in part on perceived lessons of *Spain* and other conflicts; as well as abysmal performance of the VVS against Finland in Winter War of 1939-40. After much debate and confusion, Stalin approved a *major program of reorganization and rearmament on 25.2.41*, which was well underway at time of German assault and thus an immediate cause of the June disaster. Objective of this effort was to restructure the air forces to *stress the tactical role of frontline aviation* (as opposed to long-range strategic mission). This reorganization was accompanied by a *reequipment program* aimed at replacing the old **I-15** and **I-16** fighters and **SB-2** bombers w/ the new generation of **Mig-1**, **Yak-1**, and **LaGG-3** fighters, **Pe-2** and **Il-2** ground attack acft, and **DB-3F/Il-4** medium bombers. Serial production of these planes had begun in 1939-40. Yet such an overhaul took time, and, on 22 Jun 41, it was still under way. For example, only **19** of the planned **106** new air regiments had been formed, and problems of quality of training persisted. One report maintains that, on the eve of war, the air services *faced a 32 percent shortage in aircrew and technical personnel*. In any case, the program begun in Feb 41 could not be completed until mid- to late 1942. Given that similar problems also existed in other branches of armed forces, Stalin cannot be faulted for hoping to postpone a conflict w/ Germany until at least 1942. (D.R. Jones, in: *Why Air Force's Fail*, 271-75)⁶⁷

Jun 41 [VVS]: Red Air Force posed little immediate threat to the Luftwaffe. While its estimated **9576** combat a/c made it the largest air force in the world, its equipment, like that of Red Army, was obsolescent and suffering from prolonged use. The Great Purges had struck a/c manufacturers and designers as well as military cdrs, *ending the Soviet lead in aeronautics*. . . Newer a/c, such as the swift **MiG-3** fighter and excellent **Il-2 Sturmovik** ground-attack plane, were in some ways superior to their German counterparts. But these a/c were just entering service in spring **1941**, and many units had a mixture of old and new equipment. Transition training to qualify pilots to fly the new a/c proceeded at a snail's pace because Red Air Force cdrs *feared that any training accidents would lead to their arrest for „sabotage.“* On **12 Apr 41**, Timoshenko and Zhukov had complained that training accidents were destroying **2-3** a/c each day and demanded the removal of several senior VVS officers. At the time of the German attack, many Soviet fighter pilots in the forward area had as few as **4** hours' experience in their a/c! . . . The occupation of eastern Poland in **1939** had made forward VVS units as vulnerable as their Red Army counterparts. . . Relatively few airfields were operational in the forward area, w/ many being torn up for expansion in spring **1941**. The few available airfields lacked revetments and AA defenses to protect the crowded parking aprons. . . Perhaps most significantly, the VVS, like the Red Army, suffered from several deficiencies in leadership at all levels. . . Both in Spain and in opening battles of **1941**, VVS tactics tended to be very rigid. Throughout the disastrous summer of **1941**, Soviet bombers stubbornly attacked at an altitude of **8000** feet – too high to ensure accurate bombing but low enough for German fighter pilots to locate and attack them. . . (Glantz & House, *When Titans Clashed*, 37-38)

⁶⁷ For Soviet acft production figures from 1939-1941 see, pp 277-78. Basically, from Jan 39 to 22 Jun 41, a total of **13 852** older fighters/bombers were built, compared w/ **2 839** of the new fighters and ground attack acft and **2 065** DB-3/Il-4 bombers.

Jun 41 [Status]: VVS (*Voenno-vozdushnikh sil*) possessed ca. **19,533** acft, of which **7,133** were stationed in western military districts. It was the largest air force in the world but posed little immediate threat to the *Luftwaffe*. The Great Purge had struck acft manufacturers and designers, ending the previous Soviet lead in aeronautics. Never acft types, such as the swift **MiG-3** fighter and the excellent **Il-2** *Sturmovik* ground attack plane, which were, in some ways, superior to their German counterparts, were just entering the service in the spring of **1941**. This left the VVS „with a mixture of old and new equipment.“ Many Soviet fighter pilots had had little training (transition training to qualify pilots to fly the new acft lagged, as air force cdrs feared that any training accidents would lead to their arrest for „sabotage“); thus, in the forward area many fighter pilots had as few as four (**4**) hours’ experience were *Barbarossa* began [!]. (See, *Glantz, Barbarossa*, 27-28)

Summer ’41: As part of its general reorganization after German invasion, Red Air Force abolishes its Strategic Long-Range Aviation Command temporarily. Tactical air units were reorganized into rgts of only **30** rather than **60**, aircraft. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 65)

Summer ’41: Soviet fighter pilots in particular lacked spirit and dash and would often avoid engagements, turning away even from unescorted **Ju 52** transports (all of which carried defensive armament) when these were flying in close formation. Red Air Force bomber pilots on the other hand showed determination and courage and, because they were unescorted or unsupported by Soviet fighters, suffered heavily in consequence. The **U 2** pilots were renowned for great ingenuity and skill. (*A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 80-81)

1942: Die erfolgreiche Luftversorgung der beiden Kessel [i.e., Demjansk u. Cholm] unter guenstigen Bedingungen war mitbeteiligt an den Erwartungen in die Luftversorgung Stalingrads. Die Staerke der sowj. Luftverteidigung im Norden war mit jener bei Stalingrad jedoch nicht zu vergleichen. Im Bereich Ausruestung, Struktur u. Taktik vollzog sich in der sowj. Luftwaffe innerhalb weniger Monate ein deutlich bemerkbarer Wandel. Die deutsche Luftwaffe traf bei Demjansk zu Jahresbeginn [**1942**] auf verstreute Gruppen veralteter Jagdflugzeuge aus der Zeit des spanischen Buergerkrieges, die in der Regel ohne Funkverbindung waren. Die sowj. Luftwaffe verfuegte zwar ueber kampferfahrene Piloten von den Kaempfen am Chalchin Gol u. aus dem Winterkrieg mit Finnland, diese waren aber durch starke politische Indoktrinierung oft an der Umsetzung ihrer Erfahrungen gehindert.

Ausserdem wurden die taktischen Einheiten im Laufe des Jahres [**1942**] von **30** auf **64** Flugzeuge pro Regiment erhoehrt. Im Jahr **1942** wurden aus den Luftregimentern, die bis dahin den Heeresgruppen unterstellt waren, **18** unabhaengige, selbststaendige Luftarmeen unter General Nowikow gebildet, die in Groesse u. Struktur etwa einer Luftflotte der deutschen Luftwaffe entsprachen. Waehrend im **Apr 42** nur vereinzelt moderne Jagdflugzeuge eingesetzt waren, hatte die Sowjetunion bis zum Jahresende auf die Typen Jakowlew Jak-1, Jak-7 oder LAGG-3 umgeruestet. Die Lieferungen von Bell **P-39** Jagdflugzeugen aus den USA trugen ebenfalls zur Modernisierung bei. (*M. Mieth, Rechts zum Friedhof*. . . Bd. II: *Der zweite Weltkrieg bis zum bitteren Ende*, draft copy, courtesy of author)

3.4.2: Doctrine & Tactics:

VVS air combat tactics relied on *obsolete tactical thinking* that would characterize its ops throughout 1941 and out to mid-1942. In contrast to *German belief in subordinate initiative*, the entire Red Army was *handicapped by an archaic and authoritarian attitude*. This was felt at all levels. Sometimes, a display of independent judgement—i.e., not playing it „by the book“—

could be hazardous to an individual soldier's or airman's health. Thus, Soviet airmen entered first-line service w/ tactical thinking that reduced their efficiency and made them easy prey for German fighters. Meanwhile, the GAF was able to outweigh its declining numerical strength w/ its *flexible structure*, which allowed *Fliegerkorps* or *Luftflotten* cdrs to *concentrate acft in dangered sectors*. Frequently, *Gruppen* were shifted from one front to another, creating power points against which the *more rigid VVS* had no chance of competing. (C. Bergstroem, *Black Cross*, 36-37)

Soviet air force [German assessment]:

Lt.Gen. Uebe: Russian aviation achievements were generally so *mediocre* that German pilots could return to the Eastern Front after absences of a year or more and make use of the tactics which they had used previously, w/ a feeling that they had never been away at all. Russian pilots lagged far behind German pilots and the Western Allies in the fields of general aeronautics, navigation, and bad weather flying...The flying deficiencies of Russian pilots also enabled German dive-bomber and fighter-bomber pilots to shake off their pursuers by such simple expedients as *defensive circling*. Even many of the slower German acft [such as the **Ju 87** „Stuka“] were relatively safe for much of the war...Russian fighters normally limited their attacks to German planes which were on single missions, had straggled, or were otherwise in difficult straits (although they sometimes demonstrated greater enterprise)...All shortcomings were not consequence of Soviet fears, however, Audacious, almost foolhardy, attacks were sometimes carried out by Russian pilots...Because Soviet flyers were generally afraid of enemy fire, they normally hesitated to make return passes over targets, even when they had no reason to expect AA fire. Sometimes, when specific combat missions were assigned to Russian units, Russian pilots might be *extremely tenacious* in trying to accomplish their goals. Sometimes this tenacity bordered upon *stupidity*...It was a serious weakness of Soviet units that only the leader was entrusted w/ general knowledge of the mission. Since the flight leader was normally the only person possessing a map, or w/ knowledge of the objective, German pilots soon learned to concentrate their attacks upon the lead acft. If the Russian air cdr was shot down, the remaining pilots thought only in terms of fleeing back to Soviet territory.

[*Lack of Aggressiveness*]: Russian [pilots showed an] unwillingness to engage in aerial combat w/ German flyers, esp. German fighter pilots...The hesitation of Russian flyers to accept challenges at higher altitudes might be a result of knowledge of their own acft's limitations. Most Soviet fighters were *not equipped for reliable high-altitude combat ops*, and training for such engagements was seriously lacking. Even advanced models (such as the **Yak-3**) were at their best at lower altitudes, where they were *superior* to the **Me 109** and the **Fw 190**. Soviet fighter pilots thus preferred **5000 – 8000-ft** altitudes. Even here they generally declined battle unless the Germans had a hopeless numerical inferiority. Soviet fighter victories were few and were often dur more to good fortune than to aeronautical skill. The respect for German acft remained until the closing months of the war, although the aggressive spirit of Russian fighter pilots improved after mid-**1942**. Combat aggressiveness of Soviet flyers was usually most apparent over their own territory and in situations where their acft greatly outnumbered the declining *Luftwaffe*...Until the end, German pilots claimed that Russian pilots were affected w/ „*the jitters*.“ In the Crimean area German fighters stood off Russian fighter units **25** times their own strength. (See, *Uebe, Russian Reactions to German Airpower*, 90-94)

Note: For German assessment of „*conduct of Soviet air operations*“ see, *Gen.Lt. Uebe*, „*Russian Reactions to German Airpower*“,“ pp 95-100). In general, Uebe notes that Russian air ops were: a) „monotonous and stereotyped in character;“ b) characterized by „inflexible leadership“ and „blind obedience;“ c) evinced an „exaggerated emphasis“ on close air support; d) fighter

ops were almost „wholly defensive in character,“ no matter what type of German air unit they might opposed; and, e) Soviet pilots were often *timid* as individuals, but could be *daring* in a group.

3.4.3: Aircraft & Equipment:

Note: There was one crucially important area where the myth of German qualitative superiority was correct. In contrast to tanks and artillery, Soviet acft were, even on paper, worse than those of the *Luftwaffe*. The Messerschmitt **Bf 109** (and the British Hurricane) first flew in **1935**; comparable Soviet fighter types – **Yak-1**, **LaGG-3**, **Mig-3** – first flew as prototypes in **Mar-Apr 40**, five years later. Only the MiG was actually in service on **22.6.41**, and it was an unsuccessful design removed from production in **1942**. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East, 27*)

Note: Like tanks, most Soviet acft did not have radios fitted in 1941. Compared w/ the experienced pilots of the *Luftwaffe*, the Red air force's newest „rookie“ pilots in the forward areas may have had as few as *four hours'* experience flying their machines. (*Bellamy, Absolute War, 177*)

Note: Much Red Army air force equipment is obsolescent and worn out. It also has weak anti-aircraft artillery, no protected parking, and limited temporary airfields to which acft could disperse if threatened. Only senior leaders carried radios, maps and target information in their acft. The Air Force did have some advantages over the *Luftwaffe*, however: the benefits in sub-zero temperatures enjoyed by the *air-cooled engines* of some Soviet fighters over the *water-cooled* Messerschmitts were obvious. The Air Force's mission under the **1936** regulations was limited to *close air support*; the USSR gave up on strategic bombing in the late **1930s**, when it disbanded its three (**3**) strategic air armies and canceled the four-engine **TB-7** bomber. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941, 28*)

Note: Russian *acft production* passed German production about the end of **1937**, that is to say, before Munich. It then rose steadily from around **800** a month to **900** in **1939** and **1000** by the time of *Barbarossa*. The first deliveries from new factories built in the Urals in the early **1930s** began to reach units in **1939**, but when production and assembly plants in the west were overrun by the German armies total output was halved. It recovered by the middle of **1942** and then rose remorselessly to a peak of **3000** a month. (*Calvocoressi & Wint, Total War, 173*)

Bomber aircraft:

--Soviet bomber force considered *backbone of the VVS* before start of Russo-German war. The **SB** was a twin-engine bomber. The **DB-3** was the Soviet *Ilyushin* twin-engine bomber. Both suffered heavy losses in 1941 campaign. In fact, Soviet bomber force was in a *dismal state* at end of 1941. By this time, the modern **Pe-2** all-metal dive-bomber had still not been built in large numbers (due to *Stavka* decision to concentrate on production of Il-2 ground-attack planes). (**Note:** Only by shifting bulk of medium and heavy bomber sorties to nighttime in fall of 1941 would the DBA (Soviet long range bomber aviation) *be saved from a complete annihilation*. (*C. Bergstroem, Black Cross, 32*)

--**DB-3F**: (redesignated Il-4 in Mar 42): This was improved version of original DB-3; it would remain *backbone of Soviet long-range air force* throughout the war. (C. Bergstroem, *Black Cross*, 32)

Il-2 Shturmovik:

--Probably the *best close support acft of the Second World War*. *Luftwaffe* intelligence failed completely to inform the fighting units of its existence. Even though Il-2s *had been in action since the first weeks of the campaign*, *Luftwaffe* intelligence paid little attention to Soviet technical innovations. The German intelligence branch could provide only minimal information (and a thoroughly inaccurate silhouette!) of the Il-2 in an Oct 41 recognition manual. (R. Muller, *German Air War*, 43)

--Considered the “*triumph of Soviet aviation technology*, the Il-2 w/ its *heavy armor shield* earned the nickname “*Cement Bomber*” from German fighter pilots. Another advantage of the acft was its *strong landing gear*, enabling ops from almost any makeshift airfield. But the putative “*invulnerability*” of this plane should not be exaggerated. Its *weak spot* was the *unprotected radiator in its belly*. In combination w/ the absence of dive brakes that forced the Il-2 to make shallow dives at no more than 30 degrees, it would have seemed natural for the Il-2 pilots to remain “on the deck” during the entire combat sortie. But the most common operational fight altitude of the “*Ilyusha*,” as the Soviets called it, was between 800 and 6000 feet. The Il-2 was a formidable ground-attack plane, perhaps best of its kind during WWII (for more details see, C. Bergstroem, *Black Cross*, 30)

--Within three (3) days of start of German invasion, the first of the formidable **Il-2 Shturmovik** ground-attack acft, fresh from the Voronezh factory, appear in Army Group Ctr sector. (Kirchubel, *Barbarossa* 1941, 41)

--**5.7.41: 7 PD** runs into Konev’s **19 Army** defenses at Vitebsk and halts to wait arrival of Strauss’ infantry. On **5 July**, heavily armored *Shturmoviki* attack **7 PD** w/o suffering a loss, despite some planes taking **200** hits. (Kirchubel, *Barbarossa* 1941, 49)

--Die laufend angeforderten Einsaetze der *Jagdflieger* zum Schutz der Heeresverbaende gegen *gepanzerte tieffliegende russ. Schlachtflieger* wurden zur *Beruhigung der Erdtruppe* geflogen; die *Waffenwirkung war gering*, da die Erfolgsaussichten fehlten. Hier war mit Flak u. Pak mehr zu erreichen...(Kesselring, *Soldat*, 132)

--As early as the autumn of 1941, the first **IL-2** (Ilyushin) „*Stormovik*“ ground-attack plane appeared at the front. This type, which soon became available in large numbers, was ideally suited, by virtue of its rugged construction and excellent armor protection, for air support missions. Frequently, formations of **Me 109s** and even **Fw 190s** expended their entire allocations of ammunition firing at them w/o bringing them down. [!] German AA cdrs noted that the „*Stormoviks*“ could be shot down by light and medium AA artillery only if direct hits were scored and soon began making greater use of the heavy (8.8 cm) gun against Soviet acft. **IL-2** planes were *most vulnerable* when fired upon from above or from the rear by explosive ammunition. The tail and control surfaces disintegrated readily if struck by gunfire. At ranges of **900 – 1200 ft.**, light AA guns had little effect upon them, although succesful hits were scored by medium or large calibre guns which happened to strike the engines, tail assemblies, or control surfaces of these

planes. The „*Stormovik*“ was somewhat *sluggish in performance*; it might have been more maneuverable except for its *weak power unit*. (K. Uebe, *Russian Reactions to German Airpower*, 7)

--**IL-2** „*Shturmovik*“ ground attack plane, the Red air force’s unique, armored „flying tank,“ had just entered service in spring of **1941** and were still in short supply when the war began. The acft’s engine, cockpit and fuel tanks were all protected by steel armor and the pilot’s windshield was of **66mm** thick bullet-resistant glass. It could attack ground targets w/ MGs, **32mm** cannon, bombs and rockets, and could survive ground fire that would be lethal to any other aeroplane. (Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 178)

--Im Material war die **IL 2** / *Schlachtflieger* eine *grosse Ueberraschung* gewesen, da sie anfangs – durch ihre gute Panzerung – nur schwer abgeschossen werden konnte. („*Ueberblick ueber den dt. Luftkrieg gegen Russland*, III. Phase: vom 4.10.1941 – Anfang Dez. 41,“ **KDC**, 16)

I-15:

--Soviet *Polikarpov* single-engine, single-seat, fixed-gear biplane fighter. Slow and obsolescent by 1941.

I-15bis:

--Soviet *Polikarpov* single-engine, single-seat, fixed-gear biplane fighter. Slow and obsolescent by 1941. Few fighter regiments were outfitted with this airplane after 1942.

I-16:

--The numerically most important Soviet fighter was the little **I-16** monoplane, of which the best version had a speed of about **300** mph. A total of **9450** of these acft were built, a colossal number for the **1930s**. In **1941**, the **I-16** was **50** mph slower than the **Bf 109E** and only as fast as the German **Ju-88** bomber. (E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 28)

--Soviet *Polikarpov* single-engine, single-seat fighter. Slow and obsolescent in 1941. Still, this *monoplane* would remain in operational service in relatively large numbers throughout 1942. With its *excellent maneuverability*, the I-16 could be a quite tough opponent even against faster Bf 109s. (C. Bergstroem, *Black Cross*, 31)

--Apparently, the I-16 “Rata” was an extremely loud acft. Writes one German observer of this plane shortly before the start of Operation “Barbarossa:” Nach kurzer Zwischenzeit hoerten wir ploetzlich ein moerderisches Motorengeraeusch auf der russ. Seite. Was war das? Auf dem Feldflughafen von Brest-Litovsk stieg eine Rata in die Luefte. Aus dem Flugererkennungsdienst kannte ich diesen robusten Jaeger, der zwar nicht sehr schnell flog, aber sehr wenig sein sollte u. mit einem riesigen Boxermotor vorne ausgestattet war. . . Mit seinem dicken Motor machte er einen Krach, als ob mehrere Flugzeuge auf einmal kommen wuerden. Er wirkte wie eine dicke Hornisse, die sich zum Stechen vorbereitete.” (Dr E. Bunke, **31. ID**, *Das Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, 204; see also, p 227)

I-153:

--Soviet *Polikarpov* single-engine, single-seat fighter biplane. Slow and obsolescent as of 1941.

--The “new” **I-153** fighter entered service in **1939**; it was a biplane, albeit w/ retractable landing gear. The acft had a maximum speed of **265** mph and could barely catch up w/ a German **He 111** medium bomber or even a **Ju 87** Stuka. No fewer than **1000** of these useless biplanes came of Soviet assembly lines in **1939**, and **2400** in **1940**. Neither the **I-16** nor the **I-153** were able to climb to altitude – which was one reason German reconnaissance planes could roam at will over western Russia before **22.6.41**. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East, 28*)

LaGG-3:

--Soviet *Lavochkin-Gorbunov-Gudkov* single-engine, single-seat fighter. It reached peak production in 1942, w/ **2 771** manufactured. Yet it was *never able to compete w/ the Bf 109*, which was superior to the LaGG-3 in all respects. Still, it was successively improved throughout 1942. (*C. Bergstroem, Black Cross, 35*)

Lend-Lease acft:

--Lend-Lease fighters from Britain and America were delivered to the USSR starting in late 1941: *Hawker Hurricanes* and *Curtiss P-40 Tomahawks*. They generally performed poorly compared to the *Bf 109*. Soviet fighter pilots found the *Hurricane* to be outdated and cumbersome. Furthermore, the standard Soviet aviation fuel in 1941-42 was the **B-70 formulation**, w/ an octane rating between only 70 and 75. Since the Hurricane’s *Rolls-Royce Merlin* engine was designed for a considerably higher octane rating the Soviet fuel wore them down rapidly, decreasing performance and frequently causing flying accidents. In contrast, the *P-40 Tomahawk* was superior to both the Hurricane and the I-16, and it at least fared no worse on eastern front than in North Africa. (for more see, *C. Bergstroem, Black Cross, 31-32*)

--**126 IAP** (Soviet fighter aviation rgt.) was first unit to be equipped w/ American *Lend-Lease* P-40s. This unit served on the Moscow front during the winter of 1941/42. (*C. Bergstroem, Black Cross, 38*)

MiG-3:

--The modern MiG-3 had been designed as a *high-altitude fighter*, based on belief that the upcoming air war would be fought at high altitudes. But on the eastern front, *the air war mainly took place at low or medium altitudes* in response to both sides concentrating on close-support missions near front lines. In late 1941, the MiG-3 was *removed from production* for sake of producing more engines for more Il-2s (the latter used the low-altitude version of the same engine). Existing MiG-3s remained in service in large numbers during the first months of 1942. (*C. Bergstroem, Black Cross, 31*)

U-2 light bombers:

--Soviet *Polikarpov* single-engine, two-place training/light bomber/multitrole biplane. These acft “played a remarkable role during most of the war.” From late 1941 on, the Soviets converted large numbers of U-2 trainers into light bombers and brought them into front-line service for *nuisance missions at night*. During the crisis of the VVS in late 1941 and early 1942, the U-2s were responsible for a large share of total VVS activities. They operated under *most primitive conditions* and rarely succeeded in dealing any true material losses to the Germans, but they had a *psychological effect* that should not be underestimated, depriving German soldiers and airmen of badly needed sleep at night. The U-2 was *so successful* that it not only remained in VVS service till end of war, but the *Luftwaffe* copies its combat methodology later on. (*C. Bergstroem, Black Cross*, 33)

--The ubiquitous two-seater biplane first designed in **1927** and known as the **Po-2** or **U 2**: There were large numbers of these about and they were to fly throughout the whole war as reconnaissance and intercommunication acft and as light bombers. They had an airspeed of only **100 mph**. (*A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 80)

--Some *U-2s* were *outfitted w/ skis*, so they could operate from makeshift airfields covered w/ deep snow. (*Bergstroem*, 43)

--Russian **PO-2 biplanes**,⁶⁸ used as trainers before the war, then employed for *night harassing raids* on German rear areas. So called from the sound of their engines. (*Voices from the Third Reich*, 541)

--**Naehmaschinen** or **Nebelkraehen**: German *Landser* terms for slow-flying Russian aircraft that seemed to torment German troops (at night mostly, it appears) during winter of 1941/42. These aircraft, mentioned in many German accounts, would fly over German positions, illuminate them with a *Scheinwerfer*, then drop a bomb(s). Term refers to the strange noise made by the plane. See, for example, *Heinlein Memoiren*, pp 73-4)

--**Naehmaschinen: 1.1.42:** In der Nacht, als die Kampfthaetigkeit etwas abebbte, besuchte uns der „**Eiserne Gustav**“ bzw. die „**Naehmaschine**.“ Er huschte ganz niedrig u. mit abgestelltem Motor ueber die Stellungen u. wurf seine Bomben meist wahllos ab. (*A. Gutenkunst, Die 3. Kp. des Inf.-Rgt. 109*, 326)

--Ganz unangenehm waren, u. fuer staendige Unruhe sorgten, die vom Landser sogenannten „**Naehmaschinen**“ oder „**Nebelkraehen**.“ Dies waren russ. Flugzeuge in *Leichtbauweise*, die unseres Wissens nur mit dem Piloten besetzt u. bei klarem Wetter staendig des Nachts am Himmel waren u. uns stoerten. Sie waren entweder mit einer groesseren Bombe oder mit mehreren kleinen Reihenbomben beladen, die wir „*Knallfroesche*“ nannten. Immer wenn der Pilot seinen Motor drosselte, konnten wir sicher sein, dass diese Dinger aus dem Flugzeug „geschaufelt“ wurden...Bevorzugte Ziele fuer diese Bomben waren vermutete *Gefechtsstaende* in Doerfern, Artilleriefuerstellungen, Nachschubkolonne, ja sogar Einzelfahrzeuge, wenn diese in der Nacht unterwegs waren. Wenn diese Flugzeuge auch nur im Einzelfall groesseren

⁶⁸ **Note:** Bergstroem/Mikhailov (*Black Cross Red Star*) make no mention of this plane. They *do* refer to *U-2 trainers*—a “vastly obsolete” biplane. (33)

Schaden anrichteten, so erfuellten sie doch dadurch ihren Zweck, dass sie fuer Unruhe sorgten u. uns stoerten. Man wuesste ja nie, wann u. wo sie „Schaufeln“ wuerden. (H.J.Dismer, 6. ID, 99-100)

--Russian “double-decker” airplane: Verton notes that he and his men pestered by these “*sewing machines*” (Naehmaschine”), as the Germans called them. (96)

--“Ich werde ihn nie vergessen, diesen Winter 1941/42 in Russland...Zunehmend machten uns die russ. Flieger zu schaffen, bei Tag u. Nacht griffen sie unsere zurueckweichenden Truppen in direktem Beschuss mit Bordwaffen u. Bomben an. Zu einem *Alptraum* wurde in der Nacht der russ. „UvD“;⁶⁹ wer dabei war, wird sich entsinnen koennen...” (Wagner, *Tage wie Jahre*, 263 ID, 46)

Yak-1:

--Soviet *Yakovlev* single-engine, single-seat fighter. This plane was *comparable to the Bf 109F in all respects*—at least at low and medium altitudes. Only in the *Yak-1* did the *Bf 109* meet its equal on the eastern front in early 1942. (C. Bergstroem, *Black Cross*, 31, 35)

3.4.4: *VVS Losses:*

22.6.-31.12.41: Russian air force losses in opening days nothing short of spectacular. The same strikes also utterly disrupted the Red Air Force’s *logistical and support networks* and created chaos w/in their command-and-control agencies—a process furthered by Stalin’s *execution of some senior leaders as scapegoats*. By day three, the *Luftwaffe* thus free to support rapidly advancing mechanized forces. These then seized Soviets’ forward airfields, along w/ all the disabled acft awaiting repair and massive prewar stockpiles of bombs and other munitionis. Those Soviet pilots who fought back had little if any tactical, let alone operational, control, and they *frequently found themselves forced into suicidal strikes*. By **30.6.41**, *Western Front* had lost **1 163** planes, or **74 %** of its initial strength. German HQ claimed the destruction of a total of **4 017** Soviet machines, at a cost of **150** of their own. This total reached **6 857** by **12.7.41**, and three days earlier, the Soviets themselves admitted the destruction of **3 985** acft. And, despite the new *Stavka*’s efforts to conserve dwindling resources, post-Soviet Russian figures verify that from **22.6.-31.12.41**, the Red Air Force *lost a staggering 10 300 combat acft out of a total of 17 900*. (D.R. Jones, in: *Why Air Force’s Fail*, 272-73)

22.6.-31.12.41: All told, the Russian Air Force (VVS) would lose **10,300** warplanes (**5100** fighters and **5200** bombers and attack planes) in battle in **1941**, w/ a further **7600** lost due to other causes (accidents or written off). In addition, **3600** trainers and transports were lost, for a grand total of **21,200** acft. This was from an initial strength of **32,100**. (E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 59)

3.4.5: *Chronology of Events:*

⁶⁹ **Note:** “Unteroffizier vom Dienst” – *Landser* slang for this annoying acft.

Jun 41: Russian air force faced acute shortages of *high-octaine fuel* at the front and essential raw materials for the factories. The air forces had *no radar, no ground control*, not enough fighters and very few night fighters. The first three (3) months of the campaign of 1941 were catastrophic but just not fatal. The Russian air forces, attacked by an enemy who was technically much superior, were caught by surprise, inadequately camouflaged, undispersed, unsure of their supplies and communications: Russian fighters, **20-100 mph** slower than the German **Me 109s**, were outfought, frequently in the course of retreating from one airfield to another further back. Great numbers were destroyed on the ground, either by surprise attack or because they had to be left behind owing to *shortages of fuel and spare parts*. (*Calvocoressi & Wint, Total War*, 174)

Jun 41: *Opening days of campaign:* Even when VVS did manage to appear over the battlefield, its contribution was often *ludicrously ineffective*. An officer of **7. PD:**

It soon became clear that the Russian air force had only obsolete machines at its disposal, but above all that the pilots did not function nearly as well as our fighter and dive-bomber pilots, or the pilots of our Western opponents. This was naturally a great relief to us, and when Russian aircraft appeared, we hardly bothered to take cover. When often had to smile, in fact, when, for want of bombs, *thousands of nails rained down on us from their bomb bays*. (*Hans v. Luck, Panzer Commander*, 53)

3.7.41 [*Iwanowo bei Moskau*]: Personal account of attack by 27 Soviet **TB-3s** on the German bridgehead at *Rogatschew* in *Weissrussland*. They conducted their mission w/ virtually no fighter cover. Some of the pilots had experience from the Spanish Civil War but most had not combat experience. They are attacked by German **Me-109s**; only 9 of the original 27 planes managed to return to *Iwanowo*. Attack is repeated – again w/ 27-28 TB-3s – on **10.7.41**, against a German tank column at the *Beresina*. Results are the same; only 10 acft return to *Iwanowo*. All told, some 35 bombers, and 120 aircrew, lost in two missions. Excellent example of tragic experience of Russian bomber units in opening weeks of campaign. (*Bomberpilot Iwan Litwinow, Echelot*, 202-03)

13.8.41 [*Hr.Gr.Mitte*]: Auch vor der Ostfront der **9. Armee** dauern uneinheitlich gefuehrte Feindangriffe an. An d. *gesamten Heeresgruppenfront starke fdl. Fliegertaetigkeit*, die sich bei **9. Armee** in ausgesprochener Luftueberlegenheit des Gegners auswirkte. (*Mehner, Tagesmeldungen*, in: *Geheime Tagesberichte*, 263)

Summer 41: Despite losses of Red Air Force, even in first few months of advance *German units reported a resurgence in the activity of the VVS*. (*Muller, German Air War*, 51)

30.9.41: At this time, the Russians could deploy only **545** largely obsolete machines, to oppose the **1 000 + Luftwaffe** acft supporting drive on Moscow. (*D.R. Jones*, in: *Why Air Force's Fail*, 279)

3.10.41: Gen. Grossmann (**6. ID**) noted improvements in Soviet air forces at start of Operation „*Taifun*“: Mit wendigen Tieffliegern, die nichts mehr mit den am 22.6. festgestellten schwerfaelligen Flugzeugen gemein hatten, suchte der Russe unser Vorgehen zu verzoegern. (*Grossmann, Geschichte der 6. ID*, 70-71)

27.10.41: In *Orel* erscheinen täglich russ. Flieger, aber bombardieren unbedeutend. (*Tagebuch Rupp*, **17. PD**)

Oct-Nov 41: *Stavka* orders anti-air strikes against German airfields in effort to reduce *Luftwaffe's* numerical advantage. While these apparently achieved *significant results*, more important was the *arrival of four aviation divisions* (more than **1000 acft**) from the Far East, where the Japanese threat had waned. Thus, in mid-Nov, the Russians massed **1 138** machines (**738** active) to oppose the *Luftwaffe's* **670**. But even though the VVS had gained numerical superiority, the experienced *GAF* continued to hold its own, and then some, until autumn 1942. (D.R. Jones, in: *Why Air Force's Fail*, 279)

14.11.41: ...The field forces, esp. the units of the 4th and 9th Armies, are *suffering from an increase in the activity of the enemy air force*, which in addition to attacks on the troops, *set their billets on fire w/ incendiaries*. Through *radio intercepts* and statements by deserters we have *identified English or American fliers operating over the army group's front*. (Bock War Diary, Gerbet, 357)

Late Nov 41: Soviet air forces have “*voellige Luftherrschaft*” in the sector of **47. Pz.K.** (Guderian's **2. Panzerarmee**) (See, *Tagebuch Lemelsen*, 28.11.41; *Tagebuch Rupp*, **17. PD**, 21./24.11.41, 27.-29.11.41) (Note: On **27.11.41** Rupp writes in diary: „*Den ganzen Tag sind die russ. Jaeger wie die Tauben herumgeflogen, auch Bomben sind gefallen...*“)

Late Nov 41: Soviet air forces very active opposite elements of **2. PD**. See, *Tagebuch Richter* (**AR 74**), 27.11.41...For example, “*Die russ. Flieger beherrschen ueberlegen den Luftraum. Von unseren sieht man nicht die Bohne.*“ (27.11.41) See also, *Memorien W. Heinlein* (**AR 74**, 66-7): „*Besonders unangenehm waren die immer oefter angreifenden Kampfflugzeuge von Typ ,Rata.*“

Dez 41: Im Dez. 41 errangen die sowjet. Fliegerkraefte zum erstenmal in der Moskauer Richtung die *Luftueberlegenheit*. (A. Samsanow, *Schlacht vor Moskau*, 192)

Dec 41 [Tula sector]: In the Tula area, where **2 Pz Army** had been breached the Red Army advance was rapid and the Red Air Force was very active. In a **20-day** period at beginning of December, the Red Air Force flew **10 000** sorties in this area. Of these, **50%** were in tactical close support of ground forces, **26%** reconnaissance and only **10%** were on interdiction or rear area targets. (Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 235, f.n. 32)

19.12.41: Der dt. Schriftsteller *Horst Lange*, der als Soldat an der Ostfront heftige russ. Fliegerangriffe miterlebt, notiert am 19.12.41 in seinem Tagebuch: “*Die Russen sind gute u. mutige Piloten.*“ (Lange, *Tagebuecher aus dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 108; quoted in: *H.J. Schroeder, Die gestohlenen Jahre*, 528)

Late 41: From late 1941, it was not uncommon that young Soviet airmen arrived from the flight training schools w/ *no more than 30-40 flight hours* in training acft and *8-10 hours* on combat planes. This was a result of the immense losses in 1941; the Soviets were left w/ no option but to reduce the curricula of the flight training schools. Result, of course, was a large *inequality in pure dog fighting*, due to increasing gap in pilot training standards between the *GAF* and the VVS. (C. Bergstroem, *Black Cross*, 35)

Winter 1941/42: VVS developed *several ingenious methods and devices to keep its planes operating despite extremely low temps*. Powerful *heating lamps* were commonly used to prevent engine liquid from freezing. In addition, Soviets had advantage of operating several of their aviation units from *well-equipped air bases constructed prior to the war*—in stark contrast to

GAF units often stationed at *makeshift airstrips*. Thus *Soviet numerical superiority* in air in central sector at onset of winter offensive *became even more pronounced in Jan 42*. Frequently using two crews for every plane to maintain largest possible air activity, the frontal aviation, independent aviation groups, the aviation units of *Moscow Military District*, and even the *air defense units* of **6 IAK/PVO** operated predominantly in *close-support*, but they also ranged against German *supply lines* and *airfields* in the vicinity of the front. Since there were still few **Il-2s** and **Pe-2s** at hand, most of the daylight missions were carried out by fighters in the role of fighter-bombers. At night, **U-2s**, **R-5s** and **R-Zs** took over against the same targets. Relentless VVS air strikes meant that transporting goods to front line troops which had been unloaded at *Vyazma* was a *virtual death ride*. With most of the motor vehicles rendered useless due to cold, these supply columns were mainly *horse drawn*, and the plowed roads leading to the front were soon *littered w/ frozen horse carcasses and overturned wagons*. (C. Bergstroem, *Black Cross*, 42)

Winter 41/42: „Among the many missed opportunities of the Soviet forces, none was more striking than the failure of the Russian Air Force to follow up the retreating German forces in the withdrawal from Moscow during the winter of **1941-42**. Any sort of systematic assault upon those retreating columns, which were then choking the few available traffic arteries, would have dealt a heavy blow to the *Wehrmacht*.“ (K. Uebe, *Soviet Reactions to German Airpower*)

Jan 42: At beginning of 1942, structure of the VVS still based on the *irrational division between the front air forces, the army air forces, and the long-range bomber aviation (DBA)*. This division of command and responsibility *seriously hampered efficiency of Soviet aerial operations*. At same time, Soviet acft industry was *heading for a remarkable revival from immense difficulties*.⁷⁰ (C. Bergstroem, *Black Cross*, 30)

Jan 42: In „central combat zone,“ the frontal aviation of VVS-*Western Front* conducted **4 175** combat sorties, while the *Luftwaffe* registered but **666** in same area. The frontal aviation of VVS-*Western Front* claimed 20 German planes shot down; and in raids on ground targets, **1 920** vehicles, **64** tanks, **117** railway wagons and one railway engine were reported destroyed. For such successes, VVS-*Western Front* sustained a loss of **74** acft on combat flights. (C. Bergstroem, *Black Cross*, 47)

Jan 42: During this period, the **DBA** (Soviet bomber force) concentrated on *night raids against rail line leading from Smolensk to Vyazma*. Despite heavy AA opposition, the bomber crews *caused some severe disruption of German supply transports*. Raid on night of **4.1.42** was particularly successful. German **216. ID**—recently arrived from France only to be encircled by **Soviet 10th Army** at *Sukhinichi* (50 miles SW of *Kaluga*)—subjected to repeated VVS attacks. On northern flank of Army Group Center, Red Air Force instituted an *offensive against enemy airbases* in order to open the way for an upcoming ground offensive. (For details see, C. Bergstroem, *Black Cross*, 44-45)

Jan 42: During this month, *Moscow PVO* credited w/ shooting down **43** enemy planes. In fact, the *Moscow PVO* made any deep intrusion by the GAF into Moscow area increasingly hazardous.

⁷⁰ **Note:** In fall of 1941, almost the entire industry in western USSR had been evacuated to the east. Production resumed under *utterly primitive conditions*, often beneath the open sky. Under these circumstances, the monthly output of Soviet acft fell from **2 329** in Sep 41 to **627** in Nov 41. But through frantic efforts and by concentrating production resources, output figures rose sharply. By Jan 42, monthly production surpassed **1 000** acft (30)

This particularly the case w/ *long-range reconnaissance missions*, which were usually carried out singly. Two *Fernaufklarungsstaffel* of *Fliegerkorps VIII* (**4.(F)11** and **4.(F)14**), incurred **11 Ju 88s missing** in action during Jan 42. (C. Bergstroem, *Black Cross*, 46)

4.1.42: (*Anecdote*): Amazing story of Soviet MiG-3 pilot *Leytenant Ivan Shumilov's* aerial battle w/ several *Bf 109s*. Culminates in *Shumilov* crashing his MiG into one of the 109s, shattering the latter's cockpit and shredding the German pilot to the waist. (See, C. Bergstroem, *Black Cross*, 43-44)

Ca. 9.-10.1.42: About this time [second week of month], a sudden low-pressure system brings *rising temperatures and heavy snowfalls*. These adverse weather conditions, however, did not prevent VVS from maintaining constant pressure on the Germans. Even in blizzard and fog, the fighter-bombers, *Shturmoviks*, and *Pe-2s* dived out of the low clouds and *wrought havoc on German troop columns*. On **11.1.42**, the VVS-Kalinin Front claimed to have destroyed 15 trucks and two artillery pieces during ops against withdrawing *9th Army*. (C. Bergstroem, *Black Cross*, 45)

Jan-Feb 42: Rapid advance of Red Army also had *negative effects*. Not only were supply lines strung out, but the VVS fighters and ground-attack planes *were deprived of one of the initial Soviet advantages—well-equipped air bases*. As the frontal aviation regiments were moved forward to airstrips deserted by the *Luftwaffe*, the Soviets began to encounter many of the problems which previously had dogged the GAF. (C. Bergstroem, *Black Cross*, 48)

May 42: VVS carefully examined *lessons learned* since Jun 41. By spring 42, the VVS's ability for mass air ops beginning to improve. The *structural overhaul* was signaled by the *transformation of the post-June 1941 frontal air forces into truly operational air armies*. The involved the *top-to-bottom restructuring of the air forces into air divisions*, each comprising a single type of acft. Along w/ other reforms, this significantly raised the efficiency of *logistical support* and C2 systems. (D.R. Jones, in: *Why Air Force's Fail*, 281)

3.5: Intelligence Activities:

22.6.41 [Why did German attack achieve such surprise?]: In retrospect, there were „ample indications of impending hostilities.“ Communist railway workers in Sweden, resistance fighters in Poland, and numerous other agents reported the massive buildup of German forces in the east. German high-altitude reconnaissance a/c flew over Soviet territory on more than **300** occasions, prompting repeated diplomatic protests but little defensive action. . . At first glance, it is easy to accept the standard interpretation that Stalin's obstinate blindness was responsible for the debacle. . . Undoubtedly, Stalin was guilty of wishful thinking, of hoping to delay war for at least another year in order to complete the reorganization of his armed forces. . . There were numerous reasons for Stalin's reluctance to believe in an immediate German offensive. . . And certainly, Hitler's own logic for the attack – that he had to knock the Soviet Union out of the war to eliminate Britain's last hope of assistance – was incredibly convoluted. . .

There were also institutional reasons for the failure of Soviet intelligence to predict Hitler's plan. The Great Purges had decimated Soviet intelligence operations as well as the military command structure. Only the military intelligence service, the **GRU**, remained essentially intact, and the GRU chief, Lt.-Gen. F.I. Golikov, had apparently succumbed to German deception efforts. . . German deception operations also contributed to Soviet hesitation. First, the planned invasion of

Britain, Operation Sealion, was continued as a cover story for Operation „Barbarossa.“ The **OKW** confidently informed its Soviet counterpart that the troop buildup in the east was actually a deception aimed at British intelligence and that Germany needed to practice for Sealion in a region beyond the range of British bombers and recon a/c. . . A host of other German deceptions suggested impending operations from Sweden to Gibraltar. . . The German invasion of Yugoslavia and Greece during **Apr-May 41** also helped to conceal Operation Barbarossa. . . And by late **Jun 41**, so many warnings of a German attack had proved false that they no longer had a strong impact on Stalin and his advisors.

Viewed in this context, the Soviet strategic surprise is much more comprehensible. . . In retrospect, the most serious Soviet failure was neither strategic surprise nor tactical surprise, but ***institutional surprise***: In **Jun 41**, the Red Army and VVS were in transition, changing their organization, leadership, equipment, training, troop dispositions, and defensive plans. Had Hitler attacks **4** years earlier or even **1** year later, the Soviet armed forces would have been more than a match for the Wehrmacht. Whether by coincidence or instinct, however, the German dictator invaded at a time when his own armed forces were still close to their peak while his arch enemy was most vulnerable. It was this ***institutional surprise*** that was most responsible for the catastrophic Soviet defeats of 1941. (*Glantz & House, When Titans Clashed, 41-44*)

Like the Red Army, the **NIO** (Foreign Intelligence Service) and the **NKVD/NKGB** (State Security Intelligence Apparatus) had *both been ruthlessly purged between 1937-39*. Thereafter, Stalin allowed an intelligence organization to grow up around him *that reflected his own prejudices*. Only the “right” intelligence could be passed on to him, if intelligence officers wanted to survive. Thus, **General Golikov**,⁷¹ his chief military intelligence officer (head of the **GRU**), made sure that any intelligence reports reaching his master were carefully sorted into “reliable” and “not confirmed.” The Kremlin’s definition of “reliable” in early 1941 seems to have embraced any information that reinforced Stalin’s analysis of the politico-military situation. (*Col Hughes-Wilson, 42-49*)

Russia won the “intelligence war” on the eastern front—not thru signals intelligence and aerial reconnaissance, as did Britain and American on the western front—but by means of *espionage* conducted by Soviet agents at every level of operations, from parachute agents in the tactical zone of the *Wehrmacht* in Russia, to networks and penetration agents w/ access to the German High Command and German intelligence organizations. (*D. Thomas, 271-72*)

After the initial phase of the war, the NKVD infiltrated hundreds of agents into the rear of the German army, and numerous Soviet agents penetrated the German civil and military administrations in the guise of collaborators and anti-Communists. (*D. Thomas, 273*)

Russian failure to foresee “Taifun:” The German halt in the center after **Jul 41**, the diversion of German mechanized forces to the north and south, as well as the lateness of the season *persuaded the Russians that they need not worry about an offensive against Moscow*. By **5 Oct 41**, Russian C2 over the entire central front had collapsed. The German advance was so swift and collapse so sudden that Moscow got its first indications of disaster thru *Hitler’s speech of 5 Oct* that spoke of a “final decisive offensive.” The Russians had no specific knowledge of what Hitler was

⁷¹ *Col Hughes-Wilson*: Golikov, an efficient if doctrinaire ops officer, w/ no reputation as an intelligence analyst but a *commendable political loyalty to the party line*. (48-49) A brief biography of Golikov is on p 50. According to Hughes-Wilson, Stalin “could rely on comrade Golikov to follow his orders without question.”

speaking except for fact that communications no longer existed w/ the *Western Army Group*. (W. Murray, *Strategy for Defeat*, 86)

Sep 41: Der Angriff der Hr.Gr.Mitte [am 2. Okt. 41] haette die sowjet. Verteidigung vollstaendig ueberrascht, wenn nicht eine kommunistische *Spionageorganisation* im Fernen Osten Stalin u. dem sowjet. Oberkommando zu Hilfe gekommen waere. Dr **Richard Sorge**, aus Deutschland stammender Kommunist, Sowjetbuerger u. als Korrespondent einer dt. Zeitung in Tokio, wertvolles Mitglied des sowjet. Geheimdienstes konnte im Montat September sogar zwei lebenswichtige Meldungen nach Moskau funken: den *Angriffstermin* des Operationsplanes „*Taifuns*,“ u. den Beschluss der japan. Kaiserlichen Konferenz vom **6.9.41**: „Japan wird Amerika u. England angreifen, die Gefahr fuer die Sowjetunion ist vorbei!“ Diese Nachrichten erlaubten es dem Staatsverteidigungskomitee, Sofortmassnahmen zu ergreifen, das Moskauer Verteidigungssystem zu verstaerken...u. nicht zuletzt einen betraechtlichen Teil der fernoestlichen Truppen der Roten Armee in den Moskauer Raum, zum Schutze der Hauptstadt, zu verlegen. (Gosztony, *Entscheidungsschlacht*, 228)⁷²

3.6: *War Crimes:*

Note: In ihrer oft verzweifelten Lage [i.e., am Anfang des Ostkrieges] kam es auch zu schweren Kriegsverbrechen durch Truppenteile der Roten Armee, die deutsche Gefangene nicht selten ermordeten. Auf seiten der Wehrmacht steigerte das die Brutalitaet der Kaempfe u. die Gleichgueltigkeit gegenueber den Elendzuegen der sowj. Kriegsgefangenen. (R.-D. Mueller, *Der letzte deutsche Krieg*, 103)⁷³

Note: From the very start of the war, the Soviet authorities had *also* stressed that this war had a *totally different character* from any other. „This war w/ fascist Germany must not be regarded as an ordinary war,“ **Stalin** said in his *radio broadcast* of **3 Jul 41**. „It is not only a war between two armies. It is, at the same time, the war of the entire Soviet people against the fascist German troops. . .that know no compassion for the enemy.“ (Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 28-29)

Die Sowjetunion war dem *Genfer Kriegsgefangenenabkommen von 1929* nicht beigetreten. Gleich zu Beginn des Russlandfeldzuges haeuften sich die Meldungen u. Berichten ueber Toetungen dt. Gefangener.

Russians violate basic laws and usages of war from *opening hours of the campaign*. Shoot down doctors, stretcher bearers, even though they clearly carry red cross markings. Shot at ambulances, etc. In response to Russian methods, Dr Haape *removed his red cross armband on first day of war*. Began carrying automatic wpn and grenades. (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 25-27)

Ilja Ehrenburg schieb in seinem Weit verbreiteten u. spaetestens ab Sep 42 den dt. Stellen bekannten Flugblatt: „Die Dt. sind keine Menschen. Von jetzt ab ist das Wort ‚Deutscher‘ fuer uns der allerschlimmste Fluch...Wir werden nicht sprechen. Wir werden uns nicht aufregen. Wir werden toeten...Dem Flugblatt stand der **Beschluss des Rates der Volkskommissare der UdSSR vom 1.7.41** ueber die Behandlung von Kriegsgefangenen gegenueber. Es wurde unter

⁷² **Note:** This article was published by Gosztony in 1967; since then, others have asserted that Stalin began to move troops from the far east even *before* he received Sorge’s intelligence concerning Japanese intentions.

⁷³ **Note:** Mueller’s statement interesting in that few authors so strongly acknowledge Red Army complicity in such war crimes.

anderem untersagt, Kriegsgefangene zu misshandeln, zu bedrohen oder zu bestehlen. Wie wenig diese Anordnungen befolgt wurden, zeigt die haeufige Wiederholung des Befehls. Zahlreiche Aussagen kriegsgefangener Rotarmisten weisen darauf hin, dass ein **Stalin-Befehl zur Erschiessung dt. Gefangener** aufrief. Da ein solcher Befehl im Original nicht vorliegt, kann man nur aufgrund der Haeufigkeit der Zeugenaussagen davon ausgehen, dass eine solche Anordnung existierte. Vielfach dokumentiert hingegen sind *entsprechende Befehle von Befehlshabern sowjetischer Heerfuehrer u. Kommandeure*. Nachgewiesen sind ebenfalls *Anordnungen des stellvertretenden Volkskommissars fuer Verteidigung, L. Mechlis*, der 1941 persoanlich Weisungen zur Erschiessung dt. Kriegsgefangener gegeben hat. (*Anmerkung Dr Tauber in: Loewer Memoiren, f.n., 26-7*)⁷⁴

Special NKVD Detachments: It should be remembered that from the outset [of the war] the Soviet leadership possessed an executive agency which closely corresponded to the special squads of the German security police and the SS security service. These were the Special NKVD Detachments which *de facto* came under the People's Commissar of the Interior, **Beriva**; their duties included the administration of the **80 „concentration-camp systems“** then existing in the Soviet Union w/ hundreds of individual camps, as well as guarding political prisoners and POWs handed over to them by the military. From the first days of the war the **NKVD** troops had been charged w/ the execution of liquidation orders on a large scale. (For details see, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 909-10)

1941/42: In the early phases of the war, *German prisoners were usually shot*, either immediately on capture or after initial interrogation. The executions were usually authorized, or at least condoned, at company, battalion and regimental level. In many cases they were carried out on the order of commissars. The *Wehrmacht Investigation Office for Breaches of International Law (WUSt)* collected thousands of reports. Soviet records indicate that **90-95%** of German prisoners taken in **1941-2** did not survive . . . In his speech of **6.11.41**, on the 24th anniversary of the Great October Revolution, Stalin did not appear to discourage the practice (of killing/murdering German prisoners): „From now on it will be our task . . . to annihilate all Germans who have penetrated as occupiers, down to the last man.“ After the usual „tumultuous applause,“ he continued, „No mercy to the German occupiers! Death to the German occupiers!“ Stalin's appeal was understood to mean that all Germans, whether fighting, wounded or taken prisoner, were to be killed. As a direct result, one of the worst incidents occurred after the successful Soviet amphibious landing on the *Kerch* peninsula at end of **Dec 41**, when the Crimean Front drove the Germans back west of *Feodosiya* (p 29). However, Red Army cdrs were already realizing that such barbarism was counterproductive. In Order No. **55 (23.2.42)**, Stalin countermanded his earlier order. „The Red Army takes German soldiers and officers prisoner when they surrender.“ Thereafter, it appears that the Red Army command was *seldom guilty of outright violations of international law*, although there were exceptions, particularly during the Battle of *Stalingrad*. The same restrictions do not appear to have applied to the **NKVD**. (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 28-29)⁷⁵

⁷⁴ **Note:** For more on Ilya Ehrenburg and his anti-German propaganda see, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 912-13.

⁷⁵ **Note:** For more on shooting/mutilation of German prisoners, which began “in the same way and at the same time” in the most varied sectors of the front during the first few days see, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 913 ff. Altogether, “several thousand reports” of shootings of POWs, especially of wounded men left behind, were collected by the Wehrmacht Investigation Office for Breaches of International Law. This illegal practice, however, and the inhuman treatment of German POWs, of whom **90-95%** perished in **1941/42**, do not seem to have been in line w/ the intentions of the Red Army command. . . [However] efforts by Red Army leaders to curb such excesses by Soviet troops and to ensure appropriate treatment of

3.6.1: Deportation of Ethnic Groups:

For a long time, *one of the best-kept secrets of Soviet history* was the *deportation of whole ethnic groups* during the Great Patriotic War—nations that were collectively accused of “subversive tactics, espionage, and collaboration w/ the occupying Nazi forces.” Only at the end of the 1950s did the authorities finally admit that “excesses and generalizations” had taken place. In the 1960s the *legal existence* of a number of autonomous republics, which had been *struck off the map* for collaboration w/ the enemy, was finally reestablished. But it was only in **1972** that the remainder of the living deportees were finally given a “free choice of their place of abode.” And it was only in **1989** that the *Crimean Tatars* were fully rehabilitated. Only w/ the “*Declaration of the Supreme Soviet*” of **14 Nov 89** did the Soviet state finally acknowledge “the *criminal illegality of the barbarous acts* committed by the Stalinist regime against the peoples deported en masse.” (*Black Book of Communism*, 216)

Winter 40/41: The Soviets expedite the *mass expulsion* of populations in border regions – people they perceived as dubious and dangerous elements – and they concentrated large numbers of troops in those areas. (*Yahil, Holocaust*, 245)

28.8.41: The Germans were the first ethnic group to be collectively deported, *a few weeks after the German invasion* of the USSR. According to the 1939 census, there were **1,427,000** Germans living in the Soviet Union, most of them descendants of the German colonists invited by *Catherine II* to settle the vast empty spaces of southern Russia. In **1924**, the Soviet government had created the *autonomous Volga German Republic*. On 28 Aug 41, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet issued a decree stipulating that all Germans in the autonomous Volga Republic, the *Saratov* region, and *Stalingrad* were to be deported to *Kazakhstan* and *Siberia*. The decree portrayed this move as a *humanitarian measure*. At a time when the Red Army was retreating on all fronts, *Beria* diverted more than 14,000 men from the **NKVD** for this operation...Even if one takes account of the extraordinary circumstances and the unforeseen defeat of the Red Army, the *cruelty w/ which the operation was carried out is astounding*. (*Black Book of Communism*, 217-18)

Thereafter (summer 1941), other deportations of ethnic Germans carried out at *Leningrad*, in the *Moscow* region, *Gorky*, in *Rostov*, etc. In Oct 41, there was a further deportation of 100,000 Germans living in *Georgia*, *Armenia*, *Azerbaijan*, the *Northern Caucasus* and the *Crimea*. As of **25.12.41**, **894,600** Germans had been deported, mostly to Kazakhstan and Siberia. If the German deportations in 1942 are considered, in all roughly **1,209,430** were deported in less than a year—very close to the 1,427,000 Germans reported in the 1939 census. (**Note:** Although no figures given, clear that many of the deportees never made it to their destination; if they did, they lived under very harsh conditions.) (*Black Book of Communism*, 218-19)

Deportations of the Germans followed by a *second great wave of deportations*, from **Nov 43 – Jun 44**, when six peoples—the *Chechens*, the *Ingush*, the *Crimean Tatars*, the *Karachai*, the *Balkars*, and the *Kalmyks*—were deported to Siberia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kirgizstan on the pretext that they had “collaborated massively w/ the Nazi occupier.” (See, *Black Book of Communism*, 219-25)

POWs were encountering extraordinary difficulties – as is proved by the ceaseless repetition of similar orders. (916)

A few figures give an idea of the *scale of death* among the deportees: Of the **608,749** people deported from the *Caucasus*, **146,892**, or nearly 1 in 4, had died by **1 Oct 48**. Of the **228,392** people deported from the *Crimea*, **44,887** had died after four years. The extremely high mortality rate becomes even more apparent when one considers that between 40 and 50 percent of the deportees were *under 16 years of age*. (*Black Book of Communism*, 223)

3.6.2: Wehrmachts-Untersuchungsstelle (WUSt.):

a. BA-MA RW 2/145 (Nov 41):

Kriegsverbrechen der russ. Wehrmacht 1941: „Die von der [WUSt.] fuer Verletzungen des Voelkerrechts in den ersten Monaten des Krieges gegen die Sowjet-Union getroffenen Feststellungen ueber Kriegsverbrechen der russ. Truppen gegenueber wehrlosen deutschen Soldaten und hinsichtlich voelkerrechtswidriger Ueberfaelle auf Sanitaets-Formationen, Aerzte und Krankentraeger *ueberstiegen die schlimmsten Befuerchtungen und jedes Vorstellungsvermoegen*. Die Sowjet-Union hat sich aller kriegsrechtlichen Verpflichtungen, die die Kulturstaaten in der *Haager Landkriegsordnung* u. den *Genfer Konventionen* sowie in anderen voelkerrechtlichen Vertraegen untereinander getroffen haben, durch ihr Verhalten entledigt und *vom ersten Tage des Krieges an* die ihren innerstaatlichen *Schreckensmethoden* entsprechenden brutalen Mittel auch gegenueber den in ihre Hand gefallenen wehrlosen Angehoerigen der dt. Wehrmacht u. gegenueber dt. Sanitaetsformationen zur Anwendung gebracht.“ (*WUSt., BA-MA RW 2/145*, p 1)⁷⁶

As partial evidence, WUSt. reveals *two Russian orders*, which were found among the captured documents of Russian military staffs—[sie] beweisen das *unmenschliche Verfahren*, das die Sowjet-Wehrmacht gegenueber verwundeten u. unverwundeten deutschen Kriegsgefangenen *planmaessig zur Anwendung gebracht hat*:

a. **30.6.41:** Ein Befehl des „Volkskommissariats fuer Verteidigungswesen, Leitung der politischen Propaganda der 5ten Armee,“ vom 30. Juni 1941 (Nr. 25) (see pp 2-3)

b. **14.7.41:** Der Befehl des „Volkskommissariats fuer das Verteidigungswesen, UdSSR, Abt. Pol. Propaganda des 31. Schuetzen-Korps,“ vom 14. Juli 1941. This order notes among other things: „Rotarmisten u. Kommandeure *nehmen im Kampfe keine Soldaten u. Offiziere gefangen*. Es sind Faelle bemerkt, dass Gefangene *erwuegt u. totgestochen werden*...“

WUSt.: Rueckhaltsloser Bestaetigung von feindl. Seite als durch diese beiden russ. Befehle vom 30. Juni u. 14. Juli 1941 koennen die in der anliegenden Dokumentensammlung behandelten Gewalttaten der Bolschewisten nicht finden. (*WUSt., BA-MA RW 2/145*, p 4)

Noch heute, ueber 4 Monate nach Beginn des dt.-russ. Krieges, liegt keine Mitteilung der russ. Regierung ueber die *Einrichtung von Kriegsgefangenenlagern* in Russland vor. Auch den legitimierten Vertretern des *Internationalen Roten Kreuzes* ist der Zutritt zu Kriegsgefangenenlagern in Russland bisher nicht erlaubt worden, obwohl die dt. Regierung die Besichtigung von Gefangenenlagern, die mit russ. Kriegsgefangenen belegt sind, dem

⁷⁶ **Note:** This volume, **RW 2/145**, originally published by WUSt. in Nov 41. Also, unclear if this document is really 2/145 or 2/147! I believe it is former.

Geschaeftstraeger der Vereinigten Staaten sowie verschiedenen Vertretern des [Roten Kreuzes] u. anderer Hilfsgesellschaften *wiederholt gestattet hat.* (WUSt.,BA-MA RW 2/145, p 5)

In the introduction (Allgemeine Einfuehrung) it states that: „Dokumente ueber die russ. Greuertaten an *ukrainischen, polnischen, lettischen* u. anderen Minderheiten der Bevoelkerung der Sowjet-Republik aus den ersten Monaten des Krieges werden den Beweisen ueber die Kriegsverbrechen gegen dt. Wehrmichtsangehoerige beigefuegt. Auch diese Dokumente, insbesondere die aus ihnen ersichtlichen *brutalen Ernordungen zahlloser Frauen u. Kinder*, bestaetigen die Absicht des methodischen Vorgehens der sowjet. Verbaende u. bilden daher eine wichtige Ergaenzung...Ein *Untersuchungsprotokoll*, dass die Verrohung [*brutalization*] bolschewistischer Wehrmichtsangehoeriger in ihrem Verhalten zueinander *bis in den Bereich des Kannibalismus* *erhaertet*, beschliesst die dieser Niederschrift beigefuegten Dokumentensammlung. (WUSt.,BA-MA RW 2/145, p 7)

Following introduction (all above), this document goes on to add such topics as: A) „Ermordung, Verwundung u. Misshandlung Wehrloser – Beraubung der Kriegsgefangenen – Grabschaendungen – Freischaerlerie – *Verwendung von voelkerrechtswidriger Munition.*“ (WUSt.,BA-MA RW 2/145, p 10)

Examples of Soviet War Crimes (pp 8-72). These well-documented investigations of the WUSt. make abundantly clear that Soviets were killing German prisoners-of-war from opening day of campaign. From just a cursory examination of the document, one finds that German prisoners were robbed of their belongings; forced to strip down to underwear; dispatched with shots to back of the head (*Genickschuss*); bayoneted to death; beaten (to death) w/ rifle butts, spades, etc.; brutally mutilated (eyes gouged out, noses/ears cut off, genitals mutilated, etc.); bound up (hands/feet); tortured, and so forth. This kind of treatment “meated out” to all—regular combat troops, medical orderlies, doctors, etc. *Commissars* often ordered the killings. The numerous examples cover period from 22.6.-14.10.41.⁷⁷

3.6.3: Proscribed Munitions (use of):

BA-MA RW 2/v.147: WUSt. / *Kriegsverbrechen der russ. Wehrmacht 1941:*

Verwendung von Dum-Dum u. kleinkalibrigen Explosivgeschossen.

„Die Russen haben in den verschiedensten Abschnitten der Ostfront Infanteriemunition verwendet, die durch behelfsmaessiges Abkneifen oder Abfeilen der *Geschosspitzen Dum-Dum* Charakter erhalten hatten.“⁷⁸

„Auch Geschosse mit Explosivwirkung sind in vielen Faellen von den Russen gegen dt. Truppen verwendet worden. So berichtet am **13.7.41** eine Inf.Div., dass bei dem Tiefangriff eines Sowjetflugzeuges auf eine dt. Marschkolonne russ. Munition – sog. B-Munition – mit Sprengwirkung verwendet worden ist, die im vorderen Teil des Geschosses eine Sprengladung enthaelt. Diese Sprengladung wird beim Auftreffen des Geschosses zur Entzuendung gebracht, sodass das Geschoss beim Eindringen in den Koerper auseinanderreisst, wodurch verheerende Wunde verur-

⁷⁷ See, for example, declaration of Russian Major *Koslow* (taken prisoner on 23.7.41), concerning treatment of German POWs. (71-72)

⁷⁸ **Note:** Several examples of discovery of such illegal munitions adumbrated. German soldiers give statements *under oath* to that effect. (74-76)

sacht werden. Auch in der Beutesammelstelle in *Krzemieniec* ist derartige Munition festgestellt worden...Gleichartige *Explosiv-Munition* ist nach dem Bericht eines Korpskommandos auch bei einem russ. Tieffliegerangriff am **16.7.41** bei *Kropiwna* von den Russen gebraucht worden. In allen diesen Faellen sind die Geschosse nicht gegen Luft- oder Panzerziele oder aehnliche bewegliche oder feste Erdziele, sondern *voelkerrechtswidrig* gegen dt. marschierende oder kaempfende Truppen verwendet worden.“

* * * *

H. Stockhoff: „Du fragst nach **Explosiv-Munition**. Es waren *gefaehrliche Geschosse*, die *schwere Verwundungen* verursachten. Bei dem *Sturmangriff* auf [*Upjerwitschi?*] am **28.Oktober 1941** unserer **9./37** wuerde der Soldat *Hermann Klein* durch ein Explosiv-Geschoss im Oberschenkel toedlich verwundet...In der **Gridino-Stellung** ist am **13.06.42** Uffz. *Franz Lienkamp* gefallen, als ein *Explosiv-Geschoss* ihm die Schaedeldecke abgerissen hatte. Nach meiner Meinung war es nicht erlaubt mit *Explosiv-Munition* zu schiessen. Von deutscher Seite wurde *keine Gegenmassnahme getroffen* u. unerlaubte Munition eingesetzt. Auch bei den Kaempfen *Weihnachten* 1941 in *Sresnewo* u. *Bukontowo*, wo unser Zugfuehrer [?] Lt. S.gefallen ist, sowie beim Sturmangriff auf *Gory-Kaseki* [?] am **5.8.42**, bei dem unsere **9./37 63** Kameraden verlor, **8 Tote**, **8 Vermisste** u. **47 Verwundete** setzte der Russe *Explosiv-Munition* ein. (*Ltr, H. Stockhoff, 6. ID, 12 Oct 07*)

H. Stuehlmeier: “Diese *Explosive geschosse* waren *Kugeln aus der russ. Maschinenpistole*. Sie explodierten beim Aufschlag u. rissen dann immer gefaehrlich grosse Wunden. In meinem Brief vom **09. August 2006** hatte ich Dir schon mal darueber gerichtet. In der Winterstellung 1941-1942 wurden wir in dem Dorf **Gridino** *sehr oft mit dieser Waffe beschossen*. Der Russe schoss dann einfach ungezielt wahllos in das Dorf *Gridino*. Das war dann etwa *wie ein Artillerieueberfall in Kleinstformat*. Mit dem Zischen habe ich die explodierenden Geschosse gemeint. Das Dorf *Gridino* lag tagsueber *unter stetigem Beschuss*. Diese Explosivgeschosse habe ich am **21. Dez-ember 1941** zum ersten Mal erlebt. Es muss morgens so gegen 6. Uhr gewesen sein, als dieser Feuerzauber so richtig losging. Ich lag mit meinem Kameraden *Karl Ebert* hinter dem Schutzschild von unser Pak...Das war eine *fuerchterliche Ballerei*. Die Geschosse zerplatzten vor dem Schutzschild. Es wurde eine Sprenggranate abgefeuert, aber danach oeffnete sich der *automatische Verschluss* nicht mehr, er war festgefroren, durch die ploetzliche Erhitzung. Wir hatten ueber -30 Kaelte, sogar unsere *Maschinengewehre* waren eingefroren. Wir haben alles versucht den Verschluss zu oeffnen, es war vergebens. Mit einer *Maschinenpistole* vom *Unteroffizier Konrad* u. 5 Gewehren konnten wir die Russen noch fuer kurze Zeit aufhalten. Doch dann hatten wir keine Munition mehr u. wir mussten uns ins Dorf zurueckziehen. Unsere Kanone war verloren. Es wurde ein *Gegenangriff* gemacht, dabei ist dann der *Oberleutnant Grupe* u. einige Kameraden gefallen. Auch bei diesem *Gegenangriff* haben diese *Explosivgeschosse* eine besondere Rolle gespielt. Ich habe einen Kameraden gesehen, *dem war durch ein Explosivgeschoss das halbe Gesicht weggerissen*. Er hatte keine Augen mehr u. der halbe Mund u. die Nase war auch weggerissen. Eine gewoehnliche Kugel haette wahrscheinlich nur einen Streifschuss verursacht.“ (*Ltr, H. Stuehlmeier, 6. ID, 25 Oct 07*)

16.2.42: Augenblicklich schießt der Russe. Ich kann die Schüsse hier zischen hören. *Er schießt mit Explosiv-Geschossen*. *Das ist ein ganz gefaehrliches Zeug*. Vor ein paar Stunden schoss der Russe noch mit Artillerie, aber schon nach kurzer Zeit erhielt die russische Beobachtungsstelle einen Volltreffer von unserer Artillerie. Jetzt mache ich Schluss, ich habe gleich Wache. Seid nun vielmals begrüßt von Heinrich. (*FPB, H. Stuehlmeier, 6. ID*)

3.6.4: Chronology:

In a *Feldpostbrief*, W. Dicke describes, „wie die Russen den Regt.-Stab des **IR 77** [26. ID] bestialisch ermordet haben.“ (*Dicke Ltr*, 16.3.05)

Jun 41: Initial experiences of *E. M. Rhein* in combat w/ Russian *Versprengte*. Noted that they killed German *Red Cross* personnel. Also noted they discovered the mutilated body of a German *leutnant* – his eyes gouged out and genitals cut off – in initial days of campaign. (see, pp 51-55 of his history of **IR 18**) His initial impressions: „Die Russen sind nicht wie die Franzoesen...Krieg wird grausamer werden.“ Russians *much tougher than French*. (*Intvw, E.M. Rhein, IR 18/6. ID*, 8-9 Dec 06)

22.6.41: Erste Ueberfaelle aus dem Hinterhalt werden festgestellt. Feldwachen sind erstochen u. *graesslich verstuemelt*. (*H. Boucsein, Halten oder Sterben, 129. ID*, ca. 15)

22.6.41: Wir hatten den Schwerpunkt des Angriffes. Von den **6** Aerzten des Regiments ist einer gefallen (Kopfschuss) u. einer verwundet. Dazu sind auch **4** Krankentraeger gefallen. Wir haben den Russen auf der ganzen Linie geworfen bis auf einige Bunker die noch nicht gefallen sind. Es wird noch hart gekaempft. – Viel Arbeit habe ich gehabt u. oft unter schweren Maschinengewehrfeuer Kameraden verbunden. (*Tagebuch, Haape, 6. ID*)

22.6.41 [*vor Bialystok*]: ...Bald wurden die ersten Spaehtrupps gefunden, die den Russen in die Haende gefallen waren. Man hatte ihnen bei lebendigem Leibe die *Geschlechtsteile abgeschnitten*, die *Augen ausgestochen*, die *Kehlen durchgeschnitten* oeder *Ohren u. Nasen abgeschnitten*. Wir gingen mit ernsten Gesichtern umher, denn vor dieser Art des Kampfes bekamen wir Angst. Zwangslaeufig, entwickelte sich auch auf unserer Seite *eine unnatuerliche Haert*, die uns in der Ausbildung nicht anerzogen worden war. (*Uffz.Fritz Huebner, Echolot*, 24-25)

ab 22.6.41: *Eye and genital mutilations* were inflicted w/ such frequency on German prisoners during the early part of the campaign that it increased unease even further at the prospect of possible capture by the enemy. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 138)

ab 22.6.41: The **NKVD** were in charge of the **GULag – 80** „concentration camp systems,“ plus political prisoners and POWs transferred to them by the military. As soon as the Germans attacked, Stalin used the **NKVD** to *execute all people* suspected of espionage and to arrest those considered politically unreliable. *Far from a relaxation of the „terror,“ the outbreak of war meant more arrests...*The outlying republics in the Germans' path which in many areas were already resisting Soviet rule – eastern Poland, the Baltic States, Belorussia and Ukraine – were particularly hard hit. In the first few days, *mass shootings took place*, primarily of Poles, Ukrainians and Baltic nationals. Before they pulled back, the NKVD shot political prisoners...Massacres took place in *Brest, Minsk, Kaunas, Vilnius* and *Riga*. But shootings also occurred in *Smolensk* and *Kiev*, and even in the Russian Republic itself. ***The NKVD and the German SS Security Police Service behaved in similar fashion.*** In *Kiev*, the NKVD and other Soviet security agencies executed **4000** Ukrainian and Polish political prisoners, as well as some German prisoners, some of whom were *tortured* . . . In any areas recovered by Soviet forces, even temporarily, the Soviet security troops also shot any Soviet citizen suspected of contact w/ German troops. (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 37-38)

23.6.41 [*Moskau*]: Am zweiten Kriegstag rief man mich ins PUR u. bat mich, ein Flugblatt fuer die dt. Soldaten zu verfassen...ich wuesste, dass es meine Pflicht sei, das wahre Gesicht des faschistischen Soldaten zu zeige...Ich musste unsere Maenner vor dem illusionaeren Vertrauen auf die *Klassensolidaritaet* der dt. Arbeiter warnen, vor der Hoffnung darauf, dass den Kriegern Hitlers das Gewissen schlaegt. Es war jetzt nicht die Zeit, in der vorrueckenden Armee des Feindes nach „guten Deutschen“ zu suchen, indes der Tod in unsere Staedte u. Doerfer einzog. Ich schrieb: „Toete den Deutschen!“ (*Ilja Ehrenburg, Echolot*, 63)

28.6.41: An diesem Tage hatten Sowjetsoldaten in der Gegend von Minsk eine deutlich gekennzeichnete Kolonne des **Krankenkraftwagenzuges 127** ueberfallen u. einen Grossteil der Verwundeten u. der begleitenden Sanitaetssoldaten niedergemetzelt. (*Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 203)

30.6.41: ...The troop commanders report that the *Russian ruse of pretending to surrender and then opening fire again has so infuriated our people that they kill everyone who crosses their path*. But there are also reports of *mutilation of German wounded*. (*Bock War Diary, Gerbet*, 233)

Late Jun 41: At end of **Jun 41**, **III/IR 9** was wood-clearing around a road NE of *Bialystok*, near the village of *Krynki*. A young *Panzerjaeger Leutnant*, despite warnings to the contrary, arrogantly insisted on pushing ahead of the road clearance thru woods probably infested w/ Russian soldiers. The *Panzerjaeger* platoon pressed on and was barely out of sight of the supporting German infantry before the vehicles were heard to stop. Inhuman shrieks of pain soon rent the air, interspersed w/ shouted commands in Russian. Major Haeften, the infantry company cdr, ordered a hasty assault to rescue the ambushed AT platoon. The lead platoon led by Feldwebel Gottfried Becker encountered a *scene of carnage* they “could only gradually, very slowly, allow to sink in.” They were sickened by what they saw. “Here and there a body jerked convulsively or danced around in its own blood.” The nearer the rescuing troops approached the macabre scene, the greater the appreciation of the *atrocities* visited upon the wretched *Panzerjaeger*:

The majority of the German soldiers had their eyes gouged out, others their throats cut. Some had their bayonets stuck in their chests. Two soldiers had their uniform jackets and shirts ripped apart and their naked stomachs slit open, glistening entrails hung out of the bloody mass. Two more had their genitals cut off and laid on their chests.

German soldiers “stumbled as if in a trance” onto the road to survey the scene. News swept quickly thru the division. The regimental cdr had objected to the *Commissar Order*, but the next political commissar captured was handed w/o scruple to the military police and shot. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 137; see also, *Nayhauss, Zwischen Gehorsam u. Gewissen*, 144-46)

Jun-Aug 41: The notorious Order Number 270 was issued in **Aug 41**, condemning all those who surrendered or were captured as “traitors to the motherland.” The wives of captured officers were subject to arrest and imprisonment. . . The wartime terror took an almost inevitable toll among those officers who had been unfortunate enough to be in command of the zone that was attacked. Senior commanders were arrested, though not all were executed. But the chief culprit in Stalin’s eyes was the commander of the Western Army Group, General Dmitri Pavlov. [He was arrested at end of **Jun 41**, accused of treason and shot.]

The terror was not limited to military scapegoats. On **20 Jul 41** Stalin authorized Beria to organize a special section in the **NKVD** to purge unreliable elements from military units and to investigate ruthlessly all soldiers who escaped from German captivity or encirclement. True to Stalin's intentions, the NKVD rounded up suspected rumor-mongers and defeatists, who in a fresh wave of lawlessness were either shot or exiled to the camps. *The worst atrocities were perpetrated in the areas vacated by the Red Army.* In occupied Poland, the Baltic states and the Ukraine the NKVD indulged in a panic-stricken orgy of killing. Uncertain what to do w/ their prisoners, they began to murder them randomly in the first days of the German assault. . . The NKVD guards killed anyone in their hands, even common criminals or those pending trial. When the prisons were opened up after the Soviet retreat they were scenes of indescribable horror. Bodies had been savagely mutilated, hundreds of prisoners had been tortured to death. . . In one incident in the Ukraine, the NKVD *dynamited two cells filled w/ women prisoners*. In another prison the floor was strewn w/ the tongues, ears and eyes of the dead prisoners. The horrors almost defy explanation. . . Racism cannot be discounted, for when the advancing Germans put Soviet prisoners of war and Poles together in the same railway cars, they sometimes found, on arrival at prison camp, that the Poles had been murdered on the way. When the NKVD had time, prisoners were marched east under escort on what quickly turned into death marches. [For more details see, *R. Overy, Russia at War*, 80-83]

1.7.41: [Stiftsberg?] von Lemberg im Gefaengnis. Tausende erschossener Ukrainer, russ. Bestialitaet. Man kann die Leichen gar nicht alle beerdigen...(Tagebuch Thilo)⁷⁹

2.7.41 [Sowjetunion / an seinen Lehrer]: ...Die eingesetzten russ. Verbaende setzten sich z.T. aus *Mongolen* zusammen. Entsetzliche Kerls; leider sind einige dazu gekommen, *Grausamkeiten an Verwundeten auszuueben*. Einem Unteroffizier von unserer Fahrradgruppe haben sie, nachdem er einen Oberschenkeldurchschuss erhalten hatte, die *Augen ausgestochen* u. die *Genitalien abgeschnitten*. 50 gefangene Bolschewiken, die in dem Verdacht standen, sind umgelegt worden. (*Unbekannter Soldat, Echolot*, 183)

5.7.41: [Heusinger an seine Frau]: ...Das der Kampf jedoch „*zum Teil asiatische Formen*“ angenommen habe, „vor allem in der *Frage der Gefangenenbehandlung*,“ missfaellt ihm zusehends. (*Meyer, Heusinger*, 153) (Autor: „Heusinger bezieht sich hier auf zahlreiche Faelle vom ersten Kriegstag an, in denen die vorrueckende Truppe von zurueckweichenden sowjet. Truppenteilen *bestialisch ermordet, oft zuvor gefolterte dt. Kriegsgefangene* u. Verwundete von Vorausabteilungen *aufgefunden hat*.“ (*Meyer*, 850, f.n. 29)

5.7.41: On this day, **AA 6** finds a *Gelbkreuzlager* in Lycewicze. Two days later, Div. Kdr. inspects the *Zuchthaus* in Wilejka, 100 km east/southeast of Wilna. The prison used for Lithuanian political prisoners (some 1600). Russians had executed hundreds of them. Vivid account. (*Grossmann, Geschichte der 6. ID*, 47-48)⁸⁰

⁷⁹ **Note:** For a harrowing picture of what the Soviets left behind at the prisons in *Lemberg* – i.e., thousands of beastially slaughtered prisoners – see, *Kempowski, Das Echolot*, account of *Divisionspfarrer Alphons Satzger*, 4.7.41, 227-28.

⁸⁰ **Note:** Between **Jul-Dec 41**, 210 labor colonies, 135 prisons and 27 camps, containing nearly **750,000** prisoners, were transferred to the east by the NKVD. Because of shortages of transport, most of the prisoners were evacuated on foot, over distances that sometimes exceeded **600 miles**. When there was not enough time to evacuate a camp or prison, as was often the case in the opening weeks of the war, the *prisoners were simply executed*. This was particularly the case in the western Ukraine, where at end of Jun 41 the NKVD massacred 10,000 prisoners in *Lviv*, 1200 in prison at *Lutsk*, 1500 in *Stanislwow*, and 500 in *Dubno*. When the Germans arrived, they discovered dozens of mass graves...Using these “Judeo-

17.7.41: Teile des Gef.Tross 2, sowie die 2. San[itae]ts] Komp. sind ueberfallen worden u. restlos vernichtet. *Viele Verwundete wurden umgebracht!* (*Tagebuch Kreuter, SR 101/18. PD*)

17.7.41 [HLKO]: Neben dem Genfer Abkommen vom **27.7.29** ueber die Behandlung von Kriegsgefangenen, gab es die Haager Landkriegsordnung (HLKO) von **1907**, in der u.a. auch die Rechtsstellung der Kriegsgefangenen festgelegt wurden. Doch die Sowjet Union erkannte die durch das Zarenreich unterzeichneten Vertraege nicht an u. hatte auch das Genfer Abkommen nicht ratifiziert. Ernst nach Beginn des Russlandfeldzuges liess die Sowjetregierung in einer Note vom **17.7.41** der Reichsregierung ueber Schweden mitteilen, dass sie sich unter der Bedingung der Gegenseitigkeit an die **HLKO** halten werden. (*Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam, 202*)

18.7.41: ...Ich erfahre von Lt. Kirmse die *Geschichte von Ljady*. Er sollte es mit seiner Kp. Besetzen. Nur ganz schwache Feindteile sollten darin sein. Es stellte sich aber dann heraus, dass es sehr stark besetzt war. Der Russe liess ihn schoen in den Ort hinein u. griff dann an. Einige Leute wurden gefangen genommen. Als spaeter ein Btl. den Ort nahm fand man diese *vollkommen verstuemelt* auf... (*Tagebuch Kreuter*)

18.7.41: An diesem Tage wurden zwischen Liosno u. Rudnia mindestens **10** verwundete dt. Soldaten der **AA 35**, die man zunaechst zurueckgelassen hatte, von den Russen getoetet u. beraubt. Bei den Kaempfen um den Brueckenkopf bei Dzisa and der Duena wurden **74** gefangene Soldaten des **II./IR 53 (mot.)** u. etwa **30** Soldaten des **Kradsch.-Btn-54** der **14. ID (mot.)**, die oestl. Sztaritza vermisst gemeldet waren, auf brutalste Weise massakriert u. schliesslich ermordet.⁸¹ Aehnliche Grausamkeiten an wehrlosen verwundeten oder gefangenen dt. Soldaten erlebten wohl all Truppenteile an der Ostfront. (*Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam, 128*)

19.7.41: Elements of Gen. Lemelsen's (**47. AK [mot]**) Korps Nachr.Abt. ueberfallen & murdered by Russians, "meist durch Genickschüsse." German soldiers *wutend*. (See, *Tagebuch Lemelsen, 20.7.41*)

Late Jul 41: Ende **Jul 41** steht das Rgt. [**IR 77**] im Raum der oberen Duena, suedl. von Welikije Luki u. riegelt die eingeschlossenen Russen nach Sueden ab. Die Gefechte finden im Raum Niwy, Bor [Niwy-Bor?] statt, welche auf keiner der Karten zu finden ist. Der Angriff gegen die Russen u. die Gefechte sind gegen den spaeten Nachmittag beendet unter grossen Verlusten der Russen. Auch unter uns sind Verluste zu tragen. Ein ganzer Zug unter dem Leutnant Putsch, der **1./IR 77** ist verschwunden. Erst viel spaeter werden die Leute gefunden. **74** Mann sind gefallen.

Wie die Untersuchung ergab haben diese **74** Mann bis zum letzten Schuss gekaempft, dann im Nahkampf gegen eine vielfachen Uebermacht unterlegen. So etwas kommt im Krieg vor, nur was dann zu sehen war liess einem das Blut in den Adern stocken. Saemtliche Soldaten waren die Augen ausgestochen, die Nasen u. Geschlechtsteile abgeschnitten u. die Baeuche aufgeschlitzt. . . Der Leutnant Berger, mein Rekruten-Ausbildungs-Offizier, hat die Kameraden gefunden. Wer solche Greuelthaten sieht u. davon hoert erlebt Gefuehle, die nach Vergeltung nur so schreien. . . (*G. Barkhoff, 26. ID, Ostfront – Ein Soldatenleben, 22a*)

Bolshevik atrocities" as a pretext, the Nazi *Sonderkommandos* immediately massacred tens of thousands of Jews. (*Black Book of Communism, 225-26*)

⁸¹ **Note:** Date of this second incident not provided. I placed it in this entry for convenience. Would have been summer **1941**.

Aug 41: Eine Kompanie [26. ID] wurde ein Opfer russischer Uebermacht, die verwundeten Dt. wurden niedergemacht, ihre Schaedel mit Gewehrkolben eingeschlagen, ihre Augen ausgestochen oder der Hals durchschnitten. (*Tagebuch Stabarzt Lierow, IR 37/6. ID*)

Aug 41: Despatches submitted during August by Army Group South contained reports of the first atrocities committed by Soviet troops. They were so appalling that even Hitler was doubtful, and he sent me to Nikolayev to check w/ **16 PD**. I spoke there w/ General Hube and a very good friend of mine, Udo v. Alvensleben. They described to me the discovery of the corpses of more than **100** murdered soldiers of **6./IR 79** at Grigovo station. At another place German prisoners had been drawn and quartered alive. Our troops had responded accordingly. When I explained the facts to Hitler at Wolfsschanze he thought about it for some time and said finally that General Staff ought to know; then they might take a different view of the sort of enemy we were fighting against. (*v. Below, At Hitler's Side, 112*)

8.9.41: On the *Volga* river, the eastward deportation begins of all **600,000** ethnic Germans who had lived in the Volga region for two (2) centuries. With the German forces already poised to enter Kiev, Stalin fears possible sabotage and subversion. (*Gilbert, Second World War, 232*)

Oct 41: Elements of *Pz.Jg.Kompanie 58* caught in a trap by the Russians, who massacre wounded German soldiers. (*Grossmann, Geschichte der 6. ID, 80*)

Oct 41 [*Rumor only?*]: “Nach einem sofortigen Gegenangriff wurde ein paar dt. Soldaten wieder befreit. Die Russen hatten sie *mit der Zunge auf den Tisch genagelt*. Diese Geschichte wurde damals in unserer Kompanie erzaehlt. In unserem Rgt ist das sicher nicht gewesen, dann waere das doch bekannt geworden. Dann bleibt die Frage noch offen. Ist das wirklich die Wahrheit gewesen? Aber nach allem, was wir in spaeteren Jahren erlebt u. erfahren haben, koennte das tatsaechlich passiert sein. . . Ueber ein anderes Ereignis kann ich Dir folgendes Berichten. Damals im **Okt 41** war mein Vater als Klassifizierer mit noch 2 anderen Herren taetig. Nach getaner Arbeit hatten die drei sich an einen Tisch im Schlachthofrestaurant gesetzt um zu fruehstuecken. An der Theke [*bar, counter*] stand ein staedtischer Bediensteter u. erzaehlte dort folgendes: -- Zwei dt. Soldaten waeren den russ. Soldaten in die Haende gefallen, aber kurz darauf wieder befreit worden. Diese beiden Soldaten waren mit der Zunge auf den Tisch genagelt. – Darauf hatt mein Vater gesagt: ‚Hoert auf, ich kann das nicht mehr hoeren.‘ Nach kurzer Zeit sind ein paar Polizeibeamte gekommen u. haben meinen Vater festgenommen u. zum Gerichtsgebäude am Neumarkt gebracht. Dort wurde er verhoert u. nach etwa einer Stunde wieder freigelassen. Vater hatte dort ausgesagt: ‚Ich kann so was schreckliches nicht mehr hoeren, weil mein Sohn dort auch als Soldat ist.‘ Das war doch sicher die geheime Staatspolizei!?! Mein Vater hat mir davon erzaehlt, er sagte, ‚Heinrich du musst das nicht weiter erzaehlen, ich moechte keine Unannehmlichkeiten deswegen haben.‘ Ich moechte mit Sicherheit glauben, dass er u. vielleicht die ganze Familie beobachtet wurden. . . Die Sache mit meinem Vater war im Herbst **1941**. Und dieselbe Erzaehlung war auch im Herbst bei meiner Kompanie in Russland. Das bringt mich auf den Gedanken, ob das wohl Wahrheit war? (*H. Stuehlmeier, 6 ID, Brief an C. Luther, 25.1.08*)

Nov 41: Village of *Spass*: Wounded German soldiers (**106. ID**) murdered by Russian troops; bodies of dead mutilated with bayonets, etc. “Aus den Toten von Spass wuchsen den wenigen, die noch geblieben waren, neuer Mut u. die Kraft zur *Vergeltung*.“ (See, *Bericht Ringenberg, 240 IR/106. ID*).

17.-18.11.41 [Spass-Bludy]: Am 17 Nov 41 ging der sogenannte Sturm auf Moskau los, unsere **240er** hatte Erfolge, aber durch starke russ. Gegenangriffe mussten wir schnell zurueck unter Zuruecklassung alles Materials u. **52 SCHWER VERWUNDETEN**. Am anderen Tag, beim Gegenangriff erfasste unsere Kameraden das GRAUEN, denn die **52** verwundeten Kameraden waren furchtbar MASSAKRIERT. Unsere Kampfweise wurde auch haerter. (*W. Vollmer, 106. ID, Ltr to C. Luther, 10 Dec 04*)

18.11.41: *Oberleutnant E.M. Rhein, Leiter der 5./IR 18 (6.ID)*, urteilte den russischen Feind in einem Brief an seine Eltern: „*Man kann unsere Gegner weder als ritterlich noch als Fairplay (Englisch im Text) bezeichnen. Wenn man manchmal sieht auf welcher Art unsere Verletzten, die in russische Hände gefallen sind, behandelt werden, dann hat man Lust zu versprechen, dass man nie mehr wieder Gefangene unter ihnen machen wird. Und trotzdem hat man oft Mitleid für diese armen Schlucker, wenn sie sich uns vor Füßen werfen, nachdem sie von uns gefangen gemacht wurden und wenn sie uns bitten, zitternd vor Angst, dass wir sie schonen. Manche küssen unsere Hände ab, dankbar, dass wir ihnen nicht die Kehle durchgeschnitten haben, wie es ihnen ihre Kommissare erzählt hatten. Was für einem teuflischen und unmenschlichen Fanatismus waren diese Leute unterworfen, unter der Knute der Politrouks ?*“ (quoted in: *La Guerre a L'Est, August v. Kageneck, 72*)

H. Haape notes effects of Stalin's *scorched earth policy*: Russians burned cornfields, destroyed granaries and other food supplies as they had withdrawn. This policy would hit Russian civilians hard in the winter. (*Moscow Tram Stop, 146*)

2.12.41: Ein bitterkalter (18 Grad) ganz klarer Sonnentag. Schneidend kalter Wind jagt den Schnee in Wolken über die erstarrten Felder. Ich fahre nach Norden, um mir die Gräber der Gefallenen der 29.Div. aus den letzten Kämpfen anzusehen. Auf fester, aber spiegelglatter Straße geht es im Strom eines in gleicher Richtung marschierenden mot. Rgts. über *Bhf. Jepifan* nach *Nowaja Jakoblewka*, einem kleinen Panjedorf, das kürzlich der Schauplatz schwerer blutiger Kämpfe war. *Am Dorfeingang baumelten an einem Balken aufgereiht etwa 15 Rotarmisten. Davor steht auf einem Schild: „Diese Bestien haben in der Nacht zum 25./26.11.41 verwundete deutsche Soldaten verstümmelt und ermordet.“* Schauerliches Bild, schreckliche asiatische Typen. Gegen solche Tiere in Menschengestalt müssen deutsche Soldaten kämpfen! Und dann hinter dem Dorf auf einer Anhöhe neben dem Wege der Friedhof für 65 Angehörige des IR 15 und AR 29, in der Mitte der Btls.Kdr. Hptm. Jize und die beiden Obltn. Tettig und Hübner. 65 weiße Birkenkreuze stehen eng nebeneinander, in der Mitte ein etwas größeres Kreuz, und über diese Gräber fällt der Schnee und braust der eisige russ. Ostwind, ein ergreifendes Bild. Ein schwarzer Tag in der Geschichte der 29.Div. (*Tagebuch Lemelsen*)

12.12.41: [Befehl, **4. PD**]: „Der Moskauer Pressefunk hat bekannt gegeben, dass dt. Gefangene, bei denen russ. *Bekleidungsstuecke* vorgefunden werden, als Pluenderer angesehen u. dementsprechend behandelt werden. Ueber das Schicksal dieser dieser Soldaten duerfte nach allen bisherigen Erfahrungen kaum Zweifen bestehen. Um diese Gefahr auszuschalten, ist es erforderlich – da auf Beutekleidung aus verschiedenen Gruenden nicht verzichtet werden kann – dass die in vorderster Linie eingesetzten Truppen nur mit dt. Bekleidungsstuecken ausgestattet sind.“ (*C. Hartmann, „Verbrecherischer Krieg,“ 40; f.n. 224*)

20.12.41: On this day, Oberarzt Hans-Georg Suck's btn., retreating w/ Guderian's **2 Pz Army**, had fallen back to *Plawsk*, south of *Tula*. There it makes a horrifying discovery: Several naked bodies of German soldiers lined up next to each other, under the ice. The soldiers were much depressed and alarmed by this gruesome discovery in temperatures of **-42 to -48 C**. „Our comrades,“ he surmised, „must have had to undress in the road, were made to lie down in the street,

and then covered w/ water so as to construct a stretch of road!“ (Details see, *R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 231)

24.12.41: “...Our own treatment of Russian prisoners is having awful consequences. In the retreat from Moscow we had to abandon German field hospitals as well. The Russians dragged out the sick and injured, hanged them upside down, poured gasoline over them, and set them on fire. On another occasion German prisoners were beheaded and their heads laid out to form the SS symbol.” (*Tagebuch Admiral Canaris*, quoted in: *Irving, Hitler's War*, 363)⁸²

Late Dec 41: *Evacuation of Kalinin* by elements of **9th Army**: German wounded and doctors left behind in field hospital. Slaughtered by the Russians. (see, H. Haape, *Moscow Tram Stop*, 234). See also, *August v. Kageneck*: Dr. Haape, „hatte sich das Prinzip auferlegt seine Schützlinge nie lebend an die Russen abzugeben. Er war davon desto mehr überzeugt seitdem er von dem Verhalten der Roten Armee in *Kalinin* erfahren hatte. Der hastige Rückzug der deutschen Garnison hatte nicht ermöglicht, dass man das große Lazarett im Stadtzentrum räumte und man hatte Hunderte von Verletzten in ihren Betten zurücklassen müssen. Die Armen hatten die Befehlsgewalt angefleht, sie nicht an den Sowjets auszuliefern, denn sie hatten nicht einmal mehr Waffen, um sich letztlich umzubringen. Ein Paar Ärzte waren jedoch bei ihnen geblieben, denn sie verließen sich auf den Schutz durch die Genfer Konventionen und durch das Rote Kreuz. Aber die Russen haben weder die einen noch die andere respektiert. Den Aussagen nach, haben sie zuerst alle Ärzte erschossen, und dann ganz einfach die Verletzten aus den Fenstern rausgeworfen. (Es wurde von den gleichen Geschehnissen aus anderen Ecken im April 1945 berichtet, wie aus *Feodosnia in der Krim*, *Bobronisk an der Berezina* und aus *Königsberg, Ostpreußen*).“ (*La Guerre a L'Est*, 104)

Ca. **9.1.42:** Russians force 50 or more old men and women (unarmed Russian civilians all) to run in front of Red troops attacking **Gridino**. They are of course slaughtered. (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 314)

More than one German account also states that Russians sometimes used civilians to launch attacks. See for example, *G Keuter Tagebuch*, 15.12.41)

Feb 43: Of **91,000** Germans taken prisoner at **Stalingrad** in early **Feb 43**, thousands died within days as a result of exposure to the bitter cold, executions, savage beatings or the rapid spread of disease (*typhus, cholera, dysentery*) through unsanitary prison camps. Those that survived faced years of hardship and toil doing hard labor in Soviet penal *Gulags*. Many died working in the *mines of Siberia* from sicknesses associated w/ mining dangerous materials. When the Soviets finally released the survivors in **1955**, less than **5000** remained. (*Hart, German Soldier*, 95-96)

3.7: Commissars:

Note: As Albert Seaton points out, “Stalin was well served by the normal armed forces political control structure, headed by the powerful Mekhlis, this commissar organization existing

⁸² **Note:** According to Irving: “Jodl’s naval staff officer, Cdr *Wolf Junge*, described similar reports, adding: ‘When a major German field hospital had to be abandoned to the enemy at *Kaluga* in **Dec 41**, our troops laid a pistol on each invalid’s bed; we left them the choice of whether or not to fall alive into Russian hands.’” (Unpublished memoirs of *Junge*, 363)

throughout all levels of command in the Red Army and Fleet, in all HQs, staff branches, formations and units. The *commissar was a soldier*, as opposed to the political member of the military council who could be a Stalin-appointed civilian.” (A. Seaton, *The Battle for Moscow*, 61)

Commissars: ...another determining factor had been introduced into the Red Army by the pol. Commissar: *unqualified obedience*. Systematic training, drill, disregard for one’s own life, the natural inclination of the Russian soldier to uncompromising compliance and, not least of all, the real disciplinary powers available to the commissar were the foundations of this *iron obedience*. The commissar was probably the most controversial man in the Red Army; even in the Soviet Union opinion varied concerning his usefulness, his position, and his duties. He was the *driving force of the army*, ruling w/ cunning and cold-bloodedness. It is not true, however, that the Russian soldier fought well only because of fear of the commissars. (see, *Newton, Panzer Ops Raus*, 5-6)⁸³

D. Glantz: In the “best Stalinist tradition,” the initial defeats brought *renewed authority* to the political commissars, who assumed *co-equal status* w/ force cdrs and chiefs of staff. (*Barbarossa*, 62)

Soviet commissars: Apparently, they were detectable – in part at least – due to their *blue trousers*. (H.J. Schroeder, *German Soldiers’ Experiences*, 319)

One by-product of the purge was a tightening of the Red Army’s disciplinary code, which subjected the Soviet conscript to a positively Prussian standard of mil. obedience. Another, paradoxically, was a *demotion of the commissars* [?]; these political officials, whom the Revolution had originally imposed on the army to forestall treachery by ex-tsarist cdrs, had been empowered w/ the right to *veto military orders* until **1934**. That right was *reimposed* during the purges but withdrawn again after the debacle of the *Finnish campaign*. The „political deputies“ of the new division cdrs were therefore restricted in their responsibilities to the *political education* of the soldiers and the maintenance of *party orthodoxy* among the officers. (*Keegan, Second World War*, 177)⁸⁴

Jun 41: As the world’s largest air force [UdSSR] was being flattened the *Wehrmacht* tackled the Russian divisions. Frontier armies simply faded away – when the *Wehrmacht* reached *Bialystok* they were amazed to see *three divisions shoot their commissars and surrender*...Within a week the *Wehrmacht* was halfway to Moscow. (*Faust’s Metropolis*, A. Richie, 500)

Jun 41: In the best Stalinist tradition, the initial defeats brought renewed authority to the political commissars, who assumed co-equal status w/ force cdrs and chiefs of staff. . . Many soldiers who escaped from German encirclements returned to Soviet lines only to find themselves disarmed, arrested, and interrogated by NKVD “rear security” units looking for cowardice and sabotage. . . This renewal of Communist Party influence and terror in the army was unnecessary, since virtually all soldiers were doing their utmost w/o such threats. (*Glantz & House, When Titans Clashed*, 63)

⁸³ As *Newton* indicates, *Raus’ work* is “very much a Cold War period piece, in which the Germans fought hard but honorably against eh malevolent Soviet hordes.” (xv)

⁸⁴ Note: These comments of *Keegan* not entirely clear –that is, it appears the demotion of the Commissars came well *after* the Purges (i.e., after the Finnish War).

Summer ,41: The influence of the commissar was not particularly strong at this period despite the fact that his power had been restored to that of parity w/ the military cdr, so that no orders could be issued w/o his counter-signature. The authority of the commissar was to become stronger, however, as the months went by. (*A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 82)

„In diese Ansammlungen hinein [am Dnjepr] werfen andauernd unsere Stukas ihre Bomben, schießen Batterien von Osten, Süden Norden u. Westen hinein. Unzählige Kraftfahrzeuge brennen u. explodieren, dickste schwarze Rauchwolken überdecken das ganze Gelände dieses Dramas u. dazwischen irren die sowjetischen Soldaten herum u. haben die Wahl entweder von den Deutschen oder von ihren Kommissaren erschossen zu werden. *Die Kommissare erschießen rücksichtslos Jeden, der versucht sich zu ergeben.* Diese schauerlichen Bilder werde ich nie vergessen, es ist eine ganz große Tragödie diese Vernichtung der Reste zweier bolschewistischer Armeen. Ich war 12 Std. unterwegs u. bin überall in vorderster Linie bei den Kompanien gewesen u. stark beeindruckt von dem Erlebten.“ (*Tagebuch Lemelsen*, 4.8.41)

Überhaupt wird die Überlegenheit des deutschen Soldaten über die Sowjet Truppe immer mehr fühlbar, zumal die jetzt auftretenden Divisionen meist Neuaufstellungen mit schlecht ausgebildeten Soldaten sind, die wenig Kampfwert besitzen; *sie kämpfen nur aus Furcht vor ihren Kommissaren.* (*Tagebuch Lemelsen*, 22.8.41)

In context of destruction of *113th Rifle Division* (a militia unit absorbed into the Red Army), *C. Merridale* writes: “German observers also noted the lines of special troops behind the riflemen, the men with machine guns who waited to cut the stragglers down.” “As a rule,” another German report went on, “they do not fight out of some ideology or for their motherland but out of fear of their officers, especially their commissars.” “Fear and hate,” agreed one observer, “leave the Russian soldiers to fight with nothing but the courage of desperation.” Notes author: The soldiers *were indeed afraid.* Among Moscow’s defenders were some, like the famous 28 “*Panfilov men*,” who fought to the last bullet, in part because *retreat would mean tribunals and a death sentence.* (*Ivan’s War*, 124)

For one of many stories about Soviet *Kommissaren* being „*fragged*“ by their own men see, *Tagebuch Rupp*, 1.10.41, **17. PD.**

3.8: Josef Stalin:

Note: “All Moscow knows the lighted window above the Kremlin walls. There Stalin paces to and fro, smoking one pipe after the other, and broods.” (*Plievier, Moscow*, 120)

Note: Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn noted sardonically that Stalin’s distrust of people was so great that it amounted to his world view. He distrusted his mother, God, fellow members of the Party, including those who had been exiled w/ him, peasants, workers, the intelligentsia, soldiers and generals, his closest associates, his wives, lovers, and his children and – he turned out to be right each time! [?] The only person in the world he did trust was – Adolf Hitler! (*W. J. Spahr, Zhukov*, 46-47)

B. Musial: Die sowj. Kriegsvorbereitungen, die massive Aufrüstung, der Massenterror sind unzertrennlich mit der Person Stalins u. mit seinem Aufstieg zum kommunistischen Diktator mit faktisch unumschraenkter Machtfuelle verbunden. Stalin war derjenige, der die Sowjetunion in ein riesiges Zwangsarbeitslager verwandelte. . . Stalin glich einem Sektenfuehrer [Entfuehrer?],

dem Hunderttausende, ja Millionen fanatisierter Kommunisten u. kommunistischer Anhaenger in der Sowjetunion u. auch im Ausland blindlings folgten u. fuer den sie bereit waren, im Namen des Kommunismus die groessten Massenverbrechen zu begehen und/oder gutzuheissen. . . Stalin mit seinen kommunistischen Gefolgsleuten war auch derjenige, der im Europa im 20. Jahrhundert die groessten Massenverbrechen beging. . . Vor diesem Hintergrund verwundert es immer wieder, dass in der kollektiven Erinnerung u. historischen Diskursen, all diese historischen Tatsachen noch nicht verankert sind, ja teilweise geradezu ausgeblendet werden. (*Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 466-67)

Stalin *need the support of organized religion* to help unify the country during the war. The church gave it unstintingly, as it has done repeatedly when invaders threatened Russia. *A score of Moscow churches reopened*, and by the end of the war the total in operation had risen to about 50—a number that has remained fairly constant ever since. The public packed them all. (*Gruliov*, 42)

According to one highly-reputable source: “*Stalin took the menace of Nazi Germany **much less seriously** than did other Bolshevik leaders, esp. Bukharin and Maksim Litvinov, who was the people’s commissar for foreign affairs until Apr 39. Stalin did not hesitate to sacrifice the majority of the best officers in the Red Army [during the purges of 1937-38, etc.] and replace them w/ entirely untried substitutes. Stalin wished his army to be staffed w/ those who had *no memory of the controversial episodes in which he had participated as military chief in the civil war*, and who would not be tempted to argue, as Field Marshal **Tukhachevsky** might have, w/ the military and political decisions that Stalin took at the end of the 1930s, esp. the *rapproachment w/ Nazi Germany*. (*Black Book of Communism*, 198-99)*

3.8.1: Ignores Warnings of Attack:

C. Bellamy: Concerning a possible war w/ Germany in spring of **1941** Stalin, like *Saint Augustine*, was praying: „*but not yet.*“ (*Absolute War*, 111)

D. Irving: Notes in his Hitler biography that, by spring **1941**, rumors of an impending German assault were “all over Europe.” (See, *Hitler’s War*, 234)

W. J. Spahr: In his conversations w/ Konstantin Simonov, Zhukov opined that Stalin thought he had Hitler *wrapped around his finger* and therefore trusted him to an extent that he did not trust anyone else. [!] As an example of this trust, Z. cited an exchange of letters between the two dictators in early **1941**. Stalin wrote to Hitler expressing concern over information he had received that German troops were concentrating in Poland. Hitler replied that the troops were there for rearming and reforming beyond the reach of English bomber and reconnaissance aircraft. Hitler assured Stalin that he intended to observe strictly the existing treaty which he guaranteed on his honor as state chief. (*Zhukov*, 46)

Soviet pre-war policy under Stalin was *bent on avoidance of war w/ Germany*...Most striking feature of the *Soviet leader’s appeasement of Germany* was a series of political and economic gestures (after **22.8.39** pact w/ Germany) designed to conciliate Hitler. Some of these were pure theater, as when Stalin bear-hugged the embarrassed German Ambassador at Moscow’s railway station and *swore eternal friendship*. Others were more devious, as the **Tass** official denial on **8.5.41** of any German troop concentrations on the Russian border. There was a mass of evidence to the contrary, of which Stalin was fully aware. Even overt German *photo-reconnaissance flights* were studiously “overlooked,” despite at least one crash at **Rovno** on **15.4.41** of a

Luftwaffe plane laden w/ incriminating exposed intelligence films in the wreckage. Soviet AAA defenses were specifically ordered not to open fire on German aircraft. Apparently, no humiliation was too much for Stalin in his *desire to avoid provoking the Germans* and to prevent an outbreak of war between autumn 1939 and spring 1941. (Col Hughes-Wilson, 46-7)

Antony Beevor writes of “*Stalin’s willful blindness about the growing threat from Germany.*” He was convinced that “every warning of Operation Barbarossa was a **provocation from British intelligence**. It was all part of a plot by Churchill to trick the Soviet Union into war with Germany. Beevor writes that **Vladimir Dekanozov**, a “diminutive, balding Georgian associate of Beria,” shared Stalin’s “willful blindness” regarding German intentions. *Dekanozov* was the first head of the NKVD’s Foreign Intelligence Department to be posted as an ambassador abroad. His appointment to the Berlin embassy was announced during *Molotov’s* visit in mid-Nov 41. Beevor also notes that Stalin had *imposed restrictions on spying in Germany* to avoid antagonizing Hitler any further. (Beevor, *Mystery of Olga Chekhova*, 159)

D. Pryce-Jones: „A large literature has examined Stalin’s *mystifying decision to trust the pact he had signed w/ Hitler in 1939*. In the face of mounting intelligence, most if it *first-class*, Stalin *refused to believe that Hitler was preparing invasion*. All such warning was merely *disinformation* put out by the *desperate British*. How could so paranoid a dictator fall into such a trap? The answer seems to be that **Stalin took it for granted that Hitler employed the same calculus of power that he did,**⁸⁵ **and would never attack in the East until he had settled w/ Britain**. He could not acknowledge that his reign of terror, and particularly his bloody purging of the Red Army, had made the Soviet Union an easy prey in Hitler’s eyes. The pre-war pact benefited Hitler, he reckoned, and would last accordingly until that was no longer the case, and so he *convinced himself that Hitler’s visceral fear of Bolshevism must be secondary*. This misjudgment was of *world historic proportions*, leading to death and destruction on a scale that almost brought about the end of the Soviet Union.“ (David Pryce-Jones, book review of *Kershaw’s Fateful Choices*, 50-51)

Kershaw: With so many Communist sympathizers abroad, Stalin’s regime had no shortage of informers willing to provide the state security organs w/ a flow of intelligence – varied in quality, often contradictory, but sometimes significant. Reports of impending German attack reached Stalin from the **NKGB**, the **GRU** (Soviet military intelligence), via **foreign ministry** sources, etc. But Stalin treated all of them w/ *skepticism*. Clearly, some of the reports did indeed involve *disinformation*. But Stalin’s own *profound cynicism* went much further than healthy skepticism. It led him to **disbelieve all information**, however compelling and however well placed the source, which contradicted his own analysis of German intentions. And this, *perversely*, came to rest upon the **successful German deception** than any attack would be *preceded by an ultimatum*, which would give him time to concede, mobilize or even pre-empt. The complete mistrust of all intelligence,⁸⁶ coupled w/ the certainty that his own analysis was right, amounted ultimately to the reason why Stalin was caught so totally by surprise on **22 Jun 41**. (see, *Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 271-72)

⁸⁵ In other words, what today would be called „*mirror imaging*.”

⁸⁶ **Note:** According to *Kershaw*, much of the intel Stalin received – at least that from British, U.S. and other foreign sources – was instinctively mistrusted by Stalin. This distrust was actually *encouraged* by his own intel chiefs. Stalin and his associates, moreover, were not alone in misreading the signals. Foreign intelligence services were also for the most part misled. German *deception strategy* played a notable part in this. (275)

D. Glantz: Puts Stalin's inability to conceive that Germany was about to attack in a reasonable context: Hitler too „rational“ to attack in east before he had defeated Britain in the west; problems w/ Soviet intelligence (its ops decimated by the purges); German deception ops (for ex., Operation „Sea Lion“ continued as cover story to mask German buildup in east); German invasions of Greece and Yugoslavia (plausible explanation for much of German buildup in east); numerous false warnings of attack, etc. „Viewed in this context, the Soviet strategic surprise [i.e., failure to foresee German attack] is much more comprehensible.“ In retrospect, the „most serious Soviet failure was neither strategic surprise nor tactical surprise, but *institutional* surprise. In **Jun 41**, the Red Army and VVS were in *transition* – changing their organization, leadership, equipment, training, troop dispositions and defensive plans. „Had Hitler attacked four [**4**] years earlier or even one [**1**] year later, the Soviet Armed Forces would have been more than a match for the *Wehrmacht*.“ (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 28-32)

According to *Citino*, despite piles of intelligence pointing to a German attack, Stalin refused to believe it. It was all a *plot*, he swore – either a western one to get him mixed up in a war w/ Germany, or a Nazi one to get him to move first and thus justify a German counterblow. (*Citino, Death of the Wehrmacht*, 35)

Richard Sorge, one of the early members of the German Communist Party, headed a spy ring in Japan for the GRU from the mid 1930s until his arrest in 1941. Although at the very moment when Moscow seemed in the greatest danger he was able to transmit information about Japan's decision to move south against Indo-China rather than north against the Soviet Union, *there is increasing evidence that Stalin had already decided to move some troops before Sorge's message reached Moscow*. His loyal service did not stop Stalin from *executing him* in 1944.⁸⁷ (*Faust's Metropolis*, A. Richie, 503; 1017-18 (f.n. 78)

According to *Antony Beevor*, Stalin had not trusted the reports from the Soviets' brilliant spy in Tokyo, **Richard Sorge**. Rather, it was *signal intercepts* indicating that the Japanese were indeed about to attack the USA and not the Soviet Union that enabled him to begin moving his Siberian armies westward. (*A. Beevor, Mystery of Olga Chekhova*, 180)

Ab Sommer 1940: Ab dieser Zeit erhielt Stalin zahlreiche Informationen u. Warnungen über die Massierung der dt. Truppen entlang der dt.-sowj. Grenze u. den bevorstehenden dt. Angriff. Diese stammten sowohl von seinen eigenen Nachrichtendiensten als auch beispielweise von britischer Seite. Trotzdem wachte sich Stalin vor einem dt. Ueberfall erst einmal sicher. Er glaubte nicht, dass sich Hitler auf einen Zweifrontenkrieg einlassen wuerde, denn Grossbritannien blieb standfest u. kaempfte weiterhin. . . Solange Grossbritannien Krieg gegen Deutschland fuehrte, wachte sich Stalin vor einem dt. Angriff sicher. . . Stalin war fest davon ueberzeugt, dass die britische Seite mit falschen Informationen den vorzeitigen dt.-sowj. Krieg zu provozieren suche. (*Musial, Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 430-32)⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Note: According to *Richie*, after learning from Sorge that Japan was planning to move against Indo-China—and not against Mongolia—Stalin immediately transferred *40 crack Siberian divisions*, including 1700 tanks and 1500 aircraft to Moscow. The men were especially trained to fight in the snow. They had fur coats, fur-lined boots and hats and gloves; some had skis and white uniforms and their T-34 tanks did not seize up in the bitter -40 degree weather. (503) (**Note:** I'm not sure Richie's numbers of divs./equipment transferred are *accurate*.)

⁸⁸ At same time, however, as *Mikojan* wrote in his *Erinnerungen*: „Stalin u. wir alle wussten, dass der Zusammenstoss [mit Deutschland] unvermeidlich ist.“ My view is, while historians hesitate – and rightly so – to speak of „inevitability“ in history, if anything in history was inevitable or unavoidable [*Unvermeidlich*], it was war between Hitler & Stalin.

Between late **Jul 40** and **22.6.41**, no less than **90 separate, unequivocal warnings of an impending attack** were passed on to Stalin. In every case they were professionally collated, evaluated, interpreted and briefed to Stalin:

Jun 40: Information about Hitler's future intentions had already been passed to Moscow. Where this came from is "obscure."

Jul 40: Churchill wrote personally to the Soviet dictator warning him of Hitler's intentions. Stalin merely read it as a feeble attempt to involve the USSR in Britain's lost war (i.e., this was just after *Dunkirk*).

25.12.40: The Soviet attaché in Berlin passed on a resume of Hitler's Directive 21 of **18.12.41**, the operation order for *Barbarossa*.

1.3.41: In Washington, *Sumner Welles*, the US Under-Secretary of State, formally summoned and briefed the Soviet ambassador (*Urmansky*) w/ the *full details of the forthcoming German attack*. Wells informed the Soviet ambassador that the evidence was "so overwhelming it should be passed to Foreign Minister *Molotov* immediately." Stalin ignored the US reports.

Apr 41: Churchill (armed w/ *hard Enigma decrypts* that elite German divisions were in Cracow, Poland, and not in the Balkans, decided to alert Stalin w/ a *personal message* from a "trusted agent." Stalin is alleged to have scrawled "another English provocation!" in the margin and took no action.

19.5.41: Stalin even ignored detailed intelligence on *Barbarossa* from **Richard Sorge**, the NKGB's prized agent in Japan. Stalin rejected Sorge's warning of 19 May 41 that 9 German armies w/ 150 divisions were massing against the USSR. Stalin angrily denounced Sorge as "a little shit who has just set himself up w/ some good businesses in Japan."

Early Jun 41: German Ambassador in Moscow, *von Schulenburg* warned the new head of the Soviet International Affairs Dept.: "I am going to tell you something that has never been done in diplomacy before...Germany's state secret number one is that Hitler has taken the decision to begin war against you on 22 June." Stalin's indignant response to the *Politburo* was that "Disinformation has now reached ambassadorial level!"

2.-13.6.41: *Antony Eden's personal warnings* of the impending Nazi onslaught were dismissed by the Soviet Ambassador in London as merely part of Hitler's "war of nerves to wring concessions from the USSR w/o a fight."

In addition to all the above warnings (which are only examples), Stalin's intelligence service was *feeding him w/ high-grade human intelligence* from a number of trusted agents deep within the combatants' war machines. Some of this human intelligence came from agents in Britain. It was confirmed by other reports: the **Schulze-Boysen spy network** based in the German Air Ministry, the **Trepper "Red Orchestra,"** and the German traitor **von Scheliha** in the German embassy in Warsaw. Stalin also chose to overlook news of *Luftwaffe* and panzer units relocating to Poland; a personal statement by Hitler to his ally *Prince Paul of Yugoslavia* that he would invade the USSR in mid-June; a copy of the outline

Barbarossa operation order from an agent; massive German railway traffic to the East; German General Staff requests for thousands of copies of maps of the Baltic States and western USSR; *Wehrmacht* defectors giving precise details of their targets and objectives; and last but not least, on **9.6.41**, precise details of the instructions to Ambassador von Schulenburg to “burn all documents” and prepare to leave Moscow. Stalin ignored all these and other reports. (Col Hughes-Wilson, 47-57)

No war without an ultimatum: This is another reason Stalin allowed himself to be deceived. He believed that *there could be no war w/o an ultimatum*, a view shared by the whole diplomatic community at the time. There was a misplaced but obstinate belief that any crisis must start w/ a German ultimatum. As a result, the whole thrust of **Stalin’s policy of appeasement** toward Nazi Germany in 1941 seems to have been *designed to prevent any situation that could have led to a German ultimatum*. If we accept the fact that *no pretext for war was to be offered under any circumstances*, then Stalin’s deliberate suppression of unwelcome intelligence makes sense. (Col Hughes-Wilson, 56)

5.12.40: As early as **5 Dec 40**, the newly appointed Soviet ambassador to Germany, *Vladimir Dekanozov*, a former senior officer in NKVD, received an anonymous letter warning that Hitler would attack the Soviet Union in the following spring. This was indeed at precisely the point that Hitler was confirming to his mil. leaders his decision to prepare to invade the USSR in May 1941, embodied in Directive No. 18. (see, *Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 272)

Two of the best-placed agents, supplying a flow of excellent information, were the *German communist sympathizers Harro Schulze-Boysen* (whose codename was „*Starshina*,” or „the Elder”) and *Arvid Harnack* (known as „*Korsicanets*,” or the „Corsican”). Through family connections (his father was a nephew of Admiral Alfred von *Tirpitz*, and his mother related to *Goering*) *Schulze-Boysen* was able to join *Luftwaffe* HQ in 1941 as an officer. There, he gained access to top-secret material. *Harnack*, a lawyer who had studied in the U.S., had worked in the *Economics Ministry* in Berlin since 1935. Both were won over in 1940 to work secretly for Soviet intelligence. They were eventually uncovered and *executed in 1942*. (for details see, *Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 272-74)⁸⁹

Spring 41: The number of indicators of the immense of hostilities continued to grow. In addition to the tactical intelligence flowing from the border military districts, Stalin was also receiving intelligence from such sources as Richard Sorge in Tokyo, directly from Beriia. Golikov, the head of the Main Intelligence Directorate, was also providing Stalin w/ reports. . . Timoshenko and Zhukov at last managed to convince Stalin that some precautionary measures were necessary. Permission was received to call up **500,000** reserves and to move four [4] armies to the western military districts, but Stalin refused to sanction the placing of the border military districts on alert. According to Zhukov, Stalin feared that Hitler would consider that a provocation to war. (*W. J. Spahr, Zhukov*, 47)

⁸⁹ **Note:** In April, precise details were provided of the German buildup along the frontier, troop movements and construction of fortifications and aerodromes. However, some of the information clearly contradictory and played into Stalin’s own preconceptions. For example, *Starshina* reported that before war was declared, Germany would issue an *ultimatum* to the Soviet Union to join the Tripartite Pact and submit to German demands. The attack would follow if Russia refused to comply w/ the ultimatum. (274)

Spring 41: As Marshal *Zhukov* told *Konstantin Simonov*, it was some time in the spring of **1941**, when the stream of reports about the concentration of German troops in Poland considerably increased, that Stalin wrote a *personal letter to Hitler* asking for an explanation of the situation. In a “confidential” reply, the *Fuehrer* reported to the Soviet leader that the information was accurate; it was true that large military formations were concentrated in Poland, but being confident that it would go no further than Stalin himself, Hitler was duty bound to make clear to him that the formations in Poland were not directed against the Soviet Union. He said that the territories of west and central Germany were being subjected to *heavy British bombing*; hence the reason for removing a considerable part of his troops and placing them in Poland. Stalin believed that Hitler intended to adhere strictly to the Pact. It appears, said Zhukov, that Stalin believed in Hitler’s argument. What the Soviet leader did *not* know at that time was that at the beginning of **1941** Germany carried out a *huge disinformation effort, Operation Sealion*, w/ aim of convincing the Soviet Union about large-scale preparations for a landing on the British Isles. The realization of this plan was clear from an “accidentally lost” map of the German invasion of England, and the statement by the German military attaché, General *Koestring*, who importunately repeated to the Soviet officials attending formal meetings that the German forces in Poland “must be thoroughly rested, before they go and finish off England.” (*Volkogonov, “The German Attack,”* 81-82)

21.4.41: Churchill sends msg to Stalin – via *Sir Stafford Cripps* – warning of the danger of a German attack. Impact of msg wholly counterproductive. Stalin presumes Churchill trying to entice him into a war w/ Germany in a move aimed at serving only British interests. Yet, in the context, Stalin’s reaction was *not totally irrational*. In any case, by this time, Stalin had been *inundated w/ intelligence reports* informing him of the growing threat from Germany. (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices, 271*)

May 41: By beginning of May, the flood of worrying information could no longer be ignored. Even Stalin saw that some action was necessary. At the same time, Timoshenko and Zhukov were viewing the warnings w/ more anxious eyes than Stalin’s. They were by now favoring a different sort of action. They were at work on a *drastically revised military plan* – one which placed the emphasis on a Soviet offensive. At same time, Stalin takes actions – such as resuming diplomatic relations w/ pro-German government of Iraq – to appease Hitler. (see, *Kershaw, Fateful Choices, 276-77*)

May 41 [*Schulenberg*]: The German ambassador to Soviet Union was, at times, deliberately fed misleading information from Berlin. During an audience w/ Hitler himself in Berlin (late April), the German dictator had explicitly told him: „I do not intend a war against Russia.“ S. was sure Hitler had *lied to him*. Even so, in weeks that followed, he conveyed his own belief to Stalin and Molotov that *war was not inevitable*, reinforcing in their minds the notion that a diplomatic solution might still be possible. (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices, 281*)

6.5.41: A communication from another well-informed source, *Richard Sorge* (known as „*Ramzai*“), a Soviet spy in the German embassy in *Tokyo*, noted that, according to the German ambassador, *General Eugen Ott*, Hitler was determined to defeat the USSR; that German generals believed an eastern campaign would prove no hindrance to the war against Britian; that Soviet forces were unprepared and Red Army could be routed in a matter of weeks. These, and countless other agents’ reports, were routinely summarized by *Vsevolod Merkulov*, head of external security [**NKGB**], and the *digests sent on to the Soviet leadership*. (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices, 274*)

10.5.41 [*Hess flight to England*]: The distrust of British intentions by Soviet Union was significantly hardened by Hess's flight into English captivity. It simply „shored up Stalin's paranoia. Unsure of actual intent of Hess mission, Stalin was confirmed only in his belief in the utter *untrustworthiness of the British* and took all the warnings emanating from London to be outright *disinformation*. (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 281-82)

10.5.41: [*Hess flight to England*]: This prelude to *Barbarossa* was one that “muddied the waters hopelessly against any Russian perception of British good faith over the final warnings of German intentions.” Whatever Hess's motives, Soviet suspicion of both the flight itself and the British government's reaction *fatally skewed Stalin's perceptions of subsequent British warnings over Barbarossa*. (Col Hughes-Wilson, 56-57)

May-Jun 41 [Goebbels Bluff]:⁹⁰ Kreta . . . inspirierte Goebbels dann auch zu einem Propaganda-Bluff, mit dem er die in ihre Endphase tretenden Vorbereitungen fuer das Unternehmen „Barbarossa“ zu verschleiern suchte. Schon Ende **Mai 41** hatte er Geruechte streuen lassen, wonach die Wehrmacht durch eine Landung in England alsbald die Entscheidung im Westen herbeifuehren wollte. . . Die auswaertigen Spekulationen u. das inlaendische Gemunkel von einer gigantischen militaerischen Operation, die sich im Osten zusammenbraue, waren damit jedoch nicht aus der Welt zu schaffen. Wengleich *kaum jemand fuer moeglich hielt, dass Hitler vor Beendigung des Ringens mit England ohne Not eine zweite Front eroeffnete*, so deuteten doch die ununterbrochenen Transportbewegungen, wie auch die Feldpostbriefe, die fast ausschliesslich aus Polen u. Ostpreussen kamen, unweigerlich darauf hin.

Der amerikanischen Presse hatte Goebbels entnommen, dass die Besetzung Kretas – sofern sie gelaenge – zeige, dass auch die Besetzung Grossbritanniens moeglich sei. Auch wenn die Wehrmachtfuehrung aus dem Unternehmen „Merkur“ den eher gegenteiligen Schluss zog, warum sollte nicht die auslaendische Oeffentlichkeit in dem Glauben bestaerkt werden, spekulierte Goebbels. . .

Goebbels verfasste also, nachdem er Hitlers Zustimmung fuer das Taeschungsmanoeuver mit Kreta eingeholt hatte, „mit grosser List“ unter der Ueberschrift *Das Beispiel Kreta* einen Artikel, dem zwischen den Zeilen zu entnehmen war, dass die Invasion der Britischen Insel bevorstehe. Am **12 Jun 41** wurde der vom „Fuehrer“ korrigierte Beitrag „mit allem gebotenen Zeremoniell“ dem *Voelkischen Beobachter* uebergeben, in dessen Berliner Ausgabe er am darauffolgenden Tage erscheinen sollte. Soweit kam es jedoch nicht, denn zum Bluff gehoerte es, dass die gesamte hauptstaedtische Ausgabe, bis auf ein paar Exemplare, in den fruehen Morgenstunden beschlagnahmt wurde. [!]

Der Goebbels-Artikel, dessen Verbreitung dadurch nur noch forciert wurde, schlug bei den auslaendischen Pressevertretern wie eine Bombe ein. Abgehorte Telefonate zeigten, dass der Schluss, der gezogen wurde, vielerorts der gleiche war: Das „Grossmaul Goebbels“ hatte nich zu schweigen vermocht. Reporter wussten zu berichten, dass der Minister, weil er Geheimnisse preisgegeben habe, bei Hitler in Ungnade gefallen sei. Britische Rundfunkkommentatoren folgerten daraus sogar, dass der Aufmarsch an der oestlichen Peripherie des deutschen Machtbereichs ein grosser Bluff sei, mit dem die Vorbereitungen der Invasion Britanniens versteckt wurden. . .

⁹⁰ **Note:** This is terrific example of extremes Germans went to w/ their “disinformation” campaign; must have made an impression on Stalin!

Bis auf seine Vertrauten versuchte Goebbels selbst sein Ministerium auf eine falsche Faehrt zu setzen. Am **5 Jun 41** . . . „informierte“ er seine Abteilungsleiter waehrend einer vertraulichen Sitzung dahingehend, dass der „Fuehrer“ zu der Erkenntnis gelangt sei, ohne die Invasion Englands koenne der Krieg nicht zu Ende gebracht werden. Die fuer den Osten geplanten Operationen seien ausgesetzt worden. Den genauen Zeitpunkt koenne er nicht nennen. Nur eines sei sicher: In drei, vielleicht fuenf Wochen werden die Invasion Englands beginnen. Um die Tauschung glaubwuerdig zu machen, gab er ein Invasionslied in Auftrag, liess neue Fanfaren komponieren u. englische Sprecher auswahlen . . . (R.G. Reuth, Goebbels, 476-78)

Jun 41: Dekanozov, the Soviet ambassador in Berlin, passed on information that played directly to Stalin's prejudices – i.e., rumors of a possible *rapprochement* between Germany and USSR, either on basis of far-reaching „concessions“ on part of Soviet Union, or on basis of „division of spheres of influence,“ etc. In fact, the Soviet ambassador was simply unwittingly relaying a piece of *deliberate German misinformation*. (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 282)

Jun 41: Hard to image that Stalin did not by now harbor *hidden doubts about his own convictions*. „He must, in solitary moments, have wondered whether he had not for months been outbluffed by Hitler.“ During the last weeks before the invasion, he seemed *restless and worried*, took to *drinking more heavily*, seeking out company as a diversion, replacing working stints at the Kremlin by lengthy dinners at his *dacha*. (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*; also, Gorodetsky, 307)

1.6.41: *Richard Sorge* dispatches two reports from Tokyo based on information emanating from *Berlin*. Ambassador Ott had learned that the German attack on the USSR would *begin in the second half of June*, *Sorge* indicated, and was 95% certain that war would begin. In a second report, *Sorge* passed on information received from a German Lt Col *Erwin Scholl*, who was passing through Tokyo en route to a new posting at the German embassy in *Bangkok*. *Scholl* told him that war would *begin on 15 Jun*. Yet Stalin had long been *disparaging about Sorge*, dismissing the man risking his life for Soviet intelligence as „*a little shit*.“ The Stalinist system was at all levels *preprogrammed to supply the Soviet dictator w/ confirmation of his own prejudice*. (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 283-84)

12.6.41: Stalin, Molotov and Beria receive information from „*Starshina*“ (*Schulze-Boysen*) that a decision had been made to attack the USSR. The same day, a report reached the Foreign Ministry and Central Committee, noting a total of **2,080 violations of the Soviet border by German aeroplanes between 1 Jan and 10 Jun; 91 planes** had violated the borders during the first ten days of June. (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 284)

Mid-Jun 41: Stalin knew by mid-June that “to escape war, even in the very near future, was impossible” and permitted the final preparations to begin. The rule, however, was “to do what was necessary to strengthen the defenses. . . but not do anything in the frontier zone that could provoke the fascists or hasten their attack upon us.” The Defense Commissariat ordered the frontier military districts to shift their divisions closer to the border and into the positions designated for them in the “special plan for defending the state frontier.” The movements began on **15 Jun 41**, but, on the 22nd, “only certain” of the divisions were in position. . . Also, the Commissariat of Defense, between **14-19 Jun 41**, ordered the frontier military districts to set up command posts from which they could exercise their appointed wartime functions as army group commands and to camouflage airfields, military units, and “important military objectives.” (Ziemke & Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 23)

16.-21.6.41: The German embassy in Moscow evacuated all non-essential personnel as early as **16 Jun 41**; by **21 June**, no German merchant ship remained in Soviet-controlled ports. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 28)

17.6.41: Another report from „*Starshina*,“ based in *Luftwaffe* HQ, told Stalin, Molotov and Beria that *all German military measures for an attack were complete*, and that the blow could come at any time. (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 285)

17.6.41: Nur 5 Tage vor dem dt. Ueberfall, leitete Wselowod Merkulow, Volkskommissar fuer Staatssicherheit, einen Aufklaerungsbericht aus Berlin mit folgendem Inhalt an Stalin weiter: „Quelle, die im Stab der dt. Luftwaffe arbeitet, meldet: Alle militaerische Massnahmen Deutschlands zur Vorbereitung des Krieges gegen die UdSSR sind bereits vollstaendig abgeschlossen, u. den Angriff muss man jederzeit erwarten.“ Am Rande des Berichtes notierte Stalin: „An Genossen Merkulow. Sie koennen Ihre ‚Quelle‘ aus dem Stab der dt. Luftwaffe zum Teufel schicken. Das ist keine ‚Quelle,‘ sondern ein Desinformator. J[osef] St[alin].“ Stalin glaube nicht daran, dass Hitler einen Zweifrontenkrieg wagen wuerde, alle Warnungen ueber dt. Kriegsvorbereitungen hielt er fuer gezielte „Desinformation.“ Er nahm auch die Ideologie Hitlers vom Lebensraum, die dieser in Mein Kampf unmissverstaendlich formuliert hatte, nicht ernst. (*Musial, Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 432-33)

18.6.41: Als ihm Generalstabschef Georgij Schukow am **18. Jun 41** riet, die Rote Amree in Alarmbereitschaft zu versetzen, bruellte Stalin: “Wollen Sie Krieg, weil Sie noch nicht genuegend Auszeichnungen haben u. Ihr Rang noch nicht hoch genug ist?“ (*Mueller, Duell im Schnee*, in: *Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Burgdorff (Hg.), 114)

19.6.41: A Soviet agent in *Rome* passed on information, said to be derived from the Italian ambassador in Berlin, *Augusto Rosso*, that Germany would attack sometime between 20 and 25 June. In mid-June, information came in from „*Lucy*“ (an emigre German anti-fascist publisher, named *Rudolf Roessler*), a Soviet agent based in *Lucerne*, Switzerland, stipulating the date of the attack (22 June) and providing details of the German operational plan. By now, most of the German embassy staff, in a state of great nervousness, had left Moscow. However, Soviet distrust of reports from agents and from foreign intel services *continued unabated*. Stalin remained in *complete denial*. His denial often supported by *Beria* and others. (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 284-85)

19.6.41: Not until this date did Stalin finally issue an order for the *dispersal and camouflaging* of VVS acft—much too late to diminish the coming catastrophe. (*D.R. Jones*, in: *Why Air Force’s Fail*, 275)

19.6.41: According to information given Stalin by General Staff, a total of **186** [Russian] divisions were deployed on the western front (as of mid-Jun 41), more than half of them to the south-west. Most had been *secretly moved there from the interior of the country* in the preceding weeks. But only on **19.6.41** were orders given to begin to *camouflage aerodromes* and other vital installations, and to *disperse the acft* around the airfields. Even now, Stalin was keen to retain secrecy, to *avoid any provocation*. (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 282-83)

22.6.41: Stalin’s illusions finally shattered by a telephone call from Zhukov at 3:40 a.m. on morning of 22 June. A massive German attack was underway. The war had begun. Stalin was *speechless when he heard the news*. All Zhukov could hear was his heavy breathing on the phone. Initial orders issued by Soviet High Command bear little relationship to reality. Only

that afternoon, when the *Politburo* met at 4:00 p.m., did the full gravity of situation become apparent. (see, *Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 286-88)

22.6.41: Stalin who trusted nobody else, appears to have been the last human being on earth to trust Hitler's word. It was a case of *wishful thinking*. The Nazi-Soviet pact was of *enormous benefit to Stalin*. Though he later defended it solely as a temporary, tactical arrangement ('We secured our country peace for a year and a half and the opportunity of preparing our forces') he *clearly hoped at the time that it would last indefinitely*, or alternatively until the Germans and the West had mutually exhausted themselves in a prolonged war when, in according w/ his **1925 declaration**, Russia could move in for the pickings. In the meantime the pact was of immense benefit to him. By mid-1940 he had recovered much of the territory Russia had lost in **1918-19**. He had destroyed the structure of eastern Poland. In spring **1940**, he had **15,000** Polish officers murdered, a third at *Katyn* near Smolensk, the rest in or near the Soviet *concentration camps* of ***Starobelsk*** and ***Ostachkov***. It is possible that these mass killings were carried out at the suggestion of the *Gestapo*. (*P. Johnson, Modern Times*, 372-73)

22.6.41: Um **4:30** Uhr Moskauer Zeit kamen Schukow u. Verteidigungsminister Timoschenko in Stalins Buero. Stalin hoffte noch immer, dass der Angriff nur eine *Provokation der dt. Generaele* sei, die den „Fuehrer in den Krieg zwingen wollten – „Hitler weiss sicher nichts davon.“ (*Mueller, Duell im Schnee*, in: *Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Burgdorff (Hg.), 114-15)

In all fairness, *Barbarossa*, like any thorough military operation planned by the German General Staff, **had a substantial deception plan**. Indeed, its *deception measures were the biggest the Wehrmacht ever used*; only the Allied plans for D-Day were more all-embracing. The major thrust of the deception effort was the pretence first that Hitler was covering the Balkans (where Mussolini was in deep trouble fighting the Greeks and Albanians), and second that the movement of troops to the East in winter 1940/41 was a *ruse to fool the British into thinking that Operation Sea Lion had been cancelled*. The massive *Barbarossa* troop redeployments were represented as a *deception plan for an invasion of Britain...*The overall deception plan worked. Arrangements made by the Germans to disguise *Barbarossa* were both "professional and comprehensive," yet it is doubtful whether they would have worked as well as they did w/o the *dead hand of Stalin's self-deception*. Also, in fairness, many of the warnings were *not ignored*. They were misinterpreted: as political pressure, as relocations of units for other purposes, etc. And Stalin was *not alone in his misinterpretation of the available intelligence*. Even the *British Joint Intelligence Committee* was ambivalent in its conclusions until the **end of May 1941** and only confirmed the Germans' final intention to invade in early June 1941. (*Col Hughes-Wilson*, 52-56, 58)

3.8.2: Stalin as Leader/ Military Commander:

Note: Stalin showed much common sense; he was energetic and down to earth and particularly well informed on the day to day state of the battle. . . Stalin's word was law and his iron grip and brutal determination provided the driving force which kept the Soviet Union in the war. (*Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 60)

Note: In the first few months of the war the claims of the field commanders had been optimistic; their failures they had *tried to conceal*. As the true situation emerged, Shaposhnikov had borne the weight of Stalin's rage. . . According to Voronov, *Stalin wanted to know everything*, but his commanders and staff *feared to tell him the truth*. (*A. Seaton, Stalin as Military Commander*, 130)

Note: In Wahrheit verfolgte Stalin – wie Hitler – ein gigantisches Aufrüstungsprogramm, existierten seit den **20er** Jahren klare Angriffspläne gegen Westeuropa, als dessen Herzstück Deutschland galt. Erstmals gelingt es dem dt.-poln. Historiker Bogdan Musial, anhand neuer Archivfunde die Kriegspläne der sowj. Führung, denen die gesamte Innen- u. Außenpolitik untergeordnet war, minutiös nachzuzeichnen. (*Musial, Kampfplatz Deutschland, Rear Book Jacket*)

Note: *War made Hitler a fantasist and Stalin a realist.* In the first campaigns of 1941 and early 1942, Stalin had sought to direct strategy himself, and even to *micromanage* battles. He was personally responsible for many disasters. Yet by 1942, he had *learned the lesson*. Without sacrificing a jot of power over the Soviet people, he began to delegate military authority to able commanders – Zhukov, Konev, Rokossovsky, *et al.* – and to be rewarded w/ victories. These Soviet marshals were *terrible men working for a terrible master*. Militarily, they were *gifted brutes*. (*W.P. Reese, Stranger, foreword, x*)

Note: “The tragedy of the beginning of the war lies not only in Hitler’s treachery, but also in the evil of the Stalinist system, in which only one man could take all decisions, one political power had the monopoly of governing, and the Leader’s blunders and crimes were treated unquestioningly as ‘great deeds.’ Had Stalin listened to Zhukov, Timoshenko, and even Pavlov, when they were asking for permission – even one week before the fateful beginning – to place troops at battle readiness and take defensive positions in good time, the war could have begun very differently. . . Looking at it in a historical context, it was a defeat of the Stalinist system [i.e., the initial period of the war], but not of the people.” (*D. Volkogonov, “The German Attack,” 93*)

Note: The most striking feature of the Soviet command system was the position of Stalin. While Hitler was head of the Armed Forces High Command (**OKW**), Stalin initially had no specific titular role in the military (or even, until **May 41**, in the state). Stalin’s drive for ultimate authority meant that he tolerated no independent head of the military, but at the same time he did not put himself in supreme command until **Jul 41**. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East, 22*)

Note: Stalin was *little affected by sentiment or ideology* in the pursuit of foreign policy. His statesmanship was *rooted in Russia’s tsarist legacy*, and responded to imperatives deep within its history. . . True, Stalin’s system of government was characterized by an idiosyncratic and despotic choice of methods. . . Yet it would be a mistake to attribute Soviet foreign policy in the wake of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact either to the whims of a tyrant or to relentless ideological expansionism. Stalin’s policy appears to have been rational and level-headed – an unscrupulous **Realpolitik** serving well-defined geopolitical interests. Marx’s battle cry for the international proletariat in **1848**, that they had “little to lose in this revolution but their own chains,” evoked far less resonance w/ Stalin than Palmerston’s famous dictum of the same year that “we have no eternal allies and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and these interests it is our duty to follow.” As Henry Kissinger put it in his characteristically succinct way, “Richelieu or Bismarck would have had no difficulty understanding [Stalin’s] strategy.” . . . It is not surprising that in the execution of his foreign policy Machiavelli rather than Lenin was Stalin’s idol; here was a man who had The Prince specially translated for him. . . (*G. Gorodetsky, Grand Delusion, 316-17*)

Note: Stalin’s working day began an hour or so before noon when he would himself dial the operations directorate for a briefing on what had happened during the night. According to Shtemenko, the answering officer would verbally describe the situation, using a **10-yard** long

telephone lead as he walked from one battle map to the next, Stalin having a corresponding set of maps in his own office which were brought up to date every **5** days by Platonov. The most important fronts were dealt w/ first. . . Even though there were **20** or **30** armies in contact w/ the enemy, Stalin *never allowed a single one to be passed over w/o mention*. . . The second briefing would be at about **1600** hours, sometimes by telephone but usually in the form of a written summary collated by Shaposhnikov. . . Shortly before midnight the Chief of General Staff or his deputy, the head of the operations directorate, and the theater or sector chiefs if required, would drive either to the Kremlin or to Kuntsevo [i.e., Stalin's *Dacha*] w/ their maps and folders for the nightly report to Stalin and the Politburo or GKO. [**Note:** See text for excellent description of Stalin's study and conference room – w/ its vaulted ceiling and light oak paneling; portraits of Suvorov and Kutuzov, Marx and Engels; Stalin's desk near the death-mask of Lenin under a glase case, and the globe, etc. – and for Stalin's typical behavior (he would walk up and down, his hands behind his back, smoking his pipe, etc.)] The nightly meetings often lasted until **3-4** in the morning. (See, *A. Seaton, Stalin as Military Commander*, 129-30)

Note: Stalin himself had little military experience. He had escaped being conscripted into the Tsarist Army in **1916** on the pretext that his arm was deformed and two toes grown together, and his only pretensions to military fame were based on his activities as a military commissar and political member of the military councils of the old revolutionary South and South-West Fronts, mainly at Tsaritsyn (Stalingrad), during the Civil War. There he had acted as Lenin's eyes and ears, the watchdog of the efficiency and political reliability of military cdrs and staffs, and it was on the Volga that he had become acquainted w/ Voroshilov, Budenny, Timoshenko and Tyulenev. Although he was to ascribe to himself the success of the Tsaritsyn operations in accounts written after he had destroyed his rivals and taken over the USSR as dictator, he appears to have shown no evidence of great military ability but rather an overbearing determination to assert his will. . .

There can be no possible doubt that the overall direction of the [Russo-German War] lay entirely in Stalin's hands. . . Eventually a routine of work was evolved. [**Note:** For details see, *A. Seaton*.] Among other things, Seaton writes: "Late each night a General Staff delegation, headed by the Chief or Deputy Chief of General Staff, arrived at the Kremlin rooms which Stalin used as an office. There, in the *arched-roofed, light oak paneled gallery of the ancient fortress, under the massive oil portraits of the Tsarist generals Suvorov and Kutuzov* (which, on the outbreak of war, Stalin had hung beside those of Marx and Lenin), the General Staff representatives, having brought their marked maps and more important documents w/ them, made their reports. The listening Stalin would pace up and down the room. . . These meetings often continued until **3:00-4:00** in the morning. Throughout the whole of his working day Stalin was in touch w/ the front HQs in the field by telephone or short wave radio, operated by his own adjoining signal center and secretariat under his personal secretary, Poskrebyshv. (*Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 57-59)

Stalin [1941]: Rather than visit subordinate HQs, as Hitler was prepared to do [and did], Stalin came to rely on *troubleshooters*, reliable senior officers attached to the *Stavka*, who he would send out to points of crisis to take charge of the situation. He also instituted a *series of draconian measures*. Many of the generals who had faced the initial German *blitzkrieg* were relieved and *executed*. This gradually bred *tough and ruthless cdrs*, who could be relied on to obey orders, whatever the cost in casualties. Stalin also issued, among his *edicts*, an order that troops were to *fight to the last man*, and that the families of those who surrendered would be deprived of all their rights. Indeed, even those who escaped or were liberated from German captivity often found themselves posted to *penal btns*. (*Messenger, Second World War in Europe*, 111)

Stalin bears *direct responsibility* for the weakness of the Soviet armed forces in **1941**, and the readiness of the Russian and Ukrainian peasantry to welcome a foreign invader who promised to drive out the Communists and abolish the collective farms. It was on his orders that countless soldiers were sacrificed in premature, over-ambitious offensives beyond the operational abilities of the army that Stalin had beheaded in **1937**. Yet, as war progressed, Stalin learned to listen to his best generals, to rely on them rather than the Party *apparatchiks*. Enigmatic and inhuman, the *workaholic* Stalin visited neither the front lines nor the factories; indeed, he *seldom left the Kremlin*. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 12)⁹¹

Stalin's ruthlessness: Anyone whose loyalty was suspect in the slightest, even in theory, was *treated like an animal*. Political prisoners in areas open to the German advance were massacred. Stalin engaged in *defensive social engineering* on a scale only marginally less ambitious than Hitler's wild plans. The Germans of the **Volga German Autonomous Republic**, numbering **1,650,000**, were hustled off to Siberia. They were followed by other entire nations: *Chechens, Ingushes, Karachays, the Balkars* of the Northern Caucasus, the *Kalmyks* from the northwest Caspian, the *Crimean Tatars*, etc. Some of these *genocidal-type crimes* were enacted long after the danger from the Germans had passed. The *Chechens* were moved as late as **23.2.44**, being carried off in American trucks supplied under *Lend-Lease*. **Stalin's ruthlessness, combined w/ Hitler's folly, ensured Soviet survival.** (P. Johnson, *Modern Times*, 383-84)

Stalin's ruthlessness: "Throughout the entire period [i.e., **1941**], Stalin 'turned the screws' on Red Army troops, issuing directives that demanded *absolute obedience* to orders under threat of censure, arrest and even execution. The *Stavka* authorized the establishment and employment of *blocking detachments* to enforce discipline by brute force and Stalin often accused and prosecuted unsuccessful cdrs for *treason*, unleashing against them the full power of state security organs. The *raw fear* that kept the Red Army obedient in the late **1930s** did not improve Red Army combat performance during wartime." (Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 209)

Note: „The survival of the Soviet Union in 1941-42 and its resilience in the face of shattering defeats can be ascribed to the character and patriotism of its people, esp. the Russians, or to the *draconian measures* imposed by Stalin, Beria and their lieutenants. In fact, it must be ascribed to both. During the war, an already authoritarian system became more so.“ (C. Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 687)

Paul Johnson: As *generalissimos*, Stalin and Hitler were *strangely alike*, in their total indifference to casualties, however calamitous, in their refusal to visit the fronts (in both cases for security reasons) and in their personal direction of the campaigns. Stalin, like Hitler, sometimes deployed rgmts himself. On **30.11.41**, Stalin received a report that the town of **Dedovo-Dedovsk**, 20 miles west of Moscow, had fallen. He ordered *Zhukov*, plus two army cdrs, *Rokossovsky* and *Govorov*, to assemble a rifle coy and two tanks, and retake it personally. [true?] But Stalin added an extra dimension of secrecy to which even the suspicious Hitler was incapable. From the point where he recovered his nerve, early in **Jul 41**, Stalin began to quietly accumulate *secret military reserves* of his own, the *Stavka* [?], which he commanded personally and whose very existence was concealed from the army cdrs, no matter how senior. (see, P. Johnson, *Modern Times*, 384; also, *Seaton, Stalin as Warlord*, 131-3; 126)

Five-Year Plans: That Russian armed forces made recovery they did (after Jun 41) due to many factors. One, of course, was the ability of the *Soviet infrastructure* to expand w/o *Luftwaffe*

⁹¹ **Note:** Stalin visited the front line on one occasion only – in **Aug 43** he left Moscow for two days to meet the cdrs of the Western and Bryansk fronts. (205)

interference. There was a drop in production for 1941, while factories were moved east of the Urals, but then they turned out modern military equipment in prodigious numbers. Underpinning the ultimate success of the Soviet war economy were Stalin's *Five-Year Plans*. In an effort to remedy the perceived weaknesses of the *tsarist regime*, these plans created the industrial plant and correspondingly enlarged network of technical education and paramilitary training required for modern warfare. In the end, it was this base that provided Stalin w/ the ability to overcome the disastrous effects of his own domestic, military and foreign politics. (D.R. Jones, in: *Why Air Force's Fail*, 278)

Stalin was „directly responsible for the disruptions plaguing the air force command in years preceding the German assault, and he was *indirectly* responsible for the *theoretical confusion* and uncertainty that frequently hindered planning for a future conflict and inhibited a more timely reorganization and reequipment of the air services. Also, the air forces were *hit hard by the purges* after May-Jun 1937. Over **5600** Soviet air force officers had been arrested by Jan 40, including **75 %** of the most senior and experienced cdrs. (See, D.R. Jones, in: *Why Air Force's Fail*, 273-78)

Stalin's *technological conservatism*, shared by old civil war cronies like the greatly mustachioed cavalry officer Marshal *Semen Budenny*, ensured that the Red Army's communications net consisted almost *entirely of cable rather than radio*. A relative handful of German agents in the country were able to utterly disable it before the main body had even crossed the border on 22 June 1941. (Citino, *Death of the Wehrmacht*, 36)

Stalin was convinced that Hitler would *not attack in the east before the war in the west was conclusively won*. Winning time was of the essence: the *overriding imperative* [for Stalin]...Conclusion Stalin drew from the lack of preparedness of Red Army was simple: *There was no option: conflict w/ Germany must be at all costs delayed until 1942 at the earliest*. „We all, Stalin included, knew that conflict was inevitable,“ *Mikoyan* recalled,⁹² „but we were also aware of our lack of preparations for it.“ Stalin later told Churchill that he knew the war was coming, but thought he might gain another six months or so. This meant a policy of *mollifying Germany* and avoiding confrontation, offering not the slightest provocation for German aggression. So keen was he to avoid provoking the Germans that deliveries of raw materials to Germany in line w/ earlier trade agreements were *still being met in full only six days before the Wehrmacht attacked*. Even down to morning of the invasion itself, Soviet goods were being unloaded at stations on the Polish borders. And Stalin „*thought he could read Hitler's mind*.“ Hitler was not stupid, he thought; he would not risk a war on two fronts. So Stalin was confident he could fend off Hitler until 1942. Then the Red Army would be ready. (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 266, 269-70; 280)

Like Hitler, Stalin had a sharp mind (however warped), and his *excellent memory* gave him a good grasp on detail. His understanding of military affairs was, nevertheless, in essence that of an *informed amateur*. He lacked the training and expertise of a professional. This led to seemingly contradictory tendencies, both harmful. On one hand, he was *inclined to interfere in matters of detail*, such as on specific artillery types, often on a whim. On other hand, he was forced to rely heavily upon the judgement of those he trusted – and they were few in number – in the top echelons of military command. Once the *big drive for expansion and reconstruction of the Red Army had begun in summer 1940*, he had frequent briefings, usually late at night in his *dacha*, from his mil. leaders. They also sent in regular written reports on the state of the army. And Stalin checked up on the army leadership through reports from *Beria*, head of the *secret*

⁹² Anastas Mikoyan, Soviet foreign trade expert.

police, and others. But since he seldom left the Kremlin or his nearby dacha to inspect the genuine condition of the armed forces, he was all the more dependent upon what he was told. (Kershaw, Fateful Choices, 264)

Wann wollte Stalin Deutschland angreifen?:

*Brogdan Musial: Diese Saetze [i.e., remarks by high-ranking Soviet leaders] moegen als Hinweis gedeutet werden, dass Stalin den Angriffskrieg gegen Deutschland in zwei Jahren (1943) eingeplant hatte. Auch Stalin selbst soll gegenueber Molotow erklart haben: „Erst 1943 waeren wir Deutschland gewachsen.“ Diese Saetze koennen aber lediglich als Indizien, nicht aber als Beweise fuer den Termin des geplanten Angriffes gedeutet werden, zumal der geplante Verlauf der Kriegsvorbereitungen eher auf Fruhjahr 1942 hindeutete. Das Jahr 1941, ob Sommer oder Herbst, ist jedoch auszuschliessen. . . Der fuer das Jahr 1941 angeordnete Neu- u. Ausbau von Eisenbahnlinien u. Flugplaetzen entlang der dt.-sowj. Grenzen ist ein Indiz fuer die Vorbereitungen zum Angriffskrieg fuer das Jahr 1942. Ein aehnliches Indiz ist auch der Beschluss des Politbueros vom 6.6.41, bis zum 1.1.42 grosse Vorraete an Treib- u. Rohstoffen, Lebensmitteln, Futter, Gebrauchsartikeln fuer Soldaten, Uniformen u. Waesche anzulegen. . . Parallel zu der massiven Auf- u. Umruestung, dem Aus- u. Umbau der Roten Armee, dem Ausbau des Eisenbahnwesens, der massiven Aufstockung der Vorraete entwarf der Generalstab in den Jahren 1940/41 Plaene zum Angriff in westl. Richtung, d.h. auf die auf polnischem Territorium zusammengezogenen dt. Truppen. Die letzten bekannten Plaene stammen vom Mai 41. Der gegenwaertige Stand der Forschung u. die hier dargelegten Quellen ziegen aber, dass im Jahre 1941 die Rote Arme auf einen Krieg mit so einem starken Gegner, wie Deutschland es damals war, unter keinen Umstaenden vorbereitete war. (Musial, *Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 451-55)*

5.5.41: Anders als [Hitler] selbst, hielt Stalin die *Wehrmacht* am 5. Mai 1941 nicht fuer unbesiegbar, sondern nur fuer „*boastful, self-satisfied and conceited*“, d.h. „*dizzy with successes*.“ (J. Foerster, *Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, 172-73)

Jun - Jul 41: After the weeks of vacillation preceding the invasion, Stalin was galvanized into action. The recollections of those who worked w/ him in the first week of war paint a picture of an energetic man who, though “tired and worried,” was consumed w/ anger – at the Germans, at his colleagues, at the disoriented forces at the front, even at himself. He *worked around the clock, involving himself in every decision, large and small* – the design of a sniper’s rifle, the length of bayonets. He was voracious in his appetite for news, but those around him hesitated to tell him the worst. The military discussions had an air of complete unreality, Stalin urging annihilating attacks, his commanders cautiously painting a picture of continuous retreats. (R. Overy, *Russia’s War*, 77)

ab 22.6.41 [Stalin’s response to the German attack]: An oft-told tale about Stalin’s response to Operation “Barbarossa” is that he was shocked and surprised by the German attack, refused to believe that it was happening and then descended into a depression which he did not snap out of until urged to do so by his Politburo colleagues. As w/ so many stories about Stalin, the origin of this one is Khrushchev’s secret speech to the 20th Party Congress in 1956:

It would be incorrect to forget that after the first severe disaster and defeats at the front, Stalin thought this was the end. In one of his speeches in those days he said: “All that which Lenin created we have lost forever.” After this *Stalin for a long time actually did not direct the military operations and ceased to do anything whatever*. He returned to active service only when some members of

the Political Bureau visited him and told him that it was necessary to take certain steps immediately in order to improve the situation at the front.

Khrushchev elaborated on the story in his memoirs, reporting that Beria told him that Stalin at one point resigned the leadership and retreated to his dacha in despair. Another version of this particular incident was put forward in the memoirs of Anastas Mikoyan, Stalin's Trade Minister. [Note: See text for details.]

Perhaps a better guide to Stalin's personal response to the German attack is the contemporary evidence of his actions during the first days of the war. According to his appointments diary, when war broke out Stalin held numerous meetings w/ members of the Soviet military and political leadership. The early days of the war required many decisions by Stalin. On the *day war broke out*, he authorized 20 different decrees and orders. On **23 Jun 41** he established a STAVKA (HQ) of the Main Command, a mixed political and military body – chaired by the Defense Commissar Timoshenko – to oversee the strategic direction of the war. On **24 Jun 41** it was resolved to establish a Council of Evacuation to organize the evacuation of people and materials from the war zone and to create a Soviet Information Buro (Sovinform) to coordinate and direct the propaganda war. On **29 Jun 41** Stalin issued an urgent directive to party and state organizations in front line areas, ordering them to fight to the last drop of blood in defense of every inch of Soviet soil. (*G. Roberts, Stalin's Wars*, 89-90)

27.6.41: Stalin's personal battle w/ reality reached its climax on **27 Jun 41**. News was filtering in that German forces had reached the Belorussian capital of Minsk, some **300** miles into Soviet territory. Following a tense Politburo meeting, Stalin, accompanied by Beria and Molotov, took the unprecedented step of paying a visit to the Defense Commissariat, where Timoshenko and Zhukov were trying to bring some order to the battered Soviet line. Stalin looked at the maps and reports for himself and could see the truth. An angry exchange followed w/ Zhukov and Timoshenko, who for once dropped the mask of fear always worn in Stalin's presence. Stalin wanted the truth and he got it. He looked around at each of them in the room w/ evident gloom and stalked out. "*Lenin founded our state,*" he muttered, "*and we've fucked it up.*"

Stalin abruptly stopped ruling. He drove to his dacha at Kuntsevo in the forest of Poklonnaia Gora outside Moscow and stayed there, leaving the Government in abeyance. There are a number of possible explanations for Stalin's behavior. [Note: See text for details: *R. Overy, Russia's War*, 78-79)

Jun-Sep 41: "Stalin's tardy decision to withdraw his forces from *Belorussia* in June, from the *western Ukraine* in July and from *Kiev* in September led directly to the encirclement and destruction of entire *fronts* and the loss of immense territories w/ large populations and valuable industrial and agricultural resources. Similar catastrophes on a smaller scale occurred at *Uman*, *Luga* and in the *Donbas* region." (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 208)

Aug 41 [Smolensk]: Stalin was, as Zhukov put it, *beside himself w/ rage* at the Smolensk defeat. "We generals," he said, "felt the full weight of his anger." (*A. Seaton, Stalin as Military Commander*, 108)

Sep 41 [nach Kiever Kesselschlacht]: Neue Dokumente zeigen, dass Stalin zum ersten Mal in Panik geriet. Seinem Botschafter in London schrieb er, "dass, wenn die Engländer in den nächsten zwei, drei Wochen in Europa keine zweite Front schaffen, wir u. unsere Verbündeten

dann die Geschichte verlieren koennten. Das waere traurig, aber es kann so kommen.“ (Mueller, *Duell im Schnee*, in: *Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Burgdorff (Hg.), 121)

Oct 41: At end of first week of October, Stalin had made it abundantly clear to his close entourage, most notably *Beria*, **that they faced annihilation and must react w/ total ruthlessness**. The enemy's rear was to be harassed by *partisan attacks*. All houses capable of offering shelter to German soldiers as winter approached *were to be destroyed*, whatever suffering this entailed for Russian civilians trapped behind German lines. Above all, *the partisan war* was to be extended to vengeance operations w/ special stay-behind groups. Beria appointed General *Pavel Sudoplatov* to be chief of the *Special Tasks Group* of the NKVD. (Note: Soviet intelligence network to be activated in Moscow after it had fallen to Germans. An "autonomous group" was created, to assassinate Hitler and his close associates if they came to Moscow after its capture. City's *water supply to be sabotaged* if Nazis came, etc.) (Bevor, *Mystery of Olga Chekhova*, 176-77)

Oct/Nov 41: Bis Heute [i.e., 1967] gibe es keinen authentischen Bericht ueber Stalins Verhalten waehrend der grossen Krise in Moskau. Zu Lebzeiten des Diktators schwieg man einfach ueber diese unruhmlichen Wochen, u. in der Aera Chruschtschow wurde Stalin, „der Feldherr,“ mit Schmach ueberhaeuft. Es ist also nicht leicht, ein Bild ueber seine Rolle im Spaetherbst u. Winter 1941 zu entwerfen. Doch es steht ausser Zweifel, dass die Verteidigung Moskaus mit der Person Stalins fuer immer verbunden bleibt. *Er war es, der auf dem Hoehepunkt der Krise seinen Kopf nicht verlor*, der zwar die Evakuierung der auslaendischen Vertretungen, der Regierung u. der Behoerden befahl, sich persoendlich jedoch nicht bewegen liess, Moskau zu verlassen. In seinem Bunker, *tief unter dem Kreml*, harrete er der kommenden Ereignisse . . . Von seinem Schreibtisch aus stand er in direkter Verbindung mit den Oberbefehlshabern der verschiedenen Fronten, u. von hier aus ueberwachte u. leitete er die mil. Operationen . . .

Hat Stalin je daran gedacht, Moskau den Deutschen uebergeben zu muessen? Zwar sagte er Anfang Oktober dem britischen Botschafter, dass die Hauptstadt „bis zum aeussersten“ verteidigt werde, aber er gab auch den Fall Moskaus als Moeglichkeit zu: *Wenn Moskau tatsaechlich falle, muesste die Rote Armee ganz Russland westl. der Wolga aufgeben*. Den Krieg wuerde er aber trotzdem weiterfuehren, doch es koennte Jahre dauern, bis man die Wolga wieder in westlicher Richtung ueberschreiten wuerde.

War es tatsaechlich so? Die Ueberlebenden jener Zeit schweigen darueber bis heute. Nur eines ist sicher: *Noch nie in der Geschichte Russlands war ein Krieg so eng mit einer einzigen Person verbunden wie der „Grosse Vaterlaendische Krieg“ mit Stalin*. (For more details see, *Gosztony, Entscheidungsschlacht*, 234)⁹³

Nov-Dec 41: *Stalin* would do much to boost morale in the tense weeks before Christmas, reopening the churches, easing the grip of the NKVD and appearing at Red Square to calm the people. Memories of *Borodino* and *Napoleon* stirred a *religious feeling* of sacrifice in the people of the front-line city, and they worked by the thousand to build tank traps and fortifications. The Germans never reached them. (*Faust's Metropolis*, A. Richie, 503)

⁹³ **Note:** *Milowan Djilas*, who was with Stalin in the Kremlin, wrote: “Bald danach musste ich Moskau verlassen. Stalin ging aber nicht: Er war entschlossen, die Stadt zu verteidigen. Mann kann nicht beschreiben, von wie grosser moralischer Bedeutung das war, als die Leute erfuhren, dass Stalin in Moskau ausharrte, u. als sie ihn am 7. Nov. sprechen hoerten. Das richtete ihren Glauben wieder auf u. staerkte ihr Vertrauen u. war mehr Wert als eine ausgewachsene Armee.“ (234-35)

Mid-Dec 41: In the middle of Dec 41, when the first phase of the Moscow counter-stroke was concluded (w/ both German pincers north and south of Moscow broken off), w/ reports of German demoralization and defeat flowing in, as the hinges securing the flanks of AGC were under immense strain, Stalin took personal control of the counter-offensive and handled the planning of its next phase. As the Stavka directives rolled on to the Fronts, Stalin's massive plan became clearer – the destruction of AGC, the annihilation of AGN, and a great lunge into the Ukraine. . . (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 280)

Winter '41/42: That the *Russian counteroffensive* did not destroy Army Group Center due to two reasons: a) the vast blood letting of summer and fall had left the Russian army as well w/ limited resources to achieve its objective; b) after the first flush of victories in December, *Stalin became overconfident*; overruling **Zhukov**,⁹⁴ he set *wide-ranging strategic objectives that were beyond capabilities of his forces*. (W. Murray, *Strategy for Defeat*, 113, 118)

Winter '41/42 [Stalin's "Broad Front" Strategy]: Postwar Russian critiques of Stalin's direction of the Battle of Moscow, including those written by his closest subordinates (such as Zhukov), harshly criticize the dictator's employment of a „broad front“ strategy to defeat the *Wehrmacht*. This strategy, they claimed, dissipated the Red Army's limited strength by requiring it to conduct offensive ops along multiple axes and insured that no single offensive achieved its ultimate aims. The same critics, in particular Zhukov, argue that, after the spring of **1942**, Stalin finally heeded the advice of his advisors and discarded the „broad front“ strategy in favor of a more selective approach. . .

However, recently revealed archive materials clearly refute this claim in two respects. First, while Stalin did indeed adopt a „broad front“ offensive strategy in the winter of **1941/42**, his key advisors (including Zhukov) acquiesced in and encouraged that strategy, agreeing w/ Stalin that the best way to collapse the German defenses in any given sector was to apply maximum pressure against all sectors. Second, rather than abandoning that strategy after the spring of **1942**, Stalin and the *Stavka* adhered to it in **1942**, **1943** and early **1944** for the same reasons they had in **1941**. Only in the summer of **1944** did they adopt the policy of conducting staggered and successive offensive ops. As late as **Jan 45**, the Red Army once again employed the „broad front“ strategy, albeit on a smaller scale, in its strategic offensive into East Prussia and central Poland. (D. Glantz, *Soviet-German War: Myths & Realities*, 26-27)

ab Jan 42: [Re: Stalin's unrealistic expectations and demands for the general offensive]: Stalin never visited the front (despite of the many fictions that he did). And since commanders who were summoned to him had to face also his “entourage” (who, according to Admiral Kuznetsov, advised officers “not to make trouble”), the chances of Stalin being persuaded of reality – stiffening German resistance, decimated Soviet formations, over-extended fronts, dangerous multiplicities of objectives – vanished almost completely from the horizon of decision-making. In all this airless artificiality, caverned in the bunker in the Kremlin, the doctrine of Stalinist infallibility prevailed in war, just as it had come to prevail in peace. . . (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 303)

19.1.42 [Stalin's decision saves AGC?]: Ausgerechnet jetzt, in der zweiten Januarhaelfte, als es darauf angekommen waere, Schukov's Truppen zu verstaerken, befahl die STAWKA das Gegenteil: Stalin sah bereits den Sieg an der Westfront zum Greifen nahe u. beschloss am 19 Jan 42 die Abgabe der 1 Stossarmee zur Verfuegung der STAWKA, die diese Armee auf

⁹⁴ **Note:** This is the conventional view – gleaned from Zhukov's memoirs, etc. – but Glantz points out (see below) that Zhukov and other generals actually supported Stalin's strategy.

einem Nebenkriegsschauplatz, naemlich zur Abschnuerung der deutschen Kraefte auf den Waldai-Hoehen, verwenden wollte. Trotz scharfen Protests Schukows wurde ihm die wertvolle **1 Stossarmee** entzogen. Auch die **16 Armee**, die an Wlassows Durchbruch durch die Lama-Stellung beteiligt war, musste herausgezogen werden. Die STAWKA setzte sie nach Sueden zum grossen Frontvorsprung bei Suchinitschi – Kirow in Marsch, offenbar um den dort errungenen Erfolg zu erweitern.

Diese Entscheidung Stalins brachte aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach Schukow um den Sieg u. bewahrte die Deutschen vor einer vernichtenden Niederlage. Haette man die beiden Armeen auf dem rechten Fluegel Schukows belassen, haette dieser hoechstwahrscheinlich die **3 Pz Armee** durchbrochen, aber zumindest deren Festsetzen in der sogenannten „Koenigsberg-Stellung“, die zugleich die Winterstellung darstellte, verhindert. Ob es unter diesen Um-staenden der **9 Armee** gelungen waere, eine feste nach Osten gerichtete Abwehrfront zu errichten u. gleichzeitig die Angriffe gegen ihren Ruecken aufzufangen, ist stark zu bezweifeln. (*H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 218)

19.-22.1.42 [Stalin decides!]: Between 19-22 Jan 42, Stalin made decisions of fundamental and far-reaching importance, all intended to reinforce his intention of encompassing the destruction of the two German Army Groups – North and Centre. . . A Stavka directive, issued at **21.15** hours on **19 Jan 42**, embodying Stalin’s orders about handing over two Shock Armies to Koniev,⁹⁵ and in which Stalin personally assigned the objectives to the various armies, clearly envisaged the capture not only of Rzhev but also of Smolensk. (See text for details of directive, *J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 306-07)

28.7.42: With the “*Ni shagu nazad!*” (“Not a step back!”) order of **28 Jul 42**, Stalin reached what could have been the last stop short of strategic bankruptcy: he had to demand that his forces sacrifice themselves to buy time for him. A month later, he had to call on Zhukov and Vasilevskiy to augment his generalship. The *History of the Second World War* [IVMV, Vol. 5, 236) states that by appointing a deputy supreme cdr, Stalin “introduced a new element in the leadership at the strategic level,” and that Zhukov and Vasilevskiy “were provided w/ pleni-potentiary powers and possessed great authority in the fighting forces.” Specifically, Stalin had, in making Zhukov deputy supreme cdr, for the first time installed a military professional in the direct chain of command above the operational level and had, by granting plenipotentiary powers to Zhukov and Vasilevskiy, created the nucleus of at least a provisional military high command.

The development of the high command continued through the rest of the year and into the early months of **1943**. . . The mostly ad hoc command structure of late **1942** was formalized in May 1943, when Zhukov’s and Vasilevskiy’s appointments as first and second deputy defense commissars, respectively, put them at the heads of both the line and staff military chains of command. . . The military’s relationship to Stalin had changed. He had come as close to creating a high command and appointing a cdr-in-chief as he ever would, and he had accepted the professionals’ guidance. . . That Stalin discovered an effective system of command, which was also satisfactory to himself, was evident in his own entry into the military as a marshal of the Soviet Union in **Mar 43**. What is most remarkable, however, is that after late **1942**, Stalin had managed successfully to foster and exploit military professionalism w/o relinquishing any of his authority over or within the armed forces. The army had performed as if it had a high command, but it did not. Orders continued to be issued in the name of the Stavka. Zhukov, as deputy supreme cdr, and he and Vasilevskiy, as first and second deputy defense commissars, wielded

⁹⁵ **Note:** Kurochkin, Commander of North-Western Front, was to lose **3 and 4 Shock Armies**, which were to be subordinated to Koniev’s Kalinin Front. (306)

great authority when Stalin desired them to, but it was from his authority and not theirs. In terms of real power, the distance between Stalin and his deputies always was, when he wanted it to be, at least as great as that between a marshal and a private. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 506-08)

Sep 42: [in ref. to *Stavka* conference at Kremlin]: *D. Glantz*: “Despite the autocratic nature of the Soviet regime, and unlike the case of Hitler and his High Command, the decision to undertake major offensives was not taken lightly. Moreover, it involved *considerable genuine debate*... Debate was not a new phenomenon in *Stavka* planning circles. What was new, however, was the degree of debate and its vigor and freshness. While Stalin’s opinion, quite naturally, had dominated discussions in earlier months, *the elusiveness of victory and the sharpness of recent catastrophic defeats conditioned Stalin to listen more respectfully to the most capable of his military experts*. By now he had also developed a keen understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, and personal quirks of each member of his military entourage. Ironically, *despite the harsh experience of the first year of war, that entourage had changed little*. Each member brought to the group unique personal perspectives born of combat experience and valuable biases that needed to be aired and debated in full. Now, *in the fall of 1942, Stalin finally understood that these discussions were essential for victory.*” (*Glantz, Zhukov’s Greatest Defeat*, 14-15.)⁹⁶

Fall 42: [ref.: Operation “Mars”]: Although *mildly criticized by Zhukov* in winter 1941 for mandating an offensive on too broad a front, *Stalin too still seethed over the earlier failure to defeat Army Group Center*. Thus Zhukov’s arguments for a repeat effort fell on receptive ears. (*Glantz, Zhukov’s Greatest Defeat*, 20)

3.8.3: Stalin Order 0428 (17.11.41):⁹⁷

Order of the Headquarters of the Supreme Command about the destruction of settlements in the area close to the front

0428 17 November 1941

The experience of the last month has shown that the German army is badly prepared for war under winter conditions; it is lacking warm clothing, and due to the colossal difficulties that the upcoming frost has caused it, it is taking shelter in settlements in the area close to the front. The shamelessly arrogant enemy had counted on spending the winter in the warm houses of Moscow and Leningrad, but that was prevented by the action of our troops. On

⁹⁶ In other words, Hitler and Stalin were going in different directions as commanders-in-chief—Stalin learning from his mistakes and acting accordingly; Hitler (after experiences of winter 1941/42) convinced of his own infallibility and showing increased contempt for his military advisors, leading to ever more of his meddling in military ops. In other words, by fall of 1942, Stalin had *grown* as a military cdr, while Hitler had learned the wrong lessons.

⁹⁷ This was Stalin’s “scorched earth” order, to deny Germans food, shelter, etc., by destroying all infrastructure as they withdrew toward Moscow. The order is *real*. However, some “revisionist” historians have concocted a bogus version of this document, purporting to show that Stalin ordered Red Army men to dress as Wehrmacht and SS soldiers and commit crimes against the local Russian population (to “whip them into a fury” against the Germans). Source of this material is: *Roberto Muehlenkamp* at: <http://holocaustcontroversies.blogspot.com/2006/07/blame-it-on-germans.html>

extended sectors of the front where they encountered tough resistance by our units, the German troops were forced to go over to the defensive and have taken quarter in the settlements located in a depth of 20 to 30 kilometers on both sides along the roads. The German soldiers generally live in cities, towns and villages, in peasant houses, barns, grain stores and bathing houses near the front, while the staffs of the German units take quarter in bigger settlements and cities, where they hide in cellars which they use as protection from our air force and our artillery. The Soviet population of these places is usually displaced and thrown out by the German occupiers.

To deny the German army the possibility of settling down in villages and cities, to chase out the German occupiers from all settlements into the cold of the field, to smoke them out of all living quarters and warm shelters and to force them to freeze to death under the open sky - that is an task not to be postponed, from the accomplishment of which the acceleration of the shattering of the enemy and the destruction of his army depends to a great extent.

The Headquarters of the Supreme Command orders:

1. To completely destroy and burn down all settlements in the rear area of the German troops in a depth of 40 to 60 kilometers from the main line of combat and 20 to 30 kilometers to the left and right of the roads. To immediately employ the air force to destroy the settlements in the indicated radius, to use artillery and grenade launchers to a great extent, as well as reconnaissance commandos, ski units and diversion groups of the partisans equipped with bottles filled with burning substances, hand grenades and explosives.

2. To form special units of 20 to 30 men each in every regiment for blowing up and setting on fire the settlements where the troops of the enemy take quarter. For the special units there must be chosen the fighters, commanders and political workers that are the most daring and strongest under political and moral aspects, to whom the task and its importance for the destruction of the German army must be explained in detail. Courageous fighters who distinguish themselves in daring actions for the destruction of the settlements where there are German troops are to be recommended for distinction.

3. In case of forced retreats of our units on this or that sector, to take along the Soviet population and in any case to destroy without exception all settlements so that the enemy may not use them. The special units formed in the regiments are to be primarily used for this.

4. To the war councils of the fronts and the single armies, to systematically verify how the tasks of destruction of the settlements are accomplished in the above mentioned radius measured from the front line. Stavka is to be given a special report every three days about how many and which settlements have been destroyed in the past days and by which means these results have been achieved.

The Headquarters of the Supreme Command

I. Stalin
B. Šapošnikov

END OF DOCUMENT

The above is a rendering of the *full text of Stalin Order 0428 of 17 Nov 41*. It is a translation by the author of this message from a transcription in German which in turn is a translation from the Russian original, which can be found in the Central Archive of the Russian Federation (Central'nyj Archiv Ministervo Oborony RF) in Podols'k, Fond 4, Opis'11, Delo 66, List 221. German historians *Christian Hartmann* and *Jürgen Zarusky* went there to have a look at the document, which has also been transcribed in various Russian publications, including Dmitri Volkogonov's biography of Stalin ("Triumph and Tragedy"), always with the contents rendered above. The German translation from the Russian original can be found in the article "*Stalins 'Fackelmänner-Befehl' vom November 1941 - Ein verfälschtes Dokument*" by Christian Hartmann and Jürgen Zarusky, published in the October 2000 issue of the quarterly "*Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*" of the German Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Institute for Contemporary History.

The actual text of **Stalin's Order 0428** rendered above is interesting not so much for what it contains as for what it does not contain. *No passages about Soviet troops disguised in German uniforms committing atrocities against their own population are contained in that order*. This means that the version of that order containing such passages is not authentic, and that said passages are the product of a falsification of the original document.

Hartmann and *Zarusky* even took the trouble to check the *alleged source of the falsified version*, which is supposed to be filed as a filmed document in the United States National Archives in Washington in a roll film with other wartime German documents under the reference Archiv Serie 429, Rolle 461, Generalstab des Heeres, Abteilung Fremde Heere Ost (II) H 3/70 Fr. 6439568. They found this roll film under National Archives, T-78, Roll 461 (the correct reference of the National Archives), but no trace of Stalin Order 0428 there. No trace of it could be found at the German Federal Archive - Military Archive (Bundesarchiv - Militärarchiv) in Freiburg either.

So it should be clear that Stalin Order 0428 was a ruthless "scorched earth" order, but never an order to produce false evidence of German atrocities for propaganda purposes. The passages referring to such actions were obviously introduced by falsifiers in order to raise unfounded doubts about the authors of countless well-documented atrocities committed by German troops against the civilian population of the occupied territories of the Soviet Union. Volume 4/2000 (Heft 4/2000) of the "*Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*", which contains the above mentioned article, can be ordered from the Institut für Zeitgeschichte under the following link: <http://www.ifz-muenchen.de/vierteljahrshefte/index.html>

What was the reaction to this clear evidence that the purported text of Stalin Order 0428 of 17 November 1941 is a fake and *that this order*, while expressing a criminal lack of concern on Stalin's part about the effects his "scorched earth" policy would have on Soviet civilians, *contained nothing about Soviet detachments committing atrocities disguised as Germans in order to make the Soviet people hate the...invaders*.

3.8.4: Chronology of Events:

1927: Der Tod Lenins (**21 Jan 24**) loeste wiederum eine ernsthafte Fuehrungskrise in der Partei aus. Es kam zu heftigen Machtkaempfen um Lenins Nachfolge, aus denen Stalin u. seine innerparteilichen Anhaenger siegreich hervorgingen. Im Jahre **1927** war Stalins Macht gefestigt. (*Musial, Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 16)

1930: Anfang **1930** liess Stalin auch die Zwangskollektivierung entscheidend beschleunigen u. zugleich einen Vernichtungsfeldzug gegen die Bauern beginnen, um den breiten Widerstand gegen die Kollektivierung zu brechen. Es ging darum, sich uneingeschraenkten Zugriff auf die bauerlichen Ertraege zu sichern, um damit die gigantische Aufruestung zu finanzieren. (Musial, *Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 16-17)

1931: Tuchatschewski gelang es, Stalin fuer seine Idee des Vernichtungskrieges zu gewinnen, u. ab Beginn **1931** wurde die Rote Armee nach dieser Konzeption ausgebaut, umstrukturiert u. ausgeruestet. Die gesamte Wirtschaft u. Gesellschaft des Landes wurden dem einen Ziel, den massiven Vorbereitungen zum revolutionaeren Eroberungskrieg, untergeordnet. . . Die Politik der Vorbereitung zum Angriffskrieg gegen den Westen verfolgte Stalin bis zum **22 Jun 41**. . . (Musial, *Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 10)⁹⁸

1935-39: Stalin hielt die antisowjetische Rhetorik Hitlers fuer ein Taeschungsmanoever, um Frankreich „einzulullen“, wie er es im Jahre **1935** formulierte. Stalin ging davon aus, dass das vorrangige Ziel Hitlers die Wiedereroberung der nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg verlorenen Gebiete sei. Die Ereignisse der Jahre **1938/39** schienen Stalin recht zu geben. (Musial, *Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 17)

1938-39 [*Sudeten Crisis/Hitler-Stalin Pact*]: The readiness of Britain and France to yield to Hitler's bullying and collude in the carve-up of *Czechoslovakia* in the Munich Conference of 29-30 Sep 38 had obvious meaning in Soviet eyes: *war was coming, and the Soviet Union could reckon on no help from the west*. The underlying thinking, on the Soviet side, behind the notorious Hitler-Stalin Pact of **Aug 39** that so astonished the world *rested on such considerations*. For Stalin, the loss of hope in the readiness of the western democracies to combat Hitler went hand in hand w/ *deepened distrust of their motives*. That the west would favor a German-Soviet war, and might even lend support to Germany's fight, was a *constant component of thinking in the Kremlin*. In **1939**, after Hitler occupied rump of *Czechoslovakia*, the Soviet Union had proposed a *full-scale military alliance* w/ Britain and France; but the latter were unenthusiastic. For the Soviets, the *dilatory western response* could be seen as confirmation of the „*unswerving line of policy – of setting Germany on to the USSR*.“ So nothing materialized in the *last hope of containing Hitler* short of an all-out war. (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 255-56)

23.8.39 [*Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact*]: At his *Alpine retreat* near Berchtesgaden, Hitler *slapped his thigh in delight* at the news of his diplomatic coup. At his *dacha* on the outskirts of Moscow, Stalin was equally pleased. But he was under *no illusions about the Germans*. „Of course it's all a game to see who can fool whom,“ *Nikita Khrushchev*, at that time the party boss in Kiev and a member of the *Politburo*, recalled Stalin saying. „I know what Hitler's up to. He thinks he's outsmarted me, but actually it's I who have tricked him.“ He told his dinner companions from the *Politburo* that night that „because of this treaty the war would pass us by for a while longer. We would be able to stay neutral and save our strength.“ Stalin knew that he had staved off any imminent treat to the Soviet Union from Hitler's Germany, and had *gained vital time*. This had to be utilized to prepare the Red Army for war. Stalin had read parts of *Mein Kampf* as he was on the threshold of the devil's pact w/ Hitler. He had *underlined the passages dealing w/ Germany's need to acquire new lands in the east at the expense of Russia*. He *knew what was coming*. But he thought the Soviet Union would have *three years to be ready for the onslaught*. And by the **end of 1942** the Red Army would be fit for the showdown. In the mean-time, the Soviet Union could benefit materially, and territorially, from its new friendship w/ the former arch-enemy. (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 258; also, *Volkogonov*, 352; *Montefiore*, 272)

⁹⁸ **Note:** Musial stresses the *continuity* of Stalin's policy from at least **1931**.

Aug-Sep 39: Der Pakt mit Hitler vom **24 Aug 39** bedeutete fuer Stalin nur ein voruebergehendes Zweckbuendnis, genauso wie fuer Hitler. Stalins Ziel war es, Europa in einen Krieg zu stuerzen u. die westl. Laender ausbluten zu lassen, um im geeigneten Moment anzugreifen, wie aus seinen eigenen Aussagen u. denen seiner Vertrauten hervorgeht. . . Im **Sep 39**, mit dem Ueberfall auf Polen, schlug die Sowjetunion den Weg der „offensiven Politik,“ das heisst des revolutionaeren Eroberungskrieges, ein, den die Sowjetunion immer verfolgt hatte. (*Musial, Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 10)

Aug 39–Jun 41: Stalin's policy was consistently to *rearm w/ all speed*, but to *mollify Germany* as far as possible. He was not naive enough to believe the conflict w/ Germany could be avoided. But he thought he could head off trouble until **1942**, and he believed he could read Hitler's intentions: to force the Soviet Union into political submission before reaching a settlement w/ Britain and only then to turn his aggression eastwards. Stalin thought Hitler *would act w/ the same cold, brutal rationality that he himself would have employed*. Sure that Hitler would *pose an ultimatum before any attack* (A German deception that Stalin „swallowed“), he felt confident he could win time. Meanwhile, the *least provocation had to be avoided*. (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 294-95)⁹⁹

1940/41: Ab **1940** wurde die Rote Armee wieder stark umstrukturiert, umgeruestet u. ausgebaut, um sie in eine der schlagkraeftigsten u. maechigsten Invasionsarmeen der Weltgeschichte zu verwandeln. Ab Ende **1940** u. besonders intensiv ab Fruehjahr **1941** bereitete Stalin die Rote Armee bereits explizit auf den Angriff gegen Deutschland vor. (*Musial, Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 17-18)

Spring 41 [*Stalin's appeasement*]: The ease of the German conquest of Yugoslavia and Greece showed Stalin that the turn of events in southeastern Europe would do little or nothing to interfere w/ Hitler's plans to attack the USSR. He increased Russian supplies to Germany, promising and punctually providing special facilities for the transit of rubber from the Far East and making other economic agreements favorable to Germany; he stopped arguing about the Russo-German frontier in the Baltic area; he expunged all criticism of Germany from the Russian press; he withdrew recognition of the Norwegian and Belgian governments in exile, expelled the Yugoslav ambassador from Moscow, refused to recognize the Greek government in exile and recognized *Rashid Ali's* pro-German regime in Iraq. None of these things had been asked for by Hitler and the German press was told to make no mention of them. (*Calvocoressi & Wint, Total War*, 168)

Spring 41: Throughout the whole period preceding the outbreak of war Stalin had been very much afraid that some event or instance could „provoke“ the Germans and thus precipitate a war. He was *not* inclined to believe that Hitler would break the Non-Aggression Pact if left unprovoked. Stalin considered that the Soviet Union was much weaker than Germany which had conquered most of Europe, and he *dreaded the prospect of war* at a time such as this. He convinced himself that Hitler would keep his word and moreover that he, Hitler, would not risk making war on Russia before he had defeated Great Britain. Though Stalin received alarming information about German preparations, he also convinced himself in this matter that here was either a

⁹⁹ **Note:** *Kershaw* points out that an option to Stalin's policy of avoiding war at all cost *was* available, however risking it might have been. This was a policy of *deterrence* – characterized by an early and full mobilization to show strength and hence counter the overriding image of the Red Army's weakness that prevailed in German circles. Ironically, the very worst that could have resulted from such a policy is what actually *did* – a German attack in spring 1941. (see, 294-96)

cunning plot on the part of the Germans, or else an attempt by the British to bring about a war between Germany and Russian. He *never for a moment trusted Prime Minister Churchill*. Stalin was by nature extremely mistrustful and cunning, ever ready to believe in meanness or treachery in others. (*Mikoyan, Barbarossa and Soviet Leadership*, 126)

Apr 41: A week after the opening of the German campaign in the Balkans and on the day when Belgrade fell, Stalin concluded a *neutrality pact* w/ Japan. But he *did not trust Japan* to keep it and even after Hitler's attack he hesitated for some time before moving troops from his Asian to his European fronts. (*Calvocoressi & Wint, Total War*, 166)

5.5.41: Stalin [who, unlike Hitler, rarely gave speeches] gives a major speech in Moscow before hundreds of graduates of the *Military Academy*, along w/ the elite of the Red Army, reps of the Defense Commissariat and General Staff, and important government figures. In all, about 1,500 head Stalin speak for around 40 minutes. He speaks of great advances achieved in modernizing the Red Army, etc. Primary objective was to boost morale of armed forces. (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 277-78)

5.5.41: On this day, Stalin appears in the Kremlin, at the graduation of the students of the Military Academy. The Soviet dictator's address was extraordinary in content. According to General N.G. *Lyashchenko*, who was present at the reception, Stalin had *sheets of paper in front of him*. However, the original text is not available, but a shorthand record of the speech was ordered. After the war, when preparations to publish volumes **14** and **15** of the *Vozhd's* (leader's) works began, the notes taken by the research assistant of the People's Commissariat for Defense – K. *Semyonov* – were accepted as the basis for the text. Few people know that, in addition to the speech, Stalin also gave *three (3) toasts*, the last one being of greatest interest. Strictly speaking, it was more an addition to the toast given by one major-general, who proposed: "To the peaceful Stalinist foreign policy!" But Stalin interrupted the speaker:

Permit me to correct you: that kind of policy has guaranteed the peace for our country. Peaceful (foreign) policy – that is a good thing. For the time being, up till now, we followed a defensive line, and we did not re-arm our Army, we did not provide it w/ the modern means to fight. . . But if we are to defend our country, we are obliged to *adopt an offensive posture*. . . We must reform our education, our propaganda, political instruction, we should adopt an offensive posture. The Red Army is a modern army, and a modern army is an *offensive army*.¹⁰⁰

In his speech, having congratulated the students of the Academy on the completion of their studies, Stalin declares, "on your return into the Army, you will not recognize it." Waving his *good hand* now and then, the orator stated that the Army had learnt the lessons from the Soviet – Finnish war and from the events of the west. Unexpectedly, while describing the qualitative growth of the Army, he mentions the existence of "Top-Secret" documents and a "Special File," the latter being especially significant. "Currently we have **300** divisions in our Army," said the leader of the Party and the Government. The *Vozhd* paints an *optimistic picture of the condition of the Red Army*, and on this occasion he depicts the process of rearmament w/ the new military technology as if it were an accomplished fact. "Why is Germany presently winning in the west?"

¹⁰⁰ **Note:** In my view, Stalin's toast here is a clear example that he was well aware of the threat of an impending German attack, however much might *appear* to have been oblivious to the threat or tried to fend it off thru appeasement of Hitler.

Stalin asks himself. Looking around w/ his *yellow eyes*, he lingered on an explanation of the secrets of its success:

First of all the Germans have learnt the lessons of their defeat in the First World War, when they allowed themselves to fight on two fronts. The military thought of the German army has advanced. The Army has been equipped w/ the new technology. The Germans have “politically prepared” themselves for the war, having acquired a “sufficient number” of allies.

But Stalin declares that the German army is *not invincible*, because “the German army possesses nothing special in the way of tanks, artillery or air force. A significant part of the German army is losing the adour that it had at the beginning of the war. . .” Stalin continues to highlight the weaknesses of the German war machine: “*Boasting, complacency and conceit are beginning to surface in the German army.* Their military thinking is not advancing any longer, their war technology is lagging behind ours. The German army has lost the taste for any further improvement of their military technology.”¹⁰¹ Those were Stalin’s views, the views of a man who determined policy, the military organization, the strategy of the defense of the country, single-handed. Volkogonov, “*The German Attack*,” 78-79)

Jun 41: Stalin, sensing the lack of readiness for war, strove in every possible way to demonstrate his loyalty to Hitler. In June, when German acft began to violate the Soviet frontier in great numbers, the Soviet leader issued a directive: the flights “are not carried out deliberately. During the infringements German planes do not carry wpns.” In cases when the acft had a “forced landing,” the crew was permitted to take off again, unimpeded. However, reports about German preparations for an attack “were rolling in *like an avalanche*.” (Volkogonov, “*The German Attack*,” 83)

Jun 41: By beginning of war, the growth of a strong *personality cult*, and the process of constructing the *image of Stalin as a superman* were well underway. Stalin – *cautious, distrustful and cold-bloodedly ruthless* – was increasingly told what his sycophantic and anxious subordinates thought he wanted to hear. This would play its part in the disaster of 1941. In the vital months prior to launch of German invasion, decisions on all matters of import w/in the Soviet Union were *taken by Stalin personally*. (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 249-50)

Jun 41: Close examination of the records raises a few questions, the most significant being why did Stalin, if he was assured the Germans would not attack as stated in most sources, form **47** new rifle divisions in **Jun 41** – increasing the total number of rifle divisions by **1/3 in a single month** before the invasion? . . . Moreover, the Red Army *doubled* from **117** divisions to **232** from **1940** to **Jun 41**. (Dunn, *Stalin’s Keys to Victory*, 64, 70)

Jun 41 [Eve of war]: Stalin seemed to be suppressing all thoughts of war. His behavior, however, displayed to people like Khrushchev that he was *restless and seriously worried*. *He now took to heavy bouts of drinking*, to which he also subjected his entourage. Moreover, unlike his *usual habit* he sought constant company, which seemed to banish from his mind the nightmarish thoughts of an imminent war. Prolonged dinners and gatherings at his *dacha* replaced the working sessions in the Kremlin which had previously characterized his routine. *Up to the very last minute Stalin continued to believe that the German army was trying to provoke the conflict*. . . He had, lost the initiative and was *practically paralysed*. (G. Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion*, 307)

¹⁰¹ **Note:** Some of Stalin’s remarks here are actually quite *prescient*.

5.6.41: On this day, Stalin became President of the Council of Commissars or, as we would say, *Prime Minister*, in place of Molotov, who became Deputy Prime Minister as well as Foreign Minister. (Stalin had hitherto held only the post of Secretary General of the Communist Party.) (*Calvocoressi & Wint, Total War*, 166-68)

21.6.41: What was happening this evening in Moscow? *Poskrebyshhev*, assistant to the Chairman of the Soviet People's Commissariats, is constantly delivering reports from the western borders to Stalin's table, each one more worrying than the previous one. The report signed by the Chief of Staff of the Baltic Special Military District, Lt.-Gen. *Klenov*, states: "The Germans have finished the construction of the bridges across the Niemen. . . The civilians have been advised to evacuate to a depth of **20** kilometers from the frontier. . ." The Chief of Staff from the Western Special Military District, Maj-Gen *Klimovskikh*, reports: "barbed wire along the frontier on the route *Augustov – Seiny*, while in place during the day, was pulled down towards the evening. In the woods, there is a sound of engines." Col-Gen M.P. *Kirponos*, cdr of the Kiev Special Military District, reports to the effect that war will begin in a matter of hours. *Stalin wavered*. "He had always been a prisoner of politics, and took decisions only after a great deal of *inner struggle*. At that moment he did not want the war; he knew he was not ready."

That evening, Stalin orders Molotov to invite the German ambassador, *Schulenburg*, in order to explain the situation at the frontier. He insisted this should be done in Berlin: the Soviet Ambassador is to meet Ribbentrop. Schulenburg, who has been instructed to destroy the embassy secret papers, listens to Molotov w/ an *inscrutable expression*. He expresses astonishment that "the Soviet government is not in a position to understand the reasons for German dissatisfaction." The Soviet Minister, Molotov, having been one of the main architects of Soviet-German policy, is expecting reassurance. Instead, Schulenburg coldly replies: "I cannot give you an answer on that question, and I shall transmit it to Berlin." Ribbentrop refuses to receive the Soviet Ambassador (*Dekanozov*), and dispatches him to State Secretary von *Weizsaecker*. (*Volkogonov, "The German Attack,"* 85-86)

21.-22.6.41: Stalin arrived at the Kremlin in the early hours of the afternoon on Saturday **21 Jun 41**, well aware that he was no longer the master of events. . . [Note: Stalin receives news of a German defector, who revealed the attack plans for the next morning; Stalin "now seemed worried but was still toying w/ the idea that the German generals had sent the defector deliberately 'to provoke a conflict.'" . . . He had been subjected to endless warnings [i.e., about an impending German attack] since the beginning of the month, and had been pressed during the entire week to issue directives alerting the troops. That Sunday, [sic! / must mean "Saturday!"] disconcerting as it might have been, did not seem different to him. After conversing for another **15 minutes w/ Molotov and Beria**, he felt confident enough to return early to his *dacha* at **11:00 p.m.**

Zhukov and Timoshenko felt differently. They returned from the Kremlin to the Ministry of Defense and communicated w/ the various fronts, keeping them all alert. Around midnight their attention was drawn by Kirponos to a second deserter who had swum across the river and informed the NKGB border police that the attack would start at **4:00 a.m.** Stalin, who was promptly informed at his *dacha*, was little moved and retired to bed. At **3:30 a.m.**, the coded telephones starting ringing at the Ministry of Defense, bringing news of heavy German shelling along the entire frontier. Stalin was speechless when Zhukov contacted him on the phone; only his heavy breathing could be heard. Despite Zhukov's insistence he refused to sanction any counter-measures. By **4:30 a.m.**, when Zhukov and Timoshenko were on their way to the Kremlin, the German artillery had been pounding Soviet cities, the Soviet air force had been

annihilated on the ground and the war machine had started rolling into Russia. At the Kremlin the two Soviet commanders encountered a “very pale” Stalin, “sitting at the table clutching a loaded unlit pipe in both hands.” Present were also the ubiquitous Mekhlis and Voroshilov, Molotov and Beria. Stalin was clearly “bewildered” but desperately hanging on to his misconception, suggesting it might still be “a provocation of the German officers.” He was little moved by Timoshenko’s attempts to “bring him down to earth.” . . . After some reflection, Stalin said, “Hitler surely does not know about it.” As a last resort he wished Molotov to speak to Schulenburg . . .

Well into the morning of **22 Jun 41** Stalin did not exclude the possibility that Russia was being intimidated into political submission. As Molotov confessed to Cripps a week after the eruption of war, the Kremlin had *not anticipated that war* “*would come without any discussion or ultimatum.*” (See, G. Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion*, 309-13)

22.6.41: *Crucial decisions* that brought catastrophe to Russia on 22 Jun 41 had been „taken by *Stalin* and no one else.“ His *shock and astonishment* on early morning of 22 June were, then, all the greater, given his earlier self-assurance (that Hitler would not attack). But his spontaneous and unique admission *six days later* – i.e., „Lenin left us a great legacy, but we, his heirs, have f---d it up“ – of grievous mistakes (if attributed collectively and couched in a crude vernacular) amounted to a tacit acceptance that *other policy options had been available* that could have avoided the disaster – choices that were not taken. In retrospect, Stalin’s decision that *he knew best* – a decision for inaction – in the face of all the warnings of impending grave danger for his country seems *one of the least comprehensible of entire war*...“History would surely have taken a different course had Stalin made other choices.“ [But] the story of Stalin’s fateful choice is *more complicated* than an easy attribution to his arbitrary whim, scarcely credible blindness or stubborn stupidity would permit. (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 243-44)

ab 22.6.41: Khushchev’s version reported in his “secret” speech, that Stalin did not direct military operations for a “long time” after **22 Jun 41** – quoted in Strobe Talbott, *Khrushchev Remembers* (pub. 1970, p. 591). Zhukov addressed this point specifically in a *paragraph deleted from the first nine editions of his memoirs*: “They say that in the first week of the war, I.V. Stalin seemed to become so lost that he could not even speak on the radio and had V.M. Molotov give his speech. *This judgement does not correspond w/ reality*. Of course in the first hours I.V. Stalin was confused. But, *he soon returned to normal and worked w/ great energy*. True he did display extra nervousness which sometimes upset the rhythm of our work.” (*W. J. Spahr, Zhukov*, 53)

ab 22.6.41: D.A. Volkogonov, in his biography of Stalin, has described the collapse of Stalin’s morale in the next **4-5** days while he awaited news from the front that the invaders had been halted. On hearing that Minsk had fallen he suffered the “*paralyzing shock*” of realizing fully that the invasion carried a deadly threat not only to the Soviet state but also to the “wise and invincible leader” himself. (See, *W. J. Spahr, Zhukov*, 57)

28.6.-1.7.41: In opening days of *Barbarossa* [i.e., 22.-27 June] Stalin was *agitated*, but not yet in shock, which was going to paralyze him psychologically for two or three days by the end of the week. This is confirmed in the “Comrade Stalin’s visitors’ book” (*Kniga zapisi lits, prinimaemykh tovarishchem Stalinym*) in the Kremlin. After **28 Jun** till **1 Jul** no one visited Stalin; he did not receive anybody. It was on **28 Jun** he learnt that, east of Minsk, two German tank groups had linked up and encircled the main forces of the western front. At the beginning of **Jul 41**, the dictator was to be found close by his *dacha*, shaken by the picture of the beginning of the war, painted by members of the General Staff. The enemy tank forces were

breaking thru towards Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev. Thus, Stalin's orders "to cross the border" only underline his *total ignorance of the real situation*. (Volkogonov, "The German Attack," 88-89)

29.6.41: Stalin leaves Moscow for his dacha and fails to return to the *Kremlin* the next day. His anxious henchmen telephoned, but got no answer. When they eventually summoned the courage and initiative to drive there, they found a very different Stalin from the combative monster they all feared. The *Vozhd* thought the game was up. In a week, he had *lost more territory than Tsar Nicholas II lost between 1914-17*. By any yardstick, he had led Russia into its worst defeat of all time, and it was far from over. *Beria, Molotov, Mikoyan, Voznesensky* and *Malenkov* arrive at Stalin's dacha w/ the power to change history ... Once Stalin realizes they had not come to kill him, but to seek his continued leadership, the *Vozhd* took charge again. They established the State Committee of Defense, led by Stalin. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 51-52)

29.-30.6.41: Members of the Politburo, having worked out certain measures for the creation of governmental bodies to operate in wartime called on Stalin. Stalin was *sitting in an armchair* when the visitors entered and, as my father said, he was evidently frightened – apparently having decided that his guests had come to depose and arrest him. Let my father [Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan] tell the rest of the story in his own words:

In the evening, on **29 June**, several members of the Politburo were gathered w/ Stalin in the *Kremlin*. They were all interested in the situation on the western front, especially in Belorussia, where during the previous evening German-Fascist forces had occupied Minsk. Communications w/ the Belorussian Military District had been interrupted. No fresh reports about the situation in Belorussia at that time were coming through. What was certain was that there was *no contact w/ the forces on the western front*. Stalin rang up Marshal Timoshenko at the People's Commissariat for Defense. However, he could not give any concrete information about the situation on the western front.

Anxious about the developments, Stalin suggested to us all that we go to the Defense Commissariat and investigate the situation there. In the office w/ Timoshenko was G.K. Zhukov, N.F. Vatutin and several other generals and officers of the General Staff. The conversation was very grave. *Only at that time did Stalin properly understand the whole seriousness of the assessments of the force, time-factor and consequences behind the attack by Hitler's Germany*. It was decided to send responsible representatives from the Stavka to establish contact w/ the Belorussian Military District immediately.

The following day around 4 o'clock, N.A. *Voznesenskii* was in my office. Suddenly there was a call from V.M. Molotov's office asking us to go and see him. With Molotov were already several members of the Politburo. They were considering a suggestion about the need to create, on the model of the Leninist Soviet of Workers and Peasants Defense, an extraordinary wartime organ – the *State Committee for Defense* (GKO), which would have total control of the country. We, together w/ *Voznesenskii*, agreed w/ that recommendation. We all concurred that Stalin should head the GKO. We decided to visit him.¹⁰² He was

¹⁰² **Note:** Confirm date of this visit. Was it not on **1 or 2 Jul 41**?

in the so-called „nearer“ dacha, in the *forest of Poklonnaia Gora*, where he had now been for several days.

We found Stalin in the small dining-room, sitting in an armchair. He looked at us quizzically and asked us: „Why have you come?“ One could sense that he was worried, but that he was taking care to appear calm. Molotov, as our spokesman, said that it was necessary to concentrate the power into one organ that would be called upon to decide all the questions of operations and to organize the mobilisation of all the country's forces for the resistance against the occupiers. That kind of organ had to be headed by Stalin.

Stalin looked somewhat astonished, but after a short pause he said: „Very well.“ (*Mikoyan, Barbarossa and Soviet Leadership*, 127-28)

Jul 41 [*peace feelers*]: *Kershaw* writes that Stalin considered putting out peace feelers ca. early Jul 41; according to *Zhukov*, Stalin again considered putting out peace-feelers in **Oct 41**, after the catastrophic encirclement battles of *Brjansk* and *Viaz'ma*. However, this second story of possible peace overtures – so *Kershaw* – „sounds implausible.“ In any case, no overtures were ever made. (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 289; also, *Volkogonov*, 412-13; *Radzinsky*, 474; and *Montefiore*, 346, for Oct 41 story)

Jul-Aug 41: In **Jul 41**, Stalin becomes, like Churchill, Defense Minister (as well as Prime Minister); in **Aug 41**, like Hitler, Commander-in-Chief, too. (*Calvocoressi & Wint, Total War*, 176)

Jul-Aug 41: During these two months all state, political, and military authority was concentrated in Stalin's hands. On **19 Jul 41** he became the commissar of defense; on **8 Aug 41** the STAVKA became the *Stavka Verkhovnogo Glavnokomandovaniia* (The HQ of the Supreme High Command) w/ Stalin as the supreme high commander. This was the title he was to hold throughout the rest of the war. In conversation among themselves, Soviet marshals and generals would often refer to him simply as “*verkhovnyi*,” as western military men would refer to their C-in-C as “the CINC.” (*W. J. Spahr, Zhukov*, 57-58)

Sep 41: There was almost no expedient at which Stalin would not grasp in this supreme crisis of the Soviet state to ensure its survival (as well as his own). In Sep 41, he decreed the creation of new units of „*Guards*,” „quintessential symbols of the *ancien regime*; in **1917**, Guards officers had *had the skin stripped from their hands* in revolutionary hatred of the *white gloves* they had traditionally worn. Now Stalin decreed that regiments, divisions, even armies which resisted the Germans most stoutly should add „Guards“ to their titles. New distinctions were meanwhile created for heroes and victors, named after the generals who fought Napoleon: the *Orders of Kutuzov and Suvorov*. Old distinctions of rank were soon to be revived, including the „shoulder boards“ which had been torn from officers' uniforms in **1917**. Even the hierarchy of the *Orthodox Church*, persecuted and vilified for two decades, was suddenly restored to esteem as the servant of „Mother Russia.“ (*Keegan, Second World War*, 190)

Sep 41: The calm which Stalin had displayed a few weeks before in talking to Harry Hopkins was shattered by the lurch to disaster in the Ukraine, and his agitation showed plainly in his **Sep 41** messages to Winston Churchill. The pressure for a “Second Front,” from which Stalin never desisted, had been applied straight away in **Aug 41**, and directly in London by Ambassador Ivan Maiskii. In his personal message of **3 Sep 41**, Stalin proposed opening a second front “this year somewhere in the Balkans or in France, one that would divert **30-40** German divisions from

the Eastern Front.” Ten days later, having pondered the British Prime Minister’s reply about the total impossibility of a Second Front in Stalin’s sense, Stalin in his personal message of **13 Sep 41** now suggested as a measure of “active military aid” that the British “land **25-30** divisions at Archangel or ship them to the southern areas of the USSA via Iran for military co-operation w/ Soviet troops on Soviet soil in the same way as was done during the last war in France.” The instigator of this plan was Marshal Timoshenko [and while fully impractical] was nevertheless a *very serious proposal* on the part of Stalin, one which he continued to press as a realistic solution. . . . (*J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 211-12)

7.10.41: Volkogonov also reports that on this day, according to Marshal K.S. Moskalenko, who was instrumental in the arrest and trial of Lavrentii Beria in **1953**, Stalin, Molotov, and Beria sent to the Bulgarian ambassador in Moscow, Stamenev, a request for Bulgarian good offices in *arranging a peace w/ Germany* under which the Germans would receive the Baltic states, Moldavia, and parts of the territory of other republics. This would have been a second Brest-Litovsk, reprising the treaty the new Soviet state made w/ the Germans in **1918**. The Bulgarian ambassador told the Soviet leaders that Hitler would never conquer the Russians and that Stalin should not be concerned. [!] (*W. J. Spahr, Zhukov*, 71)

16.10.41: Der erneute Durchbruch der Deutschen hatte in Moskau einen Schock ausgelöst. Es gab Panikerscheinungen, Partei- u. Regierungstellen verliessen seit dem **16 Okt 41** die Stadt. Fuer kurze Zeit gab offenbar auch Stalin die Hauptstadt verloren. Nach neueren Informationen dachte er offenbar sogar daran, Kontakte ueber Bulgarien zu knuepfen, um einen Waffenstillstand nach dem Vorbild von **1917** zu erreichen. Sein einsamer Entschluss, in der Hauptstadt zu bleiben u. den Kampf fortzusetzen, ist in seiner welthistorischen Bedeutung kaum zu ueberschaetzen. (*R.-D. Mueller, Der letzte deutsche Krieg*, 112)

Oct/Nov 41: Whatever bad memories and reservations the generals may have had, Stalin had become the indispensable unifying factor in the *patrie-en-danger* atmosphere of **Oct-Nov 41**. There was no alternative. (*A. Werth, Russia at War*, 228)

Oct/Nov 41 [*Stalin’s decision to stay in Moscow*]: Regime came close to destruction in [**Oct**]-**Nov 41**. Most government departments evacuated to Kuibyshev on the Volga. There was a *general burning of archives* which could not be carried away. Once the news spread there were *riots*. Mobs broke into food shops. Party officials *tore up their cards* and prepared to go into hiding. Only the knowledge that Stalin himself was staying in Moscow *prevented dissolution*. Stalin stayed for exactly the same reason Hitler concentrated all power in his hands: *he did not trust his generals*, and he wished to maintain personal control of the terror. It was the only way he knew how to rule. Though he played the *patriotic card* for all it was worth, he never relaxed the *dead weight of fear* he imposed on everyone. (*P. Johnson, Modern Times*, 383; see also, *Deutscher, Stalin*, 468-69)

10.11.41 [Anecdote]: On this day, Zhukov ordered General Belov to accompany him to Moscow, to discuss the details of the attack [i.e., one of the limited attacks ordered by Zhukov to improve the tactical situation]. Passing through the Borovitskie Gate of the Kremlin in the late afternoon, Zhukov and Belov picked their way past a bomb crater and entered an underground chamber down steps which led into a long corridor, heavily guarded and w/ doors off it to the right, “like a railway sleeping car.” Zhukov put Belov in a “cubicle” and went on himself. With the appearance of one of Stalin’s secretaries, Belov was taken to the end of the corridor, through an open door into a brightly lit room; there was a huge writing table w/ a few telephones in the far left corner, and Stalin standing in the centre.

Zhukov presented Belov to Stalin. Belov had last seen Stalin in 1933: “He had *changed a great deal since that time; before me [Belov] stood a smallish man w/ a tired sunken face. . . in 8 years he appeared to have aged 20.*” But what astonished Belov was Zhukov’s behavior: “He spoke brusquely, in a very authoritative way. The effect suggested that the senior officer here was Zhukov. And Stalin took it all for granted. At no time did any trace of annoyance cross his face.” (*J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad, 252-53*)

30.11.-3.12.41: Zhukov submitted his plan for a counter-offensive in front of Moscow to Stalin on **30 Nov 41** and the operation began **5** days later. Zhukov’s plan was to attack the enemy forces flanking Moscow north and south and to drive them away from the Soviet capital. Stalin was in ebullient mood on the eve of the counter-offensive. “The Russians have been in Berlin twice already, and they will be there a third time,” he told Wladyslaw Sikorski, the leader of the Polish government in exile, on **3 Dec 41**. (*G. Roberts, Stalin’s Wars, 112*)

Jan 43: The American “*Time*” magazine names Josef Stalin as its “man of the year” for **1942**. (*Bellamy, Absolute War, 4-5*)

Jul 45: After defeat of Germany, at the Potsdam Conference, Averill *Harriman*, the U.S. Ambassador to Moscow, congratulated Stalin on the achievement of his forces in reaching Berlin. “Alexander I got to Paris,” replied Stalin, laconically – a reference to the occupation of Paris by Russian troops in **1815**. (*Bellamy, Absolute War, 3*)

3.9: Soviet Society/People/Economy:

3.9.1: People & Society:

Collectivization in **1930s** accompanied by an **assault on organized religion**. Churches were closed, turned into barns and pigsties, priests arrested, believers exiled. With religion shattered, no creed could stand up to Communist world view. But still Soviet state commanded real support from large numbers of ordinary citizens, who could point to real improvements (*Ivan’s War, C. Merridale, 33-4*)

1940: The USSR had a population of about **190,000,000**. It included **170** discrete races, which spoke **140** different languages. However, **14** of these peoples made up **94%** of the total: **90,000,000** Great Russians, **40,000,000** Ukrainians, and **10,000,000** White Russians. (*C. Winchester, Hitler’s War on Russia, author’s note*)

1941: By **1941**, the total Soviet population had increased to ca. **198,000,000**. The Soviet Union had a high proportion of young people in its population: males under **20** years of age, **43.0** million (**45%**); **20-39** years of age, **31.5** million (**33%**). Most Soviet men between ages of **18** and **50** had prewar military training, and many had combat experience in WWI or in the Civil War. (*W. Dunn, Stalin’s Keys to Victory, 10-11*)

Wristwatches, the *symbol of modernity* that people seemed to covet most, were still a dream for almost everyone. (*Ivan’s War, C. Merridale, 34*)

Sacrifices of Soviet people [after Jun 41]: Men and women of Mother Russia were accomplishing *miracles of endurance and sacrifice* to sustain their own struggle. Whole factories were shipped by train beyond the **Urals**, machinery reassembled in the icy wastes of *Siberia*, where workers

labored, *sometimes w/o benefit of roofs*, to build tanks and planes to resist the „fascist hordes.“ Those who weakened were shot or dispatched to the camps of the *Gulag*, where they died of cold and hunger in the hundreds of thousands. Raw recruits were driven into action unarmed, w/ orders to pick up the rifles of the dead. Stalin’s commissars vied w/ Hitler’s soldiers in mercilessness. When Russians retreated, they *burned the villages of their own people*, to leave no shelter for the invader. (*W.P. Reese, Stranger*, foreword, ix)

“Life in the USSR during the war became not only grim but so difficult to sustain that about a million people died of starvation [*didn’t this many die in Leningrad alone?*]. The armed services and workers got enough to eat. By and large other people did not. The total amount of food provided and purchased was almost *halved*. Personal consumption fell below that of the frightful *famine year* of **1932**. The *sugar ration*, to take an extreme example, was reduced to *half a pound a year*. The supply of *vegetables* was cut by nearly **2/3**; of meat by more than $\frac{1}{2}$; of flour by nearly $\frac{1}{2}$. There was no attempt to keep up *tobacco* stocks, which fell by **3/4**, nor the flow of *Vodka*, which was *halved*. Real earnings were cut by more than $\frac{1}{2}$. . . Hours of work were lengthened. Holidays, other than the weekly day of rest, were cancelled. The 7-day week was reintroduced in **1940** – that is, one rest day in **7** instead of one in **six** or (before **1929**) one in **5**.” (*Calvocoressi & Wint, Total War*, 465-66)

C. Merridale discusses *Battle of Moscow, panic in city*, etc. She notes that strategic buildings—including the *Bolshoi Theater*—were all mined. (*Ivan’s War*, 120)

Religion: State’s prewar restrictions on worship were gently eased. But though the soldiers cherished totems—tin crosses or copies of poems—formal religion, so comforting to some civilians, was of little use at the front. Rage and hatred, which the state also nurtured, were more likely to inspire men on the brink of combat. (*Ivan’s War*, 132)

Soviet Youth: „I was a teenager before the war and can well recall the atmosphere of the times. In spite of the repressions, all too sorrowfully acknowledged, the *spirit of enthusiasm* which had originated w/ the October Revolution was to a certain degree still alive. It was generally accepted that we were building socialism and that our country was surrounded by unfriendly, even hostile countries. Most youngsters actually *looked forward to serving in the armed forces* and, if necessary, defending the motherland.“ (*Mikoyan, Barbarossa and Soviet Leadership*, 124)

3.9.2: Economy/War Production/Evacuations:

Note: *Evan Mawdsley* emphasizes the extraordinary growth of the Soviet economy in the inter-war years: “The Russia Hitler had written about in *Mein Kampf* in the mid-**1920s** produced some **4,000,000** tons of steel a year, roughly what it had produced before the First World War. Soviet factories built fewer than **500** motor vehicles in **1927**. In **1940**, Soviet steel production had risen to **18,300,000** million tons, and the motor industry turned out about **200,000** vehicles (mostly trucks). The Stalin government had prioritized the development of heavy industry – and the armaments industry – at the end of the **1920s**.” (*Thunder in the East*, 48)

Note: Another Russian mineral resource advantage [over Germany] was huge reserves of petroleum. In the end, the *Wehrmacht* could get nowhere near the most important oil-producing area, near Baku, on the Caspian Sea. . . The continental Soviet economy in any event possessed another oil region east of the Volga, between Kuibyshev and Ufa. This was the so-called

“**Second Baku,**” developed in the **1930s**. Wartime problems reduced total Soviet crude oil production from **33 million tons** in **1941** to **22 million** in **1942** and **18 million** in **1943**. (E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 50)

a) Background:

1930s: The main industrial effort remained where it had been – in the areas around *Moscow* and *Leningrad*, in the *Ukraine* and the *Don basin*. The development of existing facilities had *priority*. Nowhere else was there an adequate supply of skilled labor. But the development of other areas – the *Urals*, western *Siberia* and *Kazakhstan* – [became increasingly significant]. The *relocation of industry* would prove “strategically vital.” In sum, the Ural, Siberian and central Asian areas, which were opened up as *ancillary industrial enterprises* primarily to modernize the USSR and make it economically independent of capitalist countries, became in addition an *alternative arms base*. “Without this alternative the USSR “*might well have collapsed at the beginning of 1942.*” (Calvocoressi & Wint, *Total War*, 459- 62)

1932-36: The *intensive industrialization* of the **1930s** was “*Stalin’s special contribution* to the evolution of Soviet society.” Through it, he established his *totalitarian authority*, and because of it he waged a *savage fight against the peasantry*. The USSR was not in **1941** an industrial power like Germany or Great Britain or, least of all, the USA, but it was in process of becoming one. . . . But a poor beginning makes for (statistically) impressive achievements, and during the first Five Year Plan (**1928-32**) and again during the second Plan capital investment, industrial output and GNP were all *doubled* and transport facilities increased in even greater proportion. Education was extended and the shift of the population from the country to the towns was accelerated: while the population as a whole rose by **1/3** between **1914-40**, the *urban population* was multiplied by **2.4**. (Calvocoressi & Wint, *Total War*, 459, 463)

Note: Die Industrialisierung Russlands stuetzte sich in erster Linie auf reiche Bodenschuetze von *Kriwoi Rog (Eisenerze)*, *Nikopol (Manganerze)* u. dem *Donezbecken (Kohle)*. (OKW Heft 72, “*Die Sowjet-Union,*“ 8)

Note: “Ausserdem zogen die unglaublichen Methoden der landwirtschaftlichen *Kollektivierung* gewaltige Materialverluste nach sich. So erklarte z.B. Stalin auf dem **XVII. Parteikongress (1934)**, dass der *Pferdebestand* von **34 Millionen** in den Jahren **1929** bis **1933** auf **16.6 Millionen** zurueckgegangen sei. In derselben Zeit habe sich das *Rindvieh* von **68,1** auf **38,6**, *Schweine* von **20,9** auf **12,2**, *Schafe* u. *Ziegen* von **147,2** auf **50,6 Millionen** Stueck vermindert. Die Ursachen dieser Schrumpfung lagen darin, dass die Bauern in vielen Faellen ihr Vieh den Kolchosen nicht uebergeben wollten u. andererseits der Futtermittelanbau infolge der zu hohen staatlichen Getreidebereitstellungen zerruettet war. . . . Die besonders auffallende Verringerung der *Pferdezahl* um **50 v.H. [%]** im Zeitraum **1929-38** erklart sich wohl daraus, dass das Halten von Pferden nur den Kolchosen u. Sowchosen erlaubt, den Kolchosbauern hingegen verboten war. Ebenfalls war es um das *Rindvieh* nicht viel besser bestellt, dessen Stueckzahl im Jahre **1938** nicht einmal den Stand zu Beginn der Kollektivierung (**1929**) zu erreichen vermochte. Die in der UdSSR herrschende *Milchknappheit* erscheint in Anbetracht der geschilderten Lage der Tierwirtschaft, des Bevoelkerungszuwaches u. der zu starken Verstaedterung durchaus begreiflich. Lediglich die *Schweinebestaende* von **1938** waren fast um **50 v.H.** hoeher als am Anfang des ersten Fuenfjahresplanes. (OKW Heft 72, “*Die Sowjet-Union,*“ 54, 60)

b. Economy/War Production:

Note: For figures for both military output (i.e., manufacture of acft/artillery/tanks) and output of heavy industry see, *R. Overy, Russia's War*, 155. For example, these figures illustrate just how much greater German production of coal, steel and aluminium was from **1941-44**. Even in **1944** German production of coal was almost **3:1**, steel **2.5:1** and aluminium **3:1** greater than that of the Soviet Union! Only in oil was German outproduced. If these figures are accurate, they are truly remarkable.

Note: For a detailed table w/ figures on Soviet pre-war wpns production from **1937-40** see, *E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 43. All told, the Soviet Union produced **9600** tanks, **50,000** artillery pieces, and **31,000** military acft over this four-year period. According to Mawdsley, “the Germans did not grasp the importance of the pre-war build-up of the Red Army.” He also writes: “We now know much more about the pre-war military build-up of the Soviet Union, and descriptive terms like ‘Proletarian Sparta’ and ‘Soviet warfare state’ are far from irrelevant.” . . . The question, then, was not: Why did the Red Army not have “enough artillery, tanks, and aircraft?” It was: Why was the Red Army defeated *despite* having been so lavishly equipped? (42-44)

Economy of Scale: Cost-effective design, planned obsolescence, mass production and long [production] runs enabled the Russians to produce wpns at far less cost in factory space, machinery, raw materials, and labor than the Germans. An essential factor was that the Soviet plants were planned for a smooth flow of production. Efficient large plants were necessary to build complex wpn systems. During the **1930s**, *American engineers designed and built all of the Soviet tank factories* and many other factories for mass production. The Germans could not adopt the American philosophy because their factories were smaller and not designed for mass production. Many Russian plants employed from **10,000** to **40,000** workers. This **economy of scale** made a major difference in the cost of the final product. (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 26)

One effect of Stalin's industrialisation programme had been to encourage the development of modern tanks, based on designs purchased outright from the American tank pioneer, *Walter Christie*. His revolutionary propulsion and suspension systems had resulted in the models that would evolve eventually into the **T-34**, which was to prove itself the *best all-round tank of the Second World War*. (*Keegan, Second World War*, 177)

The Red Army's greatest quantitative advantage lay in its vastly superior numbers of tanks, acft and (above all) artillery. This was *not* because the USSR enjoyed greater economic resources, but because its *war economy was far better managed than Germany's*. Despite conquering so much of Europe, the Nazi regime signally failed to exploit this industrial windfall for military production. In **1943**, Germany produced about *four times as much steel and three times as much coal as the USSR* – after all, in **1941** it had conquered the **Donbas** where more [than] half of Russian coal was mined. Still, the Russians built **33%** more tanks, **50%** more acft, and vastly more heavy artillery pieces. The ratio tilted sharply in favor of the Soviets during **1943-44**, despite the managerial genius of **36-yr.-old Albert Speer**, who trebled German war production in **3** years. (*C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia*, 120-21)

Donets Basin: Known as the coal-scuttle of the Soviet Union and in **1941** it was producing **60%** of the coal and **75%** of the coke of the USSR, in addition to **30%** of the total output of iron and **20%** of the steel production. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 193)

The total *labor force* in Soviet Union fell from a pre-war total of **28,000,000** to below **20,000,000** by **1943**. Half the workers in the war industry were women and the proportion of women in agri-

culture was much higher. Something like half the male peasantry was conscripted into the army, leaving the fields to be worked by women, children and old men, or not worked at all. The labor available for war industries was reduced by the needs of the fighting services and, by western standards, inadequately trained. (*Calvocoressi & Wint, Total War*, 458)

1940: In general, the Russians won the production contest [w/ Germany] because of the sacrifices made by the civilian sector and the basic strength of their economy – even though it was not equal to the total European economy. The European nations under German control produced **31.8** million tons of steel in **1940**; compared to only **18.3** million tons produced by the Soviet Union that year. Despite the disparity, the Soviets were able to manufacture more wpons than the Germans. The *unique Soviet advantage* was the concentration of its heavy industry on basic armaments to defeat Hitler rather than spreading its efforts over marginal military needs, for ex., battleships and heavy bombers, neither of which had an immediate impact on the war w/ Germany or were essential for defense. The concept of concentration on primary goals was *learned from the Americans*. For more than a decade in the **1920s** and **1930s**, U.S. engineers had taught the Russians the *techniques of low-cost mass production* and planned obsolescence. Planned obsolescence by cutting tolerances, that is, increasing the margin of error, the acceptable variation from the ideal measurement, reduced the number of hours and degree of skill required to complete a product but at the same time reduced the life span of the engine or wpn. However, the determining factor of the life expectancy of a wpn on the eastern front was not its degree of perfection but shells from a German AT gun. Soviet tank engines seldom lasted longer than a few hundred hours or about six (**6**) months – the average life span of a tank on the eastern front. The Soviets adopted the two ideas of *cost-effective approach* and *planned obsolescence* and applied them even more rigorously than had the U.S. originators. Wpons were produced w/ the minimum number of work hours and the smallest amount of material. For example, the turret of the **T-34** had no floor, greatly simplifying production at the cost of crew comfort. The tank crew had to perch on seats hung from the turret ring. The floor of the main part of the tank, which did not rotate along w/ the turret, was stacked w/ shells for the **76 mm** gun. In combat, the loader had to scramble around the floor of the tank for shells while the turret moved around him. [!] (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 24-25)¹⁰³

1941 [*munition & steel production*]: The extreme losses suffered in the first months of the war and the evacuation of the arms industry to the east placed a severe strain on wpons and munitions production, which declined **50%** in **1941**. Tank production was less than **20%** of prewar figures. The most critical short-term loss from the German advances and relocation of the factories was *ammunition production*. By **Nov 41**, Russia had lost more than **300** munitions plants, which had produced **8.5** million artillery shell cases, **3** million mines, and **2** million bombs per month. *Steel production* dropped from **11.4** million tons in the first half of **1941**, to **3.9** million tons in the second half. Chemical plants producing explosives were overrun by the Germans. By **Aug 41**, artillery ammunition production began to decline from **5** million rounds in **Aug 41** to **3** million in **Dec 41**. The total production from **Jul-Dec 41** was only **26** million rounds, while more than **50** million were expended as prewar stocks were exhausted. (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 91)

¹⁰³ Dunn: “Cost-effective, functional design simplified each part of a product. The raw materials, the method of fabrication (stamping steel parts for machine pistols versus machining the parts from a forging, for example), and the quality of the finish and appearance were determined by a *pragmatic point of view*. As one American veteran told me, the Russian tanks *looked terrible*. They were *dirty* and had a *bad odor* [!]. Cost-effectiveness dictated a very rough finish on the **T-34** tank. Aesthetic appearance was ignored on the battlefield.” (25)

Jul-Dec 41 [*tank production*]: Tank production in the second half of **1941** was only **6542** tanks, but many had been produced in the early months. Production dropped sharply as the Germans advanced. Another sources lists tank production from **22 Jun – 31 Dec 41** as only **5600**, half of which were light tanks. The *supply conference* held in **Sep 41** had established a requirement of **1100** tanks per month. Of that total, the Russians expected to receive **500** per month from the British and Americans, and expected to produce only **600** per month themselves. Soviet heavy and medium tank production after early **1941** concentrated on the **T-34** and the **KV** to the exclusion of other types. New production of light tanks concentrated on the **T-60** and the **T-70**. Production of the **T-60** light tank began in **Jul 41**. The disruption by the German advance reduced the monthly output of **T-34s** from *Stalingrad* and **T-60s** from *Gorki* and *Kirov* from **2000** in **Jun 41** to **1400** in **Sep 41**. (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 92)

ab Aug 41: Hitler's decision in **Aug 41** to shift the main effort from the center to the south and thereby make the industrial base also a strategic objective closed down the southern region, which accounted for over half of Soviet output particularly of coal and steel. The drastic declines in Soviet coal (**63%**) and steel (**58%**) production in the last quarter of 1941 resulted from the disruption and partial loss of the southern industrial region. But the German reverse at Moscow in **Dec 41** left the Soviet Union in possession of the central region, and it and two other regions, the Urals and the western Siberian (Kuznets Basin), sufficed to decide the contest for the industrial base in the Soviet favor. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 514-55)

Oct 41: Soviet *economic crisis* in October 1941: By this time, nearly **90,000,000** people, **45** percent of the prewar population, were trapped in territory controlled by the Germans. Thus, workforce was now little more than half its prewar size. Some 2/3rds of prewar manufacturing had taken place in territories seized by the Germans in 1941. Anything that could be moved in time had been evacuated beyond the Volga to the Urals, but serious losses could not be avoided. *Not many guns were made in August and September 1941*. Four-fifths of Soviet war production was "on wheels." Moscow's defenders soon *ran out of shells that autumn*. *They ran out of cartridges*. They even ran out of guns with which to fire them. The equipment to assemble more was still packed up in crates...Production would not pick up for some months. In **Dec 41**, *an entire reserve army, the 10th, arrived for service without heavy artillery or a single tank*. (*Ivan's War*, 118)

Even in second half of **1941**, in middle of industrial relocation effort, the USSR built more tanks than German factories delivered in the whole year. Soviet industry delivered **4500** tanks, **3000** acft and **14,000** artillery pieces to the Red Army between **Jan – May 42**. During the whole of **1942**, Soviet production figures would reach **24,000** tanks and SP guns, **127,000** guns and mortars and **25,000** acft. Comparable German figures were: **9000** tanks, **12,000** guns and mortars and **15,000** acft. Note the *yawning disparity in artillery manufacture*. The growing gulf in Soviet and German industrial production would not begin to transform the situation at the front until late **1942**. (*C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia*, 75-76)

Nov 41: During this month, Soviet industry produces **2575** guns, **880** tanks and **448** combat acft. Despite every effort, production of tanks will not reach prewar levels until January 1942; and rifles, guns and ammunition not until February, March and May 1942, respectively. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 228, f.n. 2)

Nov 41: Food supply was the Achilles' heel of the war effort of both Russia and Germany in the First World War. As a result of its operations the German Army came to occupy by the end of **1942** about $\frac{1}{2}$ the cultivated land of the USSR. In the first campaign alone, up to **Nov 41**, the enemy occupied territory which had produced **38%** of the Soviet Union's grain and held a large

proportion of its livestock. The most important region was the Ukraine. . . After the retreats of **1941**, the Soviet government faced terrible difficulties. It still held most of northern and central European Russia, but before the war much of the food for this area had come from regions now occupied by the *Wehrmacht*. Agriculture also suffered from a lack of labor, as *kolkhozniki* (collective-farmers) were called up for the Red Army or to jobs in war industry. The grain harvest available for **1942** was only **1/3** of that in **1940**. The continental scale of the USSR was again a saving grace. The Moscow government still controlled the farmland of the Volga basin and the newer agricultural regions of Kazakhstan and western Siberia. The state also had more direct control over agriculture and supply than its Tsarist predecessor had had in **1914-17**. . . Meanwhile, the state had been able to accumulate large reserves of grain. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 50-51)

Nov-Dec 41: The German victories of **1941** eliminated much of the fruits of the Russian industrial effort of the **1930s**: between $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{2}{3}$ of its productive capacity in coal, pig iron, steel and aluminium; $\frac{1}{4}$ of its engineering output. Over **300** ammunition factories had been put out of action. By **Nov 41** the USSR's overall industrial output had been halved, and during **Nov-Dec 41** no coal whatever was delivered from the Moscow or the Donets minefields. (*Calvocoressi & Wint, Total War*, 462)

Dec 41: Russian industry faced a severe shortage of industrial workers after the start of the war. At the end of **1941**, the labor force had shrunk to **18.5** million men and women, or about **60%** of what it had been six months before. The Soviets were able to bring additional labor into the workplace, esp. women, teenagers and pensioners. (See, *E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 49)

Dec 41: Although there were about **200,000,000** people in the Soviet Union in **Jun 41**, by end of **1941** the Germans had occupied the heavily populated western area, depriving Stalin of more than **60,000,000** people and reducing the Russian base to **133.5** million. The occupied area was home to **40%** of the population, about **80** million persons. Perhaps **20** million escaped. According to German estimates **66** million people lived in the occupied zones. The loss of these **66** million persons had a *devastating impact* on the Soviet economy. (See, *W. Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 8-9, 11)

Jan 42: Industry in the areas occupied by the Germans was rehabilitated w/ amazing vigor as fast as it was liberated. The Moscow *coalfields*, for ex., whose pre-war production was **35,000** tons/day, resumed output in **Jan 42** at the rate of **590** tons/day. (Output would increase to **22,000** tons/day in **May 42** and was back to normal by **Oct 42**.) (*Calvocoressi & Wint, Total War*, 463)

The **black market** flourished. All kinds of military property were diverted or filched, including boots and other clothing, fuel, food and even kitchen pots. *Tobacco had become so scarce by 1942 that Muscovites would light a cigarette and offer passersby the chance, for two rubles, to take a puff...* Another thriving trade sprang to life in response to the introduction, on 25 Aug 41, of a *front-line ration of vodka*. The idea was to issue every soldier on active duty 100 grams a day. (Discusses how this led to corruption.) In Moscow, Simonov observed, people were drinking more vodka than tea by Jan 42. *Drunkedness remained a problem among front-line troops.* (*Ivan's War*, 139)

Jan-Dec 41: The German offensive in **1942** totally crippled the southern industrial region and caused a drastic decline in oil output in the Caucasus. Coal, steel and oil production would not recover during the war, as following table illustrates:

<u>Commodity</u>	<u>1940</u>	<u>1941</u>	<u>1942</u>	<u>1943</u>	<u>1944</u>	<u>1945</u>
------------------	-------------	-------------	-------------	-------------	-------------	-------------

Coal	165.9	151.4	75.5	93.1	121.5	149.3
Steel	18.3	17.9	8.1	8.5	10.9	12.3
Oil	31.1	33.0	22.0	18.0	18.3	19.4

German output, also in millions of tons, during roughly the same period was as follows:

<u>Commodity</u>	<u>1941</u>	<u>1942</u>	<u>1943</u>	<u>1944</u>
Coal	246.0	258.0	269.0	281.0
Steel	31.8	32.1	34.6	35.2
Oil	4.8	5.6	6.6	---

Nevertheless, in **1942**, Soviet output already surpassed that of Germany in tanks and other armored vehicles (**24,400** vs. **4800**), in aircraft (**21,700** vs. **14,700**), in infantry rifles and carbines (**4** million vs. **1.4** million), and in artillery (for which comparable figures were not available). Soviet accounts attribute this remarkable feat entirely to the Communist system's ability to overcome adverse circumstances, but it also appears likely that stocks of strategic materials, particularly steel and other metals, had been accumulated before the war. Certainly the millions of tons of Lend-Lease supplies also helped the Soviet Union to devote its own resources to wpns and ammunition production. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 515)

Tank manufacture:

Tanks were manufactured in more than a *dozen factories* from *Leningrad* to *Stalingrad*. In *Gorki*, the *Molotov GAZ No. 1* plant made light tanks and SP guns. This huge factory, designed, built, and initially operated by the *Ford Motor Company* under an agreement made in **1927**, originally produced copies of the Ford Model A automobile. The plant was modeled on the Ford River Rouge plant near Detroit. In **1938**, the plant had 45,000 workers and produced **84,288** GAZ AA light trucks, **23,256** GAZ M autos, **6314** GAZ AAA two-ton trucks, and a few **BT** tanks. After **22.6.41**, the Molotov Plant continued making **1.5-ton** GAZ trucks and **T-60** light tanks. . The *Krasnoye Sormovo No. 112 plant*, also in *Gorki*, had a long history of tank manufacture, having produced the first Soviet-made tank in **1920**. Before the war, the plant had **27,000** workers making the **T-32** medium tank. In **Jul 41**, production of **T-34s** began. In **Sep 41**, when the evacuation of industry started [*that late?*] the only plants making the **T-34** were the *Stalingrad tractor plant* and the *Krasnoye Sormovo*. The *tractor factory* at *Stalingrad* was the first tractor plant to be designed and equipped by *Americans*. The Soviets had selected the site in **1926** and begun work, but little was accomplished until **1929**, when *American technical assistance* arrived. The plant was designed by *Albert Kahn* and built under the supervision of a Detroit architect. Before the war, the *Stalingrad tractor factory* employed **20,000** workers making agricultural tractors and light tanks. During **1941** and **1942**, *Stalingrad* was the *major producer* of **T-34s**, while the other plants were being evacuated. . In summary, before the war many Russian factories made components and assembled tanks. With the advance of the Germans, the Soviet high command decided to maintain the plants at *Stalingrad* and *Gorki* and to create five (**5**) major centers at *Kirov*, *Nishnij-Tagil*, *Chelyabinsk*, *Omsk* and *Sverdlovsk*, enlarging existing factories w/ men and machines from factories in *Leningrad*, *Kharkov*, *Moscow* and other cities. While production fell to **500** tanks/month in **Oct 41**, by **Mar 42** it reached **1000** and by the end of **1942**

more than **1500** as the new plants came into full-scale production.¹⁰⁴ (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 39)

c. Evacuation of industry & people:

Summary: A gigantic movement of people and plants took place. The number of people involved may have been as high as **12** million. From *Leningrad*, more than **2/3** of the city's capital equipment was conveyed away. According to N.A. *Voznesenski*, the head of **Gosplan** (the State Planning Commission), these movements involved "millions of people. . . hundreds of enterprises, tens of thousands of machine tools, rolling mills, presses, hammers, turbines and motors. . . **1360** large enterprises – mostly war enterprises – were evacuated to the eastern regions of the USSR." . . . The railways were reduced to chaos as west-bound trains carried men to the armies at the front while east-bound trains, loaded w/ machinery, workers and deported Volga Germans and Polish POWs, were pushed into sidings where some of the equipment stayed to rot and men and women to die. At the new sites wooden structures were thrown up to house machinery, but there was often neither time nor materials to build houses for the workers. They sometimes set to work, in temperatures below zero, before the roof was on their makeshift factory and they *slept on the floor w/ their machines*. Their *privations were terrible*. Food was scarce, hospitals (and schools) non-existent. They just worked as long as they could. Mortality was high, output per head poor. Yet by their efforts, war industry kept going. The early months of **1942** were *critical*. Thereafter, production in these regions *expanded dramatically*. . . Once the corner was turned and production resumed, expansion was *astoundingly rapid*. In the next years output in the east continued to rise. (*Calvocoressi & Wint, Total War*, 462-63)

Note [Example of effort involved]: **8000** railcars were used to move just one major metallurgy complex from Zaporozh'e in the Donbas to Magnitogorsk in the Urals. (*Glantz & House, When Titans Clashed*, 71)

Note: Eine entscheidende Voraussetzung fuer die Aufrechterhaltung des Widerstandes bildete die Evakuierung gefaehrderter Anlagen der Ruestungsindustrie. . . Besonders schwer litt die Munitionserzeugung unter der Verlagerung der Betriebe, was sich in den Wintermonaten **1941/42** negative auswirken sollte. Von den insgesamt **382** Munitionsbetrieben, die bei Kriegsbeginn bestanden, wurden **302** abtransportiert oder zerstoert, doch die Fertigung kam nur schleppend wieder in Gang. Aehlich dramatisch verhielt es sich bei der Produktion von Artilleriegeschuetzen. Auf dem Sektor der Flugzeugerzeugung sank der Ausstoss von **2.329** Flugzeugen [**Jun 41?**], die noch nach friedensmaessigem Produktionsplan hergestellt worden waren, auf **627** im **Nov 41**. (*H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 122-23)

ca. 22.6.41: The one immediate decision Stalin did take was to order the immediate evacuation of industrial plants in the western provinces of the Soviet Union. (*C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia*, 45)

24.6.41: Prior to German invasion, the *vast majority* of Soviet manufacturing capability was located in the western portion of the country, particularly major industrial areas such as Leningrad and the eastern Ukraine. As early as 24 June, the **GKO** created a *Council for*

¹⁰⁴ **Note:** These figures don't "jibe" w/ Dunn's earlier figure, where he states that the Russians produced **27,900** tanks in **1942**. (33)

Evacuation to relocate industrial plants eastward to the Urals and Siberia. (Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 71)¹⁰⁵

Note: The successful Soviet evacuation of their industries east in **1941** signified „the foundation of all subsequent victories.“ Iron, steel and engineering plants were shipped to the Urals, Siberia or *Kazakhstan* in some **1,500,000** wagon-loads. A total of **16,000,000** people went w/ them to man the factories. The *Yak* fighter factory in Moscow was dismantled and shipped to Siberia, where production resumed after just six days on site. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 75)

2.-3.7.41: On **2 Jul**, it is decided to move the armored-plate mill at *Mariupol* to the Ural city of *Magnitogorsk*. The next day, the State Defense Committee in Moscow orders the transfer eastward of **26** further armaments factories from throughout western Russia, including Moscow, Leningrad and Tula. From Kiev and Kharkov, too, individual plants and essential machinery were ordered eastward. (Gilbert, *Second World War*, 206)

Jul-Nov 41: Die Evakuierung u. Verlagerung von Betrieben aller Wirtschaftszweige, Material u. wertvollem staatlichen Eigentum aus den Frontgebieten tief in das Hinterland wurde im **Aug-Sep 41** kraeftig vorangetrieben. Einbezogen waren dabei nicht nur die unmittelbar bedrohten Industriezentren, sondern auch andere Industriegebiete. Insgesamt wurden zwischen **Jul-Nov 41** nicht weniger als **1.523** industrielle Unternehmen, darunter **1,360** [words missing] ...**226** ins Wolgagebiet, **667** in den Ural, **244** nach Westsibirien, **78** nach Ostsibirien, **308** nach Kazachistan u. Mittelasien. Zur Abwicklung dieser riesigen Evakuierung auf dem Schienenweg benoetigte die *Eisenbahn* etwa **1.500.000** Waggons. Eine betraechtliche Zahl, wenn man noch die fortwaehrend laufenden Truppentransporte u. den Fronnachschiebung in Betracht zieht. (Source? Gosztony?)

Jul-Nov 41: In all, **1523** factories including **1360** related to armaments were transferred to the Volga River, Siberia, and Central Asia between July and November. Almost **1.5** million freight cars were involved. Despite best efforts, the *Council for Evacuation* was unable to relocate everything of value. In the case of the *Donbas* mines, where **60%** of the USSR's coal supplies were produced, evacuation was impossible. [Conversely], the successful evacuation of the Soviet railroads forced the Germans to commit **2500** locomotives and **200,000** railcars to support the troops in the east. (Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 72-74; for latter point on railroads see, Reinhardt, *The Turning Point*, 32, 146-47)

Aug 41: During this month, a massive factory evacuation scheme has been put into operation in Leningrad. The equipment of **92** factories is taken out by rail, on a total of **282** trains, the two largest heavy tank works being relocated **1200** miles to the east, at *Chelyabinsk* and *Sverdlovsk*. (Gilbert, *Second World War*, 230)

Sep 41: Eastward evacuation of Russian resources is approaching its conclusion. By last week of September, **1360** heavy industrial plants in western Russia had been successfully transferred to the Urals, western Siberia, the Volga, Kazakhstan and Central Asia. At same time, the railways were also moving **2,500,000** soldiers in the other direction, westwards, to the front line. On **29.9.41**, the Soviet government orders the evacuation to beyond the Urals of Russia's largest heavy-machine works, at *Kramatorsk*, southeast of *Kharkov*. Despite continuous *Luftwaffe* bombardment, the evacuation is ready to begin five days later. (Gilbert, *Second World War*, 240-41)

¹⁰⁵ **Note:** See Glantz, pp 71-73, for some useful details on evacuations.

Aug-Oct 41: *Barbarossa* stimulated nothing less than a "second industrial revolution" in the Soviet Union, in John Erickson's words. During these 3 months, **80%** of Russian war industry was on the move eastward. The German advance had overrun **300** Soviet war-production factories, and would eventually bring the whole immovable extractive resources of western Russia, particularly the rich coal and metal mines of the Donetz basin, into German hands. But it was not rapid enough to prevent the evacuation eastward of the greater part of Soviet engineering industry from *Leningrad*, *Kiev* and the regions west of *Moscow*. In the first **3** months of the war the Soviet railway system, while transporting **2.5** million troops westward, brought back eastward the plant of **1523** factories for relocation in the Urals (**455** factories), western Siberia (**210**), the Volga region (**200**) and Kazakhstan and central Asia (over **250**). The effort was both extraordinary and perilous. On **29.9.41**, the *Novo-Kramatorsk* heavy-machine-tool works received orders to strip down its workshops; w/in **5** days all its machinery, including the only **10,000**-ton presses in the Soviet Union, were loaded on to wagons under German bombing, while the **2500** technicians had to march on the last day to the nearest working railhead **20** miles away. (*Keegan, Second World War*, 209-10)

Oct 41: [In summer **1941**] I went to work as an apprentice metalworker at the **205th** Factory, which manufactured devices used to direct anti-acft fire. In three months, after passing an examination, I became a fourth grade metalworker. . . In October, when the Germans were approaching Moscow, the decision was made to have our factory evacuated to Saratov. . . After arriving at Saratov, we quickly rebuilt our **205th** Factory, setting it up in the building of the Agricultural Institute. *By the fifth day after our arrival we'd recommenced assembly of our devices!* We worked 14-16 hours per day w/o any days off. In **Feb 42** *we moved our beds right into the workshops*. You'd sleep for about five [5] hours, then they'd wake you up and you'd go back to work. We lived and worked for one purpose: to give the troops at the front everything necessary and as soon as possible. This isn't a slogan, nor propaganda! We really lived that way. (*Recollections of N.Y. Zheleznov*; in: *T-34 in Action*, 154-55)

Oct-Nov 41: More than **500** firms and **210,000** workers leave the Moscow area alone in these two months. . . . All the machinery arrived in remote locations on a confused, staggered schedule and w/ only a portion of the skilled work force. By the time the trains arrived, bitter winter weather and permafrost made it almost impossible to build foundations for any type of structure. Somehow the machinery was unloaded and reassembled inside hastily constructed, unheated wooden buildings. Work continued even in the sub-zero night, *using electric lights strung in trees and supplemented by bonfires*. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 72; and, *Glantz & House, When Titans Clashed*, 71-72)

90 factories were evacuated from *Leningrad*, including the *heavy tank works*, the last shipments being made by barge across Lake Ladoga after the city was cut off by land from the rest of Russia. When similar German advances interrupted evacuations from the Donetz basin, all workable plant, including the gigantic Dnieper dam, was dynamited. „In the teeth of this appalling industrial turbulence, Soviet economic managers succeeded in bringing the relocated plants back into production after an almost *miraculously brief delay*:“ according to Erickson, on **8.12.41**, „the Kharkov Tank Works turned out its first **25 T-34** tanks [at *Chelyabinsk* in the Urals], just short of **10** weeks after the last engineers left Kharkov, trudging along the railway tracks.“ (*Keegan, Second World War*, 210)

Die Verlagerung der Moskauer Industrie in grossem Still erfolgte ziemlich spaet, im Herbst 1941. Bis dahin arbeiteten die Werke unmittelbar fuer die *Westfront*, die die Hauptstadt vor dem Gegner deckte. Dennoch gelang die Evakuierung der Moskauer Industrie zufriedenstellend: von Ende September bis Ende November wurden auf nicht weniger als **71.000** Eisenbahnwaggons

498 Unternehmen mit rund **210.000** Arbeiter noch [sic] Osten geschickt. (*Gosztony, Entscheidungsschlacht*, 107)

Anecdote: „Among the mountains and *pine forests* there is spread out the beautiful capital of the Urals, *Sverdlovsk*. It has many fine buildings, but I want to tell you of the two most remarkable buildings in the whole area. Winter had already come when *Sverdlovsk* received Comrade Stalin's order to erect the two buildings for the plant evacuated from the south. The trains packed w/ machinery and people were on the way. In its new home the *war factory* had to start production, and it had to do so in not more than a fortnight. Fourteen days – not an hour more! It was then that the people of the Urals came to this empty spot w/ shovels, bars and pick-axes: students, typists, accountants, shop assistants, housewives, artists, teachers. The earth was like stone, frozen hard by our fierce Siberian frost. Axes and pickaxes could not break the stony soil, In the light of *arc-lamps* people hacked at the earth all night. They blew up the stones and the frozen earth, and they laid the foundations ... People's hands and feet were swollen w/ frost-bite, but they did not leave work. Over the charts and blueprints, laid out on packing-cases, the blizzard was raging. Hundreds of trucks kept rolling up w/ building materials. Rapidly the steel structures rose from the ground ... On the 12th day, into the new buildings w/ their glass roofs, the machinery, covered w/ hoarfrost, began to arrive. Braziers were kept alight to unfreeze the machines ... And two days later, the war factory began production.“ (*V. Ilyenkov*, quoted in: *Flower, The War*, 220)

30.11.41: Infolge der seit Ende **Jun 41** laufenden Evakuierung gelang es, bis Ende **Nov 41** insgesamt **1.523** Industrieanlagen, darunter **1.360** Ruestungsbetriebe, abzutransportieren u. **12** Millionen Menschen aus dem bedrohten Gebiet wegzubringen, wobei die Zahl der Evakuierten bis Ende **1942** auf **25** Millionen stieg. (*H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 123-24)

3.9.3: Railroads:

Note: Dec 41: In first five months of war, the Russians had shown great skill in using rail communications for troop transfers, efficiently repairing tracks, and evacuating the bulk of the rolling stock w/o too greatly impairing the capacity of the remaining net. (*G. Blau, German Campaign in Russia*, 91)

Note: The Soviet rail network generally served the large cities. Few lines were available to the Russians after **Dec 41**. The single rail line east of Leningrad was cut by the Germans. A few rail lines led south from Moscow and east to the Siberian military districts. *Lateral* north-south movement by rail was extremely difficult, usually accomplished by sending the trains first to Moscow and then from Moscow to the front. Therefore, once a division was ready for combat, it moved by rail to an army on the front and, for the most part, there it remained. When a decision was made to send a division to the Moscow area or to the south, that was tantamount to a final commitment for that division. The Soviets *could not move large numbers of divisions laterally* as did the German army. Once committed, the Soviet division remained in the general area. (*W. Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, viii)

Note: Soviet railway construction was effective but very primitive. The track bed was of sand covered w/ a layer of stone to prevent erosion, but in emergency the bed would be dispensed w/ entirely. Sleepers were of untreated pine and light in weight, and numbered only **1440** to the kilometre (compared w/ **2000** in the USA). Chairs, sole or bedding plates were rarely used, and

the rail was nailed direct to the sleeper. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 216; also, *Pottgiesser, Die Reichsbahn im Ostfeldzug*, 27)

Overview:

Railroads (Overview 1941):

- The USSR had for its **8,400,000** sq. miles of territory only **52,000** miles¹⁰⁶ of railroads, the greatest portion of which lay in European Russia. Of this trackage, less than **15%** could be classed as heavy capacity, as opposed to medium or light. As a means of comparison, the density of the rail lines was **17.6** miles per **1000** square miles for European Russia, as against **155** miles per **1000** sq. miles for Germany. The gauge differed from the standard European gauge, necessitating *transshipment* at the western border.
- The three (**3**) major geographical areas – Ukraine, White and Great Russia, and Baltic States – were *each served by one heavy-capacity double track rail line*. In the Ukraine this was the line *Krakow – Lwow – Kiev – Kursk or Dnepropetrovsk*. Only to a small extent could it be supplemented by the tortuous and winding medium- and often low-capacity line *Przemysl – Stanislaw – Cernauti – Odessa* on the southern slopes of the Carpathian Mts.
- Through White Russia to the east the primary truck was the *Warsaw – Brest-Litovsk – Minsk – Smolensk – Moscow*. This was paralleled on the south by the low- and medium-capacity line thru the *Pripyat, Brest-Litovsk, Pinsk – Gomel – Bryansk – Moscow*. Several lateral lines of medium capacity, however, and one diagonal route from *Kovno* in Lithuania southeast thru *Minsk* and *Bobruysk* to *Gomel* offered possibilities for alternate routes.
- To the north, the one trunk was the *Warsaw – Bialystok – Vilna – Dvinsk – Pskov – Leningrad* line. With the exception of the stretch *Dvinsk – Ostrov*, it was double track. The few alternate routes, for the most part to the north of *Pskov*, were all of low capacity. (*Howell, Soviet Partisan Movement*, 5-6)¹⁰⁷

Background:¹⁰⁸

„When the trains stop, that will be the end!“ said Lenin, faced w/ a transport crisis. Certainly for the Bolsheviks it would have been the end. Lenin’s words would be more true today [1964], for there can be few nations so dependent on rail transport as the Soviet Union. The Crimean War had shown the impossibility of being a world power and at the same time a country politically and economically under-developed. By 1914 this dilemma had been moderated but not eliminated. It was left to the Soviet governments to continue the transformation. As in other countries, industrialization in *tsarist* Russia was founded on railway building, but this does not mean that exactly the same process occurred as in Europe.

¹⁰⁶ According to author, “postwar estimates [i.e., 1956] of the 1940 trackage total have raised this estimate to just over **60,000** miles, of which **16,000** were double-track. (6)

¹⁰⁷ **Note:** For some of this data, author uses a key German military source: “*Militargeographische Angaben ueber das europaeische Russland, Allgemeiner Ueberblick, I.IX.41., Gen. St.d.H. Abt. fuer Kriegskarten u. Vermessungswesen (IV. Mil.-Geo.)*.”

¹⁰⁸ **Note:** The following section gleaned from J. N. Westwood’s *A History of Russian Railways*.

In American and western Europe, the state had little need to promote railways because commerce, industry, and local governments were eager enough not only to demand railways but also to get them built. In Russia, it was the *Government which provided the enthusiasm*. While the *tsars* and their ministers were willing to multiply the national debt, even to *sell Alaska*, to find money for railway-building, the commercial and industrial interests *did little to help*. It is true that merchants agitated for and occasionally promoted railways to serve their own trade, but they were rarely willing to risk their own money in such enterprises. As for the industrialists, they showed little of the initiative sometimes ascribed to private business. It was not until the 20th Century that Russia could be considered self-sufficient in railway equipment production. Whereas in western Europe early railway-building encouraged the development of industry . . . Russian industrialists were slow to exploit their opportunities. They made little effort to supply the needs of the railways, contenting themselves w/ campaigning for ever-higher tariffs and ever-wider import restrictions, behind whose protection they did eventually condescend to supply most of the railways' demands. Foreign industry and foreign money filled the gap left by the lack of domestic enterprise . . .

There is an *essential continuity* in Russian railway development over the 13 decades covered in this book. Perhaps because railways are affected by technical as much as by political changes **1917** was a turning point only in a limited sense. The greatest difference between *tsarist* and *Soviet* policies towards the railways is that before 1917 an expanding rail network was the foundation of Russian industrialization, whereas in Soviet times *railway investment was deliberately kept to a minimum* so that more funds could be allotted to other parts of industry. The railways were no longer accepted as a source and inspiration for the economy, but as a regrettable necessity. (*Westwood, Russian Railways, 7-8*)

1788-1835: As in Britain, the first railways in Russia were a means of conveying materials inside mining enterprises. Russia's first railway was probably a primitive system w/ wooden rails at the *Pyskorsk* copper mines on the upper *Kama*, where in the 17th C. waggonettes were used to transport the ore from mine to smelter. In **1788**, at the state cannon factory at *Alexandrovsk*, iron rails were laid for the first time in Russia . . . The first Russian *steam engine* appeared in **1834**; it was the work of the *Cherepanovs*, father and son, who were mechanics at an iron works at *Nizhnii Tagil* in the Urals. (In NE England, steam locomotives were in regular service from **1812**.) Their first effort was not very effective due to poor steam-raising abilities and was rebuilt w/ a new boiler in which this defect was remedied so successfully that it *exploded* while being tested . . . [Eventually] a third try produced a usable boiler and the locomotive was able to move faster than a horse, even if it could pull only a smaller load. A *second locomotive* appeared in 1835; this was similar in design but twice as powerful and could haul a 60-ton load. By **1835** there were about **200 km.** of *common-carrier* railway in Britain, a similar mileage in the Austrian Empire and about **1300 km.** in North America. In Russia there were no common-carrier lines, but from about **1825** there was ever-increasing pressure to introduce the iron road. (for more historical background see, *Westwood, Russian Railways, 20-22, etc.*)

1835-39 [*Tsarskoye Selo* railway]: Viennese professor Von *Gerstner*, who had built the first public railway on the European continent (the *Danube – Moldavia* line) was permitted to build a short experimental line, in order to prove the feasibility of railways in Russia and in particular the possibility of operating locomotives in winter.¹⁰⁹ The railway was to run from the capital to the Tsar's summer residence at *Tsarskoye Selo* (23 km.) and then continue to *Pavolvsk* (25 km.). The

¹⁰⁹ **Note:** The Tsar's attention had also been drawn by the British Government's *swift transfer by rail of troops* from Manchester to Liverpool during an Irish emergency; there was a certain parallel between England's Ireland and Russia's Poland. (23)

single track, 6-foot gauge (changed to 5 ft. in **1902**) was started in **1835** and in **1836** trains began to run provisionally. On **30 Oct 1837**, the line was *officially opened* by an 8-car train which reached *Tsarskoye Selo* in 28 minutes. The extension to *Pavolvsk* was opened the following summer. The line was an immediate success. (see, *Westwood, Russian Railways*, 24)

1839-48 [*Warsaw-Vienna railway*]: This was the *second line* to receive the Tsar's approval. It ran from Warsaw to the Austro-Hungarian frontier, and as it was intended to link w/ another line from the frontier to Vienna, it was constructed at the 4-ft. 8 ½ inches gauge. This railway was approved in **1839**. Work started in 1839 but ceased in **1842**, when the company, unable to raise sufficient capital, refused to continue. The Tsar ordered the Treasury to take over the line, and it was opened in **1848**. One of its first tasks was the carriage of Russian troops to help *crush the 1848 Hungarian rising*. (*Westwood, Russian Railways*, 25)

1841-51 [*St. Petersburg-Moscow line*]: In **Mar 1841**, Nicholas I ordered the establishment of a commission to study the possibility of a *St. Petersburg-Moscow railway*. The report's findings became the plan by which the railway was finally built and in certain respects set the pattern for other future railways. Construction of this new railway began in **1843**¹¹⁰. . . The completion of the railway was delayed several years by government difficulties occasioned by military expenditure and it was not until the autumn of **1851** that the line was opened throughout, although it had been opened to *Kolpino* as early as **1847**. It has cost considerably more than had been estimated, but it was a fine piece of engineering; two tracks of rail, laid in an almost straight line. . . The first passenger train to Moscow left St. Petersburg at 11:15 a.m. on **1 Nov 1851**, arriving the next day at 9:00 a.m. . . It was always the most distinguished of Russian railways and, under its present title [**1964**] of October Railway, is still very much a pace-setter for other lines. (*Westwood, Russian Railways*, 25-34)

Note: For construction of the *St. Petersburg – Moscow* line, Tsar Nicholas I set up a Special Committee, w/ his heir (the future Alexander II) as chairman. One of the most important decisions of the Committee concerned the *railway gauge* to be used, for it was this decision which caused the present **3 ½ inch difference between the Russian railways and those of most of the rest of Europe**. European railways (and American and many other) use the „*standard gauge*“ of **4-ft 8 ½ in.** Between the rails. Russian (and hence Finland) use a **5-ft. gauge**. It is customary to explain this as evidence of traditional Russian suspicion of the outside world, as a strategic measure to hinder an invasion of Russia. . . In fact, as the reports of the Committee's meetings show, the choice was not between 4 ft. 8 ½ inches and 5 ft., but between the latter and the 6 ft. gauge. Also, it was an *American* who made the final recommendation.¹¹¹ Moreover, at the time the decision was made, it was not at all certain that 4 ft. 8 ½ in. would in fact become the *standard gauge*. . . Thus Russia had *three railway gauges*, and this number increased when narrow gauge lines became popular. But the 5 ft. gauge was adopted as the *standard* for main lines (except in Poland). The *strategic significance* of this has been *negative*, it is much easier for an invader to re-lay one rail on Russia's broad gauge track than it is for the Russians to widen the gauge in occupied territory. This was particularly evident in the Civil War, when the Soviet

¹¹⁰ **Note:** Earthwork for the new line was entrusted to a vast army of *serfs*, who in certain years exceeded 50,000 in number. They were badly treated, badly fed and housed; they were flogged if they complained; much of the line traversed marshes, and the serfs might spend a whole working day (sunrise to sunset) waist deep in mud and water. There were epidemics of typhoid. Several thousand are believed to have perished during construction. (32-33)

¹¹¹ **Note:** The American railway engineer who made the decision was a J. Whistler, who had been invited to Russia as a technical advisor to the Committee. He was, incidentally, the *father of the celebrated artist*. His wife, “Whistler's Mother,” accompanied him to St. Petersburg. (31)

attack on Warsaw was hampered by the difference in gauges, but when the Poles advanced on Kiev, they quickly had through trains running from Poland into occupied territory. (*Westwood, Russian Railways*, 30-31)

1850s-60s: The *Crimean War* interrupted railway-building in Russia . . . The difference which a railway would have made to the defense of *Sevastopol* was an additional spur to the Russian Government in its search for promoters of a Russian railway network. Immediately after the end of the war two European groups – headed by *Pereire*, of the *Credit Mobilier*, and *Oppenheim* – were bargaining for concessions. *Pereire*'s consortium was chosen and in **Oct 1856** the Council of Ministers approved the draft agreement submitted by the Main Directorate of Ways and Communications. The new company, which was to be called the Main Company of Russian Railways, was to build w/in 10 years a main line from Moscow through *Tula*, *Orel*, *Kursk* and *Kharkov* to *Feodosia* in the Crimea; a line (mainly for grain exports) from either *Orel* or *Kursk* to the Baltic port of *Libau*, via *Vitebsk* and *Dunaburg*; a line from Moscow to *Nizhnii Novgorod*; and to complete the *St. Petersburg – Warsaw* line, together w/ a branch from *Vilnius* to the Russian frontier . . . By **1863** the Company had completed the *St. Petersburg – Warsaw* Railway and branch, and the *Moscow – Nizhnii Novgorod* line. (See, *Westwood, Russian Railways*, 40-42)

1866-99 [*the Boom Years*]: „The outstanding period for Russian railway-building was the last 35 years of the 19th C.“ From 1866-1900 the length of the common carrier rail network increased from **5000 km.** to **53,200 km.** (note: these mileages include Poland, but not the Duchy of Finland). Railway construction continued to be subject to *government planning*. While two of the first Russian main lines – *Warsaw – Vienna* and *St Petersburg – Warsaw* railways – had been largely *strategic*, in general the early railways had been built to *meet definite economic needs*. These needs were the needs of Moscow as a developing industrial city and the requirements of the grain-producing areas. Thus the early railways either radiated from Moscow, or they ran from the grain areas north-westwards to the Baltic, or they connected the same Black Earth grain region w/ the Black Sea ports. After these lines were built, forming the *basis of the Russian railway system*, other towns began to receive railway connections IAW their economic strength, or, sometimes, their political influence. (For more details see, *Westwood, Russian Railways*, 59-106)

1891 [*Trans-Siberian Railway*]: Like many other great enterprises, the railway through Siberia to the Pacific took longer to start than to finish. The first proposals were made in the **1850s** but work was not begun until the **1890s**, and by **1905** the through rail link between Moscow and *Vladivostok* was complete . . . The Trans-Siberian railway was deliberately built to *low technical standards*. Thus of the total mileage of bridges only a quarter was represented by metal construction, most being of wood. Apart from the bridges, other economies were made which were later to prove unwise. There were insufficient crossing loops and watering points . . . line capacity over some sections was limited because steep gradients had not been eased, and the 24 kg (48 lb) rails were not only too light, but also were rolled from low grade steel . . . After the difficulties experienced during the *Russo-Japanese War (1904-05)*, it was decided to *double-track* the railway, and by **1918** this had been largely achieved. (*Westwood, Russian Railways*, 108, 117-19)

1900-13: The rate of railway construction after the turn of the century did *not* match that of the 1890s. There was only a **25%** increase in mileage between **1900-10**, compared to 75% between 1890-1900. By the end of **1913**, the railway network measured **71,000 km**¹¹² . . . Military considerations remained a *principal factor* in planning new railways. Approval by the Ministry of War or by the General Staff was usually sufficient to overcome opposition on economic

¹¹² **Note:** The **1913** figure includes all common-carrier railways except in Finland. (140)

grounds . . . While the locomotive stock of the pre-war Russian railways was adequate, and the track rather poor, the situation of the rolling stock „was plainly bad.“ There was a *chronic shortage of freight cars* and no real attempt to remedy it. (*Westwood, Russian Railways*, 140-41, 156)¹¹³

1914-18 [*Railway mobilization*]: Mobilization **Plan 19**, variant „A“ was applied („A“ signified that Austria was the main enemy: Plan **19G** was for use if Germany was the principal foe.) In **1914** a new plan, No. 20, was being worked out but was not ready in time. Plan No. 19 had been formulated in **1910**. By the plan, half of the infantry were to be mobilized by the 15th day, and $\frac{3}{4}$ by the 20th. Polish railways were given 5 days to prepare for mobilization; others had up to 11 days. After the railways reached their mobilization readiness, they were expected to work at full capacity only for a few days. From the transport point of view, Russia's enemies could hardly have been more threatening. The entire frontier became a battle line. The enemy had **36** railway tracks serving the front, while Russia had only **18**. This meant that rapid concentrations of troops against weak points in the Austro-German defense were impossible. General *Brusilov* during his south-western offensive in **1916** in fact asked that troops should not be sent to him from other areas: „Knowing the limitation of our railway transport . . . I knew that while we were entraining and transporting one Army Corps, the Germans would manage to transport three or four.“ . . . The *Trans-Siberian Railway* was on the *verge of chaos* and in **1917** American railway experts arrived to reorganize it. By then, however, it was too late. The first *railway crisis* occurred in the summer of **1915**, when an apparently unforeseen situation arose: the evacuation of Poland. This eastward flood lasted 3 months, choking junctions, disorganizing stations, and exacerbating the car shortage. Coal shipments from the Donetz Basin were almost halved by the end of the summer due largely to the car shortage, the big cities began to experience food shortages, and in **1916** even the army could only receive about half its stated requirements in provisions. (*Westwood, Russian Railways*, 167-73; also, *Brusillov, A Soldier's Notebook*, London, 1930, p 239)

1914-18: Even before the war started, the Russian railways had been short of freight cars and locomotives; efforts were made to raise the production rate of both . . . During the war years, there was a high rate of railway construction, partly because of war needs but mainly the result of pre-war projects . . . Apart from the laying of new routes, capital works were undertaken at key junctions to overcome *bottlenecks* which had arisen during the war. The routes from Siberia to the west, and out of the Donetz Basin, were especially overloaded. But progress in capital works was held up by the *rail shortage* . . . The period **1916-17** marked the beginning of the *collapse of rail transport*. In the first war years, the railways' incapacity had been marked by failure to supply either the army or the population, but by **1917** the statistics not only of traffic¹¹⁴ but also of technical sufficiency, began to *deteriorate*. From **Jul 1916 – Jul 1917**, the average number of serviceable locomotives fell from **16,400** to **15,700**; while the number of freight cars awaiting repairs rose from **24,000** to **46,000**. But this was only a foretaste of what the following year would bring . . . While the war was in progress, the Russian economy decomposed amidst famine, fuel shortage, transport chaos and human suffering. In **1916**, the Russian railways had a *traffic*

¹¹³ **Note:** One reason why big engines were slow to appear on Russian railways was the *lightweight rail* commonly used, and the continued existence of „temporary“ wooden bridges. In **1913**, about **90%** of the total mileage was laid w/ rails of less than 34 kg. per metre (68 lb per yd.). (155)

¹¹⁴ **Note:** During the war, despite the difficulties, the railways did succeed in passing greatly-increased traffic w/ only a small accretion of new mileage. From **1913-16**, average freight ton/km. per month rose from **5.9** to **7.6** billion. This suggests that the lack of railway capacity so frequently bewailed before the war was a product more of *managerial* than technical inadequacy. (176-77)

density of **19** trains per day per *verst* (one more than in **1911**); in **1918**, each *verst* of track produced **10** train/versts, and in **1921** but **5**. (*Westwood, Russian Railways*, 174-78)

ca. 1917-20: Apart from the *fuel crisis* the first main problem was the *locomotive shortage*. The number of engines out of service awaiting repairs rose steadily as workshop productivity declined (because of fuel/metal shortages and unenthusiastic workers). Locomotive works continued to be devoted to *munitions production*, as well as to the construction of armored trains, which had a vital role in a war fought along the railway routes [ref. here is to the Civil War]. The number of new engines produced fell from **420** in **1917**, and **214** in **1918** to **100** in **1919**. At the time of the Revolution, $\frac{1}{4}$ of the locomotive stock was awaiting repair. By **Sep 1920**, of the **17,577** engines in existence, only **7296** were available for service. (*Westwood, Russian Railways*, 192-93)

1918-21 [*Civil War*]: During the three years of Civil War, the railways were *in a sorry state*, esp. those located on the constantly shifting periphery of Soviet power. The *Bolsheviks* had the advantage of internal lines of communication; their citadel was the centre, w/ the *two capitals* of Moscow and St. Petersburg. As the railway network *to a large degree radiated from the centre*, the *Bolsheviks* were able to operate the railway as a *single system*, transferring locomotives and rolling stock from one route to another as the decisive theatre of war changed. During Civil War, the government exploited the railways to the full, shifting troops by rail from one front to another. At times, as much as $\frac{2}{3}$ of the Red Army was involved in this kind of *mass transfer*. But the fact that the railways were the decisive element meant that they were also a decisive target . . . The Soviet railways carried **37** million tons of freight in **1918**, **30** in **1919** and **32** in **1920** (according to the not very reliable statistics of this period). The **1913** figure had been **132** million. While these figures are affected by the amount of railway actually operated by the Soviet Government each year, any adjustment would show that the real situation was *even worse* than the figures indicated . . . Some idea of how the population suffered during these years can be derived from the following figures: Rail shipments of grain: **1913, 18,000,000** tons; **1918, 1,000,000** tons; **1919, 2,000,000**; **1920, 3,000,000**; and of coal: **1913, 26,000,000**; **1918, 4,000,000**; **1919, 2,000,000**; **1920, 4,000,000**. (*Westwood, Russian Railways*, 177-79)

Railway organization after 1917: The *Tsarist* government had *nationalized* most of the Russian railways and would no doubt have completed the process if the Great War had not intervened. The nationalization of the remaining private railways was therefore not a radical move, but merely the final achievement of long-standing policy. Nevertheless, the new *Bolshevik* government was in no hurry to end private railway mgt. The reason for this hesitancy was that the central government was in a better position than its supporters to see that a *transport catastrophe* was threatening the life of the country. (*Westwood, Russian Railways*, 182)

1921: The poor maintenance of railway property during the Great War, and the damage caused by the Civil War – which had raged over all Russia except the centre, and was *fought along the railway routes* – combined to put the railways in a *grim physical condition* by **1921**. During the Civil War, about **12%** of the total number of railway bridges were destroyed, and this included many of the major structures spanning wide rivers like the *Irtysk, Kama, Volga* and *Dnepr*. Many kilometers of line had been wrecked, and thousands of locomotives and cars put out of action. And apart from physical damage deliberately inflicted, there was a **6-year** backlog of maintenance work, which meant that thousands of kilometers of rail were worn out, often dangerously so. About **30,000,000** sleepers were in need of replacement. Hundreds of *bridges* left undamaged by the wars had been weakened by improper maintenance . . . By the end of the *New Economic Policy* [**1921-28**], the condition of the railway infrastructure was still *inferior to the 1913 standards*, even though towards the end of the period *much additional trackage*, warehousing and

station facilities had been installed at certain key junctions which were feeling the strain of growing traffic . . . Lack of locomotive fuel was a situation inherited from previous years. In early **1921**, about **4500 km.** of railway had to be temporarily closed, and many railways had only a *one-day fuel reserve* at this time. In **Jan 1921**, **12%** of available locomotives were immobilized for lack of fuel, and by Sep this proportion had *doubled* . . . The fuel situation improved during **1922**. In general, the fuel shortage was overcome by **1923**, and a similar situation was *never allowed to develop* in subsequent years. (*Westwood, Russian Railways*, 200-02, 209)

1921-27: In **1921**, while there were about **12,000 km.** of railway officially described as under construction, the length of new lines completed that year was only **200 km.** In **1922**, only **118 km.** were completed; in **1923** only **246 km.** Total mileage of common-carrier railways increased by only **5000 km.** in the six years **1922-27**. In **1927**, there were **76,900 km.** in service, of which **1000 km.** were narrow-gauge. A high proportion of the lines completed during the N.E.P. period were in Asia, or were lines connecting Asiatic w/ European Russia. (*Westwood, Russian Railways*, 220)

Locomotives & rolling stock: Almost half the freight locomotives of Soviet railways were of the **1893** “normal eight-axel type” (*class O*) [when? late 1920s?]. These engines were invaluable because of their low axle-weight; they could negotiate lightweight worn-out rails w/ less danger of breaking them than could the newer, more powerful, but heavier engines. However, they were obviously too weak for use in the future, and new construction was of more modern types. The *class E* ten-wheeled freight engine which had proved so successful over the previous decade, but still represented less than **5%** of total locomotive stock, was chosen as the basic type and in **1920** it was decided to order **1200** of these from abroad (**500** from Sweden, **700** from Germany). The design was slightly modified under the supervision of the Russian Railway Mission . . .¹¹⁵

With the *influx of engines from abroad*, the production of **E type** freight locomotives in Russian works could cease, and attention be paid to passenger units . . . As there was no time to work out a new design, the successful **S 2-6-2** of **1910** was chosen. But because the work of this type [of passenger locomotive] had sadly deteriorated when high quality fuel was not available, it was decided that the new engines should have larger *fireboxes*. The new design (*class Su*) was quickly drawn and in **1925** the first of the class rolled out. Five locomotive works built them . . . Improved versions of the original design were *still being built in the early 1950s*. It became, in fact, the basic passenger locomotive of Soviet railways. In **1927**, the *Putilov works* produced the first engine of an entirely new design. This was the **M class** 3-cylinder **4-8-0** designed for heavier passenger service. It was not very successful, and all the engines of this class were soon rebuilt.

During this period seven (7) works produced locomotives: *Bryansk, Voroshilovgrad, Kolomna, Putilov, Sormovo, Kharkov* and *Nevskii*. Russian locomotive production reached its lowest ebb in **1921** and **1922**, when only **74** and **71** units were produced. But by **1927**, production had risen to **473** . . . Construction of rail cars (both passenger and freight) had recovered by **1927-28**. (*Westwood, Russian Railways*, 221-223)

1928-34: No radical changes in railway ops during this period; but traffic began to increase at a much faster rate. In fact, it *doubled* during these **6** years. Between **1928** and **1934**, the density of

¹¹⁵ **Note:** Photo caption states that the *class E* engine was the „world’s most numerous steam locomotive design.“ Photo shows an engine in Kiev in **1961**. (opposite p 224) Another photo (opposite p 258) shows a *class E* locomotive in German hands during the war; another shows an *R class 2-8-0* captured by the Germans. This type of tandem compound engine was build between **1899-1902** for the *Moscow-Vindava Rybinsk, Moscow-Kiev-Voronezh, Ryazan-Uralsk*, and South Eastern railways.

freight movement increased from **1,200,000** ton/km. per kilometer to **2,500,000**; but despite this increase, the railways could *not keep pace w/ the demands of rapid industrialization* . . . During the period, the *decisive factor* was still the *freight car shortage*. (Westwood, *Russian Railways*, 228-29)

1935-40: This period was filled w/ changes and innovations – such as „*marchroutization*“ – all designed to handle increased traffic w/ a minimum of new investment (increased investment in rail transport had tailed off after **1937**). The available capital was concentrated on a few key routes: for ex., *Donbas-Krivoi Rog*, *Leningrad-Moscow*, *Eastern Urals-Centre*, *Centre-Murmansk*, *Western Siberia-Central Asia* and the lines from the *Southern Ukraine* to the centre. Changes involved the reconstruction of bottle-necks, such as stations, yards and junctions; laying of heavier rails; installation of automatic block signalling; lengthening of sidings and loops, and double-tracking. Such improvements permitted the operation of faster, heavier, and more numerous trains over the key lines. At the same time, the *technical* difference between these lines and the others widened and this *gap* between the best and secondary lines *remained a feature of Soviet railways*. (Westwood, *Russian Railways*, 231)

[*Marchroutization*, etc.]: The basic fact underlying „*marchroutization*“ was that $\frac{3}{4}$ of railway freight traffic was found in only eight (**8**) categories of good: Coal, oil, ferrous metals, ore, timber, firewood, grain, and mineral building materials). The carriage of these 8 types of freight was henceforth to be planned from the centre, and trains were formed entirely of one type of goods for movement (when possible) over the reconstructed lines. These trains, to which the *best locomotives were assigned*, travelled from origin to destination w/o halts at sorting yards, and wasted no time at the boundaries separating different railways. This method, and the granting of *priority* to the „*march-rout*“ trains, ensured a faster speed of delivery and helped to guarantee that even if the railways did fail to fulfill all demands, the shortfall would not consist of the eight basic materials required by the economy. This *radical change in method* was introduced gradually; by **1938**, only $\frac{1}{4}$ of loads were planned for „*marchroutization*“, and in fact this target was far from being achieved. The South Ukraine and the Caucasus, w/ their dominating oil, coal and metal traffic had the highest proportion . . .

Allied to „*marchroutization*“ was the introduction of *centralized train control* (where a central dispatcher controls the movements of all signals and switches over a long length of line). The first installation of centralized train control in Europe was probably that of the *Ryazan Railway* in **1936**. This system did much to improve line utilization. Also in **1936**, a beginning was made w/ the *unification of train weight norms* by the allocation of powerful locomotives to difficult sections. It was then no longer necessary to remove cars from trains passing through hilly areas. Increased stress was laod on the *planning and rational conduct of movement*. In **1939**, a monthly car plan was introduced. This specified for a given junction or depot the number and direction of cars which were to be passed each month . . . Due to some of these measures, and to *better organization*, more mechanical freight handling gear, the growing fleet of cars and the spread of *Stakhanovism*, average daily carloadings increased from **55,717** in **1934** to **95,150** 2-axle units in **1940**. The average daily mileage of freight locomotives rose sharply from **169 km.** in **1934** to **246 km.** in **1937**. By **1940**, the average gross weight of freight trains had risen to **1298** tons, compared to **966** tons in **1932**. By **1937**, the average commercial speed of freight trains had increased to **19 km/hr**; and the turnaround time of freight cars to **7** days, against **9** days in **1934**. With some exceptions during the war years, the techniques established during the **1930s** set the pattern for following decades. (Westwood, *Russian Railways*, 231-33)

Stalin's Purges: Arbitrary arrests, executions and labor camps had been a feature of Soviet society almost from the beginning, but in the 1930s the purge technique acquired the characteris-

tics of a mass movement . . . What does seem certain is that in the purges two groups – army officers and *railway mgrs* – suffered more than others. And both the Red Army and the railways were at the time organizations w/ whose work the Party and Government were *dissatisfied*. Furthermore, after the railways were purged, their work *did improve* beyond the „limit“ of the „*predel'shchiki*.“ (Westwood, *Russian Railways*, 235-36)

1928-46 [*New railway construction*]: With its marked distaste for investing money in transport, it is not surprising that the Soviet government *limited the construction of new railway lines*. This was especially noticable during the first *Five-Year Plan (1928-34)*, which favored investment in heavy industry. Of the funds assigned to the railways, only 1/3 were to be allocated to new construction, the remainder being devoted to re-equipping existing lines. In fact, in the 51-months of the first plan, only 1/5 of railway investment was in new lines . . . While the situation improved later, Soviet railway construction has, deliberately, *not proceeded as fast as in the best of the tsarist years*, reliance being placed on increasing the amount of traffic passed by existing lines . . . Of the **17,000 km.** of new track scheduled for construction in the first five-year plan, only about **5000 km.** were actually achieved. Even *less* was done in the second plan – only about **3300 km.** The projects of the third five-year plan were almost all unfinished when the war began, only **4600 km.** being built up to **1941** . . . Within the inter-war frontiers, there were nearly **77,000 km.** of common-carrier railway in **1928**, of which about **1000 km.** were narrow-gauge. In **1939** there were **86,400 km.** (**1100 km.** narrow-gauge), and territorial acquisitions brought the total in **1940** to **106,100 km.** (of which **4000 km.** were narrow-gauge, the **2900 km.** addition being a contribution from the Baltic States). In **1946**, after wartime construction¹¹⁶ and further frontier changes, there were **114,100 km.** Between **1928-40**, the railway mileage had increased by less than half, while traffic increased by more than four (4) times. (Westwood, *Russian Railways*, 242-43)

Technical condition of railways [1928-41]: The „*Achilles heel*“ of the Soviet railways during the five-year plans was the *track*. In the early **1930s** even the most important main lines had long sections of track w/ worn-out lightweight rails laid before the Great War. Accidents due to rail breakage were frequent, and more powerful engines could not be introduced because of axle-weight limitations. The *bridges* were also too weak. But because of the *steel shortage* little could be done. Even a line as important as the *Kursk railway* was relaid w/ old rails in **1932**. The basic rail was the type **IIIa**, capable of bearing the **0-10-0** engines. There was also a slightly heavier **IIa**, while the **Ia**, capable of accepting **23-ton** as against the **16-ton** axle loads of the **IIIa**, was hardly produced at all. Ballast continued to be another difficulty, owing to the lack of conveniently located quarries. In **1931**, **80%** of the mileage was laid on fine sand or dirt, only **250 km.** had stone chip ballasting, w/ another **5000 km.** on gravel . . . In **1935**, the track was recognized as the *most backward* sector of the railways; there were at this time **1500** speed restrictions in force and **2000** sections of line were considered to be *unsound*. For this reason, new efforts were made to open new quarries and to reorganize and mechanize track work. But the improvement was only *moderate*. By **1940**, only **17%** of that proportion of the network classified as *main line* was laid w/ **Ia** rails, and these rails were in any case not really adequate. At the end of the war the track was in a *very poor state* . . . The number of freight cars increased from **341,400** in **1928** to about **721,000** units (2-axle) in **1940** . . . The basic freight cars built during this period [of the *five-year plans*] were the 40- and 50-ton 4-axle box car; the 50-ton

¹¹⁶ **Note:** During WWII, about **7000 km.** of new line were brought into operation (considerably more than built in any of the three five-year plans). In fact, one of the characteristics of Russian railway-building has been its continuation through difficult periods in the country's history. Indeed, the rate of construction during the Great War (**1914-18**) has never been surpassed. Even during the Civil War some **1500 km.** of line were built. (245)

4-axle hopper; the 4-axle steel-body open car of 50 tons (first introduced in **1915**) and the 4-axle 50-cubic metre tank car. (*Westwood, Russian Railways*, 247-50)

1941-45: The third *Five-Year Plan*, which had forecast an improvement in railway efficiency as well as an increase in traffic, was interrupted in **1941** by the German invasion. In some ways, the railways had *fewer problems in war than they had in peacetime*:

- a. The occupation of the western and southern areas of the country relieved them of the duty of supplying the populations involved . . .
- b. The evacuation of rolling stock provided a reserve for use on the mileage remaining in Soviet hands. Thus, in conditions of diminishing traffic the number of locomotives and cars per mile of track actually increased . . .
- c. At beginning of **1943**, route mileage had decreased by **40%**, freight car numbers by **20%**, and locomotives by only **15%**, compared to **1941**.

Nevertheless, it is „true to say that the Soviet railways emerged from the war w/ credit, disappointing the German expectation, and assumption, that transport difficulties would cause a Russian collapse soon after the invasion.“ Although railway traffic *decreased* during the war, owing to the disruption of the economy and restriction of rail transport to war needs, because of radical changes in traffic flows the work accomplished was greater than the statistics would indicate. It has been estimated that in **1942** only **228** billion ton/km. of freight was produced, compared w/ **460** million [*billion?*] in **1941**. After **1942**, the worst year of the war, there was a *slow improvement* but in **1944** there were still only **314** billion tons/km. of freight traffic. At same time, due to military demands, the relocation of industry in Asiatic and east European Russia, and the loss of key western and northern areas, there was a *marked change in traffic flows*. In **1942**, nearly 1/3 of freight tonnage was handled by railways in the Urals and Siberia, compared to less than 1/7 in **1940**. The loss of the Donetz Basin meant that areas in the centre formerly using *Donbas* coal had to be supplied from the Asian coalfields at *Karaganda* and in the *Kuznetsk Basin*, causing an increase of **161 km.** in the average haul of coal. For similar reasons, the average length of haul of ores rose from **562 km.** in **1940** to **836** in **1942**. The transfer of the *industrial centre of gravity* to the east was *not achieved w/o straining the railways*. (*Westwood, Russian Railways*, 237-38)¹¹⁷

1941: The first test of the railways came in **1941**, w/ the *evacuation of industry* from the threatened areas to the east. This required hundreds of *special trains* carrying plant and workers which moved to new locations w/o any intermediate halts except for engine purposes . . . The rolling stock situation was not serious because of the numerous cars which had brought supplies to the front and were waiting to be returned. *Line capacity* was the real *bottleneck*, and *enemy bombing* made matters worse. Permissive working, w/ *trains following each other almost nose to tail*, was therefore widely used.

1941: The railways in **1941** also *acquitted themselves well during the defense of Moscow*. With all but four (**4**) of the lines radiating from the capital cut by the Germans, trains of relief troops

¹¹⁷ Westwood: “On the whole, the outstanding feature of Soviet railway operation during the war was the speed w/ which radical changes in the direction and amount of traffic were accepted, arranged and carried out under unfavorable conditions; the planning and operational mechanisms developed before the war were by no means so inflexible as might have been supposed.” Extraordinary measures . . . were willingly taken.” (241)

from the Urals and Asia were brought in as far as the *Belt Line* [?], where they were unloaded and cleared for the return trip. These troop trains were given *absolute priority* and moved westwards at a speed of about **750 km./day**. The railways also played a key role in the siege of *Leningrad*; indeed, w/o the railways „the city could not have been defended.“ . . . Many acts of heroism were performed by railwaymen. The most typical instances were the occasions when burning cars in ammunition trains were uncoupled by the train crew to save the remainder of the load . . . When the Germans invaded there were many Russians who hoped they would win, and railwaymen were among them. Some railwaymen did a „go slow“ act and others acted irresponsibly, no longer respecting the rules laid down by a regime which seemed on the point of collapse. As this attitude was *beginning to threaten war transport*, the railways were put under *martial law*. Railwaymen were considered as called-up, and a kind of courts martial, the War Tribunals, were established to try those workers who had failed to do their duty. The worst offenders were shot, other sent to *penal companies* which were expended in suicidal military tasks. (Westwood, *Russian Railways*, 238-40)

Electrification & Dieselization: The first *electrified railway* in the USSR was the *Baku* suburban line converted during the **1920s**, and the advantages of this form of traction were well-known to the Soviet planners, who constantly were seeking ways to increase railway capacity w/o building new lines. The ability of electric locomotives to haul heavy trains at high speeds and w/ outstanding reliability guaranteed them a place in Russian railway operations. Yet electrification never proceeded as fast as was planned; in the second *Five-Year Plan* alone **5000 km.** of route were scheduled for electrification, but by **1938** the *total* electrified mileage was only **1622 km.** Of this, Moscow and Leningrad suburban lines accounted for **300 km.** By the outbreak of the war (**1941**), there were still only **1870 km.** of electrified line . . . Pre-war Russian experience w/ *diesel traction* was totally unhappy and seems to support the claim that in highly-planned economies an error of judgement may become a disaster. The advantages of diesel traction in Russian conditions were *obvious*: the railways would need to carry less coal, and the problems of steam operation in frozen or arid territory avoided. The USSR had imported a few *diesel locomotives* from Germany in the **1920s** and felt ready to produce them domestically. In **1930**, the *Kolomna works* turned out its first diesel locomotive, and in **1933** the *Kaluga factory* was to produce a diesel *shunter*. The diesel engines, both German and Russian, operated at first in European Russia, where they could more easily be kept under observation, and worked satisfactorily . . . During the war, some American-built diesel-electric locomotives were acquired and on the basis of these a new, and successful, Soviet diesel locomotive was produced. By **1950**, **2%** of railway freight traffic was handled by the diesels. (Westwood, *Russian Railways*, 273-75)

Locomotive policy: By **1929**, **40%** of the Soviet freight-engine stock consisted of the old **O class**, and about **25%** of the relatively new **E 0-10-0**. To cope w/ growing traffic in the **1930s** new powerful engines were needed, and there was much discussion as to what type of motive power should be used. It was, however, impracticable at this time to replace *steam power*. The vital need, locomotives of high power, was conditioned by the *poor state of the track*, and really adequate designs *could not be introduced*. So, during the first two *five-year plans*, the **E 0-10-0** continued to be built in large numbers. By the mid-**1930s**, 22-ton axle loads became feasible on a few main lines and over **3000 FD type 2-10-2** engines were built before the war. These were of a new Soviet design, embodying many *American features*. (Westwood, *Russian Railways*, 279-80)

End Westwood.

Mid-Oct 41: Tagtaeglich trafen in dieser Zeit vollbesetzte *Zuege* mit Truppen aus dem Osten in Moskau ein. Sie kamen aus den fernoestlichen Regionen der Sowjetunion u. wurden durch die *fast unglaublich anmutenden Leistungen der russ. Eisenbahn* rechtzeitig an die bedrohte Frontstelle befoerdert . . . Der Zweifel, ob die sowjet. Eisenbahnen diese grossen Truppentransporte aus dem Osten innerhalb von **6-8** Wochen (also von Anfang Oktober bis zum **18.11.41**) ueberhaupt bewerkstelligen konnten, ist nicht gerechtfertigt. Die *Transsibirische Bahn*, die die Hauptlast der Transporte trug, wurde bereits 1941 zwischen *Omsk* u. *Tschita* (auf einer Strecke von **3.640 km**) *doppelspurig* gefuehrt. Nur von Tschita fuehrte weiter nach *Wladiwostok* eine *einspurige* Linie. Ausserdem konnte man sich noch der *Ussuri-Bahn*, der *Westibirischen Bahn* u. der *Zentralsibirischen Bahn* bedienen. Um die Truppentransporte raschestens durchfuehren zu koennen, wandte man die Methode der Zugfolge auf Sicht, mit dicht hintereinanderfahrenden Zuegen, weitgehend an. Die Truppenzuege hatten absolute Prioritaet u. bewegten sich in Tagesetappen von rund **750 km** westwaerts. Im Jahre 1941 bewaehrten sich also auch die Eisenbahnen bei der Verteidigung von Moskau. Obwohl *bis auf vier (4) Linien alle von der Hauptstadt ausstrahlenden Strecken von den Deutschen unterbrochen waren*, brachte die Bahn Einsatztruppen vom Ural u. aus Asien bis zur Moskauer *Guertelbahn*, wo die Zuege entladen u. zurueckgeleitet wurden. (Gosztony, *Entscheidungsschlacht*, 232; see also, J.N. Westwood, *A History of Russian Railways*, 1964)

3.10: Moscow:

City had population of **4,500,000** in 1939. The 1903s were a time of *mass migration* to the city. (Gruliov, 44, 121)

Moscow—becomes “dusty and hot” in the summertime. The warm, sunny autumn weather soon gives way to raw, cold rainy days; the *yellow leaves on the birch trees drop almost overnight*. On 7 November, they celebrate the anniversary of the Revolution—a ceremony that is a re-run of May Day w/ the addition of a military parade. The weather is cold, clammy, overcast; *flocks of noisy crows circle over the Kremlin*. Soon afterwards the first snow drifts begin. (Gruliov, 109)

Winter in Moscow lasts nearly *half the year*. And to Muscovites *it is their season*. Most of them regard the first snowfall w/ the same pleasure that an Englishman takes in a warm, midsummer’s day, or an American the bright hues of autumn. My own feelings are ambivalent: I love the *crisp, frosty days when the whole city sparkles*, but hate the long spells of dark chill when the *sun stands oppressively low in the sky*, casting a feeble light and long shadows. Winter comes early to Moscow. Snow flurries dust the city w/ white in early November. But the first few of the **40 snowfalls that Moscow averages annually** are only a foretaste of things to come. Not until late December do snow and ice begin to dominate the city.¹¹⁸ (Gruliov, 93-94)

Moscow’s Women: Wartime Moscow was *predominantly a city of women*; the men were all away fighting. Everyone worked 10 and 11 hours a day, often in cold, grueling conditions and often hungry. For most people the *daily ration was approx. two pounds of black bread*, and even this was given only to manual workers or persons w/ a higher education. **Lend-Lease** egg powder was a substitute for meat. Dates, when available, were used as a substitute for sugar. Many Muscovites raised *green onions* in window boxes, snipping off a bit of stem daily to chew for

¹¹⁸ **Note:** In Dec 41, the “hard” winter came several weeks earlier than normal.

vitamins...As Nazi troops advanced on Moscow, *the entire population was mobilized*. Men were rushed to the front and children evacuated to the country; but many of Moscow's women remained to help defend their city. On its outskirts they dug trenches and tank traps, often under danger of enemy aircraft fire; after air raids they dealt w/ bomb damage and repaired vital railways. Aply filling places left vacant by fighting men, they also kept munitions factories running and operated the city's transportation network. Their hard work and determination...played an important part in keeping the Germans at bay and saving Moscow. (Gruliov, 39-40)

Kremlin:

Has several beautiful, onion-domed cathedrals.

Red Square:

Red Square has been the *focus of Russian national life since the Middle Ages*. Into its broad expanse people crowded to hear the Czar's edicts read aloud—or to watch his enemies put to death. Here, in this [20th] century, they came to listen to Lenin speak, and here some of them were killed during the 1917 revolution. In **1941**, on the Revolution's anniversary, Soviet soldiers paraded *across the cobblestones* past Lenin's tomb, then continued straight out of the city to confront the Nazi invaders...Red Square is the *showplace of the Soviet Army*, which on special occasions parades its numbers and sophisticated weaponry before the public [Note: this as of late 1970s]. The military also maintains a *presence around the clock*, day in and day out, in the form of two soldiers protecting Lenin's tomb...[Note: Book also notes Red Square's *historical function as the setting for national ceremonial events*.] (Gruliov, 23, 27, 32)

3.10.1: *Early History:*

Moscow has existed since the middle of the 12th Century. For centuries it was as much fortress as city, growing behind defensive walls pushed out in widening rings. Most of the old walls have vanished, but they have left their *concentric imprint* on the city and affect its development today (late 1970s). In **1156** a wooden stockade was built to protect the busy little trading community that grew up beside the Moscow River. Over 350 years this was enlarged into the *present brick-walled Kremlin*. The last wall erected was a Customs Rampart built in **1745**. Where it stood a railway now girdles the older part of the city...Most of old Moscow disappeared in flames during the **39-day occupation** by *Napoleon's Grande Armee* in 1812. The great fire destroyed more than 2/3rds of that "Asiatic city of countless churches, Moscow the holy," as **Tolstoy** called the "mother city" in *War and Peace*. Although Moscow was soon rebuilt, it remained a muddy, sprawling town—an *overgrown village*, the aristocrats of St. Petersburg called it. Not until the *emancipation of the serfs in 1861* did it begin its steady rise. That was when *peasants poured in from the countryside* to man new mills and factories. The city became the *country's rail hub* (Gruliov, 5, 12)

In the 12th Century, there was no Moscow, only a *stockade*—located on the site of the Kremlin today—whose inhabitants benefited from the rich commerce that passed along the river between northern Europe and Byzantium in the south. For protection from marauders, the stockade was turned into a *fortress*—the original meaning of the word "*kremlin*"—and the early settlement that became Moscow eventually grew around it. The fortress was not strong enough to withstand the

13th-Century armies of nomad warriors—the *Mongols*—who swept out of Mongolia on swift ponies to conquer Russia, China, Persia and India. One of these armies, the *Golden Horde* led by *Batu Khan* (descendant of *Genghis Khan*), overran almost all of Russia and burned Moscow in **1237**. The town was slowly rebuilt, but survived in thrall of the Horde. The nomad Mogols did not install themselves as rulers; they lived apart, only visiting the town *to collect annual tributes*. The *Mongol occupation* lasted for **250 years** and *effectively cut Russia off from Europe just as the Renaissance began*. During its isolation, Russia created a separate culture, centered upon the *Orthodox Christianity* of *Byzantium*. The religion became a unifying force against the Horde. Moscow's Kremlin and other citadels like it in Russia developed into strongholds of the church, sheltering chapels and monasteries behind their battlements...

The Russians looked to distant Byzantium as the *fountainhead of the faith* that sustained them under the Mongol yoke, and *from Byzantium stemmed the icons and church architecture so typical of old Russia*. The *icons, w/ their large, wide eyes, golden halos and elongated figures, became objects of veneration*. Russian churches also borrowed the round Byzantine domes, adapting them to the snowy conditions of the north by *converting them into onion-shaped cupolas*. Byzantium fell to the Turks in **1453**. In **1472**, *Ivan III*, Grand Duke of Muscovy, cemented the tie w/ the Byzantine heritage by marrying *Zoe (Sophia) Palaeologus*, niece of the last Byzantine emperor, and proclaiming Moscow to be the “Third Rome,” heir to the fallen Byzantium. Under Ivan's successors, Muscovy led the Russian principalities in *ousting the Mongols*, gathered together the Russian lands and spread the Russian domain eastwards as the Mongols retreated. The Grand Dukes of Moscow became the *Czars*—the Caesars—of all Russia.

During Ivan III's reign, the Kremlin was expanded. Between **1485-95**, *its brick walls took their present outline*—a triangle about half a mile long enclosing some 70 acres on the brow of a hill overlooking the Moscow River. Ivan brought architects from Italy, instructed them to follow Russian models, and set them to building the *magnificent cathedrals and palace buildings around the Kremlin's Cathedral Square*. Century by century, his successors added chapels, churches, a belfry, towers, cloisters, an arsenal, palaces, theatres, imperial apartments and government buildings—all within the Kremlin's walls. In front of the Kremlin at one end of *Red Square* (called “Red” since long before the Revolution, because in Old Russian “red,” “main,” and “beautiful” were the same word; and this main square *is beautiful*) Ivan IV erected *St. Basil's Cathedral* to commemorate the final defeat of the Mongols in **1552**. *St. Basil's is a fantastic collection of asymmetrical domes and towers...*

Within the Kremlin, the Czars were wed and crowned, and most of them lie buried here, along w/ the patriarchs and metropolitans of the Orthodox Church. Here *Lenin lived and worked*; his body lies enshrined in the *red-granite and black-porphry mausoleum* on Red Square. But the Kremlin is not just a pantheon. It is also the *seat of government*, where Soviet leaders meet in council...

By the time *Peter the Great* ascended to the Russian throne in **1682**, Moscow had become the feudal stronghold of the hidebound, quarrelsome nobles, the *boyars*. Peter detested them and their city, a hotbed of intrigues and uprisings against him. Determined to break their power and to bring Russia into the European world, he *abandoned Moscow as his capital*. In its place, he built his “window on the West”—St. Petersburg. The latter replaced Moscow as the seat of empire in **1712**. (*Gruliov, 71-77*)

Approaching Moscow from any direction is a surprise. One moment you are in the *gently rolling countryside, spinning past fields and woods*. *Tipsy, log cottages, their window frames trimmed w/ elaborate fretwork*, dot the roadside. They are redolent of old Russia... You anticipate historic Moscow: *St. Basil's* peppermint-stick domes, the *red-brick Kremlin walls*, the golden cupolas of the cathedrals and monasteries. (*Gruliov, 5*)

The period of the **18th** and **19th** Centuries saw the rise of many artistic trades and crafts. Wooden toys made by the carvers of *Bogorodskoye* and *Kudrino*, miniature lacquer paintings from the village of *Fedoskino*, décor-ative metal trays from the village of *Zhostovo*, the works of master jewelers, bone carvings, and superlative lace and embroidery were world-renowned. (<http://www.kommersant.com>)

1902: Moscow Province was known as *cotton country* because of the predominance of *textile mills*. By **1902**, there were more than **2500** mills and factories employing **325 600** people. In this respect, the province was one of the empire's most important regions. (<http://www.kommersant.com>)

3.10.2: 1930s:

"I [*Gruliow*] first saw Moscow in the 1930s when its people were caught up in one of the most sweeping programmes of industrialization the world had seen. I spent more than four years there then. I returned in 1943 for another two years...I came to Moscow in 1933...The Soviet Union—largely peopled by peasants, the majority only newly literate—had set out by decree to catch up w/ the western industrial powers in one decade. It had reorganized its *strip farms* into huge collectives and in 1928 had embarked on the first of a series of five-year plans—massive programmes of industrialization. *Uprooted peasants poured into Moscow to work in the new factories*. The **city's population had grown by a million in the space of three years**. Moscow was *bursting at the seams*. (*Gruliow*, 6)

1933: [*Gruliow's* impressions]: "Every day I visited Moscow's largest and most famous food shop, Nr. 1, better known as **Yeliseyev's**, from the name of its pre-revolutionary owner (it still exists and is still called by its old name). It was lit by great crystal chandeliers, and its furnishings suggested an age when women wore bustles and men sported high hats and watch-chains. I went to **GUM**, a large department store opposite the Kremlin on Red Square (it, too, is still very much in use). Its design of three-storey-high, glass-roofed arcades w/ fountains was reminiscent of London's Crystal Palace of 1851...My feeling of having stepped back in time was strengthened when I discovered that the décor inside many homes was also old-fashioned—if it was not spare and plain. Rooms were decorated w/ family group photographs, *tinted chrome lithographs*, *sepia photos of Rodin sculptures*, hearts-and-flowers postcards, tasseled lampshades made from pink, purple, or orange *crepe de Chine*.

Much of what I saw was sadly worn or rundown. During the succession of upheavals after 1914—the war, revolutions, civil war—the fabric of the city had been neglected. Masonry was chipped; paint peeling, plaster crumbling. Steps were worn, balustrades broken. After the Civil War, which had ended in 1922, there had been a movement to rebuilt Moscow in a truly socialist image. The functional modern structures that had been erected during the 1920s, however, were too few in number to counter the image of a down-at-heel city. Every effort was concentrated on *constructing factories*, as the country rushed to *catch up w/ the age of steel*. New factories were mushrooming on the outskirts of the city and old ones were being enlarged.

The factories attracted new human tidal waves, forcing the authorities to ration housing space. Dormitory living and shared accommodation had been common in the mill sections of Moscow prior to the First World War; now *communal flats* were the general rule, with one family to a room, and several families sharing a bathroom and kitchen. I was lucky to get a room. Single people commonly settled for cots in the factory dormitories, or a curtained-off corner of a room...Housing was not the only thing in short supply. The empty shot windows told the story of food and clothing shortages. Meat was scarce: the peasants, in their *resistance to collective*

farming, had slaughtered millions of cattle rather than surrender them to the collectives. Flour was hard to come by: much of the grain harvest was being exported to pay for foreign machinery. *Black bread, potatoes and cabbage* were the staples; *sunflower-seed oil* was issued in lieu of butter, and jam or sweetmeats—when *they* were available—instead of sugar. A government-issued coupon entitling the holder to buy a sweater, suit, shoes or rubber galoshes was more highly prized than money. Little wonder that women called the net shopping bag they carried everywhere an *avoska*—a “perhaps” bag. Who knew what they might find?

The new factories required power, and *electricity was therefore rationed*. The penalty for exceeding the electricity quota was a heavy surcharge. If it was levied on the residents of a communal flat, bickering arose over who had left lights burning late at night, thereby causing all the families to incur the fine. It was as hard for a family to get a separate electricity meter as it was to get a private apartment.

Spartan conditions applied to all aspects of life. During my first winter in Moscow, I discovered that the *wooded tramcars were unheated*...The conductors—almost all of them women—wore stovepipe-shaped, warm, felt *valenki boots*, padded coats and woolen head-scarves...Against this *background of shortages and hardship*, the slogan that I saw plastered over the city, a summons to “overtake and surpass” the West, seemed sheer hyperbole—and so did some of the *grandiose construction projects* that were then under way.

The *most ambitious project was the Metro*. The *spacious marble stations* that were being built for this underground system, many to be *bedecked w/ mosaics, statuary and gold leaf*, seemed senseless when I contemplated the shabby housing above...

As time went on, I made some Russian friends...They believed that Moscow, as the Caucasian folk poet *Rasul Gamzatov* put it, was “where the world began.” To them the city was open sesame; it promised education and boundless opportunity...They accepted implicitly the *glowing promise of the future* that was dinned into them from *large loudspeakers on street corners* and from the *small, cone-shaped cardboard ones used in apartments and dormitories*. The small loudspeakers, wired to central receivers, served as *substitutes for radios*, and gave forth a stream of bravura symphonies, folk music, marching songs and pep talks. The most common words on the posters were “struggle” and “battle:” battle for steel, struggle for machinery; battle for motor cars and a tractor industry, struggle for grain harvests...(Gruliow, 10, describing his first visit to Moscow in 1933, 10-15)

1934-35: [Gruliow]: “The strain imposed by the first five-year-plan had just begun to ease when I settle down in Moscow. The second five-year-plan promised a relaxation at last. Rationing was lifted from one item after another, and a trickle of consumer goods came from the factories...By the end of **1934** the *last rationing was lifted*. Some items that the government food shops still lacked could be found at the peasant markets. Mushrooms, berries, flowers and fruit were the specialties of the markets, where the peasant women chewed sunflower seeds as they hawked their wares...There were other signs of change from the hardship of the first five-year-plan. Soviet champagne appeared in *Yeliseyev’s food store*, together w/ grapefruit and tangerines from *Abkhazia* in the Caucasus...Ice cream parlours sprang up, and the vendors did a brisk trade on the streets even in winter.

Kultura was a word on everyone’s lips at that time. Culture meant a great many things, from wearing a tie to working efficiently (“production culture”) and attending the opera...The changes in Moscow’s diet, mood and appearance came about gradually, but **1935** marked the *turning point*. **The first Metro line opened in the spring of that year**; and although it was only seven miles long its efficient service and elegant stations answered my earlier criticisms. That summer the city drew up its first plan for reconstruction and urban development. Most of the population was *still concentrated within the Sadovoye (Garden) Ring*, which was centred on the Kremlin and only three miles in diameter; but new blocks of flats were spreading out past the industrial districts. Commuter trains, now operating on electric power, carried a heavy flow of *dachniki*,

city families who rented holiday accommodation in near-by peasant cottages during the summer. A few trolleybus lines began to compete with the tramcars. The *banks of the Moscow River were being lined w/ granite*, and new bridges were built. *Gorky Street* had been transformed into a wide, modern thoroughfare; cobbled streets and squares everywhere were being asphalted...Muscovites began gradually to *lose their peasant image* as their dress became more sophisticated...

In spite of the improvements in dress and diet, life remained hard for most Muscovites. The *trickle of new housing could not meet the demands of the overcrowded city*, and communal flats were still the rule. ***Illiteracy was largely eradicated***, but the schools were so crowded that they had to operate on double or even triple shifts. *Health services* were free, but some medicines and instruments were in short supply; and the *doctors, most of them women*, had to make their rounds of house visits on foot. Some worked double shifts to make ends meet.

Whatever hardships the city and its people had to endure, *I could not fail to sense the unmistakable air of optimism that the Muscovites projected*. Moscow was emerging from the strains imposed by industrialization w/ the same *resilience* that had carried it through war and revolution. (*Gruliow*, 18-21)

1936: [*Gruliow*]: Early in 1936 Stalin proclaimed the *mood of optimism* in the slogan, “Life has become better, comrades; life has become happier.” The slogan was all over Moscow. [Note: At the point, *Gruliow* returns briefly to N.Y., hoping to find job on a newspaper. But America still in grips of the depression, so he decides to return to Moscow.] I was in for a shock. In August 1936, the ***first show trial*** of the *great political purges* opened. The roster of “enemies of the people” grew. Night arrests and searches went on. People disappeared and were later denounced as “spies” and “enemies.” *The purge cast a pall over the city*. I left in **1938**. I went back to newspaper and radio work in America, thinking I had had enough of Moscow and Russia, wondering whether Moscow’s boom spirit was finished. (*Gruliow*, 21)

3.10.3: Chronology (1940-42):

21.6.41: The winter [1940/41] had been unusually long in Moscow and snow had still fallen in the second week of **Jun 41**. On this particular Saturday the warm sun suddenly broke through and crowds thronged to the parks on this long white night. The air of uncertainty weighed heavily on the Kremlin during the weekend. . . Stalin arrived at the Kremlin in the early hours of the afternoon well aware that he was no longer the master of events. . . Saturday, **21 Jun 41**, was an exceptionally warm and pleasant day in Berlin too. Most members of the Russian embassy were resting and swimming in the serene surroundings of the Potsdam and Wannsee parks. The few left at the embassy were suddenly alerted and set to frenzied activity. A protest at the increase of German reconnaissance flights over Soviet territory was to be lodged personally w/ Ribbentrop, significantly accompanied by expressions of Soviet readiness to embark on negotiations. The hectic efforts to open a dialogue in Berlin were aimed at gaining direct access to Hitler, to acquaint him w/ the gravity of the situation. . . All efforts, however, to establish contact w/ the Wilhelmstrasse were futile now. Ribbentrop had deliberately left Berlin early in the morning, giving specific instructions that Dekanozov [i.e., the Russian ambassador] be kept at arm’s length. . . (*G. Gorodetsky, Grand Delusions*, 309)

22.6.41: An unexpected declaration of war is bound to produce a sense of shock, *yet no country was as psychologically unprepared as the Soviet Union on 22 Jun 41*. Stalin, the great trickster, had refused to believe warnings of Hitler’s betrayal. Ordinary Russians, persuaded by countless newsreels and radio programmes about their country’s industrial and military might, *never*

believed the Germans would dare attack. But once the truth sank in, the Russian people reacted far more rapidly than their leaders. There were queues of volunteers w/in hours of *Molotov's* wooden announcement on Radio Moscow. Stalin was too traumatized to speak... There can *never be any doubt about the determination to defend the Motherland.* Even the **Moscow Art Theater** put itself on a war footing.¹¹⁹ Classes in civilian anti-aircraft defense were held in the theater's "red corner." Yet popular belief in the might of the Soviet state was *soon shaken* when it became clear that the Germans had not been thrown back at the frontier. (*A. Beevor, Mystery of Olga Chekhova*, 165)

ab 22.6.41: Es wurde fuer die Hauptstadt u. fuer das Moskauer Gebiet die *Luftverteidigung* organisiert, eine *Verdunkelung* angeordnet u. die *Luftschutzraeume* schnellstens in Ordnung gebracht. Alle Theater, Kinos, Klubs, Restaurants u. Geschaefte (die bisher bis Mitternacht geoeffnet waren) mussten nunmehr um **22 Uhr** schliessen. Es wurden ferner alle Urlaubs- u. Ferienbestimmungen fuer die Dauer des Krieges aufgehoben. Diese sollten durch Kompensation in Geld...[words missing]...Bereits Ende Juni begann man, mit Arbeitern der Moskauer Industrie-reserve, *bewaffnete Abteilungen* u. Gruppen aufzustellen. Sie sollten eine Art von *Volkswehr* darstellen, deren Mitglieder tagsueber ihrer Arbeit nachgingen, in ihrer Freizeit jedoch eine mil. Grundausbildung erhielten. Nach einigen Wochen standen in Moskau **12 Volkswehrdivisionen** unten den Waffen, etwas **160.000** Mann, von denen viele noch im Buergerkrieg mitgefochten hatten.

In wenigen Tagen veraenderte sich das *Stadtbild* Moskaus. Die praegnanten Merkmale der Hauptstadt, wie das Haus des Ministerrates, das Riesenhotel „*Moskwa*“, erhielten einen *Tarnanstrich*. Die Mauern des *Kreml* wurden so uebermalt, dass sie Reihen von Wohnhaeusern glichen, *Lenins Mausoleum* aus rotem u. schwarzem *Marmor* auf dem Roten Platz wurde mit *Sandsaecken* bedeckt u. zum Dorfhaus umgebildet. Die Hauptstrassen wurden mit *Zickzacklinien* bemalt, die von oben wie Hausdaecher aussehen sollten. Ueber die Fassade des *Grossen Palais* im *Kreml* wurde ein Netz mit gruenen Zweigen gehaengt. Die *goldenen Kuppeln der Kreml-Kirchen* wurden dunkel verschalt, u. die leuchtend gruenen Daecher vieler anderer grosser Bauwerke mit blauer u. brauner Farbe angestrichen...Auch der *Moskwafluss* wurde vollstaendig mit Holz ueberdeckt, um den dt. Fliegern die Orientierungsmoeglichkeit zu nehmen...(Gosztony, *Entscheidungsschlacht*, 103-05)

ab 22.6.41: Kurz nach Kriegsbeginn ordnete die Regierung die Einziehung aller *Radioapparate* an. Jeder Besitzer eines Geraetes musste innerhalb von 48 Stunden seinen Apparat beim naechsten Postamt abgeben. Gleichzeitig wurde verfuegt, dass die in allen Gemeinschaftswohnungen, Institutionen u. Fabriken vorhandenen *Lautsprecher* nicht abgeschaltet werden duerfen. Diese Lautsprecher verbreiteten den ganzen Tag das Programm der Moskauer Zentralen Rundfunkstation. Die Beeinflussung des gesamten Volkes durch eine zentrale *Propagandastelle* war damit erreicht u. gleichzeitig garantiert. (Gosztony, *Entscheidungsschlacht*, 106)

ca 5.-18.7.41: Zwei Wochen nach Ausbruch des Krieges war bereits das Baltikum, ein groesserer Teil Bjeloruslands u. der westl. Ukraine von der dt. *Wehrmacht* besetzt. Der Vormarsch der Dt. war schneller, als selbst die groessten Pessimisten am 22. Juni haetten ahnen koennen. Beunruhigende *Geruechte* kursierten in der sowjet. Hauptstadt...Gegen die *Geruechtemacher* ging auch die Regierung sehr scharf vor; am **7.7.41** erliess das Praesidium des Obersten Sowjets der UdSSR eine besondere Verfuegung. Ihr Wortlaut war folgender: „Es wird bestimmt, dass waehrend der Kriegszeit diejenigen, die unwahre Geruechte verbreiten u. damit Unruhe in der Bevolkerung

¹¹⁹ Later (ca. Jul-Aug 41) "a group of actors from the Moscow Art Theater was being evacuated from the capital to the Caucasus." (168)

hervorrufen, durch Urteil von Kriegstribunalen mit einer Gefaengnisstrafe von 2 bis 5 Jahren bestraft werden, sofern ihr Vergehen nicht eine haertere Strafe nach sich zieht.“ Die stalinistische Warnung vor *Spionen* u. *Diversanten* verfehlte ihre Wirkung nicht. In Moskau herrschte in diesen Sommermonaten eine *regelrechte Spionagehysterie*. Ueberall entdeckte man “feindliche Agenten,” u. insbesondere beliebt war die Jagd auf “dt. Fallschirmspringer.“ ... Am **18.7.41** wurden in Moskau u. in den groesseren Staedten der Sowjetunion die **Lebensmittelkarten** eingefuehrt u. damit die Lebensmittel *rationiert*. (Gosztony, *Entscheidungsschlacht*, 106)

9.7.41: Gestern: . . . Der Fuehrer hat die Absicht, Staedte wie Moskau u. Petersburg ausradieren zu lassen. Es ist das auch notwendig. Denn wenn wir schon Russland in seine einzelnen Bestandteile aufteilen wollen, dann darf dieses Riesenreich kein geistiges, politisches oder wirtschaftliches Zentrum mehr besitzen. . . (R.G. Reuth (ed.), *Goebbels Tagebuecher*, Bd. IV, 1625)

22.7.41: Moscow was bombed for first time by the *Luftwaffe*, which followed up this raid with raids on the following two nights. The windows of apartments were blasted in and *dogs went wild in terror*, but there was comparatively little structural damage. Food was already in *short supply* at this time. (A. Beevor, *Mystery of Olga Chekhova*, 167)

Sep-Okt 41: Im **Sep 41** zaehlte Moskau samt den dort lebenden Fluechtlingen **4.236.000** Einwohner, die sich nach dem deutschen Angriff im **Okt 41** auf **3.15** Millionen durch Flucht u. Evakuierung verringerte. Die Bevoelkerung hatte schon nach Kriegsbeginn begonnen, Lebensmittel u. andere Dinge des taeglichen Lebens zu horten. (H. Magenheimer, *Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 124)

Early Oct 41: Die fieberhaften Vorbereitungen innerhalb u. ausserhalb Moskau machten die Moskauer *ploetzlich* auf die ernste Lage u. die Gefahren aufmerksam, in denen sie sich befanden. Ende September u. Anfang Oktober hatten sie *ihre ganze Aufmerksamkeit auf die dt. Grossoffensive in der Ukraine*, auf die Nachricht ueber den Durchbruch der 11. dt. Armee zur Krim u. nicht zuletzt auf den Besuch einer englischen Regierungsdelegation im Kreml gerichtet. Auf die unmittelbare Gefaehrung der Stadt durch die Deutschen machten auch die *tagtaeglichen Frontberichte die Moskauer nicht aufmerksam*, da sich der sowjet. Nachrichtendienst (als einzige Informationsquelle) bemuehte, *die wahre Lage an den Fronten so gut wie moeglich zu verschleiern* bzw. zu verschweigen. Erst vom **4.10.41** an wurde man sich der Tatsache bewusst, dass eine dt. Offensive gegen Moskau im Gange war, ohne freilich bereits auch deren Umfang zu erkennen. (Gosztony, *Entscheidungsschlacht*, 229)

Oct 41: In early October, the German armored spearhead was within 25 miles of the *Kremlin's domes*. For several weeks in the frost of an *early winter* nearly half a million Muscovites, *3/4 of them women*, desperately built fortifications and dug tank traps and *400 miles of trenches* at the edge of the city. (Thirty years later, my wife and daughter stumbled upon the line of trenches, now overgrown by scrub, while gathering mushrooms near the city limits.) Another 100,000 civilians were sent into the woods to fell timber to fuel the power plants that had been cut off from supplies of coal. Inside the city all the troops that could be mustered, including raw recruits and volunteers, were formed into divisions and sent to the front *after only a week's training*, with orders to hold off Hitler's 75 divisions until *Siberian reinforcements* could be brought up. *A state of siege* was declared on **20 Oct 41**. (Gruliov, 35)

Oct 41 [Stalin plans to destroy Moscow]: An exhibition of secret papers staged to commemorate **90** years of military counter-intelligence showed the extraordinary lengths the Soviet high command was prepared to go to if the city fell. The documents were drawn from archives of the so-called „Moscow Plan“ drawn up in the Autumn of **1941**, when German forces were within

19 miles of the city. Soviet generals had told Stalin that the capital was likely to be overrun and the dictator responded by forming the **Independent Mot. Bde for Special Ops** – or **OMSBON** – to destroy the main landmarks and infrastructure.

The plan was based on a strategy originally drawn up by Tsar Alexander I as Napoleon's troops bore down on Moscow in **1812**. The French forces found the city an uninhabitable ruin and were eventually forced to withdraw. Destroying a 20th Century metropolis presented a different challenge, so Stalin ordered OMSBON to rig **1200** buildings in Moscow w/ explosives. Booby-traps were laid in the orchestra pit of the Bolshoi theater as well as around the Kremlin and Moscow's best known cathedrals. The Metropole and National hotels were also mined, as was the towering foreign ministry.

Under the elaborate plan, ballerinas and circus acrobats were armed w/ grenades and pistols and ordered to assassinate German generals if they attempted to organize concerts and other celebrations upon taking the city. The composer Lev Knipper was charged w/ the responsibility of killing Hitler if he got the opportunity. All country houses owned by Soviet leaders were to be blown up too, w/ the exception of Stalin's own dacha because the dictator was too scared of home-grown assassins to allow his home to be filled w/ explosives.

It was not just Moscow's famous buildings that were to be demolished. The water supply, telephone system and power stations were all to be blown up too in an attempt to render the city useless to the German occupiers. Stalin and his generals were to retreat to the wartime capital of Samara, on the Volga River, where Lenin's body and other national treasures had already been stowed. The exhibition is the first time the documents have gone on display to the public. (A. Blomfield, „Stalin planned to destroy Moscow if the Nazis moved in,“ in: *telegraph.co.uk*, 5 Dec 08)

3.-5.10.41: Guderian's tanks dashed forward on the southern flank and entered the center of **Orel** (ca. **3.10.41**), *overtaking streetcars whose occupants had no idea that the enemy was upon them*. On **5.10.41**, a Soviet reconnaissance acft spotted a **12-mile long column of German armor on the Yukhnov road, no more than 80 miles from Moscow**. The news caused such *disbelief in the Kremlin* that **Beria** wanted to arrest the air force officer concerned for “provocation.” Two more acft were sent up and their pilots confirmed the news. There was *panic in the Kremlin*. Stalin ordered the commander of the Moscow military district to mobilize everything he had. He did not know that Hitler had already claimed that the victory was won and had *sworn a Carthaginian fate for Moscow*. The city was to be **razed to the ground and the site flooded to create a huge lake**. (A. Beevor, *Mystery of Olga Chekhova*, 169)

6.-14.10.41: The **NKVD** sets in motion the evacuation of the inmates of the Moscow prisons, requesting orders for the deportation of nearly **5000** prisoners on **6-7 Oct**. On **8 Oct**, the **GKO** set up a five-man commission, headed by deputy commissar of internal affairs, **I.A. Serov**, to prepare „special measures“ to be taken at industrial enterprises in Moscow and in the Moscow region – namely, their destruction. The commission is given *one day* to report back to the GKO. On **9 Oct**, **Serov** sends Stalin a list of **1119** enterprises to be made ready for destruction, **412** by blowing them up, **707** by wrecking or burning their machinery. Explosives were to be delivered to the enterprises the next day. Also on **9 Oct**, the secretariat of the Moscow region and city party committees (**MK-MGK**) ordered party *documents* to be sent out of the city by **12 Oct**. On that day, the GKO put the shrinking area between Moscow and the front line under **NKVD** control, and ordered the *forced construction of the new defensive line*, w/ **450,000** people from the city and the region to be drafted for the purpose. Meanwhile, orders were given for the *rapid evacuation* of important Moscow factories. Beginning with a **GKO degree of 8 Oct** on the

transfer of *acft factories* to *Kazan, Kuibyshev, Novosibirsk, Ul'yanovsk* and elsewhere, this process reached a climax between **12-14 Oct**, when successively eight, 20 and seven decrees of the GKO, mainly addressing the evacuation of industry, were issued. (*Barber, Moscow Crisis*, 204)

ca. 7.-16.10.41: Aeusserste Spannung lag in der Luft. *Viktor Krawtschenko*, Ingenieur u. seit Ende September Hauptmann der Roten Armee, war Augenzeuge der Ereignisse. Es lohnt sich aus-fuehrlicher aus seinem Bericht zu zitieren:

„In der ersten Oktoberwoche verlor die Hauptstadt ihre Fassung. Eine Stadt kann genausogut wie ein Mensch einen Nervenzusammenbruch erleiden. Die Strassenbahnen u. Autobusse verkehrten nur noch stossweise. Die Laeden waren meistens leer, aber die Hungernden standen trotzdem Schlange . . . Die Haueser u. Bueros waren ungeheizt, die Versorgung mit Wasser u. Elektrizitaet war unsicher u. klappte nur zeitweise. Tag u. Nacht stieg Rauch aus den Kaminen der NKWD-Gebaeude, des Obersten Gerichtshofes, des Kommissariats fuer Auswaertiges u. anderer verschiedener Institutionen u. Parteihauptquartiere. Unsere Fuehrer vernichteten eilig Dokumente . . . Die wertvolle Gegenstaende des Kremls u. auch der Museen gingen ins Landesinnere . . . An **12. Okt.** warfen die Deutschen *Flugblaetter* ueber dem Bolschewo-Bezirk ab . . .

In derselben Nacht gab es Alarm. Innerhalb einer halben Stunde mussten drei Bataillone unserer jungen, halbausgebildeten Offiziere mit voller Kampfausruestung nach den westl. Stadtgrenzen Moskaus abmarschieren. 48 Stunden spaeter kehrte etwa in Drittel blutig, durchfrozen, hungrig u. entmutigt zurueck – die uebrigen sahen wir nie wieder. . .

Am Abend des **15. Okt** wurden zwei Kompanien qualifizierter Ingenieure zu einer vertraulichen Mission nach Moskau abgeordnet. In meiner Eigenschaft als Parteiorganisator teilte man mir ihre Aufgabe als Staatsgeheimnis mit. Sie sollten (mit anderen Einheiten) die *Sprengung Moskaus vorbereiten*. Der Sprengstoff war in der Moskauer Untergrundbahn, den Hauptgebaueden des Kremls, im Elektrizitaetswerk, den Wasserwerken, den Bahnhoeften, Museen, Theatern, in den wichtigsten Regierungsgebaueden u. Festungen bereitgestellt. Alles war vorbereitet, um die Hauptstadt zu „versengen.“ . . . Die Sprengladungen wurden bis zum Sommer 1942 nicht entfernt.

Am Morgen des **16. Okt.** sandte mich Oberst Wawarkin nach Moskau. Die *Stadt befand sich in voelliger Panik*. Die verruecktesten *Geruechte* gingen um. Man sagte, im Kreml haette ein *Staatsstreich* stattgefunden, Stalin sei verhaftet, die Deutschen seien bereits in *Fili*, am Stadtrand. Verwirrte Leute waren ueberzeugt, dt. Fallschirmtruppen auf dem Roten Platz gesehen zu haben. Andere sagten, die Deutschen befaenden sich in Uniformen der Roten Armee bereits unter uns. Die Massen draengten sich von Strasse zu Strasse u. dann wieder zurueck, in ploetzlichen, panischen Wellen.

Bereits setzen Aufruhr u. Pluendern ein. Laeden u. Warenhaeuser wurden von der wahnsinnigen Menge gestuermt. Der Eindruck, es existiere keine Regierung mehr, verstaerkte sich . . . Die Ordnung brach zusammen . . . (*Gosztony, Entscheidungsschlacht*, 230-31)

ca. 12.10.41 [Soviet refugees in the Moscow sector]: The situation was extremely serious. There was no continuous front any more. . . Together w/ the army, thousands of Soviet civilians were moving east. People on foot, or in horse carts, cattle, cars, were moving east in a continuous stream along all the roads, making troop movements even more difficult. (*A. Werth, Russia at War*, 231-32)

12.-13.10.41: On these days in *Kalinin*, the arrival of German troops had been preceded by *looting, arson and the flight of the militia, local NKVD officers and firemen*, together w/ two-thirds of the population. (*Barber, Moscow Crisis*, 206)

Mid-Oct 41: The survival not only of Moscow but the Soviet state itself was in question. The State Defense Committee ordered the evacuation of most of the government to *Kuibyshev*, on the Volga, 400 miles to the southeast. Factories and industrial installations were made ready for detonation; so what the Moscow underground. Among ordinary Muscovites, what came to be know as „*the big skedaddle*“ began, as hundreds of thousands voted w/ their feet and rushed to leave the city. Possibly a fifth of the city’s population took flight as the panic spread. Lenin’s embalmed body was removed from its Kremlin mausoleum and shipped east, to be secretly housed in a former Tsarist school. Preparations, too, were made for Stalin to leave Moscow. His *dacha* near the city was mined. Offices and a bomb shelter had been made ready for him at *Kuibyshev*. A plane waited to transport him out of Moscow; so did a special train. Stalin faced another vital decision. (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 289-90; also, *Werth*, 232, 236-37)

Mid-Oct 41: Tagtaeglich trafen in dieser Zeit vollbesetzte Zuege mit Truppen aus dem Osten in Moskau ein. Sie kamen aus den fernoestlichen Regionen der Sowjetunion u. wurden durch die *fast unglaublich anmutenden Leistungen der russ. Eisenbahn* rechtzeitig an die bedrohte Frontstelle befoerdert. Stalin liess die Divisionen meistens noch durch Moskau marschieren, um dadurch die Moral der Bewohner zu staerken. Durch neue Einberufungen u. Freiwilligenmeldungen gelang es der Regierung, weitere **40.000** Maenner in Moskau zu den Waffen zu rufen u. diese in kuerzester Zeit der Front zuzufuehren. (*Gosztony, Entscheidungsschlacht*, 232)

14.-19.10.41 (Moscow crisis overview): Soviet leadership galvanised into *most drastic of actions* by German breakthrough of capital’s main strategic defence, the *Mozhaisk line*, on night of **14.-15.10.41**. The decision of the *State Committee of Defence (GKO)* on **15 Oct** to order the immediate evacuation of most of the government to *Kuibyshev* and other cities far in the rear, and the preparation of factories, offices and warehouses for destruction, reflected its belief that the imminent capture of Moscow by the Germans was likely. The highly visible departure of members of the elite, combined w/ the sudden reduction or cessation of normal services, and the virtual disappearance of the police from public view, *caused alarm among the public to turn to panic*. Many people fled the city, among them officials who abandoned their posts; while on the streets of Moscow, law and order broke down to an extent *unparalleled* in Soviet history before or after. The panic, however, *subsided almost as quickly as it had arisen*. A slight improvement in the military situation convinced Stalin that Moscow could be held. On **19 Oct** the **GKO** delcared a *state of siege* in the capital.¹²⁰ Order was quickly and lastingly restored.

¹²⁰ **Note**: The state of siege in Moscow and neighboring districts put them under *marital law*. A *curfew* was imposed. Implementation of this resolution was “instant and ruthless,” beginning even before it had been published on **20.10.41**. Over the coming weeks tens of thousands of people would be detained, and hundreds executed. (for details see, 213-14)

The magnitude of the crisis stands in sharp contrast to its *treatment in historical literature*. While the military history of the battle of Moscow was the subject of many books, articles, reminiscences and collections of documents published in the USSR, *mention of the panic inside the city was conspicuous by its absence*. At most there was reference to disturbances and cowardice on the part of a few people. For their part, *western historians* mentioned the panice, but only in passing, limited both by the silence of Soviet historians on the subject and the scarcity of first-hand accounts of it...The disappearance of *taboos* about historical writing in the former Soviet Union, however, and *greater access to archives* have produced valuable new evidence about the Moscow crisis. The *origins of the crisis* lay in the Soviet failure to anticipate a German offensive aimed at Moscow in October. The Soviet leadership responded to the rapidly escalating danger w/ increasingly *severe measures*, of which the public was largely unaware. At the same time, the news of the worsening situation was *censored* until the point of greatest peril was reached.

Yet given the critical situation and the preoccupations of the country's embattled leadership, neither the exodus nor the disorders were surprising. What is more remarkable is that both were *exception rather than the rule*. Those who left Moscow during the October crisis, though numerous, were *only a minority*: perhaps a *fifth of the population*, probably less. The party members expelled for their behavior during the panic were only a fraction, perhaps **1-2%**, of the Moscow party leadership. Despite everything, *life went on w/ more than a semblance of normalty*. While some factories were evacuated, others continued production; some shops closed, others continued trading; some theaters were evacuated (the *Bolshoi, Malyi, MkhAT, Vakhtangov*), others continued to give their performances. The *metro* was out of operation for most of **16 Oct**, but service was resumed on the *Kirov-Frunze line* by 7 p.m. that day, and on the other lines the following morning...

The fact that for the most part the party and state apparatus and the rank and file of the party, w/ little or no direction from above, continued to function meant that when the worst of the military crisis passed, the government was quickly able to regain control of Mosocw. (*Barber, Moscow Crisis*, 201-02, 211-12)

15.10.41: With the German breakthrough on night of **14-15 Oct**, the possibility Moscow might fall appears to have become a probability for Soviet leadership. In early hours of **15 Oct**, the **GKO** issued an order of *unprecedented urgency*:

In view of the unfavorable position in the area of the *Mozhaisk* defensive line, the GKO has decreed:

1. To charge comrade *Molotov* to inform foreign missions that they will be evacuated today to *Kuibyshev*...
2. Also today to evacuate the *presidium of the Supreme Soviet* and also the government...(comrade Stalin will be evacuated tomorrow, or later, depending on the situation).
3. Immediately to evacuate the agencies of the people's commissariat of defence and the people's commissariat of the navy to *Kuibyshev*, and the basic group of the general staff to *Arzamas*.
4. In the event of the appearance of enemy troops within the walls of Moscow, to charge the NKVD...to effect the blowing up of enterprises, warehouses and establishments which cannot be evacuated, and also all electrical equipment of the Metro...

(Source: *Barber, Moscow Crisis*, 204-05)¹²¹

15.10.41 [Panic grips Moscow]:

I was 17 ½ years old when the war started. I'd just graduated from school. Of course, we all hoped that the war would last only two or three months, that the enemy would be routed, and that victory would be ours. But the enemy turned out to be far stronger and more perfidious than we'd expected. So when, at the beginning of July [sic], the Germans captured Minsk, my father told me: "Son, it's time for you to find a job." I went to work as an apprentice metalworker at the **205th** Factory, which manufactured devices used to direct anti-aircraft fire. In three months, after passing an examination, I became a fourth grade metalworker. Then at the beginning of August our family received news that my older brother Mikhail had perished in the fighting at Smolensk. It was such a loss for our family – you can't imagine it!

In October, when the Germans were approaching Moscow, the decision was made to have our factory evacuated to Saratov, and so I started packing for the journey. My family sewed a clothes sack for me out of tarpaulin – there were few rucksacks back then, they were expensive, and we didn't earn much. The departure date of our train was set for **22 October**, but on the **15th**, when the evacuation of the national government started, panic gripped Moscow. I saw the workers of the Hammer and Sickle Factory come out into Ilyich Square when their management tried to flee w/ their families and possessions loaded onto company trucks. There was no limit to the workers' indignation. *They began stopping the trucks, throwing the bureaucrats, their squealing families and their possessions out onto the street.* All their things were immediately looted. These disturbances quickly spread through the city. People began looting stores. I saw an out-of-control mob loot a three-storey department store and carry everything off to their homes. (*Recollections of N.Y. Zhelezov*; in: *T-34 in Action*, 154-55)

15.-16.10.41: NKVD takes emergency measures. Some high-ranking prisoners evacuated on **15 Oct** to Kuibyshev, only to be *executed* soon after their arrival; another **138** (including the wives of Mezhlauk, Tukhachevskii, and Uborevich) were shot on **16 Oct**. Further executions may have taken place. By **18 Oct**, only **56** prisoners were left in all Moscow gaols. (*Barber, Moscow Crisis*, 207)

15.-16.10.41: On night of **15-16 Oct**, the *roads leading into Moscow were mined*. On the **16th**, work on the new defensive line close to Moscow got underway. Meanwhile, the military drew up detailed plans for fighting in Moscow should the Germans break into the city. And *secret units* were set up to continue *underground resistance* in event of the city being captured. These were composed of **800** party, *Komsomol* and soviet personnel, who were meanwhile found work at small factories, *artels* and cooperatives. (*Barber, Moscow Crisis*, 207)

15.-16.10.41: In the evening (**15 Oct 41**), foreign embassies and government departments were told to prepare to leave the city. Orders were issued for the evacuation to Kuibyshev, 500 miles to the east. Even *Lenin's mummified corps* was removed secretly from the mausoleum on Red

¹²¹ **Note:** Barber points out that there was *precedent* for evacuating the government in the face of a military threat from a German army, namely *Lenin's decision* to move the Soviet capital from Petrograd to Moscow in **Mar 1918**. (205)

Square and *sent east in a refrigerated railway car*. Government files were destroyed in *huge bonfires* in the courtyards of the ministries. “There was a smell of burnt paper as charred fragments floated over the centre of the city, rather as the human ashes from the *Donskoi monastery* had done during the purges four years earlier. ‘We were walking on black snow,’ Vova Knipper wrote later.”

There was indeed an *echo of the purges*, as the execution squads in the *Lubyanka* and other NKVD prisons worked overtime shooting prisoners to prevent them from falling into the hands of the Germans.

Around the city, *steel hedgehogs* were set up to block roads against enemy armour, and tens of thousands of ill-equipped civilians *were marched out to dig more anti-tank ditches*. Word spread that Moscow was about to be abandoned to the enemy and *large parts of the population became panic-stricken*. Families stormed the city’s eastern railway stations, especially the *Kazansky station*, desperate for a place on what they thought might be the last train out before the Germans encircled the city. People had barely left their apartments before neighbors and block supervisors *began looting them*.

Even *government officials* who were supposed to stay behind *deserted their posts to escape the city*...Stores of alcohol as well as food shops were stormed and there was *much drunkenness on the streets*. Wild rumours described the drop of German paratroopers on Red Square. *Natalya Gesse*, a friend of the physicist *Andrei Sakharov*, was *nearly lynched* as she hobbled along on crutches after an operation. *People were convinced that she had broken her leg when coming down by parachute*. Other panic-mongers claimed to know on the best authority that Stalin had been arrested in a Kremlin coup. A rumour, which in this case proved accurate, ran round the city that *huge demolition charges were being laid in the Metro*...Most people still feared to voice openly the idea of Moscow falling to the enemy. The crime of defeatism was dealt w/ by firing squad. (*A. Beevor, Mystery of Olga Chekhova, 171-3*)

15.-19.10.41 [*Stalin*]: If *Beria* and others who may have argued for *immediate evacuation* had the upper hand on **15 Oct**, Stalin as ever kept his options open. While most of the government left Moscow, and while the normal decision-making process *ground to a virtual halt* (only a handful of brief GKO decrees were issued between **15-19 Oct**), Stalin appears to have *continued to direct the war effort from the capital*. All necessary preparations were made for his departure: a *special plane* at the central Moscow airport, a train at a station near the „*Serp i Molot*“ works. In *Kuibyshev*, accomodation and offices, a bomb shelter, and dachas had been prepared for him. (*Barber, Moscow Crisis, 206*)

15.-19.10.41: Beginning on **15 Oct**, the *panic* in Moscow reached its peak on **16-17 Oct**. And was not brought under control until **19 Oct**. No section of society was exempt, least of all (since it had most to fear from the Germans) the *nomenklatura*. With many of their peers making authorized departures, and w/ no clear instructions from above, it is not surprising that a considerable number of party and state officials took any opportunity to escape. The situation in one district, described in the report of the Moscow *Komsomol* underground organization, was probably typical:

Late in the night of 15-16 October...What is going on at the *raion* party committee and soviet is amazing: everyone has bundles, suitcases, is counting money, packing food, going off to the railway station...[next morning]. At the *raikom*, comrade „D“ [the party secretary] is missing. Someone jokes that he is collecting his suitcases...The *ispolkom* officials are giving out money to workers

of *raion* factories whose managers fled last night, taking valuables and cash with them. (Barber, *Moscow Crisis*, 208)¹²²

15.-19.10.41: The breakdown of social control took other, more violent forms. There were attacks on members of the elite attempting to escape: „Workers of the *Milk Factory* stopped the director who had dairy products w/ him. They took the products and car from him, and **shoved his head in a barrel of sour cream**. [!] On **18 Oct**, a huge crowd gathered on *Shosse Entuziastov*, blocking cars and people escaping from Moscow...In other cases, workers tried to prevent the evacuation of machinery, suspicious of management’s motives and understandably fearing for their jobs. (For examples of rioting, *hooliganism*, etc., see eye-witness accounts in: *Barber, Moscow Crisis*, 210-11)

16.10.41 [Panic in Moscow]: What happened on **16 Oct 41**? Many have spoken of the big skedaddle (*bolshoi drap*) that took place that day:

Background:

- It took the Moscow population several days to realize how serious the new German offensive was. During the last days of **Sep 41** and, indeed, for the first few days of **Oct 41**, all attention was centered on the big German offensive in the Ukraine, the news of the breakthrough into the Crimea, and the Beaverbrook visit, which had begun on **29 Sep 41**;
- It did not become clear until **4-5 Oct 41** that an offensive against Moscow had started, and, even so, it was not clear how big it was;
- The news on the night of **7 Oct 41** brought the first official reference to “heavy fighting in the direction of Viazma.”
- On the **8th**, while *Pravda* and *Izvestia* were careful not to sound too alarmed, the army paper, *Red Star*, looked extremely disquieting. It said that “the very existence of the Soviet State was in danger,” and that every man of the Red Army “must stand firm and fight to the last drop of blood;”
- *Pravda* sounded the alarm on the **9th**, warning the people of Moscow against “careless complacency” and calling on them to “mobilize all their forces to repel the enemy’s offensive;
- On **12 Oct 41**, *Pravda* spoke of the “terrible danger” threatening the country;
- It was on **12-13 Oct 41** that it was decided to evacuate immediately to Kuibyshev and other cities in the east a large number of government offices, including many People’s Commissariats, part of the Party organizations, and the entire diplomatic corps of Moscow. Moscow’s most important armament works were to be evacuated as well. . . But the State Defense Committee, the STAVKA of the Supreme Command, and a skeleton administration were to stay in Moscow until further notice;

¹²² **Note:** Another reaction during the panic was the *destruction of party and Komsomol cards*, by both those who fled and those who stayed. (See, Barber, p 209)

- The news of these evacuations was followed by the official communiqué published on the morning of **16 Oct 41**. It said: “During the night of **14-15 Oct 41** the position on the Western Front became worse. The German-Fascist troops hurled against our troops large quantities of tanks and motorized infantry, and in one sector broke through our defenses.”

I remember Surkov telling me that when he arrived in Moscow from the front on the **16th**, he phoned some **15** or **20** of his friends, and *all had vanished*.

In “fiction,” more than in formal history, there are some valuable descriptions of Moscow at the height of the crisis – for instance in Simonov’s The Living and the Dead. Here is a picture of Moscow during that grim **16 Oct 41** and the following days – w/ the railway station stampedes; w/ officials fleeing in their cars w/o a permit; the *opolchentsy* and Communist battalion men sullenly walking, rather than marching, down the streets, dressed in a motley collection of clothes, smoking, but not singing; w/ the “Hammer and Sickle” factory working day and night turning out thousands of anti-tank hedge-hogs, which are then driven to the outer ring of boulevards; with its smell of burning papers; with the rapid succession of air-raids and air-battles over Moscow, in which Russian airmen often suicidally ram enemy planes; with the demoralization of the majority and the grim determination among the minority to hang on to Moscow, and to fight, if necessary, inside the city. . .

I also remember a very different kind of story – a story told to me by a leading woman-member of the Komsomol at the famous Trekhgorka Cotton Mill – a remarkable girl of about **25**, called Olga Sapozhnikova, who belonged to a long dynasty of Moscow cotton weavers. All her three brothers had been called up, and one was wounded and another “missing.” She was a little plump and heavy, and had rough proletarian hands, w/ closely-clipped fingernails. And yet she had poise and character, and there was a solid kind of Russian beauty in that pale face, in her large, quiet grey eyes, firm jaw, finely shaped full mouth, and her white teeth showing when she smiled. Not a single nondescript feature about her; she belonged, even physically, to the proletarian aristocracy; her character, like her body, shaped by good tradition.

The story she told me, on **19 Sep 42**, differed in one respect from present-day stories; she told me how even the bravest and most determined people in Moscow had felt uncertain of whether Moscow could be saved – or could be effectively defended had the Germans fought their way into the city:

Those were dreadful days. It started about the **12th**. I was ordered, like most of the girls at the factory, to join the Labor Front. We were taken some kilometers out of Moscow. There was a large crowd of us, and we were told to dig trenches. We were all very calm, but dazed, and couldn’t take it in. On the very first day we were machine-gunned by a Fritz who swooped right down. Eleven [11] of the girls were killed and four wounded. [Werth: She said it very calmly, w/o affectation.] We went on working all day and the next day; fortunately, no more Fritzes came. . .

By the end of **Oct 41**, over **2** million people had been officially evacuated from Moscow; in addition, there were many others who had fled unofficially. (*A. Werth, Russia at War*, 232-41)

16.-17.10.41: Formation of the *Communist battalions* is completed on **16 Oct**, and the **10,000** volunteers are sent to the front the next day...Whether all those in the Communist btms genuinely

volunteered is impossible to say. As w/ the *opolchentsy*, the people's militia, pressure may have been applied to get recruits. (*Barber, Moscow Crisis*, 207; 216, f.n. 38)

16.-19.10.41: According to *Pronin*, Stalin was told by *Zhukov* as early as **16 or 17 Oct** that Moscow could be held; however, the crucial decision to commit the government to doing so was taken by the **GKO** only on **19 Oct**. (**Note:** *Zhukov's* opinion appears to have based on an assessment of civil as well as military factors. On the morning of **16 Oct**, a senior aide, *N.Kh. Bedov*, was sent from *Zhukov's* HQ at the front to the capital to make a quick appraisal of the situation there. Although according to the driver, Moscow resembled a „*disturbed ant-hill*,“ he saw „no particular panic“ and returned to the front convinced that Moscow could hold out.“ (*Barber, Moscow Crisis*, 212; 217-18, f.n. 68)

18.10.41: Die *Panik in Moskau* erreichte am **18. Okt.** ihren *Hoehepunkt*. An diesem Tag wurde nirgends gearbeitet, u. eine grosse Unruhe erfasste die Menschen. Die Geruechte von der Flucht der Regierung, vom unmittelbaren Einzug deutscher Truppen in die Stadt u. von der allgemeinen Aufloesung der Front brachten ganz Moskau auf die Beine. Die Menge stuermt die Bahnhofe, versuchte sich Fuhrwerke zu organisieren, u. nicht wenige machten sich zu Fuss auf den Weg, um die Stadt in Richtung Osten zu verlassen. Ueber diese Stunden in Moskau lagen einige eindrucksvolle Berichte vor. (*Gosztony, Entscheidungsschlacht*, 231; see also, *A. Werth, Cassidy, Theodor Plivier*, etc.)

19.10.41: If officials and party members were to the fore in the flight from Moscow, the majority of those who departed were ordinary citizens. How many left is not known, but the number clearly ran into the *hundreds of thousands*...The number who were evacuated or fled must have run into hundreds of thousands; it may have been as much as half to three-quarters of a million. Eyewitness accounts indicate a *mass exodus* out of Moscow. An ambulance service doctor noted in his diary on **19 Oct**:

The squares in front of the railway station are crowded to overflowing, impassable...Porters pile 30 to 40 pieces of luggage on to their carts and... charge 50 or more rubles per piece. The one and only subject of conversation is where and when to go, and what to take w/ you. *Barber, Moscow Crisis*, 209-10)¹²³

19.10.41: *Lev Knipper*¹²⁴ writes to his *surrogate mother*, Aunt Olya. It is a letter “churning w/ mixed feelings of sadness and fierce joy at his mission: “The city [Moscow] has produced a very strange impression on me. It's a mixture of ‘Feast during a plague,’ [by *Puskin*] and the well-known play by Hemingway [*The Fifth Column* (1937)]. I am feeling odd, too, like a bird sitting on a branch, knowing it might have to take off at any second...And it's not even so frightening to die. There are at last some powerful things in which I believe and which have helped to stiffen my spine...I am Russian, Russian to the marrow of my bones. I've realized that I love my ridiculous, idiotic, uncultured and dirty Motherland, love her w/ a tender *Levitan* love, and it's a pain to me to see her big, beautiful body violated...[Note: *Levitan* was a close friend of *Anton*

¹²³ **Note:** The difference in the number of *ration cards* issued in October and November was **673,380**: The figures were **3,148,800** and **2,475,620**, respectively. (217, f.n. 50)

¹²⁴ *Knipper* was a composer and brother of *Olga Chekhova*. He and his new wife, *Mariya Garikovna*—an elegant, beautiful Armenian woman who was also a “brilliant agent”—had been chosen by Gen *Sudoplatov*, Chief of the Special Tasks Group of the NKVD, to eliminate Hitler and his close associates if they turned up in Moscow after its capture. However, as Stalin, Beria, etc., learned after the war, Hitler never had the slightest intention of visiting Moscow. (176-78, 181)

Chekhov, and a painter of wonderfully spiritual landscapes of Russia.] I know for sure what I will be fighting for and what, if needed, I will die for... (See *A. Beevor, Mystery of Olga Chekhova*, 178, for remainder of letter, which is example of *heroic, self-sacrificing patriotism of so many Russians* at this time.)

19.-22.10.41: In dieser Stunde der Verzweiflung fiel der Entscheid im Kreml. *Stalin, der Moskau keine Minute lang verlassen hatte, beschloss, die Hauptstadt zu halten*, u. sorgte dafuer, dass der Aufruhr in der Stadt ein rasches Ende fand. Am **19. Okt.** wurde ueber Moskau u. die angrenzenden Rayons der *Ausnahmezustand* verhaengt. Die Aufrechterhaltung der Ordnung in Moskau . . . wurde dem Moskauer *Stadtkommandanten* uebertragen, dem die Truppen des Volkskommissariats des Inneren (sprich **NKWD**-Einheiten), die Miliz u. die freiwilligen Arbeiterabteilungen unterstellt wurden . . . In erstaunlich kurzer Zeit gelang es der aufgebotenen Truppe, die nicht *zimperlich* gegen die Ordnungsstoerer vorgegangen war, die Ruhe in Moskau wiederherzustellen. Es genuegte, dass die Miliz wieder auftauchte, dass die gefuechteten **NKWD**-Formationen in verstaerkten Streifen durch die Strassen patrouillierten, um die Moskauer aus der *Panikstimmung* zu sich kommen zu lassen. Am **22. Okt.** wurde die Arbeit in den Betrieben wiederaufgenommen, u. das Leben schien – trotz der weiterhin bedrohlichen Lage an der Front – seinen alten Gang zu gehen. (*Gosztony, Entscheidungsschlacht*, 232)

Oct-Dec 41: When Napoleon took Moscow in 1812 he was surprised to find that its people had gone and left him only the hollow shell of a city. Had Hitler taken Moscow, he would have found it empty of all but guerilla fighters. ***Some 500 factories loaded their machinery, together w/ the workers and their families, on to flat cars and box cars, and sent them off to new industrial sites in the Urals and Siberia.*** A pall of smoke hung over the city as *government officials burned their records*. During several fearful days and nights *civilians jammed the railway stations*, where train after train, loaded to the doors w/ people, set out for unknown destinations beyond the Volga or in Central Asia.

For the duration of the siege the government moved to ***Kuibyshev*** (Samara), on the Volga; but although Stalin panicked at the onset of the invasion, he chose to remain in the beleaguered city. On **6 Nov 41**, eve of the anniversary of the Revolution (it took place in October by the old style calendar, but was switched to November when the modern calendar was *adopted in 1918*), a bomb crater in the lobby of the ***Bolshoi Theater*** forced the celebration to be moved from *that traditional site* to the ***Mayakovsky Square underground staton of the Metro***. There, six carriages on one track served as a cloakroom, and eight on the other track provided a buffet. Stalin addressed the anniversary meeting in the station, with German tanks 25 miles away. Early next morning Soviet troops converged on ***Red Square*** for the anniversary parade, the shortest even—and they marched straight out of the square to the battlefield.

The city held. When the temperature dropped to 40 F. below zero, on **6 Dec 41**, Stalin ordered a counter-offensive...The spacious Metro stations were *used as air-raid shelters*. The factories that remained turned out tanks, aircraft and munitions; one of them, ***Moscow's Compressor Plant***, produced the ***Katyusha rocket*** launchers...Down the *city's wide new avenues* rumbled guns, tanks and trucks, headed for the front. Even the *plug-in loudspeakers* that had served as substitutes for wirelasses during the 1930s aided the city's defense: the network was used for internal broadcasting and provided a ready-made system for alerts and for issuing civil defense instructions. (*Gruliow*, 35-6)

Oct-Nov 41: Photo of *tank trap* in a Moscow street „that the Germans never reached. Tall, official-looking, multi-storey buildings in background; as well as bus, trucks, other vehicles and what looks like a tethered aerial balloon. The tank trap itself consists of large metal or concrete

girders rammed like stakes into the ground, tilted slightly toward the anticipated direction of a German advance which never came. The girders are *massive* – as tall, or taller, as the Soviet workers in the photo. (Sokolovsky, *Battle of Moscow*, in: *Battles Hitler Lost*, 55)

Nov 41: Das Moskau im Oktober nicht erobert wurde, wirkte sich nachhaltig auf die *Kampfmoral* der Soldaten aus. Obwohl die Evakuierung der Stadt, besonders was die Industrie betraf, auch in der ersten Novemberhaelfte weiterging (insgesamt **2.000.000** Menschen wurden aus Moskau evakuiert), war die Atmosphaere ganz anders als waehrend des panischen Exodus Mitte Oktober. (Gosztony, *Entscheidungsschlacht*, 233)

Nov 41: The panic of early and mid-October *turned to mass courage in early November*. Radio Moscow had broadcast *Stalin's decision to stay in the city*. On the eve of the anniversary of the revolution, Stalin made a powerful speech, "If they want a war of extermination," he declared, "then they shall have one." The next day, **7.11.41**, the *annual parade on Red Square took place on Stalin's insistence*. Beria and Molotov had been appalled at the *threat of air attack*, but Stalin ordered in all available anti-aircraft batteries and insisted on a *fighter umbrella over the city*. His idea, designed mainly for newsreels around the world, was that reinforcements for the Moscow front should march thru Red Square, past the saluting base on Lenin's (now empty) mausoleum, and march on westwards toward the enemy. (A. Beevor, *Mystery of Olga Chekhova*, 179-80)

6.-7.11.41: "If they [the Germans] want a war of extermination, they shall have one." This challenge Stalin threw down in his speech of **6 Nov 41**, a speech delivered on the eve of the anniversary of the October Revolution: delegates from the Party, from the city administration and the Red Army filled the *marble cavern* of the Mayakovskii underground station to hear it. With emphatic exaggeration, Stalin announced that the German Army had suffered more than **4,000,000** casualties in its war on Russia, yet the blitzkrieg had failed – failed because the Soviet Union had not disintegrated, and failed above all because the Red Army was still unbroken in the field. . .

The next morning, w/ German troops less than **50** miles away, Stalin held the traditional military parade in Red Square – squads of Soviet riflemen and columns of old, out-gunned **T-26** tanks, w/ a few of the new, formidable **T-34s**, paraded in the winter light and crunched across the snow, moving off at once to the battle-lines. . . In contrast to his speech the night before, this time Stalin spoke out more brutally and brusquely, dismissing fears that "the Germans could not be beaten" as the panic of a bunch of frightened little intellectuals – a gratuitous sneer, if ever there was one. (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 249-50)

7.11.41: The traditional *Truppenparade* took place on Red Square. The parade prepared by Marschall *Budjonny*. (**Note:** For his detailed report of the event see, *Gosztony, Entscheidungsschlacht*, 233)

19.11.41: Beria sends several regiments of NKVD troops to Moscow to *restore order through summary executions*.¹²⁵ Anyone suspected of desertion, looting or even drunkenness after the storming alcohol outlets was *seized and put up against a wall* w/o the slightest pretence of an investigation... Atmosphere of "*collapse and despair*." Desperate "*sauve-qui-peut*" atmosphere. (A. Beevor, *Mystery of Olga Chekhova*, 173)

¹²⁵ **Note:** Is this date accurate? Perhaps Beevor means **19 Oct 41**.

ca. Dec 41: [following Russian counteroffensive & successful defense of the city]: The battle for Moscow *may have been the real turning point of the war*, but few Muscovites experienced any immediate benefits, save one. Vova Knipper saw the *carcasses of horses killed in the fighting on their way to the slaughterhouses* in open trucks, w/ their legs in the air...[i.e., Muscovites had more horsemeat to eat, the source of which was probably *Cossack mounts of the two cavalry corps* which had been savaging the German rear.] (*A. Beevor, Mystery of Olga Chekhova*, 183)

14.12.41-3.1.42: By **14 Dec** the position of Moscow was sufficiently safe for the **GKO** to order the *clearing of mines* from buildings in which they had been planted in October. On **15 Dec**, the *Politburo* authorized the return of the party central committee's staff to Moscow. On **3 Jan 42**, *N. Voznesenskii*, acting head of the government in Kuibyshev, requested and received permission for the return of *Sovnarkom's main administration* to Moscow. (*Barber, Moscow Crisis*, 214)

3.10.4: Air Defense System:

1932-41: Preparations for an air attack on Moscow had begun when in **1932**, with establishment of the **MPVO**, or local air defense organization; the construction of air-raid shelters started the next year. From **1938**, a proportion of all new buildings and offices were designed w/ shelters incorporated. Cellars began to be converted to shelters. By the beginning of the war [w/ Germany?], there were said to be sufficient shelters in Moscow for about **400,000** people. That was not enough for a *peacetime population of 4,000,000*, but the numbers needing shelter were much reduced by evacuation once the war began.¹²⁶ Despite all this work, the city's air defenses remained *inadequate*. Colonel *Sbytov's* inspection in **Mar 41** [see next para] and the fiasco over the flight to Moscow by the German **Ju 52** in **May 41** [see below], showed that much remained to be done...

The war in Finland showed the inadequacies of the Soviet air defense system, and the military leadership had given repeated orders for improvement...But little was done, and things seem to have come to a head when *General Pumpur*, the cdr of the Moscow air defense system and a hero of the Spanish Civil War, sent his deputy, *Col Sbytov*, on a tour of inspection of the airfields in the region in **Mar 41**. In one after another *Sbytov* found that there was *no fuel and no munitions*. The obsolete fighters were lined up wing-tip to wing-tip on the ground, and they were not camouflaged...

An incident on **15.5.41** may have been the last straw. On that day, a German Junkers **Ju 52** flew w/o permission from German occupied Poland to Moscow. The air defenses *failed to react*. Timoshenko and Zhukov investigated, and on **10.6.41** they issued a furious Order. Ground observers, they said, had mistaken the (three-engined) Ju 52 for a scheduled (two-engined) Soviet **DC-3**. The *Bialystok* airfield had failed to inform the local air defense units of the intrusion because their communications had broken down. The people in Moscow had not only failed to stop the acft; they gave it permission to land! Timoshenko and Zhukov called for remedial measures; the arrests and beatings started almost immediately. *Pumpur* was arrested, etc. (see, *Braithwaite, Moscow 1941*, 146-48; 185-86)

¹²⁶ **Note:** Where it was impossible to build proper shelters, foxholes and dugouts were constructed: by **Aug 41**, there were enough of these to accommodate nearly **250,000** people; by the end of 1941, there were enough shelters for most of the people still left in the city. (189)

*Moscow air defenses:*¹²⁷

At start of war in **Jun 41**, Moscow's *air defenses* were organized in a series of *defensive rings*. The outer ring was more than **125** miles from Moscow, and consisted of the men and women of the **VNOs**, the Air Observation, Warning and Communications Service, the equivalent of the British Observer Corps. Their task was to observe all acft passing overhead day and night; identify their type, course and height; and convey that data to Moscow. Their job was made harder by a *serious lack of binoculars*, and by the observers' initial difficulty in distinguishing between their own acft and the enemy's.

The squadrons of the **6th Air Defense Corps** were deployed about **75** miles from the city. They had **600** fighter acft, of which more than half were of the latest type. The twin-engined **Pe-2** bomber was also particularly effective as a *night fighter*, stalking the raiders back to their bases and shooting them down as they landed.

The approaches to Moscow were defended by nearly **800** medium *anti-aircraft* guns. Over **600** large *searchlights* were deployed in a ring **40** miles from the city to enable the guns and fighters to operate at night. There were smaller searchlights inside the city itself. An inner ring of over **100** *barrage balloons* was intended to force the Germans to fly high, and to confuse their aim. AA and MGs were placed in the city itself, many of them on the tops of buildings. There were „*listeners*“ (*slukhachi*) all over town: *acoustic devices* to listen to the German bombers shaped like gramophone horns, only bigger. It was of course difficult for the fighters in the dark; and the guns could do little more than send up a curtain of fire to deter acft they could not see unless the searchlights picked them out. The expediture of ammunition was very high as a result: an average of more than **20,000** shells were fired for each acft shot down. In the *absence of effective radar tracking equipment*, there was little else the gunners could do...

Moscow was in any case *peculiarly hard to defend* from aerial attack. Despite the massive building programme of the **1930s**, **70%** of the residential buildings in Moscow in **1941** were *still made of wood*. Factory workshops were roofed w/ inflammable rubberised material and tarred paper. Even in the centre of the city, even in places like *Gorky Street*, there were piles of firewood, wooden storehouses, and other combustible buildings. Moscow was a *tinderbox*. (Braithwaite, *Moscow 1941*, 186-87)¹²⁸

Moskau liegt im Herzen des russ. *Waldguertels*. In diesen dichten Bestaenden von *Nadelbaeumen* u. *Birken* wurde die groesste Anzahl von *Scheinwerfern*, die bisher jemals um einen einzelnen Punkt herum angesammelt worden war, in konzentrischen Kreisen aufgestellt. In den Lichtungen placierte man – gut getarnt u. in die Erde eingegraben – die *Flakbatterien* des verstaerkten **1. Luftverteidigungskorps** unter *Generalmajor M.S. Gromadin*, das berufen war, die kommenden dt. Luftangriffe abzuwehren. Riesige *Fesselballone* wurden jeden Abend bei Einbruch der Dunkelheit in die Hoehe gelassen. Sie sollten das Manoevrierten der dt. Flieger ueber der Stadt erschweren. Ein Mittel, das schon von den Englaendern bei der Schlacht ueber London *wirksam* ausprobiert wurde. (Gosztony, *Entscheidungsschlacht*, 105)

¹²⁷ **Note:** Moscow was *blacked out* on the first day of the war, and the blackout remained in force until **Apr 45**. (190)

¹²⁸ **Note:** The Soviet authorities made a determined effort to *camouflage the city* and confuse the German bomb aimers. Architects and students were mobilized to pain trees and the roofs of buildings on the streets and squares of the city. The *golden cupolas* of the Kremlin churches were painted in camouflage colors, and the red stars on the towers were covered in canvas. The buildings were disguised w/ camouflage netting. The Kremlin walls were painted in contrasting stripes to look like apartment buildings. (for more details see, pp 190-91)

Moscow (camouflage measures):

An observer [Werth?], who witnessed the early days of the war in Moscow, gives following description of the camouflage measures implemented by the Soviet Union in its capital city (quoted in: *Uebe, Russian Reactions*, 39-40):

The walls of the Kremlin were painted over to resemble a row of dwelling houses. Lenin's mausoleum of red and black marble in Red Square was covered with sandbags and decorated as a village house. *Mozhavaya* Street was painted over w/ zigzag lines to present from above the appearance of a row of house tops. The Bolshoi theater was draped w/ canvas on which false entrances were painted. The facade of the palace in the Kremlin was covered w/ netting and decorated w/ green twigs. The five red stars usually illuminated on the highest towers of the Kremlin were hidden under cloaks of grey cloth. The golden domes of the Kremlin churches were boarded over w/ dark timber, and the brilliant green hue of the roofs of other large buildings was painted over w/ hideous blendings of blue and brown.

Never had I witnessed anything similar in times of war, neither in Spain nor in France. However, I was convinced that this camouflage could deceive nobody. In the case of ground combat, it might have served its purpose, but surely it could never in the slightest degree mislead German bombers flying high above the city and moreover dazzled by searchlights and the flames of exploding shells.

Nov 41: Seven [7] concentric rings of AA defenses, established 2 to 3 miles from one another, surrounded Moscow and made the city almost invulnerable from the air. (*G. Blau, German Campaign in Russia*, 86)

3.10.5: Significance of (1941):

Note: „Zentral-Russland ist das Herz Russlands, dessen Besitzergreifung durch eine sehr starke, bewaffnete, fremde Macht ganz Russland laehmen u. den Zusammenhalt aller uebrigen Teile des weiten Sowjetreiches untereinander lockern wuerde, ihn auf die Dauer sogar zerst hoeren koennte. Das weitaus wichtigste Angriffsziel innerhalb Zentral-Russlands ist Moskau.“ (*Generalstab des Heeres, „Militaergeopolitische Angaben ueber das Europaeische Russland, Zentral Russland (ohne Moskau)“*, Berlin 1941, quoted in: *J. Piekalkiewicz, Schlacht um Moskau*, 16)

Note: „*Ist Moskau das entscheidende Kriegsziel?* [italics in original] Mit der Besetzung bzw. Zerst oerung Moskaus werden der militaerische, politische u. wirtschaftliche Fuehrungsapparat u. wichtige Grundlagen der Sowjetmacht lahmgelegt, **aber eine Kriegsentscheidung wird nicht herbeigefuehrt**. Der groesste Gegner bleibt dann immer noch der Raum, der ostwaerts von Moskau sich ins Grenzenlose verliert. Ob allerdings ostw. vorhandene Sowjettruppen nach dem Fall der Hauptstadt noch politisch fest in der Hand der Fuehrung stehen, ist eine politische, keine militaerische Angelegenheit.“ (See, *Generalstab des Heeres, „Militaergeopolitische Angaben ueber das Europaeische Russland, (MOSKAU)“*, Berlin 1941, quoted in: *J. Piekalkiewicz, Schlacht um Moskau*, 20-21)

E. Mawdsley: As for Moscow, leaving aside the city's political value, Moscow and its region were by **1941** at least as important to the Soviet war economy as Leningrad or the Ukraine. Moscow was now a leading industrial center, esp. for the Soviet motor vehicle & acft industries. And nearby was an important coal field. The capital was also the hub of Russia's railway network. (*Thunder in the East*, 70)

Soviet industry had its basis in the Urals and Siberia, and the loss of the Moscow industrial complex would not have robbed the USSR of its main source of armaments. Moscow was, of course, a nodal point for most of the Central Russian railway system, and on this account its loss would have been serious to the Soviet Union, but, even so, the railways from the Urals were still connected w/ Vologda, Archangel and the Finnish front, the Western Front, the Caspian and the Donets Basin.¹²⁹ Nor should the Soviet powers of improvisation be lightly disregarded. There is no reason to suppose that Stalin would have made peace w/ the Germans if Moscow had been lost. Defeat for the Soviet Union would have meant complete submission to Hitler and in all probability the overthrow and liquidation of Stalin and his communist hierarchy. In such circumstances there can be little doubt that Stalin would have continued the war whatever his territorial losses. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 216)

“Haette man nach einer berechtigten Atempause im Anschluss an die Kesselschlacht von *Smolensk, Anfang September*, die Offensive gegen Moskau fortgefuehrt, so waere nach meiner Ueberzeugung Moskau noch vor dem Winter u. vor dem Eintreffen der sibirischen Divisionen in unsere Hand gefallen. Es waere dann hoechstwahrscheinlich moeglich gewesen, *einen schirmartigen Brueckenkopf nach Osten vorzuschieben*, der russische Umgehungsmanoever u. den Nachschub fuer die anderen russ. Fronten erschwert haette. Die **entscheidende Folge der Einnahme Moskaus** waere gewesen, dass das ganze europaeische Russland von seinen asiatischen Kraftquellen abgeschnitten u. die Inbesitznahme der lebenswichtigen Wirtschaftszentren (*Leningrad, Donez-Becken, Maikop-Oelzentrum*) 1942 keine unloesbare Aufgabe gewesen waere.” (see, *Kesselring, Soldat*, 134)¹³⁰

Kesselring weights advantages of major offensives on the wings (Hr.Gr. Nord & Sued) vs. in the center on Moscow. Comes to following conclusion: “Ob aber der Besitz *Leningrads*, des *Donezbeckens* u. der *Oelfelder* die Vorteile der Einnahme Moskaus als **Fuehrungs – Ruestungs – u. Verkehrszentrum** haette ausgleichen koennen, moechte ich heute ebenso wie 1941 bezweifeln. Deswegen: **Das erste Operationsziel musste** unter bewusster Beschraenkung der Zielsetzung fuer die Fluegel-Heeresgruppen **Moskau sein**.” (*Kesselring, Soldat*, 135)

Moskau war nicht nur die Hauptstadt Russlands, sondern Sitz der Sowjets. Um Moskau herum lag ausgedehnte *Industrie*. Die Grossstadt war ferner ein *Knotenpunkt* der grossen Bahnen u. Strassen u. in diesem Raum muendeten die *aus Asien heranfuehrenden Schienenstraenge*. Der Nachschub zur Front suedwestl. der Stadt hatte nur kurze Weg u war leicht durchzufuehren. (*Blumentritt, Ueberwindung der Krise*, 107-8)

Moscow: The rail, road, political, psychological, and demographic *plexus* of the USSR (*Stolfi, Barbarossa Revisited*, 27)

¹²⁹ **Note:** The railways radiated north, west and south of Moscow w/ the capital as the hub. To the east of the city, however, there were 5 main separate lines, all going to the Urals or Siberia: Vologda – Kirov, Gorki – Kirov, Moscow – Kazan, Ryazan – Kuybyshev, Ryazan – Saratov. (216, f.n. 6)

¹³⁰ **Note:** *Kesselring* points out that, had this approach been followed, the *Ostheer* would still have had to deal w/ *Budjenny's Kiew-Gruppe* on the southern flank. He opines that a limited operation against this grouping would have been possible *after* taking Moscow. (134)

7.11.41: In a *top secret* memo to each Army group and Army chief of staff, *Halder* notes that Moscow was the “*bridgehead to Asia.*” *Five railroad lines from the Urals* converged on it; thus, it constituted a *potential staging area* from which a regenerated Soviet Army could mount offensives in any direction it chose. (**My note:** This factor must have been crucial to Halder’s desire to make a last desperate lunge for the Soviet capital.) (*E. Ziemke, Franz Halder at Orsha, 174*)

The city was a key industrial centre that lay at the hub of the Soviet *rail network*. Political considerations aside, its loss would *hamper Soviet strategic movement*, logistic arrangements and military production. (*C. Winchester, Hitler’s War on Russia, 58*)

H. Magenheimer: *Haette die Eroberung Moskaus den Feldzug entschieden?*

- Zunaechst ist klarzustellen, dass Stalin Moskau unbedingt behaupten wollte u. dass ihm die Folgen eines Verlustes bewusst waren. . .

- Voraussetzung einer Einschliessung Moskaus mit anschliessender Einnahme waere jedoch gewesen, dass die Deutschen das Unternehmen „Taifun“ 5 bis 7 Tage frueher begonnen u. diverse Fehler, wie etwa das Abschwenken der **3 PzGr** nach Norden, nicht begangen haetten;

- Auf jeden Fall haetten sich aus einer Eroberung Moskaus zahlreiche militaerishce u. politische Konsequenzen ergeben:

- Vernichtung des Gros der sowjet. Krafte, die die STAWKA zum Schutze der Stadt zusammengezogen haette;

- Inbesitznahme des zentralen Eisenbahn- u. Strassenknotenpunktes der UdSSR;

- Gewinnung einer guenstigen „Abschlusslinie“ oestlich von Moskau, die auch als Winterstellung haette dienen koennen;

- Herausloesung von Reserven zur Stuetzung der Nachbarabschnitte;

- Verlagerung des mil. Drucks auf die H.Gr. Nord u. Sued mit der Aussicht einer baldigen Eroberung Leningrads;

- Ueberragender politischer u. psychologischer Erfolg, der kaum seine Wirkung auf die Rote Armee, die sowj. Bevoelkerung, aber auch auf die Westmaechte u. nicht zuletzt auf das eigene Volk verfehlt haette;

- Gewinnung eines ueberaus wertvollen Faustpfandes, dass im Falle eines pol. Abkommen zwischen Deutschland u. Sowjet-russland grosses Gewicht gehabt haette.

- Ob die britische Regierung unter diesen Umstaenden Verhandlungen mit Stalin ueber ein Buendnis aufgenommen u. die Ruestungslieferungen fortgesetzt

haette, ist aeussert zweifelhaft. Ebenso fraglich ist, wie sich Roosevelt verhalten haette. . . .

- Bei einem Rueckzug hinter die Wolga waere auch . . . die Verbindung zu den in Nordrussland stehende sowj. Truppen verlorengelassen. Leningrad waere seinem Schicksal ueberlassen worden.
- Der baldige Verlust Leningrads u. die Vereinigung der Deutschen mit den Finnen haette mindestens vier [4] weitere sowj. Armeen zur Kapitulation gezwungen u. es den Deutschen ermoeglicht, die Fronten der H.Gr. Nord u. Mitte radikal zu verkuerzen.
- Dies haette logischerweise zahlreiche Verbaende freigemacht, die folglich als Reserven verfuegbar gewesen waeren. Ueberdies haette das Ostheer endlich im grossen Stil Gelegenheit gefunden, Verbaende abzuloesen u. aufzufrischen. . .
- Es muss zwar offenbleiben, ob eine Eroberung Moskaus die erhoffte Wende des Krieges zu deutschen Gunsten gebracht haette,¹³¹ doch waeren die damit verbundenen Vorteile entscheidend gewesen. . .
- Die Rote Armee hatte bisher eine Niederlage nach der anderen erlitten. Was haette Stalin hindern sollen, nach einem Rueckzug hinter die Wolga ein Friedensangebot, auch wenn es fuer ihn unguenstig ausgefallen waere, anzunehmen?
- Alle diese Ueberlegungen sollen vor Augen fuehren, wie sehr der Fortbestand des Regimes im Falle eines Verlustes von Moskau u. dem erzwungenen Rueckzug hinter die Wolga auf des Messers Schneide gestanden haette. . . Da Stalin die politischen Folgen einer Niederlage mehr als die militaerischen fuerchtete, haette er allen Grund gehabt, einen politischen Ausweg zu suchen.
- Spinnt man den Gedanken weiter, so spricht einiges dafuer, dass die Regierung Roosevelts gruendlich abgewogen haette, ob sie ihren Kriegskurs gegenueber Deutschland fortsetzen wollte oder nicht. . .

(Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten, 197-99)

3.11: Miscellaneous:

He [Zhukov?] came from *Dubrovno*, a small town in *Belarus*. Early memories are of countryside: horses that came down to *Dniepr River* to drink as sun set, the *fields of flax and beets* stretching away, the *yellow dust of summer* and autumn mud...(*Ivan's War*, C. Merridale, 38)

¹³¹ **Note:** Die These, wonach eine Eroberung Moskaus kaum die erhoffte Kriegswende gebracht haette, wird z.B. von Hans-Adolf Jacobsen vertreten; siehe: *Der Weg zur Teilung der Welt: Politik u. Strategie 1939 – 1945*. 1977. S. 105.

3.11.1: Russia's War, Richard Overy (Notes):

Note: First week of war characterized by utter chaos and demoralization at the front. The German attack was the *very opposite of what orthodox thinking in the Red Army had expected*. Instead of **10** days of initial probing attacks, followed by the clash of two fully mobilized armies, the entire German force swept forward in the first hours much as German leaders had expected, “to all appearances a model of purposeful efficiency pitted against Soviet primitivism.” “The Russian mass,” wrote a German staff officer, “is no match for an army w/ modern equipment and superior leadership.” . . . The speed of the German advance overwhelmed the Soviet supply system; **200** out of **340** military supply dumps fell into German hands in the first month. The [Red] Army itself was in the midst of a complex redeployment. . . Many units were in the process of moving to new quarters when the attack came. Most were under strength. In the first days, army units were posted to the frontier in almost complete ignorance of the enemy's position. No coherent order of battle could be established. Divisions were sent into the line as they arrived. Without air cover, adequate wpns or intelligence, they were annihilated, often in just a few hours. In the first four [**4**] weeks of “Barbarossa,” **319** Soviet units were committed to battle; *almost all of them were destroyed or badly damaged.* (76-77)

22.-26.6.41: On **22 Jun 41** marital law was declared throughout the western Soviet Union. A labor conscription law compelled all men between **18-45** and all women between **18-40** to work eight hours a day constructing rudimentary defenses. In all weathers, hour after hour, the conscripts dug AT traps, trenches and artillery emplacements. On **26 Jun 41** the working day was extended by a mandatory **3** hours, and all leave and public holidays were suspended. (80)

Sep 41 [Leningrad]: On the very day Stalin sent Zhukov off from Moscow to Leningrad to investigate the crisis, **8 Sep 41**, the German army to the east of Leningrad reached the town of Schluesselburg and *cut off the last land link w/ the interior*. Leningrad was encircled. . . Leningrad itself became unrecognizable as primitive fortifications sprang up in every street. **17** miles of barricades and AT ditches left long scars across the face of the city. . . Streetcars and buses filled w/ sand were used as obstacles. Fortified posts for MGs or rifles were set up, over **20,000** in all.

Zhukov inherited these preparations, and added some of his own. He ordered AA guns to be used instead as AT wpns. He had the approaches to the city heavily mined and completed a deep defensive zone in the city's suburbs. Guns removed from the ships of the Baltic Fleet were dug in by the coast or set on armored trains; they kept up a dense and powerful artillery barrage on German positions. Even the guns of the cruiser *Aurora*, which had been declared a national monument for the famous part it played in shelling the Winter Palace in **Oct 17**, were removed and sent to the front line. . .

The defense of the city reached its climax in the third week of **Sep 41**, as German forces closed in to isolate the city centre. **40** tons of high explosive were distributed to prepare for the demolition of bridges, factories and military strong points. On **19 Sep 41** the German artillery began a *continuous 18-hour barrage* of the city, while acft bombed food stores, shops and trains. The same day orders came from Moscow to lay and prime the charges. German forces had swept thru Zhukov's outer defenses, taking the suburban townships one by one. The very last line of defense along the Neva River and the approaches to the city itself were fought for yard by yard. A determined push would almost certainly have brought the German army to the gates of the city, where they would have fought house by house and street by street, much as they did at Stalingrad. On **20 Sep** the pace slackened. Intelligence sources . . . showed that the Germans

were digging in. Tanks and armored vehicles were seen on trains heading away from Leningrad. Forces were evidently moving south for Operation Typhoon and the capture of Moscow. On **25 Sep 41** the front line stabilized and then halted. The battle for Leningrad became the siege of Leningrad. (102-05; also, *Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 194-95)

2.10.41 [Operation Typhoon] : Further north the attack began on this day under cover of artillery and air attack and a smoke-screen that turned the landscape to a deep fog in front of the Soviet defenders. . . (93)

4.10.41: Hitler arrived at the Berlin Sportpalast, where an audience was assembled to listen to the routine exhortations to give to the Nazi Winter Relief Charity. The first row of seats in the dimly lit hall was reserved for wounded men, and they sat a few yards from Hitler w/ their crutches stretched out in front of them pointing towards their leader. There were the usual pleas for the German public to dig deep into their pockets. But so buoyant were Hitler's spirits w/ the news from Russia that he could not resist sharing it w/ his audience. He had come, he told them, from "the greatest battle in the history of the world." The plan had worked. The Soviet enemy was beaten "and would never rise again." He detailed the evidence: over **2 million** Soviet prisoners, **22,000** artillery pieces seized or smashed, **18,000** tanks destroyed, **14,500** acft shot down. Cheers echoed around the hall. (94; also, *J. Towland, Adolf Hitler*, 684)

10.10.41: Hitler's press chief, Otto Dietrich, was sent to Berlin from Hitler's HQ to tell not just the German people but the whole world that Germany had won. On **10 Oct 41**, in the richly decorated Theatre Hall of the Propaganda Ministry in Berlin, the foreign press corps had gathered. There was an air of suspense, exaggerated by the long, probably deliberate, delay in starting the proceedings. German officials stood at the front, all in uniform, even those whose office was entirely civilian.

At last Dietrich emerged, grinning w/ self-importance. The red velvet curtains behind him were drawn back, revealing a vast map of the Soviet front that dwarfed the huddle of Germans in front of it. Dietrich echoed Hitler, whose words he read. The last remnants of the Red Army were now trapped in two steel vices, tightened day by day by German forces; their destruction, Dietrich continued, was assured. Beyond them was simply undefended space, which German legions were poised to fill. Neutral pressmen in the audience looked glum. The rest, newspapermen from Germany's allies, rose and cheered, their arms outstretched in salute. The next day German newspapers confirmed the tidings: CAMPAIGN IN THE EAST DECIDED! THE GREAT HOUR HAS STRUCK! In Berlin the faces showed the relief. Bookshops began to display Russian grammars in their windows to serve the officials and colonists of the new German empire. (95; also, *H.K. Smith, Last Train from Berlin*, 59-64)

10.10.41 [Zhukov takes command]: On **8 Oct 41** Stalin had sacked the commanders of the encircled Western Front and Reserve Front (which Zhukov had left in **Sep 41**), and on **10 Oct 41** placed all Soviet forces before Moscow under Zhukov's command. Only Zhukov's intervention prevented Stalin from treating the sacked Konev as he had treated Pavlov. Konev became Zhukov's deputy.

When Zhukov took charge there were in his command only **90,000** men between the Germans and Moscow, all that was left of the **800,000** men that had started the battle in **Sep 41**. His priority was to strengthen the Mozhaisk defense line, a weakly held system some **60** miles from the centre of Moscow. A second line of defense was built in a semi-circle around the city itself, **10** miles from the centre. It was built, like the Leningrad fortifications, by hundreds of thousands

of women and children, who were drafted to dig ditches and construct tank traps, fire points and rough barricades. (113)

Nov 41: For Overy's colorful account of the ceremonies in Moscow marking the anniversary of the revolution in **1917**, see pp 114-15.

ab 15.11.41: German's launch second phase of attack on Moscow. According to Overy, Zhukov had very limited forces to hold the attack. His line now had **240,000** men. There were **500** tanks for the whole front, and many of them were light tanks out of their depth on the modern battlefield. The initial defense of Moscow was conducted not w/ fresh troops from the Siberian hinterland but w/ a scratch force made up from the fragments of defeated units, non-combatants from the rear services, Moscow militia and hastily trained men from the townships around the capital. Effort was made to concentrate mobile units in "shock" armies, rather than parcel them out. Zhukov organized a tighter and more co-ordinated battlefield and did not lose contact w/ his forces, as had happened in earlier campaigns. Soviet commanders now understood more clearly the nature of German tactics. (116)

30.11.41: Early in the morning Stalin telephoned Zhukov w/ orders to mount a Soviet counter-offensive to end the threat to Moscow. Zhukov protested that he had neither the men nor the wpons, but Stalin would not be moved. Later that day Zhukov arrived w/ General Belov at the Kremlin. Walking briskly past bomb craters, the two men entered the underground bunker, which crawled w/ security men. At the end of a long corridor they entered a brightly lit room. Stalin was waiting to receive them. Belov, who had last seen Stalin in **1933**, was *staggered at his changed appearance*. The public image was of a political giant, tough, brilliant, decisive. In front of him he found a quite different Stalin: "a short man w/ a tired, haggard face. In eight years he seemed to have aged twenty. His eyes had lost their old steadiness; his voice lacked assurance." He looked at Zhukov's plans but merely nodded approval. There were no angry interventions. Stalin was still Supreme Cdr, but the balance between the leader and his generals was slowly tilting their way.

The counteroffensive was planned for the first week of **Dec 41**. . . Entirely unknown to the enemy, the STAVKA had been holding in reserve no less than **12** armies for just such a strike. Some had been deployed in **Nov 41** to hold the front line before Moscow. While these divisions were expected to fight to the very limit, 58 new divisions were held behind the front, some of them withdrawn from eastern Russian, to strengthen the counterstroke. . . The recruitment and training of whole new armies took the German command entirely by surprise. It was *not the tough winter conditions that halted the German army but the remarkable revival of Soviet military manpower after the terrible maulings of the summer and autumn*. (117-18)

13.12.41: The population of Moscow is told the news that the German threat to encircle the capital is over. (120)

Jan-Mar 42: When Zhukov was summoned to Stalin's study in the Kremlin on **5 Jan 42**, he argued against the idea of a general offensive, but everyone else present stayed reverently silent. The offensive stood. In **Feb-Mar 42** Stalin hounded his commanders to move faster and harder. Offensives were launched to relieve Leningrad, to encircle Army Group Centre and to liberate the industrial heartlands of the Ukraine. All failed, and at a terrible cost. A further **444,000** Soviet soldiers perished, for the loss of **80,000** Germans, an indication that the offensive was *rich in manpower but poor in weaponry*. The Soviet war machine was *woefully deficient in the wpons and equipment needed to inflict decisive defeats*. The Battle of Moscow allowed

Stalin to fight another day, but it was *not the turning point of the war, as is so often asserted*. . .

The counter-offensive did have one enduring effect. The areas liberated from German occupation showed ordinary Soviet soldiers the nature of the war they were fighting. They found village after village torched or blown up. . .¹³² Wherever the Red Army came they found the grisly evident of atrocities. . .

The discovery of atrocities altered the mood of the troops. . . Russian culture was a target as well. Museums and galleries were looted. The great Tsarist palaces, preserved for the people by the new republic, were pillaged. The monuments to the great figures of Russian music and literature were defiled. At Tolstoy's estate, Yasnaya Polyana, *manuscripts were burned as fuel*, and the Germans buried their dead around the great man's grave; Tchaikovsky's house was ransacked and used as a motorbike garage.¹³³ (122-24)

3.11.2: Zhukov. The Conqueror of Berlin, John Colvin (Notes):

Full name = Georgi Konstantinovich Zhukov.

In **Oct 41**, Zhukov was **44** years old. He died of a stroke on **18 Jun 74**. (21)

Forward (Maj.-Gen. Julian Thompson):

Zhukov was arguably the most distinguished Allied commander in the Second World War. Even before the outbreak of the "Great Patriotic War," Zhukov could be found wherever danger loomed. One could call him Stalin's "Fireman." (13)

Zhukov was the son of a village cobbler. In **1915**, aged **19**, he was drafted into the cavalry, speedily promoted to junior sergeant, and twice awarded the St George's Cross (the equivalent of the American Purple Heart, a decoration given for being wounded). He joined the Red Army in **1918** and Communist Party in **1919**, and fought in the Civil War as a company and squadron commander.

Zhukov was wounded twice more in the bitter fighting of the Civil War. . . He was clearly marked out for high command during his service in the **1920s** and **1930s**. He was a member of the Soviet mission to the Spanish loyalists (communists by another name) in the Spanish Civil War. Fortunately for his country, and perhaps for his own survival, he *did not draw the wrong lesson from the Spanish experience*. One of his fellow members on the mission, General D.G. Pavlov, concluded that large armored formations were impractical, contrary to the current teachings of Marshal Tukhachevsky. Although Zhukov had earlier criticized Tukhachevsky's handling of the **1935** military manoeuvres, he did not support Pavlov's views.

During the military purges of the late **1930s**, during which Tukhachevsky was executed, the beady eyes of the NKVD interrogators lit on Zhukov for a time, but after he sent telegrams to Marshal Voroshilov and Stalin complaining about his treatment, *he was troubled no further*.

¹³² **Note:** Of course, the Soviets were the first to implement a scorched earth policy as they withdrew. During the winter fighting, they destroyed more villages as official military policy to deny their "comforts" to the Germans. The Germans, of course, returned the favor.

¹³³ **Note:** Here, Overy cites Nicholas, Rape of Europa, pp 193-94. Guderian and others on German side vigorously deny that Tolstoy's estate was in any way desecrated.

Why Zhukov escaped when so many others died, often after hideous torture, is, as John Colvin explains, not clear. Colvin offers a number of reasons, including, quixotic though it may sound, Stalin's predilection for cavalry officers following his, Stalin's, service w/ the cavalry in the Civil War. (14-15)

Zhukov's chance came in mid-1939 w/ his appointment to command the **57 Special Corps**, renamed **First Army Group**, to repel a Japanese invasion of Mongolia. At Khalkin Gol, he serverely defeated the Japanese in a classic all-arms battle of encirclement w/ air support, an augury for the Red Army battles to come. His success brought the first of his four awards of the Hero of the Soviet Union, and promotion to full general. . . (15)

1941-45: Zhukov began war as Chief of the General Staff. Later, he was sent to Leningrad to restore the situation when all appeared lost. He masterminded the counter-attack at Moscow. He was actively engaged on several fronts in the crucial period of the Great Patriotic War at Stalingrad, Leningrad, Kursk and on the river Dnieper. His reward was promotion to Marshal of the Soviet Union. He was responsible for coordinating the brilliant Operation Bagration, which ended in the destruction of German Army Group Centre. At end of war it was one of Zhukov's formations – the **8. Gds Army** under Vassily Chuikov – which took the Reichstag in the heart of Berlin. Finally, Zhukov was the first to sign the German surrender document in Berlin on **8 May 45**. . . (15-16)

Zhukov's total professionalism, his ruthlessness and his physical and moral courage made him a remarkable man. No Western Allied generals in the Second World War ever bore the weight of responsibility that he carried. . . (17)

End Forward.

* * * *

(**Note:** Calvin's account of opening weeks of "Barbarossa" is brief and desultory, w/ little of value; ditto his account of Battle of Moscow.)

Harrison Salisbury said that Zhukov was:

The master of disaster, the general who was sent in when all else failed, whose terrible temper, iron will and savage determination which wore men down, somehow succeeded in bringing the German war machine to a grinding halt. Each of his great engagements was in the Zhukov pattern. Each time, he directed enormous masses of troops, a million men and more. Each was marked by huge casualties, brilliant staff work, lavish use of artillery and armor and deployment of masses of infantry. *There was nothing nice, nothing gentle about Zhukov's tactics.* . . few warm passages in Russian memoirs about kind deeds, thoughtful encouragement, friendly comfort given by Zhukov, 'except over the old bereaved woman in Medyn, a significant exception. But there is story after story of his terrible threats. (92-93)

Rokossovsky said of him:

Zhukov was always a man of strong will and decisiveness, brilliant and gifted, demanding, firm and purposeful. . . it is true that his toughness exceeded what

was permissible. . . for example, in the heat of the fighting around Moscow, Zhukov sometimes displayed unjustified sharpness. (92)

Chronology:

29.7.41: Zhukov visited Stalin in his study in the Kremlin, a light, spacious room w/ stained oak panelling on which hung maps and portraits of Marx, Engels, Suvorov and Kutuzov. It contained hard chairs and a long table w/ a green cloth. The dictator was slight, but imposing, lacking any affectation or mannerisms. He preferred not to sit, but to pace the room slowly, stopping to look his interlocutor straight in the eye. He used to hold his pipe, not always lit, and stroke his moustache w/ it. . . He worked mainly at night, hardly ever rising before noon, either in his apartment or in his *dacha*. . . (71)

5.-7.10.41: On **5 Oct 41**, the Supreme Commander ordered Zhukov to return to Moscow [i.e., from Leningrad] to discuss the “rectification of the left wing” of the Reserve Front near Yukhnov, **80** miles from Moscow, where a German armored column had been seen advancing on the city. His departure, due to the failure of Kulik’s 54 Army in the North and the necessity to appoint General Khozin as Kulik’s successor, had to be postponed until **7 Oct 41**. On arrival at Stalin’s residence in Moscow, *he found the dictator, who had ’flu, discussing what Zhukov later deduced were potential negotiations for peace w/ Germany through Beria’s covert contacts, the Bulgarian embassy and probably others.*

Stalin told him to inspect thoroughly the situation on the Western Front. They first called on the Chief of the General Staff, Shaposhnikov. (“Telephone me,” added Stalin, “at any hour of the day or night.”) Shaposhnikov told Z. that he himself was very tired. He looked it. So did – when Z. found them after a long car journey that same night – Generals Koniev, commanding the Western Front, V.D. Sokolovsky, N.A. Bulganin and G.K. Malandin, Chief of Front HQ Operations Division. All, exhausted, were seated round a table in semi-darkness, lit only by candles, in a forest beyond a bridge at Protva, **60** miles from Moscow. (86-87)

8.-10.10.41: At **0230** on **8 Oct 41**, Zhukov telephoned Stalin to tell him of the catastrophe at Vyazma, stressing that the immediate danger to Moscow was at Mozhaisk. “The panzers could arrive in Moscow at any time.” No one knew where Budenny was; Zhukov, accompanied only by his driver, both sleepy, went off in the fog and rain to find him in the area of Maloyaroslavets. . . During his search, Zhukov passed by his birthplace at Strelkovka, occupied and fired two weeks later by the *Wehrmacht*, then to become a partisan base. Before that event, he had just time, through an adjutant, to evacuate to Moscow his mother, sister and her **4** children, his father having recently died.

When Zhukov reached Maloyaroslavets, he found two cars outside the District Committee office that turned out to belong to Marshal Budenny. The latter had been in the building for some hours after having escaped capture near Vyazma. Zhukov, w/ unaccustomed courtesy, invited him to return to Front HQ and report by telephone to the Supreme Command. He himself went on to Kaluga. En route, he met a tank brigadier named Troitsky who had served w/ him in the **11. Tank Bde** at Khalkin Gol. Troitsky told him that the enemy was about to occupy Yukhnov, confirmation of the original news that had caused Stalin to take Zhukov out of Leningrad in the first instance. Troitsky had had no orders for two days. Zhukov enjoined him to deploy part of his brigade in the defense of Medyn, and to report to Budenny and the General Staff, while he (Zhukov) proceeded to Kaluga via Yukhnov. . . Stalin found Zhukov back at Front

HQ on **10 Oct 41**, where his telephoned promotion to command of the Western Front was received. (88-89)

1.2.42: On this day, Zhukov accepted from Stalin the posts as C-in-C both of the Western Front and, now, of the reborn Western Direction. In considering the recent past. . . Zhukov attributed the absence of a decisive victory to the *shortage of tanks*. “Only w/ powerful tanks and mechanized formations is it possible to outmanoeuvre the enemy, outflank him quickly, penetrate his rear and surround and cut up his units.”

Stalin’s role [i.e., in the winter counteroffensive], in Zhukov’s view, had been that of a great organizer. But in his errors over concentration as opposed to “devolution,” such as weakening main forces by removing the **1. Shock** and **30. Armies**, he had made unwise decisions. The Moscow campaign, Zhukov said, “changed the Red Army from a retreating, defensive to a mighty attacking force. . .”

It was the greatest of all his victories. (102)

3.11.3: Zhukov. The Rise and Fall of a Great Captain, William J. Spahr (Notes):¹³⁴

Note: In **1969**, Timoshenko recalled Zhukov and the way he dealt w/ Stalin: “You know Zhukov was the *only person who feared no one*. He was *not afraid of Stalin*. He protected me more than once from Stalin. Especially in the early period of the war. He was a brave man.” (59)

Note: The policy of *glasnost*’ hs permitted the exposure of the considerable revisions that Zhukov’s memoirs underwent prior to their publication in **1969**. The conditions of *glasnost*’ have also allowed the revelation of the details of episodes in Z.’s career not covered in his memoirs – his military exile in **1946**, his disgrace in **1957**, and his enforced silence and isolation until his death in **1974**. From **1946-53** he was banished to the command of secondary military districts. Then, following the death of the dictator Josef Stalin, Z. seemingly recovered his position, becoming Minister of Defense and the first military professional to become a member of the Soviet Politburo. His new prominence did not continue for long. In **1957** Stalin’s successor, Nikita Khrushchev, accused Z. of Bonapartism and removed him from his party and government positions, forcing him into early retirement and isolation. (xiii)

15.5.41 [Preventiv War]: Anatolii Ivanov-Skuratov argues that Zhukov as chief of the General Staff knew the state of readiness of the Soviet Army. If he was only proposing the launching of a preventive strike on **15 May 41**, then prior to that time there was no such plan. Suvorov’s theories therefore fall apart because they were based on preparations said to be in train long before that date. Ivanov-Skuratov judges that the plan was not adopted by Stalin, otherwise his conduct in the early days of the war would have been very different. One can add that if there was such a plan, Soviet Army artillery would have been w/ its infantry and tank units and not *collected in summer training camps where it was on 22 Jun 41*. **Contingency planning** is a normal function of general staffs; in fact, it is surprising that such a plan was not developed until **May 41**, considering conditions existing in eastern Europe in **1941**. . . The historian Aleksandr Nekrich has no doubt that Stalin intended to participate in the European war at an appropriate

¹³⁴ **Note:** Zhukov’s memoirs first published by Novotsi in **1969**; since then there have been **9** subsequent Russian editions and the work has been translated into **17** languages. In **1990**, the **10th Russian edition** was published in **3** volumes; it includes, according to its publishers, the material that was excised from the original manuscript. This final edition is one used by Spahr.

time but that **1941** was not that time. The military buildup that was under way in the Soviet Union was to reach its fruition in **1942** or **1943**. (48)

22.-30.6.41: Stalin appeared to recover quickly from his initial depression and by **1300** hours, **22 Jun 41**, ordered Zhukov to Kiev (at Khrushchev's request) as representative of the staff of the commander in chief (the Stavka). He also told Zhukov that he had sent Marshalls Shaposhnikov and Kulik to the Western Front w/ separate instructions. . . Late on the evening of **26 Jun 41**, Stalin ordered Z. to return to Moscow to help restore the catastrophic situation of the Western Front. There, a combination of the unanticipated weight of the initial German thrusts, the systematic disruption of Front communications caused by air strikes, German diversionary operations, incompetent staff work, and the faulty forward dispositions of the Soviet defenders had completely overwhelmed the limited command capabilities of the Front's commander, D.G. Pavlov. In his memoirs, excerpts are provided on **27-28** and **30 Jun 41**; they demonstrate that neither Pavlov nor his chief of staff had a clear view of the situation. . . On **30 Jun 41**, Stalin ordered Pavlov relieved and recalled to Moscow. A.I. Eremenko replaced him initially and in early **Jul 41** Marshal Timoshenko took command of the Front. . . When Pavlov returned to Moscow he was almost unrecognizable, his physical appearance had changed so much. (53-54)

Sep 41 [Kiev Kesselschlacht]: The Germans claimed to have taken **665,000** prisoners in the Kiev encirclement. Postwar, pre-glasnost' Soviet historians, citing the strength of the Front at the beginning of the operation, the losses suffered during the operation, and the number of troops who escaped through the encirclement, claim that *the number of prisoners taken could not have been more than a third of that number*. (61)

5.-10.10.41: On **5 Okt 41**, Stalin called Zhukov on the *bodo* (a secure telegraph system that linked the STAVKA and the General Staff w/ the Front and field army commanders) and asked if he could return to Moscow immediately to discuss the situation on the left flank of the Reserve Front. Although Zhukov said he could return the next day, he actually did not leave until **7 Oct 41** because of a problem w/ **54. Army**. . . He arrived in Moscow to find Stalin suffering from the grippe and irritated by the lack of information about the situation on the Western Front. Stalin was finishing a conversation w/ Beriia when Z. entered and overheard him tell Beriia to try to make approaches thru his agents – in the case of a crisis – and to take soundings of the possibilities and conditions for concluding peace. Zhukov did not realize until later that *Stalin was talking about making peace w/ the Germans!* The man of steel was apparently losing his nerve again.

After describing the difficult situation as he knew it, Stalin ordered Z. to go immediately to the HQ of Western Front, find out exactly what the situation was, and call him from there at any time of the day or night. Zhukov stopped at the General Staff, picking up a map showing the current situation on the Western Axis and a cup of strong tea from its chief, Marshal Shaposhnikov, then proceeded by car to the HQ of Western Front. He and his security group used two vehicles for the trip: a Buick and an all-terrain vehicle. Arriving there after dark, he found the Front commander, General I.S. Konev, and his staff, huddled by candlelight over a situation map. . .

At **0230** Zhukov reported the situation to Stalin. In response to the dictator's questions he had to admit that four [**4**] armies were in a German pocket west and NW of Viaz'ma. He then set off to find Budennyi and the HQ of the Reserve Front, reported to be somewhere in the vicinity of Maloiaroslavets. When Zhukov located the HQ, at the former estate of the sugar baron Savva Morozov, near the Oblenskoe way station, he found that Budennyi was missing and Lev Mekhlis

(representative of the STAVKA) had taken charge. He was trying to collect and reorganize the retreating units of the Front.

Zhukov obtained little new information from Mekhlis. (**Note:** Apparently, relations between Z. and Mekhlis were “strained.”) . . . Zhukov left Reserve Front HQ and headed toward Iukhnov, still searching for Budennyi. The surrounding countryside was familiar to him; his birthplace, Strelkovka, was within **10 km** of Obninsk. His mother, sister, and his sister’s four children were there and he was worried about how they would be treated by the invaders if it was discovered that they were related to Zhukov. He thought about going to them immediately, but decided he did not have time now when the entire Western Front was collapsing. He resolved to take them to Moscow at the first opportunity. (As it turned out, the region was occupied by the Germans w/in two weeks, but by that time he had moved his family to Moscow. When the Germans retreated in **1942**, the village of Strelkovka was destroyed and his mother’s house was burned to the ground.)

Zhukov finally found Budennyi studying a map in a local government office in Maloiaroslavets. He had had no communication w/ Konev and Western Front for 48 hours, nor did he know where his own HQ was located. Budennyi could only confirm what Zhukov already knew, that two of his armies were cut off. Zhukov directed Budennyi to return to his HQ (which he located for him) and to report the situation to STAVKA. Meanwhile, Zhukov would continue to reconnoiter the situation in the direction of Iukhnov. Finding that Iukhnov was already in enemy hands and that there was fighting in progress around Kaluga, Zhukov moved toward that city. He was found by a liaison officer who had a telegram from the chief of the General Staff conveying Stalin’s order to return to the HQ of Western Front.

Stalin called soon after Zhukov’s arrival there and told him that he was to be the new commander of Western Front. The retreating units of Reserve Front were also to be incorporated into his command. Konev was to be his deputy. At least that is the version published in Zhukov’s memoirs. In one of his interviews w/ Konstantin Simonov, Zhukov related that in that same telephonic conversation, Stalin told him Konev was to be tried by a military court martial after a government commission, headed by Molotov, completed its investigation. Zhukov protested that another trial would only have a negative effect on the army. He recalled that the execution of D.G. Pavlov had not helped the situation at the beginning of the war. Pavlov did not have the capability to command anything larger than a division and everyone knew it. . . Konev, however, was more capable than Pavlov. Zhukov proposed Konev remain as his deputy. . . Stalin agreed. Zhukov sent Konev to command the far right wing of the Front. (64-68)

Nov 41: Stalin ordered Zhukov to conduct two preemptive attacks on the flanks of the Western Front, intended to upset German preparations to renew their offensive. When Zhukov demurred, citing the absence of reserves and the length of his front, Stalin cut him off and ordered the attacks to proceed. . . The attacks were undertaken by **16 Army** (Rokossovskii) and **49 Army** (Zakharkin), but they did not upset the offensive plans of the Germans. On **15 Nov 41**, they threw **300 tanks** against **30 Army** of the Kalinin Front and continued on toward Klin the next day. There were no Soviet reserves in that area because they had been used and tied up by the enemy in the unsuccessful counterattack ordered by Stalin.

On **16 Nov 41**, the Germans also launched a 4-division attack in the Volokolamsk area; by **27 Nov 41** they had taken the city of Volokolamsk but did not break thru the deeply echeloned Soviet defenses beyond that point. . .

On the southern flank, the German attacks resumed on **18 Nov 41**. By **26 Nov 41**, the Germans had enveloped Tula and cut the rail and highway links between that city and Moscow. By the **30th**, heavy Soviet resistance and counterattacks had halted the German drive and in some areas had pushed it to the SE.

At the same time, the German advance on the northern flank continued. On **23 Nov 41**, the invaders entered Klin; on the **25th**, the Soviet **16 Army** retreated from Solnechnogorsk; and, on the **29th**, a German tank unit crossed the Moscow-Volga-Canal in the area of Iakhroma, where it was halted by forward elements of the **1. Shock Army**. The situation was in Zhukov's words, "extraordinarily complicated." (74-75)

Nov 41 [Dedovsk Incident]: The situation and the tension it engendered in the high command are given by Zhukov as the reason for the dictator's explosive temper, which resulted in unreasonable orders and unnecessary casualties. Zhukov recalled Stalin's ire when he received a report that the city of Dedovsk had been lost to the enemy and then found that Zhukov was unaware of it. When Z. investigated, he discovered some confusion in the report – the village of Dedovo had been taken, not the city of Dedovsk. When Z. attempted to rectify the error, the dictator became even angrier; he ordered Zhukov to go to the area, taking w/ him the army commander, Rokossovskii, and also the commander of the adjacent army, L.A. Govorov, an experienced artilleryman, and help Rokossovskii organize the recapture of the village. Thus, two army commanders and the Front commander were ordered to plan an operation that was successfully executed by a company of infantry and two tanks. [!] (75)

6.-16.12.41: As early as **29 Nov 41**, Zhukov assessed the German situation as critical. He asked Stalin to subordinate two of the reserve armies to the Western Front for a counteroffensive. . . The Western Front counterattacks, which began on **6 Dec 41**, had the relatively modest objective of driving back the invaders **20-30** kilometers. But they began the very night that Guderian issued an order to withdraw to defensive positions on the Upper Don, the Shat, and the Upa – ca. **80** kilometers SW of Moscow. Hoepner also began to retreat. . . Considering the condition of the invaders and the fact that the Red Army had been reinforced since the German thrust on Moscow began in **Oct 41**, the *initial Soviet gains were modest*. But by **16 Dec 41**, the left wing of the Front had driven Guderian's **2 Pz Army** back almost **130** kilometers. The German armored strike forces had also yielded Solnechnogorsk, Klin and Kalinin. Zhukov later admitted that at the start of their offensive actions he and his staff did not expect the successes that these counterattacks achieved. The counterattacks of **1 Shock Army** and Liziukov's operational group contributed to the development of a broader counteroffensive.

Zhukov at this juncture believed that the Western Front should have been reinforced w/ two more armies, and the offensive continued w/ the aim of forcing the Germans back to the positions they had held in **Oct 41**. The Supreme Cdr, however, under the influence of the victories before Moscow, had become very optimistic. Stalin decided on a *general offensive along the entire front*. (80-81)

Jan-Apr 42: The Western Front, when the offensive resumed on **10 Jan 42**, was given the mission of executing a double envelopment of Army Group Centre. Viaz'ma was to be the meeting place of the northern and southern wings of the Front. The offensive failed. By the end of **Apr 42**, what Zhukov had said in January had become painfully apparent at the front. Ammunition stocks had been reduced to the point where the *daily expenditure of rounds per artillery piece was one or two*. [!] As early as **14 Feb 42**, the Western Front reported to the Supreme High Commander [i.e., Stalin] in writing, that the shortage of ammunition was causing

the attacking Red Army troops to suffer “very heavy losses” while not achieving corresponding successes.

The second phase of the Moscow offensive was not fought w/o serious disagreements w/ the Supreme High Commander. Soon after the offensive had started, on **19 Jan 42**, Stalin ordered that the **1 Shock Army** be placed in the reserve of the High Command. When Zhukov and his chief-of-staff, Sokolovskii, protested to the General Staff, they were told that this was a personal decision of Stalin. Zhukov called Stalin and was told to remove the army from his command “w/o any conversation.” When Z. continued to protest, Stalin told him that he had many troops and that he should count the number of armies he had. Stalin then hung up. . . The official histories of the war attribute this decision to an underestimation by the High Command of the steps the Germans had taken to restore the morale and capabilities of their forces. Judging that the right flank of Zhukov’s Western Front had adequate forces, the decision was made to transfer **1 Shock Army** to the Northwest Front. There the Soviets had succeeded in almost surrounding a large body of German troops around Demiansk, and Stalin was anxious to complete their destruction.

The result was that the Red Army did not succeed on either front. The northern wing of Western Front was halted before Gzhatsk by **25 Jan 42**; and the Northwest Front did not complete the liquidation of the Demiansk salient during the remainder of **1942**. Underestimation of the restorative capability of the German Army also led to the encirclement and eventual destruction near Viaz’ma of a Soviet strike force. The recapture of Viaz’ma, an important rail and highway center, was the major Soviet objective of the counteroffensive. In late **Jan 42**, an operation utilizing parachute units, cavalry, and **3** divisions of **33 Army** led by the army commander, M.G. Efremov, attempted to take the city by *coup de main*. As units of **33 Army** approached the city, the Germans closed what had been a gap in their defenses behind the attacking Soviet units and reestablished a strong defensive position thru which the Soviets could neither return to the main forces nor be reinforced or resupplied (except by air). The encircled Soviet troops joined forces w/ partisan detachments in the area, managing to disrupt German rear area operations for two months. Some of the cavalry and parachute troops were able to fight their way out of the encirclement by taking an indirect route back to their own lines. Efremov, against Zhukov’s strong protest, attempted to break out over a more direct route. He was cut off and eventually committed suicide to avoid capture. . . Lt-Gen. Efremov shot himself on either **17** or **18 Apr 42**.¹³⁵

The **29 Army** of the Kalinin Front had a similar experience during this phase of the offensive. It attacked early in **Feb 42** along w/ **11 Cav Corps** and **39 Army** and reached the approaches to Viaz’ma, only to be cut off and surrounded. The remnants of the army – **5200** men of whom **800** were wounded – managed to rejoin the main forces in late **Feb 42**. . .

During the period of the counteroffensive ordered by Stalin (**20 Jan – Apr 42**) **948,000** casualties were sustained. (**Note:** The counterattacks during **Dec 41** cost **297,000** men.) In the opinion of Russian military historians, a *fundamental reason for these losses was the conduct of infantry*

¹³⁵ **Note:** For fascinating account of the plight of Efremov’s **33 Army** – including article written in early **1990s** by Efremov’s son, now retired Col. M. M. Efremov, criticizing Zhukov’s “rash” decision to throw the army into the gap in the German position – see, pp 86-87. Survivors and their relatives (who call themselves Efremovites – *Efremovtsy*) over the years have combed the areas south of Viaz’ma for artifacts and the bodies of their colleagues, friends and loved ones in efforts to reconstruct the epic of the **33 Army**. Among relatives, a prime motivation is to remove the stigma of “missing in action” from their loved one’s name. . .

attacks w/o artillery support. These attacks were ordered despite a STAVKA directive against the practice. That the attacks continued and the losses mounted was not due to a lack of competence among the military leadership. . . They were due to the fact that in **1941** and early **1942** the military economy of the country could not meet the requirements of the forces for ammunition, artillery, tanks, trucks and other equipment and was not able to until later in the year **1942**. This was precisely what Zhukov tried to tell Stalin before the counteroffensive started in early **Jan 42**. (83-89)

1 Feb 42: From this day forward, the overall direction of these operations around Viaz'ma was the responsibility of Zhukov, who became commander of the reconstituted Western Axis on that date. Under this arrangement, Zhukov retained command of Western Front w/ F.I. Golikov as his deputy Front commander; while the Kalinin Front, under Konev, was also part of his command. (87)

3.11.4: Grand Delusion. Stalin and the German Invasion of Russia. Gabriel Gorodetsky (Notes):

Note: In section of his book, "Hitler Opts for War," Gorodetsky places Hitler's decision to make war on Russia directly in the context of Balkan politics – more specifically, German and Russian jockeying for influence. Both countries wooing Bulgaria, while Russia refused to accept German predominance in Rumania. Writes G.:

In the midst of the haggling over Bulgaria the Danubian Conference resumed its sittings. The Russians persevered and in the early hours of the morning of **17 Dec 40** Berlin was informed of the deadlock. The Russians had presented a written statement which bluntly rejected the joint German-Italian mediation, further declaring their intentions of establishing exclusive control jointly w/ the Rumanians over the mouth of the Danube, effectively controlling the exit to the Black Sea. In Berlin this was received w/ "astonishment." The positions were "irreconcilable" and negotiations were "for the present exhausted." Hitler brought about the immediate adjournment of the conference. Keen observers accurately judged the collapse of the negotiations to be "the first clash of vital interests between U.S.S.R. and Germany and therefore of first importance." A similar trend was traced to Finland, where Soviet interference in the Finnish elections indicated that they were determined to keep the country under direct control.

It was no coincidence, therefore, that the *decision on the implementation of Directive No. 21, Operation "Barbarossa,"* was taken on the morning after the collapse of the negotiations. . . The specific political, diplomatic and military context in which the decision was taken *casts serious doubt on its ideological dimensions*. Though the economic advantages were taken into consideration, the operation clearly did not aim at creating Lebensraum, as the hinterland had already been established in the Balkans and in the rest of occupied Europe. The purpose was "to establish a cover against Asiatic Russia from the general line Volga – Archangel," thereby eliminating the potential Russian threat but more specifically allowing the completion of the campaign against Europe, in other words securing the exclusive German domination of Europe. . . (85-86)

Preventive War? The suggestion is occasionally made that the Soviet mobilization in **Mar 41** prompted the implementation of Operation “Barbarossa.” We have seen the complex circumstances in which the decisions were taken [i.e., the Russo-German competition in Balkans, etc.]. It should be borne in mind that the planning for “Barbarossa” was from its beginning an offensive initiated by the Wehrmacht that *completely overlooked the magnitude of the undertaking and arrogantly underestimated the capabilities of the opponent*. In comparison w/ previous campaigns, Hitler assured Keitel, the war w/ Russia would be “like child’s play in a sand-box.” Consequently, Hitler and the German military *a priori* ruled out the possibility of a Russian pre-emptive strike. Gen.-Maj. Erich Marcks, who was entrusted w/ the drafting of the earlier version of the plan, even complained that the Red Army would not do the Germans “the courtesy of attacking.”

The presentation of the war as a preventive measure was first adopted by Hitler in his statement to Stalin on the launching of the war as well in his address to the army on that same day. He repeated it in **Oct 41**, when in inaugurated an appeal for winter clothing for the soldiers of the Russian front, explaining apologetically that in **May 41** “the situation was so threatening that there could no longer be any doubt that Russia intended to fall upon us at the first opportunity.” . . . Hitler repeated in **May 42** that if he “had listened to his badly informed generals and waited, and the Russians, in accordance w/ these plans of theirs, had stolen a march on us, there would have been hardly a chance of stopping their tanks on the well-constructed road system of Central Europe.”

The presentation of the war as a preventive one was naturally rehabilitated by some of the German generals at the Nuremberg trials. In the appropriate atmosphere of the budding Cold War, they sought to justify their own enthusiastic preparations for “Barbarossa” by claiming that they had supported Hitler’s decision to launch a pre-emptive war intended to contain Soviet expansion. However, German intelligence never pointed in this direction. General von Paulus, who would have been only too happy to produce such evidence at Nuremberg, reluctantly admitted that “no preparations whatever for an attack by the Soviet Union had come to our attention.” Guderian’s memoirs pass a similar verdict. . . Nor was German intelligence misled by the clandestine mobilization which it was scrutinizing. It expected the Russians to establish “defensive concentration points,” from which they could be expected at best to launch isolated and limited counter-attacks. . . The idea of a preventive war as a positive element in military doctrine was deeply embedded in the German rather than the Soviet military tradition. (86-88)¹³⁶

15.5.41 [Pre-emptive Strike]: Zhukov’s directive of **15 May 41** for a pre-emptive strike against Germany is of course the centerpiece in the case produced by the “revisionists.” They assume that the plan had originated w/ Stalin himself and was “appropriately signed,” thus proving Soviet

¹³⁶ **Note:** Gorodetsky also addresses the Soviet demobilization plan of **9 May 40**, which he avers is of the “utmost historical significance.” All in all, **686,329** soldiers out of a total of **3,200,000** were to be immediately discharged: “This demonstrates that no master plan for exploiting the attrition of the belligerents for military expansion had existed in the earlier stages of the war.” The war in France abruptly changed Soviet perceptions and produced a major shift in policy. The measures taken by Stalin from mid-**May 40** onwards were triggered by the realization of the growing German menace. . . In his memoirs, Khrushchev vividly depicts the panic that seized Stalin when the news of the occupation of Paris reached the Kremlin; Stalin, he recalled, “let fly w/ some choice Russian curses and said that now Hitler was *sure to beat our brains in*.” (118-19)

strategy to be “offensive,” that is aggressive. And yet the *directive was never even initialled* [i.e., by Stalin, I assume], while the following day Zhukov issued a signed second directive for a defensive deployment of the Red Army in anticipation of a German attack. It is *this directive which, w/ minor alterations, remained in force until 22 Jun 41*. Moreover, a thorough analysis of Zhukov’s proposal divests it of its sinister character. Adopting the highly sophisticated doctrine of “operational art” devised in the mid-**1930s** by the prodigiously talented Generals Tukhachevsky and Triandafilov, the directive called for an *udar*, a well-defined and restricted strike, deep into the rear of the German concentration. It was conceived not as a springboard towards the seizure of the heart of Europe, but as a limited operation aimed at disrupting the German build-up and therefore defensive in nature. (322)

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