

# **Ostfront 1941/42**

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

**Notebook 11:**

***„Stalin & Hitler“***  
*(Additional Notes)*

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

## **Genesis 4:10**

**“And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.”**

## **Revelation 6:8**

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<sup>1</sup> **Note:** Review of Roberts' book by Jonathan M. House (U.S. Army CGSC.), at: [H-War@h-net.msu.edu](mailto:H-War@h-net.msu.edu).

<sup>2</sup> **Note:** In: From Peace to War: Germany, Soviet Russia and the World, 1939-41, Bernd Wegner (ed.), 1991 & 1997.

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<sup>3</sup> **Note:** Toland's book based on more than **250** interviews w/ Hitler's adjutants, secretaries, chauffeur, pilot, his doctors, his favorite warriors, architechts, first forein press secretary, his military leaders, and the women he most admired.

## Notebook 11:

### „Stalin & Hitler“

#### 11.1: Josef Stalin

##### 11.1.1: A History of Modern Europe. John Merriman. 1996/2004.

###### The Rise of Stalin:

During the early **1920s**, the influence of Joseph Stalin rose w/in the party. [**Note:** For background on Stalin's rise to power see, pp 1045-48. Stalin was often arrested for his revolutionary agitation and exiled to Siberia.] *Ruthless political infighting* was “as natural to Stalin as breathing.”

In **Apr 22**, the Central Committee named Stalin to the important, recently created post of general secretary, which allowed him to appoint allies to various important posts and to repress dissent w/in the party. . . In **May 22**, Lenin suffered a stroke. His increasing incapacitation set off a struggle of succession . . . Stalin was thus well placed as a potential successor to Lenin. (1047)

**Dec 22:** A day after suffering another stroke, Lenin dictated his doubts about Stalin: “Comrade Stalin, on becoming general secretary, concentrated *boundless power in his hands*, and I am not sure whether he will always know how to use this power w/ sufficient caution.” Lenin's death in Jan 24 led Stalin to step up his efforts to consolidate his power. Stalin placed his own men on the Central Committee . . . (1048)

**1927:** The Central Committee, w/ Stalin *completely in charge*, voted to expel Trotsky and Zinoviev from the Communist Party and refused to publish Lenin's “Political Testament,” which had suggested that Stalin be replaced as general secretary. The Soviet Union entered the long period of the dictatorship of Joseph Stalin. (1048)

###### Forced Collectivization & Accelerated Industrialization:

After purging the Left Opposition, Stalin openly favored their plan of *accelerated industrialization*. This would be paid for by extracting more resources from the peasantry. In **1928/29**, Stalin resumed the forced requisitioning of “surpluses” and expropriated the land of richer peasants. When this led to *growing peasant opposition*, he took the next step in **1930**: the *forced collectivization* of agriculture – the elimination of private ownership of land and animals. The Five-Year Plan would mark a *complete abandonment of Lenin's New Economic Policy*, which Stalin believed would have allowed capitalism to be restored. (1049)

**1928-33:** The first Five-Year Plan (**1928-33**) led to a bloodbath in the countryside. Hundreds of thousands of peasants who refused to turn over their harvests, animals, or farms were killed. . . Peasants resisted in many ways w/ determination and resourcefulness. There were waves of protest, often led by women. . . Many peasants slaughtered livestock rather than allow them to be taken by the collective farm. The number of horses fell from **36** million in **1929**; to **15** million four [4] years later, cattle from **67** million to **34** million in same period. (1049)

Small plots were forcibly consolidated into collective farms. . . The state supplied machinery, seed and clothing. The free market disappeared, w/ the state establishing production quotas and setting prices. One of the *primary goals* of the collectivization of agriculture was to ***force peasants into industrial labor***. During the first Five-Year Plan, the Soviet Union's industrial and urban populations doubled, as 9 million peasants were conscripted to work in the factories.<sup>4</sup> (1049-50)

The Five-Year Plan ended in **1932** [i.e., not **1933**] (in part because of the effects of peasant resistance) after 4 years and 3 months, w/ **62%** of the peasants now working for the state in collective farms. The campaign continued, though somewhat less brutally; four [**4**] years later, the figure was **93%**. . . Overall, living conditions deteriorated during the Five-Year Plan. . . Hundreds of thousands of peasants had been killed, and perhaps **2** million had been exiled to Siberia or other distant places under the sentence of hard labor. Around **7** million people died of hunger between **1930-33**, and **4-5** million people starved during **1932/33**, most in Ukraine. . . (1050-51)

The campaign for heavy industrialization proceeded successfully, it the human cost is conveniently forgotten. . . The state did meet some ambitious production targets in heavy industry (iron and steel), fuel production (oil and electricity), new industries (esp. chemicals), and in the manufacture of tractors. While a harsh economic depression devastated Western economies, between **1929** and **1934** the Soviet economy may [?] have had an annual growth rate of a remarkable **27%**. . . (1051)

**1933-37:** The second Five-Year Plan (**1933-37**) relied less on the shrill rhetoric of class warfare, despite ongoing collectivization. In the meantime, Stalin reinforced his dictatorship. . . The grandson of a Soviet minister recalled, "*Stalin was like a **God** for us*. Somebody told me that Stalin could be the best surgeon. He could perform a brain operation better than anyone else, and I believed it." (1051)

A poem from the **1930s**, entitled "There Is a Man in Moscow," reflects this bizarre and troubling adulation: (1051)

*Who is that man who appears to the toilers,  
Spreading happiness and joy all around?  
It is Stalin, I shout, so the whole world will hear,  
It is Stalin, our Leader and Friend*

#### Stalin's Purges:

By **1934**, Stalin was no longer content to expel from the party those who did not share his views. . . . As arrests mounted in number, executions replaced sentences of hard labor. . . The first of the great show trials – staged before audiences and cameras – took place in **1936**, the last in **Mar 38**. . . . Children – who could be executed at age **12** [!] – were encouraged to *denounce their parents* for crimes against the state. At least **680,000** people were sentenced to death in **1937/38**, and probably about **1** million people were executed in the camps (in addition to those who died of harsh conditions). Estimates of the number of prisoners in labor camps, colonies, and prisons have ranged from about **1.5** million to **7** million. The included an elderly women sentenced to camp terms for having said things like, "*if people prayed they would work better*." . . . The purges weakened the Soviet armed forces. Among the **30,000** to **40,000** officers who perished, all

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<sup>4</sup> **Note:** In other words, forced collectivization of agriculture and rapid industrialization went hand-in-hand.

8 Soviet admirals were executed, as were 75 of the 80 members of the Supreme Military Council. (1054-55)

Under the rule of Stalin, the Soviet Union's industrial capacity increased dramatically, but at a *terrifying human cost*. (1055)

### 11.1.2.: World War II in Europe. An Encyclopedia. David T. Zabecki (ed.)<sup>5</sup>

Stalin was the absolute dictator of the Soviet Union between 1929 and his death in 1953. His major political accomplishment was to convert Communism in the Soviet Union from what had been a *relatively egalitarian, revolutionary movement into an authoritarian, repressive, and bureaucratic political system*. He established an industrial system that enabled the Soviet Union to defeat Hitler. In accomplishing these ends, he *institutionalized terror to a degree seldom seen in world history*. It is estimated that he had as many as 20 million Soviet citizens murdered in the process. (506)

After Lenin's death, Stalin consolidated his power, driving all of his political rivals out of the party. When he succeeded in expelling Leon Trotsky from the Soviet Union in 1929, Stalin's position became virtually unassailable. (506)

Through a series of brutal five-year plans that enforced collectivism and industrialization, Stalin changed the Soviet Union from a backward agrarian country into a modern industrialized state. During the 1930s, he continued to tighten his grasp on the reins of power by eliminating internal enemies through a series of treason trials and purges. (506)

Foreign policy: In the years before WWII, Stalin's foreign policy was aimed at defending the Soviet Union from the openly expansionist policies of Nazi Germany. When he concluded that a series of treaties negotiated w/ France and Czechoslovakia would not achieve this objective, he decided to deal w/ Germany directly. The result was the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of **Aug 39**, which in a secret protocol agreed to the division of Poland and the placing of the Baltic States under the Soviet sphere of influence. (506)

German-Soviet War: When the German leviathan steamrolled across the Soviet frontier and the Red Army on **22 Jun 41**, Stalin was dumbstruck. For days he dithered in a melancholic daze<sup>6</sup> as the sheer scale of the catastrophe, largely of his own making, became apparent. On **30 Jun 41** his psychological paralysis began to lift as he approved the creation of the overarching State Defense Committee (GoKo),<sup>7</sup> w/ himself as its head. He quickly regained his merciless composure, executing failed Red Army commanders and placing the government on a total war footing. In the meantime, his belief in his own mastery of military affairs and strategy revived – w/ ominous consequences for Red Army operations. (506)

Military Leader: Stalin injected total dominance into military planning. He fostered a deeply held belief, dating from the Civil War, that any dedicated Bolshevik could *master strategy and tactics in a matter of days*. Initially, this resulted in a myriad of orders from Stalin to defend untenable lines or counterattack, orders that meant little to the shattered and encircled forces that

<sup>5</sup> **Note:** This entry prepared by Stephen Donahue.

<sup>6</sup> **Note:** This “conventional wisdom” has been significantly revised in recent years – i.e., Stalin was something more than a “zombie” during first week of war.

<sup>7</sup> **Note:** GKO?

receive them. His appointment to senior commands of incompetent cronies from his Civil War days, Semyon Budenny and Kliment Voroshilov chief among them, exacerbated the spiraling crisis. (506)

By mid-**1942**, Stalin had learned to adopt a more cautious tact to his personal interventions into combat operations. . . The Battle of Stalingrad ended the myth of German invincibility, and the summer campaign of **1943** – and history’s greatest tank battle at Kursk – verified that the war had *reached its strategic turning point*. Despite some early vacillation, Stalin subdued his impulse for a frontal assault and accepted the entrenched, defensive posture advocated by his commanders, who had possession of detailed intelligence regarding the imminent German attack, Operation ZITADELLE. (507)

When the attack came [at Kursk], the German panzer echelons broke against the prepared Soviet positions in what was a *decisive defensive victory*. The resulting [Soviet] counterattack then permanently shifted the strategic initiative to the Soviets. By the end of **Nov 43**, the Red Army had established three [**3**] bridgeheads across the Dnieper River, and was poised for the advance into Eastern Europe and the Balkans. (507)

With Soviet success, however, Stalin returned to his previous single-minded insistence on continuous offensives on broad fronts, instead of the closer assault frontages to spearhead the advance desired by the field commanders. This led to many ill-prepared attacks and resulted in high Red Army casualties. (507)

Stalin’s role as a military commander in **1941/42** was marked by disastrous defeats and enormous battlefield losses, to which he apparently was completely indifferent. Indeed, Zhukov considered Stalin’s worth as a commander primarily in that “he excelled above all as a military economist who knew how to collect reserves even while the front was consuming manpower in gargantuan mouthfuls,” while also deploying those reserves to decisive effect – such as the Soviet counteroffensive at Kursk. Otherwise, the main point in Stalin’s military performance was that by **Sep 42**, *he finally learned to listen to his experts*. Militarily, this is probably *the biggest difference* between Stalin and Adolf Hitler, who never did quite grasp this vital lesson. (507)

Stalin was an uncertain military commander, but his deficiencies in the military realm were overridden by two primary considerations. The first was his *absolute mastery over the apparatus of the Soviet state*. The second was his *keen, overriding feel for grand strategy*; the geopolitical, diplomatic, economic, and industrial factors that defined his wartime and postwar objectives. (507)

Crux: Stalin will most likely be remembered as one of the greatest mass murderers of all time. (507)

### **11.1.3: Stalin’s Wars: From World War to Cold War, 1939-53.** Geoffrey Roberts.<sup>8</sup>

For decades, Cold War politics – and then revisionism – caused historians to emphasize Stalin’s ruthlessness and paranoia, while downplaying his contribution to the war effort. Just as most Germans blamed Adolf Hitler for all their defeats, so Soviet leaders from Khrushchev onward

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<sup>8</sup> **Note:** Review of Roberts’ book by Jonathan M. House (U.S. Army CGSC.)

tended to depict Stalin as a bungling butcher who was saved by the undoubted self-sacrifice of the Soviet peoples.<sup>9</sup>

Geoffrey Roberts, a history professor in Cork, Ireland, has undertaken a systematic review of the dictator's role in both WWII and the ensuing Cold War. In an unusual form of revisionism, Roberts concludes that the *contemporaneous view of Stalin as a **great war leader** was largely justified*. Without minimizing Stalin's mistakes or his paranoia, the author maintains that the dictator was a key factor in the Soviet victory: "Without him the efforts of the [Communist] party, the people, the armed forces and their generals would have been considerably less effective." (p. 373)

To demonstrate his contention, Roberts uses the growing, if still limited, *access to Soviet archives* that historians have been exploiting for over one decade. For example, analysts [sic] of Stalin's official appointments calendar have indicated that he was involved in a series of critical meetings and decisions immediately after the **1941** German invasion, at a time when (according to Khrushchev) the dictator was in shocked depression as a result of the attack.

The author uses a similar source to argue that G.K. Zhukov, the deputy commander in chief, had *exaggerated his own role* in convincing Stalin of the **1942** counterattack plan that eventually destroyed German **6. Army** at Stalingrad. . .

This account *repeatedly endorses the conclusions of **David Glantz*** and others that *Stalin learned to trust the professionalism of his generals*, resulting in a fundamental change in his leadership style.

**11.1.4: Stalin's Wars**. (Jamie Glazov<sup>10</sup> interviews Geoffrey Roberts for: *FrontPage Magazine*, 12 Feb 07)

**FP:** So what inspired you to write this book?

**GR:** I am a historian of the Soviet Union and I specialize in Stalin, Soviet foreign policy, the Great Patriotic War and the Cold War. . . Stalin's Wars is a follow-on to work I did in the **1980s** and early **1990s** on Soviet foreign policy in the **1930s**. the last **15** years or so an *enormous amount of new material on Stalin during the war and early Cold War has become available from Russian archives*. This new material has made possible a major reassessment of Stalin as a war leader and a postwar peacemaker. . . In terms of my personal history the origins of this book date back to the **1970s** when I was a communist activist. . . In the **1980s** my politics changed and I lost interest in discourses centered on the idea of a socialist transformation. . .

**FP:** What is the main argument of your book?

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<sup>9</sup> **Note:** And yet, there remains more than a kernel of truth to this harsh assessment!

<sup>10</sup> **Note:** Glazov's parents were Soviet dissidents. He "grew up sitting at a dinner table that was surrounded by individuals who fought Soviet tyranny and who had been barbarized by Soviet tyranny. I can tell you that none of them were inspired by Stalin's leadership and central role during the war. . ."

**GR:** I argue, firstly, that Stalin was a *highly effective and successful war leader* and I reject many criticisms of his leadership that I see as rooted, on the one hand, in western Cold War polemics, and, on the other hand, in the de-Stalinization campaign in the USSR. I think that Stalin and the Soviets played by far the greatest role in the defeat of Hitler and the Nazis and characterize Stalin as the dictator who, ironically and paradoxically, *saved the world for democracy*.

Secondly, I argue in great detail – and this is the most original and most extensively researched component of my book – that Stalin was very committed to the grand alliance w/ Britain and the United States and wanted to see it continue after the war. While Stalin’s actions contributed to the outbreak of the Cold War, he *strove to avert the breakup of the grand alliance*. . .

**FP:** . . . To say that Stalin saved the world for democracy is also, of course, in no way to suggest that he wanted a world of democracy. . .

**GR:**<sup>11</sup> . . . In Stalin’s case, the truth is that he was a mass murderer and a great war leader who did humanity an immense service in helping to defeat Hitler and the Nazis. . . For me the interesting question is how it was possible for Stalin to be a great war leader AND a mass murder[er]. As is apparent in my book, the answer to this question is that there was *more to the Soviet system and to the Stalin regime than terror and mass repression*. It was a *regime that had a significant degree of popular support* and was capable of evoking great public enthusiasm, not least during the war.<sup>12</sup> It was a system that proved *capable of mobilizing its resources and population in a total war effort* that demanded immense personal sacrifice and which resulted in the greatest military victory in history. Stalin’s leadership and central role in this whole scenario seems to me to be undeniable. . .

**FP:** Well if Stalin did humanity an immense service in helping to defeat Hitler and the Nazis, all I can say is how tragic that someone didn’t do humanity an immense service during Stalin’s reign and help to defeat him and the evil empire that he ruled. . . You state that the Stalinist regime had “a significant degree of popular support. . .” Why someone would praise the Stalinist regime by referring to the ‘support’ it enjoyed amongst a victimized and terrorized populace that was run by a totalitarian evil empire is beyond me.

**GR:** . . . I had and have no illusions about the Soviet system and have never, ever sought to minimize its repressiveness and brutalities. But my research and my conversations w/ many people who lived in the Soviet Union and live in Russia today tells me that among the Soviet people there were a diversity of views and experiences of the Stalinist system, including many who were genuinely inspired by Stalin’s leadership and enthusiastic supporters of his regime.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> **Note:** These comments by Roberts are vitally important, for they get at the heart of the matter of how and why the Soviet Union defeated Hitler’s Germany.

<sup>12</sup> **Note:** Glazov took real issue w/ this contention of Roberts: “.”

<sup>13</sup> **Note:** This is unequivocally true – Stalin did find such support. A good example would be the inspired reaction of so many Russians to his decision to remain in Moscow in mid-**Oct 41**, when German capture of the city appeared imminent. More fundamentally, as Roberts opines, w/o such popular support Stalin’s regime would never have survived the German onslaught. Why he enjoyed the support of so many must lie (in part) in the history and character of the Russian people themselves.

Without that base of popular support the regime would not have survived the war. Violence and terror alone are not sufficient explanations for the durability of the Soviet system. . .

**FP:** Ok, well, let's discuss some of the things you found out as a historian about Stalin. . . In the context of your thesis, what is the angle you take on the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact in 1939?

**GR:** I have written extensively about the Nazi-Soviet pact, beginning w/ my book, The Unholy Alliance: Stalin's Pact w/ Hitler (1989). In Stalin's Wars, I devote two chapters to Soviet-German relations after the pact was signed. These chapters update my previous research and record two important developments in my view of the pact.

Firstly, I'm more inclined to agree that Stalin *contemplated the possibility of a long-term alliance w/ Hitler*, at least until summer 1940 when Nazi-Soviet relations *entered a crisis period* that climaxed w/ the German attack in **Jun 41**. Secondly, I highlight the importance of new evidence from Soviet military archives about the *Red Army's plans for an offensive war against Germany*. This does not mean Stalin was preparing or planning to initiate hostilities w/ Germany but it does mean that when war broke out the Red Army would counter-attack and counter-invade. The great surprise of **22 Jun 41** was not the fact of the German attack itself but the failure of Soviet defenses to hold while the Red Army prepared its own offensive action. This disastrous miscalculation was certainly Stalin's but the responsibility was shared by the members of his High Command who did not believe that the Germans could surprise them the way in which they did.

**FP:** If it is possible to do so briefly, can you give us an insight into who Stalin was [as] a person? What made him tick? . . .

**GR:** Stalin's personality *remains the greatest mystery of all*. For all the new evidence from Russian archives we still *don't know very much about his inner life*.<sup>14</sup> In my book I don't give a systematic presentation and analysis of his personality, allowing instead the different aspects of his character to emerge incrementally in the detailed narrative . . .

The indexer of my book took a different view, however, and drew together all these different elements under the heading of "character," including such descriptors as bully, charm, modesty, paranoia, rages, realism, sadism, humor, shrewdness, simplicity, toughness, vengefulness, will to power and wit. This listing *neatly captures the complexity and contradictions of Stalin as a person* but it also misses the main point I make in the book: that what defined and explained Stalin as a personality was his politics and ideology, particularly concepts of class conflict and class struggle. . . What made Stalin's paranoia, for example, so dangerous, extreme and murderous was its class ideological content.

**FP:** Can you give us an example of one or two of the battles on the Eastern Front in which Stalin can really take credit for playing a decisive role?

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<sup>14</sup> **Note:** Of course, the same could be said for his nemesis – A.H.

**GR:** The obvious example is Moscow in **Oct-Nov 41**. As the Germans approached the city gates Stalin held his nerve and maintained the coherence of his command structure; made a good decision when he called in Zhukov to lead the defense of the city; inspired popular confidence and enthusiasm by remaining in Moscow himself and by making some classic patriotic speeches; and did not get panicked into deploying all available forces for defense and allowed the Red Army to build up its forces in the rear in preparation for the successful counter-offensive in early **Dec 41**.<sup>15</sup>

The Battle of Moscow was the first of the great turning points of the Eastern Front war; it marked the failure of Operation Barbarossa and meant that the Germans now faced a long war of attrition – a struggle that they could *only win by a bold stroke* – which they tried and failed to execute at Stalingrad in **1942** – another battle in which Stalin displayed the aforementioned qualities, although the pressure of Stalingrad seems to have got to him more than Moscow – perhaps because he, like most Soviet people, did not expect to have to fight such a decisive battle again.

**FP:** If Hitler had been a war leader like Stalin and Stalin had been a warlord like Hitler, is there a chance the Second World War might have been won by the Nazis?

**GR:** Philosophically I'm an individualist and voluntarist. I believe that people make history and that particular individuals can play a critical role at decisive turning points. Stalin's war leadership is one such example – which, I argue in the book, was *indispensable to the Soviet victory over the Nazis*. So, yes, had Hitler been as effective a war lord as Stalin and Stalin as dysfunctional as Hitler then the *Germans would have won the war on the Eastern Front* and, by extension, the Second World War as a whole.

At the same time *I don't go along w/ all the criticisms of Hitler's military leadership* spawned by the mythmaking of his surviving generals making excuses for their own failings and failures. Stalin was a better warlord than Hitler because of the efficiency w/ which he ran the Soviet war machine, because of his ability and willingness to learn from his mistakes and because of the good relations he maintained w/ his High Command – even at moments of dire crisis.

### **11.1.5.: “Stalin as Supreme Commander,”** Dmitriy A. Volkogonov.<sup>16</sup>

The unofficial title “Leader” (*vozhd'*) concealed a despot, a dictator, a ruler w/ unlimited power over state and party. (463)

On **6 Mar 43**, when Stalin became Marshal of the Soviet Union, he was already Supreme Cdr, Chairman of the State Defense Committee (GKO) and the Stavka, People's Commissar for Defense, and, on top of all this, all-powerful Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (B) and Chairman of the Council of Ministers. In other words, this man held immeasurable power in his hands. (463)

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<sup>15</sup> **Note:** This latter point – calmly building up reserves despite the ongoing crisis at the front – is a vital one indeed!

<sup>16</sup> **Note:** In general, this article is a devastating indictment of Stalin.

Stalin was not the “gifted military leader” that hundreds of books, films, poems and studies had portrayed him to be. This does not mean that he was a mediocre blunderer. On the contrary, I will attempt to prove, on the basis of documents and eye-witness accounts, that Stalin was an armchair general, w/ a practical, “strong-willed,” but evil brain, who entered into the “secrets” of the art of warfare at the cost of bloody experiments. (463)

Napoleon once said that a military leader has to possess “*as much intelligence as character.*” He added, however, that it was not enough just to *have* these components, but rather that they had to be in the right proportion. . . Thus a true military leader is one whose will is equal to his intelligence. (464)

Stalin certainly did not lack will-power. . . As for Stalin’s character, it was strong but dogmatic, tending to overestimate the importance of directives, orders, rules. (464)

Stalin, above all, had no professional military knowledge. Military science was unknown to him, as was the theory of the art of warfare. He did not learn the secrets of strategy and operational-level thinking until he had begun a *bloody empirical process*, w/ many attempts and errors. His experience of the Civil War, in which he had participated as a member of the war councils of a variety of fronts and as plenipotentiary of the Bolshevik headquarters, was clearly not enough to hold the post of Supreme Commander. (464-65)

But Stalin’s renown as a military leader profited from the collective intelligence of the General Staff,<sup>17</sup> i.e., from the *exceptional capabilities* of a series of top commanders, who aided him during the war, but about whom little is said. Four [4] Soviet military leaders and commanders had the greatest influence on Stalin’s development as Supreme Commander, i.e., B.M. Shaposhnikov, G.K. Zhukov, A.M. Vasilevskij, and A.I. Antonov. . . It can be seen, from an analysis of Stavka documents, military correspondence, the Supreme Cdr’s directives and orders, and his personal telegrams and lectures, that these four Marshals and Generals of the Army worked most closely w/ Stalin during the war, had the most contact w/ him, and made the greatest impression upon his complex personality. (465)

Through these four [4] men, Stalin, during the bloody day-to-day business of war, learned the “ABC” of operational art and strategy. Although he remained mediocre in the first discipline, he had more success in the second field. (466)

Meetings in Stalin’s office took place daily, sometimes more than once a day. . . *De facto*, Stalin’s word was final and law, independent of whether the decisions were formulated by the Politburo, the GKO, or the Stavka. . . As a rule, *no minutes and no shorthand notes were kept*. Thus, for example, the Stavka archive contains thousands of different documents – announcements, reports, directives, orders, decrees – but there is practically no material informing us how the Stavka discussed any kind of strategic questions. (466-67)

Twice daily, provided there was no unexpected turn of events, the Supreme Cdr was informed of the situation on the fronts. The Chief of the General Staff or one of his deputies stood near the map spread out on the table (for some reason, Stalin did not want it hung on the wall), upon which the changes in the last few hours were marked, and gave his report of the situation. While

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<sup>17</sup> **Note:** This is an incredibly important point – Stalin was surrounded by military minds which were far superior to men like Keitel, Jodl and Brauchitsch. And, as time progressed (as author makes clear) Stalin began to listen to his advisors and follow their advice. Hence, Stalin “grew” as a military leader during the war, while Hitler regressed.

this was going on, Stalin paced up and down in his office, now and again asking the questions that came into his head. (467-68)

As the Soviet historian N.G. Pavlenko, who met Zhukov many times after he had retired from active service, reports, the famous Marshal once said of Stalin: “*He was a civilian, and a civilian he remained.*” (468)

Shaposhnikov – whose vital role as the “teacher” of Zhukov, Vasilevskij, Antonov, and Stalin has not as yet been sufficient recognized. . . (469)

Thousands of documents bearing Stalin’s signature affected people, masses of people, in some way or another. Stalin became used to manipulating human fates, often not considering the consequences of his decisions. (And even if he did so, this only serves to emphasize even further the weak nature of his intelligence.) They were the masses – he was the Leader. He was convinced that it had always been that way, throughout history, and would always remain so. I must have read through thousands of operational-level documents that Stalin had dictated or signed during the four years of war, but I *did not find one where he specifically reduced the possible loss of life, avoided throwing his troops away in unprepared attacks, or worried about the lives of his fellow countrymen.* In wanting to cause as much damage as possible to the enemy, he never wasted much time wondering what damage this would cause the Soviet people. [Note: As example of one of Stalin’s most egregious orders, he cites his scorched earth order, No. **0428**, of **17 Nov 41**.] (470-71)

From **1941/45**, the forces on the fronts under Stavka command carried out around **50 strategic operations**, about **25%** of them defensive in nature. These were forced upon them by the enemy; he chose where to fight the Soviet army and often enough made them fight spontaneous defensive battles. This is due to the fact that, between **1939/41**, *questions of organizing and commanding a long-term strategic defense covering the entire country and involving all arms of the service had neither been dealt w/ in exercises and manoeuvres nor in theory.* Anyone who had suggested that the defense of the Dnieper, Moscow, and Leningrad be examined would presumably have been accused of defeatism and treason on the spot. However, there had not even been an abstract examination of problems concerning the organization of large-scale, long-term defense. (471)

As a military leader, Stalin in **1941/42**, attempted to maintain the moral fibre of his forces by the comprehensive use of specifically “Stalinist” methods. . . Stalin tried to solve the problem by means of punishment details and blocking units; he paid less attention to strengthening the roles of commanders and political commissars in this extremely difficult situation. . . Stalin, who was neither a military man nor a subtle psychologist, relied more upon violence and punishment. Let me state once again: *Stalin was **not** a military leader in the widest sense of the term.* . . (472)

Another weak point in Stalin’s thinking as a military leader was his *total ignorance of the realities of time*, a problem mention by both Zhukov and Vasilevskij. The man who never visited divisions, staffs, field CPs, who had no idea how a military system functioned, often got into difficulties (esp. during the initial phase of the war) owing to his lack of appreciation of the time factor in coordinating operations in a theater of war, as well as in judging the actual capability of his forces. Very often Stalin, inflamed by some idea or other, demanded that it be put into practice at once. He repeatedly only gave the front involved a few hours’ time to carry out a directive he had signed – a fact that usually forced staffs and divisions to mount actions that were unprepared, hasty, and thus doomed to failure. . . Stalin simply did not see how complex this process was. (473)

However, Stalin, the military amateur *did gradually learn the ropes* – as early as after Stalingrad, as Zhukov wrote, “he coped well w/ the larger strategic problems.” . . . Stalin began to “cope” mainly because the Stavka had a working body like the General Staff. And, as I have already mentioned, its *role cannot be more highly regarded*. (473)<sup>18</sup>

For Stalin, only the end was important. He never had fits of conscience or feelings of bitterness or pain over the massive losses. (473)

Following the battle at Moscow and Stalingrad, Stalin constantly sought means by which he could combine the efforts of the various fronts in more and more strategic combinations. The Kursk and Belorussian Operations, the East Prussian, the Weichsel/Oder, the Berlin and Manchurian Operations; all represented not only the objective situation but also *Stalin’s subjective penchant for all things big, comprehensive, unbelievably gigantic*. . .<sup>19</sup> As always the Supreme Cdr hurried things along from the start, was unhappy w/ the speed of the operations, and got angry when delays occurred. (475)

During the last year and a half of the war, Stalin coped well w/ operational and strategic problems. . . Let me say again that Stalin himself did not as a rule produce strategically important operational ideas, but that, between **1943/45**, he was able to pick the right ones. . . His “genius,” during the second and third phases of the war (i.e., from **Nov 42**), was, in most cases, to grasp and to agree w/ the (usually reasonable) suggestions made by Zhukvo, Vasilevskij, Antonov, and the front commanders. (476)

Owing to his fragmentary knowledge of the theory of warfare, his introvertedness, and his lack of any idea of the workings of the military system, the Supreme Cdr was *unable to reach the heights of true strategic thinking*. (476)

Stavka: All main ideas realized in defensive and offensive operations arose in the “think-tank” of the Stavka, w/in its military environment. In spite of his lack of military professionalism, Stalin was able to grasp these ideas and intensions, now and again even making important changes regarding the scope, dimensions, and time-limits, aims, and dates of such and such an operation. Thus it can justly be said that the “intellectual element” of military leadership really belonged to the Stavka and its main working body, the General Staff. . . (476)

Not until **1944/45** did Stalin approach the level of command knowledge possessed by his military advisors. His highly amateurish and incompetent military leadership, especially during the first year and a half of the war, manifested itself in catastrophic losses in terms of *materiel and manpower*. But the Soviet people were able to withstand this, not *because* of Stalin’s genius but *in spite of it*. (477)

We know that the true talent of a military leader is measured by his ability to achieve the highest aims w/ the least possible losses. Stalin did not possess this talent. . . According to my calculations, based upon the analysis of a wealth of data, the direct losses suffered by the Russian people during the war amounted to **26-27** million. No other nation in history has had to pay such a terrible price for its freedom and independence. (477)

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<sup>18</sup> **Note:** Again, here Stalin was much better served than was Hitler.

<sup>19</sup> **Note:** This can also be said of his strategic “vision” in **Jan 42**, calling for major offensive operations all along the Soviet-German front.

Stalin's demand for success "whatever the losses" was no coincidence. It is a particular characteristic of a Supreme Cdr who, to echo the words of the well-known Russian theoretician M. Dragomirov, emphasized a style of leadership based on will-power rather than intelligence. Stalin never succeeded in creating a balance between these factors. (477)

Voltaire's statement that "a victorious general never made a mistake in the eyes of the people" fits Stalin like a glove. No-one ever spoke to him about his "mistakes." Instead, many, indeed countless millions, spoke of the greatest military leader "of all times and nations." The Supreme Cdr of the Soviet Union also never doubted he was a "genius," and he scarcely considered that history could ever judge him otherwise. (478)

### **11.1.6: Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy, Dmitri Volkogonov.**

#### **Preface:**

Dmitri Volkogonov was not a typical member of the intelligentsia: he was a Col-Gen w/ responsibility for the army's political education and its publishing activities. In this position he latterly had unique access to archives, he had talked to long-pensioned-off party bosses and army top brass w/ personal experience of the Stalin era. . . Born in **1928** in Chita, Eastern Siberia, V. is the son of an agrarian specialist father and schoolteacher mother. In **1937**, his father was arrested, and as was later learned, shot. The rest of the family were then exiled to Krasnoyarsk in Western Siberia. In **1945**, V. joined the army and, despite his politically dubious background, quickly rose in rank, entering the Lenin Military Academy in Moscow in **1961**, where he attained a Ph.D. and professorship. . . He began writing his book in **1978** and completed the first part of it in **1985**. (xiv-xv)

#### **Forward:**

All his life, Stalin tried (w/ some success) to turn one of his weaknesses into a virtue. Already during the revolution, when he had to visit a factory or a regiment or attend a street meeting or mix w/ a crowd, he would experience a sense of insecurity and fear which in time he learned to hide. He did *not enjoy speaking before an audience, nor was he good at it*. Though his style was simple and clear, w/o flights of fancy, catchy phrases or platform histrionics, the *heavy Georgian accent* and *monotonous delivery* combined to make his speeches unexpressive. . . He was a mediocre writer, whose arguments were both fairly consistent and invariably categorical. His newspaper articles are black or white. . . Stalin made it a rule not to come into direct contact w/ the masses. With rare exceptions, he never visited a factory or a collective farm, never traveled to any of the republics, or to the front during the war. (xx-xxi)

My work is based on party documents and materials from numerous holdings:

Central Party Archives;  
USSR Supreme Court Archives;  
Central State Archives of the Army;  
Ministry of Defense Archives;  
Armed Forces General Staff Archives;  
Archives of a number of museums, etc.

On the military aspect of Stalin's activities, I became acquainted w/ many interesting, original and unpublished documents in the Ministry of Defense. (xxi)

Gazing at Stalin's orders, written in bold, legible strokes, as a rule in *red or blue pencil*, I have to ask myself where the deep springs of his irrationality, harshness and cunning lay. . . Trotsky's characterization of Stalin as "*our party's most outstanding mediocrity*" is well known. On the other hand, Trotsky was apt to make similar remarks about other opponents. (xxiii)

My book is called ***Triumph and Tragedy*** to suggest how the triumph of one man [Stalin] became a tragedy for a whole people. (xxiii)

We now know that at the beginning of the war, Stalin repeatedly resorted to harsh punishment of many military men, using them as scapegoats for the heavy Soviet losses. Looking back, one is *astounded by the forbearance of the Soviet people*, above all of the *Russian people*. Where does it come from? **250** years of Tartar domination, or the succession of wars for liberation and freedom? Or having to struggle w/ the Russian winter and the great expanses of territory? Or was it bred of the wisdom of historical experience, their faith that they were in the right and their loyalty to their historical tradition? Perhaps it was the conviction that they had taken the right course in **1917**.<sup>20</sup>

Intellectually and morally, Stalin was no match for most of the leaders of the revolution, but in the struggle for succession [following Lenin's death] it was purposefulness, political will and cunning that counted. (xxvi)

### **Chapter 36: Stalin and the Army:**

Discussion of status of Red Army on eve of German invasion. (367 ff.) Below some of author's key points:

Voroshilov was removed as defense commissar in **May 40**. . . His place as defense commissar was taken by S.K. Timoshenko, who was also made a Marshal of the Soviet Union. The new commissar's first major decision, ratified by a decree of the Sovnarkom of **6 Jun 40**, was to create mechanized corps of two tank divisions and one motorized division. Only six [**6**] months earlier, the tank corps administration had been dismantled.<sup>21</sup> (367-68)

The purges resulted in a sharp fall in the intellectual quality of officers. By the beginning of **1941**, only **7.1%** of the commanding officers had a higher military education; **55.9%** had secondary education; **24.6%** had been through accelerated courses; and **12%** of officers and political personnel had no military education at all. . . A huge deficiency of officers existed as war loomed. . . Situation in some military districts catastrophic, and in the army as a whole the officer corps was the weakest element. By the summer of **1941**, about **75%** of officers and **70%** of political officers had been in their posts less than one year. The backbone of the army lacked the necessary experience of command. (369)

Official doctrine: The USSR's official military doctrine was defensive, but Stalin and the leaders who parroted his views were always proclaiming that the *best defense was attack*. Regulations, orders, directives, the commissar's speeches and now Stalin himself expressed a single idea:

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<sup>20</sup> **Note**: Interesting that the author does not cite the Russia people's deep religious faith.

<sup>21</sup> **Note**: In reaction, of course, to stunning German victory over France.

*“The war would be fought on the enemy’s territory and victory must be won at the cost of little bloodshed.”* (369)

Stalin mistakenly believed that Hitler would not attack in the east until he had won in the west: he would *never engage in a war on two fronts*, and Stalin laid stress on this notion in his speeches at the time, notably that of **5.5.41** in the Kremlin. (370)

**Dec 40 / War Game:** It would be hard to find a precedent in history when one of the sides on the eve of a mortal conflict had so damaged itself. Zhukov recalled that during a large-scale war game in **Dec 40**, he was given command of the “Blues,” that is the German side, while Army General Pavlov, C-in-C of the Western Special Military District, commanded the “Reds.” It so happened, Zhukov recalled, that he developed his operations precisely along the lines that the real battles would take in six months’ time. He claimed that his tactics were dictated by the configuration of the borders, the terrain and circumstances. He deduced that the Nazis would make the same calculations. Even though the umpires artificially slowed the progress of the “Blues,” in eight **[8]** days they advanced to the district of Baranovichi. (See text for more details, 370-71)

Stalin ordered Timoshenko to see for himself the real battle-readiness of the troops. In the course of **1940**, T. visited all the western military districts, put a number of units on alert and observed some training courses and manoeuvres. . . These tours of inspection revealed many serious shortcomings. Military and political officers, lacking experience, were proving slow to master the new elements of combat training. . . (371)

### **Chapter 37: The Defense Arsenal:**

Anecdote: How literally on the eve of the war production of small-calibre tank guns was halted w/ Stalin’s agreement. It was a serious mistake. (See, 373)

Defense budget: If the budget allocation for defense in the period **1928-33** was only **5.4%** of gross national product (GNP), by **1941** it had risen to **43.3%**. . . (374)

People knew war was coming and that they would have to perform the impossible. . . The rise in output was everywhere accompanied by severe discipline. The level of absenteeism fell dramatically. . . Stalin himself was now working 16-17 hours a day and the yellow glint in his eyes had become dimmed by lack of sleep and overwork. He knew that only by the total mobilization of the country’s resources could the approaching test be withstood. . . The acft industry began working at a furious pace. Every day its commissar reported to Stalin on the number of planes and engines built. People had to remain in their laboratories and workshops for days on end. (375)

And yet – production of new weapons had barely begun on the eve of the war. In his book on the war economy, published in **1948**, N.A. Voznesensky wrote: “The war found the Soviet war industry in the process of mastering the new technology, and the mass production of modern military hardware was not yet organized.”<sup>22</sup> (375)

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<sup>22</sup> **Note:** In other words, just like the Red Army, the Soviet war economy found itself in a state of transition when war began.

**May 41:** As Timoshenko and Zhukov reported one month before the war began: “Fulfillment of the plan for the supply of the military technology the Red Army needs so acutely is extremely unsatisfactory.” Stalin, the Politburo and the commissars sought a solution and found it in raising the effort of the Soviet people to the limit. (376)

### **Chapter 39: Secret Diplomacy:**

Author notes that what Stalin needed was time – he needed time and he needed peace, peace at any price. (384)

**23 Aug 39 / Nazi-Soviet Pact:** The pact might not have been signed on **23 Aug 39**, for on that day, the two giant Condor transport planes bringing the Ribbentrop delegation to Moscow were fired on in the region of Velikie Luki. (386)

The second major action Stalin embarked on was to move the Soviet border further west. . . The decision to take over Western Ukraine and Belorussia, in the face of the advancing German armies [?], was in my view justified. . . But, regrettably, Stalin’s action, violating the 1921 Riga Treaty, was conditioned by his agreement w/ Hitler on future borders and territorial “re-arrangement.” (386)

**10 Sep 40:** On this day, Beria sent a note to Molotov: “In connection w/ forthcoming changes in the deployment of NKVD border troops of the Kiev and Belorussian military districts, the line of the Soviet state border is extended from **1412** to **2012** kilometers, or by **600** kilometers.” (386)

**Apr 41:** During this pre-war period, there was one final diplomatic action for which Stalin was responsible – the treaty of neutrality signed w/ Japan. . . The USSR’s strategic position in the Far East was markedly improved by this act. . . For the last five [**5**] years relations between Japan and the USSR had been rife w/ conflict, friction, the frequent and sharp exchange of notes and major armed clashes. The most serious of these – involving more than a million troops! – took place in Mongolia at Khalkin Gol and Lake Khasan and were no doubt the reason the Japanese decided finally to sign the treaty. Stalin knew that he was untying Japan’s hands to carry out the *Tanaka Plan of 1927 for the conquest of the Pacific*, but he had no choice while Hitler was the greater threat. (388-89)

Stalin was in two minds: He knew that war was inevitable yet he refused to believe it was imminent. He therefore repeated over and over that “we must not be provoked.” The Germans, meanwhile, realizing that Stalin’s sole purpose was to gain time, became more brazen. For instance, from the beginning of **1941**, German planes began violating Soviet borders by the dozen and penetrated deeper and deeper into Soviet airspace. Even if they were forced down, both crews and acft were immediately returned to the Germans. (389)

It had been clear since the middle of **1940** to both Hitler and Stalin that relations between them were deteriorating. (389)

**Stalin’s One-Man Rule:** On **27 Sep 40**, the Germans signed the Tripartite Pact w/ Japan and Italy. . . Stalin, who by now ought to have seen *reality staring him in the face*, persisted in his belief that the war, though inevitable, was still two or three years away. Instead of consulting w/ his military leadership and his diplomats, he had relied on his own judgement, knowing no doubt that they would in any case only try to agree w/ him. The bureaucracy he had so assiduously

cultivated was only capable of approving his decisions. *He was now reaping the harvest of his one-man rule.* (390)

**14.6.41 / TASS Communiqué:** In the last two [2] months before the war, Stalin received several reports from a variety of intelligence, diplomatic and other sources, warning of Hitler's impending attack on the USSR. The British and U.S. governments also sent warnings. . . The warnings accumulated to a point where Stalin felt it prudent to test them out in Berlin itself. He ordered TASS to publish a statement dismissing rumors of German troop concentrations on the USSR's borders as nonsense and clumsy propaganda put out by forces hostile to Germany and the USSR. . . The strange statement [see p. 391] was read by millions of Soviet citizens and the entire armed forces, and it had a profoundly disorienting effect. . . It was everywhere understood in the same way, according to L.M. Sandalov, a staff officer during the war: "Coming from an authoritative state body, such a statement was bound to dull the forces' vigilance. . . Officers stopped sleeping at the barracks. The soldiers started undressing for bed." (391)

#### **Chapter 40: Fatal Omissions:**

**19.6.41:** Soviet troops were ordered to begin camouflaging aerodromes, transport depots, bases and fuel dumps, to disperse acft around airfields. The order came hopelessly late, and even then Stalin was reluctant in case "all these measures provoke the German forces." Timoshenko and Zhukov had to ask him two-three times to approve their operational orders. While agreeing w/ the military, he clung to the idea that Hitler ***would not risk a war on two fronts***, and *did not appreciate that in fact there was no real second front in the middle of 1941*. The nature of Stalin's miscalculations lay not only in his wrong assessments. . . His unforgivable mistakes stemmed from his personal rule. (393)

**Defense Planning:** A revised defense plan was ready for review by **Aug 40**. It had been prepared under the leadership of Chief of Staff K. A. Meretskov, w/ Vasilievsky again in charge of the planning and again maintaining that Soviet forces must concentrate on the Western sector. The plan was submitted to Stalin on **5 Oct 40**. He listened carefully to the defense commissar and the chief of staff, looked at the map a few times, paced the room in silence for a while, and finally pronounced:

I don't fully understand the General Staff's insistence on concentrating our forces on the western front. They say Hitler will try to send his main attacking force in the direction of Moscow by the shortest route. But I think the most important thing for the Germans is the grain in the Ukraine and the coal of the Donbass. Now that Hitler has established himself in the Balkans, it's all the more likely he'll launch his main attack from the southwest. I want the General Staff to think again and submit a new plan in ten days time.

The defense plan was resubmitted to Stalin on **14 Oct 40**. His proposals had naturally been incorporated, meaning that the basic orientation of the forces was ***shifted to the southwest***. Military intelligence, meanwhile, was perfectly aware that the *Wehrmacht's* main attacking force . . . was routed to Smolensk and Moscow. Yet none of the army chiefs had the nerve or the arguments to persuade Stalin. (397)

Zhukov probably put it best when he said that all Stalin's actions and thoughts on the eve of the war were subordinated to the single effort to avoid war, and this generated in him the *certain belief that it would not occur*. (399)

Stalin's Personal Letter to Hitler: Zhukov told Simonov that, in early **1941**, when the flow of reports of German troop concentrations in Poland increased markedly, Stalin *wrote a **personal letter to Hitler*** to say he was surprised by these events, for they created the impression that Hitler was preparing to fight the USSR. Hitler replied w/ a personal and, as he stressed, confidential letter, saying that the information was correct and that large troop units were indeed concentrated in Poland. Being sure that this would go no further than Stalin, he wanted to explain, however, that his troops in Poland were not being aimed against the Soviet Union and that he intended to observe the Pact strictly on his honor as head of state. He found an argument that, according to Zhukov, Stalin must have believed – namely that the British were carrying out heavy bombing of western and central Germany and, since they could observe the territory from the air at will, he was compelled to move large numbers of troops to the east. (399)

Zhukov said later that Stalin resisted all attempts by the military leadership to put the troops on alert on the western frontier. His fear of “provoking” Hitler had become “*maniacal*.” One can understand the desire not to give Hitler an excuse to attack, *but he can hardly have imagined that Hitler would attack if provoked, if invasion of the USSR did not already figure in his plans*. . . (400)

According to author, an important feature of Stalin's psychological makeup was that of great cautiousness. . . His hyper-cautiousness in dealing w/ Hitler, however, was counter-productive, for Hitler outwitted him. . . Berlin took note of Stalin's obsessive avoidance of “provocations” and concluded that the USSR was weak.<sup>23</sup>

## **Chapter 41: A Paralyzing Shock:**

### **22 Jun 41:**

At about **4.00 a.m.** on **22 Jun 41**, Stalin telephoned by Zhukvo and informed of the German attack. Stalin finally mumbled: “Come to the Kremlin w/ Timoshenko. Tell Poskrebyshyev to summon all the members of the Politburo.” He returned to the Kremlin and went up to his office by the entrance reserved for him alone. [Note: See text for detailed account of this meeting and Stalin's behavior in days following German attack, 405 ff.]

Stalin had never had so great a shock in his life. His confusion was obvious, as was his anger at having been so misled. [!] The Politburo members remained w/ him in his office all day, waiting for news from the border. . . No one doubted that Hitler would receive a resounding rebuff. . . The penetration achieved by German mobile units of up to **50-60** km in the first day was totally unexpected. . . (406)

On **22 Jun 41**, Stalin received no news of victories and so was in a state of alarm and confusion, but he was confident that in two-three weeks he would repay Hitler for violating their agreement. . . . The paralyzing shock only struck him after **4-5** days, when he finally understood the invasion was a mortal threat to him, and not only to the country. (407)

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<sup>23</sup> **Note:** A classic example of appeasement before WWII, even though rarely examined that way in comparison to Munich and **1938**.

Stalin waited nervously, lifting his head expectantly each time someone entered the room. All that first day only a *single glass of tea* passed his lips. (408)

At **10.00 p.m.** that night, Vatutin reported that Red Army infantry had beaten back the attacks over most of the border w/ heavy enemy losses. *Everyone came to life and spirits lifted.* Stalin and his entourage still did not know that German forces had penetrated deep into Soviet territory. Their illusions only began to be dissipated on the morning of **23 Jun 41**. (409)

**28.-30.6.41:** Towards the last days of **Jun 41**, the scale of the fatal threat finally sank in on Stalin and for a while he *simply lost control of himself and went into a **deep psychological shock***. Between **28-30 Jun 41**, according to eyewitnesses, Stalin was so depressed and shaken that he *ceased to be a leader*. On **29 Jun 41**, as he was leaving the defense commissariat w/ Molotov, Voroshilov, Zhdanov and Beria, he burst out loudly: “Lenin left us a great inheritance and we, his heirs, have fucked it all up!” (409-10)

Now it seemed to Stalin that the situation was hopeless. . . In his nervous state, he behaved in an unsettled way, dividing his time between the nearly dacha and the Kremlin, but in general making himself scarce. . . Everyone knew that Stalin still held all power and authority, but he was acting impulsively and his state of depression was obvious. This naturally was transmitted to the military leadership to a certain extent and some of their orders bore the mark of desperation. . . (410-11)

**29.6.41:** Stalin’s mood made a rapid shift from apathy to nervous agitation and on this day he twice turned up unexpectedly in the defense commissariat and subjected the military leadership to course abuse. His face grey w/ fatigue, and w/ bags under his eyes, he at last grasped the scale of the danger hanging over the country. . . (412)

Stalin was shattered by the news that Minsk had fallen. He went to the dacha and stayed there the whole day w/o returning to the Kremlin. (412)

**Jul 41 / Surrender to Germany?:** Apparently, early in the month, Stalin, Molotov and Beria met secretly w/ the Bulgarian ambassador, Ivan Stamenov. Together, they discussed in private the question of *surrendering to Germany*. According to Beria, Stalin said nothing during the meeting w/ the Bulgarian. Only Molotov spoke, asking the ambassador to contact Berlin. According to Beria, Molotov described the offer of territory in exchange for an end to the fighting as “a possible second Brest Litovsk Treaty,” and said that, if Lenin could have the courage to make such a step, we had the same intention now. The ambassador, however, declined to act as mediator, adding, “Even if you retreat to the Urals, you’ll win in the end.” [!] [**Note:** This must be carefully checked out, w/ other sources!] (412-13)

## **Chapter 42: A Cruel Time:**

Stalin, working **16-18** hours per day [!], going w/o sleep, became still *more harsh and intolerant and often vicious*. (415)

**Jul 41 / Lying to Stalin!** After two [2] weeks of battle, statistics on comparative losses given to Stalin; in them, Soviet losses were artificially reduced, while those of the Germans inflated. For example, it was stated that the Germans had already lost **2625** tanks (vs. only **900** Russian tanks lost), and that the enemy’s KIA amounted to **1,312,000** men! (417)

**Note: Anecdote:** For a fascinating story on the nature of Stalin's absolute dictatorship see, pp 418-19.

**Note: Anecdote:** For a story from **Sep 41**, involving the German use of human shields outside Leningrad, and Stalin's utterly characteristic and harsh reaction see, p 420) Stalin's response, after being informed of the German's pushing women and children and old men ahead of them, was: "Don't be sentimental, smash the enemy and his willing or unwilling accomplices in the teeth." (420)

**Cruelty:** It was Stalin who bore the responsibility for the catastrophic start of the war but, typically, he had to have scapegoats and hence exacerbate the already cruel nature of the war by his own cruelty. (422-23)

Of the millions of Soviet troops who fell into enemy hands, those who managed to escape and get back to Soviet lines were *immediately put into "special camps for checking."* After being "checked," some servicemen were sent to newly formed detachments, others were executed on the spot, and others sent for long terms to concentration camps. (423)

### **Chapter 43: Disasters and Hopes:**

**Aug 41:** At the beginning of the month, Shaposhnikov was summoned to the dacha at midnight to give Stalin an account of the situation on all fronts. What emerged sounded to Stalin like the gloomiest of lectures. . . Referring to the map that had been spread out on Stalin's desk, S. began: "We can say that we have utterly lost the first phase of the war. . . The enemy has all the strategic initiative. . ." However, S. also states that the engagement at Smolensk "enabled us to stop the enemy on the most dangerous, i.e. western thrust. . ." From all this, Stalin drew the *conclusion that the Red Army was capable of stopping the enemy*, even where he had concentrated his main force. . . [**Note:** See text for more details of S.'s report.] (425-26)

**Sep 41 / Kiever Kesselschlacht:** According to Volkogonov, "only" **452,720** men were encircled, including about **60,000** officers.<sup>24</sup> Stalin and his Staff were mainly responsible for the tragedy. . . Showing no sign of emotion, Stalin merely told Shaposhnikov to "Plug the hole quickly. Quickly!" (429)

**Oct 41 / Stalin to stay in Moscow:** See text for terrific anecdote concerning Stalin's decision to stay in Moscow and not leave capital. In mid-**Oct 41**, Beria told Stalin that a special train was ready for him at one of Moscow's stations, as well as four [**4**] airplanes, including his personal Douglas DC-3. Stalin said nothing. He pondered, but something deep down told him that, as long as the army and the people knew that he, Stalin, was still in Moscow, they would feel more assured, and so, after long deliberation, he decided to stay to the bitter end. (434-35)

**Nov 41:** On the eve of the **1941** anniversary of the revolution, he asked Molotov and Beria: "How are we going to have the military parade? Maybe two or three hours earlier?" The others thought they must have misheard. A parade, w/ the Germans literally just outside Moscow? As if unaware of their doubts, Stalin continued [see text]. . . It was undoubtedly a bold and far-

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<sup>24</sup> **Note:** German sources give figure of over **650,000** Soviet POWs. Also, the figure of **60,000** officers seems quite high.

sighted move, reflecting the sure hand w/ which Stalin influenced public opinion and guided the people's mental state. (436)

### **Chapter 45: Headquarters:**

Discussion of Stalin's capabilities as a military commander – covers much of the same ground as the author's article above. (Section 11.1.1)

Again, author notes that, despite his flaws as a military leader, he gradually did learn; and by the time of Stalingrad, according to Zhukov, “he had a good grasp of the broad strategic issues.” (451)

As a rule, no minutes or notes were made [of the top level meetings and conferences]. The Stalin archives are full of documents containing reports, enquiries, orders and dispositions, but there is practically nothing on the *General Staff's discussion of strategic questions*. Once he had recovered from his initial shock [i.e., following the German invasion], Stalin would simply summon two or three members of the General Staff and together they would decide operational issues. (452)

Never hesitant when it came to dealing w/ individual officers, Stalin *constantly moved commanders from one position to another*, usually for no apparent reason. (455)

Strategic planning was devised by Stalin IAW the ideas of Shaposhnikov, Zhukov and Vasilievsky. According to author, Shaposhnikov's role as the “teacher” of Zhukov, Vasilevsky, Antonov and Stalin himself is still unrecognized. (455)

As examples of Stalin's cruelty, and lack of concern for human lives, the author notes two “appalling orders. The first was No. **0428**, signed on **17 Nov 41**, implementing a “scorched earth” policy [my term] in belts of territory along and behind the front. The second instruction, No. **170 007**, was sent to the commander of the Kalinin Front on **11 Jan 42**, ordering the capture of Rzhev, a city of **54,000** people. It called for capture of the city on that very day, or no later than the next day, **12 Jan 42**. All available artillery, mortars and acft were to be used to smash the city and the Russian attackers were not to be deterred from destroying it. (For more details see, pp 456-57)

### **Chapter 47: The Commander and His Generals:**

See this chapter for detailed sketches of the top generals Shaposhnikov, Zhukov, Vasilievsky and Antonov.

#### Shaposhnikov:

Died in **Mar 45**, “but his intellectual influence on the military leadership is beyond doubt.” As a marshal and professor, S. who had been a colonel in the tsarist army, combined high military culture w/ an excellent education, much experience as a commander, theoretical depth and great personal charm. . . S. did not have an overbearing personality, expressing his will rather thru his subtle, flexible and wide-ranging mind, and Stalin evidently found this irresistible. Everyone was aware of this and Zhukov wrote of the Supremo's great respect for S. “He always addressed him as Boris Mikhailovich, his name and patronymic, and never raised his voice when they

spoke, even if he disagreed w/ him. S. was the only man Stalin permitted to smoke in his office.” (465)

This was a rare example indeed of Stalin’s confidence in one of the old regime military experts, the rest of whom he had liquidated before the war. Shaposhnikov was one of the very few people to whom Stalin would actually turn w/o embarrassment for an explanation, advice and help. . . The former tsarist colonel’s intelligence disarmed Stalin, and it was this quality that helped him tactfully to teach Stalin strategic thinking, military skill and even tactics. (465)

#### Zhukov:

If S. helped Stalin acquire the stern logic of armed conflict, then it was Zhukov who inspired Stalin as a man of strong will and uncompromising military leadership. . . Stalin knew that Z. conceded nothing to him in toughness of character. He noticed this especially at the beginning of the war. [**Note:** See text of anecdote of Z. countermanding order of Stalin re: Scuttling of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet. **Sep 41.**] (466)

Zhukov was audacious and far-sighted; yet he could be merciless toward panic-mongers and cowards and was capable of the harshest measures. . . Stalin often lost his temper w/ Zhukov, esp. at the start of the war. (466)

Stalin did not have favorites. He simply relied on some people more than others. (467)

#### Vasilievsky:

One of the main links between Stalin and the front was Alexander Mikhailovich Vasilievksy, who was the Deputy Chief of the General Staff’s Operational Administration when the war began, becoming its chief and Deputy Chief of Staff on **1 Aug 41**, and Chief of the General Staff and Deputy Commissar for Defense from **Jun 42 – Feb 45**. Vasilievsky commanded the **3<sup>rd</sup>** Belorussian Front and later served as C-in-C in the Far East. (470)

His role in the General Staff reflected Stalin’s original style of work in the highest military body, the Staff HQ. Most of V.’s time was spent as the Staff representative at the front, where he carried out Stalin’s orders. . . V. rarely raised objections nor was he temperamental like Zhukov, but he was perfectly capable of quietly pursuing his line in argument w/ Stalin. With rare exceptions, on *every day of the war*, either face to face if he was in Moscow or by telephone when he was on his innumerable trips, V. gave Stalin the benefit of his counsel, always patient and economical w/ words, as if he was thinking aloud. (470-71)

**Note:** After the war, Stalin ascended to glory, like Caesar, on the triumphal chariot. But whereas Julius Caesar had racked his brains to find ways of rewarding his loyal legionaries, Stalin *gradually distanced those whose presence most reminded him of the contribution they had made to the victory.* (472)

#### **Chapter 48: The Thoughts of a Strategist:**

For Stalin, only the goal mattered. He was never tormented by conscience or grief at the enormous losses. News that large numbers of divisions, or corps or armies had been destroyed would alarm him, but there is not a single document in Staff HQ archives showing his concern about the number of human lives lost. (475)

**1.8.43 / Stalin's visit to the front:** For account of Stalin's attempt to visit the front, near Rzhev, see p 481. This visit was required for "history" – to ensure that his image as a war leader was safe.

**11.1.7: "Stalin: Victors are not Judged,"** Evan Mawdsley. Feb 05.<sup>25</sup>

Stalin's activities as a war leader extended over **35** years. In **1918** he was an organizer of primitive revolutionary armies, of men on horseback. At the end of his life, in **1953**, he was dealing w/ nuclear wpns and missiles. (1)

Although the revolutionary Dzhugashvili-Stalin was a man of action, he did not take any interest in military affairs as a young man. (1)

Stalin occupied high posts as a commissar in the Russian Civil War of **1917-20**. . . In the Soviet-Polish War of **1920**, Stalin was commissar of one of the two army groups that drove the Poles back west. . . Had Stalin died in **1921**, his place in history would have been that of one of the dozen outstanding Soviet leaders of the Civil War. (1-2)

The Civil War exposed Stalin to military affairs, and he showed a flair for it. In an open letter, written nearly **30** years later to a professor of military science, Stalin contrasted his own knowledge favorably w/ that of the great Lenin. (2)

What Stalin's experience, his links, and the élan of the Revolution did do was to *predispose him to mobile, offensive, warfare* – and perhaps to make him *over-confident*. (3)

Marshal Zhukov in a **1966** lecture: He divided the Soviet dictator's wartime (**1941-45**) command activities into three [3] periods. Zhukov stated that in the first period (up to the Battle of Stalingrad) Stalin *dealt poorly w/ the demands of modern warfare* and remained *fixed in the past*. "He frequently accused us, the military leadership, of being preoccupied w/ the traditions of the Civil War. But I must say that he himself was essentially *preoccupied w/ those same traditions*." (3)

Stalin withdrew from direct involvement in military affairs after the Civil War. In the early **1920s**, his focus was on building up the administrative structure of the Communist Party, and securing his own place w/in it. (3)

Voroshilov: By the late **1920s**, w/ the death of Lenin and the political defeat of Trotsky and other opponents, Stalin had emerged as the leading veteran of the pre-revolutionary party. He installed Kliment Voroshilov – a Civil War comrade from Tsaritsyn and one of his closest political allies, as People's Commissar responsible for the Red Army. Despite V.'s limited abilities and lack of military knowledge he possessed the vital virtue of loyalty, and from **1926-40** Stalin delegated the organization and training of the Red Army to him. (4)

Shaposhnikov: Schneider's suggestion that the "military genius" of Stalin was cultivated by the Tsarist military theorist Boris Shaposhnikov during these years seems unfounded. Trained at the Tsarist General Staff Academy, Shaposhnikov produced important writings, notably on the General Staff. He would be treated, during the war, w/ unusual respect by Stalin. However, while

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<sup>25</sup> **Note:** This is draft of article sent to me by Evan in **Feb 05**.

Shaposhnikov served as Chief of the General Staff in **1931-32** and **1937-40**, he was, according to Stalin's appointments diary, received a mere eight [8] times between **1930** and **Jun 39**. Not only is there little evidence of Shaposhnikov "tutoring" Stalin, but Stalin's comments about the military in **1940/41** show that his grasp of military affairs, in an organizational and technical sense, was still rudimentary. (4)

A second aspect of Stalin's war-related activities in the late **1920s** and **1930s** was his larger role as an industrializer. With his shift to the "Left" in **1927**, Stalin became associated w/ the policy of rapid industrialization. In a **1931** speech, delivered toward the end of the first Five Year Plan, Stalin used the demands of war to justify the rapid tempo of economic development: . . . "To reduce the tempo means to fall behind. Those who fall behind get beaten. . . We are **50 to 100** years behind the advanced countries. We must make up this distance in ten [**10**] years. *Either we do it, or we shall go under.*" (4-5)

**1927-53**: During this period Stalin oversaw a huge buildup of the Soviet armed forces. Charges were made later, notably by Khrushchev's 1956 "Secret Speech," about Soviet "unreadiness." These charges were *far wide of the mark*. The USSR was the first of the great powers to rearm. Stalin's government not only expanded the number of personnel and divisions, it also supported a policy of comprehensive doctrinal and technical modernization.<sup>26</sup> This was a side effect of the investment, modernization, and "motorization" which affected the whole Soviet economy, both civilian and military. Huge resources were lavished on the acquisition or design of "state of the art" tanks, aircraft, motor vehicles and artillery. Stalin took a personal interest in all this; he was "sponsor" of the Red Army Air Force and of the acft industry. . . Soviet factories produced **9600** tanks in **1937-40**, **50,000** artillery pieces, and **31,000** military acft. The manpower of the armed forces grew from **1,600,000** in **Jan 38** to over **5,000,000** in mid-**1941**. (5-6)

Purges: Author notes that Stalin did preserve his old comrades in arms – the **1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Army** group. . . On balance, however, Stalin's purges had a devastating effect on the Red Army. Some "dead wood" was removed, but also the best trained and most senior commanders that the Red Army possessed. The purge also reduced the cohesion of the High Command – cohesion that in political (and conspiratorial) terms was a threat to Stalin, but cohesion that was essential for an effective fighting force. It had other negative effects. For the British and French, the purge reduced the credibility and value of the USSR as a potential ally, while for Germany and Japan the weakened Red Army *lost its deterrent threat*. (7)

**1939**: Stalin's original aim was to keep the USSR out of the war between the two "imperialist" blocks, or at least to delay his country's entry until a favorable moment. Stalin's remarks to close comrades in late **Sep 39** showed that he still adhered very closely to Lenin's view of international relations, and that he believed the conflict had certain advantages for the USSR: "A war is on between two groups of capitalist countries . . . for the re-division of the world, for the domination of the world! We see nothing wrong in their having a good hard fight and weakening each other. . . ." (8)

**1941**: Historians argue about whether in the spring of **1941** Stalin felt he was dealing w/ Hitler from a position of strength. The most authoritative source, Gabriel Gorodetsky's Grand Delusion, takes the view that Stalin knew that the Red Army was weaker than the Wehrmacht and that he therefore followed a policy of appeasement. Some evidence, however, suggests that Stalin was

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<sup>26</sup> **Note**: According to Walter S. Dunn, the problem w/ the Red Army in **1941** was not so much the legacy of the Purges, but fact that it had grown at much too fast a pace and, hence, was unable to absorb or assimilate all the changes.

more confident. Certainly in this period of “armed neutrality,” the Red Army was much used as an instrument of policy. (8-9)

The most common charge about Stalin as a war leader was that he ignored warnings about an imminent German attack. The purges had weakened Soviet systems for collecting and analyzing intelligence. Over-centralization led to an intelligence apparatus in which overall strategic analysis was confined to Stalin’s hunches.<sup>27</sup> Stalin had no illusions about the hostility of Germany, but he was mentally locked into the notion that Hitler *would not willingly fight a war on two fronts*, that he would not willingly attack the USSR while the British Empire was still at war. Stalin based this assessment partly on the experience of the First World War, where Germany had fought on two fronts and been defeated. Hitler might, however, be tipped into war by accident, or by less “far-seeing” generals, and it was therefore *essential for Russia to avoid any kind of “provocation,”* which would include overt mobilization or border preparations. Stalin’s strategic logic was not unsound.<sup>28</sup> . . . German troop movements in the East were seen as bluff or diplomatic pressure. (10-11)

Soviet Doctrine: Mawdsley rejects view of Rezun-Suvorov and others that Stalin was actually planning to attack Germany, and that this attack was only prevented by Hitler’s invasion. It was critically important, however, that the Red Army was oriented towards offensive operations, and had been so oriented since the Civil War. This was not necessarily the same thing as planning aggressive war . . . yet once war came, it was to be fought w/ offensive action, and on the territory of the enemy. This was the logic behind the “deep battle” concept developed at the end of the **1920s** by Tukhachevskii and others. It was also the *raison d’etre* of the massive tank and air forces built up in the **1930s**. There was no intention to rely on passive defense, and any doubts were resolved by the defeat of France’s Maginot Line strategy in **1940**. Stalin himself would famously declare in **May 41** that “the Red Army is a modern army, and a modern army is an offensive army.” (11)

**Oct 40 – Mar 41**: At this time, Stalin had accepted an outline war plan that envisaged a decisive offensive – either as a preemptive attack or as a near-immediate counterattack – in the event of war w/ Germany. This plan was confirmed in **Mar 41** after Zhukov became Chief of the General Staff. To mount these operations Soviet units were based as close as possible to the border, but this in turn made them vulnerable to enemy attack. In addition, the specific plan approved by Stalin meant mounting a deep Red Army offensive into southern Poland. This led to a concentration of strength in the Kiev Military District, and the acceptance of relative weakness in the Belorussian Military District. Unfortunately, it was on Belorussia that the main German blow would fall on **22 Jun 41**. (11-12)

**ab 22.6.41**: Stalin seems initially to have taken the failure of his assumptions w/ some equanimity. It is a myth that he suffered a nervous breakdown on hearing the news of the German invasion; his appointments diary shows that he was frantically busy throughout the first days of the war. He was badly shaken a week later when he learned that most of his Western Army Group in Belorussia had been cut off and destroyed. Even so, he returned to Moscow after a day, created the State Defense Committee (GKO), and assumed control of the overall war effort. . . (12)

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<sup>27</sup> **Note:** And yet was not Stalin himself responsible for such institutional flaws; after all, he had largely created this system.

<sup>28</sup> **Note:** Not so sure I concur w/ this assessment by Mawdsley. Hitler would certainly not have been forced into war w/ Russia by “accident!” No “provocation” on the part of the Russians would have resulted in war w/ Germany, unless that was precisely what Hitler intended all along. Soviet appeasement simply validated the German sense that Russia was weak.

Stalin & Role of Reserves: According to a **1949** article ascribed to Voroshilov: The accumulation of reserves of Red Army personnel and materiel, was going on even at the times of the great defeats of **1941/42**. “Stalin always paid especially serious attention to reserves. . . That is why in the first stage of the Great Fatherland War, along w/ the organization of active defense, the accumulation of strategic and operational reserves for carrying out a long victorious war occupied the lion’s share of Stalin’s attention.”<sup>29</sup> (14)

Zhukov: In a passage of his memoirs that Soviet editors had censored out of early editions, Marshal Zhukov claimed that Stalin displayed limited ability as a military commander in these early years: (14)

Up until the defeat of the German forces at Stalingrad he had only a superficial understanding of combined-arms operations. Not having a thorough grasp of the complexities, methods, and means of preparing modern army-group level operations I.V. Stalin frequently demanded patently unrealistic periods of time for the preparation and carrying out of operations.

**Jul-Sep 41**: Two fateful command decisions were made in the summer of **1941**, after Stalin took over at the Stavka. One was to try to hold the city of Kiev at all costs; the other was to mount waves of counterattacks in the Western Theater, around Smolensk. In military terms both were ultimately unsuccessful, perhaps even disastrous. The first decision went against the advice of at least some of Stalin’s military advisors, notably Zhukov. In Stalin’s justification it can be said that Kiev had vital political significance. And the heavy fighting around Smolensk, although it would cost the Red Army dear in later battles before Moscow, helped to *halt the Wehrmacht*. The protracted Smolensk battles also *persuaded the Japanese that the USSR was not about to collapse*.<sup>30</sup> Tokyo chose to drive south against the British, Americans, and Dutch, rather than north against the Russians. (15)

The Battle of Moscow “changed the nature of the war,” but Stalin’s limitations as a commander were still evident. Two general counter-attacks were mounted in early **1942**, one in **Jan-Feb 42** and the other in **May 42**. Both evidently went against the advice of the General Staff (now under Shaposhnikov). There were actually *strong reasons for Stalin’s counter-attacks*, especially to relieve the besieged Leningrad and Sevastopol before they fell to the enemy. But his approach also came from his *predilection for offensive warfare*, from *wishful thinking* about the state of the *Wehrmacht*, and from an exaggerated picture of Hitler’s problems at home. . . Then, in the summer of **1942**, Stalin failed to anticipate where Hitler’s “second offensive” would be struck. He assumed a drive in the centre of the front, towards Moscow, rather than in the south towards the Caucasus (and eventually towards Stalingrad). (15-16)

Stalingrad: The *turning point* in Stalin’s command activities was at Stalingrad. He agreed to build up an attack far out on the flanks of German **6. Army**, rather than to mount repeated immediate attacks closer to the besieged Volga city. . . Zhukov saw an improvement in Stalin’s command skills, although he was not unlimited in his praise: “In the second period of the war, which went from the preparation of the Battle of Stalingrad and up to Kursk, inclusive, I must say that Stalin showed *definite flashes of insight into modern war*.” In an interview w/ the writer

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<sup>29</sup> **Note**: Of course, in **1949**, Voroshilov would not have dared to have written anything critical of Stalin, so should his remarks be taken w/ “grain of salt?”

<sup>30</sup> **Note**: So just how, then, was the decision to counterattack furiously around Smolensk from ca. mid-**Jul 41** to early **Sep 41** a “fatal command decision?”

Konstantin Simonov in 1968, Zhukov spoke tellingly about Stalin's *greater realism*. Stalin's wishful thinking, after all, had led him to be caught by surprise by Operation "Barbarossa;" wishful thinking also explained the unsuccessful Soviet winter counter-offensives in 1941/42, and the retreat of the summer of 1942. "The notion, 'what I decide can and must happen,' was replaced by a more sober notion, based on an objective assessment of reality. . . Marshal Vasilevskii, who worked very closely w/ Stalin, especially in the middle third of the war, also *saw a change*. V. thought Stalin underwent a "deep reconstruction as Supreme C-in-C" in Nov 42. (16-17)

**Jul 43 / Kursk:** Stalin took advise again in mid-1943. He allowed the Germans to deliver the first blow at Kursk, despite some reasonable doubts – given the experience of 1941/42 – about letting them take the initiative. The defensive Battle of Kursk, and the successful Soviet counter-offensives that followed it – the Orel & Belgorod-Khar'kov operations – *changed the war into a steady pursuit of the Wehrmacht*. (17)

**1944/45:** It is difficult to argue w/ success in the later parts of the war. The wave of offensives launched by the Red Army in 1944 was called the "Ten Stalinist Crushing Blows." One attack after another kept the Wehrmacht off balance. As the 1949 Voroshilov article put it: "All these operations were carried out in the *style of the classical Stalinist offensive strategy, on a gigantic scale*." (17)

In his 1966 lecture, Zhukov was unstinting in his praise:

And as far as the third period of the war is concerned . . . I must say to you – and here Zhukov's voice took on a special tone – here was a real military commander [*polkovodets*] of modern world war on a large scale. And coming to a general conclusion, said Zhukov, in this war we had a *worthy Supreme C-in-C*. (19)

Throughout all three periods of the war, Stalin was in direct control of the Red Army. One prominent historian of the war, Earl Ziemke, argued that Stalin had "*a largely counterfeit military image*." This was surely not the case. As John Erickson put it, Stalin's "regulation of his command was minute, strict, and all-prevading. The considerable amount of Russian documentation now published shows constant "hands-on" control by Stalin. Foreign observers were impressed by his grasp of overall strategy and logistics. (19)

Stalin selected effective subordinates in both the Stavka and the GKO functions, but he made his own decisions. . . Stalin [did not visit the front]; he ran the war by teleprinter and telephone and only made one very short visit to the front line. The exertion of the war took its toll on a man in his 60s. In Zhukov's words, "When the war ended . . . I.V. Stalin immediately seemed to age, he became less mobile, more silent and pensive. The past war and all that had been linked w/ it strongly and perceptibly affected him." (20)

That said, James Schneider's appraisal of Stalin as "*the first true strategist of the twentieth century*" is really not convincing.<sup>31</sup> (21)

Stalin was fond of a saying attributed to Catherine the Great: "*Victors are not judged*." It did not matter what mistakes were made along the way, victory justified everything. . . Yet Stalin himself admitted shortcomings in a remarkable speech published at end of war:

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<sup>31</sup> **Note:** See, James J. Schneider, The Structure of Strategic Revolution, 1994.

Our government made not a few mistakes, we were in a desperate situation in **1941** and **1942**, when our army had to retreat, had to abandon our native villages and towns . . . abandoned them because there was no alternative. Any other people would have said to the Government: you have not lived up to our expectations, get away from us, we will put in place another government which will make peace w/ Germany and give us rest. (25)

In *any other system*, Stalin would have been removed from power for his mistakes. (25)

Stalin as a war leader must also be “judged” for the length and cost of the fighting. As John Armstrong, one of the most astute writers about the war, observed: “Rarely, if ever, has an invading force maintained itself on enemy territory for so long a period of time when it was *enormously inferior in manpower and military equipment.*”<sup>32</sup> (26)

#### Summary:

Stalin was a tyrant who inflicted untold harm on Russia over **25** years. He was also an “exceptional” war leader – just as Hitler was. He was not a military genius, nor was he just a blundering dilettante. . . As a war leader Stalin was ultimately a victor, partly due to his own efforts, and partly despite them. Stalin was both a great war leader and a disastrous one. Any analysis that makes him exclusively the one or the other is inadequate. (26)

**11.1.8: “*Stalin and Hitler’s Attack on the Soviet Union,*”** Gabriel Gorodetsky, in: *From Peace to War: Germany, Soviet Russia and the World 1939-41.* Bernd Wegner (ed.) 1997 (English edition).

Historians have devoted much attention to a minute investigation of the ample available data concerning the origins of Operation “Barbarossa.” These studies, however, focus almost entirely on the military aspects of the operation. The study of Soviet policies seems to reveal strong ideological predilections and fails to relate to the political and diplomatic framework w/in which the military decisions were taken.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the invasion is explored exclusively on the basis of German-Soviet relations, while Soviet relations w/ Britain, *crucial for a wholesome* [?] *interpretation*, have been left out. The aim of this chapter is to shed new light on Stalin’s supposedly erratic and illogical behavior on eve of “Barbarossa.” (343)

#### Stalin on eve of war:

The total absence of testimony on *Stalin’s intentions and strategy on the eve of the war* has led historians either to agree w/ Churchill in dismissing Stalin and his lieutenants as “the most completely outwitted bunglers of the Second World War so far as strategy, policy, foresight and competence” were concerned,<sup>34</sup> or to attribute to him a dubious plot. . . The absence of evidence led even John Erickson, the foremost expert on Soviet military history . . . into a blind alley when seeking a *rational explanation* for Stalin’s politics in the months preceding the German invasion. (344)

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<sup>32</sup> **Note:** See, John A. Armstrong, ed., *Soviet Partisans in World War II*, p 138.

<sup>33</sup> **Note:** The recent most extreme and inaccurate presentation of these events as Hitler’s “pre-emptive strike” is in Victor Suvorov, *Der Eisbrecher: Hitler in Stalins Kalkuel.* (343, f.n. 1)

<sup>34</sup> **Note:** S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. 3, p 316.

It is now a fully established fact that Stalin was indeed in possession of accurate intelligence on German intentions and deployments from various sources. . . The accumulated evidence points to **20 Mar** and **5 May 41** as dates on which Golikov [head of GRU] transmitted crucial intelligence on German intentions to Stalin. Golikov attached such significance to the information that he stressed its meaning to Stalin, despite the latter's disposition to mute intelligence that did not conform to *his idea that Britain was attempting to **provoke a crisis** in German-Soviet relations by spreading rumors of a build-up.* (344)

Common assumption is that Stalin could not bring himself to believe that Hitler would *conduct a war on **two fronts***. He therefore interpreted the warnings as a "*war of nerves*" that was bound to culminate in an *ultimatum* [from Germany]. He was thus inclined to assume that the British sought salvation from their deteriorating strategic posture by *provoking a war between Germany and the Soviet Union*. Stalin's predisposition was to *avoid a conflict at whatever cost*. (345)

**Russian policy:** An examination of the diplomatic scene in the period between the signing of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact [i.e., **Aug 39**] and the German attack on the Soviet Union [**Jun 41**] reveals that the *terror of a separate Anglo-German peace* severely hampered Stalin's judgement and contributed to the paralysis that became more pronounced as the German offensive drew nearer.<sup>35</sup> The origins of his pathological suspicion lay in fears of renewed intervention. The major international events in the inter-war period [i.e., **1919-39**] were examined in Moscow within this framework. Thus, the exploitation of differences among the Western Powers had been the cornerstone of Soviet foreign policy since the Peace of Brest-Litovsk in **1918** and the Rapallo Treaty of **1922**; it was clearly demonstrated by the **Aug 39** Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact. The logic of the pact was undoubtedly based on the *establishment of a buffer zone* in the wake of the failure to achieve security arrangements through diplomacy in the **1930s**, and particularly since the guarantees given to Poland by Britain in **Mar 39**. It was assumed that, while Germany and Britain were engaged in hostilities, Russia would be able to improve her military preparedness. (346-47)

**Sep 39-Jun 40:** The fallacy of this assumption was first diagnosed when Poland was crushed before the British had been able to mount their Expeditionary Force. [?] The "phoney war" that ensued was accompanied by *constant Soviet fears of a separate peace*. The lightning campaign in France and subsequent German encroachments in the Balkans were even more alarming. In his memoirs, Khrushchev vividly depicts the *panic that seized Stalin* when the news of the occupation of Paris reached the Kremlin; Stalin "let fly w/ some choice Russian curses and said that now Hitler was *sure to beat our brains in*."<sup>36</sup>

Stalin, who had acquired ample evidence of German intentions and deployments, was equally aware of the weakness of his armed forces. . . By the end of **Apr 41**, after the fall of Yugoslavia and Greece, Stalin must have realized that the *overwhelming need for a "breathing space"* forced him into further submission to Germany rather than an aggressive strategy, as is suggested by Suvorov. (347)

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<sup>35</sup> **Note:** In other words (I assume), hampered his judgement in that he was even more suspicious of British warnings of an impending German attack – i.e., Britain might be trying to lure Stalin into war w/ Germany – and contributed to his paralysis because he did not want to make any move that might be remotely interpreted by Hitler as being aggressive, potentially pushing Germany into a *modus vivendi* w/ Great Britain (to free Germany's "rear" for moving East).

<sup>36</sup> **Note:** Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, 1970, pp 176-77.

The situation was, however, complicated by Stalin's conviction that Hitler would *not risk waging a war on two fronts*. Dismissing the accumulating information in spring **1941** about the Germans' menacing deployment, Stalin told his entourage that "as long as Germany does not settle her account w/ Britain (and this, he thought, could not happen before the middle or end of **1942**) Germany would not fight on two fronts and would keep to the letter the obligations undertaken in the Non-Aggression Pact." However, if Germany were set on an earlier war in the East, Hitler would be bound to make *peace overtures to Britain*. (347)

This suspicion was enhanced by the pattern of relations existing between the Soviet Union and Britain since the outbreak of war. (348)

**Apr 41** / Awkward British diplomacy: What follows is discussion of activities – some unauthorized – of Sir Stafford Cripps, the British Ambassador in Moscow. He attempted to *play on Soviet fears of a separate peace* [w/ Germany] as a device for drawing Russians toward Britain. The British Foreign Office, however, objected to this approach, "which may encourage Stalin to cling more tenaciously to this policy of appeasement." Read in conjunction w/ Churchill's famous warning of German intentions, which Cripps submitted to the Russians a few days later [**21.4.41**], it [Cripps's long memorandum to the Russians, w/o waiting for instructions from London] achieved the opposite effect, and had serious repercussions in *intensifying Soviet suspicion* that, in desperation, Britain was striving to *embroil Russia in war*. . . . What seemed to worry the Russians the most was Cripps's warning that it was not outside the bounds of possibility, if the war were protracted for a long period, "that there might be a temptation for Great Britain (and especially for certain circles in Great Britain) to *come to some arrangement to end the war*. (348-49)

The fresh insinuations of a *separate peace* introduced unprecedented anxiety in Moscow during the last week of **Apr 41**. (349)

**12.5.41**: Examined in the light of events heretofore described, the flight of Rudolf Hess, Hitler's deputy, to England on **12 May 41** on a peace mission emerges as a key to understanding the Soviet attitude to the approaching conflict. . . . The British government, taken aback by Hess's unexpected arrival, maintained silence over the affair, overlooking the impact this might have in Moscow. Maisky [Soviet Ambassador in London] interpreted [the English government's reticence over the Hess affair] to mean that the Cabinet was actually giving the peace offer serious consideration. . . . Cripps's extempore warning suddenly seemed to be materializing. . . . Maisky's impression was not the only vindication of the presumed meaning of the Hess mission and the Cripps memorandum. Soviet intelligence sources pointed in the same direction. . . . (349-50)

Shortly afterwards, Maisky learned that Lord Simon, the apostle of appeasement, had been entrusted w/ Hess's debriefing. Given the extreme suspicion prevailing in Moscow, the recall of Cripps [to London in early **Jun 41** for consultations in suspicious circumstances], combined w/ the disinformation spread by the Foreign Office on the nature of his journey, seemed to lend force to the hypothesis that some kind of arrangement was after all being worked out behind the scenes, allowing Hitler a free hand in the East. (351-52)

Just as alarming was circumstantial evidence implying that American pressure was being exerted on Churchill and Eden to sacrifice Russia in exchange for peace proposals. . . . It is in this context that the famous Tass communiqué of **12 Jun 41**, denying the probability of war, should be

analyzed. . . The communiqué – which dismissed the possibility of war w/ Germany – was published by Tass on **14 Jun 41**.<sup>37</sup> (352-53)

**Jun 41:** Contrary to Churchill’s subsequent account, the massive German concentration in the East was interpreted in London, as late as the first week of **Jun 41**, as pressure mounted by the Germans to secure positive results in negotiations that (Britain supposed) must be impending w/ Russia. (348)

**Jun 41:** Maisky’s hunch that Britain was desperately trying to entangle Russia in war *seemed to be confirmed* by his interview w/ Eden after Cripps’s return on **13 Jun 41**, just when the communiqué was being released. Maisky dismissed Eden’s warning, general in nature, on the German deployment. He “felt sure that England exaggerated the German concentrations. He did not believe in the possibility of a German attack on Russia.” (354)

**15.6.41:** The decision to part w/ momentuous evidence obtained through Ultra was finally sanctioned by Churchill only late on Sunday, **15 Jun 41**. Maisky was thus astounded when summoned to the Foreign Office on Monday morning to face Cadogan’s detached and monotonous recital of “*precise and concrete*” evidence. . . Maisky hastened to cable Moscow *reversing his earlier appreciation*.<sup>38</sup> (355)

**21.6.41:** On Saturday, **21 Jun 41**, Cripps provided Maisky w/ the *essence of Ultra’s most recent and precise information* on what was anticipated the next day. (355)

The attitude of the British government to the developing crisis had been central to the Kremlin’s own evaluation. In the *atmosphere of terror* prevailing in the Kremlin, Stalin’s *unshaken belief in a provocation* on the one hand, and in a *German ultimatum* to precede an attack on the other, was discouraging his entourage, intelligence sources as well as Maisky, from formulating a clear-cut evaluation. (355-56)

According to a recent stunning revelation by the Russians, Count von Schulenburg, the German Ambassador to the Soviet Union (a disciple of Bismarck’s school of avoiding war w/ Russia at all costs), *disclosed to the Russians the precise date of Hitler’s attack*; Stalin scornfully dismissed it in a meeting of the Politburo: “We will now consider that disinformation has reached the level of ambassadors.” (356)

As now becomes obvious, the object of the subtle communiqué issued on **14 Jun 41** was to forestall provocation. Its unequivocal message that no Soviet-British *entente* was in the making was at least expected to produce a British confirmation and a German denial of belligerent intentions. . . However, it was not even published in Berlin. Pondering w/ his advisors over the absence of a reaction, Stalin was faced on **16 Jun 41** w/ Maisky’s revised appreciation after his talk w/ Cadogan. (356)

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<sup>37</sup> **Note:** Somewhat unclear from text, I assume author is taking about a single communiqué, not two of them. Or perhaps one date is in error.

<sup>38</sup> **Note:** In other words, up until only a few days before the invasion, Maisky had apparently not believed that Germany would invade Russia.

**18.-19.6.41:** [Now there was] sudden frenzied activity in the Kremlin. While the fresh information<sup>39</sup> did not eliminate the possibility of British provocation, it increased the likelihood of war regardless of what was happening in London. Hitherto, priority had been given to attempts to prevent provocation. That would explain the extreme secrecy w/ which the troops were being moved to the front. Only on **18 and 19 Jun 41** were instructions issued to both the air and ground forces to take precautionary measures. The earlier instructions were reversed and the commanders of the Baltic and Northern Fleets were ordered to put their crews on alert. On **19 Jun 41** General Yeremenko was ordered to hand over his Far Eastern command and proceed to Moscow w/o delay. (357)

**21.6.41:** On this day, Stalin *clearly admitted the **uncertainty*** of the situation. In a similar way, Molotov intimated to the Turkish ambassador that the situation had become “*confused and uncertain.*” Zhukov remembers Stalin as being *torn between anxiety and fear of triggering off an unwanted war*. At the insistence of the General Staff he now issued Directive 1, pointing out the possibility of war and implementing essential defensive measures; it still warned the field commanders against “any provocative action which may cause serious complications.” . . . *At long last the Russians had come to grips w/ the magnitude of the crisis on their doorstep.* (357)

**22.6.41:** Well into the morning of **22 Jun 41**, the Kremlin did not exclude the possibility that Russia was being *intimidated into political submission*. As Molotov confessed to Cripps, as early as **27 Jun 41**, it was not anticipated that war “would come w/o any discussion or ultimatum.” It was still assumed that Hitler would not have embarked on a full-scale attack unless it had been condoned by the British government. (358)

Neither was Cripps surprised to find Stalin, in their first meeting after the invasion, apprehensive about a possible separate peace. After all, he disclosed in his diary, “we have tried to make them [apprehensive] in the past so as to prevent them going too far w/ the Germans.” “All believed,” recalled Litvinov in Washington a few months later, “that the British fleet was steaming up the North Sea for a joint attack, w/ Hitler, on Leningrad and Kronstadt.” [!] (358-59)

It thus comes as no surprise that, in negotiating w/ the British in the early stages of the war, Stalin did not seek a second front but single-mindedly sought an agreement which would *pledge both sides not to negotiate a **separate peace***. These fears lasted well beyond the German invasion. (359)

**CruX:** It seems, thus, that the deployment of the Red Army was a last-ditch attempt to thwart a German attack prompted by Churchill’s release to Stalin of very precise Ultra signals revealing Hitler’s intentions and by corroborating evidence transmitted to Stalin from Tokyo by his master spy, Sorge. . . Thus, an examination of the Soviet reaction to the German deployment within its proper political and military framework renders absurd any suggestion that Stalin was on the brink of mounting an offensive against Germany that was forestalled by the surprise, and even perhaps (as some German historians now eagerly suggest) pre-emptive, attack on Russia. (359)

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<sup>39</sup> **Note:** I assume the Ultra information passed on to Maisky.

### **11.1.9: Stalin. The First In-Depth Biography Based on Explosive New Documents from Russia's Secret Archives. Edvard Radzinsky. 1996.<sup>40</sup>**

#### Prologue: The Name:

Stalin Cult: Every day the largest country in the world woke up w/ [Stalin's] name on its lips. All day long that name rang out in the voices of actors, resounded in song, stared out from the pages of every newspaper. That name was conferred, as the highest of honors, on factories, collective farms, streets, and towns. During the most terrible of all wars, soldiers went to their deaths intoning his name. . . During the political trials organized by him, his victims glorified his name as they died. Even in the camps, his portrait looked down on millions of people who, corralled behind barbed wire at his behest, turned rivers back in their course, raised cities beyond the Arctic Circle, and perished in their hundreds of thousands. Statues of this man in granite and bronze towered over the immense country. (3)

Anecdote: A gigantic statue of Stalin stood beside the Volga-Don canal – one of several built by his prisoners. [**Note:** See text for this wonderful anecdote, pp 3-4]

Winston Churchill recalled: “Stalin made a very great impression on us. . . When he entered the conference room at Yalta everybody stood up as if at a word of command. And, strange to tell, for some reason stood w/ their hands along the seams of their trousers.” Churchill also said that on one occasion he was determined not to stand up, but when Stalin entered it was as if some extraterrestrial force lifted him from his seat. (4)

#### Two Leaders:<sup>41</sup>

Until **1938**, foreign policy had remained subservient to domestic policy. But now that Stalin had created a new country he could afford to begin realizing his external aims. Or rather his main aim. The secret one. The Great Dream! We see that w/ the accession of Stalin nothing had changed. It was just that the Great Leninist Dream, *world revolution*, which the activists of Lenin's Party, all those defunct big mouths, had openly shown their eagerness to export, had become a secret. The Boss had relegated it to the underground. . . He was playing his favorite game: quieting his enemy's suspicions. But propaganda at home was preparing his people for something quite different. His tame writers extolled the Great War for the realization of the Great Dream. . . I found traces of these preparations for a major war in the President's Archive. The Red Army was rapidly rearming in the **1930s** – even before the advent of Hitler. As a result, Tukhachevsky wrote Stalin an anxious letter. . . [on **19.6.30**] There followed a detailed plan for the rearmament of the Red Army for a “*war of engines*” – a Great War. (425)<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> **Note:** Publisher's Weekly calls this book “a vivid, astonishingly intimate biography.” Radzinsky one of first to draw on previously unavailable primary-source documents in recently-opened party, state and KGB archives. PW: “He portrays the Soviet dictator as even more sadistic and methodically demoniacal than Western historians had supposed. Radzinsky admits in his “Preface” that, at a young age, he “hated” and suffered a “revulsion of feeling” toward Stalin, after first having a “mindless adoration” for the Soviet leader, a “change of heart” brought about by his father and by his “dangerous stories” about Stalin. His father was an intellectual from a well-to-do Jewish family. Still, author avers that he wrote his book “with no feeling of hatred for the Boss.” (x)

<sup>41</sup> **Note:** Radzinsky's account appears to be fairly close to that of Suvorov's revisionist perspective. Radzinsky sees continuity of revolutionary aims from Lenin to Stalin.

<sup>42</sup> **Note:** See also, Bogdan Musial, Kampflplatz Deutschland, for similar interpretation.

In **Mar 38**, Hitler annexed Austria. Clouds gathered over Czechoslovakia. It was as the Boss had expected. Hitler really was drawing Europe into war, and Germany *would bring down the ruin of the whole capitalist system*. It was no longer a mirage, no longer a dream – world revolution was advancing on empire. All that was needed was to egg Hitler on. . . (426)

**Aug 39 / Non-Aggression Pact:** Stalin had no doubt that his scheme would succeed. He sensed that Hitler was like him – insatiable. Czechoslovakia was just the beginning. He would give Hitler his alliance – to make sure that farther would mean farther away from the Soviet Union. . . For Stalin the change in orientation had no ideological implications. Hitler and the Western democracies alike were enemies. Alliance w/ either side was merely a turn on the tortuous road to the Great Dream. . . Hitler invaded Poland, and England and France declared war on Germany. Stalin's tactics had proved correct: Hitler had, as expected, drawn Europe into a world war. The path to the Great Dream lay open. . . (427-29)

But the match went on. Stalin went into action himself, taking back parts of the empire of the Romanovs lost after the Revolution. On **17 Sep 39**, his troops entered Poland. . . The western Ukraine and western Belorussia, parts of the former Romanov empire, had returned to the bosom of Stalin's empire. (429)

**Note:** In narrative which follows, author speculates on possible secret meeting between Stalin and Hitler in **Oct 39** in Lvov, Poland. (430 ff.)

**Note:** Author states that for its “aggression against the Soviet Union,” Finland was *expelled from the League of Nations*. [!] (433)

**The Empire Reestablished:** Meanwhile Hitler was reaping rewards beyond his dreams all thru **1940**. Denmark, Norway, Holland, Luxembourg and finally France fell swiftly. After each act of aggression, Stalin unfailingly congratulated Hitler on the Wehrmacht's “brilliant success.” But w/ these congratulations he always called in a bill. One by one, he occupied the Baltic States. . . He turned hurriedly toward the Balkans. In the summer of **1940**, he presented Romania w/ an ultimatum, demanding the return of Bessarabia, annexed by Romania in **1918**, and of northern Bukovina. A powerful army group was concentrated on the Romanian frontier. Romanian oil was feeding the whole German war machine, and Hitler, fearful of a possible military conflict on Romanian soil, was compelled to put pressure on that country's government. Romania meekly consented to cede the disputed territory. While grabbing more than had been agreed upon, Stalin still tried to demonstrate his loyalty to Hitler. (433-34)

**NKVD Purges:** In discussion of NKVD “purges” of annexed areas, author states: Train after train carried fresh convicts – the bourgeoisie, intellectuals, well-off peasants, White émigrés, politicians – to swell his labor force in Gulag. They were carried in freight cars – two tiers of plank beds, w/ a discharge pipe for the sanitary bucket in the middle of the car, tiny barred windows which admitted little air. One such freight car carried into imprisonment a Jew arrested in Lithuania: Menachem Begin, future prime minister of Israel. (434)

#### Stalin & Barbarossa:

Throughout that half-year [**Jan-Jun 41**] not only Churchill but the Comintern spies who had voluntarily remained behind in Germany kept warning the Boss that Hitler meant to attack. Richard Sorge gave him the same message. . . Sorge even managed to communicate the exact date of the German invasion. (435)

Stalin, however, did not believe Sorge, or any of the others. The sudden German invasion took him completely by surprise. His first game in an international tournament ended in a debacle. That, at least, *is what people have generally believed*. But *this version of events beggars belief*. (435)

The wily Boss, a leader whose *first rule was “trust no one,”* whose whole strategy consisted in misleading the enemy, suddenly proves gullible in his dealings w/ the archenemy, is suddenly himself so easily gulled that he pays not the slightest attention to repeated warnings, but puts implicit trust in the liar Hitler, who had betrayed so many and broken his words so often. . . It would be believable if we were talking about a different man, and not our Stalin. He had proven conclusively in the **60** years of his life that he was not a bit like that. (435-36)

What, then, did happen?

As early as **Mar 41**, his intelligence service had supplied him in effect w/ the *full details of Barbarossa*. The date for the German invasion was somewhere between **15 May** and **15 Jun 41**. But the Boss was a pragmatist and expected people to behave rationally. Hitler simply could not afford such a risky venture. As a Marxist, Stalin respected economic realities. It seemed incredible to him that Hitler would wage war simultaneously on several countries whose combined resources were incomparably greater than those of Germany. (436)

As for Churchill, he made a comic error w/ one of his predictions. He had warned Stalin of a possible German attack in **May 41**,<sup>43</sup> but in that month the Germans attacked the British on the island of Crete instead. The Boss could ask w/ his quiet smile why British intelligence, which showed such concern for the Soviet Union, was *unable to help itself*.<sup>44</sup> [!] The answer, as he saw it, was easy: Britain was losing too much blood in an unequal fight, and Churchill wanted to *push Stalin into a war at any price*. He could not, therefore, believe Churchill. Nor could he believe his own agent, Sorge. Sorge had refused to return to the Soviet Union. How could the Boss believe a defector? (436)

Balkan Campaign: When Hitler began his Balkan campaign early in **1941**, Stalin had *reason to feel reassured*.<sup>45</sup> The Yugoslavs capitulated in **Apr 41**, and Hitler moved against Greece. Hitler’s objective now seemed clear to the Boss: Once he had seized Greece he would be able to destroy the British in Egypt and take Suez. . . (436)

Anecdote: There was yet another proof – an amusing one – that Hitler could not possibly attack the Soviet Union in the near future. In **May 41** he was in the Balkans, so an attack could not possibly take place before the end of **Jun 41**. Hitler would then have to be prepared for the Russian winter. One sure sign that the Germans intended to attack so late in the year would be the *provision of sheepskin coats*. Millions of them would be needed. If Hitler really had decided to attack, he should be treating sheepskin coats as a matter of urgency. That would mean a fall in the price of mutton, and a rise in the price of fleece. Nothing of the sort was reported by Soviet intelligence. All in all, Stalin was entitled to conclude that Churchill was determined to draw the USA into the war by supplication, and Russia by false information. (436-37)

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<sup>43</sup> **Note**: Reference to Churchill’s famous warning of **21.4.41**?

<sup>44</sup> **Note**: This is an interesting point, which I haven’t seen made before.

<sup>45</sup> **Note**: This is also an interpretation I’d yet to see – however, there is another interpretation: Hitler was merely trying to clear his southern flank before beginning “Barbarossa.”

Vladimir Rezun [Suvorov]: An officer in the intelligence division of the KGB, Rezun was astonished to find that Stalin had stepped up arms production w/ feverish haste after conclusion of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, and that on the eve of war he had deployed more and more divisions on his frontier w/ Hitler. He was following the strategic rules for a surprise attack. What, Rezun asked himself, was the obvious inference? Was it that Stalin was planning to attack Hitler?<sup>46</sup>

#### He Was Planning to Attack First:

The Boss's pact w/ Hitler had indeed been intended to spur him on to fresh conquests. And while Hitler, intoxicated w/ his victories, was destroying capitalist Europe, the Boss was planning his great about-face: His Great War w/ Hitler. Once he had won that war he would become the liberator of a Europe bled dry. And its lord and master. . . The Boss had appreciated to the full the importance of Hitler's emergence for the triumph of the Great Dream. [Note: Author goes on to "buttress" his point along lines of arguments made by Suvorov and other "revisionist" historians who claim Stalin was preparing to attack Germany (hence, Hitler's attack was pre-emptive. Radzinsky writes of Soviet redeployments on the western frontier; the training of airborne troops in unprecedented numbers (by 1941 Stalin had more than one million parachutists); the frantic construction of a new air-raid shelter in the Kremlin (in which Stalin took uncommon interest); the much discussed and disputed comments of Stalin at a graduation banquet for officers at the Red Army Academy on **5.5.41**, etc. (437-39)

**15.5.41 / Pre-emptive war plan:** „No, Stalin was not planning an attack on Germany in **1941**.” That is the view of D. Volkogonov, author of a book on Stalin. A lieutenant general and an eminent Russian military historian, V. was the first person to be permitted to work in all the secret archives. [Note: Radzinsky lays out V.'s position, then states that he sees the situation “differently.” Main focus of his disagreement w/ V. is over the **15 May 41** plan, drawn up by Zhukov, for a pre-emptive strike against Germany. V. concluded that document was never submitted to Stalin; in response, Radzinsky writes: „Their signatures are in fact missing. But this does not mean that the document was not submitted to Stalin. . . Minutely detailed work of this sort on the part of the General Staff could not have been carried out w/o the Boss's knowledge. It is significant that according to Stalin's official engagement book, Zhukov, Timoshenko and Vasilevsky – all three of them – were in and out of Stalin's office on **May 12, 19, and 24**. [See text for more details, 439-41)

Hitler, too, had decided to make the first move. Knowing that Stalin was planning an offensive<sup>47</sup> and that he discounted the possibility of a German attack, Hitler made an insane decision. In fact, *he had no alternative*. Stalin might attack tomorrow himself. . . Stalin, meanwhile, still did not believe that Hitler would make such a mad move. Convinced that time was on his side, he went on calmly making ready for his turnaround – the sudden blow of which his generals had written in their “reflections.” But for all this certainty, he grew nervous as the fateful day approached. There were too many reports of German troop movements near the frontier. (441)

**14.6.41:** Stalin sent up a trail balloon. On **14 Jun 41** a press release from the official news agency, Tass, stated: “the rumors which have appeared in the British and not only the British press that war between the USSR and Germany is imminent are clumsy propaganda put out by

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<sup>46</sup> Note: Of course, this argument of Suvorov's – which Radzinsky here supports – is on very tenuous ground!

<sup>47</sup> Note: This assertion is patently false, of course. Neither Hitler nor the German High Command – nor “Fremde Heere Ost” – shared this view.

forces hostile to the USSR and Germany.” He waited, but there was no response from Hitler. Meanwhile, members of the German embassy staff were going home. This was the normal leave period, but they seemed to be departing en masse. Again, he reviewed the situation, and again he concluded that Hitler could not attack at that time. Summer would soon be ending, and the German army was not dressed for winter. Stalin saw only one explanation: Hitler was obviously scaremongering. (442)

Anecdote / Sepulchre of Tamerlane: While all this was happening, the Boss, as usual, took a hand in everything. A scientific expedition was at work on Uzbekistan. Mikhail Gerasimov, an expert in reconstructing human faces to fit skulls, had suggested opening the sepulcher of Tamerlane, and Stalin had agreed. He wanted to see the great conquerer’s face.<sup>48</sup> . . . When the expedition first started work, the Boss had been told about a local tradition that “the War God’s sleep must not be disturbed.” If it was, disaster would follow; Tamerlane would return on the third day, bringing war. . . But the Boss himself was an Eastern god. What were Tamerlane’s bones to him! On the night of **19-20 Jun 41**, the Guri Emir Mausoleum was floodlit.<sup>49</sup> A news crew was there to film the opening of the tomb. A gigantic marble slab was lifted from it. In the dark recesses of the marble sarcophagus stood a black coffin under a rotting cloth-of-gold baldachin. Tamerlane had died a long way from Samarkand and had been brought back to his burial place in this coffin. An old man who worked in the mausoleum begged them not to open the coffin. They laughed at him. Huge nails were pried from the lid. Gerasimov triumphantly removed Tamerlane’s skull and held it up for the cameraman. The film was rushed to Moscow, and the Boss saw the War God’s skull staring at humankind. [**Note**: Of course, “Barbarossa” commenced three days later!] (See, 442-43)

**21.6.41**: See text for Stalin’s activities on this day. After he learns that German deserter has stated war to begin at dawn the next day, Stalin issued a cautious order that evening. . . The Politburo was in session all day long. After the meeting the black limousines carried the Boss and his comrades-in-arms to his dacha. . . Molotov recalled that “on **21 Jun [41]** we were w/ Stalin at his dacha until **12 P.M.** . .” Stalin instructed Molotov to send an encoded telegram to the Soviet ambassador in Berlin, telling him to put to Ribbentrop the questions which Schulenberg had been asked. Molotov drove to the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs and a telegram was sent to Berlin at **12:40 a.m.** (443)

**22.6.41 / Y. Chadayev**: The street lamps were still burning when his [i.e., Stalin’s, after he had been informed by telephone of German attack] car drove into the Kremlin. . . He was the first to arrive at the Kremlin. The other members of the Politburo . . . filed into his office shortly afterward. . . Y. Chadayev, chief administrative assistant to the Council of People’s Commissars, had been chosen to take brief notes at all meetings of the Politburo and of the government held in Stalin’s private office. Chadayev mentions several times in his memoirs that he was “the only one whom Stalin allowed to take notes.” His recollections of the beginning of the war, in the manuscript of his memoirs (written after Stalin’s death), are therefore of the greatest interest. When he himself died, his manuscript seems to have made the rounds of various secret archives before coming to rest in the Secret Fund of the Archive of the October Revolution. That was where I managed, during Gorbachev’s perestroika, to read these still unpublished memoirs, to which the author gave the title, In Time of Dread. (445)

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<sup>48</sup> **Note**: Timur, also known as Tamerlane, was a 14<sup>th</sup>-Century Muslim conqueror of much of western and central Asia. He sought to restore the Mongol Empire. His conquests were often characterized by exceptional brutality. See, excellent “Wikipedia” write up.

<sup>49</sup> **Note**: Tamerlane was entombed in Samarkand, in the Guri Emir Mausoleum. (442)

Persistent Legend re: Stalin: There is a persistent legend that in the first days of the war Stalin, stunned by Hitler's attack, was at his wits' end, *incapable of action*. He then left the Kremlin for the nearer Dacha, where he remained, bewildered and inactive. Knowing Stalin's character as I did, I found this behavior strange. . . It was only after reading Chadayeve's memoirs that I began to understand Stalin's behavior. They, together w/ the dispassionate visitors' book, give us a *quite different picture* of those first days after the catastrophe. [**Note:** For account of Stalin's activities on first days of war see, pp 446 ff. Author writes that – at first – Stalin continued to cling to the hope that the German attack was simply a provocation and he asked Molotov to get in touch w/ the Berlin again and ring the embassy. . . Chadayeve writes: “I caught a glimpse of Stalin in the corridor [on **22.6.41**]. He looked tired, worn out. His pock-marked face was drawn and haggard. . .” Radzinsky – again from examination of Stalin's visitors' book – makes clear that Stalin worked indefatigably for the first few days after the start of Operation “Barbarossa.” (447-48)]

**23.6.41:** Stalin sets up a general HQ – the Stavka. From **3.30** a.m. to the middle of the following night he received an *uninterrupted succession of visitors*. (448)

**24.6.41:** It was now **24 Jun 41**, and Stalin's last visitors, Molotov and Timoshenko, did not leave his office until **6.00** a.m. . . There was no sign of exhaustion [in Stalin], of helplessness. His *constant state was one of rage*. (448)

**ca. 25.6.41:** As always, Stalin tried to take a hand in everything. Chadayeve reports that “he concerned himself, for instance, w/ the choice of the design for a sniper's automatic rifle, and the type of bayonet which could most easily be fixed to it – the knife-blade or the three-edged kind. . . . When I went into Stalin's office I usually found him w/ Molotov, Beria, and Malenkov . . . They never asked questions. They sat and listened.” (451)

Chadayeve writes: „Stalin often sent for the heads of People's Commissariats, gave them heavy assignments, and insisted quite unrealistically that they should be carried out in a very short time. People left his office in a *state of deep depression*.” (451)

**29.-30.6.41 / Stalin's disappearance:** There have been many legends about Stalin's disappearance in those dreadful first days of the war. Now we have Chadayeve's eyewitness account. [**Note:** See text for details, pp 453 ff. Radzinsky makes clear his interpretation, that Stalin was playing a game based on behavior of his hero, Ivan the Terrible. Stalin was absent from the Kremlin on these two days, only reappearing there on **1 Jul 41**. Once back at work, he was *tireless in his efforts to concentrate power in his own hands*.]

Stalin's work day: According to Chadayeve, Stalin usually got to the Kremlin by **2.00** p.m. For half an hour the black cars [i.e., limousines] would drive out of the dacha gates one after the other, w/ Stalin in one of them, *no one knew which*. Stalin's workday went on till **3.00** or **4.00** a.m. All members of the Politburo, the top military men, and the People's Commissars had to observe this routine. (454)

**Note:** Many soldiers gave themselves up at this early stage of the war, or ran home to their villages, where their parents *hid them in the cellar*. (458)

**Oct 41 / Stalin decides to stay in Moscow:** On 1 Oct 41, the Boss decided to evacuate Moscow. Government departments and foreign embassies began withdrawing to Kuibyshev, deep in the rear. . . The Boss, too, was due to leave the capital soon afterward. Members of his bodyguard recall how his daughter, Svetlana, helped w/ the packing. His library had already been transferred to Kuibyshev, along w/ his personal papers. . . The nearer dacha was booby-trapped. A secret train awaited him in a siding. Four [4] planes and his own Douglas aircraft stood ready at the airfield. And then he made a *startling decision*. (466)

**Oct 41 / Moscow in panic:** The city was being prepared for the arrival of the Germans. Smoke from bonfires hung over the capital – they were burning archives. Prisoners were hastily shot in the cellars of the Lubyanka. On the night of **15-16 Oct 41**, Beria called a meeting of leading Party personnel and ordered them to “evacuate everybody who is unable to help defend Moscow. Foodstuffs in the shops should be distributed to the population so as not to fall into enemy hands.” The highway was choked w/ people leaving the city. Special trains carried women and children to the rear. Thieves were busy in deserted apartments. House managers often told them which were the wealthy ones. Pictures and jewelry were sold dirt cheap. (466)

**Fall 41 / Siberian troops:** Meanwhile, Stalin was concentrating a *powerful striking force* just outside Moscow. A woman who lived in the village of Nikolina Gora recalled how “on the eve of the battle Siberian troops were stationed right there in our woods. Lads w/ fat, red faces, wearing newish white sheepskin coats. They contrived to sleep, standing up, leaning against trees. The snoring was terrible.” (466)

**Nov 41:** For Stalin’s celebration of the anniversary of the October Revolution – this year, because of enormous bomb crater in the Bolshoi Theater, the traditional meeting site of the gala and Red Square parade – at the Mayakovsky Square Metro station underground see, pp 467 ff.

**1.12.41:** A German reconnaissance battalion was forced back from the Khimki Bridge. They were practically in Moscow. The panicky city was haunted by rumors of German motorcyclists breaking through to Sokolniki Park – 20 minutes’ drive from the Kremlin. In reality, the Germans were getting nowhere. (468)

**The Supreme Commander:** Unlike his comrades-in-arms from the Civil War, Voroshilov and Budenny, Stalin had *succeeded in becoming a modern military leader*. The price of this knowledge was millions of lives, and he paid it w/o turning a hair. . . His office at GHQ was the heart of the army. . . He spent whole days, and often nights as well, at headquarters. (469)

**11.1.10: Stalin’s War. Tragedy and Triumph, 1941-45.** Edwin P. Hoyt. 2003.<sup>50</sup>

**Note:** In “Preface,” author states: Ernst Topitsch, professor of philosophy at Graz University in Austria, has evolved a unique theory about WWII: Stalin was *planning to attack Hitler* and was building up his armies to that end; but Hitler got in the first blow. (vii)

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<sup>50</sup> **Note:** Hoyt another “revisionist” author, of sorts. But does not subscribe to Suvorov thesis that Stalin preparing to attack in summer of **1941**.

## Chapter 1: An Unholy Alliance:

To the Russian government WWII was only an *extension of the Bolshevik Revolution* that had begun in **1918**. Germany and Japan were pawns to be used to destroy the capitalist system of Western Europe and America. In the **1930s**, Josef Stalin was pursuing the twin aims of assuring his continued power by a campaign of terrorism and the continuation of the Bolshevik Revolution, that, in his mind, would *bring all the world under Communist rule*. (1)

Nazi-Soviet Pact: Stalin was [equally satisfied w/ Hitler] w/ the secret division of the eastern border states, which gave the USSR rights to Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Bessarabia, and Poland east of the line formed by the rivers Nasrev – Weichsel – Sann. (5)

Stalin *intended to attack Germany* but in **1939** was not yet prepared to do so. It would be another three [3] years before he could strike [i.e., **1942**]. (5)

**1940**: Beginning at this time, more than half the troops of the Special Western Military District were concentrated around Bialystok and west in an area that projected into enemy territory. From that disposition, historian Ernst Topitsch concludes, the Russians *clearly were planning a pre-emptive attack on Hitler*. (8)

Dmitri Volkogonov, head of the Russian Institute of Military History and the first biographer to publish after glasnost, concluded that Stalin's miscalculations and his wrong assessments stemmed from his *absolute control of Soviet society*. Everyone was *afraid of him* – as he had shown so ruthlessly and so recently, he had the *power of life and death* over them. So, to please Stalin, everyone talked about the Invincible Red Army, knowing they were parroting lies, and the day that the internal stresses of capitalism would bring explosion from within. (9)

## Chapter 2: The Coming Storm

**Apr 41**: The German campaign in Yugoslavia ended when Belgrade surrendered on **13 Apr 41**, and the Yugoslav army gave up four [4] days later. Greece surrendered on **23 Apr 41**, and Hitler sent airborne troops to capture Crete. . . Actually, the Balkan campaign had not slowed the German preparations appreciably. The worst problem was the weather: the winter and spring of **1941** were unusually wet, and much of Poland was flooded. Even in early **Jun 41** the Bug River was over its banks. (12)

According to author, every Russian plan was predicated on a German attack that would threaten in **1942** or **1943**, not **1941**. (14)

## Chapter 3: The German Attack

No notes.

## Chapter 4: The First Days of the War

**22.6.41**: Early histories of the war portray Stalin as *going into a deep shock* at the attack and retreating to remain incommunicado in his dacha for a week. But recently new documents have

come to light that tell quite a different story. The streetlights were still on when his car drove into the Kremlin that morning. He waited for news of casualties, alone, because he was first to arrive at the Kremlin. The other members of the Politburo, aroused by Poskrebyshev, soon began filing in. . . On this first day of the war everyone believed the German attack was a short-lived venture that would fail. Orders were given to fall on the enemy w/ all the forces and means at their disposal and destroy them in areas where they had crossed the border. Pending further orders, they were not to cross the frontier. . . On this first day, everyone appeared to be optimistic. But, in reality, everyone was *feigning that optimism*. . . Stalin was also feigning optimism.<sup>51</sup> (31-32)

**ab 22.6.41:** For Stalin, day after day was filled w/ fits of rage. . . From the first days of the war, *panic and fear* reigned in Moscow. Windows were blacked out. Street lamps went unlit. . . (37)

### **Chapter 5: The Blitzkrieg**

No notes.

### **Chapter 6: Moscow**

**ab 22.6.41:** Stalin had just suffered the *greatest shock of his life*. He was *angry w/ everyone*. . . For the next few days he functioned irregularly, issuing orders that demanded immediate attack w/ forces that did not exist. . . On **29 Jun 41**, when leaving the defense commissariat w/ Molotov, Voroshilov, Zhdanov, and Beria, he burst out, "Lenin left us a great inheritance, and we, his heirs, have *fucked it all up*." (52)

**28.6.41:** Stalin's state of mind was so negative and confused that he was powerless to act sensibly. He divided his time between the Kremlin and his dacha. On the night of **28 Jun 41** he went to his dacha and lay down on his usual couch w/o undressing. He could not sleep so he got up and wandered around in the darkened rooms, pausing in the dining room before Lenin's picture, which was lighted as always. He waited for telephone calls to bring more terrible news, but they did not come. (53)

**Note:** Hoyt once again avers: "The truth was that the *Russians had planned to attack the Germans*, and the creation of the military districts along the Western Front had been preliminary buildup to such an attack. But Russian readiness was still *months away*. . . The sudden realization that the *plan had been undone* was a *major cause of Stalin's shock*." (54)

**29.6.41:** Stalin turned up twice on this day at the defense commissariat and subjected everyone there to abuse. His face was grey and he had huge bags under his eyes. At last he had recognized the danger that hung like a shroud over his country. (54)

### **Chapter 7: The First Fall Guys**

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<sup>51</sup> **Note:** Hoyt's analysis here – at times almost word-for-word – follows that of Radzinsky.

**30.6.41:** By this day, Stalin had *recovered his aplomb* enough to function again. On that day, the State Defense Committee was created, w/ Stalin as its head. His first step was to get rid of General Pavlov as C-in-C of Western Front. General Yeremenko was appointed in his place, and Pavlov and his senior commanders were all arrested. That same day, General Kuznetsov, commander of the Northwest Frontier [sic], ordered retreat from the Dvina River and the fortified districts of Ostrov – Pskov – Sebez. He was immediately dismissed and replaced by Maj-Gen Sobennikov, but he escaped Pavlov's fate. (57)

**Note:** Author writes that NKVD officers wore "green hats." (58)

**3.7.41 / Stalin's address to nation:** He had never spoken to the Russian people so intimately before. . . The speech was very effective. It raised the morale of the nervous and frightened people. As Alexander Werth put it, "Now they felt they had a leader to look to." (For more details on speech see, pp 64-65)

**10.7.41:** To stop the Germans, Stalin began to throw whole armies into the field w/o regard to their equip-ment or readiness, only to see them ground up like hamburger by the *Wehrmacht*. . . On **10 Jul 41**, the Staff HQ was transformed into HQ High Command (later called HQ of the Supreme High Command). Stalin was *in charge from that day until the end of the war*, and he meddled shamelessly w/ his military commanders. His orders were often *erratic, superficial, and incompetent*, turning victory into defeat. (58)

**Note:** Whenever Stalin heard of a position being abandoned, he either flew into a rage or he sank into apathy. He jumped to conclusions and he made snap judgements, many of them erroneous. His actions only made a bad situation worse. (68)

**Note:** That said, a couple pages later author avers: "Little by little, the dictator was *beginning to learn how war should be conducted*." (70)

## **Chapter 8: The German Advance**

**7.-29.7.41:** At the end of the first week of war, Guderian's panzers had reached Minsk, **200** miles east of the Bug River, and linked up with Hoth's 3 PzGr. A quarrel among the generals ensued. The Panzer men wanted to move fast against the center and capture Moscow. But the infantry generals of the broad front school wanted to move more slowly, cleaning up as they went and not letting the tanks outrun the infantry by too far. Hitler came down on the side of the broad front generals. On **7 Jul 41**, Guderian's troops reached the Dnieper River. He decided to disobey orders and cross. On **10-11 Jul 41**, he crossed, losing only 8 men.<sup>52</sup> By **29 Jul 41**, he was only **300** miles from Moscow. (71)

**6.-7.10.41:** On night of **6 Oct 41**, Stalin telephoned Zhukov in Leningrad and ordered him to Moscow to see what he could do to save the city. He arrived on **7 Oct 41** and went immediately to the Kremlin. Stalin was in his apartment, suffering from the flu, but Beria was also there. . . Beria remained silent as Stalin told Zhukov that the Red Army was *not strong enough* to resist the German attack on Moscow. Turning to Beria, Stalin suggested that he find a way of *negotiating another Brest-Litovsk* – like the one signed by Lenin in **Mar 1918**, which took Russia out of the

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<sup>52</sup> **Note:** Is this accurate? Check Guderian's Erinnerungen.

war at the cost of losing the Baltic states, Belorussia, Modavia, and part of the Ukraine. Beria was to ask the Bulgarian ambassador in Moscow to act as intermediary. . . (75-76)

**31.10.41:** By the end **Oct 41**, more than **2** million people had been evacuated from Moscow and many more had fled unofficially. . . Through all of this Stalin sat, like a rock, in the Kremlin, a symbol of Russian faith and resistance to the Germans. (85)

**Nov 41 / Anecdote:** This anecdote offers superb example of Stalin's interference in military operations. Somehow, he got word that Zhukov's troops had abandoned the city of Dedovsk, about **10** miles from Moscow, and he became very excited. . . He demands Zhukov retake the city. But Stalin was wrong, having confused Dedovsk w/ the village of Dedovo. Outcome is that Stalin's interference fouled up two armies, Western Front HQ, and a rifle division for half a day to satisfy a royal whim based on misinformation. (For details, pp 88-89)

### **Chapter 9: Moscow Counterattack**

Stalin had no real military experience outside the Revolution. . . He came to strategic wisdom only through trial and error. (91)

Shortage of trucks: The successes of the Red Army were quite spectacular: they liberated nearly every place between **20** and **40** miles from Moscow [by what date?]. The Red Army's serious handicap was a *shortage of transportation*. There were only **8000** trucks available on the Moscow front, a totally inadequate number. Not even half the required supplies could be delivered by motor transport. Hundreds of horse-drawn sleighs were used. And these had limited capacity. It was not for another year, until the Lend-Lease Program of America was in full swing, that the transport problem was solved. (96)

### **Chapter 10: Bitter Spring**

Status of Russia: The Russians had lost nearly **10** million men killed and captured between **Jun 41** and **Apr 42**. This meant they had only [had only?] a manpower reservoir of **9** million men and could no longer withstand losses of the sort they took in the battles from Bialystok to Bryansk. . . The Russians had suffered enormously. Their losses were matched by the economic damage. On the other hand, Stalin had converted the Russian economy to total war. War production had risen from **36%** of the total [production] in **1940** to **57%** of all industry in the first half of **1942**. . . (108)

**Feb 42:** According to author, the Russians were inferior [to the Germans] in terms of number of men under arms, w/ **5.5** million in first line units, compared to the **6.2** million German and Axis troops.<sup>53</sup> (108)

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<sup>53</sup> **Note:** These figures seem suspicious. I don't recall that the German and Axis forces were so large numerically in early **1942**.

**Mar-Apr 42:** German Army Group Center stabilized its line along a ragged **900-mile** perimeter between Velikiye Luki on the north and Orel in the south. At Agzhatsk, the group's **4 Pz Army** was w/in **90 miles** of Moscow. (109)

### **11.1.11: Stalin. A Political Biography.** Isaac Deutscher. 1949 (first edition)

#### Preface to the Second Edition (1966):

Deutscher states that, in the concluding passages of his book, he had “anticipated the so-called *de-Stalinization*. (vii)

He also avers that he did not take all of Khrushchev's revelations [at the **20<sup>th</sup>** Party Congress in **1956**, etc.] “at their face value: I do not accept, in particular, his assertion that Stalin's role in the Second World War was *virtually insignificant*.” This allegation was obviously meant to boost Khrushchev himself at Stalin's expense. (viii)

#### From the Introduction (1961):

Deutscher: “I had never been a devotee of the Stalin cult; and the cold war was not my war.” [?] . . . „The book has been praised or blamed for the most contradictory reasons, either as a denunciation of Stalinism, or as an apology for it.” (ix)

Few have been those who have paid attention to the full complexity of the character depicted here and to the intricacy of a portrait which shows Stalin *en face* as the descendant of Lenin and in profile as the descendant of Ivan the Terrible. . . (x)

I had been opposed to Stalinism ever since the early **1930s**; I had denounced the cruelties of forced collectivization while these were still being perpetrated (and not, as some of my critics did, **20** or **25** years after the event); I had been, at least since **1931**, a stern critic of the Stalinist policy which facilitated the rise of Nazism; I exposed the mass terror, the purges, and the Moscow trials while these were staged; and so on, and so on.<sup>54</sup> (x)

### **Chapter XII: The Generalissimo**

**22.6.41:** Despite all his miscalculations, Stalin was not unprepared to meet the emergency [of the war]. He had solidly armed his country and reorganized his military forces. His practical mind had not been wedded to any one-sided strategic dogma. He had not lulled the Red Army into a false sense of security behind any Russian variety of the Maginot Line, that static defense system that had been the undoing of the French army in **1940**. He could rely on Russia's vast spaces and severe climate. No body of men could now dispute his leadership. He had achieved *absolute unity of command*, the dream of the modern strategist. (461-62)

**3 Jul 41:** Stalin at last breaks his silence to offer guidance to his bewildered nation. In a broadcast address he spoke of the “grave danger.” His voice was *slow, halting, colorless*. His speech was, as usual, *laborious and dry*. It contained none of those rousing words which, like Churchill's promise of “blood, toil, tears and sweat,” pierce the mind of a people. His style was strangely out of keeping not only w/ the drama of the moment, but even w/ the content of his

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<sup>54</sup> **Note:** Interesting, that Deutscher felt such a need to justify his anti-Stalinism at this time (**1961**). Makes one wonder if the critics didn't have a point.

speech. . . He began by . . . [see text for details.] He called for “*ruthlessness, ruthlessness, and once again ruthlessness*” in dealing w/ the invader and in overcoming chaos and panic behind the fighting lines. Then he made his awe-inspiring call on the people to “scorch the earth” that they must cede to the enemy. [See text.] It was as if the Russia of **1812** had been resurrected and spoken through Stalin’s mouth. . . His speech – at once so great and so flat, so indomitable and so uninspiring. (462-64)

**30.7.41:** Stalin talked to Harry L. Hopkins, President Roosevelt’s envoy. He admitted that he himself had not expected Hitler to launch the attack; he further said that the “war would be bitter and perhaps long. . .” and that he would like the President to know that he, Stalin, “*would welcome **American troops** on any part of the Russian front under the complete command of the American army.*”<sup>55</sup> This is one of the most revealing statements attributed to Stalin by the memoirists of the Second World War. Throughout the war Stalin persistently refused to admit to the front any foreign troops not under his command. He kept foreign observers away from the fighting lines; and as a rule, to which there were exceptions, he would not even allow allied pilots to fly over Russia. What then made him so eager to “welcome American troops on any part of the Russian front under the complete command of the American army” in **Jul 41**, when the United States was not even at war and when his suggestion was completely unreal? One can only conclude that he uttered those words in a mood of flagging confidence, perhaps of despair. (464-65)

**Sep 41:** After Budienny’s disastrous defeat on the Dnieper, two other visitors, Harriman and Beaverbrook, noticed *signs of depression* in Stalin; and Stalin then inquired whether the British would not send some of their troops to the Ukrainian front.<sup>56</sup>

In the first months of the war uncertainty must have *gnawed at Stalin’s mind*, even though to the world he showed only an iron mask. He wore that iron mask w/ amazing fortitude and self-mastery. Perhaps, indeed, that mask was his most powerful weapon. It gave his will to victory an heroic, almost superhuman appearance. Russia was *replete w/ elements of weakness*. The slightest sign of flagging in the man in whose hands the nation, half-coerced and half-persuaded, had wholly rested its fate, might have increased those elements of weakness w/ disastrous results. Stalin knew, of course, that to him personally . . . hesitation or weakness spelt an inglorious end. Self-preservation bade him behave as he did; and now, *more than ever before*, his personal interest was at one w/ the interest of the nation.<sup>57</sup> (465-66)

Many allied visitors who called at the Kremlin during the war were astonished to see on how many issues, great and small, military, political, or diplomatic, Stalin *personally took the final decision*. He was in effect his own C-in-C, his own minister of defense, his own quartermaster, his own minister of supply, his own foreign minister, and even his own *chef de protocole*. The Stavka, the Red Army’s GHQ, was in his offices in the Kremlin. From his office desk, in constant and direct touch w/ the commands of the various fronts, he watched and directed the campaigns in the field. . . After a day filled w/ military reports, operational decisions, economic instructions, and diplomat haggling, he would at dawn pore over the latest dispatches from the front or over some confidential report on civilian morale from the Commissariat of Home Affairs, the NKVD. . . Thus he went on, day after day, throughout four years of hostilities – a prodigy of patience, tenacity, and vigilance, almost *omnipresent*, almost *omniscient*. (466-67)

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<sup>55</sup> **Note:** Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, pp 339-43.

<sup>56</sup> **Note:** *Ibid.*, 387-89.

<sup>57</sup> **Note:** This paragraph is most insightful.

**Oct 41:** People who spent those days in Moscow described later the salutary effect which the news that Stalin had not left w/ the rest of his Government had on the mood of the Muscovites, who saw in it evidence that the will to victory, personified in Stalin, was unshaken. His presence in the Kremlin at this late hour was indeed a challenge to fate. It was as if the *fortunes of the world had been balancing on the towers of the old fortress*. To both Stalin and Hitler the Kremlin became the symbol of their ambition. . . . At least a part of his [Stalin's] power had lain in his remoteness from the people. If he had left, the spell of his remoteness might have been broken. He might have appeared to the people as a dictator in flight. This is not to say that he could not have conducted the war from some retreat in the country. But to leave Moscow was for him a step awkward and humiliating enough to make him shrink from it to the end. (469)

Stalin's leadership: Not once, so it seems, did Stalin seek *direct personal contact* w/ his troops in the field. Trotsky in the Civil War moved in his legendary train from front to front, exploring, sometimes under enemy fire, advanced positions and checking tactical arrangements. Churchill mixed w/ his soldiers in the African desert and on the Normandy beaches. . . . Hitler spent much of his time in his advanced field HQ. Stalin was *not attracted by the physical reality of war*. Nor did he rely on the effect of his personal contact w/ his troops. Yet there is no doubt that he was their real C-in-C. His leadership was by no means confined to the taking of abstract strategic decisions . . . . The avid interest w/ which he studied the technical aspects of modern warfare, down to the minute details, shows him to have been *anything but a dilettante*. He viewed the war *primarily from the angle of logistics*, to use the modern expression. To secure reserves of manpower and supplies of weapons, in the right quantities and proportions, to allocate them and to transport them to the right points at the right time, to amass a decisive strategic reserve and to have it ready for intervention at decisive moments – these operations made up nine-tenths (**9/10**) of his task. (469-70)

**Nov-Dec 41:** Towards the end of **1941** it was precisely from that angle that the situation appeared to be hopeless. This is how N. Voznesensky, Director of the State Planning Commission, describes it: (470)

On the territory that had been occupied by the Germans in **Nov 41** lived about **40%** of the whole Soviet population. About **65%** of the whole pre-war output of coal had come from there, **68%** of all pig iron, **58%** of all steel, **60%** of aluminium. . . **38%** of the grain, **84%** of sugar . . . **41%** of all railway lines of the U.S.S.R. . . .

From **Jun – Nov 41**, industrial output was reduced by more than half; and the output of steel by more than two-thirds. The production of ball-bearings, so indispensable for modern machines, was less than **5%** of normal. At this moment, Russia's proverbial "*inexhaustible reserves*" were a myth. Her material resources were *infinitely inferior* to Germany's. Even her *manpower* was not greatly superior; [accurate?] and it was at any rate much inferior to the combined manpower of Germany and her satellites. Thus, Russia's resistance, especially in the first year of the war, was a triumph of her superior determination and spirit, the spirit that made young Communists die at the outskirts of Moscow w/ the cry: "*Behind us is Moscow – there is no room left to retreat.*" (470)

Immediately after the outbreak of hostilities, Stalin, as we know, explained the *initial Russian defeats* by the *advantage of surprise* which Hitler had secured. In **1946** he put a somewhat different construction on the events, suggesting that he had *deliberately lured the Germans into the interior of Russia in order to destroy them there*. . . . This second interpretation was calculated to stop inquisitive probings into the causes of the defeats of **1941/42** – such probings could not

but detract from Stalin's prestige. That the Russians were compelled to retreat by *overwhelming German pressure*, that it could not have been part of their strategic plan to withdraw from their wealthiest provinces is certain. Stalin did not, like Kutuzov, attempt to trap the enemy into Moscow, which was now the capital – in **1812** the capital was St. Petersburg. In **1812** the loss of territory did not impair Russia's capacity to wage war; and Napoleon's advance was confined to the roads leading to Moscow. In modern war a deliberate retreat on such a scale and involving such losses as those suffered by Russia in **1941/42** would have been stark madness, if not worse. (471-72)

**Note:** Deutscher goes on to explain how Stalin abandoned the tactics and rhetoric of Marxist internationalism – he carefully refrained from waging the war under the banner of proletarian revolution, believing apparently that this would have wrecked the coalition. . . He studiously cultivated the appearance of a single anti-fascist interest and democratic ideology, common to the whole coalition. To that appearance he sacrificed the Comintern, when, in **May 43**, he decided to disband it. This was his political contribution to the coherence of the Grand Alliance. (See, pp 474-75)

It was not only the *fear of a separate peace* that haunted Stalin. Only slightly less grave, but much more real, in his eyes was the danger that the western allies would remain inactive and let Russia and Germany mutually exhaust themselves. (475)

#### Stalin & his Generals:

Hitler, exasperated by disagreements w/ his own generals, once told his friends how much he envied Stalin, who could *deal much more ruthlessly w/ obstinate generals than he could himself*.<sup>58</sup> In this, as in many of his “intuitions” about Russia, the “Bohemian corporal” was *superficial and wrong*. He probably had in mind the purge of Tukhachevsky and his group, which, incidentally, took place three years after Hitler's showdown w/ General Schleicher. The truth is that the officers' corps of the Red Army had been the only organization in the state upon which Stalin had not brought to bear the full measure of totalitarian pressure. To be sure, he kept the armed forces under his control. But he also took care not to involve them too closely in all the controversies and intrigues which shook party and state. He encouraged the non-political general, devoted to his job and bent on making the best of it, as long as that officer paid lip service to the party on one or other rare occasion. . . Military art was one of the few politically important domains in which Stalin *encouraged the original and experimenting mind*, in which he did not impose the do's and don't's of his *pseudo-dialectical catechism*. Up until **1937** he had allowed Tukhachevsky a free hand in matters concerned w/ strategic and tactical conceptions and w/ modernization of the armed forces. Thus, the officers' corps largely escaped that oppressive spiritual drill which, over the years, maimed and crushed the civilian character. True enough, the purge of **1937** led to a grave worsening. But it was significant that not one of the indicted military leaders was brought to recite the usual confessions and self-accusations. All faced their judges and executioners like men. That circumstance alone indicated that the officers' corps had acquired a *distinct mentality of its own, an independence of mind* and a moral staying power quite exceptional in the climate of totalitarianism. (494)

In the first phase of the war the army paid a heavy price for, among other things, the loss of self-reliance which its commanding staffs had suffered as a consequence of the purges. The warning was not, however, wasted on Stalin. He had the sense to *give back to his generals their freedom of movement*, to encourage them to speak their mind, to embolden them to look for the solution of

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<sup>58</sup> **Note:** B.H. Liddell Hart, The Other Side of the Hill, p 207.

their problems by way of trial and error, and to relieve them from the fear of the boss's wrath, a fear which weighed so heavily on Hitler's generals. He punished his officers w/ draconic severity for lack of courage or vigilance; he demoted them for incompetence, even when the incompetents happened to be Voroshilov and Budienny; and he promoted for initiative and efficiency. Hitler's generals had a shrewder appreciation of Stalin's method than Hitler himself when they said that the *top rungs of the Russian ladder of command* "were filled by men who had proved themselves *so able that they were allowed to exercise their own judgement, and could safely insist on doing things in their own way.*"<sup>59</sup> (See, pp 493-95)

In the depth of defeat, Stalin radically renewed and rejuvenated the high commanding staffs. He brushed aside all sterile pretensions of seniority and *paid attention only to performance in battle*. Nearly all his famous marshals and generals held subordinate positions or were juniors when war broke out. The basic selection of the new military elite took place during the Battle of Moscow, when Zhukov, Vassilevsky, Rokossovsky, and Voronov came to the fore. It continued w/ the Battle of Stalingrad, in which Vatutin, Yeremenko, Malinovsky, Chuikov, Rotmistrov, Rotmistsev, and others made their names. It was nearly completed during the Battle of Kursk, the turning point in the meteoric career of the young Cherniakovsky, who within three years rose from major to army general. [!] These men, nearly all in their 30s and 40s, unhampered by the deadweight of routine, avidly learned in the hard school of battle until they became their enemies' equals and then superiors. (496)

The *regeneration of the army*, of its morale, and of its commanding staff was one of Russia's *most remarkable achievements*, for which *credit was due to Stalin*. But the political implications of this could not have been quite to Stalin's taste. His marshals and generals began to *steal the limelight*. . . Although Stalin himself had since been accused of being a sort of a Bonaparte, he could not but look askance upon the *military legend that was growing around his marshals*. (497)

### **11.1.12: Stalin. The Man and His Era.** Adam B. Ulam. 1973.

#### **Chapter 11: Dangerous Games**

##### War on Finland:

The whole business [i.e., the military defeat of the Finns], Assistant War Commissar Kulik told the future Marshal Voronov, should be over in **10-12** days. [!] Yet the Finns fought stubbornly and well. The *disastrous effects of the purges* in the Soviet armed forces now became evident. The command was incompetent, field officers lacked experience and initiative, coordination between the various branches of the armed forces was chaotic. The Red Army kept *attacking frontally en masse* and suffering fearful casualties – by the Soviets' own admission these amounted to more than **200,000**, a number *greater than that of the whole Finnish army*, including **50,000** killed, in a war which lasted a little more than three [3] months. (521)

By **Mar 40**, w/ more than one million men thrown into the war against the Finns, Soviet troops finally breached the Mannerheim Line and could be expected to overrun the country and to foist the Communist government on it. But the international situation was menacing. So the Kuusinen

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<sup>59</sup> **Note:** B.H. Liddell Hart, The Other Side of the Hill, 232. These comments are most likely accurate for the period of the war beginning about fall **1942**. I doubt, however, that they pertain to the initial period of the war.

government [i.e., the puppet Finnish government] was told to disband, and on **12 Mar 40** the USSR concluded a lenient peace w/ Finland. The frontier was pushed away from Leningrad, the USSR obtained military and naval bases; but Finland kept her independence. (522)

Some lessons were drawn from the Finnish affair. A few generals were shot. But Stalin was lenient on those bearing the primary responsibility for the chaos in the army.<sup>60</sup> (For details see, 522-23)

The Red Army, Stalin realized, however, *had to become more of a **Russian** army* – hence an even greater emphasis on the *continuity w/ the Imperial past*. In the course of **1940**, the rank of general was restored – the title was thought at one time to be so redolent of Tsarism that it had not been used even when the rank of marshal had been introduced. Political commissars were stripped of their equal status w/ the military commanders. Reforms were instituted to restore the authority and self-confidence of the officer corps. Discipline and the privileges of officers were strengthened. . . The gap between officers and enlisted men had already widened; now the salute was reintroduced. But all these privileges and amenities could not undo the *fatal effect on the rank and file of seeing so many officers denounced and arrested as enemies of the people*. When the Germans eventually struck, units *dissolved into fleeing rabbles*, the soldiers paying no attention to their commanders' orders (even pleas). (523)

#### Hitler attacks in West / May 40:

Stalin awaited w/ mounting impatience the news that a *long and inconclusive war in the West had begun*. In **Apr 40**, Hitler obliged him, but not very satisfactorily: the Germans seized Denmark and Norway. . . The Germans had had such an easy time of it. Surely the French Army . . . And this must have been Stalin's hope when in the early morning of **10 May 40** Molotov awakened him w/ the long-awaited message. This was it [i.e., Hitler had attacked in the West]. . . This was the big test of Stalin's gamble. (523-24)

Stalin had miscalculated. Within two weeks the Anglo-French armies in the north were either destroyed or forced to evacuate. . . What had seemed inconceivable to practically everybody in Europe became, on **23 Jun 40**, a fact: France capitulated. Again *oblivious to his word of honor to Hitler*, Stalin *concentrated substantial forces on the Soviet-German frontier* following the German attack in the West. This was intended to become known to Germany, making her *retain some divisions against a possible move by her Soviet "ally" and thus **slow down the German drive in France***. But such was the speed of the German advance that by the time this movement was confirmed by the High Command of the Wehrmacht it was too late. It was **20 Jun 40**. The French had already collapsed. . . But Stalin had managed to *confirm Hitler's **worst suspicions***. And so, like the Poles, the French, and the British before him, he was ungrateful; he would have to pay for it. On **31 Jul 40**, at a meeting w/ his military chiefs, the Fuehrer announced his verdict: "In the course of this contest Russia must be disposed of. Spring **1941**. The quicker we smash Russia the better."<sup>61</sup> (524)

The Fuehrer's decision was also prompted by Russia's unseemly greed for yet more territory. [**Note:** Here Ulam discusses Soviet seizure of Baltic states, Bessarabia and northern Bukhovina, and impact it had on Hitler. See, pp 524-25)

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<sup>60</sup> **Note:** Echoes the comments made by Issac Deutscher (see above, "Stalin & His Generals").

<sup>61</sup> **Note:** Fascinating analysis – this is first time I've seen it posited that Stalin's movement of Red Army troops to Russo-German demarcation line at time of French Campaign influenced Hitler's decision to attack Russia.

**Nov 40 / Molotov in Berlin:**<sup>62</sup> For Ulam's analysis see, pp 526-28. Key point: And so the conversation concluded w/ the Russians feeling that the Germans wanted to entangle them in a war w/ Britain, and w/ Hitler more than ever convinced that there was only one way of dealing w/ the Russians. . . Stalin, on his part, suspected – this was an *error of enormous importance* in the spring of **1941** – that it was the military men who were trying to provoke Hitler against Russia. Molotov's report must have *strengthened this suspicion*, inclining him [Stalin] to seek to appease Hitler still further. (526-28)

#### Stalin's appeasement of Hitler:

Hope and despair now fought for mastery over Stalin's mind. It would be insane for Hitler to attack Russia w/ Britain still unconquered, w/ the United States edging even closer to active participation in the war. . . In the winter of **1940/41** reports multiplied of a forthcoming German attack on Russia. Several Soviet espionage rings, the British, and the Americans all conveyed intelligence that the Germans were switching the bulk of their troops to Poland. Violations of Russian air frontiers by German aircraft became endemic. But Stalin remained wary: obviously the British and their American friends were *trying to push him into a war w/ Germany, as were some Prussian generals*. For class reasons those aristocrats might try to provoke a border incident and then trigger a war against the Bolsheviks against Hitler's wishes. (528-29)

The important thing was *not to let oneself be provoked*. Russia scrupulously kept up her schedule of deliveries of foodstuffs and raw materials, even though Germany fell behind in hers. Soviet batteries were strictly forbidden to fire on German planes violating Soviet airspace. When Admiral Kuznetsov issued an order in **Mar 41** to force down those planes – they were now almost openly photographing Soviet naval bases – he was summoned to Stalin and, in the eloquent presence of Beria, told to countermand the order. (529)

The purges, as well as *Stalin's inability to adjust to the possibility of a conflict w/ Germany*, entirely sapped the power of initiative of the Soviet generals, and it took the shock of the war itself to restore it – and then at a hideous cost. (530)

**CruX:** It would be unfair to accuse Stalin of neglecting the country's defense. In **1940** new regulations lengthened the working day and week. By **1941** the army was *more than double the size it had been in 1939*. In a number of cases capable people were put in charge of vital departments. But his *complex feeling* about the approach of war prevented Stalin from *preparing* the Soviet Union for it. (531)

#### The Balkans / Spring 1941:

After Rumania and Finland came Bulgaria's turn. Bulgaria acceded to the Tripartite Pact on **28 Feb 41**, and was rewarded by German troops moving in. Stalin now tried briefly what might be described as a get-tough policy w/ Hitler. The pro-Axis Yugoslav government was overthrown by a group of Serbian officers, and the Soviets hastened to fortify Yugoslav resolve to stand up to Germany. There was *some hope that the Germans might get bogged down in the Balkans* if they tried to punish the Yugoslavs. Mussolini's armies were currently being trounced by the Greeks. (531)

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<sup>62</sup> **Note:** Colorfully, Ulam writes: “There was the grandiose expanse of the Reichschancellery, its walls lined w/ blond giants in SS uniforms who snapped to ominous attention as the small Foreign Commissar [i.e., Molotov] and his suite of aides and spies trooped to an audience w/ the Fuehrer.” (527)

**5.4.41:** The USSR signed a treaty of friendship w/ the Royal Yugoslav Government. . . Within a week the German war machine had rolled over the Greeks and Yugoslavs. The Russians might well have believed that the Balkan terrain would *strain the resources of the German panzer*, but then it was another hope that crumbled. (531)

**9.5.41:** Stalin made an unseemly and belated attempt to undo the effect of this defiance of Hitler:<sup>63</sup> On **9 May 41**, in flagrant violation of “friendship,” recognition was withdrawn from the Yugoslav government, now in exile in London, and for good measure the same step was taken in relation to the exiled Belgian and Norwegian governments. (531-32)

**13.4.41:** There was one last diplomatic success [for Russia] before all hell broke loose. On this day Russia signed a nonaggression treaty w/ Japan. . . **13 Apr 41** must have appeared a good if not a great day for Stalin. If Germany let Japan sign a treaty w/ the USSR, there was *still hope that Hitler did not really want war*. (532)

**6.5.41:** On this day, Stalin became chairman of the Council of Commissars, the first *government office* he had chosen to occupy since **1922**. Why did he bother? There were two reasons. The Russians were playing the old game of pretending to “discord in the Kremlin.” Several highly situated Germans, Ambassador Schulenburg among them, believed that Stalin headed a “peace party” while Molotov had become anti-German. Stalin’s assumption of the chairmanship might reassure Hitler and avert or postpone the blow. The second reason was that if war came, the informal kind of dictatorship which Stalin exercised might become vulnerable. Otherwise trifling matters – such as who has the *legal* right to negotiate, issue decrees, sign a peace – can become of life-and-death importance. Stalin left nothing to chance. He now became the *highest executive official* of his country. (532-33)

**14.6.41 / Tass Communique:** There were now *very precise warnings* from several sources – the Americans, the British ambassador, Soviet spies in Tokyo – that the German invasion originally scheduled for **15 May 41** and postponed due to the campaign in the Balkans would take place around **20 Jun 41**. But perhaps this was part of some German general’s provocation; therefore Stalin should indicate to Hitler that he stood by his word of honor. On **14 Jun 41**, all Soviet newspapers and radio stations carried a Tass announcement bearing the imprint of Stalin’s own style: (534)

“Despite the obvious absurdity of rumors about a forthcoming war, German and Soviet troop concentrations,” “responsible circles” in Moscow had authorized the statement that “according to evidence in the possession of the Soviet Union, both Germany and the Soviet Union are fulfilling to the letter the terms of the Soviet Non-Aggression Pact.” German troop movements to the “eastern and northern parts of Germany” (i.e., German-occupied Poland) were mysteriously “explained by other motives that have no connection w/ Soviet-German

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<sup>63</sup> **Note:** Appears to me that Stalin’s foreign policy vis-à-vis Germany was characterized by a large degree of inconsistency in period from about **Jun 40** to at least the end of Hitler’s Balkan Campaign in **Apr 41**. During this period, he seems to have vacillated at times between aggressive moves – which simultaneously infuriated and alarmed Hitler – and abject appeasement. His *volte face* on Yugoslavia in **May 41** is emblematic of this. However, following the lightning German successes against Greece and Yugoslavia, it appears Stalin reverted to a consistent policy of appeasement in a desperate attempt to ward off war w/ Germany.

relations.” It was false to state that “the Soviet Union is preparing for a war w/ Germany.”<sup>64</sup>

Stalin must have realized that the communiqué represented yet another gamble. It was bound to lull the vigilance of the Russian people, and especially the army. But the risk had to be taken. Perhaps Hitler would be impressed, perhaps the troop concentrations were simply a way of pressuring the Russians. (There was an oblique hint in the communiqué that the Soviet Union would *welcome new negotiations*, perhaps stood ready to make concessions.) (534)

**CruX:** Mistake upon mistake, miscalculation upon miscalculation! Yet Stalin *would not pay for them*. The war, like collectivization, would be a monumental national catastrophe, and yet it would be a *tremendous political success*, and it would *end w/ Stalin towering like a giant over prostrate Europe*, unwilling to moderate in the slightest his tyranny over a heroic people. In the years to come he must often have reflected on this outrageous favoritism of Providence. . . (534-35)

## **Chapter 12: For our Country, for Stalin**

**21.6.41:** Saturday was now a regular eight-hour working day, and most Muscovites on **21 Jun 41** were preoccupied w/ one thought: how to rest or amuse themselves tomorrow. With the Tass communiqué of **14 Jun 41** the *fear of war had been allayed*. Issues of *Pravda* and *Izvestia* that went to the press the same night [i.e., **14.6.41**, I assume] contained the usual reassuring dull stuff: production achievements in Kazakhstan, a report on the Moscow Party conference. The war was far away – news of military operations in North Africa and Syria appeared on page **5** – and most readers were expected to be more interested in the announcement of an exhibition of aquatic sports that was to open on Sunday. *No other European capital awaited the summer of 1941 so calmly and unconcernedly*. (536)

There was still uneasiness among the *intelligentsia* . . . and if they had short-wave radios they heard rumors of Hitler’s next move: Would it be thru Spain against Gibraltar, or finally, against England? By contrast, the *highest agitation* ruled among officers in the War Commissariat and General Staff. On **21 Jun 41** they received information pinpointing the night of **22 Jun 41** as the beginning of the German attack. (See, pp 536-37)

### **22.6.41:**

News of the war was moving thru Russia w/ the speed of lightning, but the machine of the totalitarian government was for the moment like an overturned car, its wheels spinning in the air, the driver in a daze, no one able to order it to be righted. Until noon, the Soviet radio broad-cast music, instructions for calisthenics, and similar trivia. And when the time came to tell the people the frightful news, Stalin . . . could not bring himself to do it. At noon, in a halting voice, Molotov spoke of Germany’s “faith-breaking” deed. “Our course is just . . . we shall prevail.” Only now did orders go out for mobilization. (539)

Late in the evening Stalin, accompanied by some members of the Politburo, arrived in the operations room of the Commissariat of Defense. The war had been going on for only **20** hours, but the *magnitude of the disaster was already clear*. German armored columns had cut deep into Soviet territory, communication w/ many frontier units had been lost, others were known to have

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<sup>64</sup> Source = Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-45, Series D, XII, 1028-29.

disintegrated. By *midday* on **22 Jun 41** 1200 Soviet planes had been destroyed, **800** of them on the ground. (539)

Stalin exploded. He seemed clearly unhinged. Why were the Russian troops retreating? Did they not know they had to carry the war into the enemy's territory? But such was the terror he exuded that at **9:15** p.m. Marshal Timoshenko issued an order although, in view of the situation, it was sheer lunacy: The advancing German units were to be "*surrounded and annihilated*;" by **24 Jun 41**, Soviet armies in the north and center were to advance **60 to 90** miles and to seize strategic points within German Poland. As a result, the Soviet armored divisions of the second line of defense, which should have been carefully husbanded, were *prematurely thrown in the battle*. Their personnel incomplete, many of the tanks and armored vehicles unavailable because of repairs, this precious force was cut to ribbons. . . The fatal directive had facilitated German encirclement of sizable Russian forces [i.e., due to the directive, these Soviet armored units advanced right into the trap the Germans were laying]. (539)

**ab 22.6.41** / Myth of Stalin's Incapacitation:<sup>65</sup> Stalin had left the country rudderless – or, to use the by now proper term, he had deserted his post. After the scene at the Commissariat of Defense on the evening of **22 Jun 41**, which led to Timoshenko's fatal order, he returned to his villa in Kuntsevo. As far as it can be gleaned from the shamefaced Soviet accounts, *for the next several days he suffered from nervous prostration, which completely disabled him*. The "man of steel" was *incapable of issuing commands*, even of participating in consultations. Everything seemed to be lost; the whole edifice built on the fiction of his infallibility was crumbling. . . In his absence Russia in effect *ceased to be ruled*. The Stavka – an old Russian word for Supreme Field Headquarters, now synonymous w/ the High Command – was officially set up on **23 Jun 41**.<sup>66</sup> It included military and political officials, Stalin simply being designated as a member, its chief and Supreme Commander being Marshal Timoshenko. For seven [7] days *supreme power was in Timoshenko's hands* and, had he been made of a different stuff, Stalin might well have met the fate which in wartime is usually reserved for those who through dereliction of duty have been responsible for a military disaster. . . [**Note:** Ulam writes of the "seven [7] days when Stalin was absent."] (540)

**3.7.41:** On this day, for the first time in two weeks, the voice of authority was heard throughout the land. Stalin addressed the people on the radio. "He spoke in a dull, slow voice w/ a strong Gerogian accent." At one point he *lifted a glass w/ a trembling hand, making a sound against the table, and the radio listeners could hear him drinking water*. "His voice was low, soft and he might have appeared calm, but for his *heavy, tired breathing* and for his drinking water during the speech." Ambassador Maisky gives a more forthright version: "It came out badly. Stalin spoke in a *dull, colorless voice*, often *stopping and breathing heavily*. . . He seemed ailing and at the end of his strength."<sup>67</sup> (541-42)

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<sup>65</sup> **Note:** Ulam's book was published in **1973**, at a time when the myth of Stalin's disappearance and incapacitation at start of war was "conventional wisdom." Ulam's account appears to be one of the "better" renditions of this myth!

<sup>66</sup> **Note:** In light of preceding sentences, this is an incongruous point. How in the first place could such a decision have been taken – i.e., to establish a supreme HQ – w/o Stalin taking the lead in making that decision? And because we know he did take the lead in doing so, Russia was certainly not "rudderless" or abandoned by Stalin.

<sup>67</sup> **Note:** Ivan Maisky in: *New World* (Moscow), Dec 64, p 165.

### Stalin as C-in-C:

Though he was the only possible C-in-C, Stalin was not a good one. He was, of course, a military dilettante. Stalin's only military experience had been in the *antediluvian campaigns* (by WWII standards) of the Civil War. He had quick intelligence and an *enormous capacity for work* and for mastering details. But these qualities were offset in large measure by his inordinate suspiciousness and stubbornness, which did not allow him to judge men on their professional ability alone, or to accept strategies merely because of their military soundness. . . . As the war progressed, Stalin improved, learned to reward generalship over political reliability, to delegate some authority in the military field. But how costly in lives his education was! (544)

It is not surprising that his first steps in directing the war were *almost as disastrous* as his failure to prepare the country and army for it. He was *obsessed by the necessity of **defending every square foot of Soviet territory***, blind to the advisability of tactical retreats so that the battered Soviet armies could be re-formed and re-equipped. And his choices for C-in-Cs of the main fronts (this was to be the Soviet designation for an army group) were to prove most unfortunate. On **10 Jul 41**, Voroshilov was made C-in-C of the north, Budenny of the south, and Timoshenko on the central front. Apart from their personal loyalty to Stalin, the first two had little to recommend them. Voroshilov was incapable of commanding a major army unit, let alone a front; Budenny lived in the military past, in the era of cavalry raids before such inconvenient innovations as tanks and aviation. . . . Much younger than the other two, Timoshenko would have been a capable division or corps commander, but in **1941** and again even more disastrously in **1942**, he showed himself unqualified to be C-in-C of a front. Zhukov, Stalin's chief of staff in those few weeks, grew increasingly exasperated at his leader's *unwillingness to sanction timely withdrawals*. . . . The military disaster grew. (544-45)

For all the *incalculable **psychological effect*** of the *Wehrmacht's* defeat in front of Moscow in **Dec 41**, the Germans did not lose their mastery in the field, nor would the Red Army recover technically and, much more important, morally until the Battle of Stalingrad, in the winter of **1942/43**. And *not until then did Stalin learn the job of C-in-C*; not until then did Soviet leadership in military affairs cease to have unfortunate if not disastrous results. (546)

When German pressure slackened temporarily [after the first weeks of the war], the initial panic and then resolution was succeeded by realization of the appalling truth: *the system under which they lived was **grotesquely inefficient***, to the point that the war made it appear unreal.<sup>68</sup> (546)

Stalin's ruthlessness: In the ending of a short story by Solzhenitsyn, the hero, a soldier w/o papers who escaped from an encirclement, is turned over to the **NKVD** w/ the inevitable consequence. Such stories stand not for isolated incidents but for *hundreds of thousands of cases*. Whole units that after stubborn fighting broke through a German encirclement were, once in the Soviet lines, *disarmed and sent back for "investigations."* Once the superficial layer of unanimity and enthusiasm was peeled off by the war, what was found underneath was "papers," a synonym for that *total distrust of people which was the **cornerstone of Stalinism***, proclaiming every Soviet man from Politburo members to an army private guilty until proven loyal. In peacetime this distrust enabled Stalin to build his personal power to an extent *unprecedented in history*; in war it nearly led to an irretrievable disaster.(547)

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<sup>68</sup> **Note:** On the other hand,

Stalin panics again?:<sup>69</sup> Ulam contends that, on **16 Oct 41**, Stalin actually “fled the capital and was away for two days.” He insists “there is no question” that this happened, though it is “not explicitly stated in any Soviet source.” According to Ulam, this incident was analogous to Stalin’s putative behavior in the first days of the war, when, so Ulam, he disappeared for seven days: “That the Leader himself was *not immune to this panic* and that for the *second time in a year he had lost his ability to command* is vividly confirmed by the fact that not until **19 Oct 41** was a state of siege proclaimed in Moscow – the step which logically should have been taken the minute it was realized that the city was in danger. By that time, Stalin was back in the Kremlin in command of himself and the situation.” (553-54)

What if?: A fascinating historical is, What would have happened if the Germans had realized the extent of panic and disorganization that gripped the Soviet regime between **15-19 Oct 41**? They were pursuing the textbook strategy of clearing pockets of Soviet resistance, preparing not a frontal assault but yet another pincers operation to encircle the capital. What if they had *thrown caution to the wind and sent a **Panzer division** racing the 50 miles that separated their advance units from Moscow?* The capital might still not have fallen or been promptly recovered, but Stalin would have had to leave it and join the rest of the government in faraway Kuibyshev. Russia might still have won the war. Would Stalin? Instead, the next two months *raised him to new heights*. (554)

**Oct-Nov 41**: It was the measure of the *gravity of the situation* that Stalin should have overcome his suspiciousness to the point of entrusting the command of the several “fronts” surrounding Moscow to a single general [i.e., Zhukov]. . . For once, if not for long, he let Zhukov have a free hand. . . Memoirs written at the time [i.e., that of Marshal Rokossovksy, etc.] support the impression of Zhukov’s commanding role and exceptional position vis-à-vis Stalin. General Belov, who saw them both in **Nov 41**, recorded his impression that of the two it was Zhukov who was giving orders, Stalin at times becoming flustered. (555)

**Dec 41**: The effects of the December victory on the morale of the Russian people were electrifying. . . The great patriotic surge, the War for the Fatherland, really began in **Dec 41**. (558)

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<sup>69</sup> **Note**: This is the first I’ve ever heard of this theory!

## 11.2: *Adolf Hitler*

### 11.2.1: **DRZW / Bd. 8: Die Ostfront 1943/44. Der Krieg im Osten u. an der Nebenfronten** (review of by J. Huerter)

In his review, Huerter points out that the book is often based on the memoirs and post-war studies of the German generals: "In dieser 'Rekonstruktion des Zweiten Weltkrieges aus dem Geist des Generalstabes' ging es vor allem darum, alle Schuld auf den mil. Dilettanten Hitler abzuwaelzen, der die ‚Profis‘ dauernd behindert hat. Dieser Linie folgt Frieser weitgehend kritiklos." Yet as Huerter makes clear, „die Kapitel Bernd Wegners ueber die Strategie der deutschen Fuehrung zeichnen ein wesentlich differenzierteres Bild. Danach sind viele militaerischen Fehler nicht auf den Dilettantismus Hitlers, sondern auf Kompetenzengerangel, Ehrgeiz, Eifersucht u. schlichtweg Unfaehigkeit innerhalb der Generalitaet zurueckzufuehren.“ Thus, „Frieser unterschaezt den originaeren Anteil der Heeresgeneralitaet an der deutschen Katastrophe.“

### 11.2.2: **„Hitlers ‚Programm‘ u. seine Realisierung 1939-42,“** Klaus Hildebrand, in: Hitler, Deutschland u. die Maechte, M. Funke (Hsg.)

**1942:** Von dem Sieg ueber Russland u. dem noch immer erhofften Einlenken Englands aber hing das Gelingen des „Programms“ ab. Doch nach den grossen Erfolgen der Wehrmacht in Russland u. in Nordafrika waehrend des Sommers **1942**, die noch einmal die Siegesillusionen naehrten u. den Zeitgenossen eine scheinbar durchaus offene Situation boten, trat im **Sep 42** bei Hitler endgueltig die Erkenntnis ein, dass sein verzweifelter Versuch, „das Schicksal“ doch noch „zu wenden,“ gescheitert war.

Ja, es war ihm „von dem Kulminationspunkt des beginnenden Jahres **1942** an“ klar, wie General Jodl es kurz nach der Kapitulation **1945** ausdrueckte, dass „*kein Sieg mehr errungen werden konnte*.“ Je deutlicher sich aber der Misserfolg auf den militaerischen Schlachtfeldern zeigte, desto konzentrierter wurde der Kampf gegen das Judentum gefuehrt, dessen Fortsetzung Hitler selbst noch im letzten Satz seines Testaments aus dem Jahre **1945** forderte: „Vor allem verpflichtete ich die Fuehrung der Nation u. die Gefolgschaft zur peinlichen Einhaltung der Rassengesetze u. zum unbarmherzigen Widerstand gegen den Weltvergifter aller Voelker, das internationale Judentum.“ (90)

### 11.2.3: **„Die ‚Endloesung‘ u. das deutsche Ostimperium als Kernstueck des rassenideologischen Programms des Nationalsozialismus,“** Andres Hillgruber, in: Hitler, Deutschland u. die Maechte, M. Funke (Hrsg.)

Hitlers Ostkrieg ist mit Recht „der ungeheuerlichste Eroberungs-, Versklavungs- u. Vernichtungskrieg“ der Neuzeit genannt worden, ohne dass die elementare Bedeutung dieses Faktums fuer den Charakter, den weiteren Verlauf u. den fuer Deutschland u. grosse Teile Europas katastrophalen Ausgang des Zweiten Weltkrieges mit den vielfaeltigen Nachwirkungen u. Folgen des Geschehens fuer die Gegenwart in den meisten deutschen Darstellungen . . . mit der notwendigen Klarheit hervorgehoben wuerde.

Denn noch immer wird das Unternehmen „Barbarossa“ . . . in mehrfacher Weise missverstanden oder fehlgedeutet: a) als rein machtpolitischer Vorgang, der sich allein aus den Notwendigkeiten

des seit dem **Sep 39** im Gange befindlichen europaeischen Krieges ergeben habe; b) als „Kreuzzug“ gegen den stalinistischen Bolschewismus. . . c) u. als „nationaler Aufbruch“ der Voelker aus dem Raum von Finnland bis zum Schwarzen Meer zur Abwehr einer drohenden Gefahr aus dem Osten. All dies wurde in der NS-Propaganda nach dem **22 Jun 41** in der Oeffentlichkeit herausgestellt.

Aus den Aeusserungen Hitlers im kleinen Kreis aus den letzten Monaten vor dem Angriff auf die Sowjetunion laesst sich die Kontinuitaet seiner Zielsetzung bis in die Einzelheiten belegen. Vier [4] Motiven verschlingen sich in seiner Ostkriegs-konzeption ineinander. [Note: Here, Hillgruber lists Hitler's four objectives for Operation „Barbarossa,“ as I've delineated below, in **11.2.4.**] (99-101)

**30.3.41:** Waehrend in der Zeit bis zum Angriff auf die Sowjetunion die *Aufgaben von Wehrmacht u. SS, im ganzen gesehen, noch relative klar **voneinander getrennt waren*** u. folglich die Wehrmacht den Krieg besonders gegen die Westmaechte nach den Regeln der Haager Landkriegsordnung fuehrte, setzte Hitler diese u. andere Prinzipien des Voelkerrechts bereits vor Angriffsbeginn fuer den Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion aus eigener Machtvollkommenheit ausser Kraft. Sein Bestreben, die *bisher eingehaltene Trennlinie zwischen SS u. Wehrmacht zu beseitigen* u. die letztere unmittelbar zum Instrument seines rassenideologischen Krieges zu machen, ging aus seinen Ausfuehrungen in einer grundlegenden Rede vor **200 bis 250** Befehlshaber u. hoeheren Offizieren am **30 Mar 41** in der Reichskanzlei mit unmissverstaendlicher Klarheit hervor. (104-05)

**3./16.7.41:** Stalins Aufruf zum Partisanenkrieg gegen den Deutschen vom **3 Jul 41** bot die Moeglichkeit, die *Ausrottung der Juden mit der Bekaempfung der Partisanen zu verbinden* u. auf diese Weise SS-Aktion u. militaerischen Kampf noch fester zu verknuepfen.<sup>70</sup> In der Besprechung mit dem engsten Fuehrungskreis am **16 Jul 41** erfasste Hitler diese „Chance,“ indem er erklarte: „Die Russen haben jetzt einen Befehl zum Partisanenkrieg hinter unserer Front gegeben. Dieser Partisanenkrieg hat auch wieder seinen Vorteil: er gibt uns die Moeglichkeit auszurotten, was sich gegen uns stellt.“

Die Auswirkung dieser Verklammerung zweier von Ansatz her verschiedener Massnahmen wurde in dem von Hitler as „ausgezeichnet“ bezeichneten Befehl des O.B. der **6. Armee**, des dem NS eng verbundenen GFM v. Reichenau, vom **10 Okt 41** deutlich.<sup>71</sup>

Das wesentliche Ziel des Feldzuges gegen das juedisch-bolschewistische System ist die voellige Zerschlagung der Macht-mittel u. die Ausrottung des asiatischen Einflusses im europaeischen Kulturkreis. Hierdurch entstehen auch fuer die Truppen Aufgaben, die ueber das hergebrachte einseitige Soldatentum hinausgehen. Der Soldat ist im Ostraum nicht nur ein Kaempfer nach den Regeln der Kriegskunst, sondern auch Traeger einer unerbittlichen voelkischen Idee u. Raecher fuer alle Bestialitaeten, die deutschem u. artverwandtem Volkstum zugefuegt wurde. Deshalb muss der Soldat fuer die Notwendigkeit der harten, aber gerechten Suehne am juedischen Untermenschentum volles [im Original unterstrichen] Verstaendnis haben. . . (106-07)

<sup>70</sup> **Note:** Clearly, the Germans attempted to conflate “Partisan” w/ “Jew,” and vice versa.

<sup>71</sup> **Note:** Dr. Christian Hartmann stresses the seminal importance of Reichenau's order for the Ostheer as a whole in his new book: Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg. Following this discussion of Reichenau order, Hillgruber goes on to address similar order by GFM v. Manstein of **Nov 41**. (107)

**14.7.41:** Seines Triumphes im Osten sicher, hatten Hitler am **14 Jul 41**, bereits den Befehl gegeben, im Blick auf die Kriegfuehrung gegen die angelsaechsichen Maechte, das Schwerge-  
wicht der deutschen Ruestung vom Herr auf Marine u. Luftwaffe zu verlagern. Die Vorberei-  
tungen zu einer Offensive ueber Bulgarien-Tuerkei, ueber den Kaukasus nach Iran-Irak u. von  
Libyen-Aegypten aus in den britischen Nahostraum mit anschliessendem Aufbau einer  
Operationsbasis in Afghanistan zur Bedrohung Britisch-Indiens waren ebenso im Gange wie fuer  
einen Vorstoss ueber Spanien u. Gibraltar nach Nordwestafrika bis Dakar zum Aufbau einer  
Bastion gegen Amerika. Dabei sollten von den zu erobernden Azoren-Inseln aus im Spaetherbst  
**1941** Langstreckenbomber gegen die amerikanische Ostkueste starten koennen. Der somit auf  
die Eroberung des europaeischen Russland in einer Art „Weltblitzkrieg“ folgenden gewaltigen  
Erweiterung des deutschen Machtbereiches nach Suedost u. Suedwest sollte die Ausweitung der  
zunaechst auf die Ausrottung der Juden auf dem Territorium der Sowjetunion beschaenkten  
„Endloesung“ auf den ganzen deutsch-beherrschten Grossraum entsprechen. Erst wenn dieser  
ganze riesige Raum frei von Juden war, konnte der NS-Rassenideologie zufolge die langfristige  
Sicherung der deutschen „Weltmacht“-Stellung gelingen. (102-03)

**16.7.41:** Bereits Mitte **Jul 41**, d.h. nach rund vier [4] Wochen Feldzug, glaubte sich Hitler  
im Osten am Ziel, so dass er nunmehr die naechstfolgende Etappe des Gesamtprogramms –  
wiederum militaerstrategisch u. rassenideologisch gleichzeitig – anvisierte. . . Er gab am  
**16 Jul 41** im engsten Fuehrungskreis (Rosenberg, Lammers, Keitel, Goering, Bormann) sein  
Ostprogramm in knappster Formulierung bekannt: „Grundsatzlich kommt es darauf an, den  
riesenhaften Kuchen handgerecht zu zerlegen, damit wir ihn ersten beherrschen, zweitens  
verwalten u. drittens ausbeuten koennen.“ Zwar muesse die eigene Absicht . . . sorgfaeltig  
getarnt werden. Aber: „Alle notwendigen Massnahmen – Erschiessen, Aussiedeln usw. – tun tun  
wir trotzdem u. koennen wir trotzdem tun.“ (101-02)

Wie hat es dahin kommen koennen, dass die Fuehrung des deutschen Heeres, wenn auch  
ueberwiegend indirekt, zum Komplizen des von den Einheiten der Sicherheitspolizei u. des  
SD auf Hitlers Befehl ausgefuehrten Massenmordes an den Juden auf dem Territorium der  
Sowjetunion wurde? Die Stunde der letzten Entscheidung war hier zweifellos jener **30 Mar 41**,  
als Hitler mit seltener Offenheit vor den ueber **200** versammelten Offizieren seinen Entschluss  
zum rassenideologischen Vernichtungskrieg unter Ausserkraftsetzung wesentlicher voelker- u.  
kriegsrechtlicher Normen verkuendete. Der O.B. des Heeres v. Brauchitsch versagte sich  
damals der Alternative, die der Generalstabschef Halder *auf Grund des Einspruchs* der drei [3]  
O.B. der H.Gr. (GFMs v. Leeb, v. Bock, v. Rundstedt) sowie einiger Armee-O.B. gegen die  
Ausfuehr-ungen Hitlers – nach dessen Weggang – vorgeschlagen hatte – naemlich entweder  
Hitler bereits am Nachmittag dieses Tages zur Zuruecknahme des Entschlusses zu veranlassen  
oder die Aemter des O.B. des Heeres u. des Chefs des Generalstabes zu Verfuegung zu stellen.  
Brauchitsch hielt es fuer aussichtslos, auf diese Weise Hitler von seinem Entschluss  
abzubringen.<sup>72</sup> (109-10)

**Note:** Kaum einer ahnte, dass Hitler – als das Unternehmen „Barbarossa“ nicht, wie erhofft, in  
wenigen Monaten erfolgreich beendet war sondern sich zu einem jahrelangen verlustreichen

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<sup>72</sup> **Note:** Hillgruber’s remarks here are interesting. Some more recent authors contend that Hitler’s remarks  
on **30.3.41** encountered virtually no criticism.

Ringen ausweitete – schon im Winter **1941/42** die *Wahrscheinlichkeit eines Scheiterns des Ganzen erkannt hatte* u. im engsten Kreise auch offen aussprach.<sup>73</sup> (111)

**Note:** Near the conclusion of his article, Hillgruber quotes from the final statement (persoenliche Schlusswort) of GFM Keitel at Nuremberg:

. . . Ich habe geglaubt, ich habe geirrt u. war nicht imstande zu verhindern, was haette verhindert werden muessen. Das ist mein Schuld. Es ist tragisch, einsehen zu muessen, dass das Beste, was ich als Soldat zu geben hatte, Gehorsam u. Treue, fuer nicht erkennbare Absichten ausgenutzt wurde u. ich nicht sah, dass auch *der soldatischen Pflichterfuellung eine Grenze gesetzt ist*. (112)

**11.2.4: „Die Wendung des europaeischen Krieges von West nach Ost (Jun 40 – Jun 41),“** Andreas Hillgruber, in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg 1939-45. Kriegsziele u. Strategie der grossen Maechte. A. Hillgruber.

**31.7.41:** In Hitlers grundlegenden Ausfuehrungen vor den Militaers am **31 Jul 40** lief sein machtpolitisches Kalkuel auf die Schlussfolgerung hinaus: „Wenn (in Grossbritannien) (die) Hoffnung auf Russland wegfaellt, faellt auch Amerika weg, weil (dem) Wegfall Russlands eine Aufwertung Japans in ungeheurem Masse folgt.“ Damit waren *viel frueher als erwartet die USA zum Angelpunkt der Gesamtstrategie Hitlers geworden*.<sup>74</sup> (45)

Welche Moeglichkeiten gab es, um das Ziel der indirekten „Ausschaltung“ der USA als Hauptbedrohung fuer das deutsche „Kontinentalimperium“ zu erreichen? Neben der von Hitler am **31 Jul 40** bestaetigten, allerdings auf Fruehjahr **1941** verschobenen Brachialloesung [?] einer schnellstmoeglich anzustrebenden vollstaendigen Niederwerfung der Sowjetunion mit dem erwarteten Effekt einer anschliessenden Bedrohung der USA von beiden ozeanischen Flanken aus durch die nunmehr im globalen Rahmen kooperierenden u. langfristig auf Amerika konzentrierten Maechte Deutschland u. Japan standen drei [3] „Alternative“-Moeglichkeiten:

a. Ribbentrops politisches Konzept der Schaffung eines europaeisch-asiatischen „Kontinentalblocks“ „von Madrid bis Yokohama“ (unter Einschluss der Sowjetunion) mit Spitze gegen Grossbritanniens Empire u. gegen die USA;

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<sup>73</sup> **Note:** See, KTB OKW (WFSt), Bd. IV, S. 1503 (grundlegende Ausfuehrungen des Gen.Obst. Jodl vom **15 Mai 45**. (f.n. 56, 111)

<sup>74</sup> **Note:** Following an in-depth discussion of Anglo-American strategic planning in **1940/41**, Hillgruber concludes: „Es faellt auf, dass in der langfristigen strategischen Planung, die bis zum Sieg ueber Deutschland u. Japan abgesteckt wurde, *die Sowjetunion keine Rolle spielte*. Den globalen Krieg Deutschland u. Japan planten also die USA u. Grossbritannien allein zu fuehren. Anders, als es Hitler in seinen Lage-Analysen immer unterstellte, waren die USA u. Grossbritannien, deren Staerke im Bereich der See- u. Luftmacht lag, somit keineswegs bei ihren strategischen Planungen von der Notwendigkeit eines „Kontinentaldegens“, einer Einbeziehung der Sowjetunion in die „Anti-Hitler-Koalition“, ausgegangen. Die Haltung der Sowjetunion wurde vielmehr . . . bis Mitte **Jun 41** von der britischen Fuehrung als aeusserst zwielichtig betrachtet. Fast bis zur letzten Stunde vor Beginn des dt. Angriffs am **22.6.41** lautete auf britischer Seite die Alternative: entweder Angriff auf eine mit Hitler verbuendete Sowjetunion oder aber – sehr begrenzte – Unterstuetzung fuer eine von Hitler angegriffene, aber kaum als zu langem Widerstand gegen die Deutschen faehig gehaltene Sowjetunion.“ (56-57)

b. Raeders, des O.B. der Kriegsmarine, strategische Grundvorstellung einer Schwerpunktverlagerung der deutschen Kriegfuehrung in den Mittelmeerraum u. in den Nahen Osten sowie nach Nordwestafrika, um eine breite strategische u. Rohstoffbasis fuer einen erfolgreichen See- u. Luftkrieg gegen Grossbritannien u. die USA im Atlantik zu gewinnen;

c. Doenitzs, des Befehlshaber der U-Boote, hartnaeckige Forderung nach sofortiger Konzentration aller Kriegsanstrengungen auf die Unterbrechung der Seeverbindungen zwischen Grossbritannien u. den USA durch einen „totalen“ U-Boot Krieg, um die Fernhaltung der amerikanischen Macht von Europa durch die Beherrschung der atlantischen Seewege durch die dt. U-Boote zu erreichen, deren Zahl gegeneuber den tatsaechlich vorhandenen allerdings um ein Vielfaches erhoehrt werden musste.

Die Konzeptionen der beiden Marinebefehlshaber schieden fuer Hitler – von allem anderen abgesehen – allein schon deshalb aus, weil sie seine „programmatischen“ Ost-Ziele ausser Betracht liessen u. im Grunde einen anderen Krieg als den Hitlers: einen mit Grossbritannien u. den USA als Hauptgegnern, fuehren wollten, waehrend die Sowjetunion von ihnen als wohlwollend neutrale Macht oder gar als Verbuendeter angesehen wurde. Aehnliches galt auch fuer Ribbentrops „Kontinentalblock“-Idee, sofern sie als politische Dauerorientierung aller europaeisch-asiatischer Grossstaaten . . . gegen die anglo-amerikanischen Seemaechte u. nicht nur als ein voruebergehend vielleicht brauchbares Mittel angesehen wurde, um Grossbritannien doch noch zum „Kommen“ zu bewegen u. die USA auf dem amerikanischen Doppelkontinent zu isolieren. (45-46)

Hitler sah die Lage – nach Ausfall der „weltpolitischen Zwischenloesung“ – in folgender Weise „alternativ:“ Verzichtete er auf den Feldzug gegen die Sowjetunion in **1941** u. beschaenkte er sich auf eine Abkapselung seiner im Grunde nur um ein Vorfeld erweiterten mitteleruopaeischen Stellung, die er **1940** gewonnen hatte, die aber fuer eine „Weltkriegs-Strategie“ raeumlich zu eng u. zudem „wehrwirtschaftlich“ nicht „autark“ war, zumal eine Ausweitung des eigenen Machtbereichs in Richtung Mittelmeergebiet, Naher Osten u. Nordwestafrika im Sinne Raeders zwar einzelne, auch groessere Erfolge, aber zugleich eine Kraefteverzettelung u. keine Entscheidung gegen die dadurch eher noch schneller zu einer vollen Allianz gefuehrten Westgegner Grossbritannien u. USA bringen konnte, so liess sich eine Entwicklung voraussehen, die ihn den „Erpressungen“ Stalins aussetze u. die ihn schliesslich zur „Kapitulation“ vor den langfristig planenden, mit ihrem ueberlegenen Kraeftepotential nach jahrelangen zermuerbenden Abnutzungskaempfen triumphierenden Seemaechte fuehren wuerde.

So blieb als einzige Loesung des Knotens in seiner Sicht nur: Zertruemmerung der Sowjetunion als Grundvoraussetzung fuer die entscheidende Wende des Gesamtkrieges zu seinen Gunsten u. zur Erreichung seiner Kriegsziele im Osten wie – darauf dann aufbauend – gegeneuber den Westmaechten. Hitler *setzte alles auf die eine Karte*: dass ein „Blitzkrieg“ im Osten in wenigen Wochen zum vollen Erfolg fuehrte u. dass anschliessend eine Rueckwendung der deutschen Kriegsmarine gegen den Westen erfolgen koenne. (48)

Dementsprechend gingen die Planungen im Winter **1940/41** *weit ueber die Vorbereitungen fuer die militaerische Niederwerfung der Sowjetunion hinaus*. Die Ausschaltung der Roten Armee innerhalb von laengstens vier [4] Monaten nach Feldzugeroeffnung war nur der Kern eines – so koennte man ihn nennen – „Weltblitzkriegs“-Plan mit dem Ziel, innerhalb eines halben Jahres die gesamt „oestliche Hemisphaere“ Europa-Asien-Afrika, jedenfalls alle strategisch wesentlichen Raeume, von den „Dreierpaktmaechten“ in Besitz nehmen zu lassen, um die USA auf dem amerikanischen Doppelkontinent zu isolieren. (**Note:** See text for more details of Hitler’s strategic plan for a “world blitzkrieg.” pp 48 ff.)

### Hitler's Ostkriegskonzeption ("Weltblitzkrieg"):

Vier [4] Ziele verschlingen sich in Hitlers Ostkriegskonzeption ineinander:

- a. Die Ausrottung der „juedisch-bolschewistischen“ Fuehrungsschicht der Sowjetunion einschliesslich ihrer angeblichen biologischen Wurzel, der Millionen Juden in Ostmitteleuropa;
- b. Die Gewinnung von Kolonialraum fuer deutsche Siedler in der vermeintlich besten Teilen Russlands;
- c. Die Dezimierung der slawischen Massen u. ihre Unterwerfung unter die deutsche Herrschaft in vier „Reichskommissariaten“ Ostland (Weissruthenien, Litauen, Lettland, Estland), Ukraine, Moskowien u. Kaukasien. . . unter der Leitung deutscher „Vizekoenige“ – wie sich Hitler in Anlehnung an sein „Ideal“ einer Kolonialherrschaft, an die Rolle Grossbritanniens in Indien, ausdrueckte;
- d. Schliesslich sollte die Autarkie eines blockadefesten „Grossraums“ in Kontinentaleuropa unter deutscher Herrschaft vollendet werden, fuer den die eroberten Ostgebiete das vermeintlich unerschöpfliche Reservoir an Rohstoffen u. Nahrungsmitteln darbieten sollten. Dies schien die entscheidende Voraussetzung dafuer, dass sich Hitlers Reich im Kriege gegen die anglo-amerikanischen Seemaechte behauptete u. in Zukunft jedem denkbaren neuen „Weltkrieg“ gewachsen sein wuerde. Dass allein die Absicht, die deutsche Wehrmacht ausschliesslich aus Russland zu versorgen, dazu fuehren wuerde, dass „zig Millionen Menschen verhungern“ muessten, wurde in den Richtlinien fuer den „Wirtschaftsstab Ost“ schon am **2 Mai 41** vorausgesetzt. (65)

### **11.2.5: Hitler as War Lord, Franz Halder.<sup>75</sup>**

**18.12.40:** Hitler issued his order to the three Services – the „Barbarossa“ Order – to make military preparations for an attack on Russia against the possibility of Russo-German relations undergoing a fundamental change. It was a *preparatory measure*, **no decision had then been taken**. . . Precisely when Hitler did take it, can probably no longer be established. . . It can be assumed, however, that it was not taken until after the quick successes of the Balkan campaign, in the course of which Russia's hostility towards Hitler had been unmistakably revealed.

The decision for the attack on Russia came *anything but easily* to Hitler. . . On the other hand, he had a firm and not unfounded conviction that Russia was *arming for an attack on Germany*. To-day we know from good sources that he was right. (38-39)

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<sup>75</sup> **Note:** Halder's book has already been covered in my other notebooks. The above comments of his are interesting when compared to Jodl's immediately below.

### **11.2.6: Hitler as militaerischer Fuehrer. Erkenntnisse u. Erfahrungen aus dem KTB des OKW.** Percy E. Schramm.

a. Aufzeichnungen des Gen.-Obst. Jodl, Chef WFStab ueber Hitlers Einwirken auf die Kriegsfuehrung (diktiert 1946 im Nuernberger Gefaengnis)<sup>76</sup>

P. Schramm: Das Alfred Jodl im Grunde seiner Seele bereits seit dem Winterfeldzug 1941/42, endgueltig seit Stalingrad (1942/43), *nicht mehr an den „Endsieg“ glaubte*, erhellt aus den Aussagen, die ich an der Einleitung angefuehrt habe. Seine Tragik besteht darin, dass er sich moralisch verpflichtet fuehlte, das, was er mit dem Verstand voraussah, aus „dienstlichen“ Gruenden nicht laut werden zu lassen; deshalb trat er allen, die zu derselben Erkenntnis gelangten, mit Schaerfe entgegen – dem General Warlimont, d. h. seinem naechsten Mitarbeiter, hat er deshalb auf eine skeptische Bermerkung hin einmal erwidert, *er gehoere eigentlich in ein Konzentrationslager*. (145)

Alfred Jodl diktierte im Nuernberger Gefaengnis das Folgende: „Der Einfluss Hitlers auf die Kriegsfuehrung (Eine skizzenhafte Betrachtung Hitler als Strategie:“

. . . Wenn etwas die revolutionaeren Fuehrungsmethoden Hitlers klar vor Augen fuehrt, so die Tatsache, dass er auch seinem militaerischen Arbeitsstab, dem **OKW** u. in ihm dem **WFStab**, *nicht die Rolle eines strategischen Beraters zubilligte*. Alle Versuche, die ich in dieser Richtung unternommen habe, scheiterten. Einen Arbeitsstab, der Hitlers Entscheidungen als Strategie umsetzte in Befehle, die er dann als O.B. der Wehrmacht zu geben hatte, das liess er gelten, das wollte er haben, aber nicht mehr. Dass selbst Maenner wie Friedrich der Grosse ihre eigenen Gedanken u. Entschliessungen an den oft gegenteiligen ihrer Generale ueberpueften u. kontrollierten, aenderte nichts an Hitlers ablehnender Haltung gegenueber jeder Beratung bei den grossen Entscheidungen des Krieges. Er wollte keine anderen Auffassungen hoeren, ja er geriet ueber sie, sobald sie nur angedeutet wurden, in jaehzornige Erregung. Wunderliche u. fuer Soldaten unverstaendliche Konflikte entwickelten sich aus dieser fast mystischen Ueberzeugung seiner Unfehlbarkeit als Fuehrer der Nation u. des Krieges. . . (150)

Der Mann [i.e., Hitler], dem es gelang, vor den Augen der meerbeherrschenden englischen Flotte Norwegen zu besetzen, u. der mit unterlegenen Kraeften in einem Feldzug von **40** Tagen Frankreichs gefuehrtete militaerische Macht zum Einsturz brachte wie ein Kartenhaus, war seit diesen Erfolgen nicht mehr gewillt, auf militaerische Ratgeber zu hoeren, die vorher vor solchen Ueberspannungen der militaerischen Macht gewarnt hatten. Er verlangte fortan von ihnen nicht mehr als die technischen Unterlagen fuer seine Entschliessungen u. den reibungslosen Ablauf der militaerischen Apparatur, um diese Entscheidungen in die Tat umzusetzen. (150)

Inzwischen [i.e., Fruehjahr 1941] hatte das Gespenst eines riesenhaften russ. Aufmarsches an der deutschen u. rumaenischen Ostgrenze Fleisch u. Blut angenommen, u. Hitler trug sich mit dem Gedanken, hier das Praevenire zu spielen. Viele Stimmen hat die Welt inzwischen aus dem Nuernberger Prozess vernommen, die vor diesem Einmarsch gewarnt haben.<sup>77</sup> Alle stimmten darin ueberein, dass er Hitlers ureigentste Idee war. Beides sind historische Tatsachen. . . Ich will hier . . . nur feststellen, dass die Gefahr aus dem Osten von allen Soldaten gesehen u. die Sorge Hitlers geteilt wurde. . . Unterschiedlich waren die Meinungen, ob die Gefahr wirklich so akut war u. ob sie nicht politisch zu bannen gewesen waere. . . Uns interessiert hier nur der

<sup>76</sup> **Note:** Here, Jodl states unequivocally that Hitler only made his final decision to attack Russia on **1 Apr 41**, after the “Putsch” in Yugoslavia.

<sup>77</sup> **Note:** This perspective, of course, is largely negated by the facts.

Einfluss Hitlers auf die Kriegfuehrung, u. dazu ist zu sagen: Der Entschluss zum Feldzug gegen die UdSSR, der Plan Barbarossa, war *sein u. nur sein Entschluss*. Allerdings hat er ihn endgueltig erst am **1.4.41** getroffen. Denn um diese Zeit trat ein Ereignis ein, das zwar den Beginn des Angriffs gegen die fast fertig aufmarschierten sowj. Kraefte um **4-5** Woche verzogerte, aber fuer Hitler doch ein Fanal bedeutete, das ihm die Absicht Stalins offenbarte. (153)

Das war der Militaerputsch in Belgrad in der Nacht, die dem Beitritt der gestuerzten jugoslawischen Regierung zum Dreimaechtepakt folgte. Hitler was ausser sich. Er diktierte geradezu seine Entscheidungen den zusammengerufenen O.B. u. dem Reichsaussenminister. Er liess sich auf keine Eroerterungen ein, die politische Haltung der jugoslawischen Regierung vorher diplomatisch zu klaeren. Sie war fuer ihn im Bunde mit Russland, bereit, *uns in den Ruecken zu fallen*, wenn wir in Griechenland einmarschierten, u. bestrebt, die Verbindung mit den Englaendern aufzunehmen, die schon Anfang **Mar [41]** im Piraeus gelandet waren. Und in der Tat marschierte das jugoslawische Heer sofort an allen Grenzen auf. Am **6 April [41]** beginnend, wurde es selbst durch die improvisiert aufmarschierten deutschen Truppen ueberrannt u. verfiel in wenigen Wochen der Aufloesung. . . (153)

Aber seine militaerischen Ratgeber – hoert man noch heute oft sagen – haetten ihm doch frueher klarmachen muessen, dass der Krieg verloren sei. Welch ein naiver Gedanke! *Frueher als irgend ein Mensch in der Welt ahnte u. wusste Hitler, dass der Krieg verloren war*. Aber kann man ein Reich u. ein Volk frueher verlorengeden, als sie verloren sind? Ein Mann wie Hitler konnte das nicht. . . (154)

b. Aus den Memorien des Gen.-Obst. Guderian . . . Erfahrungen mit Hitler:

Er (Hitler) machte die Nacht zum Tage. Bis lange nach Mitternacht folgte ein Vortrag dem anderen. Die Mahlzeiten – bis zur Katastrophe von Stalingrad noch Ruhepausen im Kreise der Angehoerigen des **OKW** – wurden von da ab einsam eingenommen. Nur selten lud er sich einen oder zwei Gaete ein. Hastig ass er seine Gemuese oder seine Mehlspeise. Er trank kalt Wasser oder Malzbier dazu. Nach dem letzten abendlichen Vortrag sass er stundenlang mit den Adjutanten u. Sekretaerinnen zusammen u. redete ueber seine Plaene bis in den grauenden Morgen. Dann legte er sich zu kurzem Schlummer nieder, aus dem ihn haeufig die Besenstoesse der Scheuerfrauen an seine Schlafzimmertuer gegen **9** Uhr spaetestens weckten. Ein uebermaessig heisses Bad sollte die erschlaffenen Lebensgeister wieder wecken. . . (156)<sup>78</sup>

Als ich ihn nach der Stalingrad-Katastrophe zum ersten Male nach **14** Monaten der Trennung wiedersah, bemerkte ich die Veraenderung seines Zustandes. Die linke Hand zitterte, die Haltung war gebeugt, der Blick starr, die Augen quollen leicht hervor, sie waren glanzlos; die Wangen zeigten rote Flecken. Seine Erregbarkeit hatte zugenommen. . . (156)

c. Aus den Memoiren des GFM Erich v. Manstein . . . Erfahrungen mit Hitler:<sup>79</sup>

Man kann Hitler in der Rolle eines militaerischen Fuehrers gewiss nicht mit dem Schlagwort von dem „Gefreiten des Ersten Weltkrieges“ abtun. (157)

<sup>78</sup> **Note:** These remarks are gleaned from Guderian's memoirs.

<sup>79</sup> **Note:** Ditto – also from Manstein's memoirs: Verlorene Siege.

Er besass zweifellos einen gewissen Blick fuer operative Moeglichkeiten, der sich bereits bei seiner Entscheidung fuer den Plan der Heeresgruppe A im Westen gezeigt hatte. Einen solchen Blick kann man oefters auch bei militaerischen Laien finden. Sonst wuesste die Kriegsgeschichte nicht von so manchem Fuersten oder Prinzen als erfolgreichem Heerfuehrer zu berichten. (157)

Darueber hinaus aber verfuegte Hitler ueber ein erstaunliches Wissen u. Gedaechnis, wie ueber schoepferische Phantasie in bezug auf technische Fragen u. auf alle Probleme der Ruestung. Er konnte mit einer verblueffenden Kenntnis der Wirkung auch neuer feindl. Waffen wie mit eigenen u. gegnerischen Produktionszahlen aufwarten. . . Es unterliegt keinem Zweifel, dass er auf dem Gebiete der Ruestung vieles mit Verstaendnis u. ausserordentlicher Energie vorangetrieben hat. Der Glaube an seine Ueberlegenheit in diesen Fragen hat aber verhaengnisvolle Folgen gehabt. . . (157)

Das Interesse fuer alles Technische verleitete Hitler zudem zur Ueberschaetzung technischer Mittel. So glaubte er z.B., mit einigen Sturmgeschuetzabteilungen oder durch die neuen Tiger-Panzer Lagen wiederherstellen zu koennen, in denen nur der Einsatz grosser Verbaende Erfolg versprechen konnte. (157)

Wenn Hitler, wie gesagt, auch einen gewissen Blick fuer operative Chancen besass bzw. diese schnell erfassen konnte, wenn ein anderer sie ihm darbot, so fehlte ihm doch das Urteil ueber die Vorbedingungen u. Moeglichkeiten der Durchfuehrung eines operativen Gedankens. Er ermangelte des Verstaendnisses fuer das Verhaeltnis, in dem jede operative Zielsetzung u. die sich aus ihr ergebende Weitraeumigkeit einer Operation zu dem Zeit- u. Kraeftebedarf stehen muessen. Gar nicht zu sprechen von ihrer Abhaengigkeit von den Nachschubmoeglichkeiten. Er begriff nicht oder wollte nicht begreifen, dass z.B. *jede weitreichende Offensivoperation ueber die Zahl der fuer den ersten Angriff erforderlichen Kraefte hinaus **einer staendigen Naehrung bedarf***. . .<sup>80</sup> (157-58)

Hitler verstand es meisterhaft, sich *psychologisch auf die Eigenart des jeweiligen Gespraechspartners, den er ueberzeugen wollte, einzustellen*. (164)

Ich habe nicht weniger als dreimal versucht, Hitler im Interesse einer vernuenftigen Fuehrung des Krieges zu einer Aenderung in der Frage des militaerischen Oberbefehls zu bewegen. [i.e., after Hitler took over as C-in-C of the Army in **Dec 41?**] . . . Dabei war es mir klar, dass Hitler niemals bereit sein wuerde, offiziell den Oberbefehl niederzulegen. Als Diktator haette er dies auch gar nicht tun koennen, ohne einen fuer ihn untragbaren Prestigeverlust zu erleiden. Meines Erachtens kam es daher darauf an zu erreichen, dass Hitler, bei nomineller Beibehaltung des Oberbefehls, sich bereit fand, einem verantwortlichen Generalstabschef praktisch die Fuehrung der militaerischen Operationen auf allen Kriegsschauplaetzen zu ueberlassen u. fuer den Ostkriegsschauplatz einen besonderen O.B. zu ernennen. (166)

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<sup>80</sup> **Note:** This was surely the case w/ "Barbarossa!"

**11.2.7: Hitlers Strategie. Politik u. Kriegfuehrung 1940/41.** 1965/1982. Andreas Hillgruber.

**11.2.7.1: „Fazit: Hitlers Ostkrieg u. Stalins Kriegskonzeption.“**

Praeventivkrieg:

Aus dem Zusammenhang unserer Darstellung hat sich mit aller Deutlichkeit ergeben, dass bei Hitlers Angriff auf die Sowjetunion von einem Praeventivkrieg im ueblichen Sinne des Begriffs . . . keine Rede sein kann. Vielmehr war die Eroberung des europaeischen Russland zu Auf- richtung eines deutschen Imperiums in Kontinentaleuropa *bereits seit der Mitte der 20er Jahre Hitlers grosses Ziel*, dass er seit seiner „Machtergreifung“ **1933** unbeschadet aller taktischen Wendungen seiner Politik konsequent ansteuerte. (533)

Der Gesichtspunkt, dass er einer akuten militaerischen Bedrohung durch die Rote Armee mit einem eigenen Angriff entgeggetreten muesse, befindet sich nicht [unter den Motiven] seiner Entscheidung fuer die militaerische Ost-Loesung. Im Gegenteil: Hitler wie auch der deutsche Generalstab sahen die Roten Armee nicht als einen ernst zu nehmenden Gegner an u. betrachtete die aus anderen Gruenden fuer „notwendig“ erachtete Ausschaltung der bewaffneten Macht der Sowjetunion als eine – im Vergleich zur Niederrigung der franzoeschischen Militaermacht – *leicht zu bewaeltigende Aufgabe*. (533)

Kriegskonzeption Stalins:

Bei einer umfassenden historischen Deutung, die . . . auch die Kriegskonzeption Stalins mit einbezieht, ist der Abweisung der „Praeventivkriegs“-These hinzuzufuegen: Dem langfristigen grossem „Programm“ Hitlers entsprach ein weitsichtiges machtpolitsch-ideologisches „Programm“ Stalins, das in seinem Kerngedanken ebenfalls seit der Mitte der **20er** Jahren festlag. Jedoch war eine Verwirklichung dieses sowj. „Programms“ nur moeglich, wenn es tatsaechlich zu einem Krieg zwischen den „imperialistischen“ Maechten in Europa kam. Diese Voraus- setzung schuf Hitler **1939** durch seine Expansionspolitik. [**Note:** Objective of Soviet policy was to exploit war between the „imperialist“ powers in the West for its own purposes, then to enter the war at a time most advantageous to it, after the imperialist powers had exhausted themselves.] Der deutsche Angriff vom **22.6.41** durchkreuzte jedoch Stalins Absicht.

Den Grundgedanken der Kriegskonzeption Stalins erkannte Hitler 1940 durchaus. Bei Auftreten der mit der Fortdauer des Krieges im Westen unvermeidbar wachsenden Schwierigkeiten Deutschlands rechnete er mit einer „Erpressungspolitik“ Stalins, von dessen wohlwollender Politik u. wirtschaftlicher Unterstuetzung er sich abhaengig wusste. Aus der bei ihm scharf ausgepraegten Witterung moeglicher kuenftiger Gefahren ergab sich fuer ihn als ein zusaetzliches Motiv fuer den Ostkrieg, dieser voraussehbaren Zwangslage zu entgehen. (533-35)

**Cru:** Zwei einander – nicht nur prinzipiell, sondern auch wegen ihrer sich in Ostmittel- europa kreuzenden Stossrichtung – ausschliessende machtpolitisch-ideologische Kriegsziele- „Programme“ standen sich **1940/41** gegenüber. (535)

### 11.2.7.2: „Fazit: Die weltpolitische Situation um die Jahreswende 1940/41 aus dem Blickwinkel Hitlers.“

Hitlers Berurteilung der Gesamtlage an der Jahreswende **1940/41** hatte sich gegenüber der Zeit von Ende **Sep 40** wesentlich vereinfacht u. ihn – unter Verzicht auf eine Fortsetzung aller diplomatisch-politischen Bemühungen mit dem Ziel einer Zwischenloesung, durch die der Westkrieg abgeschlossen u. eine günstige Machtkonstellation fuer „seinen“ Ostkrieg geschaffen werden sollten – zur Konzeption eines improvisierten Planes fuer einen „Weltblitzkrieg“ gefuehrt, der ihm allein noch eine Loesung aus dem Dilemma zu versprechen schien, in dem er sich seit Ende **Jun 40** oder im Grunde genommen schon seit dem **3 Sep 39** befand. Alle seine Versuche, durch weltpolitische Kombinationen („Dreimaechtepakt“ u. „Kontinentalblock“-Projekt) oder durch die Einbeziehung weiterer Staaten (Spanien u. Vichy-Frankreich) in den Krieg gegen Grossbritannien seine politische u. strategische Position gegenüber den angelsaechsischen Maechten entscheidend zu verbessern, waren gescheitert. . . (388)

Das Gegenteil aller Erwartungen war eingetreten. Das buendnisaehnliche Verhaeltnis zwischen Grossbritannien . . . u. den nur noch formal neutralen USA . . . war immer enger geworden. Das weitaus hoehere Kraeftepotential der faktisch miteinander verbuendeten angelsaechsischen Seemaechte . . . musste dem Krieg bei laengerer Dauer u. fortlaufend gesteigerter amerikanischer Ruestung unweigerlich eine Wendung zuungunsten Deutschlands geben. Die aeusserste zeitliche Grenze, bis zu der sich dieses Uebergewicht der angelsaechsischen Maechte noch nicht wesentlich auf die strategische u. operative Bewegungsfreiheit Deutschlands auswirkte, weil die Aufruestung der USA erst Mitte **1940** begonnen hatte . . . lag bei Mitte **1942**. Gelang es Hitler bis dahin nicht, eine grundlegende Aenderung der nur aeusserlich glaenzenden, in Wirklichkeit aber ungefestigten politischen u. strategischen Situation in Europa herbeizufuehren, dann nahm der seit dem Herbst **1939** in Form einzelner deutscher „Blitz“-Feldzuege gefuehrte europaeische Krieg den Charakter eines Material- u. Abnutzungskrieges im Stile des Weltkrieges **1914/18**, bei dem das staendig wachsende u. schliesslich erdrueckende Uebergewicht der Westmaechte fruher oder spaeter zur vollstaendigen Niederlage Deutschlands fuehren musste. (389)

Diese Einschaeztung seiner verfahrenen Situation im Westkrieg durch Hitler war *ohne Zweifel* realistisch. . . Es muss konstatiert werden, dass mit den Hitler im Jahre **1940** zur Verfuegung stehenden deutschen Machtmitteln einfach eine Kriegsentscheidung gegen Grossbritannien oder gar gegen die beiden angelsaechsischen Maechte nicht zu erzwingen war. (389)

Dieser im ganzen recht realistischen Einschaeztung seiner Situation im Westkrieg stand bei Hitler ein rassenideologisch-mythisch uebersteigertes, aber in seinem Kern auf weit verbreiteten Auffassungen beruhendes Fehlurteil ueber die militaerischen Moeglichkeiten Deutschlands im Osten . . . gegenüber . . . Hitler schien die Zerschlagung der Sowjetunion einen – den einzigsten – Ausweg aus dem Dilemma der Entwicklung des Krieges im Westen zu weisen. . . Die militaerische Ost-Loesung war fuer Hitler zu der grossen „Chance“ geworden, die „Wende“ herbeizufuehren u. mit einem Schlage *alles* zu erlangen. [Note: For details see, p 391)

**Crux:** So lautete fuer Hitler im Winter **1940/41** die „Alternative“ *nicht* Mittelmeerstrategie oder militaerische Ost-Loesung, auch nicht „Kontinentalblock“ oder Angriff auf die Sowjetunion, sondern Zertruemmerung der Sowjetunion als Grundvoraussetzung fuer eine entscheidende Wendung des Gesamtkrieges zu seinen Gunsten u. zur Erreichung seiner Kriegsziele im Osten sowie gegenüber den Westmaechten – oder aber „Kapitulation.“

**Note:** Nach Hillgruber war die militaerische Ost-Loesung „im Rahmen des Gesamtkrieges in der Situation des Spaetherbst **1940** *tatsaechlich wohl unvermeidbar* . . . wenn Hitler nicht ‚kapitulieren‘ wollte.“ (392-93)

**Mar 41:** Setzte die eigentliche ideologisch-politische Planung des Ostkrieges erst im **Mar 41** ein u. erst dann die Konsequenzen des von Hitler beabsichtigten Vernichtungskrieges gegen die „juedisch-bolschewistische“ Herrschaft ueber Russland voll erkennbar wurde, zu einem Zeitpunkt also, als die Grundentscheidung zur militaerischen Ost-Loesung . . . laengst gefallen war. . . Dieser Entschluss [zum Russlandkrieg] hatte Hitler ganz allein, ohne „Beratung,“ gefasst. (393)

[**Note:** Here the author discusses the putative „efforts“ of Keitel, Ribbentrop, Goering, etc. to dissuade Hitler from attacking Russia. His conclusion is that only Grossadmiral Raeder seriously attempted to push Hitler in another direction: “Die einzige Persoenlichkeit, deren Stellungnahme gegen den Ostfeldzug bei Hitler ueberhaupt sicher verbueert ist, war Grossadmiral Raeder, dessen verschiedene Warnungen vor einem Zweifrontenkrieg wir schon an anderer Stelle verzeichneten. Die Schwaeche seiner Argumentation lag darin, dass er auf eine „Alternative“ hinwies, die bei einer gruendlichen Analyse der darin enthaltenen Moeglichkeiten keine Entscheidung des Krieges im Westen zugunsten Deutschlands versprach. (393-97)

Nimmt man alles in allem, so bleibt als einzig als voellig gesichert zu betrachtende „Tatsache“ die wiederholte, *recht eindringliche Warnung Raeders*, der allerdings auch ab **Jan 41** resignierte, sich mit der Durchfuehrung des Ostfeldzuges abfand u. ihn als Faktor in seine eigene weit ausgreifende Gesamtkriegskonzeption einfuegte. (397)

Stellungnahme des OKH: Das mit der operativen Vorbereitung des Ostfeldzuges beauftragte **OKH** erhob keinerlei Einspruch gegen den geplanten Ostfeldzug bei Hitler, obwohl v. Brauchitsch u. Halder von dem Unternehmen „Barbarossa“ *keine grundlegenden vorteilhaften Auswirkungen auf den Fortgang des Krieges gegen Grossbritannien erwarteten, also an dem Sinn des Ostfeldzuges fuer den Gesamtkrieg zweifelten*. (394)

Kontinentalblock-Konzept Ribbentrops: Author notes that Ribbentrop also probably lobbied Hitler against war w/ Russia. After all, he viewed the **Aug 39** non-aggression act with Soviet Russia as his personal achievement and would have most likely perceived the establishment of a “Continental Block” directed against England as his crowning achievement. Hence it is possible that he “in Unterredungen mit Hitler gegen die militaerische Ost-Loesung u. fuer die ‚Kontinentalblock‘-Konzeption plaediert hat, *deren voruebergehende Annahme durch Hitler im Sep/Okt 40* sicher auf seine Argumentation mit zurueckzufuehren ist. (395-96)

**CruX:** Eine richtige Einsicht u. eine klare Erkenntnis der Situation Deutschlands *haette allerdings als Konsequenz eine sofortige Kapitulation bedeutet*. Die grosse Diskrepanz zwischen dem aeusseren Schein – dem verbreiteten Triumphgefuehl nach dem Sieg ueber Frankreich – u. dem Ernst der wirklichen Lage Deutschlands erschwerte eine nuechterne Bilanz u. die notwendigen Folgerungen in hohem Masse. Die Kollektivillusion derer, die den Ueberblick besaessen u. doch die *Augen vor der bitteren Realitaet schlossen*, ist sicher bei den meisten unbewusster Selbstbetrug gewesen. . . (397)

### 11.2.7.3: „Die letzten militaerischen Vorbereitungen.“

**5.12.40 - 31.1.41:** Der grosse Rahmen der Planungen u. Vorbereitungen fuer den Ostfeldzug war durch die Besprechung Hitlers mit den Spitzen von **OKW** u. **OKH** vom **5.12.40**, durch die „Weisung Nr. 21“ vom **18.12.40** u. durch die Zustimmung Hitlers zur Aufmarschanweisung des **OKH** vom **31.1.41** abgesteckt. Aenderungen, die in die Substanz des Planes eingegriffen haetten, hat es seither bis zum Angriffsbeginn am **22.6.41** nicht mehr gegeben. (501)

**17.3.41:** Jedenfalls wurden die beiden Aenderungen, die Hitler am **17.3.41** befahl, damals nicht als tiefgreifend empfunden, wenn sie auch auf Grund des Feldzugsverlaufs aus der Rueckschau als recht bedeutsam erscheinen. Sie betrafen die Operation aus Nordfinnland heraus, also den „Hohen Norden“, u. den Vorstoss am aeussersten Suedfluegel der neuen „Ostfront“, aus Rumaenien. . . (501)

Folgenreichen als die Ausweitung der Planung im Norden war es, dass Hitler am **17.3.41** auch den Operationsplan fuer den Suedfluegel der Ostfront abwandelte, weil es durch diese zweite Abaenderung spaeter schon vom Ansatz her nicht gelingen konnte, die sowj. Kraefte in der westlichen Ukraine in aehnlicher Weise zangenartig zu umfassen, wie die im Mittelabschnitt im Raume von Bialystok-Minsk. Der Anlass hierfuer war, dass nunmehr, nachdem das britische Expeditionskorps in Griechenland gelandet war, der bisher nur als Moeglichkeit in Aussicht genommene Vorstoss bis zur Suedspitze Griechenlands zur Notwendigkeit wurde. . . Damit blieb nun die Offensive im Anfangsstadium der „Barbarossa“-Operation auf dem Suedfluegel der Ostfront allein die Aufgabe der **1 PzGr** u. der **6. Armee** in Galizien u. Wolhynien. Die bisher geplante grossraeumige doppelseitige Umfassung in der Westukraine war fallengelassen worden. (503)

Zu einer Auseinandersetzung ueber diese recht bedeutsame Aenderung der bisherigen Planung kam es zwischen Hitler u. den Spitzen des **OKH**, v. Brauchitsch u. Halder, nicht, obwohl Hitler nicht nur bei diesem Einzelproblem kurzerhand von der bisherigen Planung abwich sondern – was fuer spaeter noch bedeutsamer werden sollte – bei seinen allgemeinen Ausfuehrungen am **17.3.41** „sehr stark“ auf die Bedeutung des Nord- u. Suedabschnitts der Ostfront hinwies, so dass deutlich wurde, wie sehr der vom **OKH** nach wie vor als Schluesselproblem angesehene Stoss auf Moskau bei ihm [i.e., Hitler] inzwischen in den Hintergrund getreten war. . . Es bestand vielmehr, wie der Heeresadjutant bei Hitler, Major i.G. Engel, erstaunlicherweise als allgemeinen Eindruck ueber die Besprechung notierte, ein „erfreuliches Uebereinstimmen von OB (v. Brauchitsch), Chef des Generalstabes (Halder) u. (dem) Fuehrer ueber Aufmarsch u. Schwerpunkte.“ (503-04)

Sowohl Hitler als auch Halder zeigten sich „sehr optimistisch in Bezug auf (die Aussicht auf Erfolg angesichts der) Kampfkraft der Roten Armee, die veraltetes Geraet u. vor allem wenig Flugzeuge u. alte Panzer habe.“ Die Ueberzeugung, dass der Feldzug ohnehin in wenigen Wochen zum Ziele fuehren wuerde, *verdeckte also alle latenten Gegensatze*. (504)

**30.3.41:** Erklaerte Hitler in einer „Generals-Versammlung“, die hauptsaechlich der Begrueundung des Ostkrieges als eines ideologischen Vernichtungskriegs diene, dass die „Hoechstleistung“ der USA, insbesondere im Hinblick auf ihr „Transportproblem“ erst in vier [4] Jahren erreicht sein werde. Die Sowjetunion muesse jetzt zerschlagen werden, weil

wir . . . nur so in der Lage sein (werden), in zwei [2] Jahren materiell u. personell unsere Aufgaben in der Luft u. auf den Weltmeeren zu meistern, wenn wir die Landfragen endgueltig u. gruendlich loesen.

Dies hiess, dass die wachsende Staerke der angelsaechsischen Seemaechte nach Hitlers Auffassung die *militaerische Ost-Loesung unumgaenglich machte*, da Deutschland nur mit einer nach Osten wesentlich verbreiterten Basis, in einem blockadefesten „Grossraum“, eine Chance hatte, sich in einem grossen Krieg gegen die angelsaechsischen Maechte, vor allem gegen die USA, zu behaupten. (504)

#### Balkanfeldzug:

Hillgruber goes on to address to coup in Belgrade, the subsequent invasion of Yugoslavia, and its impact (or lack thereof) on the start of “Barbarossa.” The author notes the “vielfach ueberbewerteten Problem der Terminverschiebung.” He goes on to point out that the typical Spring weather most likely would not have enabled the Germans to launch their attack before mid-**Jun 41**: “Ob ein frueherer Angriffsbeginn als Mitte **Jun [41]** militaerisch tatsaechlich moeglich gewesen waere, ist mit guten Gruenden bezweifelt worden. Weder waere ein schnellerer Abschluss des Balkanfeldzuges ohne die Einbeziehung Jugoslawiens wahrscheinlich gewesen, noch liessen in der Regel die Wetterbedingungen vor Mitte **Jun [41]** in Osteuropa eine gross-raeumige Operation zu. Dabei soll nicht bestritten werden, dass *einige deutsche Verbaende*, die waehrend des Balkanfeldzuges bis zur Suedspitze Griechenlands vorgestossen waren u. nun in Eiltransporten auf den oestlichen Kriegsschauplatz geworfen wurden, *stark ueberfordert waren*, doch waere dies ohne die Einbeziehung Jugoslawiens in den Balkanfeldzug kaum anders gewesen. (504-07)

Blumentritt (Ms. „Moskau,“ IfZ, Muenchen) legt dar, dass die „Fruehjarschlammperiode“ **1941** laenger als gewoehnlich gedauert habe u. dass der Bug vor der **4. Armee** noch Anfang **Jun 41** so weit aus seinen Ufern getreten gewesen sei, dass ein Uebergang mit den der Armee zur Verfuegung stehenden Pioniermitteln nicht moeglich gewesen waere. – Es ist dabei daran zu erinnern, dass auch die deutsche Sommeroffensive **1942** erst am **28.6.42**, die Offensive **1943** (Unternehmen „Zitadelle“) sogar erst am **5.7.43** begann. Gleiches gilt fuer die sowj. Sommeroffensive **1944**, die am **22.6.44** gegen die H.Gr.Mitte einsetzte. Im **Mai** konnten in der Regel allenfalls am aeussersten Suedabschnitt (Krim, Suedukraine) groessere militaerische Operationen durchgefuehrt werden, waehrend in den Hauptabschnitten (Nordukraine, Mitte u. Norden) die „Schlammperiode“ zu dieser Zeit im allgemeinen noch nicht abgeschlossen war. (f.n. 28, 506-07)

#### Festlegung des „B“ Tages:

Eine weitere Hinauszoeigerung des „B-Tages“ (**22.6.**) schien vielmehr sogar noch Ende **Mai 41** moeglich, nachdem sich Hitler am **21.4.41** zu der bis dahin noch nicht vorgesehenen Eroberung von Kreta (Unternehmen „Merkur“) vor Beginn von „Barbarossa“ entschlossen hatte. Am **28.5.41** schlug das **OKH** in einer Stellungnahme an das **OKW** auf eine entsprechende Anfrage hin vor, den vorgesehenen Tag „moeglichst beizubehalten“ oder nur um wenige Tage zu verschieben, um dem Gegner keine Moeglichkeiten zur Umgruppierung, Verbesserung seiner Abwehrbereitschaft oder zu Praeventivmassnahmen zu geben.“ Ausserdem wies das **OKH** darauf hin, „dass aus Witterungsgruenden“ die Operationen nach Moeglichkeit bis Mitte **Sep [41]** abgeschlossen sein muessen.“ Daraufhin entschied Hitler am **29.5.41**, dass die Vorbereitungen fuer „Barbarossa“ „weiter auf den vorgesehenen B-Tag“ (**22.6.**) abzustellen sei. . . *Erst damit lag der Angriffstag wirklich fest.* (507)

**30.4.41**: Halder trug Hitler ueber den „Zeitablauf Barbarossa,“ d.h. ueber die Transporte zur Ueberfuehrung der Angriffsverbaende nach dem Osten vor. Da sich daraus das Eintreffen der

eigentlichen Stosskraefte (Pz.- u. mot.-Div.) in den vorgesehenen Raeumen in der Zeit vom **3.-23.6.41** ergab („Hoechstleistungsfahrplan“ fuer den Ostaufmarsch ab **22.5.**), nahm Hitler an diesem Tage erstmals den **22.6.** als Termin fuer den Angriffsbeginn in Aussicht. An ihm hielt er, nachdem sich das **OKH** Ende **Mai 41** klar fuer die Beibehaltung ausgesprochen hatte, fest, als er am **6.6.41** die Zeittafel fuer die letzten Vorbereitungen des Feldzuges genehmigte u. am **17.6.41** – nach einer letzten grossen Besprechung mit den O.B. der H.Gr. u. Armeen am **14.6.** – den endgueltigen Befehl fuer den Angriff zum **22.6. 3.15** Uhr erteilte. (507-08)

Wie die Westoffensive **1940** u. den Balkanfeldzug<sup>81</sup> im Fruehjahr **1941** wollte Hitler den Ostfeldzug von Anfang an als „Feldheer“ *persoenlich fuehren*. Lediglich die Uebereinstimmung mit den Planungen des Generalstabes des Heeres im grossen u. ganzen (wie es schien) u. die Ueberzeugung, dass der Feldzug keine besonderen Fuehrungsprobleme mit sich bringen werde, da es sich nach den ersten Grenzschlachten im wesentlichen nur um eine schnelle Inbesitznahme des riesenhaften Gebietes bis zur „AA-Linie“ handele, liessen Hitler in den ersten Wochen des Feldzuges noch mit Eingriffen in die Operationsleitung zurueckhalten. (508)

#### Beurteilung des sowj. Gegners:

Wesentlicher als das Problem des Angriffsbeginns u. damit zusammenhaengend der Terminverschiebung ist die Frage, ob sich an der Beurteilung des sowj. Gegners in den letzten Monaten vor Angriffsbeginn etwas geaendert hatte:

- **30.1.-21.6.41:** Am **30.1.41** war die Staerke der Roten Armee (im europaeischen Russland) von der Abteilung „Fremde Heere Ost“ mit **121** Schuetzen-, **25** Kavallerie-Divisionen u. **31** mot.-mech. Brigaden (=177 grossen Verbaenden) angenommen worden (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, S. 290), am **5.8.40** von Marcks mit **147** grossen Verbaenden, am **21.7.40** durch v. Brauchitsch mit **50-75** „guten Divisionen.“ Die Gesamtstaerke des sowj. Feldheeres wurde von der Abteilung „FHO“ am **4.4.41** mit **171** Schuetzen-, **36** Kavallerie-Divisionen u. **34** mot. u. mech. Brigaden, also mit **247 [241?]** grossen Verbaenden (im europaeischen Russland), am **21.6.41** dagegen nur mit **227** Divisionen (im europaeischen Teil der Sowjetunion) veranschlagt;
- **17.2.41:** Nach wie vor hielt Hitler die sowj. Luftwaffe, die seiner Auffassung nach jederzeit Ueberraschungsangriffe gegen das Reichsgebiet fuehren koennte, trotz gelegentlicher gegenteiliger Aeusserungen fuer gefaehrlicher als die Rote Armee. Am **17.2.41** zeigte er sich sogar „betroffen“ von neuen Informationen ueber die Staerke der sowj. Luftstreitkraefte;
- **30.3.41:** Aeusserte sich Hitler dann zum erstenmal im Unterschied zu allen seinen bisherigen abfaelligen Bemerkungen recht positiv ueber die sowj. Panzerwaffe, die er als „respektabel“ bezeichnete. Sie sei die zahlenmaessig staerkste der Welt, wenn auch nur wenige Panzer des „neuen Riesentyps“ vorhanden<sup>82</sup> u. die Masse veraltet seien;

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<sup>81</sup> **Note:** Zu den Eingriffen Hitlers in die Operationsfuehrung waehrend des Balkanfeldzuges vor allem die Bemerkungen Halders (*KTB*, **11.4.41**): „Aussprache mit Ob.d.H.: Ich gebe meiner Entruestung ueber die Eingriffe in die Fuehrung (durch Hitler) Ausdruck. Diese Aengstlichkeit, die jedes Risiko vermeiden, aber trotzdem fortgesetzte Erfolge einheimen will, mag politisch tragbar sein, militaerisch ist sie untragbar.“ – Hitlers Scheu vor Risiken im militaerischen Bereich lag **1940/41 nicht** auf strategischem – sondern – gelegentlich – auf operativem Gebiet (bekanntestes Beispiel: Narvik, das Hitler Mitte **Apr 40** angesichts der Bedrohung durch britische Kraefte aufgeben wollte). (f.n. 39, 508)

<sup>82</sup> **Note:** Diese Bemerkung trifft fuer den Zeitpunkt Ende **Mar 41** zu. Tatsaechlich besass die Rote Armee dann aber bereits im **Jun 41 967** Panzer des neuen Typs „**T 34**“ u. **508** des neuen **KW**-Modells, obwohl die Serien-Produktion erst im **Apr/Mai 41** angelaufen war. (f.n. 46, 509)

● **7.5.41:** Hitler sah in den Auessierungen des deutschen Militaerattaches in Moskau, General Koestring, u. seines Vertreters, Oberst i.G. Krebs, vom **7.5.41** eine Bestaetigung seiner Auffassung, dass die Rote Armee sich trotz der Anstrengungen der sowj. Fuehrung in der letzten Zeit „nicht wesentlich verbessert“ habe u. „kein gutes Fuehrerkorps“ besitze.<sup>83</sup>

● So ging die deutsche militaerische Fuehrung in den Ostfeldzug mit der Ueberzeugung, dass der Erfolg sicher sei, waehrend Hitler gelegentlich in der ihm eigenen Witterung kuenftiger Gefahren im vertrauten Kreise auesserte: „Mir ist, als ob ich die Tuer zu einem dunklen, nie gesehenen Raum aufstosse, ohne zu wissen, was sich hinter der Tuer verbirgt,“ andererseits aber in seiner Reichstagsrede am **4.5.41** oeffentlich prophezeite, dass, „das Jahr **1941** . . . in die Geschichte als das grosste Jahr unserer Erhebung eingehen“ werde, so dass fuer seine psychische Verfassung am Vorabend des **22.6.41** – vor allem auch mit Blick auf die Situation im Westkrieg – die Kennzeichnung „Mischung von Vermessenheit u. Verzweiflung“ wohl zutreffend ist. (Note: These „bullets“ from pp 509-11)

Von militaerischer Seit hat in den letzten Monaten niemand mehr versucht, Hitler von seinem Angriffsplan abzubringen. (Note: Author goes on to discuss efforts of the German ambassador to Moscow, Count von der Schulenburg to dissuade Hitler from attacking Russia. H. also points out that State Secretary Frhr. v. Wiezaecker stood in opposition to Barbarossa, yet, once again, was unable to come up with a comprehensive and effective alternative to Hitler’s “Barbarossa” plan. See, pp 511-12)

Rudolf Hess / Flug nach England: As „absurd“ as this initiative was, Hillgruber sees Hitler behind it: “Stil u. Methode entsprechen – auch wenn dies vom Standpunkt ueblicher Diplomatie u. ‚normaler‘ geheimer Fuehlungsnahmen absurd erscheinen mag – durchaus Hitlers Vorstellung von besonders bedeutsamen Auftraegen. Auch das Ziel Hess’, einen „Ausgleichs“-Frieden mit Grossbritannien auf der Basis der Anerkennung der deutschen Herrschaft in Kontinentaleuropa u. der Rueckgabe der ehemaligen deutschen Kolonien in Afrika zustande zu bringen, stimmte voellig mit der axiomatisch festliegenden „England-Politik“ Hitlers ueberein. . . Die Wahrscheinlichkeit, dass Hess im Auftrage Hitlers diesen Flug unternahm, ist daher trotz aller vom ersten Tage an dagegen vorgebrachten Argumente recht gross, auch wenn es zweifelhaft ist, ob Hitler der genaue Zeitpunkt des Abfluges bekannt war.“ (513-15)

#### **11.2.7.4: „Politik u. Strategie der kriegfuehrenden Maechte vom Beginn des deutschen Angriffs auf die Sowjetunion (22.6.41) bis zum Scheitern des improvisierten Kriegsplans (Dez 41) – ein Ausblick.“**

Zusammenfassung: Hitlers *improvisierter Gesamtkriegsplan* vom Herbst **1940** war vollstaendig auf das Gelingen der „Barbarossa“-Operation in der Form des „Blitzkrieges“ abgestellt. Innerhalb weniger Wochen sollte die Sowjetunion dem Ansturm des deutschen Ostheeres erliegen u. damit der Weg zu den vorgesehenen weitraeumigen Vorstoessen in den Nahen u. Mittleren Osten sowie ueber Spanien nach Nordwestafrika frei sein. Sie sollten insgesamt die Voraussetzungen fuer den Aufbau einer deutschen „Weltmacht“-Position schaffen, aus der heraus Deutschland nach Hitlers Ueberzeugung jeder denkbaren politisch-strategischen Situation, auch einem „Weltkrieg“ von langer Dauer (dem Hitler mit seiner nun ins Globale ausgeweiteten „Blitzkriegs“-Konzeption allerdings nach Moeglichkeit zu entgehen hoffte), gewachsen sein wuerde. (536)

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<sup>83</sup> Note: Koestring u. Krebs weilten am **6./7.5.41** in Berlin. (f.n. 53, 510)

**11./12.7.41:** In einem Gespraech in der Nacht vom **11-12 Jul 41** hatte Hitler angedeutete, dass er sich mit einer Herrschaft Stalins, den er als eine der „*aussergewoehnlichsten Gestalten der Weltgeschichte*“ bezeichnete, in Sibirien abfinden wuerde, da er eine Rueckerobering des europaeischen Russland von dort aus fuer ausgeschlossen hielt. (f.n. 21, 540)

**15.7.41 / Vortragsnotiz der Operations-Abt. des Heeres:** Im Generalstab des Heeres wurde am **15.7.41** in einer Vortragsnotiz der Ops.-Abt. eine erste detaillierte Planung fuer die „Besetzung u. Sicherung des russ. Raumes“ u. den „Umbau des Heeres nach Abschluss Barbarossa“ vorgenommen. Fuer die Sicherung der vorgesehenen vier „Staatsgebilde Ostland, Russland, Ukraine u. Kaukasus,“ d.h. der entsprechenden „Reichskommissariate,“ wurden insgesamt nur **56 Divisionen** fuer notwendig erachtet. Darin war sogar schon eine „Operationsgruppe Kaukasus-Iran“ mit **2** Panzer-, **1** mot.- u. **2** Gebirgsdivisionen einbeschlossen. . . **12** Panzer u. **6** mot-Divisionen sollten dabei auf Weisung Hitlers den Kern der deutschen Besatzungsarmee im Osten bilden. Sie konnte man – so meinte er – gegebenenfalls schnell an etwaige Aufstandszentren werfen oder auch zu Raids ueber den deutsch-besetzten Raum hinaus nach Osten verwenden. . .

Anfang **Aug 41** sollte nach der Vortragsnotiz der Ops.-Abt. vom **15.7.41** bereits der Rueckmarsch der ueberzaehligen Inf.-Div., Anfang **Sep 41** der Abzug der ueber die festgelegte Zahl hinausgehenden Pz.- u. mot.-Verbaende nach Deutschland bzw. in die vorgesehenen Aufmarschraeume fuer die Operationen durch die Turkei nach Syrien u. von Suedwestfrankreich ueber Spanien nach Nordwestafrika beginnen. (541-42)

**23.7.41 / Halder Vortrag:** „Etwa in einem Monat (**25.8.**)“ – so formulierte Halder fuer den Vortrag vor Hitler an diesem Tage (**23.7.**) – „kann man unsere Truppen annehmen um Leningrad, um Moskau, in (der) Linie Orel-Krim, Anfang **Okt [41]** an der Wolga, (im) **Nov [41]** um Baku-Batum. Raeumliches Ziel sei das Erreichen der Gebiete „Kaukasien – Wolga-Linie. . .“ (542)<sup>84</sup>

In der gleichen Zeit wurde im **OKH** eine Studie fuer eine Operation „ueber den Kaukasus u. Westiran zur Inbesitznahme der Paesse Rewanduz u. Khanaqin an der iranisch-irakischen Grenze“ u. zum weiteren Vorgehen auf Bagdad sowie – in der bisherigen militaerischen Planungen ueberhaupt noch nicht erwogen – eine weitere Studie fuer ein raidartiges Unternehmen schneller Heeresverbaende gegen das Industrie-Gebiet im Ural ausgearbeitet. . . [Note: For more details, pp 543-44)

**Jul 41:** Der von Hitler befohlene systematische Vernichtungskrieg, der als umfassendes Programm u. nicht als blosse Begleiterscheinung des militaerischen Kampfes spaeltestens Ende **Jul 41** auf der Gegenseite klar erkannt worden war, fuehrte weithin zu einer Versteifung des Widerstandes der Roten Armee u. zu einer Konsolidierung der bereits erschuetterten Herrschaft Stalins. Hitlers Vernichtungskrieg setzte in Russland Energien frei, die mit dem Willen zur Abwehr der drohenden Versklavung durch den fremden Eroberer der Verteidigung des „Vaterlandes,“ damit aber auch der Festigung des totalitaeren Regimes des stalinistischen Sowjetkommunismus zuflossen. (545)

**Aug 41 / erste Fuehrungskrise:** Waehrend Hitler sich bisher – solange die optimistische Lagebeurteilung allseits geteilt wurde – im wesentlichen auf eine intensive Beobachtung des Feldzugsverlaufs u. recht allgemein gefasste Weisungen beschraenkt u. kaum in die Operationsfuehrung u.

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<sup>84</sup> **Note:** Aus den folgenden Eintragungen im KTB Halder (Bd. III, S. 108) geht hervor, dass zumindest die letzten Angaben auf die Mentalitaet Hitlers berechnet waren, waehrend Halder diesen Optimismus „nicht ganz“ teilte. (f.n. 40, 542)

die detaillierte Planung eingegriffen hatte, fuehrte die nun beginnende Ernuechterung auf seiten des Generalstabes des Heeres zum *Ausbruch jener **ersten grossen Fuehrungskrise*** im Ostfeldzug Mitte **Aug 41**, bei der es, aeusserlich gesehen, um die Frage des Vorrangs der naechsten Operation („Kiew oder Moskau“) ging, die ihre Wurzel aber – abgesehen von der unklaren urspruenglichen Planung u. der im Winter **1940/41** nicht ausdiskutierten Problematik des Operationsplans – in der beginnenden Erkenntnis sowohl bei Hitler als auch beim Generalstab des Heeres hatte, dass das fuer **1941** gesteckte Ziel, *von dem der Ausgang des ganzen Krieges abhing*, wohl doch nicht zu erreichen sein wuerde. . . Die Krise zwischen Hitler u. dem **OKH** wurde durch die Aussprache Hitler – v. Brauch-itsch am **30 Aug 41** vorerst „bereinigt.“ (547-48 (f.n. 65))

**27.8.41 / Denkschrift OKW:** Dass auch Hitler an der Erreichung des fuer **1941** gesteckten Ziels zu zweifeln begann, zeigte deutlicher noch als seine „Studie“ [i.e., seine Denkschrift vom **22.8.41**] die von ihm gebilligte „Denkschrift des **OKW** ueber die strategische Lage im Spaet-sommer **1941**“ vom **27 Aug 41**. . . Die wichtigste Konsequenz, die das **OKW** aus der neuen Lagebeurteilung zog . . . lautete: „Der Zusammenbruch Russlands ist das naechste u. entscheidende Kriegsziel, das unter Einsatz aller an anderen Fronten entbehrlichen Kraefte erzwungen werden muss. Soweit es **1941** nicht voellig verwirklicht wird,<sup>85</sup> steht die Fortsetzung des Ostfeldzuges **1942** an erster Stelle. . . Erst nach Ausschaltung Russlands als Machtfaktor“ werde „die Schlacht im Atlantik u. im Mittelmeer gegen England . . . im vollen Masse aufzunehmen sein. . .“ (For more on the OKW „Denkschrift“ see, 548-49)

**Oct 41:** Der Wille, trotz dieser . . . wesentlich zurueckhaltenderen Lagebeurteilung doch noch im Jahre **1941** das Ziel der „Barbarossa“ Unternehmung zu erreichen, bestimmte Hitlers militaerische Entscheidungen im Osten in den verbleibenden Herbstmonaten, da er sich ueber die Konsequenzen eines Scheiterns seines „Blitzkriegs“-Planes *durchaus im klaren war*. . . Die wichtigste der Entscheidungen Hitlers war der Entschluss, nach der erfolgreichen Beendigung der grossen Kesselschlacht ostwaerts Kiew, am **2.10.41** nun doch zur Grossoffensive in Richtung auf Moskau anzusetzen, um damit die Feldzugs-Entscheidung zu erzwingen.(549-50)

**Oct /Nov 41:** Nach voruebergehenden Illusionen in den ersten Oktoberwochen im Zusammenhang mit der Einschliessung grosser Teile der Roten Armee in den Kesseln von Wjasma u. Brjansk, dass die *Entscheidung tatsaechlich schon gefallen sei u. der sowj. Zusammenbruch bevorstehe* . . . gewann Hitler Mitte **Nov 41** die Erkenntnis, dass *das grosse Ziel nicht mehr zu erreichen war*. (550-51)

**11./19.11.11:** Noch am **11 Nov 41** hatte Hitler gefordert, dass „vor Eintreten starken Schneefalles . . . es einen aeussersten Einsatz rechtfertigen (wuerde), im Sueden durch einen Vorstoss auf Stalingrad bzw. durch baldiges Gewinnen von Maikop u. im Norden durch die Besitznahme von Wologda die beiden Einfuehrlinien fuer englisch-amerikanische Kriegsmaterial zu durchschneiden bzw. unsere beschraenkte Erdoelversorgung zu verbessern u. zu sichern.“ Am **19 Nov 41** aber resignierte Hitler erstmals, wie seine Ausfuehrungen im kleinen Kreis an diesem Tage erkennen liessen. „Im ganzen“ kam in ihnen „die Erwartung zum Ausdruck, dass die Erkenntnis, dass die beiden Feindgruppen *sich nicht vernichten koennen*, zu einem Verhandlungsfrieden fuehrt.“ (551; also, *KTB Halder*)

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<sup>85</sup> **Note:** Als erstes wurde der beabsichtigte Vorstoss auf Murmansk fuer **1941** aufgegeben („Weisung Nr. **36** vom **22.9.41** u. „Weisung No. **37**“ vom **10.10.41**. (See, Hubatsch.) Damit war auch das Ende **Jul 41** vom **OKH** noch fuer Herbst **1941** vorgesehene Unternehmen gegen Gibraltar aufgegeben. (f.n. 67a, 68, 69, 549)

**5./6.12.41:** Spaetestens am **5-6 Dez 41** wurde es dann aber mit Einsetzen der grossen sowj. Winteroffensive im Raum um Moskau fuer Hitler zur Gewissheit, dass nicht nur das „Barbarossa“ Unternehmen in dem fuer die erfolgreiche Behauptung im Gesamtkrieg fuer notwendig erachteten Zeitraum nicht zum Ziele gefuehrt hatte, sondern dass damit zugleich *der im Winter 1940/41 konzipierte Kriegsplan im ganzen gescheitert war.* „Als die Katastrophe des Winters **1941/42** hereinbrach“ – so fasste der KTB-Fuehrer im WFSt. das Eingestaendnis des ersten operativen Beraters Hitlers, des Gen.-Obst. Jodl, kurz nach der deutschen Kapitulation zusammen, als dieser endlich sein Schweigen brach – „wurde dem Fuehrer u. auch dem Gen.-Obst. [i.e., Jodl] klar,“ „dass von diesem Kulminationspunkt des beginnenden Jahres **1942** an kein Sieg mehr errungen werden konnte.“<sup>86</sup> (552-53)

Hitler betonte immer wieder die Alternative „Alles oder Nichts“ – die Konsequenz eines solchen Denkens im Falle einer deutschen Niederlage sprach Hitler erstmals im Winter **1941/42** aus, als sein Kriegsplan gescheitert war: „*Ich bin auch hier eiskalt: Wenn das deutsche Volk nicht bereit ist, fuer seine Selbsterhaltung sich einzusetzen, gut: dann soll es verschwinden.*“ Von hier fuehrt eine gerade Linie bis zum „Nero-Befehl“ vom **19 Mar 45**. (556)

**16.-20.12.41 / Stalins Kriegsziele:** Erst seit **Dez 41** stellte sich die angelsaechsische Seite auf eine laenger dauernde Allianz mit der Sowjetunion ein.<sup>87</sup> Einer intensiven Eroerterung der Kriegs- u. Friedensziele zur Abstimmung der Interessen der ungleichen Bundesgenossen, die Stalin beim Besuch des britischen Aussenministers Eden vom **16.-20 Dez 41** eroeffnen wollte, glaubte die angelsaechsische Seite aber auch noch weiterhin ausweichen zu koennen. . . In den Aeusserungen Stalins gegenueber Eden zeichnete sich eine Drei-Stufen-Folge der sowj. Forderungen ab:

a) Anerkennung der sowj. Grenzen vom **22.6.41** (also der Annexion der Baltischen Staaten, Ostpolens u. Ostrumaeniens;

b) Annexion des Gebietes von Petsamo u. Einrichtung sowjetischer Stuetzpunkte in Rumaenien (als erste Etappe fuer die Aufrichtung einer sowj. Herrschaft auf dem Balkan);

c) Teilung Deutschland, noch vage skizziert durch das Kriegsziel, den „Anschluss“ Oesterreichs rueckgaengig zu machen, ein selbstaendiges Bayern zu schaffen, das Rheinland vom uebrigen Deutschland abzutrennen u. Ostpreussen an Polen zu uebergeben. Das Memelland u. Tilsit sollten dabei der Sowjetunion ueberlassen werden. (558-59)

**Sep 42:** Eine grosse politische oder strategische Entscheidung gab es fuer Hitler nach dem Winter **1941/42**, spaetestens nach dem **Sep 42** nicht mehr. Der Entschluss zu „Barbarossa“ war die bedeutendste, aber auch die letzte grosse Entscheidung Hitlers. (556)

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<sup>86</sup> **Note:** Die Einsicht, dass der Krieg nicht mehr zu gewinnen war, verstaerkte nur den Willen Hitlers, wenigstens die eine Seite seines Vernichtungskrieges, die Ausrottung aller Juden im deutschen Machtbereich in Europa, zu vollenden. So begann **1942** die systematische Massenvernichtung der europaeischen Juden in den Vernichtungslagern auf dem Territorium Polens. (f.n. 84, 553)

<sup>87</sup> **Note:** Mit ihren Grundkriegsplan vom **27 Mar 41**, hatten Grossbritannien u. die USA keine Teilnahme der Sowjetunion am Kriege vorgesehen. . . Schwerer wog, dass auch das bei dem Treffen Churchills u. Roosevelts in der „Atlantik-Charta“ vom **14.8.41** formulierte Kriegs- u. Friedensprogramm ganz auf Grundvorstellungen u. Zielen der beiden angelsaechsischen Maechte beruhte u. ohne Beruecksichtigung der strategischen Sicherheitsinteressen der Sowjetunion u. ohne Aussprache mit dem „Bundesgenossen“ Stalin abgefasst worden war. (560-61)

[Im Osten] (nicht im Mittelmeerraum oder gar mit der alliierten Invasion in Frankreich 1944) ist – daran sollte es keinen Zweifel geben – die *Entscheidung ueber den Ausgang des Krieges in Europa gefallen*, so bedeutsam auch die spaeteren Operationen der angelsaechsischen Maechte im Mittelmeerraum u. in Westeuropa *fuer die Nachkriegssituation* wurden. (557)

### **11.2.8: Hitler. Reden und Proklamationen 1932-1945. Bd. II. Untergang (1939-1945).** Max Domarus. 1963.

Domarus: Ob Hitlers Russland-Feldzug positive oder negative verlief, war fuer den endgueltigen Ausgang des **2. Weltkrieges** *ohne Bedeutung*. Das heisst: Auch wenn es Hitler gelungen waere, ganz Russland zu erobern u. sich untertan zu machen, so haetten ihn die Westmaechte dennoch frueher oder spaeter besiegt u. vernichtet. . . Der erfolgreiche Widerstand der Sowjetunion gegen die Invasion Hitlers ist genau wie im Falle Napoleons I in *erster Linie ein Ruhmesblatt der russ. Artillerie gewesen*. Wie **1812** die Divisionen u. Garden Napoleons, so sahen sich im **2. Weltkrieg** auch die deutschen Heere ploetzlich der ungeheuren Kampfkraft, Praezision u. Ueberlegenheit der russ. Batterien u. Granatwerfer gegenueber. (For more of the author's fascinating interpretation see, pp 1742-43.)

#### Chronologie:

**10.12.40:** „Wo der deutsche Soldat steht, kommt kein anderer hin!“ (Hitler-Rede / 1786)

#### 1941

**4.5.41:** „Dem deutschen Soldaten ist nichts unmoeglich!“ (Hitler-Rede / 1786)

**22.6.41:** Auszuege aus Hitlers *Tagesbefehl an die Soldaten der Ostfront*. . . So schwuelstig u. langatmig Hitlers Proklamationen vom **22 Jun 41** auch waren, das Kernstueck bildete doch die Behauptung vom Bestehen eines russ.-englischen „Komplots“ gegen das Reich, ja gegen Europa! Und denselben Vorwand gebrauchte Napoleon I, asler am gleichen Montagstag wie Hitler, am **22. Jun**, in Russland einfiel. Napoleons Proklamation an seine Soldaten lautete (see, p 1732). Hitler hatte weder von diesem Aufruf Napoleons noch von dessen Datum des **22 Jun** eine Ahnung. Er hatte das Datum des **22 Jun** lediglich deswegen gewaehlt, weil es ein Sonntag war u. er da besonders ueberfallartig vorgehen konnte. (1732)

Mussolini: Discussion of M.'s reaction to German attack on Russia: Am **22 Jun 41** um **3 Uhr** frueh erschien der deutsche Botschaftsrat von Bismarck mit dem langen Brief Hitlers bei Ciano u. verlangte, dass das Schriftstueck sofort dem Duce uebermittelt werde. Mussolini war recht aergerlich ueber die Art u. Weise, wie ihn Hitler wieder einmal behandelt hatte. . . Mussolinis Bereitschaft, Hitler gegen Russland zu unterstuetzen, war jedoch nicht ganz ehrlich. Am **1 Jul 41** erklaerte er Ciano: „Ich hoffe nur eines, dass die Deutschen bei dem Krieg im Osten *viele Federn lassen*.“ (1735-36)

**22.6.41:** Sandte Hitler ein *Telegramm an Obst.-Lt. Moelders* u. verlieh ihm zum **72. Luftsieg** das Eichenlaub-Ritterkreuz mit Schwertern. . . Seit dem **22 Jun 41** hatten die Englaender ihre Bomber-Einfluege in das Reichsgebiet *merklich verstaerkt*. . . (1739-40)

**24.6.41:** Ueberschritten *slowakische Truppen* die Grenze, um an dem Kampf gegen Russland teilzunehmen. . . Ungarn brach am gleichen Tag die Beziehungen zu Russland ab. (1739-40)

**25.6.41:** Gestattete Sweden auf deutschen Druck hin den Durchtransport einer deutschen Division von Norwegen nach Finnland ueber schwedisches Gebiet. Daenemark brach am **25 Jun 41** die Beziehungen zur Sowjetunion ab. . . (1740)

**27.6.41:** Die offizielle Kriegserklaerung Ungarns erfolgte an diesem Tage. (1740)

**30.6.41:** Gab Daenemark die Aufstellung eines „Freikorps Daenemark“ zur Teilnahme am Russlandfeldzug bekannt. Spanien [Datum?] stellte eine „Blaue Division“ zu diesem Zweck auf. (1740)

**Jul 41 / Tischgespraeche:** Beim Mittag- u. Abendessen fuehrte Hitler von **Jul 41** bis **Aug 42** hier [i.e., FHQu *Wolfsschanze*] bzw. im Hauptquartier „Werewolf“ bei Winnitza (Ukraine) die sogenannten „Tischgespraeche.“ Es handelte sich hierbei um eine Fortsetzung jener Monologe, die Hilter in vorgerueckter Stunde auf dem Berghof oder bei den Nachtgesellschaften in seiner Reichskanzleiwohnung in Berlin von sich zu geben pflegte. Auch hier verlangte er absolute Ruhe, waehrend er selbst sprach, u. widerspruchslose Akzeptierung des Gesagten, gleichgueltig, welches Gebiet aus Politik, Kunst, Geschichte, Technik usw., beruehrt worden war. . . Diese Gespraeche wurden in ihren Hauptgedanken *protokollarisch festgehalten*, fuer die Zeit v. **17.7.41** bis **11.3.42** von Ministerialrat Heim (in direkter Rede) u. v. **21.3. - 2.8.42** von Oberregierungsrat Dr. Henry Picker (in indirekter Rede).<sup>88</sup> (1743, f.n. 335)

**2.7.41:** Begann die Rekrutierung franzoesischer Freiwilliger fuer eine „Legion.“ (1740)

**10.7.41:** Meldete der *OKW-Bericht*, die Doppelschlacht von Bialystok u. Minsk, „die groesste Material- u. Umfangungsschlacht der Weltgeschichte,“ sei abgeschlossen. (1744)

**15.7.41:** Verlieh Hitler das erste Eichenlaub-Ritterkreuz mit Schwertern u. Brillanten an *Obst.-Lt. Moelders* u. richtete folgendes *Handschreiben* an ihn: „Nehmen Sie zu Ihren heutigen fuenf [5] neuen Luftsiegen meine aufrichtigsten Glueckwuensche entgegen. Sie haben mit diesen Erfolgen im grossdeutschen Freiheitskampf **101** Gegner in der Luft abgeschossen u. sind einschliesslich Ihrer Erfolge im spanischen Buergerkrieg **115** Mal Sieger im Luftkampf gewesen. (1745)

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<sup>88</sup> **Note:** Im **Sep 42** fanden die “Tischgespraeche” ein ploetzliches Ende. Hitler bemaengelte gerade eine Massnahme des GFM List im Suedabschnitt, da warf Jodl ein, der Fuehrer selbst habe diese angeordnet. So etwas! Hitler schrie: „Das ist eine Luge!“ u. verliess wutschnaubend den Esssaal. Aus war es mit den „Tischgespraechen“ fuer alle Zukunft! (1744)

**14.9.41 / Napoleon:** Napoleon hatte **1812** fuer seinen Vormarsch vom Njemen nach Moskau fuer eine Strecke von **950 km** **84** Tage benoetigt u. war am **14 Sep 12** am Ziel gewesen. Hitlers Truppen, die ebenfalls am **22 Jun** aufgebrochen waren, standen am **14 Sep 41** noch **300 km** von Moskau entfernt! (1741)

**2.10.41:** Die grosse Offensive in Richtung Moskau begann, u. Hitler erliess eine Proklamation, die den Soldaten in der Nacht vom **1** auf **2 Okt 41** verlesen wurde. . . Die Proklamation lautete: [See text for details] Hitler begins by once again insisting that “Barbarossa” was a preventive war which interrupted an imminent Soviet attack. He boasts that, hitherto, over **2,400,000** prisoners have been taken; more than **17,500** tanks and over **21,000** guns destroyed or captured; **14,200** enemy acft shot down or destroyed on the ground. He also states that, behind the front, almost **2000** bridges (of more than **12** meters in length) have been built, along w/ **405** railroad bridges, **25,500** kilometers of railline have been put back into operation; and more than **15,000** km of Soviet track regauged to the European standard. And again he insists that the final destruction of the Soviet Union will also strike a fatal blow to England. (For the entire text of his proclamation see, 1756-58)

**3.10.41:** Hitler war so ueberzeugt, innerhalb weniger Tage vor Moskau zu stehen, dass er sich entschloss, nach Berlin zu fahren u. dort eine *grosse Triumphrede* zu halten. Am Nachmittag sprach Hitler auf einer von Goebbels zusammengestellten “*Volkskundgebung*“ im *Sportpalast* anlaesslich der Eroeffnung des Kriegswinterhilfswerks. Nach luegenhaften Erklarungen ueber den bisherigen Kriegsverlauf erging er sich in den kuehnsten Prophezeiungen ueber die neue „Offensive in gigantischem Ausmass“ u. behauptete, Molotow werde bereits morgen oder uebermorgen [!] nicht mehr in Moskau sein. Russland sei „bereits gebrochen“ u. werde „*sich nie mehr erheben!*“ (For text see, pp 1758-59)

**4.10.41:** Nach Ostpreussen zurueckgekehrt, gratulierte Hitler am **4 Okt 41** *Brauchitsch* in dessen Hauptquartier persoenlich zum **60.** Geburtstag. (1767)

**9.10.41:** Erklaerte Reichspressechef Dr. Dietrich vor den Vertretern der deutschen Presse in Berlin – sicherlich nicht ohne Auftrag Hitlers - : „Der Feldzug im Osten ist mit der Zertruemmerung der H.Gr. Timoshenko entschieden.“ Die Erklarung rief in der deutschen Oeffentlichkeit *einiges Erstaunen hervor*. Was war geschehen? Hatte Stalin kapituliert, waren die deutschen Truppen in Moskau einmarschiert? Keineswegs, es war lediglich wieder einmal eine „Kesselschlacht“ im Gang. Aber dies hatte man nun schon mehrfach erlebt, ohne dass deswegen „der Feldzug entschieden“ gewesen war. (1767-68)

**10.10.41:** Angesichts der „guenstigen“ Entwicklung auf dem oestlichen Kriegsschauplatz hielt es Hitler fuer nicht mehr notwendig, Murmansk noch im Jahre **1941** zu nehmen, u. erliess am **10 Okt 41** die *Weisung Nr. 37*. . . (1768; also, *Hubatsch, Hitlers Weisungen*)

**6.11.41 / Anecdote:** An diesem Tage trug Ciano in sein Tagebuch ein:<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> **Note:** The english text reads: “Anna Maria Bismarsck said to Anfuso that when General Rintelen went to see the Fuehrer on the eastern front [when?] he was approached by the German marshals and generals,

Anna Maria Bismarck<sup>90</sup> hat Anfuso<sup>91</sup> gesagt, dass der General Rintelen,<sup>92</sup> als er den Fuehrer an der Ostfront besuchen ging, von den deutschen Generaelen angesprochen wurde u. dass eine Art Versammlung stattfand. Sie haben ihn beschworen, *um jeden Preis Hitler zu verstehen zu geben*, dass die ganze Entwicklung des Krieges in Russland *ein reiner Wahnsinn sei*, dass das deutsche Heer sich abnutze, dass es nicht mehr standhalten koenne u. dass er auf diesem Wege Deutschland dem Ruin entgegenfuehre. Das scheint die einheitliche Meinung aller militaerischer Fuehrer zu sein, aber niemand wagt es, sich Hitler zu sagen. Natuerlich hat sich auch Rintelen schoen gehuetet, dies zu tun. (1770-71)

**8.11.41/Hitler in Muenchen:** Hitlers Rede *im Loewenbraeukeller* war recht maessig. . . Und doch wurde in dieser Rede schon eine Wandlung offenbar, die sich in seinem Kopf anbahnte. Wenn Hitler der Russland-Coup ebenfalls misslang – u. es sah fast so aus – dann blieb ihm nur noch die Drohung mit den Judenmassaker, um die Englaender friedensbereit zu machen. . . Zwar hatte er die Hoffnung noch nicht ganz aufgegeben, innerhalb der naechsten Wochen die Russen entscheidend schlagen zu koennen, aber seine Gedanken waren am **8 Nov 41** doch *schon stark mit den Juden beschaefigt*.

In den ersten Abschnitten des Krieges hatte er die Judenfrage kaum beruehrt, weil eben alles glatt gegangen war. Erst am **30 Jan 41**, als die „Friedenskampagne“ u. die „Luftschlacht“ um England missglueckt waren, hatte er die *erste massive Drohung* ausgestossen. Nun aber begann er die Juden als die Schuldigen am Krieg zu bezeichnen. . . Hiter begann mit den Worten . . . [See text for details.] Hitler’s comments included following: (1771, 1780)<sup>93</sup>

So kaempfen wir als Nationalsozialisten heute nicht mehr allein, sondern in einer *gewaltigen europaeischen Front*. Und wir koennen am Ende dieses Jahres wohl sagen, dass durch diese europaeische Front die *groesste Gefahr bereits abgewendet worden ist*.

Als ich neulich in Berlin sprach, da standen wir gerade vor dem Anlauf zu einem letzten gigantischen Hieb. Er ist ueber alle Massen gelungen. Rund **75** Divisionen wurden mit einem Schlag ausgeloescht u. vernichtet.

Und die Fuehrung dieses Kampfes sowohl als die Ausfuehrung wird nicht ermueden u. nicht ermatten. Was der Heldenmut an der Front geleistet hat, ist unsterblich, u. fuer eine so unsterbliche Tat wird auch – das koennen wir als

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and that a sort of meeting took place. During the meeting they entreated him to find some way of making Hitler understand that the way the war in Russia is conducted is pure folly, that the German Army is gradually wearing out, that it cannot hold on, and that, finally, he is leading Germany to the brink of ruin. It seems that this is the unanimous opinion of all the military leaders, but that no one dares tell it to Hitler. Naturally, Rintelen, too, was careful not to do so. But if this is true – and it is probable that it is true – it is serious, because in Germany the generals still count a great deal.” (The Ciano Diaries, p 402)

<sup>90</sup> **Note:** Gemahlin des damaligen deutschen Botschaftsrats in Rom, Fuerst Otto v. Bismarck.

<sup>91</sup> **Note:** Filippo Anfuso, Gesandter, Vertreter Cianos.

<sup>92</sup> **Note:** Deutscher Militaerattache in Rom.

<sup>93</sup> **Note:** Confirm that this quotation is indeed from Hitler’s speech on **8 Nov 41**. I did not photocopy pp 1772-79.

Menschen, die an eine Vorsehung glauben, annehmen – ein unvergaenglicher Lohn kommen!

Wir duerfen keinen Zweifel darueber machen, dass *in dieser Zeit jetzt das Schicksal Europas fuer die naechsten 1000 Jahre entschieden wird.*

**19.11.41:** Sah Hitler bei einem *Gespraech mit Halder in der „Wolfsschanze“* den Zusammenbruch Russlands u. Englands wieder einmal greifbar vor sich:

Fuehrer wertet den Erfolg in Russland, den er als eine unerhoerte Leistung betrachtet, *politisch sehr hoch*. Er glaubt, dass durch Verlust wesentlicher Rohstoffquellen, besonders der Kohle, das Ruestungspotential des Russen schwer beeintraehtigt ist u. er ruestungswirtschaftlich nicht so rasch wieder auf die Beine kommt. In England legt er den innenpolitischen, sozialen Spannungen grossen Wert bei.

(1783; Halder KTB, 19.11.41)

**21.11.41:** Nahm Hitler an der Trauerfeier fuer Ernst Udet im Berliner Reichsluftfahrtministerium teil. Goering hielt die Rede. Hitler legte anschliessend einen Kranz am Sarg nieder. (1783)

**22.11.41:** Wurde schon wieder ein „Flugzeugabsturz“ gemeldet: Oberst Werner Moelders, Sieger in **101** Luftkaempfen, dem Hitler am **16 Jul 41** als erstem Offizier das Eichenlaub-Ritterkreuz mit Schwertern u. Brillanten verliehen hatte, war diesmal das Opfer. Er sollte mit einem Kurierflugzeug, dass er nicht selbst steuerte (!), bei Breslau abgestuerzt sein. Hitler ordnete ein Staatsbegrabnis an. (1783)

**28.11.41:** Nahm Hitler um **11.45** Uhr am Staatsakt fuer Oberst Moelders im Reichsluftfahrtministerium teil u. legte einen Kranz am Sarg nieder. (1785)

**29.11.41:** Allmaehlich wurde es Zeit fuer Hitler, sich an die „Front,“ d.h. in sein ostpreussisches Hauptquartier, zurueckzubegeben.<sup>94</sup> Denn im Osten stand es nicht zum Besten. [Note: Author notes that German troops were pushed out of Rostov in the south.] Als Hitler am **29 Nov 41** in der “Wolfsschanze” eintraf, lagen die *reinsten Katastrophennachrichten* vor. Gab es denn so was? Soldaten des NS-Grossdeutschen Reiches auf dem Rueckzug? Hitler befahl sofort Halt u. Wiederaufnahme des Vormarsches! An Rundstedt, den O.B. der H.Gr.Sued, telegraphierte er: „*Bleiben Sie, wo Sie sind. Kein Rueckzug mehr!*“

**2.-4.12.41:** Am **2 Dez 41** flog Hitler mit seiner viermotorigen Condor-Maschine von Rastenburg zum rueckwaertigen Operationsgebiet der H.Gr.Sued. Ausser dem Chefpiloten Bauer flogen noch mit: Chefadjutant Schmundt, Diener Lange u. Leibarzt Dr. Morell. Es herrschte kaltes Winterwetter. [Note: See text for this highly revealing anecdote.] Hitler’s plane stops first in

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<sup>94</sup> Note: It appears he had been away in Berlin from at least **21 Nov 41**.

Kiev; then continued on to Potawa. Here, in P., they changed planes, climbing into a faster – albeit also colder! – **He 111**. GFM v. Reichenau also accompanied Hitler from Poltava, flying in a second **He 111**.

Ziemlich durchgefroren kam man in Mariopol an, wo Hitler in Sepp Dietrichs Fahrzeug umstieg u. zum Hauptquartier der H.Gr.Sued in der Naehel von Taganrog fuhr, um dort weitere *Anweisungen* zum Oberbefehlswechsel zu geben. . . Am naechsten Tag [i.e., **3.12.41**] startete die Reisegesellschaft, einschliesslich Reichenaus wieder in Mariopol. . . Das Wetter wurde so schlecht, dass man unmoeglich mehr am gleichen Tag nach Rastenburg zurueckfliegen konnte. Man musste in Poltawa ueber Nacht bleiben. . . dieser erzwungene Aufenthalt in P. wurde *eine der schlimmsten Naechte seines Lebens*.

Abgeschnitten von der Aussenwelt, ohne Nachrichtenverbindungen, eingesperrt in ein altes baufaelliches, verwanztes Schloss, Hunderte von Kilometern vom FHQu u. der Reichskanzlei entfernt, *litt er Hoellenqualen bei dem Gedanken, was sich inzwischen dort abspielen koennte*. . . Wie, wenn irgend ein General, irgend ein Unterfuehrer in seiner Abwesenheit *die Macht an sich riss*, ihn wegen erwiesener Unfaehigkeit fuer abgesetzt erkluert oder gar den Reichstag einberief?  
...

Am **4 Dez 41** traf Hitler nach sorgenvollem Flug in Rastenburg ein u. war auf schlimmste Aufstandsnachrichten gefasst. Aber in der „Wolfsschanze“ war alles ruhig u. in bester Ordnung. Niemand im ganzen Reich hatte versucht, Revolution zu machen! Hitler fiel ein Stein vom Herzen. . . (1787-89)

**6.-8.12.41 / Japan:** In Hitlers FHQu verbreitete sich eine Weltuntergangsstimmung. Keitel hatte eine Pistole vor sich liegen, spielte mit dem Gedanken Schluss zu machen u. musste von Jodl an seine Pflicht erinnert werden, bei Hitler auszuhalten.<sup>95</sup> Brauchitsch bot, wie schon des oefteren, am **7 Dez 41** seinen Ruecktritt an. Aber Hitler . . . sparte sich seine Antwort auf. . . Nachdenklich sass Hitler in der Nacht zum **8 Dez 41** im FHQu „Wolfsschanze“ u. starrte vor sich hin.

Da traf eine Meldung ein, dass japanische Bomberverbaende ohne Kriegserklaerung u. an einem Sonntag – genau nach Hitlerscher Manier – den amerikanischen Flottenstuetzpunkt Pearl Harbour auf Haway schwer bombardiert hatten. Dies war natuerlich eine Nachricht nach Hitlers Geschmack. Er *schlug sich auf die Schenkel, sprang wie elektrisiert auf u. rief: „Endlich!“*

[**Note:** See text for more details. Hitler, of course, knew nothing of Japanese plans to attack at Pearl. Moreover, he had never, so Domarus, encouraged the Japanese to attack America; he had merely supported a Japanese move against England (for ex., at Singapore). In fact, the Three Power Pact of **27 Sep 40** was to help prevent an extension of the war to the USA. Conversely, in the last few months, Hitler had attempted to induce the Japanese to join in the war against the Soviet Union. In vain, of course. 1791]

**8.12.41:** Hitler war an diesem Tage wegen der “Schicksalswende” in so guter Laune, dass er sogar einige „Frontverkuerzungen“ im Mittel- u. Nordabschnitt der Ostfront gestattete u. eine relativ vernuenftige *Weisung Nr. 39* herausgab. (1792)

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<sup>95</sup> **Note:** Vgl. Walter Goerlitz, Der deutsche Generalstab, 1950, S. 574.

**11.12.41:** Um 15 Uhr hatte Hitler *im Reichstag* seinen grossen Auftritt, in dessen Verlauf er die Kriegserklaerung an die USA verkuendete. Zunaechst aber gab er einen triumphalen „Rechenschaftsbericht“ ueber den bisherigen Verlauf des Krieges u. scheute sich nicht, auch die Erfolge des doch offensichtlich misslungenen Russlandfeldzuges in diese Siegesuebersicht mit einzu-beziehen. [Note: In this Reichstag address, Hitler lays out course of war in the east in some detail, even providing detailed figures for Germany's losses in men and equipment; he also, again, justifies the war as a preventive measure: (1793 ff.)

Weil ich Sowjetrussland fuer die toedliche Gefahr nicht nur des Deutschen Reiches, sondern fuer ganz Europa hielt, habe ich mich entschlossen, wenn moeglich noch *wenige Tage vor Ausbruch dieser Auseinandersetzungen* selbst das Zeichen zum Angriff zu geben. Fuer die Tatsache der Absicht aber des russ. Angriffes liegt heute ein wahrhaft erdrueckendes u. authentisches Material vor.<sup>96</sup> Ebenso sind wir uns im klaren ueber den Zeitpunkt, an dem dieser Angriff stattfinden sollte; angesichts der uns vielleicht im ganzen Umfang aber wirklich erst heute bewusst gewordenen Groesse der Gefahr kann ich dem Herrgott nur danken, dass er mich zur richtigen Stunde erleuchtet hat u. mir die Kraft schenkte, das zu tun, was getan werden musste, es verdanken ihm nicht nur Millionen deutscher Soldaten ihr Leben, sondern ganz Europa sein Dasein. (!)

Denn das darf ich heute aussprechen: wenn sich diese Welle von ueber **20.000** Panzer, Hunderten von Divisionen, Zehntausenden an Geschuetzen, begleitet von mehr als **10.000** Flugzeugen unversehens ueber das Reich hin in Bewegung gesetzt haben wuerden, waere Europa verloren gewesen. . .

**12.12.41:** Hatte Hitler eine *Besprechung mit Raeder* ueber geeignete Kampfmassnahmen der Marine gegen den neuen Feind, die USA. Man beschloss, sechs (!) grosse U-Boote an die amerikanische Ostkueste zu dirigieren. Aber dieses billige Vergnuegen, die noch unverdunkelten amerikanischen Kuestenstaedte nachts von See aus zu beschiessen, sollte natuerlich bald aufhoeren! (1812)

**20.12.41:** Hitlers *Verlautbarung ueber den Oberkommandowechsel* umfasste einen allgemein gehaltenen Teil, in dem er sozusagen ueber sich selbst berichtete, u. eine Proklamation an die Soldaten des Heeres u. der Waffen-SS. Die Bekanntmachung hatte folgende Wortlaut. [Note: See text for details, 1813, ff.]<sup>97</sup>

**20.12.41:** Nicht weniger verheerend war der Eindruck, den Hitlers *Appell zur Wintersachen-sammlung* fuer die Ostfront vom **20 Dez 41** hervorrief. [Note: See text for details.] Dieser Aufruf gab eindeutig zu verstehen, dass die deutschen Soldaten keine ausreichende Winter-ausruestung besassen. (1815-16)

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<sup>96</sup> Note: Welches "Material" dies sein sollte, darueber schwieg sich Hitler jedoch aus. (f.n. 531a, 1798)

<sup>97</sup> Note: DNB – Text v. **20.12.41**.

## 1942

**1.1.42:** In seinen Prognosen fuer das Jahr **1942** war Hitler wesentlich bescheidener als im vorangegangenen. Hatte er vor zwei Jahren erklart: „Moege das Jahr **1940** die Entscheidung bringen“ u. am letzten Neujahrstag prophezeit: „Das Jahr **1941** wird die Vollendung des groessten Sieges unserer Geschichte bringen,“ so verkuendete er nun: „Das Jahr **1942** soll, darum wollen wir den Herrgott bitten, die Entscheidung bringen zur Rettung unseres Volkes u. der mit uns verbuendeten Nationen!“ (1817)

**1.1.42:** Hitlers *Neujahrsaufruf* [also quoted above] trug die Ueberschrift: „Deutsches Volk! Nationalsozialisten[innen], Parteigenossen!, u. war wieder ziemlich lang. [Note: For text see, pp 1820-21]

Ausserdem erliess Hitler als O.B. der Wehrmacht u. zugleich als neuer O.B. des Heeres einen *Tagesbefehl*, in dem er den Soldaten erklarte, sie haetten „*ganz Europa gerettet*.“ Der Tagesbefehl hatte folgenden Wortlaut: (1821-23)

Soldaten!

. . . Soehne aus allen deutschen Gauen haben Seite an Seite mit den Soldaten unserer Verbueudeten auf dem Balkan u. auf Kreta, in Afrika, im Mittelmeer u. auf dem Atlantik ruhmvoll gekaempft. Seit dem **22 Jun [41]** aber habt ihr, meine Soldaten, auf den Kriegsschauplaetzen des Ostens, von den Zonen des hohen Nordens bis an die Grenze des Schwarzen Meeres Kaempfe bestanden, die in ihrer Ausdehnung u. Haerte unerhoerte Ansprueche an euch stellten, in ihren Erfolgen aber die glorreichsten Waffentaten der Geschichte sind. . .

Durch euere Tapferkeit, eueren Todesmut u. euere Opferbereitschaft wurde aber nicht nur unsere deutsche Heimat, sondern darueber hinaus *ganz Europa gerettet* u. *vor einem Schicksal bewahrt*, an das wir nur mit Schaudern zu denken vermoegen. . .

Soldaten der Ostfront!

Im Jahre **1941** habt ihr in zahllosen Schlachten *den zum Angriffssprung bereiten Feind* nicht nur von den finnischen, deutschen, slowakischen, ungarischen u. rumaenischen Grenzen entfernt, sondern weit ueber **1000** Kilometer in das eigene Land zurueckgeworfen. Sein Versuch, im Winter von **1941** auf **1942** das Schicksal zu wenden u. wieder gegen uns vorzugehen, muss u. wird scheitern! Ja, im Gegenteil, im Jahre **1942** werden wir mit allen Vorbereitungen, die getroffen sind, diesen Feind der Menschheit erneut fassen u. solange schlagen, bis der Vernichtungswille der juedisch-kapitalistischen u. bolschewistischen Welt gebrochen ist. . .

**30.1.42:** Die Drohung mit dem Judenmassaker war die letzte „*Trumpfkarte*,“ die Hitler zu besitzen glaubte. Bereits am **30 Jan 41** hatte er Andeutungen in dieser Richtung gemacht, u. am **30 Jan 42** wiederholte er seine Drohung in massiver Weise: „. . . das dieser Krieg nicht so ausgehen wird, wie es sich die Juden vorstellen, naemlich dass die europaeisch-arischen Voelker ausgerottet werden, sondern dass das Ergebnis dieses Krieges *die Vernichtung des Judentums sein wird*.“ (1818, f.n. 9)

**12.2.42:** Nachmittags um 15 Uhr, fand im *Mosaiksaal der Reichskanzlei der Staatsakt fuer Dr. Todt statt*.<sup>98</sup> Hitler hielt selbst die *Trauerrede* u. fuehrte dabei ein solches Theater auf, wie er es seit jener Gedenkrede fuer Richard Wagner im Jahre 1934 nicht mehr veranstaltet hatte. Er sprach mit *traenerstickter Stimme* u. war zeitweise vor „Ergriffenheit“ nicht mehr in der Lage weiterzusprechen. Er erklarte: [See text, 1836, ff.]

**14.2.42:** Zwei Wochen waren seit der Drohung Hitlers mit dem Judenmassaker vergangen, u. noch immer hatten die Englaender keine Friedensfuehler nach Deutschland ausgestreckt! Auch seine Hoffnung, der Fall Singapurs wuerde Churchill die Stellung kosten, schien sich nicht zu bewahrheiten. Da blieb ihm nun doch wohl nichts anders uebrig, als die *Drohung mit der Massakrierung der Juden wahrzumachen*. Hitler nahm sich daher noch einmal *Goebbels* vor u. brachte ihm seine Entschlossenheit zum Ausdruck, „*ruecksichtslos mit den Juden in Europa aufzuraeumen*. Hier darf man keine sentimentalen Anwandlungen haben. Die Juden habe die Katastrophe, die sie heute erleben, verdient. Sie werden mit der Vernichtung unserer Feinde, auch *ihre eigene Vernichtung* erleben. Wir muessen diesen Prozess mit einer kalten Ruecksichtslosigkeit beschleunigen. . .“<sup>99</sup> (1841)

**24.2.42:** Fehlte Hitler zum erstenmal bei der *Parteigrueundungsfeier in Muenchen*. Er behauptete, er koenne sein Hauptquartier nicht verlassen, da er die „Vorbereitungen zur endgueltigen Auseinandersetzung“ treffe. . . Er sandte daher lieber eine „*Botschaft*.“ Sie wurde von Gauleiter Wagner verlesen. . . Noch einmal brachte Hitler in dieser „Botschaft“ zum Ausdruck, dass er die *Juden ausrotten wollte*. (1843-44)

**1.3.42:** Unterzeichnete Hitler einen *Erlass ueber die planmaessige **geistige** [!] Bekaempfung von Juden, Freimauern u. mit ihnen verbuendete Gegner des Nationalsozialismus* als „kriegsnotwendige Aufgabe.“ . . . Dieser Erlass ueber die kriegsnotwendige „geistige“ Bekaempfung der Juden sollte offenbar die gleichzeitig beginnende „physische“ Bekaempfung d.h. Ausrottung der Juden verschleiern.<sup>100</sup> (1845)

**15.3.42:** Erschien Hitler zum *Heldengedenktage in Berlin* u. hielt um 12 Uhr beim Staatsakt im Lichthof des Zeughauses folgende Rede: (1848-49)

. . . Was immer aber auch die deutschen Armeen in diesen Feldzuegen [i.e., in earlier campaigns] geleistet hatten, es tritt verblassend zurueck gegenueber dem, was das Schicksal unserer Wehrmacht u. den mit uns Verbuedeten im letzten Jahr zu loesen u. zu bewaeltigen aufgelegt hat.

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<sup>98</sup> **Note:** Reichsminister Todt had perished in a plane crash outside Rastenburg on **8 Feb 42** under suspicious circumstances.

<sup>99</sup> **Note:** Quote from Goebbels diary.

<sup>100</sup> **Note:** Hitlers Diener Linge berichtete ueber die Geheimkonferenzen zwischen dem Fuehrer Adolf Hitler u. Himmler, bei denen niemand zugegen sein durfte u. die wohl die Judenvernichtung zum Gegenstand hatten. (1846)

Und heute erste erkennen wir das ganze Ausmass der Vorbereitungen unserer Feinde. Heute sehen wir das Zusammenspiel der juedischen Drahtzieher ueber eine ganze Welt verteilt, das im gemeinsamen Angriff einer Verschwörung, die Demokratie u. Bolschewismus zu einer Interessengemeinschaft vereinte, ganz Europa vernichten zu koennen hoffte. . .

**26.4.42:** Hatte das Jahr 1942 Hitler auf aussenpolitischem Gebiet schwere Misserfolge gebracht, so konnte er jedoch auf innenpolitischem Gebiet einen weiteren Machtzuwachs buchen. Die Uebernahme des Oberbefehls ueber das Heer im **Dez 41** hatte in ihm die Ueberzeugung reifen lassen, es sei an der Zeit, endlich auch die verhassten Juristen ihrer Sonderstellungen zu entkleiden u. sich selbst zum „Obersten Gerichtsherrn“ zu machen. Und so geschah es: Am **26 Apr 42** setzte er dazu einen „Beschluss des Grossdeutschen Reichstags“ durch, der ihm das Recht verlieh, jeden Richter, jeden Beamten u. jeden Offizier nach eigenem Gutdunken abzusetzen, „ohne an bestehende Rechtsvorschriften gebunden zu sein.“<sup>101</sup> (1819)

### **11.2.9: Hitler. A Study in Tyranny. Alan Bullock (Revised Ed., 1962)**

Hitler as “Feldheer:”

Hitler was far from being a fool in military matters. He had read widely in military literature and he took an eager interest in such technical matters as the design of weapons. His gifts as a politician gave him notable advantages in war as well. He was a *master of the psychological side*, quick to see the value of surprise, bold in the risks he was prepared to take and receptive of unorthodox ideas. The decisive support he gave to the expansion of Germany’s armored forces, his adoption of Raeder’s proposal for the occupation of Norway, and of Manstein’s for the thrust through the Ardennes, [are] illustrations of these gifts. Nor was Hitler far from the truth when he argued that if he had listened to the High Command he would never have pushed through German rearmament at the pace he wanted, or have dared to take the risks which brought the German Army its sensational triumphs of **1940/41**. (665)

His faults as a military leader were equally obvious. He had too little respect for facts, he was obstinate and opinionated. His experience in the First World War, to which he attached undue importance, had been extremely limited. He had never commanded troops in the field or learned how to handle armies as a staff officer. He lacked the training to translate his grandiose conceptions into concrete terms of operations. The interest he took in technical details, instead of compensating for these deficiencies, only made them clearer. He was far too interested in such matters as the precise thickness of the concrete covering a line of fortifications for a man whose job was to think clearly about the overall pattern of the war. Moreover, he allowed himself to become intoxicated w/ figures, w/ the crude numbers of men or of armaments production, which he delighted to repeat from memory w/o any attempt to criticize or analyze them. These were precisely the faults which the professional training of the generals qualified them to correct. . . But this was ruled out by Hitler’s distrust of the generals. (665-66)

To political distrust and social resentment was added Hitler’s inveterate suspicion of the expert, the professional staff officer, who like the professional economist, saw only difficulties. Nothing so infuriated Hitler as the “objectivity” of the trained mind which refused to accept his own instinct for seeing all problems in the simplest possible terms and his insistence on will-power as

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<sup>101</sup> **Note:** Did not the “Hoepner incident” also have something to do w/ this?

a universal answer. Hitler was a man who found it difficult to take advice and intolerable to listen to criticism. It required great tact to get him to accept a view which differed from his own, and this was a quality few of the German generals possessed. . . Thus, far from welcoming the very different talents of his military advisors as complementary to his own, he despised them as men hidebound by tradition. . . (666-67)

### Reasons for „Barbarossa:”

At the time Hitler gave two reasons for his decision to attack Russia; 1) that Russia was *preparing to attack Germany* in the summer of **1941**; 2) that Britain’s refusal to acknowledge defeat was due to her hopes of Russian and American intervention,<sup>102</sup> and that Britain had actually entered into an alliance w/ Russia against Germany. The way to strike at Britain was thus to destroy her hopes of Russian aid. At most, these arguments reinforced *a decision already reached* on other grounds. Hitler invaded Russia for the *simple but sufficient reason* that he had always meant to establish the foundations of his **1000-year Reich** by the annexation of territory lying between the Vitsula and the Urals. (651)

Most important of all was the belief, a result partly of [his conviction that the German Armed Forces under his direction were invincible], partly of an underestimate of Russian strength, that the Soviet armies could be *defeated in a single campaign*. Hitler *knew he was taking a risk* in invading Russia, but he was convinced that the war in the east would be over in two months, or three at the most. He not only said this, but acted on it, *refusing to make any preparations for a winter campaign*.<sup>103</sup> (651)

Hitler was not blind to the numerical superiority of the Russians [although he clearly underestimated that superiority!], but he was certain that the *political weakness* of the Soviet regime, together w/ the *technical superiority* of the Germans, would give him a quick victory in a campaign he never expected to last much longer than that in which he had overrun France the year before. (652)

Once he had extended his power to the Urals and the Caucasus, Hitler calculated, he would have established his empire upon such solid foundations that Britain – even if she continued the war and even if the USA intervened on her side – would be unable to make any impression on it.<sup>104</sup> Far from being a desperate expedient forced on him by the frustration of his plans for the defeat of Britain, the invasion of Russia represented the *realization of those imperial dreams* which he had sketched in the closing section of Mein Kampf and elaborated in the fireside circle of the Berghof. (652)

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<sup>102</sup> **Note:** Of course, as Hillgruber pointed out, Britain and America were planning in **1940/41** to wage war against Germany w/o Russia. Neither Anglo-American partner expected Russia to survive a German onslaught. England had hardly pinned its hopes on Russia and, perforce, Hitler’s analysis of her situation was fundamentally wrong.

<sup>103</sup> **Note:** This may have been true at first, but by **Aug 41** [confirm month] he had been assured (by OQu Thomas?) that preparations were being taken for a winter campaign. He was clearly stunned when he learned in **Dec 41** that this had not been the case.

<sup>104</sup> **Note:** Of course, Hitler’s geo-strategic “calculus” would have been dramatically undone by the outcome of the Manhattan Project!

Wolfsschanze: The “Wolf’s Lair” was hidden in the heart of a thick forest, miles from any human habitation. Its buildings resembled Alpine chalets [really?], elaborately fitted w/ central heating, telephone exchanges, a wireless station, and a cinema, protected by powerful AA batteries and surrounded by a triple ring of guards. Only later did Hitler move, under the threat of air attacks, to the concrete bunker in which he passed the last years of his life, but from the beginning the *dim light of the forest* produced a feeling of gloom in everyone who went there. (657)

OKW vs. OKH theaters of war: After the invasion of Russia there was no longer a High Command or General Staff in Germany comparable w/ that over which Hindenburg and Ludendorff had presided in the First World War. Hitler ordered the C-in-C of the Army and his Staff (OKH) to confine themselves to the conduct of the war in the east (excluding Finnland). The other fronts were to be left to his own Supreme Command of the Armed Forces (OKW). But the OKW was, in turn, excluded from the eastern front, and in any case *lacked the independent authority* which the High command of the Army traditionally possessed in Germany. The responsibility for the conduct of operations was thus divided, and the strategic picture of the war as a whole remained the *concern of Hitler alone*. (665)

Hitler’s direction of “Barbarossa”: Once the attack on Russia had been launched, the war on the eastern front *absorbed all Hitler’s thoughts and energies*. . . With forces which were numerically inferior to the Russians, throughout the campaign of **1941** Hitler *swung between a number of objectives*,<sup>105</sup> losing time in switching from one to another, stretching his resources to the limit and fanning out his armies across a **1000-mile** front, while always falling short of the decisive blow which would knock Russia out of the war. (655)

#### Hitler’s “Table Talk”:

From the summer of **1941**, date the records of his conversations taken under Bormann’s supervision and subsequently published as his table talk.<sup>106</sup> They give a vivid impression of Hitler’s mood at the peak of his fantastic career, the peer as he saw himself of Napoleon, Bismarck and Fredrick the Great. . . On the evening of **17 Oct 41**, w/ the Russians (as he believed) already defeated, and Todt and Sauckel to provide an appreciative audience, Hitler let his imagination ride:

This Russian desert, we shall populate it. . . We’ll take away its character of an Asiatic steppe, we’ll Europeanize it. With this object we have undertaken the construction of roads that will lead to the southernmost part of the Crimea and to the Caucasus. These roads will be studded along their whole length w/ German towns and around these towns our colonists will settle. (See text for rest of quote, p 656)

Indeed, the first impression left by reading the Table Talk is of the remarkable extent to which Hitler’s ideas in **1941/42** *remained the same as in the 1920s*, when he wrote Mein Kampf, or when he talked to Rauschnig in the **1930s**. . . The most lasting impression left by the **700** pages of the Table Talk is of the *vulgarity of Hitler’s mind*, cunning and brutal in its sophistries, forceful but *devoid of human feeling*. . . There is not a hint in the dogmatic expression of his

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<sup>105</sup> **Note:** Yes but – Hitler did indeed shift the mechanized Schwerpunkt from center to north and south and then back again; yet this had always been his plan, as laid out in the basic Barbarossa directive of **Dec 40**. Hence, I see a fundamental continuity in his direction of the **1941** campaign.

<sup>106</sup> **Note:** For example, by Dr Henry Picker, Hitlers Tischgespraeche (Bonn, 1951).

opinion on every conceivable subject – *art, religion, women, history, economics, law* –<sup>107</sup> that on some he might be less well informed than other people or that a different view might also be possible. . . (672-73)

**Hitler & Winter Clothing:** Throughout **Nov 41** the German armies had been fighting their way nearer to Moscow under steadily worsening weather conditions. . . Confident that the campaign would be finished before the snows,<sup>108</sup> Hitler and his staff had made no provision for winter clothing to be issued to the troops.<sup>109</sup>

#### **7.12.41 / Pearl Harbor:**

Taking a leaf out of Hitler’s book, the Japanese kept their own counsel and the news of the attack on Pearl came as a surprise to Hitler. At the time of Matsuoka’s visit to Berlin in the spring of **1941**, Hitler had urged the Japanese Foreign Minister to attack Singapore. After the invasion of the Soviet Union, Ribbentrop made persistent attempts through the German ambassador in Tokyo to persuade the Japanese to take the Russians in the rear.<sup>110</sup> [oh ouch!] The one course, however, which Hitler *had never recommended* to the Japanese had been to attack the USA: indeed, he had constantly repeated to Matsuoka in the spring that one of the beneficial results of seizing Singapore would be to deter the Americans from entering the war. (661)

It might have been expected therefore that the Fuehrer would show some irritation at the independent course adopted by the Tokyo Government in face of his advice. On the contrary, he agreed to give the formal guarantee for which the Japanese asked and appears to have been delighted w/ the news of Pearl Harbor. . . He rapidly decided to follow the Japanese example by declaring war on the USA himself. When Ribbentrop pointed out that the Tripartite Pact only bound Germany to assist Japan in the event of an attack on her by some other Power, and that to declare war on the USA would be to add to the number of Germany’s opponents, Hitler dismissed these as unimportant considerations. . . Hitherto, Hitler had shown considerable patience in face of the growing aid given by the U.S. Government to the British. But he was coming to the *conclusion that a **virtual state of war** already existed w/ the USA* and that there was no point in delaying the clash which he regarded as inevitable. (661-62)

#### **1941/42: Winter Crisis:**

The Russian counteroffensive faced him w/ a crisis, which, if mishandled, might well have turned to disaster. . . If [the German troops] had once begun to retreat it might have turned into a panic flight. Hitler rose to the occasion. By a *remarkable display of determination* he succeeded in holding the German lines firm. Whatever his responsibility for the desperate situation in which the German Army now found itself . . . in its immediate effects it was his *greatest achievement as a war-leader*. (664)

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<sup>107</sup> **Note:** However, no other themes recur w/ such regularity in Hitler’s conversation as Christianity and the Jews. (672)

<sup>108</sup> **Note:** This confidence – on part of Hitler, **OKW** and **OKH** – had ended by **Aug 41**; by then, they were well aware the Russian war would continue into **1942**.

<sup>109</sup> **Note:** Again, this is something of a myth. Efforts were made to gather clothing and equipment for winter warfare, but by the early fall of **1941**, w/ the German logistical system breaking down, it proved impossible to move the items forward to the front. I’ve developed plenty of corroborative material in my other “notebooks.”

<sup>110</sup> **Note:** cf. Ribbentrop’s telegram to Ott, **10 Jul 41**, and Ott’s reply: “I am trying w/ all means possible to work towards Japan’s entry into the war against Russia as soon as possible.” (661)

Hitler's method of dealing w/ the crisis was simple. In face of the professional advice of his generals and in total disregard of the cost to the troops, he ordered the German armies to stand and fight where they were, categorically refusing all requests to withdraw. This order was enforced in the most ruthless fashion. [Note: Bullock mentions fate of Rundstedt and Hoepner in this context.] . . . In certain places it proved literally *impossible to carry out Hitler's orders*, and he had *reluctantly to accept the withdrawal of the German positions* after divisions had been decimated by Russian attacks and frostbite. . . The importance of the winter crisis of **1941/42** is not, however, adequately represented by its immediate military results. It marks a *decisive stage in the development of Hitler's relations w/ the Army* which was to have considerable consequences for the future. (664-65)

As success had followed success, Hitler's conviction that he was what he had long claimed to be – a man marked out by Providence and endowed w/ more than ordinary gifts – was *immeasurably strengthened* by the experience of the winter months of **1941/42**. . . Goebbels was shocked, when he saw Hitler in **Mar 42**, at the toll which those months had taken on Hitler's health. . . None the less the *ordeal had not broken Hitler*, and the success of his intervention in checking the Russian counteroffensive exalted his *sense of mission* and his confidence in his *military genius*. After the winter of **1941/42**, he was less prepared than ever to listen to advice – or even information – which ran contrary to his own wishes. (668-69)

Hitler on Stalin: Hitler's contempt for the “Slav” peoples was unvarying, but his *appreciation of Stalin rose sharply* in the face of the unexpected Russian power of defense. . . On **9 Aug 42**, he described the Russian leader as “*half beast, half giant*. The people can rot for all he cares. If we had given him another ten years, *Europe would have been swept away*, as it was at the time of the Huns.” (671; also, *Hitler's Table Talk*, 8.9.42)

Home Front: No less than the German Army, the home front needed its faith in the Fuehrer's leadership restored, and in the first four [4] months of **1942** Hitler found time to make three [3] big speeches: a) on **30 Jan 42** [anniversary of **30.1.33**]; b) in **Mar 42** (Heroes Memorial Day); and, c) **26 Apr 42**.

**26.4.42**: It was in this last speech, on **26 Apr 42**, w/ the winter now behind him, that Hitler gave the fullest expression of his renewed faith in Germany's eventual triumph. This time he made no attempt to conceal how near the German Army had been to disaster. He deliberately *exaggerated the seriousness of the situation* on the eastern front in order to throw into more effective contrast his own decision to assume personal responsibility and the news that the crisis had been mastered. “Deputies,” he told the packed and excited meeting of the Reichstag in the Sportspalast, “a world struggle was decided during the winter. . .” Then, picking up the allusion to Napoleon's retreat from Moscow, so often invoked during the winter, he added: “*We have mastered a destiny which broke another man 130 years ago.*” (674-75)

**1942 Campaign Planning**: To make good the German loses in manpower, Hitler demanded more of the satellite states. Keitel was sent to Budapest and Bucharest to procure more divisions: the OKW counted on **52** allied divisions for the **1942** campaign, a quarter of the total force available. The bulk of these divisions were to come from Rumania (**27**) and Hungary (**13**). But Hitler now began to ask for Italian troops which he had scorned to accept the year before, and in **Feb 42** Goering was sent on a visit of several days to Rome.

**11.2.10: Hitler.** Joachim C. Fest. 1973.

Wolfsschanze: From the beginning of the Russian campaign on, Hitler led a retired life. His HQ, which also housed the High Command of the Armed Forces, was once again [?] located in the extensive woods beyond Rastenburg in East Prussia. A system of *walls, barbed wire, and mines* protected the grouping of bunkers and buildings. The prevailing atmosphere was peculiarly gloomy and monotonous. Visitors have described the place as a blending of monastery and concentration camp. The small, unadorned rooms w/ their plain deal furniture formed a striking contrast to the pomp of past years, the spacious halls, the grand perspectives and all the theatrical lavishness of Berlin, Munich, and Berchtesgaden. Sometimes it seemed as if Hitler had retreated back to the cave. Italian Foreign Minister Ciano compared the inhabitants of the headquarters w/ troglodytes, and found the atmosphere depressing: “One does not see a single colorful spot, not a single lively touch. The anterooms are full of people smoking, eating and chatting. Smell of kitchens, uniforms, heavy boots.” (694-95)

During the early months of the war, Hitler took occasional trips to the front, and visited battlefields, headquarters, or military hospitals. But after the first failures he began to shun reality and *withdraw into the abstract world of map tables and military conferences*. From that time on, his experience of the war was almost exclusively as *lines and figures on paper landscapes*. He faced the public less and less often; he shrank from the onetime grand appearances. With the defeats he lost the energy needed for striking poses. Once he had dropped his monumental attitudes, the *changes in him* showed all too plainly [i.e., his changing physical appearance]. . . The isolation into which Hitler retreated after the quarrel w/ the generals *increased after Stalingrad*. . . In fact, Hitler began more and more palpably to *suffer from his self-chosen isolation*. In contrast to his youth, he complained, he could “*no longer stand being alone*.” His life style, already marked by a spartan note during the first years of the war, became plainer and plainer. The meals at the Fuehrer’s table were *notorious for their simplicity*. (694-95)

#### Nature of War in Russia:

From the outset these commandos [i.e., *Einsatzgruppen*] gave the conflict its frightful, totally unexampled character. And for all that the campaign was strategically linked w/ the war as a whole, in its nature and in its morality it *signified something else entirely*. It was, so to speak, the Third World War. At any rate, it dropped out of the framework of the “normal” European war, the rules of which had hitherto governed the conflict, although in Poland there had been glimmerings of a new and more radical practice. (675-76)

The SS reign of terror in the conquered Polish territories had evoked opposition among the local military commanders. It was Hitler’s experience w/ this reaction on the part of the regular army that now prompted him to *introduce his ideologically motivated extermination campaigns in the very zone of active operations*. For after so many complications, detours, and reversed fronts, this war in Russia was in *every sense his war*. He waged it mercilessly, obsessively, and became increasingly neglectful of all other theaters. (676)

Hitler thought [his generals] biased in favor of the traditional standards of their class and therefore did not content himself w/ mere slogans calling for harshness. Rather, his whole effort was bent toward *abolishing the distinction of his special commandos; he wanted to fuse these elements into a totality that would make criminals of all by having all participate in waging his*

*war of annihilation.*<sup>111</sup> [Note: What follows is a brief discussion of the criminal directives – Commissar Order, etc. – issued on eve of Barbarossa.] (676-77)

These elements [i.e., criminal directives] gave the war in the East its *unusual dual character*: It was undoubtedly an ideological war against Communism, and the offensive was sustained by a crusading mood; but simultaneously, and to a *considerably greater degree*, it was a *colonial war of conquest* in the style of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, though directed against one of the old European great powers and aimed at wiping it out.<sup>112</sup> (677)

When General Koestring, the last military attaché in Moscow, appeared at the Fuehrer's headquarters at this time [ca. mid-Jul 41] to report, Hitler led him to a military map, gestured at the conquered territories, and declared: “*No pig will ever eject me from here.*” The relapse into the coarseness of his early years corresponded to the satisfaction Hitler evidently felt in showing what he was capable of. He described the battles in the east to Spanish Ambassador Espinosa as sheer “*massacres of human beings.*” Sometimes, he said, the enemy had attacked in waves **12-13** rows deep and had simply been cut down, “*the people reduced to chopped meat.*” (678)

**Dec 41:** With failure of “Barbarossa” before Moscow at beginning of **Dec 41**, following by the Red Army's counter-offensive, Hitler's *eintre plan for the war had foundered*. This was his *first severe setback* after nearly **20** years of unremitting political and military triumphs. His decision to hold the positions outside Moscow at all costs sprang from his *consciousness of being at a turning point*. . . In fact, by the middle of **Nov 41**, he seems to have been *filled w/ forebodings*. He spoke to a small group about the idea of a “*negotiated peace*” and once again voiced vague hopes that the conservative ruling call of England would see the light. (681-82)

#### War w/ America:

Recognition that his design for the war as a whole had failed also lurked behind Hitler's decision, on **11 Dec 41**, to declare war on the United States – the *war he had dreaded all along*. . . In Berlin, Ambassador Oshima requested that the Reich immediately enter the war on his country's side. And although Hitler had repeatedly pressed his Far Eastern ally to *attack the Soviet Union* or the *British Empire* in Southeast Asia and had made it plain how inopportune a war against the United States would be for Germany, he instantly acted on the Japanese request. He did not even blame the Japanese for their insulting secrecy. . . And he brushed aside Ribbentrop's objection that, according to the letter of the Tripartite Pact, German was *by no means obligated* to give aid. The spectacular surprise attack w/ which Japan had begun the war had *deeply impressed* Hitler. . . “*My heart swelled* when I heard of the first Japanese operations,” he said to Oshima. (682)

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<sup>111</sup> **Note:** This hints at a key point others have made: “Barbarossa” was also to be – shall we say – a “teachable moment” for the Wehrmacht, beginning (or perhaps continuing?) the process of turning its generals, officials and soldiers into ruthless, ideological warriors.

<sup>112</sup> **Note:** Fest's analysis is good, as far as it goes. However, it appears to me that, in a historical sense, “Barbarossa” was something more terrible than “merely” a colonial war of conquest. It will take a bit of research to confirm, but I do not believe the European colonialists – in India, Africa, etc. – were of such a pronounced “exterminationist” bent. In other words, while they often behaved brutally, their policies did not aim at the virtual extermination of the lands they colonized. Hence, was “Barbarossa” a unique event (*sui generis*) in modern European history? Certainly, it *was* unique in modern Europe itself in terms of Hitler's exterminist objectives.

There were some advantages in beginning the war w/ the United States immediately. The German naval forces were now free to conduct the war at sea w/o restriction, whereas they had previously had to put up w/ all provocations by the American side. Moreover, the Japanese strikes came at the right moment to veil the crisis in Russia. And, finally, defiance also played a part in Hitler's decision, bitterness at the way the war had gone off the rails, so that in mockery of all his plans he had not been able to win it in a series of lightning blows. (682-83)

The decision to go to war against the United States was even less free, even more coerced, than the decision to attack the Soviet Union. In fact, it was really no longer an act of his own volition but a gesture governed by a *sudden awareness of his own impotence*.<sup>113</sup> That gesture was Hitler's *last strategic initiative of any importance*. (683)

Hitler takes over as C-in-C of Army: GFM v. Brauchitsch was allowed to resign in disfavor. In keeping w/ the prime solution he had found for all previous crises in the leadership, Hitler himself assumed the roll of C-in-C of the Army. It was only one more proof of the *totally chaotic organization* on all planes that he thus became his own subordinate twice over. For in **1934**, after Hindenburg's death, he had assumed the (predominantly ceremonial) office of *Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces*. And, in **1938**, after Blomberg's resignation, he had taken over the (actual) *High Command of the Armed Forces*. (685)

#### **11.2.11: Adolf Hitler.** John Toland. 1976.

Delay in Russian Campaign: Although Hitler blamed the delay of "Barbarossa" on the Yugoslav campaign, the *general shortage of equipment* for the Wehrmacht<sup>114</sup> – his responsibility – could have been a more determining factor. (655)

**CruX**: Hitler's *only chance for victory in the East was an alliance w/ those millions in the Soviet Union who hated Stalin but, unless he followed the advice of the Rosenberg camp to treat them liberally, he would not only lose his last chance for a genuine Grand Alliance but turn potential allies into relentless enemies*. (658)

**30.3.41**: Hitler summoned his field commanders to the chancellery to announce a definite date of attack and, more important, to deliver a doctrinal lecture on the coming "struggle of two opposing ideologies." By **11.00** a.m., the senior commanders for Barbarossa, along w/ their leading staff officers, were gathered in the small cabinet chamber where a speaker's lectern had been set up. More than **200** were seated in long rows according to rank and seniority by the time Hitler entered from the rear. With a shuffling of chairs the assemblage smartly rose, then sat down once Hitler stepped to the rostrum. His mood was grave as he spoke of the military and political situation. The United States could not reach the peak of production and military power for four [4] years. Consequently, this was the time to clean up Europe. War w/ Russia was inevitable, he said, and merely to sit back and wait would be disastrous. The attack would begin on **22 Jun 41**. (655)

Hitler said that he, and he alone, could stop the Bolshevik steamroller before all Europe succumbed to it. He called for the destruction of the Bolshevik state and the annihilation of the Red Army, adding an assurance that victory would be quick and overwhelming. The only problem, he added ominously, was how to deal w/ the conquered Russians, how to treat POWs

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<sup>113</sup> **Note:** This is a perceptive remark.

<sup>114</sup> **Note:** This is an interesting comment, which I can't recall seeing before.

and non-combatants. . . The military sat stiff in their chairs. . . As military professionals most of them had been repelled by Hitler's ruthless measures, after the conquest of Poland, against Polish Jews, intelligentsia, clergy and nobility. Their fears were quickened by Hitler's next loud threat: "The war against Russia will be such that it cannot be fought in a knightly fashion! This struggle is one of ideologies and racial differences and will have to be conducted w/ unprecedented, merciless and unrelenting harshness."

There was *no utterance of protest*, any more than there had been in Poland, not even an involuntary gesture of protest. That morning, Hitler had put his military leaders to the final humiliating test w/ his demand that they *compromise their honor as warriors*. Now they, like so many in Germany who shared his fear and hatred of Jews and Slavs, were reluctant partners in his crusade. (655-56)

Although Hitler's military leaders had first been appalled by the thought of invading Russia, they now [Spring, 1941, I assume] almost universally shared the conviction that *victory would come quickly*. The consensus was that the campaign would be successfully completed w/in three [3] months and GFM von Brauchitsch had just drastically reduced this estimate. After "up to four [4] weeks" of major battle, he predicted, the war would degenerate into a mopping-up operation against "minor resistance." The hard-headed Jodl concurred and curtly silenced Warlimont who questioned the categorical statement that "the Russian colossus will be proved to be a pig's bladder; prick it and it will burst." (658-59)

The Fuehrer, according to General Guderian, "had succeeded in infecting his immediate military entourage w/ his own baseless optimism. . ." (659)<sup>115</sup>

Hitler vs. Rosenberg:<sup>116</sup> Repressive decrees issued by Hitler, German High Command, on eve of "Barbarossa" troubled Alfred Rosenberg, who had recently been appointed Commissioner for the Central Control of Questions Connected w/ the East European Region. A Balt himself, he believed the Soviet people should be treated as anti-Stalinists rather than as enemies of the Reich. He assured Hitler that they would *welcome the Germans as liberators* from the Bolshevik-Stalinist tyranny and could be trusted w/ a certain amount of self-rule. . . Convinced that a heavy-handed policy in the East would destroy the spirit of Lebensraum, Rosenberg submitted a memorandum to Hitler objecting to the two directives. How could one possibly build a civil administration in the occupied areas w/o using the Soviet civil commissars and officials now administering them? He recommended that "only senior and very senior officials" should be "liquidated." Hitler gave no definite answer. Characteristically, he was content to take now active part in the *power struggle between Himmler and Rosenberg* that would surely begin once the Wehrmacht advanced into the Soviet Union. Bormann, the rising star in the NS-hierarchy, would be a decisive factor in this contest. He had already joined forces w/ Himmler. (666-67)

**22.5.41:** Final preparations for "Barbarossa" continued. Admiral Raeder informed Hitler on **22 May 41** that he would cease delivering important materials to Russia. Comparatively few shipments had, in fact, been sent to the Soviet Union, while many had come from the East. In addition to almost **1,500,000** tons of grain, the Soviets had delivered [by late **May 41?**] **100,000**

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<sup>115</sup> **Note:** This quote gleaned from Guderian's memoirs (p 125). However, the quote clearly involves historical "revisionism" on G.'s part: Yes, he was quite skeptical of "Barbarossa," at first; yet by eve of campaign he had become quite confident of victory.

<sup>116</sup> **Note:** See also, entry below for **16 Jul 41**.

tons of cotton, **2,000,000** tons of petroleum products, **1,500,000** tons of timber, **140,000** tons of manganese and **25,000** tons of chromium. (667)

**6.6.41:** Hitler legalized his threat to wage ruthless ideological warfare by instructing GFM v. Brauchitsch to issue a directive to liquidate captured Soviet commissars as bearers of an ideology diametrically opposed to NS. His C-in-C objected violently until Hitler curtly said, "I cannot demand that my generals should understand my orders, but I do demand that they follow them." . . . This ideologically motivated order was to be executed by the Wehrmacht together w/ Himmler's *Einsatzgruppen* and its issuance by **OKW** was *more than another victory for Hitler over the military*. It bound them to his political program and made them unwilling accomplices, along w/ the SS, in his grand plan for the future. (668)

**14.6.41:** In Berlin selected combat officers arrived at the chancellery for a special briefing and luncheon. By now each one had digested his own orders and become reconciled (if grudgingly) to the inhumane methods Hitler had imposed on the enemy. At **2:00** p.m. there was a break for lunch and this, unlike so many other meals at the chancellery, was mellow and relaxed. Nor was the atmosphere of camaraderie dispelled when Hitler ascended to the podium and began a persuasive lecture on the need to launch Barbarossa. The *collapse of Russia*, he said, *would lead to England's surrender*. (669)

**17.6.41:** A final signal went out on this day, confirming **3:00** a.m., Sunday, **22 Jun 41**, as zero hour. As zero hour approached, Hitler appeared calm and confident. . . (669)

**21.6.41:** All along the tortuous **930**-mile front, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, **3** million men [waited]. With fear and expectation they huddled in their positions. It was the *shortest night of the year*, the summer solstice, but it seemed endless to those waiting in the pale light for the command to attack. Just before midnight, the Moscow-Berlin express rumbled over the frontier bridge into German territory. It was followed by a long freight train filled w/ grain, the last delivery Stalin would make to his ally, Adolf Hitler. In Berlin that evening there was an air of expectation. . . Hitler was the *personification of confidence*. "In three months at the latest," he told one adjutant [i.e., Puttkamer], "there will be a collapse on the part of the Russians such as the world has never before seen." But this was only a sham. He could not close his eyes that night any more than he could on the eve of the invasion in the West. (671)

**22.6.41:** Correspondents all over Berlin were being awakened for a **6.00** a.m. press conference at the Foreign Office. Several heard the news [of German attack on Russia] en route to the Wilhelmstrasse from outdoor loudspeakers as a message from the Fuehrer was broadcast: "People of Germany! National Socialists! The hour has come. Oppressed by grave cares, doomed to months of silence, I can at last speak frankly." He told of the machinations of Russia and England to crush the Axis w/ the aid of American supplies. "I therefore decided today to lay the fate and future of the German Reich in the hands of our soldiers. May God help us above all in this fight!" (672)

By early morning of **22 Jun 41** single-sheet extra editions of Berlin newspapers were on the streets. Although confused by the abrupt attack on an ally, the public felt a sense of relief since few had been able to understand why a treaty had been made w/ the Reds in the first place. Hitler set Goebbels the task of explanation and that morning the propaganda chief began laying down the guidelines to his subordinates. . . The Fuehrer, Goebbels added, had assured him the Russian campaign would end w/in four [4] months. "But I tell you it will take only eight [8] weeks," said Goebbels. (673)

**23.6.41:** Within **24** hours, German public interest began to slacken . [?] After the first rush of newspapers, which contained only general reports from the front, the citizens returned to their normal life as if it were only another of Hitler's exploits. At **12.30** p.m. on **23 Jun 41** he and his entourage left the capital in the Fuehrer train: destination "Wolfsschanze." (675)

**3.7.41:** Halder writes in his diary – famous quotation – that it was “no exaggeration” to say the campaign had been won in **14** days.” The Fuehrer told his entourage that “to all intents and purposes the Russians have lost the war.” [date?] Many Western military experts shared this estimate and the talk in the Pentagon was that the Red Army would fold up in a month or so. (675)

Einsatzgruppen: Following in the wake of the advancing troops were four [4] SS Einsatzgruppen of **3000** men each. . .<sup>117</sup> To supervise the mass killing, Heydrich and Himmler had been inspired to select officers who, for the most part, were professional men. They included a Protestant pastor, a physician, a professional opera singer and numerous lawyers. The majority were intellectuals in their early **30s** and it might be supposed such men were unsuited for this work. On the contrary, they brought to the brutal task their considerable skills and training and became, despite qualms, efficient executioners. . . Heydrich's most awkward problem was coping w/ the psychological effects of the exterminators. Some enlisted men had nervous breakdowns or took to drinking, and a number of the officers suffered from serious stomach and intestinal ailments.<sup>118</sup> Others took to their task w/ enthusiasm. . . (675-76)

**16.7.41:** Rumors of these atrocities distressed Rosenberg, ordered by Hitler to draw up a blueprint for occupation of the conquered Eastern territories. He had envisaged a far different program w/ a degree of self-rule. Since the Fuehrer had earlier agreed to establish “weak socialist states” in the conquered lands of Russia, Rosenberg optimistically assumed that Hitler approved his own plan in principle and that it would be accepted at a special conference on the subject to be held at the Wolfsschanze on **16 Jul 41**. [See text for details of conference, where Hitler states: “In principle we must now face the task of cutting up the giant cake according to our needs in order to be able: first, to dominate it; second, to administer it; third, to exploit it. The Russians have now given an order for partisan warfare behind our front. This guerilla activity again has some advantage for us; it enables us to *exterminate everyone who opposes us*.” Although Rosenberg left the meeting w/ the title of Reich Minister of the East, it was a hollow one, for he realized his own dream of the East now had little chance to materialize. What a tragedy, he thought, that Hitler still maintained the false conception of the Slavs, born during his youthful days in Vienna out of inflammatory pamphlets which described the Slavs as lazy primitives, a hopelessly second class race. (677)

**Jul-Aug 41 / Hitler sick:** During the early summer days of **1941**, Hitler became sick. To begin w/ there were the recurrent stomach pains which may have been of hysterical [?] nature. His system was already undermined by an overdose of drugs – **120-150** anti-gas pills a week as well as **10** injections of Ultraseptyl, a strong sulfonamide. Then he was struck down by dysentery – a common malady in the swampy surroundings of the Wolfsschanze. A victim of diarrhea, nausea and aching limbs, he would shiver one moment, sweat the next.

A more serious threat to his health came to light during a hot argument w/ Ribbentrop late in **Jul 41**. The Foreign Minister, opposed to Barbarossa from the beginning, lost his temper and

<sup>117</sup> **Note:** This is incorrect – all four of the Einsatzgruppen had collectively some **3000** personnel.

<sup>118</sup> **Note:** Why would the officers have suffered from distinctly different ailments as the enlisted personnel? I'm skeptical.

began to shout his disapproval. Hitler paled at the extraordinary attack. He tried to defend himself but halted in mid-sentence, clutched his heart and sank into a chair. There was a frightening moment of silence. “I thought I was going to have a heart attack,” Hitler finally said. “You must never again oppose me in this manner!”<sup>119</sup>

Dr. Morell was so perturbed he sent an electrocardiogram of the Fuehrer’s heart to Professor Dr. Karl Weber, director of the Heart Institute at Bad Neuheim and a leading authority on heart disease. He had no idea that the patient was Hitler, only that he was “a very busy diplomat.” His diagnosis: *rapidly progressive coronary sclerosis*, a virtually incurable heart disease. Morell probably did not pass this information on to Hitler . . . Morell did add a number of other medicines to his patient’s growing list of prescriptions. [See text for details.]

Hitler’s illness came at the *height of a bitter conflict w/ his commanders on the conduct of the campaign in the East*. . . By mid-**Aug 41**, however, Hitler was on the road to recovery. (678-79)

**5.9.41:** At the “Wolfsschanze” Hitler *changed his mind*<sup>120</sup> and decided it was now time to launch the attack on Moscow. . . On the afternoon of **5 Sep 41**, he told Halder, “Get started on the central front w/in eight to ten days.” (680)

Hitler’s table talk: Hitler’s comments at dinner on **5 Sep 41** were noted down by Werner Koeppen, Rosenberg’s liaison man at FHQu. Since early **Jul 41**, at Rosenberg’s behest, he had been circumspectly recording the Fuehrer’s table conversations. Koeppen assumed Hitler knew what he was doing and would furtively jot down notes on his paper napkin, then immediately after the meal write out only those parts of the conversation he could distinctly remember. An original and one copy of his records were forwarded to Berlin by courier. (682)

Unbeknown to Koeppen, there was a second Boswell at the main table. Shortly after their arrival at “Wolfsschanze,” Bormann had suggested almost offhandedly to Heinrich Heim, his adjutant, that he *surrepticiously note down* what the Chief said. So Hitler wouldn’t know he was being put on record, Bormann instructed his adjutant to rely on his own memory. But Heim wanted more accurate results and on his own initiative he began making *copious notes on index cards which he hid on his lap*. Bormann was taken aback but he gave Heim tacit approval to continue taking notes. . .

Some of these notes were later published in various editions in England, France and Germany, the last under the title Hitlers Tischgespraeche, by Henry Picker, who deputized for Heim as court reporter from **Mar** thru **Jul 42**. . . Only about 1/6 of his original notes appear in the Picker edition. Heim is *positive Hitler never knew his table talk was being recorded*. After the war he was assured of this by Hitler’s personal adjutant, Schaub. . . Heim *personally omitted all military matters* for security; Koeppen did not. Their two accounts complement each other. The latter’s notes, moreover, are valuable as corroboration of Heim’s far more detailed and personalized minutes. (682)

**17.9.41:** The records of Heim and Koeppen gave rare insight into the momentous events unfolding each day on the eastern front. On **17 Sep 41**, for instance, Hitler expounded on the spirit of decision, which consisted, he said, “in not hesitating when an inner conviction

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<sup>119</sup> **Note:** A histrionic bit of “play acting” on Hitler’s part?

<sup>120</sup> **Note:** “Changed his mind?” From beginning, Hitler’s “vision” for the eastern campaign had called for resolving the issues on the flanks first – Leningrad, Ukraine, Donbass, etc.

commands you to act. Last year I needed great spiritual strength to take the decision to attack Bolshevism. *I had to foresee that Stalin might pass over to the attack in 1941.* It was therefore necessary to get started w/o delay, in order not to be forestalled – and that wasn't possible before June. . .” . . . He assured his fascinated listeners that the *hegemony of the world would be decided by the seizure of Russian space.* “Thus Europe will be an impregnable fortress, safe from all threats of blockade. . . He talked at length of his plans to make the Ukraine the granary for all Europe and to keep its conquered people happy w/ scarves and glass beads [!] . . . (682-83)

**21.9.41:** At dinner on this day, Hitler glowed w/ satisfaction as he told of the capture of **145,000** POWs in the valley near Kiev. This battle of encirclement, he claimed, was the most confused in the entire history of warfare. (683)<sup>121</sup>

**Note:** In this section of Toland's book there are several errors of fact. For one, the figure of **145,000** Soviet prisoners at Kiev. Author also states that GFM v. Bock was now warning that it was *too late in the season* to move on Moscow. Why not spend the winter in fortified positions? Could Bock, a consistent and avid supporter of taking Moscow, really have made such a statement at this time? Finally, author states that Army Group Center had assembled **69** divisions for Operation “Typhoon.” Actual figure is **78**. (684-85)

**9.10.41:** As Hitler emerged from the military conference on **9 Oct 41** he called out to Otto Dietrich that the public could now be informed of the latest operations. Half an hour later, as he paced his study in the bunker w/ vigorous strides, Hitler dictated word for word the victory statement Dietrich was to submit to the press. Dietrich did so the next day in Berlin. . . Hitler's declaration that the Soviets were defeated and total victory assured was not merely propaganda to raise morale at home. He believed what he said. (685-86)

**10.10.41:** That morning German newspapers told of a great victory: two Soviet army groups had been encircled. The public reaction was electric. Faces previously wan and drawn were now beaming. In beer-restaurants, people stood and saluted when the radio played “Horst Wessel” and “Deutschland ueber Alles.” Rumors spread throughout the capital that Moscow had fallen. (685)

**15.-17.10.41:** Panic in Moscow. . . At the Kremlin, Stalin reputedly had lost his nerve. . . In Berlin there was talk in the halls of the Wilhelmstrasse that Stalin had made an offer of peace thru King Boris of Bulgaria. . . At supper on **17 Sep 41**, Hitler's talk was mostly of the bright future. As far as he was concerned Lebensraum was a fact. (686-87)

**ca. 31.10.41:** By the end of the month the situation [for the Germans outside Moscow] was so desperate that Giesler, the architect, was ordered to stop work on the reconstruction of German cities. All workers, engineers, building materials and machinery were to be transported at once to the East to construct highways, repair railroad tracks and construct stations and locomotive sheds. (687)

**7.12.41 / Pearl Harbor:** For Toland's account of Hitler's electrified response to Japanese attack see, p 694. For example, w/ Hewel, the Fuehrer could barely conceal the elation in his voice. “*We cannot lose the war!*” he exclaimed. “Now we have a partner who has not been defeated in three thousand years.”

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<sup>121</sup> **Note:** Of course, the total number of prisoners taken was more like **650,000**.

**11.12.41:** For Hitler's declaration of war on USA see, pp 695-96. According to Toland, Hitler's decision to declare war was not taken lightly, nor was its motivation simple. . . His Foreign Office regarded the decision as a colossal mistake. In addition to the obvious reasons it neatly solved another of Roosevelt's domestic problems. The President would not have to declare war on Germany and risk opposition from a substantial segment of the citizenry. American national unity, so unexpectedly won by the surprise attack at Pearl Harbor, would remain intact.

Winter 41/42: Sometime early in 1942, Hewel told a friend: "He [Hitler] is not the man he was. He has grown gloomy and obdurate. He will shrink from no sacrifice and show no mercy or forgiveness. You *would not recognize him* if you saw him." His morale received another crushing blow on **8 Feb 42**, when Fritz Todt, builder of the Westwall and the Autobahn system, died in a plane crash. (707)

Final Solution: In the meantime the preparations for the Final Solution were maturing and Himmler's Einsatzgruppen had begun another deadly sweep. . . The death toll was massive and Rosenberg's staff begged him once more to urge Hitler to treat the peoples of the occupied areas as allies, not enemies. . . But Rosenberg lacked the strength of character and still trembled at the thought of antagonizing the Fuehrer. . . By spring, six [**6**] killing centers had been set up in Poland. There were four [**4**] in Frank's Generalgouvernement: Treblinka, Sobibor, Belzec and Lublin; two [**2**] in the incorporated territories: Kulmhof and Auschwitz. (708-09)

**11.2.12: Hitler as Military Commander.** John Strawson. 1971.

### **Chapter 7: Barbarossa – The Irretrievable Blunder**

On **21 Jun 41**, an article by Arthur Bryant appeared in the *Illustrated London News*. It analysed the *strategic disadvantage* under which Germany labored in spite of all her conquests, all her strength and all her freedom of choice. Hitler had to *maintain the offensive*; he could *not sit back and wait to be attacked*; he must himself attack and since he had already overrun so much of Europe, wherever he now advanced would take him further and further from his homeland bases. To break out of Europe meant either wresting mastery of the seas from the British – and this particular battle was already raging in the Atlantic – or thrusting through Russia into Asia and Africa. It seemed to Bryant that Russia was the "easier" road "but such *desperate steps* cannot be taken w/o evoking human and racial imponderables which may well benefit us far more than the enemy. Hitler knows this, and his *hour of decision* is at hand. It is his fate to strike, and ours to resist and strike back."<sup>122</sup> (132)

Thus w/ the initiative so securely in his hands (and this was the last time that it was, for thereafter Hitler responded more and more to Allied moves) it was peculiarly, supremely important that he used the initiative decisively. (133)

Author quotes from Alan Clark's study of the Russo-German war. Clark said: "What an appalling moment in time this is. . . the head-on crash of the two greatest armies, the two most absolute systems, in the world. No battle in history compares w/ it. . . In terms of numbers of men, weight of ammunition, length of front, the desperate *crescendo* of the fighting, *there will never be another day like the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June 1941.*" (136)

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<sup>122</sup> **Note:** So this gentleman (journalist?) was also aware of the strategic dilemma facing Hitler at this time.

Halder recalled early on in the campaign [in Russia] that it was quite unlike “*manoeuvres w/ live ammunition*” which they had enjoyed in the West a year before. The Russian’s determination and heroism was something the Germans had not encountered before. Alan Clark’s great survey contains many such stories. One of them is of a wounded Russian tank crew, thought by the Germans to be dead w/in their knocked-out tank, who somehow, w/ no hope of ultimate rescue or survival, managed to live long enough to call down artillery fire on the not-distant German positions for days on end. . . [See text for this amazing anecdote, 142-43]

**CruX:** Author notes the “ruinous condition” which was constantly to recur and more than any other robbed Hitler of decision in Russia – *no absolutely fixed and immutable purpose* to which all other considerations were subordinated.<sup>123</sup> This is not to argue for inflexibility of mind and method. . . But it is to say that between **Jun – Dec 41** in the Supreme Cdr’s handling of his struggle for Russia, *singleness of aim* – a necessary end, and beginning, for *concentration of forces* – was *absent w/o leave*. The struggle became a gigantic encounter battle which, for all the vast distances covered, for all the unthinkable destruction or capture of Russian men and material, was marred by fatal compromises. (134)

#### Hitler’s supreme tactical error:

**15.10.41:** By this date, the spearheads of Army Group Centre were at Mozhaisk, a mere **65** miles from Moscow. It was *then that the **supreme tactical error** was made*.<sup>124</sup> At this point, in spite of the time the Russians had been given, in spite of the deteriorating weather, *victory*, if by victory we mean what the German General Staff meant – destruction of the Russian armies disputing the road to Moscow and the capture of the capital itself – was *probably still in Hitler’s grasp*. But failing once again to observe those prime principles of war – singleness of aim, concentration of forces – failing to select the decisive objective and go for it w/ all the terrifying weight of fire-power that was available (and this time, unlike the Kiev/Moscow controversy, there could be *no real doubt* as to which this objective was), Hitler chose to **go for three**, absurd in their dispersion and sheer unattainability: Leningrad, Moscow, the Black Sea coast, Rostov and the Caucasus. (140-41)

October rains and new Russian armies had clearly made the defenses [before Moscow] more formidable. Winter was coming on. Hitler’s interference in the detailed conduct of operations, formerly infrequent, had become a daily affair. Yet despite these drawbacks, it is hard to believe that, if every ounce of effort had been concentrated from mid-**Oct 41** onwards to von Bock’s drive on Moscow, w/ von Leeb’s and von Rundstedt’s forces relegated to holding operations, and the entire weight of the Panzer Groups welded into one *Schwerpunkt*, Moscow could not have been taken. Even w/o the crazy dispersion Hitler insisted on, the city’s suburbs were reached. Had the effort been trebled [how so?], Moscow must have fallen, and “the greatest battle in world history” have gained, if not absolute decision, a victory so great that the *future shape of the war must have been altered*.<sup>125</sup> Instead, Hitler preferred to pursue many objectives simultaneously, to

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<sup>123</sup> **Note:** Actually, there was indeed such a “fixed and immutable purpose,” but it did not pertain to the operational objectives of the military campaign – rather, the one objective pursued from the beginning w/ great concentration of mind was ideological & racial: the enslavement and extermination of the putative enemies of the Reich by the millions.

<sup>124</sup> **Note:** Today, we would say this was the supreme “operational” error, not “tactical,” for it involved movement of corps, armies, etc.

<sup>125</sup> **Note:** This is essentially the point made by Heinz Magenheimer in his new book on the Battle of Moscow, published in **2009**.

reject out of hand the advice of his professional soldiers . . . and to fritter away his resources chasing chimerical victories. (141)

**Dec 41:** None of the basic aims which Hitler had laid down were achieved. Moscow had not been captured, nor Leningrad, nor the Caucasian oilfields, nor the Archangel railway; above all, the Russian [field] armies as a whole had not been destroyed nor prevented from withdrawing. The very *diversity of these aims* was the cause, and *diversity itself* was well nigh inevitable because of the sheer *width of front*. (138)

**6.12.41:** Author notes that Zhukov launched his counter-attack in the central sector w/ **17** armies, about **100** divisions. (139)

What had Hitler's part in it [i.e., the failure of "Barbarossa"] been? The first point is that his *interference in this campaign* . . . was *more radical and more continuous* than in any that had gone before. Before long it was to become absolute. During the first weeks of spectacular success there was no cause for major disagreement between Hitler and his generals. But when it came to deciding what to do after the great Smolensk battle, the scene changes. [Author now discusses the Moscow vs. Leningrad/Ukraine conflict] (139 ff.)

In the event the controversy as to which objectives were to be pursued was, not surprisingly, decided by Hitler. The Ukraine and Leningrad gave way to the Ukraine alone. Although the results were dazzling, Halder called the move into the Ukraine the *greatest strategic error of the campaign*. (140)

Hitler in winter 41/42: Author notes that, w/ the Ostheer facing a panicked route, Hitler "did not despair; he showed once again that will-power is all. It is hard to better Alan Bullock's succinct estimate of his remedy. 'Hitler,' he writes, '*rose to the occasion*. By a *remarkable display of determination* he succeeded in holding the German lines firm. . .'" [Note: See, **11.2.9** in this notebook for rest of Bullock's assessment.] (144-45)

**19.12.41:** Hitler assumes command of the German Army. "This fatal step meant that Hitler now had *formalized his supreme control of all military operations*." One the one hand, as C-in-C of the Army w/ the staff of **OKH** he directly conducted the war in Russia; on the other hand, as C-in-C of the Armed Forces w/ the staff of **OKW** he ran operations on all other fronts. "This division of responsibility between the staffs meant that *Hitler alone retained **strategic grasp of the war as a whole***." By assuming command of the Army, Hitler transferred himself formally from the realms of strategy to those of day-to-day operations, not that he had been slow in usurping this particular office on many pervious occasions. (145-46)

Opinion as to his [Hitler's] initial command of the Army varies. Halder, writing **8** years afterwards, *condemns it absolutely*.<sup>126</sup> (146)

Halder also – *post facto* – condemned Hitler's "stand fast" order in **Dec 41**,<sup>127</sup> saying it resulted in losses of men and materiel that could have been avoided. Blumentritt, who was GFM v. Kluge's Chief of Staff in the battle, thought otherwise. He regarded Hitler's order to stand fast and hold every position irrespective of circumstances as "undoubtedly correct." As there were no prepared positions to withdraw to, no proper line to re-establish, a withdrawal across open country, for roads and tracks were snow-blocked, would, he believes, have led to just the sort of dissolution of

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<sup>126</sup> **Note:** More dishonesty on Halder's part! His thinking was quite different in **Dec 41!**

<sup>127</sup> **Note:** More "revisionism" on Halder's part.

the Army and total cracking of the front which the Grand Army suffered. One of the corps commanders, von Tippelskirch, supports Blumentritt and thought of it as Hitler's one great achievement. Alan Clark's judgment is similar: "As for Hitler, it was his finest hour. He had done more than save the German Army; he had achieved a *complete personal ascendancy over its ruling class*." 146-47)

Yet this very ascendancy was greatly to contribute to his undoing. . . His own ability to reduce all problems to simple terms, his own iron will-power . . . were no substitutes for careful analyses of relative strengths by which capabilities could be assessed, of enemy intentions, of logistic considerations, of the effect time and space invariably wielded over the deployment and capacity of armies, above all of selecting objectives that were at once attainable and decisive, and then concentrating all efforts to attain them. (147)

Incapable of seeing any point of view which ran contrary to his own, w/ ever mounting confidence in his own military genius, his own infallibility, the *consequence of his success in holding firm* the German Army's line in the winter of **1941/42** was twofold: a) it convinced him that the failure of **1941** had been that of the General Staff, not his own in setting the *Wehrmacht* a task beyond its means; and, b) it convinced him of the feasibility of a new offensive in **1942** which under his own direction would be the knock-out blow to end the war in the east. (147-48)

War w/ USA: Strawson writes: "If attacking Russia was an irretrievable blunder, declaring war on the United States must run it a close second."<sup>128</sup> (148)

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<sup>128</sup> **Note:** Strawson does not put forth any compelling evidence for this statement.