

THE RED ARMY

1918–1941:

From Vanguard of World Revolution
to US Ally

EARL F. ZIEMKE



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THE RED ARMY
1918–1941

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Series Editor's Preface

When I was still an undergraduate, not even yet decided upon pursuing a career in academia, Earl Ziemke was already a major figure in the field of German military history – highly regarded for his thoughtful, penetrating analysis of the terrible battles on the Eastern Front. Thus, I regard it as an enormous honor to have been asked to write a forward to Professor Ziemke's history of the Red Army. And I feel particularly lucky for having played a small role in persuading him to publish this work, which he has worked on over the course of the past decade when he was supposedly in retirement and which he was not entirely sure would even find a publisher. He was wrong, because this book rests on the accumulated wisdom of over fifty years of thinking and analysis by one of the most important military historians of the twentieth century.

This book is indeed an extraordinary work that brings together the coherent and fascinating history of the Red Army from its inception in the earliest days of the October Revolution of 1917, when the Bolshevik revolutionaries struggled to establish themselves in control of Russia, through to the terrible killing battles and disastrous defeats of 1941, when Operation BARBAROSSA threatened the very existence of the Soviet Union. Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of Professor Ziemke's story lies in his examination of Leon Trotsky's role in the creation of the Red Army. Trotsky himself almost missed the revolution. On his way back to a Russia in turmoil in spring 1917, the Canadians pulled him off his ship and tossed him in jail. Only considerable efforts by the Tsar's successors got him out and on his way.

That Canadian action may well have turned out to be a disaster for world history, because Trotsky's role was to be crucial in the Revolution's survival. Without Trotsky's presence, it is doubtful the revolutionaries would have put together any successful military forces at all. Even if they had, the consistently bizarre positions taken by so many of the Bolsheviks would almost inevitably have led to the Revolution's demise. It was Trotsky who knew what was needed and who consistently provided Lenin with intelligent advice about not only organizational but operational matters. And all the while Stalin and his ilk were urging insane courses of action that could only have led to defeat. Not surprisingly, Stalin saw class enemies everywhere in the woodwork; to him it was the internal enemies who represented the danger. In the end, for the most part Lenin listened to Trotsky

and supported him. The result was the creation of the Red Army and eventual victory in the Civil War against the Whites.

But for all of his organizational skill and strategic wisdom, Trotsky was ever the child in political matters. In the ensuing struggle after Lenin's death, Stalin established an ever more powerful tyranny. The aim of the new revolution under the man of steel and his murderous cronies was to establish socialism in one country by driving the Soviet Union into the industrial age at whatever the cost. The result was that a steadily improving economy – although one that achieved those gains only at the most terrible cost — provided the wherewithal to make the Red Army one of the most innovative and far seeing of all the world's military organizations at least through 1937. In 1931 it created the world's first armored divisions; the maneuvers in the mid-1930s saw the first massed airborne drops; and perhaps even more important young generals like Tukhachevskii and Triandafilov were developing operational concepts that were far in advance of anything that was being thought of in the West, including Germany.

However in 1937 Stalin's baleful paranoia caught up with the Red Army. By the thousands, the NKVD shot the Red Army's best and brightest. The results would show with devastating effect in the catastrophic defeats of 1941. And yet the tyranny that Stalin had created would be able through its economic power and ruthless ideological staying power weather the German storm.

This is the story that Earl tells with extraordinary lucidity and power. It represents a major contribution to our understanding of the history of the Red Army, the Soviet Union, and the course of events in the twentieth century.

Williamson Murray
 Professor Emeritus, The Ohio State University

Preface

This book concludes a trilogy in which the first volume appears in print 46 years after the last. In 1960, the Office of the Chief of Military History (OCMH), US Department of the Army, established a requirement for a three-volume account of the German–Soviet War, 1941–45, based on an immense body of captured German military records then in Army custody. It appeared at the time that the research and writing could be completed in three to four years. The first volume was to cover planning and preparations and the 1941 campaign to the battle for Moscow; the second, the 1942 campaign to Stalingrad; and the third, the period of Soviet resurgence. Under the title *Stalingrad to Berlin: The German Defeat in the East*, I completed the manuscript for Volume III in 1964, and it was published by the US Government Printing Office in 1968, by which time I had joined the faculty of the history department at the University of Georgia.

My departure from OCMH was somewhat deficient in finality. On leaving, I took with me the results of several years' research, which were published in 1974 in the *Army Historical Series* as *The US Army in the Occupation of Germany, 1944–1946*; and by then I was at work on Volume 2 of *The German–Soviet War, Moscow to Stalingrad: Decision in the East*, published by the Government Printing Office in 1985.

The wholly unanticipated collapse and dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991 and the events and disclosures thereafter offered both an opportunity to do an autopsy on the Red Army and to meet the requirements for Volume I of *The German–Soviet War* more fully on the Soviet side than would previously have been possible. Although my working relationship with OCMH, by then renamed the Center of Military History (CMH) ended with the publication of *Moscow to Stalingrad*, the opportunity gradually became irresistible. I am grateful to CMH for enabling me to embark on this venture in the first place and to Frank Cass Publishers and Senior Book Editor Andrew Humphrys for bringing it to an expeditious conclusion. I owe long-standing debts for assistance to the staffs of the National Archives and Records Service and the University of Georgia Libraries, particularly those in the Interlibrary Loan Department. Dr Caroline F. Ziemke has also provided crucial support.

Glossary of Terms

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| army group | An army field command consisting of two or more armies. |
| <i>ataman</i> | A Cossack chieftain. |
| Bolshevik | Soviet branch of the Communist Party. |
| <i>Bundeswehr</i> | Armed forces of the Federal Republic of Germany. |
| <i>Cheka</i> | The first Soviet secret political police, 1918–28. |
| commissar | A political official at the ministerial level; also a civilian assigned to keep a military command under surveillance. |
| commissariat | A state ministry. |
| ‘Considerations’ | The Red Army’s 1941 plan for war with Germany. |
| correlation of forces | An adjustment of forces undertaken before engaging an opposing force. |
| cult of personality | An excessive claim for credit by a high-ranking figure. |
| FRG | Federal Republic of Germany |
| front | The line on which belligerents engage each other. |
| <i>front</i> | A Red Army army group. |
| GKO | The State Defense Committee, the highest Soviet authority in the years 1941–45 |
| <i>Gosplan</i> | The Soviet state economic planning agency. |
| Hutier tactics | Tactics for deep operations developed by General Oscar von Hutier late in World War I. |
| IGHQ | Japanese Imperial General Headquarters. |

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| <i>Kuomintang</i> | The Chinese nationalist party. |
| <i>Leibstandarte</i> | The SS unit, eventually a division, designated as Hitler's personal guard. |
| member of a military council | The commissar in a military command at the division level and higher. |
| NEP | New Economic Policy of the 1920s. |
| NKVD | The Soviet political police. Replaced the OGPU in 1934. |
| OGPU | Soviet political police. Replaced the <i>Cheka</i> in 1923. |
| OKW | The German armed forces high command. |
| <i>opolcheniya</i> | Soviet home guards. |
| <i>otmobilizatsia</i> | Covert deployment before opening hostilities. |
| <i>Polevoy Ustav, PU</i> | Field service regulations. An army's statement of the doctrine on which it proposes to base its war plans and conduct operations. |
| preventive strike | An attempt to forestall an anticipated attack on one's self. |
| <i>rasputitsa</i> | 'Time without roads', the periods of several weeks when the spring thaw and fall rains inundate the Russian countryside. |
| <i>rassekayushchiy udar</i> | The 'splitting blow' employed in Soviet deep operations. |
| <i>razvedka boyem</i> | Reconnaissance in force employed immediately before battle. |
| <i>Reichswehr</i> | The German armed forces 1919 to 1933, consisting of the <i>Reichs Heer</i> (Army) and the <i>Reichs Marine</i> (Navy). |
| RMC, RMCR, RMCU | Revolutionary Military Councils of field commands, of the Russian Republic, and of the Soviet Union. |
| RU, GRU | Soviet military intelligence. |
| salient | A triangular projection in a battle line. |

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

| | |
|------------------|---|
| <i>sbornik</i> | A collection of documentary information. |
| <i>soviet</i> | A council of some sort. |
| <i>Stavka</i> | General headquarters of the Soviet armed forces in the German–Soviet War. |
| <i>sturmovik</i> | ‘Stormer’, a heavily armored Soviet ground-support aircraft. |
| <i>Wehrmacht</i> | The German armed forces, 1935–45. |

Abbreviations

- BSE* *Bolshaya sovetskaya entsiklopediya* (Great Soviet Encyclopedia). First published in 1928, it was frequently revised thereafter to keep it in agreement with the party line.
- Dekrety* *Dekrety sovetskoy vlasti*. Decrees of the Soviet governmental agencies published in multi-volume compilations.
- DGFP* US Department of State, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945*.
- FRG, Zweite Weltkrieg* Federal Republic of Germany, *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg* (The German Reich and the Second World War).
- FRUS* US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, a massive serial publication of diplomatic correspondence subdivided after first mention by geographic area, time period and volume number (if any), for example, *FRUS, Russia, v. 2, 1931–32*.
- GVE* S. S. Khromov, ed., *Grazhdanskaya voyna i voyennaya interventsia v SSSR entsiklopediya* (Civil War and Military Intervention in the USSR Encyclopedia).
- IVMV* Ministerstva Oborony SSSR, *Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny, 1939–1945* (History of the Second World War), ten volumes.
- IVOSS* Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Istoriya velikoy otechestvennoy voyny sovetskogo soyuze, 1941–1945* (History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, 1941–1945), six volumes.
- KVR* L. Trotskiy, *Kak Vooruzhalas revolyutsiya* (How the Revolution Armed [itself]). Trotskiy's account of the revolution and civil war
- OKW Ktb.* P. E. Schramm, ed., *Kriegstagebuch des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht*. War diary of the German armed forces high command.

ABBREVIATIONS

- NARS National Archives and Records Service (US).
- PU 1936, 39, 40, 44 Narodny Komisariat Oborony, *Polevoy Ustav*. Soviet field service regulations, in which armies formulated conceptions of how they expected to fight the next war.
- Rezoliutsiyakh See Institut Marksizm-Leninizma, *Kommunisticheskaya partiya v rezolyutsiyakh i resheniyakh syezdov, konferentsiyi, i plenumov TsK*. The Communist Party in resolutions and decisions of congresses, conferences and Central Committee plenums, a multi-volume compilation of actions at the highest level.
- SVE, SVE2 Ministerstvo Oborony SSSR, *Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya* (Soviet Military Encyclopedia), eight volumes. SVE2 is the 1994 revised edition of which only three volumes have been released.
- ViZh *Voyenno-istoricheskiy Zhurnal* (Military History Journal). The journal of the Soviet/Russian Army General Staff.
- VOE G. N. Golikov, ed., *Velikaya Oktyabrskaya sotsialisticheskaya revolyutsiya Entsiklopediya* (Great October Socialist Revolution Encyclopedia).
- VOV *Velikaya Otechestvennaya Voyny* (Great Patriotic War). Used in combinations: VOV, *Kratkaya istoriya* (Short History); Rzheshhevskiy, VOV; Zhilin, ed., VOV, *kratkiy nauchno popularynyy ocherk* (Short, scientific, popular story [sic]).

The Military Revolutionary Committee

Two events that would transform the world occurred within a month of each other in early 1917. On 12 March, in Russia, the troops of the Petrograd garrison mutinied, thereby converting a workers' strike begun four days earlier into an outright revolution, and on 6 April, the United States declared war on Germany. The United States therewith converted the European war then going on into a world war and before the war was over, established itself as a world power and a paradigm advocate of the capitalist system and democracy. The revolution in Russia brought about an immediate political and military collapse, a prolonged power struggle, and the rise of an authoritarian regime committed to a deterministic political and economic doctrine. Under that regime, Russia would pass through a 28-year metamorphosis from which it would emerge alongside the United States at the end of another world war as a military superpower.

THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT AND THE SOVIET

But on 12 March 1917, Russia's future was an absolute blank. What had happened was something no one had expected and revolutionary theory did not even seriously contemplate: a successful spontaneous revolution from below. The women textile workers who walked off their jobs and took to the streets in Petrograd on 8 March had set a train of events in motion that defeated the imperial government and nonplussed its opponents. On the 12th, in the Taurida Palace, the seat of the State Duma, a committee of middle-class delegates to the Duma formed the nucleus of a provisional government and those leaders of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (Marxist socialists) and the Social Revolutionary Party (populists) that happened to be in the city appointed themselves the Executive Committee of a workers' *soviet* (council) to be elected. Since the Duma Committee derived from a nationally elected body, it had a certain legitimacy, but its middle-class orientation made it suspect in the eyes of the workers and common soldiers. The idea of the soviet established a tie with the 1905 revolution, but the workers had created

the soviet then. In 1917, the Executive Committee came into existence first and was a self-appointed body of revolutionary intellectuals who were only relatively better attuned than the Duma Committee to the workers' and soldiers' concerns.

The Social Democrats were in a quandary; the proletarian uprising that had occurred did not conform to Marxist theory, which, as it applied to Russia, required a period of bourgeois predominance to come before the revolution of the proletariat. Moreover, their most active leaders were either exiles in Siberia or emigrants abroad, and the party had been divided for 14 years on the question of how it should organize and conduct the revolution in the first place. One faction, the Mensheviks, wanted open party membership and an overt mass movement; another, the Bolsheviks, insisted on conspiratorial guidance of the masses through a centralized and professionalized party; a third, the Mezhraiontsy, stood for party reunification and engaged in polemics against both of the others. The Social Revolutionaries, who traditionally had looked to the peasants rather than the working class for their support, were divided into two parties, Right Social Revolutionaries holding to the established doctrine and Left Social Revolutionaries with leanings toward Marxism and internationalism. The only individual who stood out in the turmoil was Alexander Kerenskiy, a Right Social Revolutionary and a Duma delegate, who managed on the basis of those credentials to become a member of the Duma Committee and deputy chairman of the Petrograd Soviet's Executive Committee.

The Petrograd Workers' Soviet came into actual being on 13 March, some 600 delegates having been elected by then, but it did not retain that form for long. A day later, in part to keep the mutinous troops from getting out of hand and in part to assure itself of their support, the Soviet became the Petrograd Workers' and Soldiers' Soviet and issued Order No. 1, a document that although it was addressed only to the troops and naval personnel of the Petrograd district, was to have far-reaching military and political effects. The order assigned control of all weapons in every unit to committees to be elected from the lower ranks, abolished honorific forms of address for officers, and prohibited officers' addressing soldiers in coarse terms. Paragraph 4 read, 'Orders of the military commission of the State Duma are to be carried out only when they do not contradict the orders and resolutions of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.'¹ That paragraph, in effect, obligated the troops to question orders and established the Soviet as the arbiter of military policy in matters on which it chose to act. The Soviet approved Order No. 1, and the Soviet's newspaper, *Izvestiya*, published it, but it had no official standing since the Soviet did not possess the authority in military affairs implied in Paragraph 4; nevertheless, circulation in Petrograd and at the front and the absence of any other equally comprehensible declaration made it *the* manifesto of the revolution, which would, consequently, henceforth be tied willy-nilly to military concerns.

On 15 March, Nicholas II abdicated and the Provisional Government came into being in the form of a cabinet under Prince G. E. Lvov as Minister President.

Although the abdication gave the Provisional Government a claim to legitimacy, particularly since a majority in the Lvov cabinet still favored preserving the monarchy, the two events were almost merely coincidental. The Provisional Government owed its existence to the Executive Committee and to the Soviet. On the 14th, the Executive Committee had tentatively agreed to support the Provisional Government in return for the Duma Committee's committing the Provisional Government to adopt a program of the Soviet's demands. The program, published as the Provisional Government's first proclamation, granted full civil rights to citizens and soldiers; abolished class, religious, and nationality distinctions; promised 'immediate' preparation for a constituent assembly; gave an 'immediate and complete' amnesty to all political offenders; and stated that 'those military units which took part in the revolutionary movement shall be neither disarmed nor withdrawn from Petrograd'.² The Soviet in full session had subsequently decided not to contest the Provisional Government's right to exist but had restricted its 'support' to the execution of the program the Executive Committee had imposed. For its part, the Executive Committee had prohibited its members from serving in the Provisional Government (except for Kerenskiy, who succeeded through an emotional appeal to the Soviet in securing a mandate for himself to continue as deputy chairman of the Executive Committee and become minister of justice in the Provisional Government).

After 15 March, Russia had two governments and none. The Provisional Government had the responsibility and the Soviet the power. The Soviet's real power, however, was in the hands of the elected members and their constituencies, and the composition of that body was changing. The membership would number 2,000 before the end of the month, and three-fifths would be soldiers. The working-class contingent and the socialist politicians in the Executive Committee were themselves on the verge of being overwhelmed by the mass of unruly, politically primitive, predominantly peasant soldiers. That Kerenskiy, whose primary commitments were to the Duma Committee and the Provisional Government, could outshine them at will, exposed another weakness in the Soviet's leadership: it was composed in the main of men who had either been too insignificant to have aroused the interest even of the tsarist police or ones like N. S. Chkheidze, the chairman of the Executive Committee, who had watered down their revolutionary sentiments sufficiently to keep out of trouble.

The Social Democrats would have had more effective leadership if the revolution had occurred in Zurich, Switzerland, instead of Petrograd. Vladimir Illyich Lenin, the founder, principal theorist, and acknowledged chief of the Bolshevik faction, and Leonid Martov, Lenin's Menshevik counterpart, were there, as were also a number of their closest associates and some Mezhraintsy and Social Revolutionaries. Although the amnesty and the change in government made them respectable, even important, Russian citizens and Russia continued in the wartime alliance, they were unwilling to risk returning home across French or British territory. When the Germans, who saw the political turmoil in Russia as a strategic godsend to themselves, offered a free trip by rail to Sassnitz on the Baltic

coast, Lenin overruled his followers' opposition to what could be construed as consorting with the enemy and left Zurich on 9 April with a dozen and a half other Bolsheviks and a few Mensheviks. Martov, most of the Mensheviks, and all of the Social Revolutionaries had refused to go without approval from Petrograd.

The one of the émigrés who had actually led an attempted revolution – single-handedly, at that – Leon Trotsky, had arrived at New York in January 1917 after having been ushered out of France under police escort in the previous October and expelled from Spain in December. Having broken with Lenin in 1903 and with Martov and the Mensheviks a year later, Trotsky had only a loose following in the Mezhraintsy, but he had been the guiding spirit and chairman of the Menshevik-dominated St Petersburg Workers' Soviet in 1905, and in the international social democratic movement, he had consistently outperformed Lenin as a writer and a speaker. As the war correspondent in Paris from August 1914 to October 1916 for a legal but antigovernment Kiev newspaper, he had also acquired something none of the other professional revolutionaries had, a reasonably close acquaintance with war as it was being fought on the Western Front. On 25 March 1917, the amnesty having by then erased a sentence to lifelong banishment in Siberia imposed in 1906, Trotsky secured a passport at the Russian consulate in New York. Two days later, he and his family embarked aboard a Norwegian ship on a voyage that terminated temporarily on 3 March at Halifax, Nova Scotia, where British naval police took them off the ship and locked them in a camp for captured German submarine crews. Trotsky was well on the way toward making Marxists of the German sailors within a few days, but it took him four weeks to get an explicit request for his release from Petrograd.

Three Bolsheviks of sufficient stature to have been exiled to Siberia, Josef Stalin, L. B. Kamenev, and M. K. Muranov, arrived in Petrograd on 25 March. Before his arrest in 1913, Stalin had edited the Bolshevik newspaper, *Pravda*. Kamenev, Stalin's successor in the editorial post, and Muranov, a Bolshevik deputy in the Duma, had been convicted of treason in 1915. On the basis of an appointment to the Bolshevik Central Committee he had held five years earlier, Stalin became the ranking Bolshevik on the scene in Petrograd and claimed a place on the Executive Committee of the Soviet. He, Kamenev, and Muranov supplanted the younger men who had been setting the Bolshevik tone in the Soviet and editing *Pravda*.³ The Bolshevik position in the Soviet was weak. That they had boycotted the St Petersburg Soviet of 1905 on Lenin's orders had been remembered, and the Petrograd Soviet had almost automatically become a Menshevik institution. The Bolsheviks had only 50 elected delegates in the Soviet and no clear idea of what course they, the presumed most revolutionary faction, ought to pursue. Those in the Soviet on 15 March had opposed the formation of the Provisional Government but had not offered an alternative. Stalin and Kamenev proposed compromises: limited support for the Provisional Government, a common front with the Mensheviks, and postponement of the proletarian revolution.

LENIN AND TROTSKIY ON THE SCENE AND OFF

Lenin arrived at the Finland Station in Petrograd at around midnight on 16 April after a train trip through Sweden and Finland. The Bolsheviks staged a tumultuous welcome with placards, red banners, searchlights, and an armored car to take him to their headquarters, the Kshesinskaya Palace. His mood was anything but festive. He had already let Kamenev, who had boarded the train outside Petrograd, know that what had been done thus far was all wrong; and he spent most of the rest of the night laying down his program. The proletariat, he maintained, had overthrown the autocracy; hence, a parliamentary democracy would be a step backward. The revolution was merely passing through its first stage in which the proletariat, through insufficient class consciousness, had given power to the bourgeoisie; in the second, power would have to pass to the proletariat and the poorer peasants. A republic of soviets, a higher form of democracy, would be the instrument to exercise power for the benefit of the workers and peasants. The Bolsheviks' program, therefore, would have to be to terminate the war, expropriate the factories and the land, and abolish the army, replacing it by arming the whole people. Their slogan would be 'All power to the Soviets'; but because they were a small minority, they would not attempt an armed uprising against the Provisional Government and would try, instead, through opposition to the Provisional Government and education of the masses, to achieve a peaceful transfer of power.

The British had released Trotskiy on 29 April, and he arrived at the Finland Station a month after Lenin, on 17 May. Before the train passed out of Finland, he had read in newspapers that the Provisional Government was to be reorganized that day with Kerenskiy becoming Minister of War and three Menshevik members of the Soviet Executive Committee assuming posts in the cabinet; and he had decided to launch 'an implacable fight, allied with the Bolsheviks, against the Mensheviks and Populists [Social Revolutionaries]'.⁴ From a welcome at the station almost as large as Lenin's, in which Bolshevik and Menshevik delegations took part, he went straight to the Executive Committee. There the new Menshevik ministers greeted him as 'dear and beloved teacher', and he responded, 'I believe our next step must be to transfer all power to the Soviets. Long live the Russian revolution, prologue to the world revolution!'⁵ The Bolsheviks moved that he be made a member of the Executive Committee on the spot. That being too much for the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries, he was given membership as an advisor, which did not permit him to vote but entitled him to speak in the Soviet.

When Lenin and Trotskiy met on 23 May, agreement on practical matters almost totally overshadowed their past differences on theory. Trotskiy had no trouble at all accepting Lenin's recent decisions to regard Russia as a suitable stage for a revolution of the proletariat and the soviets as the nucleus of a revolutionary government. Knowing that those were, in fact, positions Trotskiy had originated during the 1905 revolution, Lenin offered more than an alliance to achieve them:

he invited Trotsky and his followers in the Mezhrainitsy to join the Bolsheviks on terms that for Trotsky, amounted virtually to a partnership. However, on that score some of the old animosity lingered, and what one called oneself was still important. Trotsky conceded that the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party was irrevocably split but proposed forming a separate party. Lenin, who had regarded himself as the head of a party all along, was not prepared to start a new one to accommodate Trotsky. Even so, had the rush of events not prevented it, the question of the party label might also have been resolved to Trotsky's satisfaction. Lenin had already written, though not yet published, a pamphlet in which he announced that the Bolsheviks would have to drop the association with social democracy and become the Communist Party.⁶

Regardless of labels, party and personal lines were clearly drawn in the First All-Russian Congress of Soviets, which began on 16 June. The Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, who had an overwhelming majority among the delegates from some 350 city, town, and military-unit soviets, supported the Provisional Government, approved an offensive Minister of War Kerenskiy was preparing to launch in Galicia against the Austrians, and scoffed at the notion that the soviets could assume power. The Bolsheviks, outnumbered by seven to one, were forced into impotent – though vocal – opposition. Trotsky, although he declared his support for the Bolsheviks, was the acknowledged star of the congress, outperforming Lenin and Kerenskiy on the platform. The Bolsheviks did better in the streets than in the meeting hall. Their influence was growing among the workers and soldiers in Leningrad to whom Lenin's promises of 'peace' and 'bread' had great appeal, and on 1 July, a peaceful demonstration the congress had authorized brought nearly a half million people to Mars Field in front of the Tauride Palace, most of them carrying Bolshevik banners and placards and shouting Bolshevik slogans.

Success in the demonstration and frustration in the congress led the Bolsheviks close to their undoing. Kerenskiy had managed to keep the Bolsheviks on the outer fringe of the congress, and with the offensive, started on 1 July, he kindled a degree of patriotic support for the Provisional Government. On the other hand, food shortages, inflation, the return to active participation in the war, and Bolshevik agitation kept the workers and soldiers in Petrograd aware that their concerns were being ignored and led the soldiers in particular to think in terms of something more forceful, an armed demonstration. After the demonstration began, on 16 July, the Bolshevik leaders and Trotsky, who by then regarded himself as one of them, decided they could not betray their constituency, as they had since May been accusing the Mensheviks of having done, but worked to keep the demonstration peaceful. By and large, they succeeded in doing that until the 19th, when exhaustion and a few pro-government troops brought from outside the city were enough to send the demonstrators back to their homes and barracks.

The Provisional Government claimed a victory for itself, which it needed badly, because, on the 19th, it had to reveal the failure of the offensive at the front. That day and the next brought greater shifts in political fortunes all around than

any since 12 March. The government ordered Lenin and several other leading Bolsheviks arrested for having attempted an armed insurrection and charged Lenin also with having received large sums of money from the Germans. Lenin went into hiding, first in Petrograd, then several days later, in Finland. Within the government, the Constitutional Democrats (Kadets), middle-class politicians who had been the majority in the Duma Committee and the first Provisional Government, resigned in a dispute allegedly over the status of the Ukraine. When Prince Lvov relinquished his post as well, Kerenskiy became the Minister-President.

On 23 July, Trotskiy called on the government to order his arrest along with those of Lenin and the other Bolsheviks with whom he said he agreed 'in principle', defended Lenin in the Executive Committee against the charge of having been in German pay, and himself disappeared for a week. When he returned to the Soviet in early August, he was jailed. Later in the month, the Sixth Bolshevik Party Congress accepted him and his fellow Mezhrayontsy into membership and elected him, in absentia, to the 21-member Central Committee. The timing hardly seemed propitious. The charge of complicity with the Germans was causing even working-class Bolshevik support to drop, and a mob had wrecked the *Pravda* offices. The congress, at which Stalin presided as the most prominent member not in jail or in hiding, was having to meet in semi-secrecy in the working-class Vyborg district of Petrograd, while Kerenskiy's cabinet was being acclaimed as the 'Government to Save the Revolution'.

THE KERENSKIY GOVERNMENT COMPROMISED

Unfortunately for Kerenskiy, his image as the savior of the revolution was fragile. His success against the Bolsheviks had encouraged outright counterrevolutionary elements in the capital and in the army but had not drawn either their support or proved that the Bolsheviks had lost more than superficially to him. On 2 September, the Germans, in an offensive begun two days earlier, took Riga, the northern cornerpost of the Russian front.

Although the Germans were still almost 300 miles from Petrograd and not likely to expend the effort just traversing that distance would require, Kerenskiy and his recently appointed Supreme Commander in Chief, General L. G. Kornilov, acted as if the Germans could be expected to appear at the city gates any day. Kerenskiy placed the Petrograd Military District under Kornilov's command, and they agreed to station a cavalry corps close to the city. Discussions they conducted through intermediaries who commuted between the capital and the *Stavka*, the military general headquarters in Mogilev, appeared to be leading toward an action against the Bolsheviks until 8 September when Kerenskiy learned that Kornilov was about to attempt a coup on his own against the Provisional Government and the Soviet as well as the Bolsheviks. Kerenskiy thereupon ordered Kornilov to relinquish his post, and Kornilov, calling on the Russian people to support him,

accused the Provisional Government of working in harmony with the plans of the German General Staff.

After four days in which Kerenskiy and Kornilov bombarded each other with threats neither was able to carry out, Kornilov meekly surrendered his command and submitted to arrest on 13 September. He had only managed to assemble a couple of regiments, not the cavalry corps he had counted on, and those had turned out to be as thoroughly disaffected as the troops in Petrograd. Meanwhile, however, a widespread suspicion had developed that Kerenskiy and Kornilov had been accomplices in a plot to restore the monarchy and the Menshevik–Social Revolutionary majority in the Executive Committee of the Soviet had been probable accessories.

The Bolsheviks were the only ones untainted by the affair and, at the end, its sole and great beneficiaries. In an initial panic at the thought of Kornilov's cossacks descending on the capital, the Provisional Government had issued several thousand weapons to the Red Guards, a previously unarmed, pro-Bolshevik workers' militia it had suppressed in July. Afterward, on 17 September, to restore its credibility as an organ of the revolution, it released Trotskiy and the other jailed Bolsheviks. In the popular mind, particularly among the workers and soldiers, the Bolsheviks, meanwhile, were coming to be regarded as the only party steadfastly loyal to the revolution. On 12 September, for the first time since March, the Petrograd Soviet passed a Bolshevik resolution. Entitled 'On Power', it called for the exclusion from power not only of those who had participated in and abetted Kornilov's revolt, but also those – among the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks – who 'through a policy of compromise and irresponsibility allowed the Supreme Command and the government apparatus to be converted into hotbeds and instruments of conspiracy against the revolution'.⁷

Ten days later, after the chairman, Chkheidze, declared the vote invalid because it had been taken with barely a quorum present, the Soviet passed the resolution again and refused Chkheidze a vote of confidence. Lenin, who stayed in hiding because the Provisional Government had announced it still meant to prosecute him and the Bolsheviks it had released, seeing the majority votes in the Soviet as a decided but very likely temporary turn in the Bolshevik fortunes, urged his colleagues on the scene in Petrograd to launch a campaign for a mass uprising against the Provisional Government. In a debate on Lenin's proposal on 28 September, the Central Committee split and decided to do nothing.

During the next several weeks, while the Central Committee temporized and Lenin tried to prod it into mounting an uprising, Trotskiy acted, although also not as Lenin wanted. As his biographer, Isaac Deutscher has put it, 'He did not try to impose from the outside a scheme of insurrection on the course of events. He developed the insurrection out of the situations as they arose.'⁸ He did the latter mainly in the halls of the Smolnyy Institute, a former upper-class girls' school in which the Petrograd Soviet had been meeting since the government moved it out of the Tauride Palace in August. His influence there, in both the workers' and the soldiers' sections, was great and growing. On 4 October, he persuaded the Soviet

to address a resolution to the soviets all over the country alerting them to ‘the threat of a new danger from ... the counterrevolutionaries’ and calling on them to ‘do their utmost to strengthen their positions, keep their organizations in a state of alertness, create special organs as the need arises for combating the counter-revolution’, and to convene another All-Russian Congress of Soviets ‘at once’.⁹ Two days later, the Soviet elected Trotskiy to replace Chkheidze as its chairman.

TROTSKIY, CHAIRMAN OF THE MILITARY REVOLUTIONARY
COMMITTEE

The fall of Riga and subsequent continuation of the German offensive had given the Bolsheviks and the Petrograd garrison an urgent common concern that because the troops were mainly peasants, political doctrine had formerly not been able to provide, namely, to keep themselves and the Provisional Government in Petrograd. Lenin, in his letters to the Central Committee, cited rumors that the Provisional Government was about to abandon Petrograd to the Germans and thereby deprive the Bolsheviks of their strongest power base. The soldiers knew that the government wanted to abrogate its 14 March commitment to them and order them to the front. Their dedication to not being transformed into defenders of the capital became Trotskiy’s crucial asset.

The situation he needed most, one that would enable him to organize the overthrow of the Provisional Government within the Soviet without appearing to do that, developed on 22 October when the Soviet approved a motion to set up a ‘Committee of Revolutionary Defense’ to gather information relating to the defense of the capital and to a projected government order transferring the troops out of the city. Trotskiy gave the appointment as the committee’s chairman to a young Left Social Revolutionary, P. E. Lazimir, who, he said, was ‘already traveling with the Bolsheviks ... although, to be sure, not always foreseeing whither the course would lead’.¹⁰ With Trotskiy’s ‘editorial’ assistance, Lazimir, in two or three days, wrote a charge that without betraying any insurrectional intent, converted the committee from an investigative body into the Military Revolutionary Committee, a staff claiming authority over all military and naval personnel in the Petrograd area and responsible solely to Trotskiy as chairman of the Soviet. In the meantime, on the 23rd, the Bolshevik Central Committee, in a secret meeting which Lenin attended in disguise, had adopted a resolution to mount an uprising.

Meanwhile, also, the Executive Committee of the Soviet had issued a call for an All-Russian Congress of Soviets to be convened ‘around’ 2 November. For Trotskiy, the meeting constituted an opportunity and established a deadline: an uprising that took place while the congress was in session could instantly be legitimized as a national seizure of power in the name of the soviets. Lenin, who suspected – as Trotskiy, in fact, also did – that the Provisional Government or the Executive Committee, in which the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries were still in the

majority, might yet find an excuse for cancelling the congress, did not want to wait; but he was having to stay in hiding, out of personal contact with all but a few colleagues, and the Central Committee did not move toward putting its resolution into force. Two of its leading members, Kamenev and G. E. Zinoviev, both of whom had opposed the resolution, openly campaigned in the lower ranks of the party against an uprising.

Lenin, again in disguise, attended another Central Committee meeting on the night of 29 October. After debating the whole question of an uprising once more, the committee, at the last, elected a five-man group, the Military Revolutionary Center, to maintain liaison with the Military Revolutionary Committee in the Soviet. Four of them did later work individually with Trotskiy. The fifth, Stalin, busied himself with his duties as editor of *Rabochiy Put* (Workers' Road), the Bolsheviks' substitute for *Pravda*, which had been prohibited since July. Trotskiy was not present at the Central Committee meeting. On the 25th, he had presented Lazimir's and his scheme for giving the Military Revolutionary Committee command in Petrograd to the Executive Committee as a device for restoring discipline in the garrison. The next day, he had offered it to the soldiers' section of the Soviet as a guarantee that the troops could not be ordered out of the city and had secured an overwhelming vote of approval. While the Central Committee was meeting on the night of the 29th, he was at the Smolnyy getting final approval from the full Soviet.

Although he maintained later that preparations for the uprising did not begin until the Military Revolutionary Committee was fully staffed on 2 November, Trotskiy actually began the final deployment on 29 October. (Either way, he would have been hard pressed to meet the deadline had the Executive Committee not – over his insincere protests – postponed the opening of the congress for five days on the 30th.) During the day on the 29th, Trotskiy signed an order directing one of the Petrograd arsenals to issue 5,000 rifles to the Red Guards. Other than as political window dressing, the Red Guards were not particularly important to his plans. They only numbered about 20,000 loosely organized, untrained men and boys, and he was counting on some 150,000 pro-Soviet soldiers from the garrison to give him a better than three to one superiority over the troops the Provisional Government could muster. What was essential for him was to know whether his command authority would be accepted outside the Soviet. It was. On the 31st, in answer to questions about the arms given to the Red Guards, he declared, 'in the name of the Soviet', that no decision had been taken on armed action of any kind; but using, probably for the first time, a formulation that was destined to become standard in statements of Soviet military doctrine, he added, 'We will, however, respond to the first counterrevolutionary attempt to attack us with a counterattack that we will carry ruthlessly to the finish.'¹¹

To make certain that the military commands would execute his and the Military Revolutionary Committee's orders, Trotskiy appropriated a device the Provisional Government had already instituted in the front commands, control of the military through political commissars. The government's commissars had two functions:

to give the higher commands political guidance and to help them keep the troops in hand. Trotsky's had just one: to detect and prevent treachery on the part of commanders at all levels. On 3 November, he created the Bureau of the Military Revolutionary Committee, a body of some 60 Bolshevik soldiers who were to serve as commissars. Lazimir's appointment as its chief made it look – very superficially – as if it were merely an extension of the government's system to the Petrograd garrison. The commissars went to their assigned units on the night of the 3rd, and Lazimir and two others went to the headquarters of the Petrograd Military District, where the commander, a Colonel Polkovnikov, refused to accept them.

While the commissars were taking up their stations, Lenin was meeting in the Vyborg district, not far from his place of concealment, with a group of Central Committee members and other ranking Bolsheviks whom he had hand picked to exclude the most vocal opponents of an uprising. Nevertheless, the session lasted through the night, and Lenin, who brought all of his authority and rhetorical skill to bear in a two-hour speech, did not get an assenting vote until seven o'clock the next morning. Trotsky, who was not in a position at that stage to be making clandestine excursions into outlying parts of the city, was not present; and Lenin, who knew almost nothing about what Trotsky had been doing, still envisioned a party-sponsored mass uprising.

On the 4th, all the parties expected something to happen before the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets opened, and each was confident it could determine the outcome. The moderates, 'compromisers' as Trotsky called them, in the Executive Committee of the Soviet undertook to co-opt the Military Revolutionary Committee's commissars by appointing a general commissar in the military district headquarters and subordinating the others to him. Trotsky's response was to send a Bolshevik second lieutenant to the headquarters with a message that henceforth none of its orders to the garrison would be valid unless they were countersigned by the Military Revolutionary Committee. To the troops he announced that the headquarters had 'broken with the organized garrison' and become an instrument of counterrevolution: therefore, the Military Revolutionary Committee, 'standing at the head of the garrison,' was taking upon itself 'the defense of revolutionary order'. This, he wrote later, 'was a decisive step on the road to insurrection'.¹²

TROTSKIY'S MILITARY COUP

Insisting publicly, as he always had, that the Bolsheviks were not preparing an insurrection, Trotsky waited for the government to 'provoke' a defensive response from the Military Revolutionary Committee. To hasten it along that hazardous road, he went, on the afternoon of the 5th, to the Peter and Paul Fortress on Zayachiy Island in the Neva River opposite the Provisional Government's headquarters in the Winter Palace. The fortress was thought to be the government's

stronghold. The commandant had threatened to put the corporal assigned to him as a commissar under arrest, and the troops had all along been the least radical in the garrison. When Trotsky left the fortress after an hour or so, the troops had pledged to take orders only from the Military Revolutionary Committee. That night Kerenskiy and his cabinet decided to initiate legal proceedings against the Military Revolutionary Committee, bring in loyal troops from outside the city, and close the Bolsheviks' printing plant. Early the next morning, an officer candidate detachment locked and sealed the building in which the plant was situated.

The last was the least of the government's proposed moves but the only one it could carry out quickly. Trotsky, himself in a hurry since the congress was due to open the next day, made it do as the provocation he wanted. After sending soldiers to reopen the printing plant and countermanding a government order that would have moved the cruiser *Aurora* and its dissident crew from its mooring place at the Admiralty Quay alongside the Winter Palace, Trotsky issued an order to all the regiments in the garrison. It read, 'The Petrograd Soviet is in danger. I hereby order the regiments to be in complete readiness for action and to await further instructions.'¹³ At about noon, Kerenskiy went before the Council of the Republic, a temporary parliament created in October in which all the parties except the Bolsheviks participated, to get its approval on legal action against the Bolsheviks. In the midst of his speech, his deputy handed him a copy of Trotsky's order. He paused to read it and then, declaring the city to be in 'a state of insurrection', demanded that the council, 'this very day, at this afternoon's session', authorize the Provisional Government to subject 'those groups and parties which have dared to raise a hand against the free will of the Russian people ... to immediate, final, and definite liquidation.'¹⁴ The lines were drawn, and the battle was about to be joined – with vastly unequal forces. Trotsky had machine gunners posted around the Smolnyy in the early afternoon and had the commandant of the Peter and Paul Fortress locked up, which was easy since the fortress had for more than a century been mainly used as a prison for political offenders. Later, sailors, Trotsky's most enthusiastic constituents, began arriving in the city from the Kronstadt naval base, and Trotsky summoned all the members of the Bolshevik Central Committee to the Smolnyy. Stalin did not appear. Lenin, who was not expected, came after dark, his face concealed in bandages and wearing a wig. Not having talked to Trotsky for several weeks, he apparently was still thinking in terms of a popular uprising when he arrived. Afterward he wrote a letter to the Central Committee saying it was not important who overthrew the Provisional Government; the Military Revolutionary Committee could do it or 'some other institution which will declare that it will relinquish power only to the true representatives of the interests of the people.'¹⁵ It was also dark before the Council of the Republic passed Kerenskiy's resolution – by a small majority, the Mensheviks having voted a resolution of their own blaming the Provisional Government as well as the Bolsheviks.

The Petrograd Soviet, with delegates to the congress as invited observers, went into full session shortly after midnight on the morning of 7 November (25 October by the Russian calendar, hence, the October Revolution). By then, the Bolshevik

newspaper for the Soviet, *Rabochiy i Soldat* (Worker and Soldier), had come out bearing a full-page proclamation which declared that the enemies of the revolution had attacked and the garrison and proletariat of Petrograd were ready to deal them a crushing blow under the direction of the Military Revolutionary Committee. After a stormy debate in which Trotskiy admitted for the first time that the Bolsheviks had prepared to use armed force against the government, the Soviet passed a resolution appealing to the soldiers and workers not to respond to provocations. The Bolsheviks, knowing the time had passed when such resolutions could make a difference one way or another, walked out during the vote.

At about 2:00 a.m., detachments of soldiers and some Red Guards, the latter appearing to John Reed, an American journalist present at the Smolny that night, to be mostly adolescent boys, began setting up road blocks and occupying vital points around the city, bridges, railroad stations, and power plants. Kerenskiy, after having spent the first half of the night trying to persuade the Menshevik leadership to change their party's vote on the previous day's resolution in the Council of the Republic, passed the rest of it at the military district headquarters adjacent to the Winter Palace, first listening to Polkovnikov's plans for smashing the insurrection and then to his and other officers' excuses for not being able to muster the troops to put them into effect.

The insurgents waited until 7:00 a.m. to move on the central telephone exchange and the State Bank, which they had thought would be strongly defended – but were not. An hour later, an orderly aroused Kerenskiy, who had returned to his study in the Winter Palace for a brief rest, to tell him all the telephone lines had been cut. From his window he could see Bolshevik sailors on the palace bridge. In another hour, he was in a car headed out of Petrograd toward Gatchina 25 miles to the south, where he expected to meet troops he had ordered sent from the North Front (army group).

John Reed went out late that morning. The streetcars were running, and the shops were open. The streets were crowded, but to him the people seemed less uneasy than they had the day before. Exactly at noon, as it had for many years, a cannon boomed in the Fortress of Peter and Paul.

Trotskiy opened the Soviet's second session of the day at 2:30 p.m. with an announcement that the Provisional Government had ceased to exist. Lenin then mounted the rostrum to declare, 'Comrades, the workers' and peasants' revolution, about the necessity of which the Bolsheviks have always spoken, has been accomplished.'¹⁶ Lenin indicated in his speech that the soviets would provide the structure on which a new government would be built, and committees of the congress began meeting in the afternoon to prepare for its opening the following day.

The Provisional Government had not yet actually ceased to exist. Believing that the Winter Palace, the Admiralty, and the military district headquarters clustered on the Neva and surrounded by open squares and broad avenues would be heavily defended, the Military Revolutionary Committee had decided to encircle the whole area first, using troops – mostly sailors from Kronstadt, who were

thought likely to be the most determined fighters – on the land side and naval vessels in the river. The scheme turned out to be too complicated for the insurgents to handle quickly; consequently, passage to and from the area was possible until well into the day, and the attackers passed the afternoon waiting for two cannon to be hoisted to the parapet of the Peter and Paul Fortress, which otherwise had only the one used to signal the noon hour. Random rifle and machine gun fire began at dark. The *Aurora*'s guns and the cannon in the fortress joined in later, firing blanks and some live rounds, only two of which hit the palace. The decisive tactical move of the day (if it was not an accident) was made by some unknown person who thought to turn off the palace's electricity, thereby enabling a few enterprising sailors to infiltrate the building. Their presence in the dark rooms and hallways sufficiently unsettled the defenders, cadets from military schools and a women's battalion, to bring about their surrender two hours after midnight.¹⁷ The 'storming' of the Winter Palace gave the new government its first battle victory, in not much of a battle, to be sure, but symbolically important as a political point made with armed force.

On the other hand, the whole uprising can probably be better described as an exercise in military technique than as a revolutionary political act. It was a thoroughly planned, in the main, precisely timed employment of mostly regular troops that defeated the enemy before the battle had properly begun. In doing so, it released the Bolshevik leadership from dependence on the proletariat and on political doctrine as an instrument of power. Its course brought into conjunction two personalities who changed Russia and the world. Lenin provided the will that braced the Bolsheviks to make the bid for power. Trotskiy organized and managed the military coup that gave them Petrograd and an example on which to build. On 7 November 1917, however, the revolution was nowhere near being accomplished. Before that could really be said to have been done, three years would pass during which the – in the Marxist view – classical instrument for oppression of the masses, organized armed force, again counted for more than the Bolshevik effort to rally the workers and peasants to the red banner of revolution.

‘All Power to the Soviets’

FORMING THE ‘SOCIALIST STATE’

The Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets opened on the night of 7 November, at 10:40 p.m., John Reed, who was in the chamber at the Smolny, noted. The Bolsheviks had a solid majority, 390 out of 670 delegates, and on the basis of it received 14 seats and the chairmanship in the 21-member presidium. On the other hand, the Bolshevik position was not quite as strong as it had seemed to be in the afternoon. The Provisional Government was still barricaded in the Winter Palace, and the surprise had begun to wear off. When Kamenev, who had renounced his opposition to the uprising and been elected chairman of the presidium, put forward the question of power as the first order of business, the Menshevik and Right Social Revolutionary leadership, having already refused to sit in the presidium, accused the Bolsheviks of having conducted a conspiracy against the revolution and demanded that the decision on power be made outside the congress by negotiation with all the parties and the Provisional Government. After Trotsky told them to go where they belonged, ‘into the garbage can of history’, they withdrew to the city hall to join other anti-Bolshevik groups in forming the Committee for Salvation of the Motherland and the Revolution. By 3:00 a.m., when Kamenev announced that the Winter Palace had been taken and the members of the Provisional Government were under arrest, the Bolsheviks and Left Social Revolutionaries were the only parties officially represented in the congress. A. V. Lunacharskiy then read a Bolshevik-written proclamation, which was approved. It declared that the Provisional Government had been deposed, the congress had assumed power, and all local power throughout the country should pass to the soviets.

The proclamation appealed also to the Army to hold the front and not support Kerenskiy. What the response would be was by no means certain. Officer delegates from front soviets had condemned the insurrection as a stab in the back to the Army. In the last minutes of the long night’s session joyful pandemonium broke loose on the floor after Nikolai Krylenko, a member of the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee and the Bolshevik majority in the presidium, read a telegram from the Twelfth Army stating that its military revolutionary committee had taken control of North Front, the army group headquarters closest to Petrograd.¹ Although the Twelfth Army, which was stationed in the vital sector north and east

of Riga, was going to be important for some time to come to the Bolshevik assumption of power, the celebration was premature. The military revolutionary committee did not control the North Front, and it only represented the Latvian infantry regiments, about 30,000 troops in all, assigned to Twelfth Army. The Latvians were pro-Bolshevik and were willing to fight in the Bolshevik cause, which most of them including some officers saw as the way to secure Latvia's independence. On 6 November, the military revolutionary committee in Twelfth Army had ordered the 5th Zemgale Latvian Rifle Regiment to prepare for a march to Petrograd, and the commander, Colonel Ioakim Vatsetis, had agreed to lead the regiment wherever it went.² Kerenskiy, meanwhile, had continued south past Gatchina expecting any minute to meet the troops he had summoned. By 9:00 p.m., he had driven 140 miles, all the way to the North Front headquarters in Pskov. The *front* commander, General Cheremissov, talked about trouble he was having with his military revolutionary committee and refused to associate himself with the Provisional Government in any way. In the early morning hours, Kerenskiy had made contact with General P. N. Krasnov, whose Headquarters, III Cavalry Corps had commanded the Cossacks Kornilov had sent against the Provisional Government in September. Krasnov was willing to fight the Bolsheviks, though manifestly not enthusiastic about doing so in Kerenskiy's company. At about the time Krylenko read the telegram from Twelfth Army to the delegates in the Smolny, Kerenskiy and Krasnov were heading south 30 miles, from Pskov to Ostrov, to gather up what were left of Krasnov's troops.³

Lenin, who had not yet appeared in the congress, and the Bolshevik Central Committee worked through the day on the 8th on a program and to devise a government, which had to be entirely Bolshevik because the Left Social Revolutionaries refused to form a coalition with the Bolsheviks alone. The result was not strikingly original: a 14-post cabinet under Lenin as chairman for whose members Trotsky invented the revolutionary-sounding title 'people's commissar' and which called itself the Council (*soviet*) of People's Commissars. Trotsky became People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. A three-man committee composed of Vladimir Antonov-Ovseenko, Nikolai Krylenko, and Pavel Dybenko took over military and naval affairs. All were members of the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee of which Antonov-Ovseenko was the field commander during the uprising, and they continued to serve with the other leading members of the Military Revolutionary Committee in the Council of People's Commissars for Military and Naval Affairs, which was created on 9 November. Antonov-Ovseenko had gone through cadet school and been a junior officer for about a year before being court-martialed in 1905 for revolutionary activity. Krylenko, a trained lawyer and professional revolutionary, had served briefly at the front as a junior officer after being drafted into the army in 1916.⁴ Dybenko, a peasant and ordinary seaman in the Baltic Fleet, had wielded considerable power since May 1917 as chairman of the Central Committee of the Baltic Fleet, a revolutionary sailors' organization that controlled all ship movements in the fleet. The last commissariat on the roster, railroads, was left vacant. The next to the last, nationalities, went to Stalin.

Stalin was not a visible participant in the November events. Outside observers like the American reporters John Reed and Albert Rhys Williams seldom came across his name and apparently never saw him in person. His collected works do not contain anything he said or wrote between 6 and 27 November. The People’s Commissariat for Nationalities was a completely new creation without a predecessor in the old government, hence without a bureaucracy, offices, or established functions to be taken over. On the other hand, racing through the capital in armored cars and appearing on the rostrum in the Smolnyy was not the ultimate reward to be expected for decades in exile and in the underground; and in a government that was likely to exist mostly on promises for some time to come, the People’s Commissar for Nationalities possessed a valuable piece of the future.

The presidium, with Lenin among them, returned to the platform at 8:40 p.m. on the night of the 8th. After reading several orders from the Military Revolutionary Committee, Kamenev called on Lenin who opened the session with the words, ‘Comrades, we shall now take up the formation of the socialist state.’⁵ He then presented a proclamation calling on all nations at war to negotiate an armistice immediately and seek a peace without annexations or indemnities. Next, after the proclamation on peace had passed unanimously, he offered a decree on land that abolished private land ownership, confiscated all large holdings, and offered every peasant family as much land as it could farm without hired labor. When that had been passed – to the manifest joy of the peasants – Kamenev read a decree authorizing the Council of People’s Commissars and its slate of Bolshevik members to function as a provisional government until a constituent assembly could be elected and convened. It was accepted over renewed demands for a coalition reinforced by a threat from the *Vikzhel*, the central executive committee of the railroad workers’ union, to deny a Bolshevik government the use of the railroads.

The congress adjourned shortly before dawn on 9 November, after having elected a 102-member All-Russia Central Executive Committee to exercise its legislative function until the next congress was called. As the delegates left the Smolnyy by streetcar, for most the first stage of long journeys back to their local soviets, trains with Kerenskiy, Krasnov, several Cossack companies, and some artillery on board were nearing Gatchina. The town, barely 20 miles from Petrograd and the main rail and road junction on the south, was full of soldiers, sailors, and Red Guards, who had artillery and armored cars but – the next few hours showed – no inclination to face mounted Cossacks. By mid-afternoon, Krasnov had won a battle in which very few shots had been fired and Kerenskiy possessed a headquarters in Gatchina from which he could dispatch telegrams in all directions: one to the troops in Petrograd ordering them to return to duty, others to the field commands demanding reinforcements.

TROTSKIY DEFENDS PETROGRAD

The only executive organ actually functioning in the capital was the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet under Trotskiy as chairman of the Soviet. The people's commissars' new titles could not be transmuted into authority because the staffs in the government departments had all gone on strike. Colonel Polkovnikov, the commander of the Petrograd Military District, had aligned himself with the Committee for Salvation of the Motherland and the Revolution. Participants in the battle at Gatchina who retreated all the way to the Smolnyy in the afternoon on the 9th confirmed a lesson Trotskiy had already drawn from the previous two days' experience, namely, that the Bolsheviks were exceedingly short on military capability. Not hesitating to give necessity priority over political principle and over his personal standing in the Soviet and the party, Trotskiy revised the Military Revolutionary Committee's field staff putting a professional officer, Lieutenant Colonel Mikhail Muravyev, in command. Muravyev was a Left Social Revolutionary who was regarded with suspicion in his own party. He had taken part in Kerenskiy's effort to suppress the Bolsheviks in June 1917, but he had apparently decided on 7 November that Kerenskiy was finished and had offered his services to the Soviet. Antonov-Ovseenko became Muravyev's assistant; Colonel P. B. Valden, another officer who had volunteered, the chief of staff; and a member of the Bolshevik Central Committee, K. S. Eremeev, the commissar.⁶

Before Kerenskiy, halfway between Gatchina and Petrograd, lay Tsarskoye Selo, the site of the imperial summer palace, and two miles farther north were the Pulkovo Heights, a range of hills the tallest of which was about 200 feet. In the afternoon on 10 November, Antonov-Ovseenko and Dybenko arrived at the field staff command post in Pulkovo. Valden told them that the troops had given up Tsarskoye Selo without a fight and most of them would probably also drift away from Pulkovo after nightfall. On the railroad, which ran a mile or two east of Pulkovo, an evening commuter train took Reed and Williams straight through to Tsarskoye Selo where they dined in the station restaurant before exploring the town. Soldiers guarding the palace grounds, when asked whether they supported the Bolsheviks or Kerenskiy, said they were neutral. Their colonel, who had his headquarters in the palace, said he was holding the town for Kerenskiy, but most of his troops had gone away and those who stayed did not want to fight. At about the time the Americans took a train back to Petrograd, Kerenskiy was ordering Krasnov, whose Cossacks had been stopped in the suburbs since mid-morning, to occupy the town, which he did around midnight.

On the 11th, Kerenskiy acquired, in addition to the 600–700 Cossacks and artillery he already had, an infantry regiment, a well-outfitted armored train, and a sheaf of telegrams reporting 50 or so troop-trains on the way from various parts of the front. Lenin and Trotskiy were having to find means to defend the power they had seized. In the morning, cadets from the military schools acting for the Committee for Salvation occupied the central telephone exchange and the telegraph

office. Workers, eventually some 20,000 of them, streamed southward out of the city to dig trenches and string barbed wire. Red Guards, soldiers, and sailors from the Kronstadt and Helsingfors naval bases broke the cadets’ resistance and locked them up in the Fortress of Peter and Paul before dark. About 3,000 sailors went out during the night to man positions on the Pulkovo Heights and in Krasnoye Selo three miles to the west. Until then, a bare 5,000 soldiers of the many thousands in the garrison had responded. The Red Guards showed some enthusiasm but had little experience and no training.

Krasnov advanced toward Pulkovo on the morning of the 12th. He and Kerenskiy had, perhaps, 5,000 men. Muravyev had around 12,000, but the soldiers and the Red Guards, as they had been before, were quick to leave the field. The sailors, however, stood fast, and Krasnov, who seemed to think the sailors were under German command, broke off the attack in the afternoon and took his forces back all the way to Gatchina. When they realized what had happened, which they did not do until late in the night, Trotskiy and Muravyev proclaimed a victory but did not carry the pursuit beyond the southern edge of Tsarskoye Selo, where Muravyev ordered his men to dig in. A day later, Dybenko made a deal in which the Cossacks agreed to turn over Kerenskiy and Krasnov. Kerenskiy escaped and eventually left the country; Krasnov was taken to the Smolnyy and released after giving his word not to take up arms against the revolution again.⁷

The Bolsheviks had defeated the first attempt to overthrow their government by armed force. They had turned an outrageous act of military effrontery into a successful operation. ‘Red Petrograd’ did not ‘rise unanimously against the reactionary conspirators and insurgents’ as one Soviet history claims, nor did the Red Guard detachments ‘beat off all the enemy’s assaults and go over to a decisive counterattack’ on the Pulkovo Heights as another maintains.⁸ The Bolsheviks’ best-organized military support, the Latvian rifle regiments, could not keep their grip on the Twelfth Army. On the day after the success at Pulkovo, several Petrograd regiments called on the rest of the garrison to join them in refusing to fight. What had in fact enabled the Bolsheviks to seize and begin to consolidate power was the soldiers’ compelling desire to evade an irrevocable commitment, as Trotskiy put it, ‘the struggle of a peasant garrison for self-preservation.’⁹

BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION IN THE HINTERLAND

Had the defeat of the so-called Kerenskiy–Krasnov insurgency not been accomplished as quickly and decisively as it was, the Bolshevik insurgency itself would very likely have sputtered and died out elsewhere in the land. Outside Petrograd, the Bolsheviks had not dominated the soviets and the military revolutionary committees, most of which were formed on or after 7 November, did not have the advantage of surprise. In Moscow, the Russian ethnic and cultural capital, the Bolsheviks only had a majority in the workers’ soviet. The soldiers’ soviet had

stayed separate, and the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries predominated in it. Apparently, as in Petrograd, the greater part of the troops in the garrison refused to fight for the Bolsheviks or against them. A military revolutionary committee organized on the night of the 7th found enough soldiers and Red Guards to occupy the Moscow Kremlin the next day. Cadets under the military district commander retook the Kremlin on the 10th, and thereafter both sides stood by while awaiting the outcome of Kerenskiy's march on Petrograd.

After Kerenskiy failed, the victory in Moscow was going to the Bolsheviks by default when Mikhail Frunze arrived on the scene with a detachment of soldiers and Red Guards from the industrial towns Shui, Kovrov, and Vladimir situated about a hundred miles to the northeast. Frunze was a 32-year-old professional revolutionary who had organized a fighting detachment in the 1905 revolution and subsequently been sentenced to death twice. He had been an agitator among the troops at the front in 1916, chief of police in Minsk after the February Revolution of 1917, and had become party chairman in Shui in September 1917. He had taken over the local government and garrison on 7 November and begun to look for a wider field of action. During the night of 14 November, he took 800 soldiers from Shui and 1,200 Red Guards from Vladimir and Kovrov to Moscow by train. The next morning they captured the Metropole Hotel, a cadet strong-point around which the local Red Guards had been skirmishing for two days. On the 16th, the officers and cadets evacuated the Kremlin and the city hall on terms which those in the Metropole Hotel would probably also have accepted had Frunze's intervention not given Moscow a last-minute counterpart for the storming of the Winter Palace.¹⁰

On 18 November, Lenin wrote a message 'To the Population' proclaiming the triumph of the 'workers' and peasants' revolution' in Petrograd and Moscow. In another message, 'To All Party Members and to All the Working Classes of Russia', he condemned as 'desertion' a wave of resignations that had hit the Central Committee and the Council of People's Commissars.¹¹ During the Kerenskiy-Krasnov affair, those who believed, for reasons that went beyond just the current crisis, that the Bolsheviks could not sustain themselves in power alone had negotiated a basis for a coalition with the Mensheviks and Right Social Revolutionaries. When a majority in the Central Committee upheld Lenin's and Trotskiy's refusal to accept the proposal, five of its members, including Kamenev and Zinoviev, and five people's commissars had resigned on 17 November. Lenin defended the decision to form an all-Bolshevik government in the message to the party members and working classes but declared that the party was willing to share power 'with the minority in the soviets'.

Opposition and defections in the Central Committee, resignations from the government, negotiations to bring at least the Left Social Revolutionaries into the Council of People's Commissars, and impending national elections to choose a constituent assembly, added to the already existing turmoil and uncertainty, were producing a fundamental change in the party's structure. On the eve of the uprising, the Central Committee had appointed a seven-member Politburo to

make decisions in case the whole committee could not be assembled. It had not functioned, partly because it had not been needed and partly because while Lenin, Trotskiy and Stalin were members, Kamenev and Zinoviev, the chief opponents of the uprising, also were. After 7 November, as dissension in the Central Committee impaired its reliability as an instrument for dealing with outside pressures and problems, Lenin, Trotskiy, Stalin, and Yakov Sverdlov constituted an informal Politburo in which Lenin and Trotskiy exercised the authority and Stalin and Sverdlov provided administrative support and a sufficient appearance of collegiality to satisfy the party's requirement.

The Bolsheviks' successes in Petrograd and Moscow also had not much enhanced their ability to exert power elsewhere. The *ataman* of the Don Cossacks, General Alexey Kaledin, whose people were settled in the lower Don River basin astride the communications lines into the Caucasus swore opposition to the Bolshevik regime on 7 November. Colonel Aleksandr Dutov, ataman of the Orenburg Cossacks, whose territory lay in the southern Ural Mountains, allied himself with Kaledin a week later. In the western Ukraine, Kiev, the third city in the empire, did not fall as the Russian capital had. The Ukrainian Central Rada (council), formed in March 1917 under Simon Petlyura, possessed nationalist support that transcended class differences, and the military district command had declared martial law in Kiev on 6 November. When a Bolshevik-led military revolutionary committee attempted an uprising on the 10th, the Rada, the military, and the opposition parties cooperated in squelching it. On the 14th, the Rada proclaimed itself the government of Kiev and the entire Ukraine, and, a week later, it announced the formation of a Ukrainian National Republic within the Russian state.

After 7 November, military revolutionary committees had sprung up in the armies and army groups, but they in most instances had fallen into factional squabbles that produced many meetings and resolutions and few concrete results of any kind. The commands' authority was practically nonexistent and so was that of the Bolshevik government. The sailors were full of revolutionary spirit but not disposed to take orders that did not suit them from any source. Episodes of mass drunkenness among the troops and the garrison regiments' slack response to the Kerenskiy-Krasnov threat put the Bolsheviks' ability even to keep control in Petrograd into question, and Lenin called for a Latvian regiment on 14 November. The Latvians, however, were tied down in a struggle within Twelfth Army until the 20th, when Colonel Vatsetis led a successful attack on the anti-Bolshevik faction and himself took command of the army.¹²

THE STAVKA AND THE REVOLUTIONARY FIELD STAFF

Technically the whole military manpower of the country, almost ten million men, was still under the *Stavka* (general headquarters) of the Supreme High Command.¹³ Its location in Mogilev 400 miles south of Petrograd insulated the *Stavka* from the

direct effects of events in the capital. Kerenskiy, who had assumed the post himself after dismissing Kornilov in September, was the Supreme Commander in Chief until 16 November when, after his disappearance, the authority passed automatically to the chief of staff, General Nikolay Dukhonin. Dukhonin was an officer of no distinction whose appointment as chief of staff in September 1917 had already pushed him far beyond his depth. On the night of 20 November, Lenin, Trotskiy, and Krylenko signed a telegram to Dukhonin, ordering him in the name of the Council of People's Commissars to open armistice negotiations with Germany and her allies at once. After Dukhonin first failed to acknowledge the order and then, on the 22nd, declared himself unable to execute it because the Council of People's Commissars did not constitute a legitimate government, Krylenko was appointed to be his replacement as Supreme Commander in Chief.

Dukhonin's dismissal confronted the Bolshevik government with a test it had not yet faced and would probably just as soon have delayed a while longer, the necessity to enforce a major decision outside the reach of the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee. Lenin's first move was to disavow Dukhonin and the other counterrevolutionary generals and call on the soldiers' committees in the regiments at the front to initiate armistice negotiations. It resulted at once in a wave of unilateral cease-fires in which regiments simply abandoned their positions. Within two days, one of Lenin's oldest associates, Vladimir Bonch-Bruyevich, sent an urgent telegram from Petrograd asking his brother, General Mikhail Bonch-Bruyevich, who was the headquarters commandant in Mogilev, to take over as Supreme Commander in Chief. Although Bonch-Bruyevich was more sympathetic toward the revolution than the others in his class, he refused the appointment because he did not believe he could restore order at the front.

Soviets were established in Mogilev and the surrounding Byelorussian cities, but Bolshevik influence was virtually nonexistent in the Mogilev Soviet, not yet securely dominant elsewhere, and the local party leadership was inexperienced. A hundred and some miles west of Mogilev, in Minsk, the largest Byelorussian city and the site of the North Front headquarters, a veteran Bolshevik, Aleksandr Myasnikov, chaired the soviet. He and Mikhail Ter-Arutyunyants, an advisor sent from the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee who had been a commissar in the assault on the Fortress of Peter and Paul and in the fighting on the Pulkovo Heights, undertook to organize a march on the *Stavka*, but the collapse of the front threatened to outrun their effort. At the end of the month, Krylenko set out from Petrograd with an escort of eight trainloads of sailors, Lithuanian guards riflemen, and Red Guards to claim his headquarters.

Dukhonin had six shock battalions, supposedly picked troops, in Mogilev, but neither he nor they wanted to fight, and he informed Krylenko on 2 December that there would be no resistance. When Krylenko's train arrived the next afternoon, the shock troops were gone, and Dukhonin appeared on the station platform alone and in civilian clothes. When his identity became known, a mob of sailors gathered and killed him outside Krylenko's private car. Some hours later, after he had moved into the headquarters, Krylenko summoned Bonch-Bruyevich and

appointed him chief of staff. The Supreme Commander in Chief’s assignment to open armistice negotiations had in the meantime been resolved. On 26 November, the German Army High Command had expressed willingness to open talks. A delegation under Adolphe Joffe, one of Trotsky’s associates in the People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, arrived at the German Eastern Front headquarters in Brest-Litovsk on 3 December.¹⁴

The *Stavka* had become a relic of what was coming to be called ‘the old army’. Its officers and others might still have to be used for a while as ‘military specialists’ under the close watch of commissars as Muravyev and Valden had been. The troops had already demonstrated that they were no more willing to fight for the new government than they had been for the old. On 6 December, the Council of People’s Commissars for Military and Naval Affairs became the Collegium of People’s Commissars for Military Affairs and began dismantling and reorganizing the War Ministry. A naval collegium under Dybenko had taken over the Navy Ministry some days earlier. The military collegium’s principal tasks were to demobilize the old army (as a practical matter, more to regulate the spontaneous demobilization already going on sufficiently to preserve some sort of military presence at the front until peace had been secured) and to create a politically reliable force that could deal with internal military threats. Dybenko had charge of the old army, Antonov-Ovseenko of developing and deploying forces to replace it. When the armistice was concluded on 15 December, it appeared in Petrograd that the end was near and at the front that the war was over. Two decrees issued on 29 December abolished military ranks, empowered enlisted men’s committees and soviets to make command decisions, and authorized the election of officers. In the meantime, a select Latvian battalion had taken over the guard duties at the Smolnyy, and the 6th Tukums Latvian Rifle Regiment had assumed responsibility for keeping order in Petrograd. Both observed the traditional military forms.¹⁵

For the *Stavka*, Krylenko was an absentee Supreme Commander in Chief. His visits in Mogilev were infrequent and brief. Myasnikov, who was also the elected commander in chief of the West Front, served as his part-time deputy, shunting back and forth between Minsk and Mogilev in a private railroad car. The Bolsheviks’ virtually sole interest was in the Revolutionary Field Staff, which they activated in December alongside the *Stavka* but separate and very much aloof from it. The Field Staff came under Antonov-Ovseenko, for whom Myasnikov apparently also acted as deputy, and it was the first functional element of the forces being formed for internal employment. Ter-Arutyunyan was its chief of staff, and Vatsetis was brought in as chief of plans and operations. On 25 December, while the Field Staff was still being formed, Antonov-Ovseenko with Muravyev as his chief of staff, bringing with them Red Guards from Petrograd and the 3rd Kurzem Latvian Rifle Regiment, set up a headquarters in Kharkov for operations against Kaledin and the Central Rada. By then, Kornilov, General Anton Denikin, the former commander of the Southwest Front, and several other counterrevolutionary officers whom Dukhonin had released from arrest in Mogilev on the morning of 3 December, had joined Kaledin in Rostov-on-the-Don.¹⁶

DICTATORSHIP, SELF-DETERMINATION, RIGHTS OF THE WORKING
PEOPLE, AND INSURGENCY

On 18 December, the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee transferred the executive powers it had exercised to the people's commissariats. Expanded and reorganized, the Council of People's Commissars had by then acquired seven Left Social Revolutionary members, none in crucial posts, two in newly created commissariats of municipal affairs and 'palaces of the Republic', two without portfolio. Earlier in the month also, the party Central Committee had formally established the Politburo composed of Lenin, Trotskiy, Stalin, and Sverdlov as the 'Bureau of the Central Committee'.

Three problems confronted the Bolshevik government: the insurgency in the south, peace negotiations with the Central Powers, and the Constituent Assembly. The peace conference opened in Brest-Litovsk on 22 December. The date on which the Constituent Assembly was to have convened, 11 December, was already past. The elections had given the Bolsheviks only 25 per cent of the delegates. The Social Revolutionaries had 58 per cent; but the Left Social Revolutionaries' share and decrees excluding the Constitutional Democrats as enemies of the people and permitting recall votes had not been enough to give the Bolsheviks a working majority. On 19 December, to counter rumors that the Constituent Assembly would not be allowed to meet, Lenin announced that the assembly would go to work as soon as half the delegates were in Petrograd and duly registered.

A decree drafted on 20 December created the *Cheka* (Extraordinary Commission) within the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs. Its chairman was Feliks Dzerzhinskiy, and its mission was 'to suppress and liquidate all counterrevolutionary and sabotage efforts and actions in all of Russia from whatever side they may come'. The *Cheka's* mandate was broad, and it had almost complete autonomy. Lenin ruled that jurisdictional disputes between the *Cheka* and the peoples commissariats, 'including the NKVD' (the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs), would be decided in the Council of People's Commissars, but 'without curtailing' the commission's authority to conduct its activities as it saw fit.¹⁷

One of those involved in organizing the *Cheka* was Kliment Voroshilov. Born near Lugansk (Voroshilovgrad) in the eastern Ukraine, he was 37 years old and an active Bolshevik Party member since 1904. He had met Lenin at party congresses before the war and had worked with Stalin for a time in an underground party group in Baku. He was a rare type among the party's professionals, an authentic member of the working class, an electrician, but he had not achieved a place in the party's inner circle. His best prospect had seemed to lie in Lugansk, to which he returned as local party chairman in April 1917 after having served briefly in the Petrograd Soviet. After having been a delegate to the first and second all-Russian congresses of soviets, he had returned again to Petrograd as an elected member of the constituent assembly in early December. The party was putting all of its delegates to the assembly to work, and Voroshilov became the *Cheka* commissar

for Petrograd where Lenin had instructed Dzerzhinskiy to set up a ‘special’ organ to keep the bourgeoisie and government employees under surveillance.¹⁸ The opposition to Bolshevism in the south raised possibilities of a civil war and of dismemberment of the Russian empire. Whether or not he managed to stage a march on Petrograd as he threatened to do, Kaledin was in position to block access to the whole vast region of the Caucasus. Dutov, who held Uralsk, Orenburg, Orsk, Troitsk, and Verkhneural'sk, could do the same with respect to even larger areas in southern Siberia and central Asia. Following the Central Rada by a day, the Finnish Diet had voted in favor of national independence on 15 November. In his platform ‘for the Proletarian Party’, published in April 1917, Lenin had stated, ‘as regards the national question’, that the party ‘first of all must advocate the proclamation and immediate realization of complete freedom of secession from Russia for all the [non-Russian] nations and peoples.’¹⁹

In his first public statement as People’s Commissar for Nationalities, Stalin, on 27 November, asserted an unconditional policy of national self-determination; and at the opening session of the Brest-Litovsk peace conference on 22 December, the Russian delegation proposed national self-determination as a guiding principle for the negotiations. On the other hand, the Council of People’s Commissars had sent a 48-hour ultimatum to Kiev on 16 December demanding that the Central Rada give up its ‘double-dealing bourgeois policy’ and stop supporting Kaledin; and no reply having been received, considered itself to be at war with the Rada after 18 December.

On 31 December, even though the Finnish Social Democratic Party had not responded to urgings from Petrograd to seize power and had fallen into the minority in the Diet, the Council of People’s Commissars formally recognized Finland’s independence. Two days earlier, the Brest-Litovsk peace conference had gone into a ten-day recess to await the Allies’ response to a proposed general peace treaty that embodied the principle of national self-determination. Stalin said that the grant of independence to Finland, although the ‘unaccountable cowardice’ of the Finnish Social Democrats made it a ‘tragedy for the Finnish proletariat’, demonstrated that ‘no force on earth’ could compel the Council of People’s Commissars to break its promises.²⁰ Self-determination, however, was becoming a less than absolute principle. Stalin indicated that the Ukraine’s right to secede did not include a right to reject the slogan ‘All power to the Soviets’.

In a set of theses on the Constituent Assembly, which was finally scheduled to open on 18 January 1918, Lenin asserted that ‘the interests of this revolution stand higher than the formal rights of the Constituent Assembly’.²¹ On 17 January, Dybenko brought 5,000 sailors into Petrograd, where they manned roadblocks around the Taurida Palace in which the Constituent Assembly was to meet. When the assembly convened the following afternoon, they also provided a boisterously ominous guard in the hall that enabled Sverdlov to elbow the elected Social Revolutionary chairman aside and take the chair. Sverdlov then presented a Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People as the basis for the constitution of ‘a federation of Soviet national republics.’ It affirmed two principles:

that ‘power must be vested wholly and entirely ... in the Soviets of Workers, Soldiers, and Peasants’ Deputies’ and that the soviets would be the sources of ‘authoritative’ decisions on nationality questions. The Bolsheviks walked out after the delegates refused to accept the declaration, and a decree issued the next day in the name of the soviets dissolved the assembly. A week later, the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets, meeting also in the Taurida Palace, adopted the declaration, therewith creating the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic (RSFSR).²²

OFFENSIVES AGAINST THE DON COSSACKS

In early January 1918, the southern limit of Bolshevik control ran roughly along a line from, Gomel, 100 miles north of Kiev, to Kharkov, 250 miles east of Kiev, to Samara on the middle Volga and thence east through the southern Urals to Ufa and Chelyabinsk. In terms of industrial and agricultural capacity close to two-thirds and in terms of territory and population about one-third of European Russia lay south of the line. Kharkov, the second city in the Ukraine, gave Antonov-Ovseenko a politically and strategically valuable foothold from which he could attack in three directions: southwestward along the left bank of the Dnepr River to drive a wedge between Kaledin and the Central Rada, southeastward along the Donets River toward Kaledin’s strongholds at Rostov and Novocherkassk, and westward toward Kiev. Since Kharkov was more than 800 miles from Orenburg, Antonov-Ovseenko could not directly control operations against Dutov’s Cossacks, but an experienced Bolshevik, Valerian Kuybyshev, was in Samara and had taken over the city in the name of the party on 9 November. At Samara, the rail-lines running northeast to Omsk on the Trans-Siberian Railroad and southeast to Tashkent on the Afghan–Indian frontier crossed the Volga. Dutov’s headquarters was in Orenburg on the Tashkent line, and his area extended north nearly to the Omsk line, which the Cossacks had cut at Chelyabinsk in November.

Geographical accident had put Kuybyshev in position to become the first Bolshevik leader actually to organize a military offensive, and he was at least slightly better qualified for the undertaking than most professional revolutionaries, having come from a military family and been graduated from the cadet school in Omsk. Samara (which was later to bear Kuybyshev’s name) had afforded the means with which to engage Dutov’s force fairly quickly. It had railroad lines to the east and the west and a garrison of four reserve regiments. While the reserve regiments were no more willing to take to the field than the guards regiments in Petrograd had been, they had weapons and ammunition and some artillery; and Kuybyshev, who had been working in Samara since March 1917, had managed to recruit some reasonably reliable Bolsheviks in them.

On 29 November, Kuybyshev had appointed a 27-year-old regimental clerk who used the name Vasiliy Blyukher commissar of a detachment being formed to drive the Cossacks out of Chelyabinsk.²³ Blyukher had been discharged from the

army in 1915 as a noncommissioned officer after having been severely wounded and had reenlisted early in 1917 after having been unable to settle on any civilian occupation that suited him. According to his own account – given years later – he had joined the Bolshevik Party in November 1916. Kuybyshev had noticed him because he had been one of the few soldiers who had shown interest in Marxist literature and theory.

Following Kuybyshev’s instructions, Blyukher and the garrison commissar had, in a day, scraped together about 500 riflemen and enough artillerymen to man four cannon. With them and a ‘military specialist’, an infantry captain, as commander Blyukher, on 30 November, had headed east by train. Three days later, having covered 450 miles, the detachment steamed into Chelyabinsk. The Cossacks had in the meantime decamped and gone south 75 miles to Troitsk. Blyukher thereupon became the chairman of a military revolutionary committee set up in Chelyabinsk and began recruiting Red Guards to replace the soldiers in his detachment, most of whom demobilized themselves after they heard the armistice negotiations had started.

The southern Urals was the most remote and least strategically significant of the insurgent areas, but in December 1917, it was also the one in which the Bolsheviks were best situated to open an offensive. The Samara detachment’s advance to Chelyabinsk had driven a spearhead into the northeastern quarter of the Orenburg Cossack region. All the centers Dutov controlled (except Verkhneuralsk) were strung along the railroad, which branched at Chelyabinsk, making a 600-mile-long curve to the southwest via Troitsk, Orsk, and Orenburg to Uralsk. Dutov had, perhaps, 7,000 Cossacks to defend that vast sweep of territory. The Bolsheviks could draw on Red Guards from Ufa, Ekaterinburg, and Perm as well as Chelyabinsk but could not have mounted an offensive against the more experienced Cossacks had it not been for a ‘northern flying detachment’, which arrived in Chelyabinsk from Petrograd on 29 December. The detachment, under a 20-year-old naval warrant officer, S. D. Pavlov, who had led sailors in the attack on the Winter Palace and on the Pulkovo Heights, numbered about 1,500 men according to Soviet official figures. (Blyukher gave the number as ‘three or four thousand’.)²⁴ Pavlov had received his orders from Lenin through Antonov-Ovseenko and had drawn his men from the crews of two battleships and a Siberian regiment stationed in Petrograd.

The ‘northern flying detachment’ left Chelyabinsk on 3 January and after several skirmishes with Cossack bands on the way, took Troitsk on the night of the 7th. There it was 90 miles east of Verkhneuralsk and 250 miles north of Orsk, but Verkhneuralsk could not be reached by railroad and lay in the mountains behind the Ural River. With an improvised armored train in the lead, the detachment steamed south away from Troitsk on 20 January. After several attempts to stop the detachment failed – at Orsk and at points along the 180-mile stretch from there to Orenburg – Dutov, who had already recalled the Cossacks from Uralsk, gave up Orenburg on 31 January and retreated northward through the mountains toward Verkhneuralsk.²⁵

The first distinctively Soviet operational doctrine, that of ‘echelon war’, underwent its initial field test in the south Urals campaign. Its objectives were to seize the insurgents’ bases and to secure ‘bread’ to feed the people of Petrograd and Moscow. Chelyabinsk, Orenburg, Rostov-on-the-Don, and Kiev were all major grain-milling centers, and the food shortages in the northern cities were, if anything, worse than they had been a year earlier when they had touched off the revolution. The railroads were the means for covering long distances fast and for driving directly in on the targeted localities, sometimes from several directions at once. The staggered, echelon, formation employed in air war may have provided the tactical model. Each train became an ‘echelon.’ Detachments advanced in three echelons: the first, a reconnaissance party mounted on hand cars or, when a spare one was to be had, a locomotive; the second, an armored train carrying artillery and machine guns protected by sand bags, railroad crossties, and boiler plate; the third, one or more trainloads of riflemen. According to Soviet accounts, the detachments could generally rely on acquiring a fourth echelon of local workers when they reached their objectives. The ‘echelon war’ was most effective as a device for overawing loosely organized, irresolute opponents with an appearance of concentrated mobile power.

OFFENSIVES AGAINST KALEDIN AND THE CENTRAL RADA

Offensives against the Central Rada and Kaledin began in the second week of January 1918 when a detachment of sailors and Red Guards from Petrograd and Moscow reached Lozovaya on the Kiev–Rostov railroad 75 miles due south of Kharkov. While that detachment continued south to the Dnepr crossings at Ekaterinoslavl and Aleksandrovsk, others began advances northwestward from Lozovaya toward Poltava and southeastward toward Gorlovka. By 20 January, detachments had fanned out to Poltava, 180 miles southeast of Kiev; to Aleksandrovsk; and to Gorlovka and Lugansk, the former 110 miles northwest and the latter 90 miles north of Rostov. The People’s Commissariat of Military Affairs was shipping 27,000 rifles and some machine guns to arm Red Guards in the newly occupied cities.

Muravyev was in command of the advance past Poltava and on 26 January also took over detachments bearing in from the northeast along the Bryansk–Kiev railroad and along the west bank of the Dnepr from Ekaterinoslavl. By the Soviet count, Muravyev had ‘no more than 6,500’ Red Guards, soldiers, and sailors and the Central Rada had ‘no less than 12,000 well armed soldiers’ in Kiev.²⁶ However, as in Petrograd and Moscow, by no means all the soldiers in Kiev would fight. The Rada also did not begin to react until the night of 28 January when pro-Bolshevik workers seized the arsenal and a number of points in the city. By then Muravyev’s columns were less than 75 miles away, and the few Cossack and cadet battalions sent out could not stop them. Moving slowly and cautiously, they entered Kiev on 8 February. The Central Rada thereupon withdrew to the Zhitomir in the western

Ukraine and ordered its representatives in Brest-Litovsk to sign a separate peace treaty with the Germans and Austro-Hungarians, which was done the next day.

The Bolshevik detachments at Gorlovka and Lugansk were in the Donets Basin, the single most heavily industrialized region in Russia and a potential wellspring of working-class support. Kaledin held two small areas: the largest, centered on Rostov, reached west about 40 miles to Taganrog and north 20 miles to Novochoerkassk, the other was on the Donets River around Kamensk 90 miles north of Rostov. Kaledin's headquarters and his main force, about 6,000 Don Cossacks, were at Novochoerkassk. Associated with him in the Rostov-Taganrog area, Kaledin had the 3,500-man Volunteer Army, which Generals M. V. Alekseev, Kornilov, and Denikin had begun forming after the Bolsheviks took over the *Stavka*. The Bolshevik detachment at Gorlovka was another 'northern flying detachment' out of Petrograd under R. F. Sivers, a lieutenant who had held a command in the campaign against Kerenskiy. That at Lugansk was the 1st Moscow Revolutionary Detachment under Yu. V. Sablin, a 20-year-old, 1917 graduate of an officer candidate school.

The 1st Moscow Revolutionary Detachment's arrival in Lugansk just 70 miles to their west unsettled the Cossacks in Kamensk, and they formed a military revolutionary committee on 23 January, thereby taking themselves out of the contest. Baltic Fleet sailors coming from the west and the 'northern flying detachment's' arrival at Matveyev-Kurgan, 40 miles north of Taganrog, on 26 January had a similar effect at Taganrog, from which the Volunteer Army's troops departed on the 30th. In February, 17,500 armed men with four armored trains each mounting a dozen cannon and ten machine guns were ranged against Rostov and Novochoerkassk, but they were barely moving. Although Kaledin became discouraged at the sight of the odds against him and shot himself on the 11th, the Cossacks and the Volunteer Army held out for another two weeks. Finally, after Lenin had twice demanded they do so, the Bolshevik detachments bestirred themselves on 24 February, and the next day the Cossacks, still numbering between 5,000-6,000, withdrew into the steppe east of the Don while the Volunteer Army, with Kornilov in command, retreated southward out of Rostov into the Kuban.²⁷

The three-month-old Soviet Republic had extended its authority throughout European Russia and its influence into Finland, where Finnish Red Guards backed by Russian garrisons that had not been withdrawn after the independence seized Helsingfors and the population centers of the south at the end of January. But the Soviet tenure was already again in question everywhere. The Brest-Litovsk peace conference had broken down completely on 9 February when Trotskiy announced that Soviet Russia would neither accept the terms the Central Powers had offered nor fight. After the German High Command had overcome its astonishment at that attempt to terminate the war unilaterally, the Germans and Austro-Hungarians had, on 18 February, begun an advance along the entire front. On 25 February, they were marching into the Ukraine as allies of the Central Rada and closing to the Narva River-Lake Peipus Line, virtually the last natural barrier on the approach to Petrograd short of the Pulkovo Heights.

Birth of the Red Army, War, and Peace

AN ARMY OF A NEW TYPE¹

Although Bolshevik doctrine did not follow mainstream Marxism and reject the idea of war, it held armies to be an unmitigated evil that would have to be abolished along with capitalism. In his work, *The State and Revolution*, written while he was in hiding during August and September 1917, Lenin predicted that the revolution would wipe the standing army off the face of the earth and replace it with a workers' militia. Lenin did not anticipate, however, that the Bolsheviks would have to create an armed force while actively engaged against domestic insurgents and still nominally at war with foreign enemies. When government and party committees went to work in December 1917 to devise a substitute for the then rapidly disappearing old army, experience with the Red Guards had shown that the politically 'higher type' force, the militia, was not likely to be effective in the existing circumstances. Consequently, the committees had to take up what Lenin described as 'an entirely new question which had never been dealt with before, even theoretically', namely, how to incorporate into a workers' state the most reactionary bourgeois institution, the standing army.²

By 16 January, when the Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People authorized the creation of a new army 'and the complete disarming of the propertied classes', the committees had settled on a 300,000-man volunteer force to be composed of workers and 'working' peasants. On the 28th, the Council of People's Commissars issued a decree establishing 'a new army, to be called the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army'. The army, the decree read, would be the 'bulwark of Soviet authority', the model from which all national armies would be replaced in 'the near future', and 'support for the impending socialist revolution in Europe'. The recruits would be drawn from 'the most aware and best organized elements of the working classes', and enlistment would require testimonials from party, trade union, or government organizations.³

The decision to create the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army deepened a rift developing within the party over the peace negotiations. A faction in the Central Committee calling themselves Left Communists was demanding a party conference

to decide the question of peace, their contention being that the party's obligation to promote world revolution prohibited its making peace with the Central Powers no matter what the consequences for the Soviet state might be. To them an army of any kind was a totally inappropriate instrument for conducting revolution. The Left Communists, whose chief spokesman was Nikolay Bukharin, a member of the Central Committee and the editor of *Pravda*, were prominent party members; and their position, although reckless from the practical point of view, was doctrinally sound. Lenin, in his reply to them, belittled the idea of a conference (because it could only elicit opinion) but conceded that the issue might have to be brought before a full-scale party congress 'to get precise instructions';⁴

At the end of January, the *Stavka* and the Revolutionary Field Staff, the two military staffs with something like national competence, were still in Mogilev. That of the *Stavka* was barely vestigial. Erylenko, the commander in chief, had completely lost interest in the *Stavka* after the peace conference began. On the few occasions they had talked, General Bonch-Bruyevich had reported on the progressive decay taking place in the front and had recommended seeking out enough reliable officers and men to at least form 'screens' that could offer some resistance if the peace talks broke down. Krylenko had seen the likelier result as being the emergence of another Kornilov who would march against Petrograd, not against the Germans. The Revolutionary Field Staff had organized forces for the offensive against the Central Rada and was engaged – on its own doorstep, so to speak – against a Polish legionary corps under General Iozef Dowbor-Musnicki that had refused to serve under Soviet command or to disband and had barricaded itself in a cluster of towns 60 miles south of Mogilev.

On 19 February, the day after Germany broke the armistice, Bonch-Bruyevich informed Lenin and Krylenko by telegram that he was closing out the *Stavka* and taking what remained of it eastward out of the Germans' reach. That night a telegram from Lenin ordered him to bring what was left of the *Stavka* to Petrograd 'at once'. Three nights later, after having steamed laterally across a continuous wave of troops pouring eastward away from the front, a train carrying Bonch-Bruyevich, four other generals, and some other officers reached Petrograd. The Revolutionary Field Staff had, meanwhile, gone east 250 miles to Orel.⁵

Summoned to the Smolnyy on the night of 22 February, an hour or two after his arrival in the capital, Bonch-Bruyevich secured a distinctly more receptive hearing for his ideas on screening forces than he had from Krylenko earlier. Lenin put him and the generals with him to work on the spot. On the 19th, the Council of People's Commissars had sent a radio message to Berlin stating its readiness to accept the German peace terms, but there had been no response. During the day on the 22nd, as the Germans approached Pskov, it had in a decree, 'The Socialist Fatherland Is in Danger', initiated a scorched earth policy and a virtual *levée en masse*. Bonch-Bruyevich and his colleagues drafted plans that night to an accompaniment of factory whistles calling out the workers. At mass meetings the next day, volunteers were taken into the Red Army directly off the streets; and before dark, trains set off from the Warsaw Station towards Pskov carrying the 1st Red

Army Regiment (2,500 men), the 6th Tukums Latvian Rifle Regiment, and Red Guard detachments.

It is said that the mass meetings brought 60,000 men into the Red Army in Petrograd, 20,000 in Moscow and thousands more in other places around the country; and 23 February was subsequently celebrated as the anniversary of the Red Army.⁶ The choice was probably appropriate, since the circumstances existing on that day were more influential in shaping the Red Army than were those assumed in the 28 January decree. On the other hand, many who volunteered may have lost their enthusiasm quite quickly. The Petrograd recruits were supposed to have gone into the I Corps of the RKKA (Workers' and Peasants' Red Army): two months later, its strength was 15,000.

The most profoundly significant circumstances first emerged, in fact, late in the morning on 23 February when a reply in the form of a 48-hour ultimatum arrived from the German headquarters in Brest-Litovsk. It imposed a devastating set of nonnegotiable new conditions, chief among them: that Russia renounce all claims to the Baltic States, that Russia immediately conclude peace with the Ukrainian People's Republic and withdraw all of its troops and Red Guards from the Ukraine and Finland; that the Russian Army, including any military units the Soviet government had formed, be completely demobilized; and that the German forces would hold all the territory they occupied after 18 February until the demobilization was completed.⁷ More than half of the ultimatum's term had expired by the time the courier bringing it from Brest-Litovsk reached Petrograd.

Lenin had made up his mind to accept whatever the Germans offered, but the Central Committee, in which the Left Communists had increased their support, had failed to achieve a consensus of any kind. The Central Committee went into session on the morning of the 23rd with 15 full members present, 8 of them against signing the treaty. Lenin threatened to appeal to the party at large if the vote went against him. Trotskiy opposed signing on practical grounds, namely, that peace on the German terms would be as perilous as war and would lose the party respect abroad; but he argued also that a divided party could not continue the war. Stalin talked about not signing but reopening peace negotiations – until Lenin pointed out that failure to sign would bring Soviet power to an end 'within three weeks'. When the debate ended an hour or so before midnight, Lenin and six others, Stalin included, voted to sign; Bukharin and three other Left Communists voted against signing; and Trotskiy and three members, one the chief of the *Cheka*, Dzershinskiy, who were aligned with the Left Communists in principle but were impressed by Trotskiy's argument, abstained. The Left Communists protested that the seven affirmative votes did not constitute a bona fide majority. Nevertheless, after securing a slightly less ambiguous majority in the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, Lenin telegraphed an acceptance to Berlin shortly before dawn the next morning.⁸

The Soviet signatories entered German-held territory at Pskov on the night of the 24th, but from there, treated with equal disregard by the local German and Russian authorities, they needed four more days to make their way to Brest-Litovsk.

In the meantime, replying to an inquiry from Petrograd, the German Army Command had stated that the armistice would not be reinstated, and the German troops would continue advancing until the day a peace treaty was signed.⁹ When the signing took place on 3 March, the demarcation line between German-occupied and Soviet territory ran almost due south from Narva, 90 miles west of Petrograd, to Pskov, Mogilev, Kiev, and Odessa.

That its birthplace, Petrograd, could not remain the capital of the Soviet Republic was obvious before the treaty was signed. The government acted fast to put itself on a war footing. Sverdlov headed a committee for the defense of Petrograd with powers similar to those the Military Revolutionary Committee had held. Under Bonch-Bruyevich and two commissars, the *Stavka* returned to life as the Supreme Military Council. But militarily Petrograd's fate was entirely in the Germans' hands; and whether or not they decided to expend whatever additional effort might be needed to take it, with the Latvian regiment gone, the city was none too safe a place for the government to be. The most reliable sailors had been sent elsewhere, and those that were left had become a roistering, swaggering mob that refused to fight when they were sent under Dybenko's command to be the main force in the Narva screen. The soldiers who had provided vocal support in the Soviet had been demobilized and were on their way home. The only really secure ground lay inside the precincts of the Smolnyy, where the Latvian battalion kept watch.

That the Soviet regime could maintain itself anywhere else in the country was almost equally in question. Only 30,000–50,000 effective troops had existed before the German attack, and their number had certainly not increased. The Red Guards, despite their apparent ubiquity, did not in total amount to more than 150,000 men. The peace treaty, particularly through the clauses applying to the Ukraine, cost the country 71 per cent of its total coal output, 68 per cent of its pig iron production, and the greater part of its best farm land. All the territory gained in the offensives against Kaledin and the Central Rada was lost either to the German occupation or to the German-backed Rada. Antonov-Ovseenko, recently the victorious commander in chief in the south, became the commander of the southern screen and chairman of a shadow 'Ukrainian Council of People's Commissars'. Voroshilov, the *Cheka* commissar of Petrograd, left the capital to join a small group, the 'Southern Regional Soviet of the People's Economy', charged with organizing pro-Soviet partisan detachments in the Donets Basin. The White Finns had found a military leader in the ex-tsarist general, Baron Carl Mannerheim, and a first-rate fighting force in the 27th Jaeger Regiment, which was composed of Finns who had trained and served with the German Army. A German–Finnish alliance signed on 7 March included military assistance provisions.¹⁰

On the eve of the departure to Moscow, the party held its Seventh Congress (6–8 March) to establish a position on the peace treaty before a Congress of Soviets scheduled to meet in Moscow shortly after the government arrived there took up the question of ratification. Time was short. The time set in the German ultimatum was running out. Because of that and for tactical reasons, the congress was small,

106 delegates, of whom 47 had a vote. The Left Communists resumed their attack on the peace policy; and Trotskiy, apparently with considerable effect, repeated his contention that the party and the revolution could better and more honorably survive by continuing the war but that it was necessary ‘to sacrifice our Ego in the cause of party unity’ and vote to ratify the treaty.¹¹ With 30 affirmatives votes, the congress passed a resolution ‘On War and Peace’, in which it accepted the necessity to ratify the peace treaty – and, in a secret section, pledged to train the whole ‘adult population, regardless of sex’, for a ‘patriotic war of liberation in the Russian tradition’.¹²

After the decision on the war and peace resolution, the four Central Committee members who had voted against the treaty on 23 February and whom the congress had just reelected to the Central Committee declared, without formally resigning, that they would not work on the Central Committee or at their posts in the government, all of which except for Bukharin’s editorship of *Pravda* were at the people’s commissar level. Four Left Communist delegates, three of them people’s commissars, made the same declaration with regard to their government posts. In one of its final acts, the congress resolved that Central Committee members could not express disagreement with it by refusing to serve and implored the dissidents to ‘take counsel with the mass organizations’ and retract their declarations.¹³ After the plea failed and the Left Communists who had not withdrawn did not change their stand on the peace treaty, Lenin preferred the inconvenience and embarrassment of what amounted to a strike in the Central Committee and the government to the risk of an open division in the party.

The congress also adopted a resolution changing the party’s name to Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik), ‘Bolshevik’ being retained because it was the name by which the party was known in Russia and abroad. Although the change had been contemplated for nearly a year, it was not unrelated to the current situation. Russia, as Lenin explained, had advanced to a superior stage of political development, the dictatorship of the proletariat, which had no historical antecedent other than the Paris Commune of 1870; therefore, the party had to set itself apart from the foreign social democratic parties, which were still enmeshed in bourgeois democracy.¹⁴

At the Fourth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, which met in the Kremlin (14–16 March), Lenin had enough Bolshevik votes to ratify the peace treaty by nearly a two-thirds majority. Apparently about 80 Left Communists refused to vote and another hundred or more cast negative votes or abstentions. The Left Social Revolutionaries voted against the ratification, and their representatives withdrew from the Council of People’s Commissars.¹⁵

A day before the Congress of Soviets convened, Trotskiy had become the People’s Commissar for Military Affairs. Although his failed gamble on the ‘neither peace nor war’ formula had caused him to resign the foreign affairs post, he had kept Lenin’s and the party’s confidence, and the party congress had reelected him to the Central Committee with a vote second only to Lenin’s. Having declined to lead a war faction, he had come to represent the other side of the peace policy. Lenin

had made it clear that another side existed. The treaty just signed, he had said, was 'a Tilsit peace', a brutal humiliation comparable to that which Napoleon Bonaparte had imposed on Prussia at Tilsit in 1807. But he had remained in the party, saying, 'Periods of war teach us that peace has not infrequently in history served as a respite and a means of mustering forces for new battles.'¹⁶

THE RED ARMY IN TROTSKIY'S HANDS

Trotsky's take-over of the military affairs commissariat terminated the Red Army's gestation phase. The time of multiple military affairs commissars and of resort to autonomous committees and collegia ended. Dybenko, after being expelled from the party for a time over the Narva affair, went into the underground in the Ukraine. Krylenko found an outlet for his legal training as a prosecutor in political cases. Antonov-Ovseenko was caught up in Ukrainian affairs. Trotsky also assumed the chairmanships of the All-Russia Collegium for Red Army Organization and the Supreme Military Council, the latter having been established as a five-member committee consisting of the People's Commissar for Military Affairs, a deputy for naval affairs, and three 'well-informed and experienced' military specialists, one in naval matters.¹⁷ As the *Stavka* had earlier seemed to have done, the Revolutionary Field Staff had become superfluous. It continued for a few more weeks before its personnel were brought to Moscow and reassigned.

The All-Russia Collegium for Red Army Organization was an interdepartmental committee originally appointed to lay down the principles on which a Bolshevik military system could appropriately be based. After the decree on the Red Army, which it had written, took effect on 28 January, it had turned to organizational and personnel questions. On becoming its chairman, Trotsky promptly elevated military effectiveness to first place, well ahead of political acceptability, among the collegium's guiding premises. While continuing recruitment for schools, the collegium had begun setting up to train Red Guards and former noncommissioned officers as 'communist' commanders. Trotsky announced publicly that the proletariat could not find the military leadership it needed in its own ranks and invited former officers to join the Red Army as military specialists. The Red Army's path to becoming an army of a new type was going to be much the same as the one all other modern armies had taken. Trotsky assured the prospective military specialists that they would have the deciding word in military matters and called on the workers to 'exercise self-restraint' and to remember that they were 'not the center of the Cosmos', in other words, not to expect the kind of freewheeling democracy extended to the old army in its last days to apply in the Red Army as well.¹⁸

Trotsky had quickly become caught up in the work of organizing an army, but the Left Communists were in no wise disposed to accept the results of the party congress as the 'precise instructions' Lenin had talked about. The Resolution on War and Peace, in their judgment, exposed the heresy they had seen in the peace

policy all along. And they stood on solid ground: Bolshevik doctrine had always taken revolutionary war to be the only justifiable form of war and had condemned all other forms, including war of national defense; and Lenin had, in 1906, designated partisan (guerrilla) warfare as the method the party would employ in revolutionary war. Therefore, a ‘patriotic’ war constituted rank ‘defensism’, that is, an abdication of the party’s true mission, which was to promote world revolution, in favor of an attempt to keep and protect what had been taken in Russia. An army of any kind was a political aberration; moreover, a regular army such as Trotskiy projected appeared so unattainable under existing conditions in Russia as to necessitate an all but permanent abandonment of the revolution. The Left Communist newspaper, *Communist*, which appeared briefly in March (until the Petrograd city government suppressed it), advanced a theory of ‘field revolution on a world-wide scale’, which held that revolutionary war could not adopt the operational characteristics of national armies but had to be conducted by partisan warfare and class agitation.¹⁹

Trotsky’s call for military specialists was heard and brought in numbers of former line and staff officers. Bonch-Bruyevich had observed that some officers who categorically rejected the revolution had volunteered to serve in the screens after the German advance began, but most probably were not influenced by political or patriotic considerations. The old army’s disappearance had simply terminated their careers and left them with a choice between becoming particularly despised and suspect civilians or continuing to pursue their profession under surveillance in the Red Army.

One of them was Mikhail Tukhachevskiy, a 25-year-old lieutenant in the Semenovskiy Guards who had returned to his regiment in October 1917 after more than three years in a German prison camp. Elected a company commander in December, he became unemployed in March 1918 when the regiment was disbanded. In the first week in April, he joined the Red Army and the Communist Party. Aristocratic descent on his father’s side and membership in a guards regiment were neither social nor professional advantages in the Red Army. On the other hand, he and Valerian Kuybyshev’s younger brother, Nikolay, who joined the Red Army at the same time, had been classmates and friends in cadet school, and hardly any of the incoming military specialists had a high-level contact in the party. His party membership and Kuybyshev’s sponsorship qualified him for an appointment in the Central Committee’s military affairs section, which was located in the Kremlin, and in less than two months he became the commissar of the Moscow defense area.²⁰

Boris Shaposhnikov, a 36-year-old former colonel and member of a family in the service gentry, was a more typical military specialist. Shaposhnikov had gone through the Moscow military cadet school and the General Staff Academy. During the war, he had been a staff officer and chief of staff in cavalry and Cossack divisions. In 1917 he commanded the 16th Mingrelian Grenadier Regiment in the Caucasian Grenadier Division, and in December the troops had elected him division commander. After being discharged in the March 1918 demobilization, he took employment as a court clerk and applied for admission to the Red Army,

which accepted him in May and assigned him to the Supreme Military Council staff.²¹

Since a commissar would have to be posted alongside just about every former officer (and commissars were, for good measure, assigned to all commanders, including party members), the military specialist influx made political control a parallel and at least coequal specialty in the Red Army. In April, Trotskiy founded the All-Russia Bureau of Military Commissars directly under himself. The bureau opened a path to quasi-military and – in more than a few instances – military careers for party members without training or experience. In May also, the *Cheka* began activating O.O. sections (*osobyie otdely*) to detect spies, saboteurs, and counterrevolutionaries among the Red Army personnel, including the commissars.

Bringing back the former officers through the front door, so to speak, only a month or two after their entire class had been cast into the discard, of course struck the Left Communists as a reckless flirtation with counterrevolution no matter what controls were imposed. Moreover, the ‘military practitioners’, the party activists who had undermined the old army, had organized and commanded detachments, and believed themselves to be the legitimate backbone of the future Red Army, did not embrace the idea that the Soviet Republic needed to reemploy the old regime’s officers. They were beginning to look on the operations they had conducted at the Winter Palace, the Kremlin, on the Pulkovo Heights, and against Kaledin and Dutov as very considerable military accomplishments and the dawning of a new era in the art of war. The Left Communist thesis of field revolution exactly suited their preferences for loose organization and freewheeling operations, while Trotskiy referred to those disdainfully as ‘guerrillism’ and ‘anarchism.’²²

THE FRAGILE PEACE

After the peace, the Soviet Republic was in a state of painful isolation and progressively deepening military vulnerability. The Allied embassies and war missions had withdrawn to Vologda, 300 miles north of Moscow on the railroad to Arkhangelsk, the White Sea port through which they could leave Russia; and a newly arrived German Ambassador, Count Wilhelm Mirbach, and his staff were positioned in Moscow to monitor Soviet observance of the treaty. Two screens occupied the North and West Fronts’ former sectors. The western screen, which had become strategically the more important after the government’s move to Moscow, had 20,000 troops on a 400-mile-long front. The northern screen had 4,000 men at Narva, 2,000 at Pskov, and about 2,000 on the Isthmus of Karelia. The 3rd Latvian Brigade, two regiments under Col. Vatsetis, in the western screen and the 6th Tukums Latvian Rifle Regiment in the northern screen were the only conventionally organized units. The rest were loosely structured independent detachments.

On 29 March, German and some Austrian troops, ostensibly assisting their Ukrainian allies, marched into Poltava. Ignoring for the next several weeks a

Soviet offer to negotiate, they continued eastward at a steady pace, occupying Kharkov on 9 April and the cities in the Donets Basin in succession thereafter. Under Antonov-Ovseenko as ‘Supreme Commander in Chief of the Southern Republic’, Red Army, Red Guard, and partisan detachments – including Siver’s flying detachment in the Taganrog-Rostov sector and partisans Voroshilov had recruited in Lugansk – formed five armies to defend the Donets Basin industrial complex. Their combined strength was less than 25,000 men. At the end of April, on orders from Moscow, they abandoned the cities they were to have attempted to hold. At Lugansk, Voroshilov had merged the ‘Third’ and ‘Fifth Ukrainian Armies’ and begun a 300-mile trek eastward across the Donets and the Don to Tsaritsyn on the Volga. The other two armies withdrew toward Rostov and subsequently crossed the Don there. On 4 May, *Pravda* reported that Antonov-Ovseenko had terminated all military operations against the German and Ukrainian forces ‘in keeping with the Brest-Litovsk Treaty’ and had relinquished his post as Supreme Commander in Chief. Over Lenin’s and Trotskiy’s names, the same issue announced that the forces were being withdrawn to be disarmed and the Soviet Government was ready to enter into a ceasefire and to establish a permanent demarcation line ‘forthwith’. The Germans occupied the whole Donets Basin, took Rostov on 8 May, and then informed the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin that they did not contemplate any further advances in the Ukraine (or in Finland, where the White Finns had taken their last major objective, Vyborg, on 30 April).²³

CZECH REVOLT AND FOREIGN INTERVENTION

Some 40,000 Czech soldiers had been coparticipants in the Bolshevik retreat out of the Ukraine. Their situation was exquisitely complicated. They were Austro-Hungarian nationals who regarded themselves as a corps in the army of a non-existent Czechoslovak state fighting on the Allied side. Thomas G. Masaryk, the leader of the Czechoslovak independence movement, had recruited them in Russian prisoner of war camps during 1917; and in November 1917, General Dukhonin, then the acting Supreme Commander in Chief, had accepted them as a two-division corps in the Russian Army. Like the Latvian regiments the Czech corps preserved its military effectiveness after the armistice, but Bolshevism did not attract them, and they wanted to carry on the fight against the Central Powers. To do that after Russia left the war they would have to get from the Zhitomir area in the Ukraine west of Kiev to France. In mid-February 1917, after the Bolsheviks captured Kiev, Masaryk and the head of the French military mission in Kiev had negotiated an agreement with Col. Muravyev under which the Czech corps, fully armed and equipped, was to be permitted to travel at French expense via the Trans-Siberian Railroad to Vladivostok. Muravyev had secured a concurrence from Petrograd, which he conveyed to Masaryk on 16 February, the day before the armistice ended.

By the 18th, going halfway around the world to seek action against the Central Powers hardly seemed necessary. Muravyev offered the corps a full partnership in a projected effort to hold Kiev. Within a week, however, the Czechs realized that the Bolsheviks were going to take whatever terms the other side imposed and it was therefore high time for them to be heading east. The impending peace made their status dangerously uncertain. They would become either renegade Austro-Hungarian soldiers or, having been accepted into the French Army, a belligerent force on neutral territory. On the other hand, after the Germans stopped on the Dnepr in early March, their short-term position was remarkably good. They were the largest, best-organized, and best-armed force anywhere east of the demarcation line. That and an ardent desire to see them leave disposed the newly independent Ukrainian authorities not to put obstacles in their way. Before the peace was a week old, the corps had requisitioned enough railroad rolling stock to make up 70 trains, each with about 40 cars, and had the first sets steaming north across the border toward Kursk.

The first leg, the roughly 500 miles from Bakhmach in the northern Ukraine past Kursk and Voronezh to Penza, went well enough, although the Bolsheviks, among them Antonov-Ovseenko, who had moved his headquarters to Kursk, had manifestly not anticipated seeing the heavily-armed Czechs traveling with commissaries stocked in the Ukraine and aboard their own trains. While the Soviet authorities were probably every bit as eager to get the Czechs off their hands as the Ukrainians had been, they, no doubt remembering how they had recently used the railroads, saw plentiful reason for concern in the Czech's self-sufficiency. On 22 March, the chairman of the Penza Soviet refused to let the trains make the turn into the line that would carry them into Siberia. Subsequently, after four days' negotiations in Penza and Moscow, the Czechs traded all of their artillery and the greater part of their small arms and ammunition for an agreement granting them passage to Vladivostok.²⁴ The concessions were considerable on both sides, since the Czech corps still constituted a stronger force than the Bolsheviks could muster between Penza and Vladivostok.

The Czechs regarded their concession as more than sufficient to entitle them to an expeditious departure from the country. The Soviet authorities, on the other hand, saw theirs as a considerable sacrifice in a larger and for them potentially most dangerous game. The peace treaty had made German interventions a certainty in the Ukraine and in Finland (where General Ruediger von der Goltz landed a German division in the first week of April). The Allies had had schemes afoot for landings at Murmansk, Arkhangelsk, and Vladivostok since early in the year, and Trotsky had seemed at times almost willing to suppress his suspicion that the Bolshevik regime would be the target and accept Allied intervention as a counterweight to the Germans. He had not protested when small British and French naval parties landed in early March at Murmansk where Allied military assistance supplies delivered before November 1917 were stored – out of Soviet reach and less than a hundred miles from the Finnish border. Proximity to Vladivostok, availability of forces, and national policy made Japan the nation

likeliest to stage a strong intervention and the one whose motives the Bolsheviks most deeply mistrusted. In March 1918, to keep a watch on the city – and on each other – the Japanese had two cruisers stationed in Vladivostok harbor and the British and Americans each had one.

The first Czech train began the 5,300-mile trip from Penza to Vladivostok on the afternoon of 27 March in an atmosphere of mutual confidence and good will. The Penza Soviet had provided a safe-conduct instructing the authorities further along the line, in the name of the Council of People's Commissars, to permit and assist the train's passage. But the train had barely passed the Volga before the prospect of a smooth transit dimmed. On 28 March, the Irkutsk and Omsk Soviets, already fearing a Japanese intervention, demanded that the trains be stopped before they entered Siberia and rerouted to Arkhangelsk. A week later, when 200–300 Japanese marines went ashore at Vladivostok, an intervention also appeared imminent in Moscow; and on 9 April, Stalin, as People's Commissar for Nationalities, declared the Penza agreement to have been invalidated by subsequent events. He stated the new policy as being to disarm the Czechs completely, move them eastward in small groups, and not to allow them to congregate in large numbers in any one place. To divert them toward Arkhangelsk, he added, would not be possible because doing so would give the Allies an excuse for an intervention there.

The policy, Stalin maintained, had to be made clear to the Czechs and strictly enforced, but neither was done.²⁵ The commissariats in Moscow kept on negotiating with Czech, French, and British representatives on the questions of passage either to Vladivostok or Arkhangelsk while apparently hoping to resolve the issue by luring the rank and file into the Red Army. The soviets at Penza, Samara, Chelyabinsk, Omsk, and Irkutsk, and some in between, created delays and raised disputes over the numbers of weapons the trains carried but stopped short of provoking outright confrontations. Consequently, the first train reached Vladivostok on 28 April and a dozen or so followed over the next several weeks. The by far greater part of the corps, however, had yet to pass Chelyabinsk, and 17 trains were still west of Penza. Those troops, some of whom had barely moved in more than a month, were angry over the treatment they were getting from the Bolsheviks and unhappy with their own representatives in Moscow. In May their discontent grew as the parties in Moscow, Bolshevik, Czech, French, and British, seemed to be on the verge of agreeing to disarm the corps, immobilize it, and send the elements that had not passed Omsk to Arkhangelsk at some indeterminate time in the future.

On 23 May, delegates from the Czech trains meeting in Chelyabinsk rejected an order from their Moscow representatives to surrender their weapons and place themselves under Soviet control. Two days later fighting broke out when the Omsk Soviet attempted to halt two trains coming east, and Trotskiy thereupon ordered the soviets to disarm all the trains and shoot every Czech found with a rifle in his hands. On 29 May, citing a rise in counterrevolutionary activity and agitation in Moscow and elsewhere, Lenin and Trotskiy imposed martial law in the capital. These and the immediately subsequent events have caused 25 May 1918 to appear in Soviet historiography as the starting date of the Civil War.

In the Chelyabinsk meeting the Czechs had realized that they would have to take over the whole railroad from Penza to Vladivostok. Once the fighting began, it became apparent that distance, a full fifth of the Earth's circumference, was likely to be their greatest problem. They had Penza, Syzran, and Chelyabinsk before the end of the month, and their trains were moving across the railroad bridge over the Volga at Syzran. Anti-Bolshevik armed detachments calling themselves White Guards sprang up. As they had all along, the Red Guards, turned Red Army men, and the political leaders tempered their revolutionary ardor with prudence. On 5 June, the United States consular representative in Samara watched the local Red Army men execute a fast retreat into the city in their underwear after an early morning encounter with the Czechs. Later he saw the national gold reserve, which had been stored in the state bank, and the leadership of the Samara Soviet, including Kuybyshev, leave by boat for a more secure location.²⁶ By mid-June, having taken Samara, Ufa, Omsk, and Krasnoyarsk, the Czechs had virtually complete operational control of the railroad east to the Yenesei River crossing at Krasnoyarsk.²⁷

Meanwhile, the domestic counterrevolution had revived. The Volunteer Army, of which General Denikin had assumed command in April after Kornilov was killed, had increased to between 10,000 and 12,000 men by June and was making a bid to take over the Kuban. In May, General Krasnov, who had given his word not to take up arms against the revolution and gone into retirement, had accepted election as ataman of the Don Cossacks. Krasnov proclaimed an independent, anti-Bolshevik Cossack state, which suited the Germans' purposes exactly, and they were more than willing to give him weapons and ammunition in exchange for grain. The Volunteer Army's leaders were Russian nationalists who refused to deal with the Germans themselves but maintained close enough relations with Krasnov to benefit from his German contacts. In the southern Urals, the Czech uprising almost instantly revived the Ataman Dutov's fortunes. From March through May, Blyukher, as 'Commander of the Eastern Detachments', had carried on the echelon war against Dutov's Cossacks in the triangle formed by the railroads connecting Samara, Chelyabinsk, and Omsk. The Czech captures of Samara and Chelyabinsk automatically immobilized Blyukher's detachments and restored the initiative to the Cossacks. On 8 June, the *Komuch*, a committee composed of Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks who had been delegates to the Constituent Assembly, set itself up in Samara as a revolutionary anti-Bolshevik government; and a counterrevolutionary provisional government for Siberia appeared in Omsk two weeks later.²⁸

CONSCRIPTION AND THE 'NEW ARMY'

The effort to activate the Red Army had, meanwhile, not come anywhere near keeping pace with the descent into civil war. As of May, the All-Russia Collegium for Red Army Organization had 322,278 troops on its roster. Those consisted of

263,700 Red Army men, 36,611 Red Guards, and 21,887 partisans. In the total force, 199,000 men were armed, about 31,000 had military training, and 15,000 were judged combat-ready.²⁹ While the collegium could be said to have met the requirement for a 300,000-man army in less than four months, the feat was less one of recruitment than of bookkeeping which had blanketed existing detachments into the Red Army. The trained and combat-ready troops had probably acquired their qualifications in the old army.

In any event, Trotskiy was not proposing to build a 300,000-man Red Army. On 15 March, two days after he became the Commissar for Military Affairs, he had raised the requirement to 1.5 million men. Knowing he could not depend on volunteers to get a force that size, he had also secured Lenin's agreement in principle to conscription; but he had not instituted a draft. He and his associates later explained the delay as an effort to accumulate volunteers 'as piles which could be rammed into the ground' to provide a stable political foundation before work on the main structure began. Less lofty but equally cogent and certainly more compelling motives could have been that Soviet armed forces of any kind contravened the Brest-Litovsk Treaty and the Germans were having successes on the Western Front in April and May 1918 that made it appear unwise to provoke them.

From the first, the volunteer Red Army was incidental to Trotskiy's plans, a concession to necessity. Since German power prevented him for the time being from building a viable force of any kind, his main concerns in April and May were with laying a paper foundation and beginning to erect an organizational framework on it.³⁰ A series of decrees issued on and after 8 April, while seeming to reconfirm the volunteer army and provide as well for training the whole adult population as projected in the 'On War and Peace' resolution, actually substituted political control for doctrinal consistency in the 'new type' concept and opened the way for the reintroduction of conventional 'bourgeois' military practices. On 8 April, ostensibly as decisions pertaining to the training program for the citizenry at large and to volunteer recruitment and training, the Council of People's Commissars accepted universal military service as a principle, authorized military districts, and created the All-Russia Bureau of Military Commissars in the military affairs commissariat. A subsequent decree made appropriate training and experience prerequisites for command appointments at all levels.

Universal service was manifestly not going to produce a predominantly working-class force, and Bolsheviks with officer training were scarce in the company grades and nonexistent in the higher levels. On the other hand, the Bureau of Commissars, installed directly under the People's Commissar for Military Affairs, protected the party's interests while providing the means for exploiting military expertise the party did not have. The additional function, 'agitation', assigned to the bureau later in April made it responsible for troop political indoctrination as well. The commissar system – together with *Cheka* O.O. sections being installed in military units – guaranteed that whether the armed forces represented the working class or not, they would be the instrument of the Communist Party.

A decree Lenin endorsed on 4 May partitioned the Soviet-controlled territory

into 12 military districts, the same number the imperial government had maintained during the war as its principal organs for recruitment, training, and mobilization. Each district came under a military commissariat modeled on a smaller scale after the Supreme Military Council and consisting of a commissar, a 'military' commissar, and a 'military director' (*rukovoditel*).³¹ The district and subordinate regional, provincial, and local commissariats constituted a staff channel under the Supreme Military Council and independent of the soviets. The commissars were expected to be seasoned party members and to have been military practitioners. Among the first commissars appointed were F. I. Goloshchekin, a member of the party since 1903, to the Urals Military District and K. Ya. Zedin, a 14-year party member who had been an agitator in the Navy during the war, to the North Caucasus Military District. The military directors, whose function actually was to advise rather than to direct, were selected from among the most senior officers who had volunteered. At least two had been lieutenant generals, D. N. Nadezhnyy in the Urals and A. E. Snesev in the North Caucasus district commissariats, which placed them on an equal footing in terms of former rank with Bonch-Bruyevich, whose own position in the Supreme Military Council was the same as theirs in the commissariats.

Concurrently, Trotsky activated the All-Russia Main Staff in the People's Commissariat for Military Affairs. Drawing heavily on former staff officers, the Main Staff reconstituted organization, mobilization, training, and personnel sections as they had existed in the imperial general staff. A three-man collegium consisting of a former general, N. N. Stogov, as chief of staff and two commissars, A. I. Yegorov and N. I. Bessonov, headed the staff. Yegorov, a Social Revolutionary and ex-lieutenant colonel, had been the military advisor to the All-Russia Collegium for Red Army Organization. The Main Staff also absorbed part of the personnel and nearly the whole mission of the All-Russia Collegium for Red Army Organization. Under its chairman, N. I. Podvoyskiy, the collegium subsequently became the Supreme Military Inspectorate of the Red Army, a highly placed, imposingly titled but superfluous guardian of the party's interest.

In practical terms, the 1.5 million-man conscript army was very little closer to becoming a reality when the Czech revolt broke out in May than it had been in March when Trotsky made the decision. The military districts constituted a territorial machinery for mobilization and training, but the only actually functioning organs were ones the All-Russia Collegium had set up: regional recruiting stations in Petrograd, Moscow, and Kazan and 'flying bureaus' that were sent into threatened areas to organize local detachments. Podvoyskiy himself was on a mission of the latter type at Ufa in June when the Czechs cut the railroad at Samara and Chelyabinsk. In late April, in an apparently partial reversion to the militia principle, all workers between the ages of 18 and 40 were ordered to take 96 hours of basic military training during their free time in courses to be run by local party members – who would themselves have to be trained first.

On 29 May, four days after the Czech uprising began, Trotsky put through a decree authorizing conscription. The initial call-ups, in June, applied to 21- and 22-year-old workers in the Petrograd and Moscow urban areas and to 21–25-year-old workers

and ‘working’ peasants in the Volga, Urals, and Western Siberia Military Districts. Carried out with an accompaniment of mass meetings at which Lenin, Trotskiy, and other leading figures appeared, they brought in 10,000 men in Moscow and 5,000 in Petrograd. The Supreme Military Council rated the result as satisfactory in Moscow, although it was not clear whether the credit ought to go to the government’s appeal or to the catastrophic food situation. The amount of bread available to the average worker was then less than an ounce a day. The call-up in the three military districts, which was expected to yield 275,000 men, actually only secured about 40,000.³²

The Red Army was actually still an aggregation of independent, irregular detachments with a tenuous chain of command. The Supreme Military Council’s specific charge was to create central departments and ‘assemble all the information necessary to the work of a supreme command’.³³ Orders traveled in whatever channels, party or military, happened to exist; and their ultimate recipients, the detachment commands, regarded them as open to broad interpretation. Schools opened in February were giving workers, Red Guard leaders, and former non-commissioned officers command training, but their first courses, completed in May, turned out only 43 graduates. The Supreme Military Council developed plans in late April to convert to a uniform force structure based on 27,000-man divisions and to form initially 88 divisions at half strength. In early May, it upgraded Vatsetis’s Latvian brigade to a division, designated the detachments in Moscow as the 1st Moscow Soviet Infantry Division, and disbanded the I Corps of the RKKKA, using the 15,000 men it had acquired during the late February recruiting drive to form two divisions in the northern screen. But thereafter ‘the elimination of the detachment system and the forming of divisions on a firm footing proceeded very slowly,’ owing to insufficient command personnel, weapons, and supplies and to ‘the strong influence of partisanism and anarchism.’³⁴

In response to the Czech revolt, the Supreme Military Council, in mid-June, created the Red Army’s first operational commands, the East Front and, under it, the First and Second Armies. In doing so, it introduced an element that was going to become a permanent part of the command system: the Revolutionary Military Council consisting of a ‘people’s commissar’, a commander, and two commissar members. The commander was to issue all operational orders – with one commissar countersigning. In order of precedence, the people’s commissar clearly stood first. The people’s commissar of East Front was P. A. Kobozev, a 20-year party veteran who had been the Council of People’s Commissars’ chief representative for Western Siberia and Central Asia, and the commander was ex-lieutenant colonel Muravyev. The East Front’s mission was ‘to manage all detachments and operations against the Czechoslovak insurgents, their confederates, and bourgeois counterrevolutionaries.’³⁵ Its sector stretched 700 miles from Penza to Ufa to Troitsk, and its troops, scattered in local detachments, numbered 54,000 men.

First Army took over the Penza–Samara–Simbirsk–Kazan area. Its chief, Peoples Commissar Valerian Kuybychev, although he had recently lost Samara, no doubt

possessed considerably more authority than Tukhachevskiy, the army commander, did. Second Army, which had the dismal task of trying to establish itself in the Ufa–Orenburg area, went through three commanders by the first week in July – all of whom deserted. Tukhachevskiy described the detachments as having,

in the short time they had existed, developed an extraordinary homogeneous outlook, a military tradition. Leaders and men alike were afflicted with excessive egocentrism. There was no discipline to speak of, and while some elements, such as the armored trains and armored car detachments, struck our command as being quite fearsome, they did not behave that way against opponents.³⁶

On 4 July, the Fifth All-Russian Congress of Soviets, scheduled since early April to ratify a constitution, convened in the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow. Lenin and Trotsky expected to use its heavy Bolshevik majority to squelch Left Social Revolutionary – and Left Communist – opposition to the peace policy and to confirm Trotsky's design for the Red Army. Replying to the Left Social Revolutionaries in the second day's debate, Lenin told them, 'Your appeals for the creation of partisan detachments to fight a regular imperialist army are recognized as absurd by any soldier.' Reaffirming his defensist policy toward Germany, he continued,

When we signed the Peace Treaty of Brest, we said of the imperialists that until they were vanquished by an international socialist revolution, we should not be able to defend ourselves in any other way than by retreating. That is unpleasant, but it will remain a fact ... until we have built up an army.

Building the army, he added, would take 'a few years'.³⁷

The chairman, Sverdlov, hastily closed the session when the Left Social Revolutionary Boris Kemkov, speaking directly to the German Ambassador, Mirbach, who was seated in a box just off the stage, declared that the dictatorship of the proletariat had become 'a dictatorship of Mirbach' and Lenin had made the Russians 'lackeys of the German imperialists'.³⁸ The next session, which had been scheduled for 4:00 p.m. on the 6th, did not open. An hour or so earlier, two Left Social Revolutionaries had shot and killed Mirbach. That evening, Lenin and Sverdlov visited the German Embassy to offer regrets; and in a telegram to Stalin, who was in Tsaritsyn, Lenin said, 'We are a hair's breadth from war.'³⁹

A good third of the delegates, some 350 Left Social Revolutionaries, were not there when the congress reconvened on 9 July. This time the opposition to the peace had indeed been routed, but that it would not achieve its aim was highly and painfully uncertain. In what an experienced observer, the British 'Agent' in Moscow, R. H. Bruce Lockhart, considered 'a great speech', Trotsky called the Left Social Revolutionaries 'traitors who are trying to drag Russia into the war against the will of the people'.⁴⁰ He likened the Russian Soviet Republic to a fortress besieged on all sides by imperialist forces. Inside the fortress, he said,

counterrevolution was raising its head, encouraged and supported by Czechoslovak mercenaries of the Anglo-French bourgeoisie. The republic would therefore have to raise a powerful revolutionary army to destroy the counterrevolution and repulse the onslaught of imperialist predators.

He then offered a resolution on Red Army organization. It specified that the indispensable requirement would be to achieve a centralized military administration. The period of detachments ‘amateurishly put together at random’ would have to be ended. All formations would be staffed in accordance with the All-Russia Main Staff’s regulations. The Red Army could only produce ‘great results’ if it applied ‘all the features of military science that have developed from present-day experience in warfare’, and to do that it would be necessary to employ large numbers of military specialists drawn from the officer corps of the ‘former army’.

In the resolution, Trotsky offhandedly dismissed the ‘new army’ envisioned in the 28 January decree as the product of a time when the republic did not possess the ‘knowledge or means’ to create an army in any other way than by ‘enrolling the volunteers who happened to be willing to serve under the Red Army banner’. Although he dropped remarks about ‘iron revolutionary discipline’ and ‘a new command system imbued with the ideas of workers’ and peasants’ revolution’, the Red Army was manifestly going to be cut from the same pattern at other national armies. Conscription would provide the means and ex-imperial officers, who would ‘all be registered and required to serve in the posts the Soviet authority assigns them’ would supply the knowledge. The military commissars would constitute ‘the ever vigilant and incorruptible internal link between the Red Army and the workers’ and peasants’ regime as a whole’. The army would ‘stand guard over the workers’ and peasants’ rule until the hour in which working class uprisings in Europe and the world deal the death blow to militarism and create conditions for peace and brotherhood among the peoples’.⁴¹

MURAVYEV, STALIN AND TROTSKIY’S RESOLUTION

Trotsky spoke against a background of reality that contrasted sharply with the vision he offered. To suppress the Social Revolutionaries and keep order in Moscow he had had to call in the Red Army’s only tested regular unit, the Latvian Division. While he stood on the rostrum in the Bolshoi, the operational command, East Front, was undergoing a collapse. Muravyev, the senior military specialist in the field, had put Tukhachevskiy and some others under arrest, proclaimed himself ‘commander in chief of the armies’, and dispatched a telegram to the Czechs inviting them to join him in a march against the Germans. Ex-officers belonging to an underground association, the Union for Defense of the Homeland and Freedom, had seized the industrial city of Yaroslavl 150 miles northeast of Moscow. Muravyev’s coup was an almost instantaneous failure, and he was dead within a day, but it pointed up again the danger of entrusting high-level

commands to military professionals. While Trotsky was talking about abolishing the detachments, the Yaroslavl Military District staff were refugees in Ivanovo-Voznesensk 35 miles away from the scene of the uprising and Frunze, the party chief in Ivanovo-Voznesensk, was headed toward Yaroslavl with a 400-man detachment he had organized.⁴²

In Tsaritsyn, on the Volga River 550 miles southeast of Moscow, Stalin was for the first time concerning himself with military affairs. As Lenin's 'extraordinary plenipotentiary' for grain shipment from the North Caucasus to Moscow, he had arrived there in early June aboard an armored train. He brought with him a detachment of Red Army men and two armored cars, visible evidence of his authority; but neither that nor his impressive credentials could conjure up grain in Tsaritsyn. He faced a total failure in his first really vital mission. As his military biographer, Voroshilov, put it, 'At every step Comrade Stalin ran into obstacles arising from the general situation, which interfered with the performance of his task.'⁴³ Krasnov's Cossacks had cut the railroad running into the city from the grain-growing region in the south. The Headquarters, North Caucasus Military District was in Tsaritsyn with a staff of military specialists; but it had arrived only two or three weeks ahead of Stalin and, like its counterparts elsewhere, was nowhere near bringing the Red Army and partisan detachments scattered around the countryside under effective control.

In his first report to Lenin from Tsaritsyn, Stalin had said he was about to proclaim a 'Grain Week' and would have a million bushels on the way to Moscow in short order. On 6 July, after apparently a long silence, he told Lenin there was plenty of grain on the railroad south of Tsaritsyn, but it could not be brought through because of a break in the line, which could not have happened if the military specialists, who were all 'bunglers', had not been 'asleep or loafing about'. By the 10th, he saw getting the grain, which seemed to have moved off the railroad, as a long-term military problem, and he asked for military powers. Whether he received those or not, he said, he would, 'without any formalities, dismiss army commanders and commissars who are ruining the work ... and, of course, not having a paper from Trotsky is not going to deter me'.⁴⁴

In its final session, on 10 July, the Fifth All-Russia Congress of Soviets unanimously adopted Trotsky's resolution on the Red Army, thereby, according to a Soviet assessment written a half-century later, 'enacting into law the most important principles relating to the creation of a regular army and assuming an enormous role in the transition to a new stage in Soviet military development'.⁴⁵ An assessment more accurate in the context of the time would be that for what it might be worth, Trotsky secured a legal mandate to carry out the transition he had begun – if he could.

‘In a Fiery Ring of Fronts’

‘IMPERIALIST’ INTERVENTION

The resolutions passed in the Congress of Soviets gave the Red Army two specific and, by the standard generally applied to regular national armies, modest missions: those were to operate against counterrevolutionaries and ‘foreign mercenaries’ (the Czech corps) on Soviet soil. Consequently, the Red Army was for the time being a subsidiary component in a predominantly nonmilitary defensist strategy predicated on ‘contradictions’ in the capitalist, ‘imperialist’ world. As Lenin construed them, the contradictions were of two kinds: one stemmed from the dialectically foreordained crisis of capitalism, the other from tensions within the imperialist blocs. The first kept the imperialist powers locked in war with each other, limited the resources they could bring to bear against their common enemy, Bolshevism, and fostered world revolution. The second forced the Allies to contend with deep-seated hostility between the United States and Japan in their schemes for intervention in Russia and made Germany weigh the satisfaction of demolishing the Bolshevik regime against the immense profit it stood to gain without any further effort under the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. The contradictions of the first kind kept capitalism on a suicidal course that it could not alter. In the short term, however, those of the second kind would determine whether Bolshevism survived in Russia, and they were susceptible to change ‘any day, any moment’, change to which the only effective Soviet responses were ‘maneuver, retreat and bide our time’.¹ In July and August 1918, the strategy came to the test.

In Paris, on 2 July, the Allied Supreme War Council concluded that a military intervention in Russia through Murmansk, Arkhangelsk, and Vladivostok was ‘essential to win the war’ and dispatched an appeal to President Woodrow Wilson to offer ‘encouragement and support’ (which he had thus far steadfastly refused) for a major Japanese expedition into Siberia.² On 6 July, Wilson decided to act with Japan in dispatching troops to Vladivostok. He insisted on limiting the force to a combined 14,000-man total, hardly enough to win the war but sufficient to confirm intervention as a principle. Also on that day, the Allies proclaimed a temporary protectorate over Vladivostok, and the senior British, American, and French officers in Murmansk concluded an agreement with the Murmansk regional soviet that ascribed autonomous status to the Murmansk region and

permitted the Allies to recruit, train, and command Russian troops.³ In the meantime, the French General Staff had directed the Czech corps to constitute itself as the advanced guard of the intervention by keeping open the route across Siberia and enabling the Allied forces 'to precede directly into action on the territory of European Russia'. The Czechs' successes had convinced the Allied Supreme War Council that the Bolsheviks had 'no real power with which to support their rule' and had 'entirely failed to raise an effective army'.⁴

In the Murmansk area the Allies were accumulating additional evidence of the Soviet military inadequacy (as Trotsky and Lenin also were, if they needed it). British Major General Charles Maynard had debarked 600 troops from England at Murmansk on 23 June, bringing the total there to about 2,500. In response, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, G. V. Chicherin, had told Lockhart on the 27th that the Soviet forces would defend the Murmansk area against all foreign intervention 'to the finish', and the Headquarters, Petrograd Military District had sent two Red Army detachments of 400 men each north along the Murmansk railroad in 'echelons' (trainloads). Maynard had begun a reconnaissance along the railroad on the same day, and by 8 July he had disarmed the detachments without firing a shot and had possession of the railroad to Soroka, about halfway to Petrograd.⁵

At the German Imperial Headquarters in Spa, Belgium, the Allied presence in Murmansk had vexed First Quartermaster General Erich Ludendorff for some time, as had the entire question of Germany's relationship with the Soviet Republic. Ludendorff represented one – the strong – element in the German contradiction, the Foreign Ministry the other. He wanted the Allies 'thrown out' of Murmansk 'to deny them the hope of putting Russia back on its feet against us'; and he believed Germany had to rely on military, not political, means to guarantee its security in the East. He judged the Bolsheviks to be duplicitous, incapable of governing, likely to collapse any day, and 'useful to us only so long as they continue to recognize us as absolute masters and remain submissive out of fear of Germany and concern for their own survival'.⁶ The Foreign Ministry took an equally dim view of Bolshevism's future, but it believed Germany could not extract nearly as good terms from any successor Russian government and therefore wanted to establish a solid legal position before the Bolsheviks were swept away. In Berlin, on 1 July, it began working with a Soviet delegation under Leonid Krasin on a supplement to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk that would spell out the territorial, economic, and financial provisions.

For Ludendorff and the Foreign Ministry alike the ultimate question was whether Germany ought to associate itself at all with a regime that was thoroughly disreputable as well as moribund. The officials in the Foreign Ministry – to whom Krasin and the Soviet Ambassador Adolf Joffe were picturing Russia as a cornucopia waiting to eliminate the German food and raw material shortages – were inclined to think it should. Ludendorff, as he told the Foreign Ministry's representative in Spa on 2 July, doubted that the Bolsheviks could deliver anything and was coming to believe Germany could deal better with the monarchists. But he was just then

preparing another offensive on the Western Front and did not want ‘to try to overthrow the Bolsheviks at this time.’⁷

For Ludendorff – and for Lenin – security was the decisive consideration in the relationship between Germany and the Soviet Republic. Militarily the Bolsheviks were no threat. Mirbach estimated in one of his last dispatches that an advance ‘on any considerable scale’ would ‘automatically’ unseat them.⁸ On the other hand, they were a political liability. Their weakness kept Russia in disorder, which invited Allied intervention; and conducting diplomatic negotiations with them diminished German prestige, like ‘being seen on the Unter den Linden with a tramp’. At the 2 July meeting in Spa, Ludendorff let the Foreign Ministry know that in his order of priorities getting the Allies out of Murmansk stood first and, as far as he was concerned, the supplemental treaty could wait. The Foreign Ministry would either have to persuade the Russians to ‘invite’ German help in throwing the ‘English’ out of Murmansk or get the Finns to do it with German weapons ‘and possibly also troops.’⁹

Lenin’s concerns were vastly more compelling than Ludendorff’s. Soviet security depended entirely on Germany, and subservience alone was not likely to preserve it for long. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk had engendered a contradiction in the defensist strategy: it had bought time, but it had also greatly strengthened the parties advocating war against the Soviet Republic in both imperialist camps. Having relinquished even its nominal status as one of the Allies, Russia had become vulnerable to Allied intervention; and troops from the Eastern Front had enabled the German Army to seize the initiative in the West while retaining, if anything, enhanced superiority in the East. In short, the peace had exposed the Soviet regime to the ‘imperialists’ hostility toward it and toward each other. Addressing that problem in a set of theses drafted in the second week of May, Lenin had determined that the tactics of maneuver, retreat, and biding time, in the defensist strategy legitimized a sharp detour on the road to revolution: ‘We do not in general,’ he wrote, ‘reject military agreements with one of the imperialist coalitions against the other.’ Having put the proposition, he had ruled out an agreement with the Allies (essentially because the German reaction would have been quick and for the Soviet Republic in all likelihood, deadly). That left one alternative, an agreement with Germany, which he did not mention.¹⁰ An alignment with Germany was manifestly the last resort. Germany as a partner could be more dangerous than as an enemy. In the former role it was only slightly less likely to demolish the Soviet state and all but certain to discredit Bolshevism permanently as well.

By the end of June, continued maneuver and retreat in a state of nonalignment had intensified the pressures from both sides. The Czechs, some 15,000 of whom had arrived there, had taken control of Vladivostok on the 29th; and the next day begun negotiations to put themselves under Allied protection. Already before those events, the Germans had let Joffe and Chicherin know that their confidence in the Soviet ability – and will – to stave off an Allied intervention was small.¹¹

In Berlin during the first week of July, Joffe and Krasin introduced a radically new element into the negotiations on the supplement to the peace treaty: a

proposal for a secret military–economic covenant. An understanding with the Allies, they said, was out of the question, and Lenin and Trotskiy were agreed that the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk provided the basis for a rapprochement with Germany in which the covenant would be the first stage and an alliance the goal. The Bolshevik leaders, they asserted, were prepared to give Germany a 50 per cent share in Russian agricultural production plus mineral ores and oil without awaiting the outcome of the negotiations and then to enter into a mutual security arrangement. Under the latter, if Germany agreed not to violate the existing demarcation line and not to insist on Finnish or its own forces' participation against the Allies, the Soviet Government would guarantee the defeat of the Czechs and the expulsion of the Allies from the Murmansk region and any other places on Russian soil. It was a scheme that in the light of known Soviet capabilities and performance, required a sweeping suspension of disbelief on the Germans' part, and they interposed a far from reassuring condition, namely that the Soviet Government commit itself to 'invite' German military assistance, if its forces could not accomplish their missions.¹²

The events of 6 July transformed the Soviet play for time into a headlong race with disaster. Talking to the German press attaché, Alfons Paquet, after the assassination of Mirbach, Karl Radek, Chicherin's deputy for European affairs, exclaimed, 'Fate is galloping like a terrified horse,' and asked, 'Will there be war?' In a telegram to Stalin later the same night, Lenin wrote, 'We are a hair's breadth from war.'¹³

Knowing that Ludendorff was not looking for an excuse to attack would not have much reduced Lenin's and Radek's alarm. While he might let the murder of an ambassador pass, he was not likely to do the same in the instance of an Allied intervention on the scale their actions at Murmansk and Vladivostok seemed to indicate was in the making and for which the Yaroslavl uprising was providing an added inducement in the form of a bridgehead on the Volga in the direct line from Arkhangelsk to Moscow. The Bolsheviks, as Trotskiy put it in his autobiography, were 'between the hammer and the anvil'.¹⁴

During the next week, while Germany maintained a seemingly ominous official silence, trouble was in the making for East Front. On 5 July, Second Army gave up Ufa, and two days later, the Czech leadership, having complete control of the railroad from Samara to Chelyabinsk, told the troops that they would henceforth be serving as the Allies' advance guard. The Czechs perceived their missions as being to provide a bridgehead on the Volga for Allied forces coming west from Vladivostok and to make a junction with other Allied troops, 25,000 of whom they had been told would be landing at Murmansk and Arkhangelsk on 8 July. To execute those, they redeployed at Samara for an attack toward Simbirsk, 100 miles upstream on the Volga, and at Chelyabinsk for a thrust northward to Ekatrinnburg, the first objective on a projected 300-mile march to meet the Allies' Arkhangelsk force expected to take Vologda by 14 or 15 July. By the 12th, the Red Army detachments defending Ekatrinnburg doubted that they would hold out more than another several days.¹⁵

EAST FRONT IN JEOPARDY

East Front, meanwhile, lost most of the little cohesion it had achieved. Command passed to Vatsetis, but he could not leave Moscow before the 8th. Until the 18th, Second Army did not have a commander to replace A. I. Kharchenko, a former colonel who served just two days before deserting at Ufa. Muravyev's and Kharchenko's defections, plus those of Kharchenko's two predecessors, revived and reinforced the old doubts about entrusting important commands to military professionals and raised new ones about the effectiveness even of three commissars in the higher commands. The Yaroslavl uprising appeared to demonstrate as well that the former officers performed better against Bolshevism than they did in its service. Trotskiy's thinking, bolstered by an innate compulsion to prove he was right, did not change, nor did Lenin's confidence in him; but Lenin had from the start been less than enthusiastic about using the military specialists.

Muravyev's attempted coup and the Yaroslavl uprising had also confirmed the existing doubts as to the troops' reliability. Muravyev had not acted entirely on a hare-brained impulse; he had beforehand enlisted the tacit support of the Kazan and Simbirsk garrisons, and the Red Army men guarding the Yaroslavl arsenal and other points around the city had been negligent to say the least.¹⁶ On 12 July, Lenin addressed a deceptively worded letter to the workers of Petrograd, calling on them as 'indispensable' organizers, guides, and leaders to 'set out in tens of thousands for the Urals, the Volga, and the South'. They were needed, he said, to help the poor peasants, who were about to be attacked by the *kulaks* (rich peasants). He cited the Simbirsk district as one in which that danger existed.¹⁷ A week later, the workers' response having been negligible, he appealed to the three-man bureau of the Central Committee in Petrograd telling them that the situation with the Czechs was 'as bad as can be' and workers were needed by the thousands 'in order to convert the jelly into something solid'.

On his arrival at the East Front headquarters in Kazan, Vatsetis judged Simbirsk, in the First Army sector, to be more important strategically than Ekaterinburg, although the latter appeared by far to be the more endangered. To reinforce Simbirsk, which was the main Volga River port for Moscow, a major goods and oil storage center, and the point at which the most direct railroad from the Urals and Siberia crossed the river, he called in the 4th Latvian Rifle Regiment. On the 20th, he activated two additional army headquarters, Third Army at Ekaterinburg and Fourth Army downstream on the Volga from Syzran to Saratov. Two days later he ordered all of the armies to activate partisan warfare in the enemy's rear. Tukhachevskiy and Kuybyshev had installed embryonic division staffs at Penza, Inza, and Simbirsk; those did not so much change the detachments' style as conform to it. The prevailing doctrine of echelon war had made it convenient as well as tactically proper for the detachments to congregate in railroad centers where they could live aboard trains and draw their rations and emoluments from the passing traffic while relying on the railroad telegraph to keep the lines under surveillance

in all directions. As long as the enemy also depended on the rails, as the Czechs had so far done (and were doing), surprise was impossible. The Penza detachments could cover the 150-mile stretch west to Syzran, those at Simbirsk could do the same in the direction of Ufa, and those could advance either toward Syzran or Simbirsk.

On the other hand, the echelon tactics confined reconnaissance to the rails. As a result, an overland raid out of the Syzran bridgehead by 300 White cavalrymen and a battery of artillery under a tsarist Colonel V. O. Kappel went undetected until it crossed a branch line 30 miles southwest of Simbirsk. At 2:00 a.m. on 22 July, Kappel struck into the city from the west. What had been a diversion for the benefit of the Czechs, who were still about a hundred miles away to the east, blossomed into a largely self-inflicted Red Army defeat. The garrison, which Vatsetis reported outnumbered the Whites 'by far', panicked and fled the city, most not stopping until they were 50 miles away. On the 23rd, the 4th Latvian Rifle Regiment, which had arrived in Ruzaevka 150 miles west of Simbirsk, answered an order from Vatsetis to precede to Simbirsk, with a resolution passed in a mass meeting that it remain in the rear 'for a rest'. The commissars voted with the troops at Ruzaevka and joined the flight from Simbirsk. Other than to quote Lenin's admonishment (issued some days later) to get the troops 'out of the trains' and into the field, accounts of Tukhachevskiy's military career pass over his role in the episode in silence. Vatsetis, displaying somewhat pointless determination, ordered all the armies to attack and gave Third Army Ufa and Chelyabinsk as objectives. On 25 July, Third Army lost Ekaterinburg.

The loss of Simbirsk reverberated in Moscow like the sound of the last trumpet. The breakdown there (and at Ekaterinburg) could hardly do anything but encourage Allied and therewith also German intervention, and it demonstrated how far from ready the Soviet forces were. The Red Army had no better formation than First Army and the Latvian regiments. On 23 July, the Supreme Military Council reported that since a German attack was to be expected at any time, reinforcements would have to come from the recent draft. Lenin dispatched another appeal to the Central Committee bureau in Petrograd telling them that everything depended on 'one card', the defeat of the Czechs, and if they did not respond, the fault for Bolshevism's downfall would be theirs.¹⁸

The Central Committee met in plenary session on 29 July to take action on the 'circumstances' disclosed at Simbirsk. It concluded that the troops did not have a clear idea of what they were fighting for, the commanders were inexperienced and unreliable, and the commissars lacked 'revolutionary tenacity and devotion to the revolution'. To strengthen the party's effort, it ordered all party members with any kind of command experience to be registered within three days and sent to Moscow by 3 August for assignment to the front, and all party members who had failed at Yaroslavl, Simbirsk, and elsewhere to be expelled from their posts and from the party. In conjunction with the session, the Council of People's Commissars issued three decrees. Two ordered drafts in a broad band of districts reaching from Petrograd to Moscow to Western Siberia of workers and of former line officers and

medical personnel 26 years old and younger. Those were expanded a few days later to include former noncommissioned officers, who were promised opportunities for fast advancement to command positions. The third placed all state property usable for military purposes at the disposal of the military affairs commissariat.¹⁹ Two men who would become notable in the then still remote future entered the Red Army in August under the officers' and noncommissioned officers' drafts: Aleksandr Vasilevskiy, a former staff captain, and Georgiy Zhukov, holder of two George Crosses as a noncommissioned officer in the tsarist cavalry. The purge of the party leaders brought Frunze into a full-time military career as commissar of the Yaroslavl Military District.

STALIN IN THE SOUTH

In late July, the survival of the Bolshevik regime was endangered in the east and that of the Moscow, Petrograd, and other urban populations in the south. On the 13th, Denikin's Volunteer Army took Tikhoretsk, the railroad junction 270 miles southwest of Tsaritsyn through which the grain from the North Caucasus would have had to come, and by then Krasnov's Cossacks were fanning out to the north and east across the great bend of the Don River and southeastward toward the Tsaritsyn–Tikhoretskaya railroad. The Cossacks' advance also brought Stalin into contact with men whose regard for military specialists was as low as his own, the partisan leaders whose bands had withdrawn from the Ukraine and now comprised the bulk of the Soviet strength in the Tsaritsyn sector. They were the revolution's self-made military elite, unschooled and disdainful of tutelage. Voroshilov was their spokesman. He commanded the 'Voroshilov Group', the 15,000 or so partisans who had made up the Third and Fifth Ukrainian Armies and were the main field force in the Tsaritsyn sector. On 17 July, Stalin and Voroshilov held a conference of 'party and Soviet workers' to consider the state of command on the Tsaritsyn front.

Two days later, a report on the conference having in the meantime reached Lenin, the military affairs commissariat directed Stalin to organize a military council in the North Caucasus Military District for the purpose of 'establishing order, consolidating the detachments into regular units and establishing a proper command, at the same time dismissing all insubordinates'. Military councils, composed of a military director and two commissars, commanded screens, and they existed separately from the military district commissariats on whose territories they were installed. In Order No. 1 of the military council in the North Caucasus Military District, dated 22 July, Stalin named himself chairman of the council, S. K. Minin, the city party chief, commissar, and A. N. Kovalevskiy 'temporary military specialist' in the military director's post. He also specified that, in accordance with the military affairs commissariat's directive, the district commissariat would continue.²⁰

Order No. 1 was in large part obsolete when it was written. Anisimov, the district commissar, had been shipped off to Astrakhan at the mouth of the Volga. Snegarev, the military director, was under arrest. Voroshilov was the military director in the military council, and Kovalevskiy’s signature disappeared from orders and reports within two weeks. On Stalin’s orders, the Cheka had rounded up the 5,000 military specialists on the district staff (and loaded them in a barge on the Volga where they all drowned when the vessel sank). To Lenin, Stalin justified his actions after the fact as having been necessitated by an ‘inherited state of utter disruption, caused partly by the inertness of the former military director and partly by a conspiracy on the part of persons he had appointed’. Consequently, he added, ‘Everything had to be started afresh.’ But as a result, particularly of the ‘timely removal of the so-called military specialists’, it had been ‘possible to win the sympathy of the military units and establish iron discipline in them.’²¹ For Stalin, whether disruption or conspiracy – other than those he had himself instigated – had existed or not was immaterial; the essential consideration was, as one of the military specialists who escaped to join the Whites discerned, that ‘from July 20 on, Stalin was the sole moving and deciding force’.²² In his first days as chairman of the military council in Tsaritsyn, Stalin had struck upon his single most significant contribution to the Soviet theory and conduct of war in his time, the ‘principle of the stability of the rear’ (the suppression of all potential opposition behind the front).

In less than two weeks, Stalin could report that the ‘muddle caused by the detachment principle’ had been completely eliminated on the Tsaritsyn front. Voroshilov and he had consolidated the partisan detachments into regiments, brigades, and divisions under their old commanders and without military specialists, which was, of course, not exactly what the military affairs commissariat had in mind. During the conversion, the seed of a legend was planted when Voroshilov met Semen Budennyi, a Cossack former tsarist cavalry noncommissioned officer and holder of four George Crosses, who was being appointed deputy commander of the 1st Socialist Cavalry Regiment. Reportedly, Budennyi urged Voroshilov to release the cavalry from the infantry support role to which it was then confined and give it independent offensive missions. With Voroshilov’s concurrence, the regiment launched a raid on 29 July that resulted in the rescue of a 5,000-man detachment encircled at Martynovka 125 miles southwest of Tsaritsyn.²³ According to the legend, the Martynovka raid set the Red Army on the track to its first great contribution to the art of war: the use of cavalry to achieve strategic mobility. Stalin would come to figure prominently in that development – and even more in the legend.

In manpower the North Caucasus Military District was not badly off. By the Soviet count, Voroshilov had over 43,000 ‘bayonets and sabers’ on the Tsaritsyn front, Krasnov 45,000; and to the south, in the Kuban and North Caucasus proper, some 45,000 Red Army bayonets and sabers opposed Denikin’s 10,000–12,000.

Soviet accounts give troop strengths for the Civil War period in two forms: bayonets and sabers (infantrymen and cavalrymen) and all troops. They rarely

appear together. When they do, the total for bayonets and sabers is as a rule 20–25 per cent smaller than that for all troops. Enemy strengths always appear only in one or the other form and are assessed generously.

The North Caucasus Military District probably had a total strength of about 120,000 troops to the Cossacks' and Volunteer Army's less than 60,000. But the Cossacks and the Volunteer Army had experienced leadership and a higher proportion of trained troops and held the initiative everywhere. On the direct line of approach to Tsaritsyn from the west, Voroshilov had 27,000 men to Cossack General Konstantin Mamantov's 12,000, while he had less than 8,000 deployed on the north face of the Don bend to counter a wide sweep around Tsaritsyn to the north and east that General A. P. Fitskelaurov was developing with 20,000 Cossacks. By 30 July, Fitskelaurov had crossed the Don and cut the railroad running north out of Tsaritsyn in two places, and Mamantov was on the Don 30 miles west of Tsaritsyn.²⁴

THE 'APPARENT DEATH AGONY OF THE SOVIET REGIME'

In the early morning on 28 July, the Allied embassies left Arkhangelsk by ship for Kandalaksha in the British-controlled area south of Murmansk, and that night Karl Helfferich, Mirbach's replacement as German Ambassador arrived in Moscow. On the Soviet side, those occurrences were at once reassuring and alarming. To disarm German suspicion of Soviet inability to master its problem with the Allies, Chicherin and Radek had tried for two weeks to dislodge the embassies from Vologda and bring them to Moscow where they could be kept under surveillance (and, the ambassadors believed, held as hostages against an intervention). The move to Arkhangelsk had the desired effect as far as the Germans were concerned, but it also virtually confirmed the imminence of an Allied intervention. Helfferich's arrival restored a relationship with Germany, but in a manner that appeared as likely to enhance the German threat as to mitigate it. Helfferich was a far more important personage than Mirbach had been. A former deputy chancellor and a Prussian minister of state charged with formulating German peace terms, he had closer ties to Ludendorff than to the German Foreign Ministry and potentially a good deal more authority than an ordinary ambassador; and, if nothing else, he was an outstanding target for the Left Social Revolutionaries.

At the turn of the month, military setbacks and looming intervention and counterrevolution were bringing on what the German press attaché, Pacquet, called 'the apparent [death] agony of the Soviet regime'. The Baku Soviet arrested its Bolshevik members and called for British protection. Czechs and White Guards advancing northward from Simbirsk on both sides of the Volga were halfway to Kazan. Others were headed south along the river from Syzran toward Saratov. Fitskelaurov's Cossacks were closing up to the Volga at Proleyka, 60 miles north of Tsaritsyn. In Moscow, Trotskiy was having a train equipped so that he could

take command in person at East Front. During the day on 1 August, Allied warships shelled the forts at the mouth of the Northern Dvina River and began the 25-mile passage upstream to Arkhangelsk.

That night at the German embassy, Chicherin delivered a request from Lenin for help on the Murmansk front and against Denikin and Krasnov. Lenin, he said, could not make an open alliance but would tacitly accept German intervention and would undertake to engage Soviet forces in 'parallel action'. Helfferich, who had completely accepted the prevailing opinion in the embassy staff that the impending counterrevolution rendered agreements with the Bolsheviks worthless and – because they would leave Germany 'tied to the stinking corpse of Bolshevism' – dangerous, forwarded the Soviet proposal to Berlin with a negative recommendation. German Foreign Minister Paul von Hintze thought differently. Although he owed his appointment (on 9 July 1918) to his acceptability to Ludendorff and by no means favored a reconciliation with Russia, Hintze had become convinced that no group in the country other than the Bolsheviks would work with Germany and therefore they would have to be kept in the saddle at least until the peace settlement was completed. Ludendorff opposed a military alliance in any form or any kind of action, such as an attack on Denikin or withdrawal of support from Krasnov, that would tend to strengthen the Bolsheviks' hand against their domestic opponents; but the idea of a 'parallel' operation in the Murmansk area interested him, and he ordered planning begun under the code name 'KEYSTONE'.²⁵ However, Hintze wanted a complete package, and the Bolsheviks' 'agony', which they dared not admit to the Germans, progressed faster than the negotiations.

On 2 August, British Major General F. C. Poole landed 1,200 Allied troops unopposed at Arkhangelsk, where a coup had ended the Soviet presence the night before. British, American, and Japanese forces began debarking at Vladivostok on the 3rd, and the next day a British detachment occupied Baku. The Supreme Military Council thereupon activated another two screens: the Northeastern Screen between Lake Onega and Vyatka and the Southern Screen on a line running from Kursk to the Volga and thence south into the North Caucasus. Podvoyskiy, the chief of the Supreme Military Inspectorate, headed a commission dispatched from Moscow to organize the Southern Screen.

Trotsky's train steamed out of Moscow along the Kazan line on the night of the 7th. On the way, he learned that the Czechs had captured the city in a surprise attack, and many of the military specialists on the East Front staff and the entire faculty of the Nikolayevskiy General Staff Academy (which had been evacuated from Petrograd) had gone over to the enemy. In Kazan, the Czechs had captured the national treasure, 540 tons of gold and other precious metals, which may well have been the reason for their sudden move. Vatsetis reported that the Russian troops had been undisciplined and 'incapable' of giving battle. On the 8th, a Social Revolutionary–White Guard uprising in the Izhevsk–Votkinskiy area halfway between Kazan and Ekaterinburg spawned a threat to Vyatka; Mamantov began a drive toward Tsaritsyn; and the *Cheka* conducted sweeps in Moscow and elsewhere, rounding up some 60,000 former officers and shipping them off to concentration camps.²⁶

Defections and collusion with the enemy were again bringing the employment of the military specialists into question. Lenin, citing the ‘total unreliability of the officers’, wanted to have ‘our own instructors for a workers’ army’. He also suggested adopting ‘the example of the French Revolution’ and holding the most senior officer answerable with their lives for failed operations. From another source, he forwarded a proposal to replace the general staff officers with communists. To the latter, Trotsky responded that sabotage was also occurring on the railroads, yet no one believed communists could replace locomotive engineers. The test of battle and the concentration camps, he asserted, would foster rapid improvement by making it possible to detect and get rid of the unreliaables.²⁷

While East Front’s situation might well have been worse without the military specialists, their accomplishments were not apparent to the government, the troops, or the people. The effective leadership appeared, after all, to be emerging from the detachment system. Blyukher had united the detachments in the southern Urals under his command and was setting out with them from Orenburg on a partisan raid to the west and north. G. D. Gay, who had commanded a group of detachments east of the Volga and brought them back through the enemy front after Simbirsk fell, had as a result of his exploit been appointed to convert the detachments into the Simbirsk ‘Iron Division’. At Nikolayevsk, 60 miles east of Volsk, a former anarchist turned communist and holder of four George Crosses as a noncommissioned officer, Vasilii Chapayev, was using detachments he had organized to fight the Urals Cossacks to prevent the Czechs from expanding their bridgehead south to Saratov, and creating an image of the communist commander as a romantic, larger-than-life figure.

In mid-August, ‘interventionists and White Guards occupied three-fourths of the country, encircled it in a fiery ring of fronts, and deprived it of its basic raw material, fuel, and grain resources.’²⁸ Out of the 190 million pre-1914 population, the Bolsheviks could claim control over just a third, 64 million. The Whites had taken possession of munitions works located at Izhevsk and Votkinskiy, thereby cutting arms and ammunition output, which in July had already been 75 per cent less than in the previous year, by more than half. Stepped-up conscription had brought the Red Army’s total strength to over a half-million men, of which 323,000 were armed and 134,000 were in the field at East Front or on the screens.²⁹

From Kazan south to Volsk, Czechs and White Guards held a 300-mile-long bridgehead on the Volga. To the north and west, uprisings threatened Vyatka and Nizhniy Novgorod, potential meeting places for the Czechs and the Allied Arkhangelsk force. On the south, the Don Cossacks were at Kamyshin, within 150 miles of Volsk. Vatsetis was installing a Headquarters, Fifth Army, north of Kazan to cover Vyatka. Trotsky, who had parked his train at the Sviyazhsk Station directly across the river from Kazan, was trying by example – and by promising to shoot the commissar and commander of any unit that retreated – to reverse a wave of defeatism that threatened to bring on a complete collapse.

Krasnov was on the verge of reestablishing an independent Don Cossack state (which had last existed in the eighteenth century) that would extend from Voronezh

to Rostov on the Don and to Tsaritsyn on the Volga and would permanently separate the Transcaucasus, Caucasus, North Caucasus, the eastern Donets Basin, and the Don Basin from central Russia. He had signed a treaty of mutual recognition with the Ukraine on 7 August, and his emissaries were setting off for Spa to secure Ludendorff's help in getting German recognition and German troops to aid in the taking of Voronezh and Tsaritsyn. A Cossack group had reached Povorino, 180 miles northwest of Tsaritsyn and 140 from Voronezh, where it was actually some 50 miles closer to Moscow than the Czechs were. Mamantov had his force ranged in a semicircle around the Tsaritsyn suburbs; and in the North Caucasus, Denikin had taken Ekaterinodar, the capital of the Kuban, thereby acquiring a political base for himself.

A PACT WITH THE ENEMY

Nevertheless, although it was not completely apparent to anyone and was unimaginable to all but Lenin, Trotskiy, and a very few others in the Central Committee and the foreign affairs commissariat, Soviet military fortune was taking a profoundly decisive turn for the better. On 8 August, Ludendorff and the German Emperor, William II, had concurred in Hintze's assumption that the Bolsheviks' downfall would be contrary to the German interest. When Joffe asked a day later whether Hintze could guarantee that Germany would not violate the demarcation line if the Soviet troops were withdrawn and committed elsewhere, he had received an affirmative answer. On 10 August, Lenin had directed the Supreme Military Council to develop and execute 'in the shortest possible time' a plan to shift 'all units possessing combat capability' from the western front to the east. An order to that effect had gone to the Western and Northern Screens the next day, and Vatsetis had sent Lenin a copy of an order putting his armies on notice to prepare for a general offensive.³⁰

Also on the 11th, Lenin told Joffe to accept all the German financial, economic, and territorial demands without any more discussion and get the supplementary treaty signed. The terms did not make any difference, he said, because the German revolution would nullify them. Lenin and Hintze were equally eager to hasten the negotiations, Hintze because he believed the Bolsheviks' 'agony' was in its terminal phase. But two obstacles arose at mid-month: the German High Command demanded the right to conduct an expedition against the British at Baku, and newspapers in the Don region published the agenda of the Cossack mission to Spa. Owing to those, two identical secret notes that were part of the treaty package had to be revised (somewhat to the Soviet benefit), and the signing did not take place until 27 August.

Lenin had exploited the German contradictions with brilliant results. In return for a legal claim, which he did not propose to honor, to a vast array of Russian assets, he had harnessed the revolution's potentially most deadly enemy to the

Bolshevik cause. In doing so, he had also entered into a military relationship with one of the capitalist camps. Article 5 in the supplementary treaty obligated the Soviet forces to expel the Allies from northern Russia. The secret notes extended that commitment to include Baku and German participation in both areas if the Soviet forces could not achieve the desired results. It further required the Soviet Government to ‘take all possible measures in order to crush immediately’ the Czechs and Denikin’s Volunteer Army. On its part, Germany undertook in the notes ‘to see that [Krasnov] should not obtain military support from the Ukraine’, to ‘adopt all measures at her disposal’ against the Volunteer Army, and not to support Turkish incursions into the Caucasus.³¹

The result could hardly be called an alliance. Neither party acted out of any sense of common interest, and both harbored undisclosed reservations. Lenin, in all likelihood, did not want to see any of the Soviet military commitments put into effect other than that to crush the Czechs. Ludendorff and General Max Hofmann, the commanding general in the east, believed the divisions they were assembling for Operation KEYSTONE could be more profitably used to unseat the Bolsheviks. On the other hand, few alliances have had as significant effects. The German guarantee of 9 August, the supplementary treaty, the secret notes – and the decisive turn on the Western Front that began on 8 August, the Black Day of the German Army – relieved the Soviet regime of the one threat to its existence that it otherwise had no hope of surviving and set it on the road to military power.

In his autobiography, Trotsky characterizes the month he spent aboard his train in the front line at Sviyazhsk as the interval in which the fate of the revolution was decided and effective military organization was achieved. During it, he maintains, the Red forces underwent a transition from an aggregation of raw, undisciplined detachments prone to panic and riddled with treason, from the ‘lowest ebb of the revolution’, the fall of Kazan, to a stage of competence that enabled them for the first time to take the strategic initiative. He attributes the achievement to discipline and morale instilled by his own ‘harsh methods’, persuasion, political propaganda and agitation, and the infusion of ‘worker-communists’ into the ranks.³² Indeed, a remarkable transformation took place, but it owed much more to other circumstances. Those saved the revolution, and they did not result from the kind of lifting-by-one’s-own-bootstraps Trotsky describes but from collaboration on the part of Bolshevism’s enemies, deliberate in the German and inadvertent in the Czech and Allied instances.

REDEPLOYMENT EAST

After 10 August, the Supreme Military Council conducted a massive west-to-east redeployment that stripped the Northern and Western Screens and in effect turned the defense of Leningrad against Finnish or Allied attack (neither of which was very likely) over to the Germans as well. At the turn of the month, East Front

had 43,500 bayonets and sabers (and a total 60,000 of all troops), ‘about’ 110 artillery pieces, and ‘about’ 700 machine guns against – by the Soviet estimate – 52,000 Czech and White Guard bayonets and sabers, 150–90 artillery pieces, and 580–630 machine guns. By mid-month, East Front’s bayonets and sabers stood at almost 72,000 and its troop total at about 85,000. On 1 September, its bayonets and sabers exceeded 80,000, its troop total stood at about 100,000, and it had 72,000 more scheduled to arrive during the next 20 days. Its artillery pieces and machine guns had increased to 264 and 1,130 respectively. The Czech and White totals, according to Soviet estimates, then amounted to between 53,000 and 64,000 troops, 163 and 220 artillery pieces, and 950 and 720 machine guns, which would indicate a possible increase below 20 per cent while the East Front strength was being doubled.

The Northeastern and Southern Screens benefited from the redeployment as well. Detachments withdrawn from the Finnish border and the area south of Soroka brought the Northeastern Screen to over 10,000 men by late August. Shifts away from the Ukrainian border enabled the Southern Screen to bring its strength in the sector between Povorino and Kashirin to almost 18,000 men. Those were sufficient to hold both places and to stage counterattacks jointly with the Tsaritsyn group that pushed the Cossacks away from the Volga and brought the first battle for Tsaritsyn to a successful conclusion on 6 September.³³ The Cossacks’ withdrawal, particularly at Tsaritsyn, could possibly also have been influenced by Krasnov’s failure to secure German recognition and military assistance.

‘MILITARY ACTION’ AND ‘MILITARY INTERVENTION’

The Czechs, at the height of their success, were becoming disheartened. In accepting the role of Allied vanguard they had assumed that Allied troops and weapons would be arriving in short order. None had come, and winter was no more than a month away in the Arkhangelsk region and in Siberia. At Ekaterinburg, Kazan, and Nikolayevsk, they were embroiled in battles of attrition, the last thing they could afford. The Russian population was not rallying to the Allied cause. The workers, if they were anything, were pro-Bolshevik, and the anti-Bolshevik majority regarded the predominantly Left Social Revolutionary Samara government as no better than the Bolsheviks. On 19 August, the corps commander told the Czechoslovak National Council, ‘Our troops are extremely tired. All their hopes are pinned on the Allies’ sending us reinforcements. Their spirit remains high, but enthusiasm alone is not enough.’ On the 28th, in an assessment addressed to the US Government, Masaryk, as chairman of the National Council, stated that ‘the enemy will try to defeat and, if possible, annihilate our forces on the Volga’ and therefore ‘Allied troops must reinforce our army’s western elements in the absolute shortest time’.³⁴

The far greater likelihood by then was that reinforcements would not materialize at all. The decision to intervene had hardened the Allies’ contradictions, not resolved

them. British and French enthusiasm for a revived Eastern Front was at its peak but so were also the Western Front's demands on their military resources. While the Japanese were willing to commit substantial forces in the Far East, they would do so only to serve their own interests, and those did not extend beyond Lake Baikal. The US President, State Department, and War Department considered the defeat of Germany on the Western Front to be the country's sole objective and the employment of American troops elsewhere, except in limited numbers for strictly defined purposes, as militarily, politically, and morally indefensible. In an *aide-mémoire* given to the Allied ambassadors on 17 July, the State Department had undertaken to clarify the American position by introducing a distinction between 'military intervention' and 'military action'. Military intervention for the purpose of bringing Germany under attack from the east, it stated, would damagingly exploit Russia and not help win the war against Germany; consequently the United States could 'not take part in such an intervention or sanction it in principle'. Military action by small forces would be admissible for two specific purposes: to protect the rear of the Czechs in the Far East who were fighting to restore contact with their comrades in Western Siberia (which was not done until late in August) and to guard military supplies and equipment stored at Murmansk and Arkhangelsk. On 3 August, after Japan asserted a right to send as many troops as it deemed necessary, the State Department had released a resume of the *aide mémoire* to the press and with it a 'most public and solemn' announcement to the Russian people that the US Government contemplated 'no interference with the political sovereignty of Russia, no intervention in her internal affairs ... and no impairment of her territorial integrity, either now or hereafter' – and that it 'understood' the Japanese Government would 'issue a similar assurance'.³⁵

An Armed Camp

THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL OF THE REPUBLIC

As Lenin was leaving a mass meeting at a Moscow factory on the night of 30 August 1918, two young women approached him, and one of them fired three shots from a pistol, hitting him in the upper chest and left shoulder. That morning a former officer had shot and killed the chief of the Petrograd *Cheka*, Mikhail Uritskiy. Lenin's wounds were severe enough to require more than a month's recuperation but did not impair his control over the party and government. Uritskiy's assassin was a member of an underground officers' group, and the woman who shot Lenin, Fanya Kaplan, was an Anarchist turned Social Revolutionary. Although the incidents were probably entirely the work of those two individuals acting independently of each other and the groups with which they were associated, the coincidence, like that of 6 July, intensified the existing crisis atmosphere and provided the pretext for a drastic reaction. On the night of the 30th, Sverdlov addressed a report to 'All Soviets of Workers, Peasants' Red Army Men's Deputies, All Armies, All, All, All!' telling them there had been 'an utterly foul assault on Comrade Lenin' by 'Social Revolutionary hirelings' of the British and French to which the working class would 'respond with merciless, massive terror against all enemies of the revolution.' Three days later, on 2 September, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (see n. 10, Ch. 4) declared a 'massive Red terror against the bourgeoisie and its agents'.¹

Along with the articles in *Pravda* and *Izvestia* proclaiming the Red Terror, accounts appeared describing an Anglo-French conspiracy to capture the Council of People's Commissars and set up a military dictatorship in Moscow. They did not assert a direct connection to the attack on Lenin, but the resolution on the terror had charged 'agents of degenerate socialism paid by Anglo-French imperialist gold'. Lockhart, as head of the British mission, was named as the chief conspirator. The plotters, had they been successful, were said to have planned to publish forged secret correspondence and treaties between Soviet Russia and Germany 'in order to create a suitable atmosphere for renewing the war with Germany'.² On 4 September, the papers published a decree passed in the All-Russia Central Executive Committee two days earlier stating that 'face to face with imperialist predators ... face to face with the yellow banner of treason raised

by the Russian bourgeoisie ...: the Soviet Republic is converted into an armed camp’.

The decree dedicated the ‘entire strength and resources’ of the country to ‘armed struggle against aggressors’, obligated all citizens to carry out whatever duties were assigned to them for national defense, and specified that a Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic ‘with a single commander in chief’ would be created ‘to head all fronts and all military elements.’³ Trotsky was in Moscow from 2 to 5 September, and he, no doubt, had much to do with the decrees on the Red Terror and the armed camp, the latter in particular. In it, he exploited the emotional storm then being generated to take the final and politically most controversial step in the transition to a regular armed force.

The activation of a general headquarters had been under discussion throughout August. Podvoyskiy had proposed giving command authority to the Supreme Military Council. Yegorov had argued for a commander in chief responsible directly to the Council of People’s Commissars and a headquarters similar to the old *Stavka* that would serve the commander in chief and not a committee as the staff of the Supreme Military Council did. Trotsky wanted to appoint a commander-in-chief and give him substantial freedom to exercise his professional judgment under close but restrained political control. At East Front, Trotsky had found in Vatsetis the sort of man he wanted, energetic, optimistic, imperturbable. The generals in the Supreme Military Soviet, particularly Bonch-Bruyevich, considered Vatsetis, who had done poorly at the imperial general staff academy, unfit to command more than a regiment; but Trotsky may have held that to have been a point in Vatsetis’s favor since it could immunize him against the peer pressure that was drawing others away from the Bolshevik service. Trotsky had told Lenin on 23 August that he proposed to appoint Vatsetis ‘after the first victory, when arguments for it can produced’.⁴

On 6 September, at Headquarters, East Front in Arzamas, Trotsky issued Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic (RMCR) Order No. 1 announcing the council’s activation as of that date with himself as chairman, Vatsetis as ‘Commander in Chief of All Armed Forces of the Republic’, and five ‘members’. Three of the members, K. Kh. Danishevskiy, P. A. Kobozev, and K. A. Mekhonoshin, were the commissars at East Front, and two, A. P. Rozengolts and I. N. Smirnov were commissars with Fifth Army. The order also named the former general N. I. Rattel chief of staff and directed him to convert the staff of the Supreme Military Council into a staff for the RMCR. Two days later, Sverdlov reminded Trotsky that he had not provided the RMCR with regulations defining its powers and relationships to the existing military agencies.⁵ Having by then launched East Front in pursuit of its first victory, Trotsky was content to leave the RMCR in administrative limbo for the time being.

East Front went over to the offensive at Kazan on 5 September, throwing in the first wave 11,000 Fifth and Second Army troops against, at the most, 6,000 Czechs and White Guards in and around the city. From the river, some two dozen vessels of the Volga flotilla, minesweepers, floating batteries, steamers, and torpedo boats

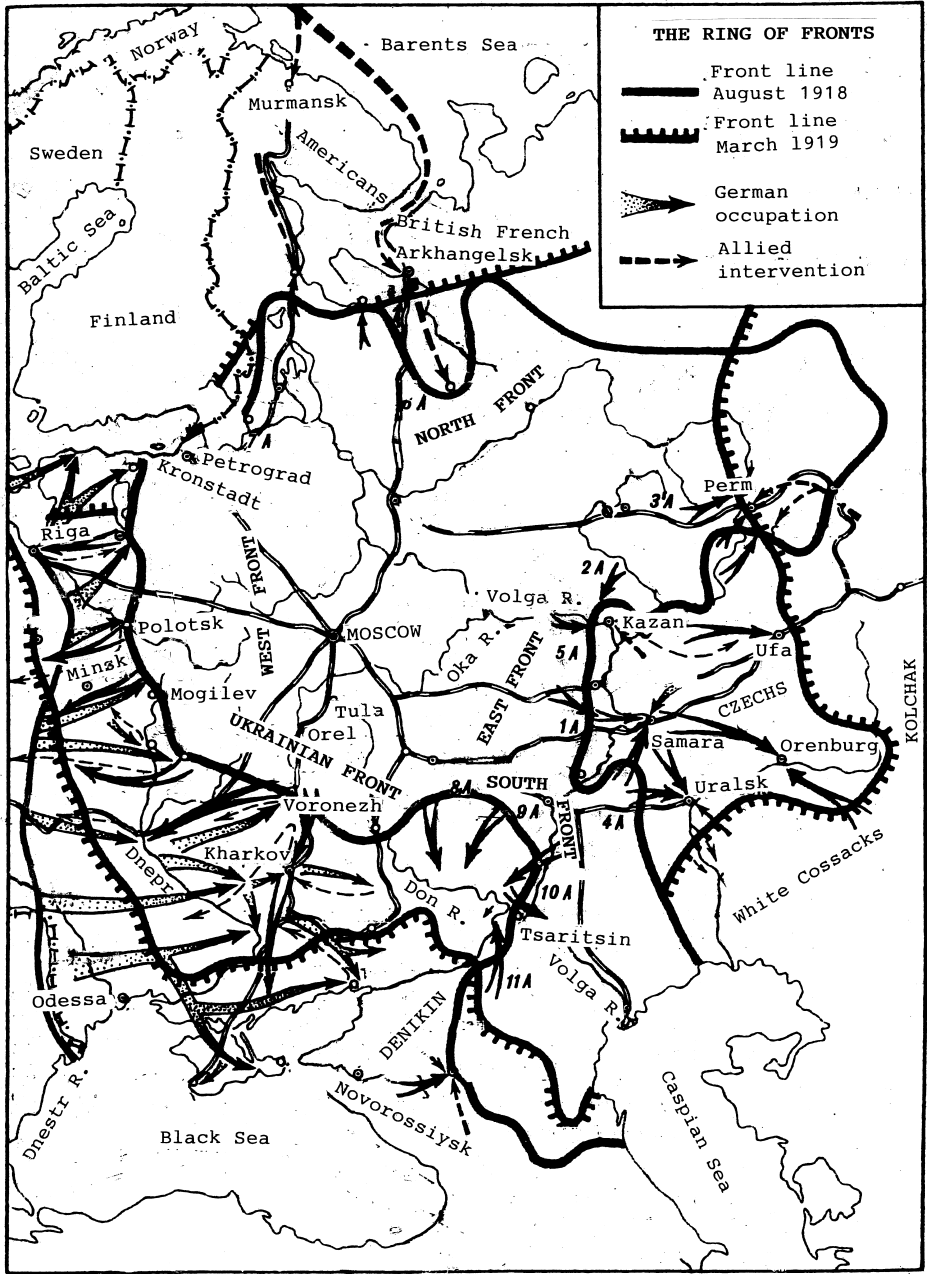
mounting guns in calibers up to 8-inch, shelled Kazan while 16 airplanes dropped improvised dynamite bombs. In a note to Trotskiy, Lenin expressed confidence that the Kazan Czechs and White Guards 'and the kulak leeches supporting them' would be 'suppressed ... in an exemplary and implacable' manner. Tukhachevskiy's First Army joined in with an attack toward Simbirsk on the 9th; Kazan fell on the 10th; and Gay's Simbirsk Iron Division drove into Simbirsk two days later as Fourth Army at the southern end of the bridgehead was taking Volok.

On the night of the 12th, Vatsetis ordered an East Front general offensive. On the left, Third Army was to take Ekaterinburg and Second Army to clear the line of the Kama River; and on the right, Fifth, First, and Fourth Armies were to drive the enemy away from the Volga, taking Syzran and Samara. But the Czechs and White Guards, although their respect for the Soviet numbers and determination had grown, retained sufficient superiority in tactical skill not to allow themselves to be routed. In the Ekaterinburg sector, which was strategically important to them, they did not give any ground at all. Syzran they held until 3 October, Samara until the 10th. Second Army had two bridgeheads on the Kama by mid-October but would be tied down at Votkinskiy and Izhevsk until well into November.⁶

Nevertheless, in September, the Red Army passed major military and psychological milestones in its development. It conducted its first cohesive offensive operations and secured its first victories against regular army forces. Trotskiy, writing to Lenin on 11 September (with copies to the press), asserted that in capturing Kazan the Red Army men had proved themselves to be 'in their overwhelming majority superb combat material' and their past failures resulted entirely from lack of proper organization.⁷ On 16 September, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee overcame its distaste for military decorations, which had been abolished in November 1917 as marks of class discrimination, and authorized the Order of the Red Banner to be awarded for courage and valor in combat. Vasilii Blyukher was the first to receive it. He had led the southern Urals detachments, calling themselves 'the partisan army', on an 800-mile march behind the enemy front. On the way, he had temporarily cut the Czechs' line of communications between Ufa and Chelyabinsk and enhanced the feeling of isolation already gripping their units on the Volga; and on 13 September, when the East Front offensive was at its height, he had brought 6,000 experienced fighters through the front to Third Army. He, Chapayev, Gay, Budennyi, and others who received the Order of the Red Banner would soon constitute a new elite, a class of so-called 'legendary' figures separate both from the military specialists and from the Red Army rank and file.

On 30 September, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee confirmed regulations for the RMCR, establishing it as the 'organ' of supreme national military authority, placing all of the 'people's strength and means' at its disposal, and obligating all state institutions to satisfy its requirements as matters of highest priority. Within the military affairs commissariat the RMCR superseded the collegium of the commissariat as the executive body and absorbed the collegium's members. The regulations anticipated that RMCR members would serve with the

THE RED ARMY 1918-1941



Map 1: The Ring of Fronts

field commands as observers and instructors and in critical situations as temporary members of *front* and army revolutionary military councils. From his experience at East Front, Trotsky had come to conceive the RMCR as the central military authority and himself and the members as the means by which its decisions would be brought directly to bear. When he wrote the regulations, Trotsky had already been away from Moscow for nearly two months and was leaving the coordination of RMCR affairs to Ya. M. Sklyanskiy, whom he appointed deputy chairman.

The regulations gave the commander in chief RMCR 'full independence in all strategic-operational questions' and the full rights of a RMCR member. On the other hand, all orders he issued had to be countersigned by one other member. The aim, as Trotsky had explained in a letter written to Lenin in late August, was to institute 'strict separation of operational-command functions from political functions' but to ensure as well that the political members in military councils 'enjoy equal authority and bear equal responsibility'.⁸ Vatsetis turned the East Front command over to S. S. Kamenev, an ex-colonel and general staff academy graduate who had been assistant commander of the Western Screen. As Commander in Chief, Vatsetis was subordinate to the RMCR and superior to the *front* commands. The reorganized Supreme Military Council, a substantial number of whose members had outranked him in the old army and with which he had had less than cordial relations during his tenure at East Front, became the Field Staff of the RMCR. The Field Staff prepared plans, directives, and reports in accordance with the Commander in Chief's requirements but it was not his staff. He and it were headquartered in Serpukhov, a small provincial city 50 miles south of Moscow, where, presumably, they could give their undivided attention to operational matters.

One of the first RMCR directives to be issued, No. 3/2 of 12 September, terminated the screens. The Northern Screen became North Front with an allotment of two armies, Sixth and Seventh, and a 700-mile sector extending from Petrograd to Vyatka. Ex-tsarist general D. P. Parskiy became the *front* commander and set up his headquarters in Yaroslavl. The Southern Screen became South Front, receiving an allotment of five armies, Eighth through Twelfth, to cover a 1,100-mile sector from Bryansk east to Astrakhan and including the North Caucasus. The *front* commander P. P. Sytin, another ex-general, had his headquarters in Kozlov, 240 miles due south of Moscow. The Western Screen, reduced to about 12,000 men, became the Western Defense Area under A. E. Snesarev, who was headquartered in Moscow.⁹ The *front* headquarters' deployment in a tight arc around Moscow indicated a continuing strong defensive orientation and an almost total shift in the strategic emphasis from the west to the north, east, and south, most particularly the south.

In the RMCR regulations Trotsky established the conventionally organized, centralized command structure that had been the core of his resolution in the Fifth All-Russia Congress of Soviets. Unity of command as it existed in other military forces was far from being achieved. The highest authority at all levels was vested in the military revolutionary councils, in which the Commander in Chief and the *front* and army commanders had 'the right of a deciding vote' but were

clearly not superior to the other members or to the chairman. *Front* and army commanders, like the Commander in Chief, possessed ‘full independence in all strategic-operational questions,’ subject only to directives from and answerability to the higher headquarters. While their orders were not valid without a council member’s countersignature, members could not refuse to sign unless they suspected a counterrevolutionary intent. However, if they disagreed with an order on any other grounds, they could report their objections to the next higher headquarters.¹⁰

Centralization was going to require skills in military management, planning, and command that had always been in short supply in Russia and were virtually monopolized by men many of whom, as Trotsky put it, ‘only two years before had thought of moderate liberals as revolutionaries, while the Bolsheviks, in their eyes, belonged to the fourth dimension.’¹¹ After the wave of military specialist defections at Kazan Lenin had proposed it was time the party trained its own instructors ‘for a workers’ army’ and prepared Bolsheviks for assignments to senior commands. On 7 October 1918, the RMCR authorized an Academy of the General Staff, giving it a mandate to train party members with some military experience either in the old army or the Red Army.

A week later, Trotsky told Dzerzhinskiy, the head of the *Cheka*, and Lenin and Sverdlov that ‘in view of changed circumstances,’ the arrested officers were showing readiness to work in the Soviet service and those who had no serious charges against them could be put at his disposal for enrolment in the Red Army and Navy. Doing so, he said, would lighten the load on the prisons, and treachery could be averted by holding their families hostage for their good behavior. The General Staff Academy opened in early December with 183 students. The number was later increased to several hundred, but few, perhaps none, completed the full two-year course during the Civil War. Trotsky’s approach to the former officers, on the other hand, was almost instantly effective. The Red Army, which had about 8,000 military specialists in August, had nearly 25,000 by 15 November.¹²

STALIN AND THE RMCR

Trotsky’s next and more difficult task after having erected the machinery was to make it work. A breakdown came at once – no doubt not unexpectedly – at South Front. In a telegram to the Council of People’s Commissars Stalin announced, ‘The enemy has been utterly routed and hurled back across the Don. Tsaritsyn is secure.’ On the 15th, he arrived in Moscow to report in person to Lenin. Before departing for Tsaritsyn four days later, he gave an interview to *Pravda* in which he spoke of ‘the appearance of a new corps of commanders promoted from the ranks’ and asserted that ‘whereas our combat units are being welded and cemented, the enemy is undergoing complete disintegration.’¹³ The situation did not look nearly as bright to the Supreme Military Inspectorate, which was engaged in organizing South Front. From its point of view, reopening the railroad line from

Povorino to Tsaritsyn (and restoring the connection into the North Caucasus) was as important as holding Tsaritsyn. Doing that required coordinated thrusts to the west on the front between Kamyshin and Tsaritsyn and south on the front between Kamyshin and Povorino; but the Inspectorate reported that 'at the present time' the two groups were operating with 'virtually no relationship to each other' because one group, the Tsaritsyn group, was concentrating exclusively on the area round Tsaritsyn.¹⁴

On the day Stalin arrived back in Tsaritsyn, 22 September, the Cossacks launched another attack toward the city. For the moment, however, Stalin and his colleagues, Voroshilov and Minin, were preoccupied with another problem: they had been ordered to join Sytin as members of the South Front revolutionary military council (RMC). Stalin promptly designated himself chairman and began issuing orders in the name of the South Front RMC. In one of the first, Order No. 118 of 24 September, he placed all South Front forces under I. L. Sorokin, an ex-noncommissioned officer and partisan detachment commander, and instructed him to report directly to Tsaritsyn. In another, he ordered Sorokin to dispatch the 1st Steel Rifle Division, a recently converted partisan unit under D. P. Zholba, to Tsaritsyn. On the 27th, ignoring Sytin, whom he dismissed as being interested only in the Povorino sector, he sent the RMCR an elaborate plan for defeating Krasnov by 150-mile-deep thrusts from the vicinity of Voronezh to Kantemirovka and Millerovo and out of the North Caucasus to Rostov, accompanying it with a list of weapons and ammunition 'absolutely essential' to the plan's execution. If those requirements could not be met in short order, he concluded, 'we will have to cease fighting and withdraw to the left bank of the Volga.'

On 30 September, in a telegram to Trotskiy, Sytin summarized the results of a meeting he and RMCR-member Mekhoshinin had held in Tsaritsyn with Stalin, Voroshilov, and Minin. Citing the RMCR regulations, he and Mekhoshinin had asserted the *front* commander's independence in operational matters. The other three declared that they could, in the first place, not accept the commander's exclusive right in operational decision-making and, in the second, did not regard the RMCR regulations as an official order; and they insisted that the *front* headquarters had to be in Tsaritsyn. A day later, in a telegram of their own to the RMCR, on the grounds that Sytin had neither an interest in nor a strategic plan for the southern front, they demanded his dismissal and nominated Voroshilov to replace him. They received two answers. In the first, Sverdlov transmitted a Central Committee decision made on 2 October requiring *front* RMCs to carry out all RMCR orders 'because without subordination there will not be an army'. Trotskiy's response arrived on 3 October in a directive, transmitted through Headquarters, South Front, confirming Sytin's 'full independence in all questions of strategic-operational character', appointing Mekhoshinin to the *front* RMC 'to ensure unity of command', and requiring the entire South Front RMC to be 'in residence at Kozlov' by 5 October.

Within the day, Stalin and Voroshilov, as 'party members', fired off a telegram to Lenin 'protesting categorically' that to carry out Trotskiy's order would be

‘criminal’ because Trotskiy did not have ‘the slightest idea’ of what the situation on the southern front was like and had put the entire control of the front ‘in the hands of General Sytin, a man who is not only useless but untrustworthy and therefore dangerous’. It was necessary, they insisted, that the Central Committee investigate Trotskiy’s ‘demeaning of respected party members to please traitorous military specialists’ and his ‘inadmissible’ issuing of personal orders, examining as well ‘the question of military specialists from the non-party counterrevolutionary camp’. Trotskiy countered with a ‘categorical’ demand for Stalin’s recall.

In a note written on the 5th, Sverdlov told Lenin that he had talked with ‘those in Tsaritsyn and found the situation to be more complicated than it had appeared’; therefore, Stalin’s coming to Moscow would be ‘useful’. Stalin left Tsaritsyn on the 6th, returned on the 11th, and passed through Kozlov, where Trotskiy had arrived on the 5th, twice without stopping. In the accounts published during his lifetime, Stalin is portrayed as having made the trip to frustrate Trotskiy’s ill-advised, if not nefarious, effort to remove him and Voroshilov from Tsaritsyn at the height of the battle. Lenin, who most likely took into account, as Trotskiy had not, the political and psychological effects of disciplining two prominent and obstreperous Bolsheviks at that time, allowed Stalin to return – but apparently with an understanding that he would arrange his own early removal from Tsaritsyn. Stalin made the decision easier by diverting his attack from Trotskiy to Sytin and his alleged ‘henchmen’ among the military specialists, who he accused of denying weapons and ammunition to the Tsaritsyn front; and he departed from Moscow on the 9th with a warrant from Sverdlov authorizing him to requisition a special train to hasten the trip back. On his return, he told Sverdlov by telegraph that because ‘not a single shell or a single bullet’ had reached Tsaritsyn during his absence, he was going to impound the records and come to Moscow shortly to lay the ‘whole horrible situation’ before the Central Committee.

Lenin had manifestly not given Stalin what he, Voroshilov, and their associates at Tsaritsyn wanted most, namely, an exemption from the RMCR regulations. While Stalin was gone, Trotskiy had set about reorganizing South Front. His presence and three new members in the *front* RMC enabled Sytin to activate the armies, Eighth and Ninth Armies on the line west of Kamyshin, Tenth Army in the Kamyshin–Tsaritsyn sector, Eleventh Army in the western North Caucasus, and Twelfth Army in the eastern North Caucasus. Military specialists V. V. Chernavin and A. I. Yegorov commanded Eighth and Ninth Armies. Voroshilov had been named acting commander of Tenth Army, Sorokin of Eleventh Army, and a commander for Twelfth Army had still to be found. Trotskiy, who knew how military specialists had been handled at Tsaritsyn, had said that even though Voroshilov was totally unqualified to manage a 50,000-man army, he could have the Tenth Army command provided he took orders from and reported regularly to Sytin. Stalin and Minin had not been formally excluded from the South Front RMC, but under the RMCR regulations, as long as they stayed with Tenth Army they only possessed the authority of army RMC members.

The second encirclement of Tsaritsyn was in the making on the day Stalin returned. He told Sverdlov that the Cossacks were five versts (about four miles) from the Volga south of the city. According to later Soviet accounts, the Cossacks had 45,000 men to Tenth Army's 40,000, but Trotskiy used the number 50,000, and the actual Tenth Army strength at mid-month appears to have been nearer 60,000.¹⁵ The Cossacks' main thrust had been in the south. On the 12th, they stepped up the attacks in the center and in the north; and in another two days, they were threatening the outlying settlements, Sarepta, Beketovka, and Voroponovo, after having reached the Volga north of the city and crossed it on the south. Voroshilov was sufficiently desperate by the 15th to establish contact with Sytin via the telegraph, and when Sytin asked for a situation report, Minin told him it was 'tragic' and the evacuation of Tsaritsyn was beginning. Late in the day on the 16th, Minin told Sytin that Voroponovo, the settlement closest to Tsaritsyn, had been lost, the situation was 'most serious' and would have been worse had Zholba's Steel Division not arrived at Sarepta during the previous night and encircled some 1,500 White Guards there. In another day, the Cossack offensive subsided, and on the 18th, Stalin told Lenin and Sverdlov that the front was firm, Tenth Army's troops were attacking, and if the situation did not worsen in the meantime, he would leave for Moscow 'tomorrow'.

The Steel Division's arrival after a 16-day march marked the turning point in the second encirclement and came later to be regarded as the outstanding early manifestation of Stalin's prescience in military affairs, he having had the foresight to defy Trotskiy and call in the division. Order No. 118, which Trotskiy had countermanded on 5 October, does appear in that respect either to have been a stroke of genius or of great good luck. But by the 5th, the Steel Division had been on its way toward Tsaritsyn and Trotskiy's greater concern was Stalin's attempt to capture control of the North Caucasus forces for the Tsaritsyn faction in the South Front RMC.¹⁶ The Steel Division was a reliably effective unit, hence a very significant addition to Tenth Army, but it did not reverse the course of the battle by itself. Sytin provided the 2nd Moscow and 38th Rogozhsko-Simonovskiy Regiments, both composed of Moscow workers, and they also stiffened the drive to push the Cossacks back to the Don River that continued until 25 October. The Cossacks' most discouraging single experience may well have been their encounter with 13 armored trains that came into play on the 15th and 16th when they approached Tsaritsyn.

From Moscow, Stalin dispatched a telegram to 'Commander, Tsaritsyn Front, Voroshilov' on 22 October. It read:

Give the Morozovsk, Tikhoretsk, 3rd Revolutionary and other regiments that have encircled the enemy and beaten him over the head my fervent communist greetings. Tell them that Soviet Russia will never forget their heroic deeds and will give them their due reward. Long live the gallant troops of Tsaritsyn Front!¹⁷

Soviet Russia would indeed not forget while Stalin lived or after. The reward for most of those who had been there would be small; for some, for Voroshilov,

Budenny, Semen Timoshenko (who commanded the Crimean Regiment, a converted partisan detachment), and G. I. Kulik (Voroshilov's chief of artillery), it would be enormous.

STALIN, TROTSKIY AND THE 'MILITARY QUESTION'

To Lenin, and through him to Trotskiy, Stalin presented himself as an essential intermediary between the center and the forces in the south whose first concern all along had been to avert the errors the others less knowledgeable than he would have made. Subtly distancing himself from them, he characterized Voroshilov and Minin as valuable workers whom he had persuaded to comply fully with orders from the center. The ammunition shortage, he said, was the whole cause of their dissatisfaction. For himself he expressed a desire to return to the south and work with Sytin and Mekhonoshin in the South Front RMC and to become a member of the RMCR. He was also willing, he said, to meet with Trotskiy to compose their past differences, which Lenin indicated he would be very pleased to see happen.

Trotskiy was in Tsaritsyn during the last week of October and stayed into early November awaiting word from Lenin as to whether he would be needed in Moscow at a special All-Russia Congress of Soviets that was being called to commemorate the October Revolution. The Tsaritsyn delegation was rumored to be primed to raise the 'military question' at the congress. After Lenin told him on the 3rd that the question was not on the agenda and would not be put on it, he left the next day for Astrakhan. In the meantime, he had decided to keep Voroshilov on at Tenth Army after giving him a military specialist chief of staff and a new RMC member, A. I. Okulor, to replace Minin, whom he dismissed as an incorrigible troublemaker. To a request from Lenin and Sverdlov that he act to satisfy Voroshilov's 'frantic' demands for more ammunition he replied that shortages existed everywhere and the trouble at Tsaritsyn was an 'incredible, completely rabid expenditure of ammunition' at a time when economy ought to be practiced.¹⁸

Although Lenin apparently wanted to accommodate Stalin's expressed desire for a prominent place in the military work and Trotskiy was not disposed to take issue with Lenin, Stalin did not return to the south or enter the RMCR.¹⁹ As Lenin had promised, the Congress of Soviets also did not take up the 'military question'; nevertheless, it did become the setting in which Stalin and Trotskiy established the positions from which they would henceforth contend with each other. In an article, 'The October Revolution', printed in *Pravda* on 6 November, the day the congress opened, Stalin undertook to separate Trotskiy from the party. To the party, specifically the Central Committee and Lenin, he gave the whole credit for having inspired the Petrograd uprising 'from beginning to end'. To Trotskiy, as 'president of the Petrograd Soviet', he assigned a very large but intrinsically different share: the 'immediate direction' of 'all practical work in connection with the organization of the uprising'.²⁰ Trotskiy had, by implication, put personal

power and organizational efficiency (of the kind he was currently using the military specialists to generate) ahead of party collegiality. For those who wished to understand it that way, Trotsky's report to the congress at its last session on 9 November made Stalin's implications virtually explicit. In the south, he said, the 'negative characteristics' of guerrillanism persisted; and with Stalin particularly in mind, he added,

Not all Soviet workers have understood that our administration has been centralized and that all orders issued from above must be final ... We shall be pitiless with those workers who have not yet understood. We will remove them, cast them out of our ranks, pull them up with repressions.²¹

While Stalin and Trotsky skirmished at the congress, events elsewhere were subjecting their positions to the most serious test yet. The stalemate in the World War was dissolving. Germany had asked for an armistice. In his first speech since being wounded, Lenin had told the Central Executive Committee and the Moscow Soviet on 22 October that 'never before have we been so near the world workers' revolution, and ... never before have we been in such a perilous position'. The trouble was that near as the revolution might be, it had not actually begun. The governments that had fought the war were still in power, somewhat faltering in Germany but solidly in France and England (and the United States). The war's ending before the revolution came would allow the Allies to divert enormous military resources to the campaign against the Soviet Republic and could terminate the Soviet-German semi-alliance or even bring Germany back into the field as an active enemy.²²

In his opening address to the Congress of Soviets on 6 November, Lenin confirmed the peril. He informed the delegates that Germany had on the previous day severed relations with Soviet Russia and was expelling Joffe and the embassy personnel. Germany, he inferred, had made a tacit deal with US President Woodrow Wilson and was going to hold Poland, the Ukraine, Latvia and Estonia until Allied troops arrived to take possession of them. The revolution remained a hope but nothing more – until the congress's last minutes when Sverdlov briefly interrupted the adjournment proceedings to read a news item: the Berlin radio station had announced that a mutiny had broken out in the German naval base at Kiel.

THE 'FORTRESS OF SOCIALIST REVOLUTION'

The 9th of November 1918 appeared by the following morning to have been an even more historic day than 7 November 1917 had been, the day of the true workers' revolution. The German imperial government had been overthrown and a republic proclaimed. Radio broadcasts indicated that workers' and soldiers' councils (soviets) had seized control in Berlin and Kiel, that Joffe and the Soviet Embassy staff were

being recalled to Berlin and that German soldiers had arrested the official armistice delegation and begun peace negotiations between themselves and the French soldiers. The revolution appeared to be spreading like wildfire. By telegraph, Lenin ordered Joffe, who was last heard from at Minsk on the German side of the demarcation line, to return to Berlin at once. He also sent telegrams to the Orel and Kursk district executive committees directing them to enlist the German troops in the Ukraine in the campaign against Krasnov. As the picture became clearer, however, it lost some of its luster. Workers' and soldiers' councils had sprung up, and Germany had become a republic, but right-wing socialists with no taste at all for revolution, not the councils, were in control. Official delegations, not the soldiers, were negotiating an armistice, and the German and French commands at the front still had their troops firmly in hand.²³

The armistice, as it went into effect on 11 November, amounted to a surrender to the Allies, and it contained significant provisions pertaining to Russia. While the German forces were required to withdraw immediately from France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Alsace-Lorraine, they were obligated to remain in place in Russia until the 'Allies shall think the moment suitable [for withdrawal], having regard to the internal situation of those territories'.

After the armistice the perils Lenin had foreseen appeared to be materializing on all sides. In the east, at Omsk, in Siberia, on 18 November, Admiral Aleksandr Kolchak overthrew a loose-knit coalition government that called itself the Directory and proclaimed himself Supreme Ruler of All Russia. Kolchak had solid credentials as a Russian nationalist and a conservative, if not a monarchist, and he was an Allied, particularly British, protégé. He was a figure around whom the White counterrevolution might coalesce. The situation in the west took a serious turn on 23 November when, after two weeks of Soviet efforts to Bolshevize Germany, the provisional government in Berlin completed the break its imperial predecessor had begun. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland had declared independence; and Red Army troops and Soviet partisans had launched a campaign to capture the Baltic States that initially went quite well since the great majority of the German soldiers wanted only to go home. But by early December a British warship squadron was supporting the Estonians and some Germans in Latvia were beginning to see the armistice provisions as offering a chance to create a German sphere of influence there.

Allied and Soviet attention centered most intently on the south, where the Turkish (on 31 October) and German armistices opened access to the Black Sea for the first time since August 1914. British and French naval vessels passed through the Dardanelles on 11 November. Two weeks later a combined French–British–Italian fleet anchored at Sevastopol to take over the German and Russian ships and installations there. At the same time, British and French military missions landed at Novorossiysk to establish contact with General Denikin and begin arranging assistance for the Volunteer Army. In the Ukraine, as the German grip weakened, groups professing all sorts of political aims contended with each other, and France installed a force of French and Greek troops at Odessa. Ostensibly to

supervise the armistice with Turkey, British troops occupied Baku (lost to the Turks in September) and Batumi, which gave them potential control over the entire Transcaucasus.²⁴

Lenin had told the Central Executive Committee in October that the south would be the primary target of British and French imperialism. In late November, the Red Army's deployment strongly reflected that concern. South Front had 116,000 bayonets and sabers (not including the troops in the Kuban and Caucasus, on whom figures were not available) and Antonov-Ovseenko had set up a headquarters at Kursk from which he commanded detachments numbering 17,000 men ranged along the Ukrainian border west of the Don River. East Front had 86,000 bayonets and sabers, North Front 20,000, and the Western Independent Army had 8,000. When Vatsetis asked how the military supplies were being distributed, Lenin replied that nothing was going to the west, very little to the east and 'almost everything' to the south.²⁵

On 30 November, the Central Executive Committee issued a decree the purpose of which was given as being to put the 2 September armed camp declaration 'into practice in all areas of economic activity and state administration'. The preamble stated that the German, French and other European working classes had fallen under British and American dominance, leaving only one country to uphold workers' rights, a single 'fortress of Socialist revolution, Soviet Russia'. Therefore it was necessary to establish for food production, transportation and war industry as well as for the Army and Navy a centralized 'military regime' that could institute sufficiently 'rigorous labor discipline' to meet the requirements of the country's conversion to an armed camp. The decree went on to create an instrument, the Council of Workers' and Peasants' Defense, to which it assigned 'full power to mobilize the countrys' manpower and resources for defense'. The membership consisted of Lenin as chairman (and chairman of the Council of People's Commissars), Trotskiy as chairman of the RMCR, the deputy People's Commissar of Food and Railroad Communications, the chairman of the Extraordinary Commission for Red Army Supply, and Stalin as Central Executive Committee representative.

The Defense Council's function was to outfit a mass army and sustain it at war by imposing an iron-hard economic dictatorship, what was later known as war communism. The fundamental principles applied were 'surplus appropriation' and the 'dictatorship of food'. Under those, all the products of labor became the property of the state, which determined according to its own requirements how much was surplus and how much could be allotted to the workers and peasants for their subsistence. The council's goals were to increase the Red Army quickly to 1.5 million men and eventually to 3 million.

Through the Defense Council, Lenin and Trotskiy brought food, transportation and war industry directly under their control and made the people's commissariats their executive agencies. Stalin was a supernumerary member. As one of some 260 delegates in the Central Executive Committee he had no personal power base. Lenin wanted to compensate him for having been removed from Tsaritsyn, and

Trotsky thought taking him into the council would be a way to end his random sniping at the military organizations. For Stalin, the appointment provided what he had so far lacked, a confirmed place in the war establishment and that at the very top in a body technically superior even to the RMCR.

On the other hand, the 30 November decree specifically exempted the armed forces from the kind of collegiality Stalin had advocated. Trotsky, who most likely drafted the decree, not only saw to it that command and administration of the armed forces were reserved to the RMCR 'as before' but 'to achieve greater centralization in the leadership' included a clause creating a 'bureau' within the RMCR consisting of himself, Vatsetis and S. I. Aralov, the chief of intelligence in the Field Staff.²⁶ Trotsky therewith secured himself the personal authority – thinly veiled in collegiality – that Stalin and Voroshilov had accused him of exercising illegally. Additional decrees issued in early December gave statutory force to the RMCR regulations pertaining to the Commander in Chief, the front commanders and the army commanders.²⁷

Although he had certainly not meant to do so, Trotsky had also centralized the opposition. Stalin had been dislodged from Tsaritsyn but was in no wise disposed either to terminate his military involvement or to bring it into conformity with Trotsky's program. He told Voroshilov in early November that he was relying on him and all of his comrades 'from Astrakhan to Voronezh' (i.e., the whole South Front zone) to keep him informed; and he reminded Voroshilov that as Tenth Army commander, he was 'the boss of a *front*' and possessed means for 'arranging matters' to suit himself.²⁸ Voroshilov was in fact the 'boss' of over 70,000 troops. Trotsky, after his inspection, described those as constituting 'a vast army, peculiar in its make-up ... with ill-disciplined commanders', low operational effectiveness, and units unqualified for the divisional designations they bore. Nevertheless the Soviet strategic position in the south depended absolutely on Tenth Army.²⁹ It comprised over two-thirds of South Front's total complement, had more than half of the *front's* machine guns and two-thirds of its artillery and alone outnumbered Krasnov's forces by nearly two to one.³⁰ Lenin's desire to placate Stalin and his and the Central Committee's reluctance to permit repressions against party members, moreover, gave the Tsaritsyn group a sense of immunity to Trotsky's authority. While Trotsky was in Tsaritsyn, Voroshilov joked with Stalin over the teletype about having to exercise the troops in 'marching and parading' in order to persuade Trotsky that they were not a batch of detachments but a 'real revolutionary army'. Minin's removal from the army RMC (and from Tsaritsyn) did not disturb the Tsaritsyn group, which had merely used him. Its members, chief among them M. L. Rukhimovich, Ye. A. Shchadenko, A. Ya. Parkhomenko, and V. I. Mezhlauk, were Voroshilov's party cronies from the Ukraine, and they stayed on as 'special representatives' of the RMCR. They did not openly challenge Trotsky's appointee, Okulov, but since their Bolshevik credentials were as good as his, Stalin could make effective use in Moscow of evidence they concocted against him.

ON THE OFFENSIVE IN THE SOUTH

The approaching end to the World War, which the Soviet leadership had tardily recognized owing to its doctrinal requirement for a revolution as the first stage, had made the destruction of Krasnov's and Denikin's forces before the Allies could intervene Trotsky's paramount strategic objective. Having been a war correspondent in France for two years, he knew how far from being ready to fight on the terms that had prevailed on the Western Front the Red Army was. A strategic estimate sent to Lenin in early October had set a requirement for a 'decisive blow' to be launched 'in the very shortest time' that would drive Krasnov's forces back to the Don River. Late in the month, after the situation at Tsaritsyn had stabilized, South Front ordered Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Armies to go over to the offensive in the first week of November and designated the Povorino–Tsaritsyn railroad as their initial objective. On 2 November, a day before the offensive was to have started, Fitskhelaurov's Cossacks hit Eighth and Ninth Armies. In the next two weeks they advanced up to 40 miles to the north and northeast, cutting the Balashov–Kamyshin railroad, taking Povorino, and threatening Voronezh. Trotsky replaced Sytin as South Front commander with P. A. Slaven, a Latvian officer who had taken over at Kazan in similar circumstances (except that Voronezh was 125 miles closer to Moscow than Kazan was) and had commanded Fifth Army in the counteroffensive.

Ninth Army, under Yegorov, recovered sufficiently by the end of the month to counterattack along the railroad between Balashov and Kamyshin, but its 32,000 troops were not enough to turn the scales against the Cossacks. On its right Eighth Army, with just 13,000 troops, was barely able to screen the approaches to Voronezh; and Tenth Army on its left, which was to have brought the weight of 40,000 bayonets and 9,000 sabers to bear, was letting its front sag toward the Volga between Tsaritsyn and Kamyshin and had allowed a 40-mile-wide gap to open between its and Ninth Army's flanks northwest of Kamyshin. On 6 December, Slaven told Voroshilov that it was evident Tenth Army was 'marking time' and not 'making war in earnest'. A day later, Slaven reported to Trotsky that he had given Voroshilov 'a categorical order' to give Ninth Army offensive support without delay. While Tenth Army went on 'clinging to passivity', as Slaven put it, the Tsaritsyn group managed to persuade Lenin through Stalin that Okulov was at fault for having failed as a commissar to prevent a mutiny in one division and desertions and refusals to fight in several regiments. To a complaint from Lenin, Trotsky replied that the question of recalling Okulov could not be settled in isolation; all attempts at compromise with Voroshilov having failed, the entire Tenth Army RMC including the commander had to be replaced. On 18 December, Voroshilov relinquished his post at Tenth Army – and simultaneously took up another as a member of the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Ukrainian Government.³¹

In the meantime, the strategic situation had changed for all parties. The German occupation was ending in the Ukraine, and neither the troops nor their commander had any interest there other than an expeditious passage home.

In mid-December, the Germans abandoned Hetman Pavel Skoropadskiy, whose dictatorship they had sustained since April 1918. The coalition of left-leaning parties that replaced him, the Directory, and its chief military *ataman*, Simon Petlyura, proclaimed Ukrainian national independence, which evoked instantaneous Bolshevik hostility without attracting material domestic or Allied support. Krasnov could no longer rely on either the Germans or the Ukrainians to protect the western approaches to the Cossack territory, and the Allies were insisting on his renouncing Cossack separatism and subordinating himself to Denikin as a precondition of their assistance. The Directory's weakness created a power vacuum that the Bolsheviks were eager to fill, and the Allies' presence in Odessa, Sevastopol, Novorossiysk, Batumi and Baku necessitated operational speed and effectiveness that South Front had not yet come anywhere near achieving.

On 19 December, Vatsetis submitted a plan for a two-stage offensive to be begun on about 1 January 1919, in which South Front would destroy the Krasnov and Denikin forces and then sweep west across the Ukraine. South Front thereupon set to work preparing the first stage: a thrust due south from the Voronezh area toward Rostov through the Cossack heartland between the Don and Donets Rivers. Trotskiy, whose train had been based at Voronezh since early November, expedited a regroupment that raised Eighth Army's strength to 26,000 men, and on the army's right he stationed 20,000 partisans designated as the Kozhevnikov Group (after their commander I. S. Kozhevnikov, one of Antonov-Ovseenko's deputies) inside the Ukrainian border.

On 1 January, two days after Slaven had issued an operations order projecting a starting date between 7 and 10 January for the South Front offensive, Mamantov's Cossacks began a third attack on Tsaritsyn; and Yegorov, who had taken over Tenth Army, reported that he had found less than half of the troops sufficiently trained and organized to be considered combat-worthy. The Cossacks reached the Volga north of Tsaritsyn on the 12th and four days later were on the river at Sarepta south of the city. Eighth Army, which had opened its offensive on the 4th, was stalled by counterattacks. Slaven threatened to bring the army commander, V. M. Gittis, before a revolutionary tribunal if he did not get moving and reported to Vatsetis that South Front had the enemy surrounded on three sides and was 'endeavoring' to attack from all of them but 'for the present moment' the situation at Tsaritsyn was 'extremely serious'.³²

Complications had also arisen with regard to the second stage, the occupation of the Ukraine. On 2 January, with Trotskiy's encouragement (given when the outlook for the South Front had appeared brighter) the 2nd Ukrainian Partisan Division, one of four in the Kozhevnikov Group, had seized Kharkov. The Bolshevik provisional Ukrainian government, which until then had been confined to issuing proclamations *in absentia* from Kursk while the Directory was ensconced in Kiev, had established itself in Kharkov on the 3rd. Trotskiy then argued that unless the Soviet Government was willing to disavow its people in the Ukraine and see the Allies, who he claimed were ready to land 100,000–150,000 troops, take Kiev, Kursk, and possibly Moscow, a Ukrainian

Front would have to be activated and begin an offensive in the Ukraine at once.³³

Events in the Ukraine – and in Siberia – had also brought Stalin back into military affairs. At East Front late in November, Mikhail Lashevich, a very senior Bolshevik and member of the semiautonomous Petrograd bureau of the Central Committee, had taken over Third Army proposing to lead it on an advance to Ekaterinburg. Third Army, with 35,000 troops the largest in East Front by far, was loosely organized into three divisions spread over a 240-mile front. Concurrently looking for a success to mark his assumption of supreme command, Admiral Kolchak had ordered the Czech general, Rudolf Gajda, who was coming on the Ekaterinburg front to attack toward Perm. Gajda's offensive had pre-empted Lashevich's by one day and had reached Perm and the line of the Kama River on 25 December. In the final ten days or so, Third Army had disintegrated, the retreat had become a rout, and more than half of the troops had disappeared. Lashevich had completely lost control and taken to drink. Trotsky had talked about replacing him, but, as the Tsaritsyn experience had shown, disciplining a well-connected party member was no simple matter. On 31 December, Lenin had asked Trotsky to go to Third Army and added that he had also thought of sending Stalin. Trotsky, who was engaged with more immediately crucial problems at South Front, had responded with a, nevertheless, surprisingly enthusiastic endorsement for Stalin, who, he said, should be sent with 'full authority' from the party and the RMCR to restore order and severely punish offenders. Stalin and the chief of the *Cheka*, Dzerzhinskiy, had arrived at Third Army headquarters 120 miles west of Perm on 7 January with a mandate 'to investigate the causes of the city's surrender' as well as to restore the situation at the front.³⁴

From a thousand miles away in Siberia, Stalin's influence had again reached into the south where he could claim a voice in Ukrainian affairs as People's Commissar for Nationalities and (since October 1918) a member of the Ukrainian Central Committee. Voroshilov and his associates in the Tsaritsyn group had gone to Kharkov, and Lenin and Sverdlov had suggested as a 'compromise' with Stalin appointing Rukhimovich, who had been the commissar for military affairs in the short-lived Ukrainian Soviet government of early 1918, either to that post again or making him the Ukrainian Front commander. Trotsky had protested that the appointment would be 'a rotten compromise' because Rukhimovich was 'a pseudonym for Voroshilov', and recommended that they read Ikulov's report on Tenth Army which showed 'how Voroshilov demoralized it with Stalin's assistance'.³⁵ Trotsky had managed to secure Antonov-Ovseenko's appointment as Ukrainian Front commander and Podvoyskiy's as Ukrainian military affairs commissar; but Voroshilov had become the Ukrainian internal affairs commissar; Shchadenko had gone into the Ukrainian Front RMC; Mezhlauk had become one of Podvoyskiy's deputies; Rukhimovich had taken over Ukrainian army organization; and Parkhomenko had found a place as Kharkov regional military affairs commissar.

Suddenly, in the latter half of January, the situation at South Front shifted dramatically in the Soviets' favor. The Cossacks, their confidence undermined by the German withdrawal, Allied indifference, Soviet numerical superiority at the

front, and Bolshevik agitation in the rear, lost their will to fight. Their fronts went into spontaneous collapse, and by the end of the month they had fallen back to the right bank of the Don in the Eighth and Ninth Army sectors. In another two weeks, they lost their grip on Tsaritsyn and their entire territory inside the Don bend. Krasnov resigned his command on 14 February, and the 15,000 or so Cossacks who were not yet ready to give up the struggle retreated across the lower Don and Donets to take service with Denikin. The most notable Soviet tactical accomplishment was a 200-mile cavalry raid Budennyy had conducted in the steppe south of Tsaritsyn for which he received an Order of the Red Banner and promotion to commander of the 4th Cavalry Division.

That the decision against the Don Cossacks had not been primarily a feat of Soviet arms became evident when South Front's armies crossed the Donets. While South Front was advancing, one of Denikin's generals, Baron P. N. Vranghel, had defeated the recently (late November 1918) activated Caspian–Caucasus Front and smashed the Eleventh Army. Vranghel's success, which brought the entire North Caucasus under Volunteer Army control, enabled Denikin to reinforce a 5,000-man division he had stationed in the Donets Basin earlier. The Volunteer Army elements, although they were vastly outnumbered, were sufficient to hold the Donets Basin against Eighth Army (of which Tukhachevskiy had taken command), Ninth Army, and the Kozhevnikov Group – and thereby, in the middle of winter, to deny Soviet access to the Donets coal.³⁶

Ukrainian Front had occupied the western Ukraine to the Dnepr River and to within 40–50 miles of the Black Sea coast by the end of January. Its 47,000-man force consisted of partisan detachments combined to form regiments, brigades, and divisions. The most celebrated partisan commander was Nikolay Shchors, whose partisan brigade took Kiev on 5 February. P. Ye. Dybenko, the former naval affairs commissar and expelled from the party, led a detachment of Black Sea Fleet sailors aboard an armored train. The most effective partisan leader was Nestor Makhno, whose independent movement attracted substantial support among the Ukrainian peasantry. His detachments flew the anarchist black flag. Although they opposed all forms of government, they happened for the time being to be less ill-disposed toward the Bolsheviks than toward Petliura or Denikin. Since neither Petliura, who in early February made himself also the chairman of the Directory, nor Denikin, who proclaimed himself Commander in Chief in all of southern Russia including the Ukraine, had forces or domestic or foreign support sufficient to make a good their pretensions, anarchy was the Ukrainian Front's paramount strategic asset. By mid-March, it had advanced west of the Dnepr to Zhitomir and the lower Bug River against Petliura and was threatening Volunteer Army units Denikin had stationed in the Crimea.

East Front, reduced to about 100,000 troops by attrition and the shift of the main effort to South Front, reached the limit of its offensive capability in February. Fifth Army had by then gone better than 300 miles to Ufa and Fourth Army over 200 miles to Uralsk. First Army, where Gay had succeeded Tukhachevskiy, covered 540 miles via Orenburg to Orsk, which it took on 22 February. At Third Army,

Blyukher's 30th Rifle Division with attached elements of the 29th Rifle Division had managed to set up a screening line 20 miles west of Perm, and Blyukher had been appointed deputy commander of Third Army. Stalin took ample credit for Third Army's partial recovery, which he claimed resulted in large part from his having stabilized the army's rear by purging the party organizations in Glozov and Vyatka (respectively 120 and 250 miles behind the front). In the final report he submitted to Lenin and the Central Committee after his return to Moscow on 27 January, Stalin attributed the primary responsibility for the Perm disaster to the RMCR and implied deliberate gross negligence on the part of the chairman (Trotskiy), the commander in chief (Vatsetis) and the Field Staff.³⁷

GAINS AND LOSSES

In mid-February, Army of Soviet Latvia and Western Army, both activated in the Western Military District after the armistice to operate independently in Latvia, Lithuania and Belorussia, completed the third month of an offensive that had carried better than 200 miles past the former German-Soviet demarcation line to Riga, Vilnius, and Pinsk. Seventh Army, set up under North Front in early November 1918, had done less well against Estonia, which had, in addition to a small army of its own recruited covertly during the German occupation, assistance from a British fleet under Rear Admiral Walter Cowan (five light cruisers, nine destroyers, and seven minesweepers) and from Finnish and White Russian volunteers for whom the British ships had provided transportation across the Gulf of Finland. Seventh Army had taken the eastern two-thirds of Estonia by early January and had lost it all before the end of the month. To deal with the Estonian resurgence, which posed a potential threat to Petrograd, and to exploit the success in Latvia, which had brought almost the entire country under Soviet control, the RMCR on 19 February shifted Headquarters, North Front from Yaroslavl to Staraya Russia on the Estonian-Latvian border and redesignated it West Front. Disregarding the clause in the armistice prohibiting their departure, the German occupation troops had refused to fight and had gone home; however, a German diplomatic representative and the Latvian minister of war had with Allied concurrence signed an agreement on 26 December that invited German volunteers into Latvia. The agreement came too late to save Riga, which had fallen a week later, but on 14 February, General Count Ruediger von der Goltz, who had commanded the German troops in Finland, took command of the volunteer units being formed in Latvia, which by then numbered about 15,000 men.³⁸

In the three months after the armistice, the German occupation had passed into history; the massive Allied intervention had not materialized; and the Soviet Republic controlled 40 million more people and two and half times more territory than it had in the previous summer. Soviet republics had been established in the Ukraine, Latvia, and Lithuania. The fronts on the east, south, and west were over

200 miles farther from Moscow than they had been in the previous summer; and the Defense Council had conscripted over a million men, bringing the number on the Red Army's rolls to 1.8 million, 85 per cent of them peasants.

In late February, Vatsetis sent two reports 'on the strategic situation of the Soviet Republic and the Red Army's mission' to the Defense Council. Those pointed out that the territorial expansion had also lengthened the front by a third, from 3,600 to 4,800 miles, and that the Defense Council was not supplying the weapons needed to arm the men the army had received. On 1 December 1918, when the total strength was about 750,000, about 400,000 were armed; and of those, 250,000 were assigned to the *fronts*, 70,000 were reserves in the military districts, and 80,000 were on special duty in the interior. At the 1.8 million-man level, 625,000 were armed, and 382,000 were assigned to the *fronts*, 60,000 were reserves in the military districts, and 183,000 were on special duty in the interior (the last reflecting an upsurge in peasant revolts against the confiscatory policy associated with war communism). That the old army had left vast stocks of weapons and ammunition had proved to have been an illusion, and the army's effective numerical strength was being determined by new production, particularly of rifles. Since the armament works were only turning out about 50,000 rifles a month, the disparity between the Red Army's roster strength and its effective strength was likely to widen.³⁹

THE 'MILITARY QUESTION' AGAIN

During the year since the Seventh Party Congress, especially after November 1918, a commission under Lenin had been engaged in drafting a party program to replace the 1903 program, which the events of the past two years had rendered obsolete. An outline Lenin gave to the congress included among ten theses on Soviet power one pertaining to an armed force. Stalin and Trotskiy were on the commission, and Trotskiy had taken responsibility for developing the thesis on an armed force. Three leading Left Communists, Bukharin, A. S. Bubnov, and G. L. Pyatakov, also belonged to the commission. They and the others in their faction who had withdrawn in protest against the peace treaty had resumed government and party work in July 1918 when the Mirbach assassination seemed about to resolve the war and peace question in their favor. They were far from ready to let Trotskiy's military policy be enshrined in the party program.

Toward the end of December, *Pravda*, which Bukharin was again editing, printed an attack on the employment of military specialists. The author, A. Z. Kamenskiy, who belonged to Voroshilov's Tsaritsyn group, had disparaged the idea that war was too 'big a thing' to be left to the same men who had carried out the October Revolution and accused Trotskiy of protecting traitorous military specialists but having ordered stalwart party members to be shot for mere mistakes. Kamenskiy had alleged three instances in which Trotskiy had taken arbitrary action against

commissars. One concerned a regimental commissar, Pantaleyev by name, who had been shot for desertion after being caught along with his troops aboard a boat on which they were attempting to flee the Kazan battle. Two involved commissars in a divisional RMC who had been unable to produce names of relatives against whom reprisals could be taken after several military specialists had defected. Trotsky had protested to the Central Committee that he had not ordered any executions, that Panteleyev had been condemned by a military tribunal and the two divisional commissars had neither been tried nor shot; and the Central Committee had rebuked Kamenskiy in *Pravda* for having made accusations without evidence and for having treated state policy as the whim of an individual.⁴⁰ Trotsky, who never shunned polemics, had followed with an article, also in *Pravda*, which he cited as an example 'an army of ours that in the not so distant past counted petty and foolish jeering at the military specialists as the highest form of revolutionism ... because it was run by military ignoramuses and half-partisans.'⁴¹

On 14 March, the Central Committee began holding plenary sessions to prepare the agenda for the Eighth Party Congress, which was scheduled to open in four days and would have the party program as its main item of business. That same day the center of the East Front collapsed and Admiral Kolchak's forces retook Ufa, prompting Trotsky to order all the delegates who had assignments at the front back to their units. After delegates from the front complained that their exclusion from the congress looked like a trick to squelch debate on military policy, the Central Committee canceled the order and allowed the delegates to make their own decisions as to whether their presence was needed at the front or not. The Fifth Army commissar, V. M. Smirnov, whose army was the one in greatest trouble, had already secured a special dispensation for himself. Smirnov was expecting to be the Left Communists' principal spokesman on military policy since Bukharin would be heavily engaged with other parts of the program. Trotsky, insisting that the situation at the front was very serious, left Moscow on the night of the 16th, hoping, no doubt, that others would follow him, but apparently few did.

The congress took up the military question in its fourth session, on 20 March. G. Ya. Sokolnikov, a member of the Central Committee and the drafting commission, presented Trotsky's resolution on military affairs; and Smirnov spoke for what would thereafter be called the military opposition, the Left Communists and the Tsaritsyn group. Trotsky, in a rather clever formulation, placed the Red Army as it then existed in an intermediate position between partisanism, a much lower form of military organization, and the highest form, the people's militia, which would eventually be attained. He characterized the army as a regular army of a new and superior type because it was a class army and the military specialists' presence in it as a necessary expedient until the working class and peasantry could produce sufficient command personnel of their own. Smirnov condemned discipline and regulations as hangovers of autocracy and serfdom. Without specifically advocating field revolution, he proposed abolishing centralized military administration and command, restricting military specialists to advisory roles, giving full field command authority to the commissars, and shifting responsibility for military

affairs in general from the central organs to the local party groups.⁴²

When 64 delegates registered to speak on the resolution, the presidium formed a military section in which 85 members participated, 57 of them with voting rights. The military opposition had a strong majority in the voting contingent. Mostly it was composed of Left Communists, but the Tsaritsyn group was also represented. The Soviet accounts mention Voroshilov, Rukhimovich, Minin, and Myasnikov, and there may have been others as well. The military section was supposed only to have shortened the debate on the floor, but it set its own course and with a Left Communist, Ye. M. Yaroslavskiy, in the chair, rejected the Trotskiy resolution by a vote of 37 to 20 and adopted Smirnov's as a substitute. On the 21st, the presidium moved, with what appears to have been some urgency, to bring the entire question back to the floor. In the subsequent debate the main speakers opposing the Trotskiy resolution were Smirnov and Voroshilov; those supporting it were Lenin, Okulov, and Stalin. Smirnov and Voroshilov reiterated the opposition to military specialists, centralized command, and stringent discipline. Lenin insisted all those were absolutely indispensable if the Red Army was to continue as a regular army and not revert to partisanism – as, he pointedly added, Tenth Army had done under Voroshilov's command. (Voroshilov's biographer states that Voroshilov thereupon realized his mistakes and drew the correct conclusions.⁴³) Okulov, the former Tenth Army commissar, gave the congress an explicit report on Voroshilov's and his associates' performance at Tsaritsyn. Stalin seems to have not quite known what to say other than that a regular army was a necessity and peasants could not be made into effective soldiers without strict discipline.⁴⁴

The congress adopted the Trotskiy resolution by a vote of 174 to 95 with 32 abstentions, by party standards an embarrassingly, even alarmingly, small majority; and the presidium appointed a five-man committee, three from the majority and two from the minority, to negotiate a compromise with the military opposition. G. E. Zinoviev, Stalin, and B. P. Pozern represented the majority and Yaroslavskiy and another Left Communist, G. I. Safarov, the minority. Zinoviev, the chairman, headed the Petrograd bureau of the Central Committee and was a notorious waverer who had flirted with the Left Communists before supporting Lenin on the peace resolution, and Pozern belonged to the Petrograd party group and was the chief commissar at North Front. Their associations, like Stalin's, bespoke something less than total commitment to the Trotskiy resolution. The committee reported to the congress in its last session that the military section had unanimously accepted the resolution on military policy as initially passed with the addition of certain 'practical measures', which were not disclosed to the congress and not included among its published proceedings until 1941.

The practical measures were aimed specifically at Trotskiy. As Zinoviev put it in his report to the Central Committee, the congress had given Trotskiy a 'serious warning', one he ought not disregard. Two measures echoed Stalin's report on the Perm disaster in calling for reorganization and tightened administration of the RMCR and the Field Staff. Trotskiy observed that the apparent intent was to tie him and the other RMCR members down at the central headquarters and thereby

keep them away from the front. A number of the practical measures were clearly devised to give the commissars and party workers greater independence and more power. One would have required Trotsky to hold monthly meetings with the senior commissars. Another demanded that the All-Russia Bureau of Military Commissars, which was directly under Trotsky's control, be abolished and its functions transferred to the RMCR under a member of the Central Committee.⁴⁵ Trotsky dismissed the measures as, in the main, the work of disgruntled party intellectuals, on the one hand, and oversimplifiers, on the other, which he could do because the congress did not have authority to give orders to the People's Commissar for Military Affairs. Seeing in the demand pertaining to the bureau of commissars an opportunity to expand and strengthen his own authority, which was not exactly what the military opposition had wanted, he shifted the bureau to the RMCR as the Political Administration of the RMCR and placed a hard-bitten old Bolshevik and Central Committee member, I. T. Smilga, in charge. Otherwise he believed that those commissars who felt themselves 'sighted, injured, and offended' would 'when our savage work at the front is terminated ... meet me on friendly terms and will, in retrospect, concur in the measures taken by me'.⁴⁶ In the election to the Central Committee at the congress, Trotsky received 50 negative votes, the largest number cast against any candidate.⁴⁷

In a resolution 'On the Organizational Question', the congress, acting to extend the movement toward democratic centralism into party affairs, also confirmed and regularized the Politburo and the Orgburo (the Organizational Bureau, which had been created in January 1919 to organize the congress), each with five members to be elected from the Central Committee. Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, L. B. Kamenev, and N. N. Krestinskiy were elected to the Politburo. Sverdlov, the fourth member of the old Politburo, had died of influenza on the day the congress opened. Stalin also secured a post on the Orgburo, which made him the only member of both bodies. In part to replace Sverdlov, who had served unofficially as party secretary, the resolution also established a secretariat in which Yelena Stasova, a Central Committee and Orgburo member, served as chief secretary.

The Eighth Party Congress, despite the Soviet inability to give more than fragmentary reports on it, went down in the Soviet literature as the crucial landmark in military policy. The achievements attributed to it range upward to the metaphysical. The party is said to have created an armed force 'in its own image', to have given birth to an exclusively Soviet military science, and to have 'correctly and successfully' solved the problem of creating a regular Red Army.⁴⁸ Trotsky's absence, allegedly to avoid having to answer for his having 'ignored party leadership in the army and placed blind trust in the old military experts, among whom there were obvious traitors', moreover, made it possible to credit the congress's accomplishments in military affairs entirely to Lenin, Stalin and the innate wisdom of the party.⁴⁹ The significant immediate results of the congress were that it confirmed Trotsky's military policy and simultaneously encouraged the military opposition to keep the issue alive by shifting its attack – with Stalin's backstage assistance – to Trotsky's performance as the policy's executor.

The Test of Battle on Three Fronts

EAST FRONT AND KOLCHAK

While deep February cold and heavy snow suppressed activity in the Urals, East Front had begun regrouping for a spring offensive in 1919 on its 1,100-mile-long front. Third Army and Second Army were to advance eastward from Perm and Votkinskiy to Ekaterinburg and Fifth and First Armies from Ufa and Orsk to Chelyabinsk. Fourth Army, already facing more south and east on the Ural River between Uralsk and Orenburg was to push southeastward to the Caspian Sea and into Turkestan. On 5 March, Headquarters, East Front had created the Turkestan Army out of detachments stationed around Orenburg and joined it with Fourth Army to form the South Group. A week later, Kolchak's drive toward Ufa, that in a few more days would draw Trotskiy away from the Eighth Party Congress, had forced Kamenev to cancel the East Front offensive. Kolchak by then had the Siberian Army on the move against Third and Second Armies and the Western Army against Fifth and First Armies. Kolchak had about 117,000 troops; Kamenev had 104,000; but East Front had substantial superiorities in artillery, 362 to 210 pieces, and in machine guns, 1,882 to 1,330.¹

Fourth Army had undergone a change of command during the winter, a common enough occurrence in the Red Army, but in that instance a singularly remarkable one. Having learned in the fall that the Yaroslavl Military District was about to be abolished in a reorganization, M. V. Frunze, who had been the district commissar since August, and ex-general F. F. Novitskiy, who had been the military director, had volunteered for front service. In December 1918, Trotskiy had appointed Novitskiy to command Fourth Army and had assigned Frunze as his commissar. Since the command authority in the military districts was vested in the commissars and the military directors were advisors (which was as the Left Communists and the military opposition, with both of whom Frunze was associated, thought it ought also to be in the field commands), the appointments would have substantially altered Frunze's and Novitskiy's positions *vis-à-vis* each other. However, although Frunze and Novitskiy were available well before then, the formal command change at Fourth Army had not taken place until 31 January, and when

it did, Frunze had emerged as the army commander. How Frunze had advanced to near the top of the military hierarchy in a matter of a few weeks is a question very seldom raised and never forthrightly answered in Soviet accounts. A. S. Bubnov, Frunze's first biographer, credited Novitskiy with having possessed the prescience to recognize Frunze's outstanding – although not yet wholly undemonstrated – military talent and voluntarily relinquished the command to him. Novitskiy wrote that the appointment as commissar 'did not conform to M. V. Frunze's personal qualities'.² The creation of South Group on 5 March advanced Frunze another step upward.

Trotsky's confidence in the freshly-minted army commander was distinctly limited, and at his direction Frunze took to the field under elaborate tutelage. Novitskiy became the deputy army commander and a member of the army RMC, which kept him in the direct line of command. The Fourth Army commander whom Frunze replaced, A. A. Baltiyskiy, also an ex-general, stayed on as 'military instructor to the commander'. V. S. Lazarevich, a former lieutenant colonel and General Staff Academy graduate, was sent from the All-Russia Main Staff to be the chief of staff.³

General M. V. Khanzhin's Western Army and General Rudolph Gajda's Siberian Army had struck on both sides of the Second Army–Fifth Army boundary north of Ufa on 3 March. When Trotsky arrived at the front two weeks later, a 125-mile-wide gap had opened between the Samara–Ufa railroad and the Kama River. Second Army was behind the Kama; Fifth Army's left flank barely reached to the railroad 45 miles west of Ufa; and First Army, under pressure also from Dutov's Orenburg Army, was being driven to the south and west toward Orenburg. By early April, Khanzhin and Dutov were compressing Fifth and First Armies into an elongated pocket which had its closed eastern end tenuously anchored at Orenburg, the eastern terminus of South Group's front. On 10 April, one of Khanzhin's spearheads reached Bugulma, about halfway between Ufa and the Volga crossing at Simbirsk, and another was approaching Bugurslan, 100 miles east of Samara. Also on the 10th, Gajda's troops took Inzhevsk and Votkinskiy, thereby in a single stroke cutting Soviet weapons production by half. In a letter published in *Petrogradskaya Pravda*, Lenin called on the Petrograd workers to set 'an example to the whole of Russia' by volunteering for service on the Eastern Front, where, he added as an inducement, they could find food for themselves and enough more to send food parcels home to their families.⁴

As had happened earlier at Tsaritsyn, the retreat from Ufa created an opportunity for the military opposition. Like Voroshilov, Frunze, his all but total lack of professional qualifications notwithstanding, could claim to be the chief military figure on the scene. He did not possess so well placed an ally as Stalin; but his commissar, Valerian Kuybyshev, and the party members of the East Front RMC, S. I. Gusev, M. M. Lashevich, I. T. Smilga (to mid-April) and K. K. Yurenev, like he, all believed command to be an inherently more appropriate function for the party elite than for military specialists. The army commanders, Tukhachevskiy at Fifth Army (after 5 April), G. D. Gay at First Army and G. V. Zinoviev at Turkestan

Army, were communists, although of recent vintage. Tukhachevskiy, the most seasoned, welcomed the chance to expand his associations within the party and deferred to Frunze. Gay, to his subsequent discomfiture, was deficient in political awareness. Zinoviev was a veteran detachment commander but as new to army command as Frunze was. The senior military specialists, Kamenev and Novitskiy, cultivated symbiotic relationships with the party members of their RMCs.

In April, Frunze secured an appointment and a mission appropriate to a *polkovodets* (a commander of strategic forces). On the 5th, Vatsetis had rebuked Kamenev for ‘wanting to cover everything [on the front west of Ufa] and consequently not covering anything’ and ordered him to pull together First Army’s forces, which Kamenev had a day earlier instructed to stretch south to cover Orenburg, to form a ‘fist’ that could strike a blow northward into the flank of the enemy, driving Fifth Army back toward Simbirsk and Samara.⁵ In an exchange by teletype two days later, Kamenev had proposed to Frunze that he take charge of assembling elements from the four southern armies to form a group for a counterattack. Although Frunze had thus far been no more than a bystander in an inactive sector, he had responded with the self-assurance of a veteran campaigner, demanding that the elements be subordinated to him and he be given control of the ensuing operations. In a conference at Headquarters, East Front in Simbirsk on 10 April, Kamenev and the political members of his RMC persuaded Trotskiy and Vatsetis to grant South Group operational control over First and Fifth Armies on the conditions that Frunze’s permanent assignment remain Fourth Army and he not be authorized to create an autonomous command.⁶ Nevertheless, Frunze thereupon took most of his staff out of Orenburg where it had been situated and set up his headquarters in Samara, more or less side by side with Kamenev’s 90 miles upstream on the Volga.

The Simbirsk conference did not bring the projected counterattack notably closer to fruition. Kamenev’s preparations had not progressed since the exchanges with Vatsetis and Frunze three days earlier, and Vatsetis ordered him to develop an operational plan within the next ten days. The outlook was indeed mightily uncertain. Khanzhin still had the initiative everywhere, and the *rasputitsa* (literally, in both translation and fact, time without roads) was almost at hand. During this period, melting snow and ice combined with gradual thawing of the deeply frozen ground to flood rivers and fields and turn roads into progressively deepening bands of mud. Kamenev was inclined to wait until the *rasputitsa* had passed, which would have meant at least a five or six weeks’ delay. Frunze believed the *rasputitsa* did not need to be particularly taken into account because it would affect both sides equally and proposed to have Gay cover Orenburg on First Army’s right and take command of an attack group to be formed between his left flank and Tukhachevskiy’s right. Gay objected, contending that at the rate Fifth Army was retreating, it could be pushed behind the Volga before a counterattack could be started, and First Army would then be cut off and hopelessly stranded in mud around Orenburg. Frunze thereupon assigned the sector between First and Fifth Armies to Zinoviev’s Turkestan Army staff and ordered Gay to hold

Orenburg, come what might. Tukhachevskiy declared that he could not hold Bugurslan, the point on the Ufa–Samara railroad toward which Frunze proposed to aim the counterattack and, in fact, lost it on 15 April.⁷ Khanzhin's advance appeared to be outrunning Frunze's preparations for a counterattack; and, on the 17th, Trotskiy and the Politburo agreed that 'Comrade Frunze ... had insufficient experience to discharge such important tasks' and that Vatsetis should be 'asked' to take over East Front himself and put Kamenev in charge at South Group.⁸

Trotskiy ordinarily reserved the final word on major command changes to himself, but he had learned that charges about his alleged favoritism toward military specialists and arbitrary treatment of party workers had been circulated at the party congress – and in the Politburo meeting he requested another investigation of the Pantaleyev affair. He apparently therefore left the decision with regard to the East Front and South Group to Vatsetis, who must have been aware of the political hazards in it and, moreover, had no reason to believe Kamenev's presence would be a change for the better at South Group.

After the Simbirsk conference, Kamenev had virtually ignored Vatsetis, and on 20 April, having taken the entire allotted ten days, Kamenev submitted an operations plan (pointedly endorsed by his entire RMC) that was so studiously superficial as to fall barely short of direct insubordination.⁹ On the 27th, after having given Kamenev a week to present a proper plan, Vatsetis asked why he had not yet done so and Kamenev replied that he 'presumed' his original plan had been 'exhaustive'. Although such correspondence did not require it, Gusev and Lashevich added their names to Kamenev's on the reply.¹⁰

At Kolchak's headquarters in Omsk, victory seemed within easy reach. A directive issued on 12 April assumed that the 'demoralized and shattered' East Front could be 'annihilated' on the whole front east of the Volga and Vyatka Rivers and bridgeheads seized at Kazan, Simbirsk and Syzran in short order.¹¹ Colonel Robert Johnson, recently arrived in Omsk with a thousand officers and men of the British Hampshire Regiment to train and outfit Russian troops, believed 'one strong push' could bring 'Bolshevism ... to collapse altogether' and Moscow could be taken before autumn.¹² It seemed for the next two weeks that the Siberian and Western Armies could coast to the Volga. By 26 April, Khanzhin's spearheads came within 20 miles of Buzuluk on the Samara–Orenburg railroad, 60 miles of Samara on the Samars–Ufa line, and 90 miles of Simbirsk on the Simbirsk–Ufa line. A cavalry division reached Chistopol on the Kama River 60 miles southeast of Kazan. Gajda's southern wing, having made a later start, was about 100 miles east of Kazan. But the front, particularly Khanzhin's, was rapidly expanding; the distance from his left flank at Chistopol to his left at Sharlik was close to 300 miles. The troops had already marched as much as 200 miles; the *rasputitsa* was setting in; and the supply service, never good because it depended entirely on Allied stocks of everything from weapons and ammunition to shoes, which had to be brought all the way from Vladivostok, was breaking down. Kolchak was also giving preference to the approaches to Moscow and Arkhangelsk via Kazan and Vyatka. Khanzhin had 23,000 troops, Gajda, 35,000. Trotskiy, meanwhile, had raised the Red Army

strength opposing Gajda to 40,000 men and against Khazhin to 42,000. Of the latter number, Frunze had assembled nearly 20,000 troops in two divisions, the 25th and the 31st Rifle Divisions, around Buzuluk. From there he had expected to mount a counterattack after another two divisions being formed west of the Volga arrived.

On 28 April, when the front, slipping steadily to the west and south, was on the verge of engulfing the Buzuluk staging area, Frunze threw the 25th and 31st Rifle Divisions into a counterattack toward Burgurslan through a 15-mile-wide gap that a document captured ten days earlier had indicated existed in an enemy line. The 31st Division had been formed in February 1919 out of the detachments Zinoviev brought from Turkestan. The 25th Division was built on a cadre of former partisans, many of whom, like their commander Vassily Chapayev, had been operating in the Samara region for more than a year.¹³ Elements of both divisions were already engaged in the defensive fighting north of Buzuluk.

Although he apparently no longer expected to accomplish anything thereby, Vatsetis, on 1 May, upbraided Kamenev for not having devised an operations plan that would have provided a more powerful striking force. Trotsky and he had by then decided to restore central control over East Front and South Group by getting rid of Kamenev and sending ex-general Aleksandr Samoylo, who had worked with Trotsky at the Brest-Litovsk negotiations and was commanding Sixth Army, to take command at East Front. Samoylo's mission was not going to be easy, particularly with regard to Frunze and South Group.

Frunze's counterattack was far from being the powerful blow Vatsetis wanted, but it was having an effect and was substantiating in the minds of the military opposition their contention that experienced revolutionaries like themselves understood revolutionary war better than the military specialists did. Chapayev's division advanced north 27 miles to Burgurslan in a week, which turned out to be enough to unsettle Western Army's troops and command. A Ukranian brigade murdered its officers and deserted to the Reds at Burgurslan, and Khanzhin's spearhead aimed toward Simbirsk turned back, enabling Fifth Army to begin a thrust toward Bugulma.

Samoylo, who had arrived at East Front on 5 May, issued his first directive on the 10th. In it he removed Fifth Army from Frunze's control, ordering Tukhachevskiy to continue his advance to Bugulma and Frunze his to Belebey, which Turkestan Army was then approaching from the west and south. At the same time, he sent an operations plan to Vatsetis in which he projected a complete reorganization after Bugulma and Belebey were secured: Turkestan Army would then be divided between Fifth and First Armies and its headquarters could then be disbanded, as could also the South Group headquarters, which would be restored to its original status as Fourth Army headquarters. Thereafter, Fifth Army would turn due north from Bugulma toward the Kama River to threaten the rear of Siberian Army, which was dangerously close to achieving a breakthrough to Kazan; Gay, with First Army and the greater part of former Turkestan Army, would make the final drive to Ufa (85 miles east of Belebey); and Frunze, with Fourth Army, would take over the defense of Uralsk and Orenburg.¹⁴

The operations plan brought an indignant response two days later from Frunze, who had received a copy, probably via the political channel. Frunze contended that South Group, which Samoylo was attempting to terminate, was actually a *front* command in its own right, hence not subordinate to East Front in the first place. (A week earlier, Frunze had removed himself from the Fourth Army command, appointed K. A. Avsentyevskiy, an associate of his from the Yaroslavl Military District, to the command, and began styling himself ‘Commander of the Armies of the South Group of the East Front’.) In taking over First and Fifth Armies temporarily, Frunze maintained, South Group had accepted a certain subordination to East Front; nevertheless, since its ‘elite army’, Turkestan Army, was the main force in the Ufa operation, it had a right to the deciding voice in that operation. That voice, Frunze added, was the more necessary because Samoylo’s plan was misconceived from the operational standpoint and embodied a dangerous tactical flaw. The proper way to dislodge Siberian Army, he asserted, was by striking deep toward Ufa, not by a northward thrust into its flank; and diverting Fifth Army would be a great mistake in any case because it could expose Turkestan Army to a counterattack. He indicated more than once, however, that his strongest concern was to have South Group’s status as a *front* command confirmed and, mentioning Romania as a possibility, offered to accept a transfer somewhere else in that capacity.¹⁵ Frunze’s assertions were all questionable. Certainly Trotskiy and Vatsetis did not regard South Group as a *front* command. Samoylo pointed out that Second and Third Armies needed direct and immediate relief, neither of which they would get from the drive to Ufa and that in its present circumstances, Western Army would be exceedingly hard-put to mount a counterattack. On the other hand, of course, Frunze’s success at building a military career had not thus far depended on his professional qualifications.

After Fifth Army had reached Bugulma on 13 May and Turkestan Army took Belebey on the 17th, Samoylo returned once more to the operations plan. He had obviously learned in the meantime that Frunze was not to be dealt with summarily, and he was prepared to modify the plan’s execution, but he was not disposed to abandon its underlying premises. He agreed to let Frunze dismiss his rival, Gay, shift Zinoviev to First Army and take over Turkestan Army himself, but he insisted that Frunze then give his whole attention to the army command and deactivate the South Group headquarters except as an operational planning staff until further developments provided a basis for a decision on its future.¹⁶

Keeping Fifth Army under his command, Samoylo ordered Tukhachevskiy to turn his main force north and detail about a division and a half to cover Frunze’s left flank. Frunze, accusing Samoylo of issuing ‘disjointed directives’ and inability to make clear decisions, demanded an immediate decision in his favor on South Group and predicted that Samoylo’s directives would ‘wipe out the work of East Front in a short time’ if they were executed.¹⁷ Tukhachevskiy joined the attack with a telegram in which he charged Samoylo with issuing conflicting directives and included a passage from the Red Army’s recently published field service regulations stating that it is ‘necessary to think before issuing orders.’ When Samoylo drew

up a charge of disparaging a superior against Tukhachevskiy, the East Front commissars killed it by refusing an endorsement.¹⁸

The commissars, although the regulations prohibited them from interfering in command decisions, took the disputes between Samoylo and the army commanders to the Central Committee along with a request of their own for Kamenev's return to the East Front command, which Frunze and Tukhachevskiy seconded. The Central Committee, which likewise was not authorized to intervene in purely military matters, supported the commissars and the army commanders. Lenin wanted to return Kamenev to East Front to keep peace in the party. Trotskiy agreed but complained that subjective enthusiasms for certain military specialists were becoming a common affliction among the commissars. On Trotskiy's advice, Lenin first called Kamenev to Moscow for an interview and, it was later claimed, 'comprehended the strength of the man'. However, on 29 May, the day after Kamenev returned to East Front, Lenin sent a telegram 'to S. I. Gusev, M. M. Lashevich, K. K. Yurenev' stating, 'Kamenev has been reappointed on your insistence. If we do not conquer the Urals by winter, I consider the destruction of the revolution to be inevitable.'¹⁹

Safely able to assume by then that Samoylo would not have anything more to say, Frunze had started his attack toward Ufa on the 25th, and Tukhachevskiy had joined in a day later on a parallel eastward course toward Birsk, 30 miles north of Ufa. Kamenev confirmed what they were doing in a directive issued on the 31st. Frunze had 30,000 troops, Tukhachevskiy had 15,000. Khanzhin had 19,000 troops in the front and some 8,000 in the Urals Group that was being hastily formed at Ekatrinnburg and did not arrive until late in the first week of June. Fifth Army took Birsk on 8 June, and Chapayev's 25th Division crossed the Belaya River and stormed Ufa the next morning.²⁰

The latest Soviet official history (1959) singles out the Ufa operation as having accomplished 'the decisive turn in favor of Soviet power' on the eastern front. Novitskiy, writing in the first official history (1928), ranked it as 'one of the most brilliant operations in military history'. Frunze's biography states that in half a year he had achieved his potential 'as a military leader of a new, Soviet school'.²¹ Frunze had indeed made himself an outstanding figure in Soviet military affairs; on the other hand, it appears that in practical terms, the military specialist commanding Second Army, V. I. Shorin, who had opened a counteroffensive against Siberian Army on 25 May and in a 125-mile advance took Ishevsk on 7 June and Votkinskiy on the 12th, may have accomplished as much.

SOUTH FRONT AND DENIKIN

On May Day, in Red Square, Lenin had expressed confidence that victory over Kolchak was quite near and the full Soviet triumph would thereafter come quickly and easily. The prediction with regard to Kolchak rested shakily on 'the latest reports from the front', but in other respects, the future looked substantially

brighter on the whole than it had on 1 May 1918, or at any time since then. Communist parties had proclaimed soviet republics in Hungary in March and in Bavaria in April, the first flashes, it seemed, of the European revolution. The Allied Supreme War Council in Paris was proving itself incapable of mounting a cohesive campaign against Bolshevism. The French, after having failed to come to terms either with Petlyura or Denikin, had evacuated Odessa in early April and Sevastopol at the end of the month, thereby terminating what there had been of an intervention by Allied forces in southern Russia and crippling Ukrainian Front's opposition in the western Ukraine. South Front's right wing had yet to break into the Donets Basin, but Tenth Army was on the Manych River and threatening Denikin's rear from the southeast. West Front, which extended from the Gulf of Finland west of Petrograd to the Pripyat Marshes, was, if not in particularly good circumstances, at least quiet. It had retaken about two-thirds of Belorussia before being halted by the Poles and Lithuanians. Von der Goltz had driven to within about 25 miles of Riga and then stopped, leaving the communists in control of the Latvian capital. An offensive aimed at installing a soviet republic in Estonia had been a distinct failure, but the Estonians had not pressed their counteroffensive beyond their border. The Finnish front on the Isthmus of Karelia and the Allied front on the Isthmus of Olonets were uncomfortably close to Petrograd, and Allied positions on the Northern Dvina River between Arkhangelsk and Kotlas sustained a threat of a junction with Kolchak, but none of those was active.

Although Lenin's confidence with regard to Kolchak was on the way toward being confirmed, his defeat was not going to eliminate the last major obstacle in the Red Army's path. The full Soviet victory would depend at least as much on South Front's performance against Denikin, which had for more than a month been anything but encouraging. South Front still nominally held the initiative, but its offensive was languishing. Some 15,000 of the Cossacks who had surrendered in January had gone into revolt in March and were creating turmoil in the rear area; and South Front's troop strength, which had been 117,000 in February, was down to 73,000 in the first week of May. Although Denikin had just 45,000 troops, the advantage was shifting to his side. In April, the docks at Novossiysk had begun to be filled with British weapons and military supplies brought from Mesopotamia, where they had been stockpiled during the war. Eventually enough of everything, including rations, uniforms and ammunition, would arrive to outfit a quarter of a million men – if Denikin could recruit that many. The first shipment included six heavy and six light tanks, a hundred airplanes, and tank crews and pilots to train the Russians.²²

The decline in South Front's strength owed in the main to a prevailing extremely high desertion rate in the Red Army and not to combat losses. Because it was having to send all the troops it could muster to East Front, the RMCR had expected to secure replacements for South Front in the Ukraine. It had also expected to acquire weapons and supplies the French had presumably abandoned at Odessa and Sevastopol. Neither those nor the replacements had materialized. The Ukrainian military establishment was technically autonomous; and Podvoyskiy,

as the Ukrainian military affairs commissar, and Antonov-Ovseenko, as commander of Ukrainian Front, although they were also members of the RMCR, had done almost nothing to counteract separatism and guerrillaism. Lenin accused them of having themselves become Ukrainian separatists. Trotsky believed they were merely incapable of applying the ‘necessary turn to the wheel’. On 15 April, after repeated demands from Moscow, Antonov had created three army headquarters and as Stalin and Voroshilov had done at Tsaritsyn, regularized partisan contingents by calling them divisions. The First Ukrainian Army was stationed west of Kiev with the 1st and 2nd Rifle Divisions. The partisan Shchors commanded the 1st Division. Second Ukrainian Army, with the 3rd and 7th Rifle Divisions, was to have taken over South Front’s right flank north of Melitopol and Mariupol to enable the Eighth, Ninth, and recently activated Thirteenth Armies to concentrate their effort on an attack toward Rostov. The 7th Division, the anarchist Makhno’s 20,000 partisans with him in command, were in place because the sector assigned them happened to lie in their home territory, but fighting in the open was not at all to their taste. The 3rd Division, about 10,000 partisans under the sailor Dybenko, was to have reinforced and stiffened the Makhnists. Instead, Dybenko betook himself and his men into the Crimea, where, on 5 May, he participated in proclaiming a Crimean Soviet Republic, became its military affairs commissar, and converted his division into the Crimean Army.

Third Ukrainian Army had the 5th and 6th Rifle Divisions with which it was to have attacked westward across the Dnestr River to recover Bessarabia from Romania and extend a helping hand to the Hungarian revolution. Nikolay Grigoryev, who had been a captain in the tsarist army but came, like Makhno, from a peasant background, command the 6th Division. Apparently an out-and-out freebooter, he had aligned himself and his 20,000 partisans with the communists after having successively deserted the Hetman Skoropadskiy and the *Ataman* Petlyura. He had taken Odessa and was suspected of holding large quantities of French weapons and other loot there. On 7 May, he broke with the communists and in two weeks controlled almost the whole Dnepr bend region south of Kiev. Grigoryev’s advance shook the Ukrainian Republic and brought Voroshilov back into the field as commander of a contingent the Kharkov Military District mobilized against the insurgents.²³

On 7 May, having concluded that South Front was becoming worse off than East Front, Trotsky steamed south out of Kazar, which he had been readying for a siege. On the 14th, after a stop at South Front headquarters in Kozlov, he was in Boguchar, where the expeditionary force assigned to suppress the Cossack uprising was headquartered. There he decided that the South Front RMC should be reprimanded for having displayed an ‘inadmissibly overtrustful attitude toward persons and organizations coming under its orders’ and personally turned one regimental commander and his commissar over to a military tribunal, which he charged with seeking out delinquents in other regiments as well. In Kharkov three days later, Trotsky pronounced Autonov and Podvoyskiy unfit for military work and moved to have the Ukrainian Front abolished and its components brought

under RMCR control.²⁴ On 12 May, probably under the influence of Trotsky's return to the south, South Front resumed the offensive and, on the 15th, took Lugansk. That would be its last success for some considerable time to come.

Denikin had deployed three armies of about 15,000 men each: on the left, in the western Donets Basin, the Volunteer Army under General V. Z. May-Mayevskiy; in the center, the eastern Donets Basin and the lower Don area, the Don Army under General V. I. Sidorin; on the right, along the Manych, the Caucasus Army under General P. N. Vrangel. On 19 May, the Volunteer Army's cavalry corps, under General A. G. Shkuro, struck at the boundary between Makho's partisans and Thirteenth Army. The partisans dispersed, and Shkuro advanced north more than 60 miles within three days. Several days later, Makhno renounced the Soviet affiliation, leaving the South Front right flank open. On 21 May, Vrangel inflicted a disastrous defeat on Tenth Army at Velikokhazhevskaya, taking 15,000 prisoners. In another week, Colonel S. G. Ulagay, one of Vrangel's Cossack cavalry commanders, had chased the Tenth Army rearguard, which included Budenny's 4th Cavalry Division, halfway to Tsaritsyn.

WEST FRONT AND YUDENICH

In early May, General Nikolay Yudenich, who had been trying since late 1918 with some British encouragement and aid to organize a combined White Russian–Finnish offensive against Petrograd from the north, had announced that he was taking over all White forces in northwestern Russia as Kolchak's designated commander in chief there. Although it has always been portrayed as such in the Soviet literature, Yudenich's advent as a member of the White triumvirate was not auspicious. (Denikin had not yet associated himself with Kolchak but would do so in June.)²⁵ The only White unit within striking distance of Petrograd was the 3,000-man Northern Corps, and Yudenich could not command it. General K. K. Dzerozhinskiy had organized it in January 1919 out of White detachments formed in the Pskov area during the German occupation, and the Estonians gave it billets and rations on the condition that it be fully subordinate to the Estonian Army. Since Yudenich refused to recognize Estonian independence (or that of Finland, which was another of his problems), the Estonians were not disposed to give him authority over the corps.

By coincidence, the Estonian commander in chief, General J. Laidoner, a former tsarist officer, was also looking toward Petrograd. He had about 75,000 troops, who were quite well supplied with Russian and British weapons and ammunition, and he knew that the Soviet command was drawing heavily on West Front and Petrograd to reinforce East Front. May, which brought lengthening days and the end of the *rasputitsa*, was a good time to exploit the Soviet weakness, and Laidoner calculated that a brisk little offensive could round out the Estonian border and possibly take enough Russian territory to give the Northern Corps a base from

which it could pursue its own destiny. On 13 May, with the Estonian 1st Division (about 6,000 men) on the left and the Northern Corps on the right, Laidoner attacked on the 45-mile-long Narva front, which lay along the Narva River between the northern tip of Lake Peipus and the Gulf of Finland. It appears that the only substantial amount of ground Laidoner thought to gain was east of Lakes Peipus and Pskov, where, owing to the barrier the lakes afforded, no organized front existed; and he assigned that sector to the Northern Corps.

From the very first, the offensive greatly surpassed Laidoner's expectations. The Soviet Seventh Army's 6th Division, which probably did not have many more troops than Laidoner's 9,000, broke on the 13th. Two days later, the Northern Corps had a column passing Gdov on the eastern shore of Lake Peipus and another heading toward Luga, and on the 17th, the 1st Division was across the lower Luga River with no other significant natural obstacle between it and Petrograd 65 miles away. On the 23rd, two more blows fell: the Estonian 2nd Division entered Latvia the next day to complete the rout of the Latvian Soviet Army and to prevent the Germans, whom the Estonians regarded as no less dangerous to their independence than the Russians, from carrying their advance to the Estonian border. The 2nd Division took Pskov on the 26th, and turned the area around the city over to the Northern Corps three days later.²⁶

In the Smolnyy, on 19 May, Stalin, whom the Council of Defense had sent as its plenipotentiary extraordinary, gave the Petrograd Central Committee a defense program directed particularly toward eliminating elements of instability in the rear, counterrevolutionaries, spies, and diversionists. Lenin supplied a slogan, 'Death to Spies!', and a judgment that organized treason was the only possible explanation for the White success.²⁷ On the 25th, Stalin reported to Lenin that the military situation gave 'no cause for alarm', since the front had become stable and 'in places our forces are already advancing'. All he needed, he said 'to drive the whole pack beyond Narva', were three regiments he had asked for on the 19th; and he added, 'If you could have seen your way to meet this small request in time, the Estonians would have been driven back before now.'²⁸

As he had done at Tsaritsyn, Stalin distanced himself from the military chain of command. He moved the Seventh Army headquarters from Novgorod to Petrograd, in effect detaching it from West Front, and thereafter ignored Vatsetis and the Field Staff except to disparage them in his communications to Lenin. On 3 June, Okulov, who had been at Tsaritsyn and was currently a member of the West Front RMC, reported that Seventh Army was 'isolated' from West Front and that the Petrograd Military District, which was subordinate to West Front, was channeling all of its resources directly to Seventh Army. Pozern, the chief commissar at West Front, he added, was spending all of his time in Petrograd managing a separate supply service for Seventh Army that bypassed West Front entirely.²⁹ Stalin, in response, accused Okulov of 'intriguing and disrupting the work' and demanded his recall. Although Sklyanskiy, Trotsky's deputy, insisted that Okulov was the 'only good party worker' in the Petrograd area, Lenin ordered him recalled 'temporarily' in order to ensure 'maximum solidarity as concerns Petrograd military planning'.

In the dispute with Okulov, Stalin also contended that the West Front commander, D. H. Nadezhnyy, would 'wreck the West Front' and forwarded a document seized in the Swiss Legation that he alleged proved the All-Russia Field Staff to be working for the Whites. The latter evidence, he contended, explained desertions by several regiments at Perm and by an entire division in the south; and he added, 'The whole question now is that the Central Committee should summon up the fortitude to draw appropriate conclusions. Has the Central Committee sufficient force of character and resoluteness?'³⁰

On 9 June, Stalin drastically revised his earlier confident assessment of the military situation, telling Lenin by telegraph that the enemy was approaching Peterhof and Gatchina and Petrograd was 'a hair's breadth' away from collapse. Nadezhnyy reported that the Seventh Army left flank east of Pskov, with which Stalin did not concern himself, and the Fifteenth Army (the shattered remains of the Army of Latvia) would very likely have to retreat all the way to the Vokhov and Lovat Rivers, which would put them east of Petrograd. Lenin told the East Front RMC he was going to have to take divisions from them; and on the 10th, he wrote a Central Committee resolution designating the Petrograd front as 'first in importance'.³¹

The Estonian advance touched off mutinies in two coastal forts, Seraya Loshad and Krasnaya Gorka, on the night of 12 June. The sailors turned their heavy guns on the Kronstadt fortress, 18 miles to the east and offered the forts to the Estonians, who were then just a few miles away. In the morning, Vatsetis ordered the battle-ships *Andrey Pervozvannyi* and *Petropavlovsk*, the cruiser *Oleg*, and the Kronstadt batteries to shell the forts. A British torpedo boat commander, Lieutenant Augustus Agar, returning from an intelligence mission in Petrograd, saw the ships at work later in the day.³² After two more days during which the ships continued the shelling and 20 aircraft dropped bombs and showers of metal fléchettes, a specially organized 'Coastal Group' of Red Army men and sailors with an armored train and armored cars stormed and took Krasnaya Gorka from the landward side late on the 15th. Seraya Loshad surrendered the next day. Stalin, who had participated in organizing the 'Coastal Group', in his report to Lenin credited the success against Krasnaya Gorka to 'the greatest interference in the operation by me and civilians generally'. The naval military specialists, he said, 'assert that the capture of Krasnaya Gorka from the sea runs counter to naval science'. He then expressed disdain for 'such so-called science' and considered it his duty to report that he would 'continue to act this way in the future'. In the margin of the telegram, Lenin inserted three question marks and the comment, 'Krasnaya Gorka was taken by land'.³³

The incident at the forts, although only Soviet troops were directly involved in it, was the turning point in the campaign. On 19 June, Laidoner, having concluded that he had fulfilled his commitment to establish the Northern Corps on Russian soil, relinquished his control and turned the corps, renamed Northwest Army, over to General A. P. Rodzyanko and thereby freed himself also to terminate the Estonian advance toward Petrograd.³⁴ No doubt, the events at Seraya Loshad and

Krasnaya Gorka influenced Laidoner, but for him a far more vital consideration had been involved as well: on the 17th, von der Goltz and his Latvian associates had sent an ultimatum demanding the immediate removal of all Estonian troops from Latvia, and the next day they had denounced a tacit armistice that had existed since early in the month.³⁵

Stalin's confidence had revived by 19 June when he told Lenin that Rodzyanko was 'a mere gnat' and one division from East Front would suffice to drive him back to the Estonian border. The Soviet fortunes, he reported a few days later, were taking a big turn for the better: an offensive had begun, and deserters were returning to the units 'by the thousands', while 400 enemy troops had come over in the last week, most with their weapons. The stuff of another legend had been created, one in which Stalin would figure as having converted Petrograd into an armed camp in three weeks, foiled the White Guards' treacherous designs, and infused the Soviet troops with offensive spirit by the successes at Krasnaya Gorka and Seraya Loshad. Stalin's offensive stalled at the end of the month when the Estonians, who had by then inflicted a crushing defeat on von der Goltz's German and Baltic German contingents, stopped after withdrawing about ten miles. The Northwest Army likewise went over to the defensive after giving some ground – with a strength of about 15,000 men, mostly acquired through defections from the Soviet side.³⁶

EAST FRONT AND TROTSKIY

In the meantime, East Front's success and South Front's trouble had continued. East Front opened an offensive to take the Urals on 24 June, and recaptured Perm on 1 July. South Front lost Kharkov on 24 June and Tsaritsyn on the 30th. The loss of Ekaterinoslav, also on the 30th, effectively terminated the Soviet hold on the lower left bank of the Dnepr River and the Crimea. Ukrainian Front had been disbanded earlier in the month and its armies combined to form Twelfth Army, which was subordinated to West Front, and Fourteenth Army, which became part of South Front. The reorganization put a permanent end to the practice of allowing separate armies in the republics, but it was not accomplished without an effort by the Ukrainian group to have Voroshilov, who could claim a victory over Grigoryev, rewarded with a *front* command. Trotskiy, after ordering Voroshilov, Mezhlauk and their associates to stop 'cooking up schemes ... and covert devices for bringing the Ukrainian Front back into being,' allowed Voroshilov to stay on in command of the former Second Ukrainian Army during its conversion into Fourteenth Army.³⁷

The Red Army was also by far stronger in the east, where it had the upper hand, than in the south, where exactly the opposite situation prevailed. As of 1 May, before Denikin's offensive began and when South Front's strength had stood at 73,000 bayonets and sabers, East Front had had 143,000. Since then, South Front had been barely able to replace its losses while having to contend with a rapidly

lengthening front. When Vatsetis had begun shifting reserves stationed behind East Front southward late in the month, the East Front commissars, Gusev, Yurenev, and Lashevich, had instantly complained to Lenin that moving units from one front to another would prevent there being a decisive victory anywhere. A few days later, on 2 June, they contended that Vatsetis and the Field Staff were afflicted with a great instability and were incapable of deciding where the main effort ought to be even though it manifestly belonged in the east. After Vatsetis, desperate to get reinforcements for South Front and Petrograd, issued a directive on 6 June ordering East Front to halt its offensive on the line of the Belaya and Kama Rivers (essentially at Ufa and Perm), the commissars accused him of having made ‘a massively fatal error that could cost us the revolution.’³⁸

The East Front commissars were not only asserting, as they had been doing since early in the year and Stalin and Voroshiov had done at Tsaritsyn, the primacy of the party authorities in their own areas; they were challenging the principle of centralized command. The challenge barely stopped short of Lenin himself. They construed his 29 May telegram admonishing them to stop arguing and get on with the offensive as an irrevocable commitment to keep the main effort in the east, and they resisted his efforts as well as Vatsetis’s to withdraw units for Petrograd and South Front. In the latter regard they had support from Stalin, who, in a rare burst of selfless collegiality, told Lenin that ‘under no circumstances should forces be withdrawn from the eastern front for the Petrograd front in such numbers as might compel us to halt our offensive on the eastern front.’³⁹ On 17 June, Sklyanskiy negotiated a truce with Gusev, who had a few days earlier been installed in the RMCR as commissar to the Field Staff by appointment from the Central Committee. Under it, the RMCR resolved to prolong the offensive against Kolchak and required the East Front commander to submit a plan for future operations ‘based on the actual conditions’ and including provision for the release of six brigades (approximately three divisions) for the other *fronts*. In the truce, Gusev also secured the removal of F. V. Kostyaev, the chief of the Field Staff, and his replacement by M. D. Bonch-Bruyevich.⁴⁰ The East Front RMC had been campaigning against the former general Kostyaev since March, apparently because he held their man, the former colonel Kamenev, in low regard.

The truce was bound not to last. The East Front commissars could regard the issue as settled, but Trotskiy and Vatsetis could not. On 20 June, Gusev, whose new post gave him access to the message traffic in the Field Staff, warned Lashevich and Yurenev that Trotskiy was insisting on upsetting the agreement and ‘conducting rabid agitation against East Front.’⁴¹ By the 22nd, Vatsetis had drafted a plan for an offensive in the south. Pointing out that East Front’s situation was improving by the day and South Front’s getting worse at the same rate, he proposed diverting all available resources in troops and equipment, including some from East Front, for a counteroffensive to be opened at South Front on about 1 August. On 1 July, after Kharkov and Tsaritsyn had fallen, he reported in person to Lenin on the South Front situation and the plan.⁴² Lenin, then, apparently sent out a call for a plenum of the Central Committee.

The meeting, the first for the committee elected at the Eighth Party Congress, opened on the morning of 3 July with 18 members present, including Stalin and Trotskiy, both just arrived, and also Gusev, who was not a member. The issue for Trotskiy was the Supreme Commander in Chief's authority to make strategic decisions; for the majority in the Central Committee, it was the party's role in military affairs as the Eighth Party Congress had defined it. Trotskiy defended the Vatsetis plan, which in later years he claimed as his own. It projected a massive build-up at South Front that would stop Denikin's northward advance short of Kursk and Voronezh and provide the means for a powerful two-pronged advance via Kharkov in the west and Tsaritsyn in the east to Rostov. The East Front commissars entered a counter-proposal that has come to be known as the Kamenev plan, although Kamenev's authorship is doubtful to say the least, and what the Central Committee received was less an operational plan than a scheme to keep the main effort at East Front. Through Gusev, Lashevich and Yurenev guaranteed – provided their offensive was not halted – 'to deal an annihilating blow to Denikin's flank and rear' with a far less heavy deployment than Vatsetis wanted.⁴³

The Central Committee adopted the East Front commissars' proposal and did so on terms that could hardly have been more gratifying to them or more dismaying to Trotskiy. It dismissed Vatsetis, appointed Kamenev to replace him as Supreme Commander in Chief, dropped seven civilian members from the RMCR (leaving only Trotskiy, Sklyanskiy, Smilga, and Gusev), and appointed one new member, A. I. Rykov, who was also chairman of the Supreme Economic Council. The purpose of Rykov's appointment was to bring all agencies concerned with military supply under his control. The Central Committee, moreover, by its actions – and probably more explicitly – served notice that henceforth Trotskiy's decisions would be subject to its review. After the choice fell to Kamenev, Trotskiy walked out of the meeting, and on the 4th, he resigned from the Politburo and as People's Commissar for Military Affairs and chairman of the RMCR, apparently charging that the Central Committee had acted contrary to previously established military policy – as indeed it had.⁴⁴

The Decisive Battles

THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE IN CHARGE

In the Bolshoi Theater on the night of 4 July 1919, Lenin gave an address on the state of the war that Trotsky was supposed to have given to the Central Committee and the Moscow Soviet. Trotsky was in bed under doctors' care and did not appear outside his Kremlin apartment for the next several days. His sudden illness terminated in a sudden departure from Moscow. He insisted later that what had occurred at the Central Committee meeting was merely a 'small episodic disagreement ... of a practical nature', one of many Stalin engineered against him and a not very successful one because it 'had not the slightest bearing' on his relations with Lenin.¹ His reaction at the time, however, strongly indicates more than just annoyance at one of Stalin's petty intrigues against him. The Central Committee, he must have realized, had not only decided against him on the practical issues, the plans and the commander in chief, but had as well profoundly altered the principles governing the military system. And Lenin had voted with the majority on all the questions, giving him only a private assurance of support in disciplinary matters. The Politburo and the Orgburo unanimously refused to accept his resignation, at the same time advising him that should he wish to alter the Central Committee's 'line on the military question', he would have to call for a party congress and suggesting that he might do well to reduce his other functions 'with a view to concentrating on his work at the South Front'.²

Trotsky was right in taking himself to have been the target of the Central Committee's actions but by far overestimated Stalin's role. He drew his assumption about Stalin from Stalin's claim (made on 4 June) that the documents from the Swiss Legation proved treason in the Field Staff and the reference to the alleged necessity for the Central Committee 'to draw appropriate conclusions'. No doubt, the 'appropriate conclusions' Stalin wanted to have drawn would have involved Trotsky, but the issue raised had been resolved well before the plenum. Stalin had directed his charges particularly against Kostyaev, with a somewhat embarrassing result. The East Front RMC secured Kostyaev's dismissal, and on the day that took place, Lenin told Stalin that his information had proved untrue.³

While Stalin would certainly have regarded the outcome of the plenum as a well-deserved comeuppance for Trotsky, it could otherwise hardly have pleased

him. The Central Committee had given the East Front RMC a resounding vote of confidence and slighted him, the defender of Petrograd. It had accepted his contention that Nadezhnyy, whom Trotskiy regarded as one of the best generals, had to be removed from the West Front command, but it also accepted Trotskiy's long-standing contention that the practice of sending out plenipotentiaries should be stopped. When Stalin left Moscow on 9 July, he did not return to Petrograd as a plenipotentiary but went to Smolensk as a member of the West Front RMC.

On 9 July, the Central Committee published a letter to the party. Under the heading 'All out for the Fight against Denikin!' it called once more for the conversion to a single armed camp. The objectives were stated as being 'to repulse Denikin's onslaught and to defeat him without checking the Red Army's victorious advance into the Urals and Siberia'. In the letter, Lenin, who was its author, also rebuked the party representatives who adopted an 'incorrect', that is, hostile, tone toward the military specialists, 'as was recently the case in Petrograd'.⁴

Vatsetis, who had not yet learned about the Central Committee's decisions, was getting ready on the morning of 8 July to leave for Moscow, where he proposed to present his plan to Lenin again, when the *Cheka* arrived at his quarters and placed him under arrest.⁵ Trotskiy, who learned of the arrest by telegram aboard his train, believed Stalin was behind it, which was probably right. The Petrograd evidence having proved almost entirely groundless, Stalin, through his friend Dzerzhinskiy, was apparently trying to extract some residual capital from it by at least staging a high-level arrest. The party's suspicion of the military specialists was so intense that it did not regard charges against any one of them as wholly unfounded. Even Trotskiy, writing years later, thought Vatsetis had possibly 'engaged in some reckless talk' with his officers.⁶ The evidence, whatever it may have been, manifestly did not support any kind of criminal charge, and Vatsetis was released after a few days and subsequently assigned to special duties in the RMCR.

Vatsetis's being in jail made Bonch-Bruyevich the senior military specialist present in Serpukhov during the command reorganization. He had held a low opinion of Vatsetis and regarded Kamenev as a near-total incompetent. As Vatsetis had, he considered Kamenev constitutionally incapable of either making a complete decision or carrying out a decision completely. Like Vatsetis also, he did not agree with the East Front plan, particularly not after advances of over 200 miles to Ekaterinburg and Zaltoust by 14 July proved Kolchak's forces to be collapsing. After he expressed an opinion in an RMCR meeting that a major shift of strength from East Front to South Front ought to be made, Gusev, who had become the dominant figure in the new command, began working in Moscow to have him removed.

In the third week of the month, during a tour that took them to West Front but not South Front, Kamenev and Gusev stopped at Simbirsk where they turned over the East Front command to Frunze and took aboard their private train Kamenev's former chief of staff, P. P. Lebedev, who was the newly appointed chief of the Field Staff. Vatsetis had sent Lebedev, a former general, to East Front in March to keep an eye on Kamenev, but Lebedev had chosen to associate himself with Kamenev and his commissars.⁷

STALEMATE AT PETROGRAD

On 8 July, the day before he left for Smolensk, *Pravda* published an interview with Stalin in which he predicted a full victory for the Red Army at Petrograd. The Northwest Army, he said, had no room for deployment and maneuver and therefore could not exist for long.⁸ While the Northwest Army was not yet as near destruction as Stalin possibly thought, the Red Army had the initiative and, by Nadezhnyy's estimate of 25 June, a better than 2:1 superiority (33,000 to 15,000). In the next month the Red Army strengths increased, Seventh Army's to 3:1 over the Northwest Army forces in its sector (36,000 to 9,000), Fifteenth Army's by not quite as much. On 29 July, Nadezhnyy's replacement, V. M. Gittis, ordered the armies to stage a combined offensive, Seventh Army carrying the main effort due west toward Narva and Fifteenth Army striking northward toward Pskov and Gdov, which would threaten Northwest Army with encirclement east of the Narva River–Chudovo–Lake Pskov line. Before the offensive ran out of steam in late August, Seventh Army, which had also to contend with Estonian forces, made some minor gains, and Fifteenth Army took Pskov and pushed Northwest Army's front northward about 35 miles. Stalin's predicted early victory having failed to materialize, the Soviet Government on 31 August offered to open peace negotiations with Estonia.⁹ Events in the south were compelling limitation of the commitment at Petrograd.

THE CRISIS

In Tsaritsyn on 3 July, General Denikin had issued his 'Moscow Order': the armies were to carry the offensive northward and converge on Moscow. On the right, Vrangel's Caucasus Army was to go via Saratov and Penza; in the center, Sidorin was to take Don Army along the line Voronezh, Kozlov, Ryazan; on the left May-Mayevskiy's Volunteer Army would have the most direct route, from Kharkov through Kursk, Orel, and Tula.¹⁰ The armies would have to cover upwards of 450 miles.

Kamenev issued his directive for a South Front counteroffensive on 25 July. Although Kolchak's forces were by then in full retreat east of Chelyabinsk, Kamenev stayed committed to the objective of the plan presented in the plenum, namely, to defeat Denikin with a minimum diversion of resources from East Front. Therefore the decision was to be achieved by a single stroke via Tsaritsyn across the Don territory to Rostov that would isolate the Cossacks from their homelands. To accomplish it, South Front's Ninth and Tenth Armies and the I Cavalry Corps being activated under Budennyy would be joined with divisions from East Front's Second Army to form the Special Group Shorin under the commander (U. I. Shorin) and staff of Second Army. The South Front deputy commander, U. I. Selivachev, would lead a special group composed of the reinforced

Thirteenth and Eighth Armies in a thrust toward Kharkov. The newly appointed South Front commander, V. I. Yegoryev, objected that sending the groups off on divergent lines could create dangerous gaps on both of Eighth Army's flanks – on 27 July, Trotsky, 'without going into the substance of the controversy', recommended to Lenin that someone else be appointed to the South Front command because it was necessary to preserve the commander in chief's authority and Yegoryev (along with his operations chief and chief commissar) believed the Kamenev plan was 'irrational' and could not succeed.¹¹

The Special Group Selivachev was to have opened the counteroffensive on 1 August and the Special Group Shorin to have come in at the middle of the month, after the enemy had been tied down in the Kharkov sector. However, delays in Selivachev's deployment led to his starting on 15 August, a day after Shorin. By the Soviet count, the special groups had generous numerical superiorities, Shorin 52,000 bayonets and 14,500 sabers to 12,000 bayonets and 22,000 sabers, Selivachev 49,700 bayonets and 4,700 sabers to 20,500 bayonets and 9,200 sabers. That the White strengths were probably no more than half the numbers given is indicated in a 10 August telegram from Lenin to Sklyanskiy in which he spoke of Selivachev's group having the enemy outnumbered by four times.¹² Before the counteroffensive started, Yegoryev's concern for the flanks had materialized. On the 10th, General K. K. Mamontov's 9,000-man Cossack corps had broken through between Eighth and Ninth Armies, and on the 12th, the Volunteer Army had launched a thrust around the Thirteenth Army right flank toward Kursk.

The two special groups made remarkably good initial advances, each gaining about 100 miles by 1 September, but a week later Vrangell stopped the Shorin group at Tsaritsyn, ending the prospect of a fast thrust through the Cossack territory. The threat to Moscow was not on the way toward being eliminated. Mamontov had gone 100 miles north and, after driving the Headquarters, South Front out of Kozlov on 25 August, had begun a sweeping turn to the southwest into the Selivachev group's rear area. The fast-moving Cossacks overawed the Red Army units sent against them and so impressed Trotsky, who had doubted the appropriateness of cavalry in a workers' army, that he issued a summons, 'Proletarians to Horse!' The Volunteer Army's push around Thirteenth Army's flank had developed into a 200-mile westward thrust that took Kiev on 30 August and brought Denikin to within a hundred miles of a junction with General Josef Pilsudski's Polish Army. Voroshilov led the Red Army troops out of Kiev. A 22-year-old former Red Guard, Iona Yakir, found a place in the ranks of the legendary figures by leading three divisions out of an encirclement near Odessa and appearing west of Kiev in time to build a front there.

On 6 September, in a telegram to Kamenev, Trotsky broke his rule against interference in operational military matters. Two South Front commissars, one of them, Lashevich, formerly a member of the East Front RMC, cosigned the message. Trotsky asserted that 'the center of gravity' at South Front had shifted to the Kursk–Voronezh area, where the danger of a breakthrough toward Moscow was evident; therefore, forces, at least Budenny's cavalry corps, would have to be

withdrawn from the Shorin group. Kamenev answered that shifting Budenny's corps from the main to the secondary effort would amount to abandoning the plan and reverting to the defensive. Lenin, in a telegram endorsing Kamenev's reply, expressed 'astonishment at the attempt to revise the plan decided upon'.¹³

On the 7th, Kamenev assigned phase lines to the Shorin group. According to those, the group was to reach the halfway point between Tsaritsyn and Rostov by the first week in October. Just then, in a three-day battle outside Tsaritsyn, Vrangl was inflicting a resounding defeat on Tenth Army that cost it 8,000 men in prisoners alone and gained Vrangl three weeks in which to rest and reinforce his army. After the victory at Tsaritsyn, Denikin decided to make a single thrust to Moscow with the Volunteer Army plus Mamontov's and Shkuro's Cossack corps. At mid-month, the Volunteer Army was approaching Kursk, which it took on 20 September, and Mamontov's corps was ranging southward toward Voronezh.¹⁴ The distance to Moscow was still over 250 miles, but about 100 miles less to the all-important armament works at Tula.

Continuing its supervision of the campaign against Denikin, the Central Committee began a four-day plenary session on 21 September. The crisis was deepening, but a victory over Denikin could win the civil war. East Front, reduced to Third and Fifth Armies, was steadily driving deeper into Siberia. Frunze commanded First and Fourth Armies as Turkestan Front was pushing southward against the Uralsk and Orenburg Cossacks. Petrograd appeared safe. The Polish commander in chief, General Josef Pilsudski, had been gradually pushing his front eastward during the summer but was clearly avoiding contact with Denikin, whose nationality policy posed a potentially more serious threat to Polish independence than that of the Bolsheviks did.

In his report to the plenum, Kamenev recommended continuing to rely on the Shorin group's offensive for the decisive effect but disclosed also that he was reinforcing the Kursk–Voronezh sector (as Trotskiy had proposed on 6 September). After sharply questioning his authority to alter a plan it had adopted, the Central Committee concurred. The committee then established the Shorin group as Southeast Front and authorized the RMCR to reinforce South Front with the Budenny cavalry corps, the Latvian Rifle Division, a brigade of Cossacks, and drafts from Petrograd and the northern front. Stalin was appointed to the South Front RMC, and A. I. Yegorov was named to replace Yegoryev as *front* commander.¹⁵ Stalin claimed later that Lenin nominated him 'to organize the defeat of Denikin' and he accepted on the condition that Trotskiy be kept out of the South Front area.¹⁶ The appointment more likely was part of a general effort to tighten political surveillance. Smilga was sent to the Southeast Front RMC, for the same reason. Trotskiy, according to his account, returned to South Front long enough to organize the reinforcements for a counterattack.¹⁷

Stalin arrived at Headquarters, South Front on 3 October. By then, Shkuro had taken Voronezh, and Mamontov's Cossacks, loaded with loot, had rejoined Don Army. On the Petrograd front, in a drive begun on 28 September, Northwest Army had regained the greater part of the ground lost to Fifteenth Army in August. On

the 12th, General Yudenich, who had taken over the Northwest Army in person, launched an attack at Yamburg that in another day carried halfway to Petrograd. On the 13th, the Volunteer Army took Orel, putting itself just over 100 miles from Tula. Denikin was at his peak strength, 98,000 troops by his count, 112,000 by the Soviet reckoning. South and Southeast Fronts together had 155,000 bayonets and 21,000 sabers.¹⁸

The crisis was at hand; Tula and Moscow were threatened; Petrograd was endangered. The Politburo, concluding in a meeting on 15 October (as Trotskiy had done on 6 September), that the main battle would have to be fought at South Front, stopped the Southeast Front offensive in order to secure reinforcements for South Front. It also set holding Tula, Moscow, and Petrograd as the paramount military objectives, authorized Trotskiy to go to Petrograd, and designated South Front ‘the main *front* of the Soviet Republic’.¹⁹

The biographical chronology appended to the fourth volume of Stalin’s *Works* gives the following entry for 15 October: ‘In a letter to V. I. Lenin, J. V. Stalin outlines a strategic plan for an offensive against Denikin from the Voronezh area in the direction of Rostov, through Kharkov and the Donbas.’ Otherwise scrupulous in keeping track of Stalin’s presence at conferences, the chronology does not mention the Politburo meeting Stalin attended that same day. When the fourth volume of *Works* was published (in 1947), the Stalin letter was long established as entirely a product of his military genius, particularly his unique ability to determine the correct location of the main effort. The letter had first appeared in Stalin’s 1929 military biography and had figured prominently thereafter in the building of his military reputation. In the process, the Politburo meeting had, of necessity, been made to disappear.

Internal evidence in the letter indicates that it was not, as the military biography purported it to be, an example of independent and original strategic thought, but a contrived attempt to capitalize on two ambiguities in the Politburo’s resolutions. The Politburo had used the word ‘temporary’ in halting the Southeast Front offensive and had contemplated mounting a general offensive some time later. Having effectively abandoned the Kamenev plan, the Politburo had wisely put the battles then being fought ahead of ones yet to come. In the letter, Stalin, conceding that ‘the old [Kamenev] plan’ was ‘already revoked as a practical matter’, insisted that the ‘old plan’ had to be replaced ‘right away, without loss of time’. Otherwise, he asserted, Kamenev ‘and that “strategic” bantam cock, Gusev’ would try to revive it. The new plan, which ‘must be adopted without delay’, would have to direct the ‘main blow’ from north to south along the line Voronezh–Rostov. ‘Without this’, he concluded, ‘my work at the Southern Front will be pointless, criminal, and superfluous, which will give me the right, or rather, make it my duty to go anywhere, even to the devil, only not to remain on the Southern Front.’²⁰ The plan, of course far from new, was the three-month-old Vatsetis plan, which was well known to every member of the Central Committee and certainly to Lenin, whom Vatsetis had briefed on it again in September.²¹ The 15 October Politburo decisions had made its adoption virtually automatic if Denikin’s advance could be

stopped. Stalin had made no contribution to strategy, but had, with an unerring eye to self-interest, disassociated himself from the plan he had formerly supported and had, at least nominally, preempted the Vatsetis–Trotsky plan.

TROTSKIY AT PETROGRAD

Trotsky's train steamed into Petrograd late on the 16th. Northwest Army troops had occupied Gatchina, 30 miles south of the city, that morning; and wherever one of three British Mark V tanks with them appeared, the Red Army men were running away. Zinoviev, the party chief, was prostrated in the Smolnyy. The Seventh Army commander, S. D. Kharlamov, hearing nothing but reports of retreats, was in nearly as bad a state. Trotsky, who had made up his mind on the train to defend Petrograd street by street if necessary, was in his element. With his accustomed gusto, he propelled himself into the midst of the fight, exhorting the workers to take up arms and appearing in person at the front, where, on one occasion, he mounted a horse to herd fleeing troops back to the firing line. It was one of his best performances and not all histrionics. He recalled Nadezhnyy to take over Seventh Army and summoned reinforcements: students from the Moscow military schools and the 21st Cavalry Regiment and 5th Latvian Regiment, which had been stationed at Tula to prevent a breakthrough there.

The Northwest Army took Tsarskoye Selo and advanced to the Pulkovo Heights on the 20th, but both its flanks were open. On the left, the Reds still held the coastal forts. Taking them had been left to the Estonians, who, however, had also accepted an offer from Lenin to open peace negotiations and were fast losing the little inclination they had to help the Yudenich–Kolchak cause. On the right, the Moscow–Petrograd railroad remained open. In its surge toward Petrograd, the White cavalry had bypassed bridges at Tosno and Kolpino, which it could easily have wrecked on or before the 20th. Nadezhnyy, who had arrived on the 18th, was having the reinforcements unloaded on the railroad to protect the bridges and the line between them.

The 5th Latvian Regiment detrained on the night of the 20th at Popovka Station, about halfway between Kolpino and Tosno and ten miles east of Tsarskoye Selo. A night reconnaissance determined that the Izhora River, three miles or so west of Popovka and the likeliest place for White positions to have been, was only guarded by cavalry patrols. The next morning, after a skirmish at a bridge, the regiment's two battalions and one artillery battery (about 1,200 men) crossed the river and advanced toward Tsarskoye Selo. Drawing the other reinforcements with it, the regiment took Tsarskoye Selo on the 24th and turned southwest toward Gatchina, which Northwest Army could not hold except by drawing away from Petrograd.

In Moscow on the 24th, Lenin announced that the turning point had been reached in the campaign against Yudenich. That had not yet actually happened. The deciding blow came from I. A. Kork, the Fifteenth Army commander, who launched a strike toward Luga on the 26th that took the town on the 31st and then

turned north toward Volosovo, halfway between Gatchina and Yamburg. When the threat to Volosovo became clear, the Northwest Army had to begin a general retreat that allowed the 5th Latvian Regiment to occupy Gatchina on 3 November and make a junction with Kork's troops at Volosovo on the 6th. Nadezhnyy, Kork, and Kharlamov, who had commanded the so-called 'Assault Group Kolpino–Tosno' after being relieved from the army command, received Orders of the Red Banner. Trotsky presented a red banner to the 5th Latvian Regiment, Orders of the Red Banner and gold watches to the commander and the commissar, and gold and silver watches to the other officers (out of a large stock of such items confiscated from the bourgeoisie that he kept aboard the train). The Politburo awarded an Order of the Red Banner to Trotsky, and, at Lenin's request, one to Stalin as well, for his alleged participation in the fighting at Seraya Loshad.²²

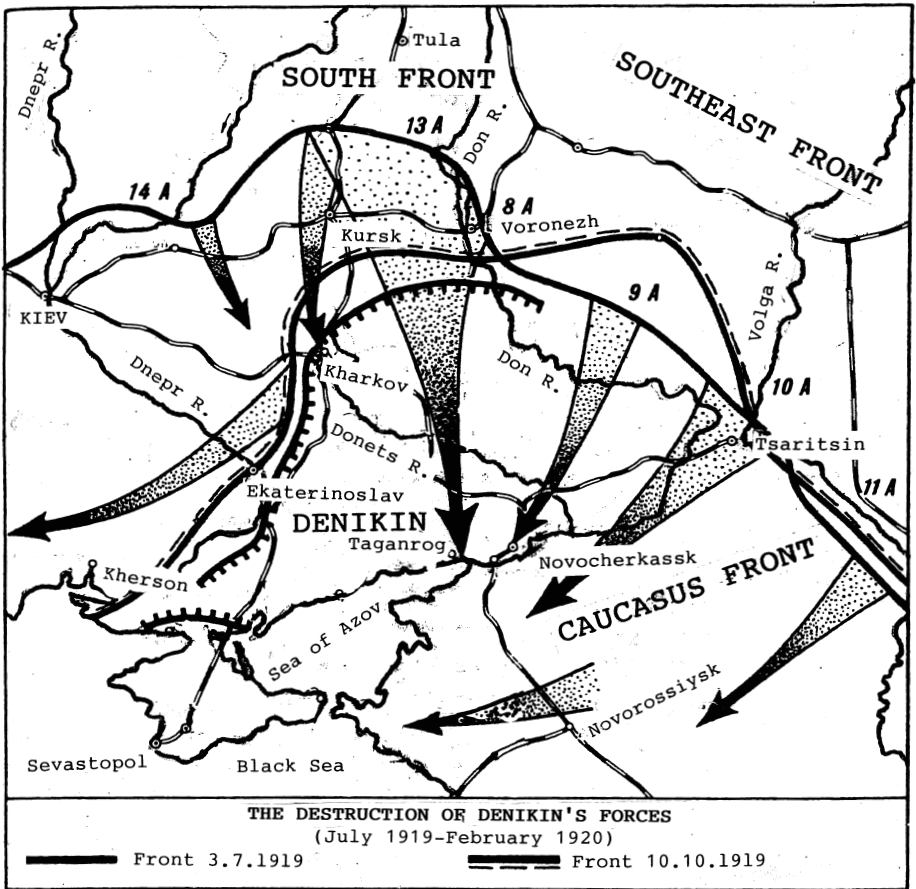
'THE CIVIL WAR HAS ENDED IN VICTORY!'

On 15 October, South Front had two shock groups in action against the spearheads Denikin was thrusting toward Moscow, the Latvian Rifle Division (6,000 Latvians with 2,000 Cossacks and 1,500 other infantry attached) and Budenny's cavalry corps (the 4th and 6th Cavalry Divisions, together 7,600 sabers). The Latvian Rifle Division had advanced on the 10th, taken Kromi (20 miles southwest of Orel) on the 14th, and was wheeling left to come up on Orel from the rear. Budenny had struck westward toward Voronezh on the 13th. The shock groups were small, but by the Soviet reckoning, the Volunteer Army main force only numbered 22,300 troops and the Don Army 16,000. Against those, South Front had overall superiorities, which of course had not always counted for much, of 3:1 against the Volunteer Army on the Orel area and 1.25:1 against the Don Army.

The Volunteer Army, under pressure from two infantry divisions on the north and west and with the Latvian Rifle Division threatening its escape route to the south, gave up Orel on 20 October. Budenny, assisted by three infantry divisions, dislodged Shkuro's and Mamontov's Cossack corps from Voronezh on the 24th. On the 26th, the Latvian Rifle Division began a drive due south in which the Fourteenth and Thirteenth Armies joined on its right and left, covered 70 miles in 25 days, and took Kursk on 17 November. Budenny took Kastornoye, 85 miles east of Kursk, on the 15th, after a 23-day, 65-mile advance.²³

The Red Army's most durable and influential legend, that of the First Cavalry Army, 'a kind of military organization the like of which had not been seen before', was born during the Voronezh–Kastornoye operation.²⁴ On 3 October, Shchadenko, the former Tenth Army commissar, had come to Budenny's headquarters near Tsaritsyn bearing 'fervid Bolshevik greetings' from Stalin. Being unemployed after the retreat from Kiev, Voroshilov and Shchadenko had reestablished contact with Stalin. Shchadenko also brought a circular letter the Central Committee had issued at its September plenum calling on communists to help organize Soviet

THE DECISIVE BATTLES



Map 2: The Destruction of Denikin's Forces (July 1919–February 1920)

cavalry. On reading it, so the story goes, the thought came to Budenny in a flash that the Red Army needed a mass cavalry organization, an army, to overcome the White cavalry corps. The day after Voronezh fell, Stalin sent a telegram to Lenin – and to *Pravda* – announcing that ‘the halo of invincibility created around the names of Generals Mamontov and Shкуро has been shattered by the valor of the Red heroes of Comrade Budenny’s Cavalry Corps.’²⁵ On the same day, he issued an order that a captured armored train named ‘General Shкуро’ be renamed ‘People’s Hero Budenny’. Budenny reportedly responded that what he really wanted was a cavalry army, and Stalin thereupon set about creating one. On 31 October, he gave Budenny the newly formed 11th Cavalry Division, which with its 600 bayonets and 6,300 sabers, nearly doubled his strength. On 19 November, the drive on Kastornoye entered its last phase, and South Front activated the First Cavalry Army. The order named Budenny as commander and chairman of the army

RMC and Voroshilov and Shchadenko as the RMC's political members. Yegorov and Stalin told Budenny at their first meeting with him that he should rely on Voroshilov's and Shchadenko's 'rich experience' in political and organizational matters.²⁶ Knowing them well from past experience, Yegorov seems to have regarded the cavalry army as a relatively harmless way of satisfying the Tsaritsyn group's ambitions and placating Stalin.

Stalin maintained an equable relationship with Yegorov and confined his splenetic attacks to Kamenev, Gusev, and Lebedev, the former East Front RMC members in the RMCR. On 10 November, when the Orel–Kursk and Voronezh–Kastornoye operations were moving successfully, Kamenev had told Southeast Front it would be getting reinforcements and had directed it to be prepared to resume the offensive across the Don Cossack territory toward Novocherkassk in early December. The South Front RMC had protested to Kamenev on the 12th that it could not guarantee it would not lose the initiative unless it was given reinforcements. Stalin had followed up the protest with a message to Lenin and the Politburo in which he accused Kamenev and Gusev of showing 'outright hostility' toward Yegorov and 'total indifference' to South Front's needs. He had called for replacement of either the whole 'General Staff Headquarters' (presumably Kamenev and the Field Staff) or Gusev, whom he named as the 'chief instigator' against South Front. In a telegram on the 13th, he declared that any change in the plan, such as Kamenev proposed, would make his staying at South Front 'impossible'.²⁷

The Politburo met on 14 November. Trotskiy had come from Petrograd. Stalin did not attend, although he managed two days later to be in Moscow to promote the cavalry army project in the RMCR. The Politburo took up two issues: Kamenev's attempt to reinstate his plan for a Southeast Front offensive and Stalin's complaints against the RMCR. It resolved the first and the substantive aspect of the second in a 'political-economic directive' that stressed the necessity to take Kursk, Kharkov, and the Donets Basin and regulated the distribution of reinforcements to South and Southeast Fronts accordingly. To make certain Kamenev understood the Politburo's thinking, which he seemed so far not to have done, Lenin and Trotskiy were each to 'talk to' him. In separate decisions, Gusev was slated for transfer to the Southeast Front RMC and Stalin was 'to be informed that the Politburo considers absolutely inadmissible his backing up of his official demands with ultimatums and notifications of resignation'.²⁸

South and Southeast Fronts opened a general offensive against the Volunteer Army and Don Army on 20 November. The main effort was at South Front in the form of a massive *rassekayushchiy udar* (cleaving blow) by Fourteenth, Thirteenth, and First Cavalry Armies aimed from the line Kursk–Kastornoye toward the line Kharkov–Kupyansk–Valuyki and thence across the Donets Basin to the Sea of Azov and Rostov-on-the-Don. The object was to drive a blunt wedge between the Volunteer Army and Don Army and then destroy each separately. Kharkov, the most important city and communications center in the eastern Ukraine, was the main first-phase objective; and Fourteenth Army, under I. P. Uborevich, a 24-year-old former junior lieutenant who had won an Order of the Red Banner as a brigade

commander earlier in the year, headed toward it. Thirteenth Army drove toward Kupyansk and First Cavalry Army toward Valuyki. The Latvian Rifle Division broke through west of Kursk on the 20th and thereafter spearheaded a 130-mile advance to Kharkov, which it took on 12 December. Thirteenth Army and First Cavalry Army reached Kupyansk and Valuyki on the 8th and the 9th. The thrust in the center enabled Eighth Army and Southeast Front's Ninth Army to clear the line of the Don River north of Tsaritsyn by the 8th and Twelfth Army to round out the first phase by retaking Kiev on the 17th.²⁹

Lenin delivered the Central Executive Committee's report at the opening session of the Seventh All-Russia Congress of Soviets on 5 December. He told the delegates, 'We can say that the Civil War, which we conducted with such tremendous sacrifices, has ended in victory. It has been victorious, not only on a Russian scale, but on a world-historical scale.'³⁰ Victory in a few weeks or a few months, as Lenin said later in the congress, did appear certain. The Allies had evacuated Arkhangelsk in September, and the last Allied troopship had left Murmansk on 12 October. On 14 November, Yudenich had lost Yamburg, and Kolchak had fled his capital, Omsk. Yudenich's troops were disarmed and interned in Estonia, and Kolchak's army was disintegrating. Frunze's Turkestan Front had smashed the Orenburg Cossacks and had the Uralsk Cossack army trapped against the Caspian Sea.

Stalin, who did not attend the congress, published an analysis of the causes of the victory in *Pravda* later in the month. In it, he reached an exceptionally profound conclusion that would serve him well in later years. He attributed the White leadership's failure to its having had to operate from a 'peripheral position', which forced it to rely on a diverse assortment of non-Russian peoples while the Soviet leadership controlled 'Inner Russia' with Moscow and Petrograd and 'its nationally homogeneous population, principally Russian'. The result was, he observed, that 'when the counterrevolutionary armies reach certain boundaries (the boundaries of Inner Russia!), they inevitably sustain disaster'.³¹

As a result of the successes in the East, the North, and at Petrograd, the demands on the army establishment had declined dramatically. East Front, reduced to Third and Fifth Armies before it reached Omsk, needed only Fifth Army to continue the eastward pursuit. Seventh and Fifteenth Armies made sporadic warlike gestures against the Estonian Army until an armistice was signed at the end of December (followed by a peace treaty on 2 February 1920). The Red Army had received 1.2 million recruits during 1919, which raised the number of troops on its rolls to 3 million at year's end (though, it would seem, not necessarily all present or accounted for). Arms output continued to be a limiting factor. The 470,000 rifles produced during the year would not have been enough to cover the deficit that had already existed in January 1919.³²

The units no longer needed at the front were becoming a useless burden on an economy in an advanced state of collapse, and in January 1920, the RMCR and the Council of People's Commissars, following a plan Trotskiy had proposed two months earlier, began converting armies into labor armies. Third Army became the First Labor Army, charged with collecting 'all spare food supplies' and restoring

railroad lines. Stalin, in addition to his duties as a member of a *front* RMC, became the chairman of a Ukrainian Council of the Labor Army, which was to set up a Ukrainian Labor Army using military units supplied from the reserve. The units were to be used in the reoccupied areas of the Ukraine, 'either as manpower or as a means of coercion according to the situation'.³³

On 17 December, Thirteenth Army, First Cavalry Army (with two infantry divisions attached), and Eighth Army began the drive to the Donets Basin and the Sea of Azov. Fourteenth Army, veering westward, covered their right flank, and Southeast Front's Eighth and Tenth Armies joined in on the east against the Don and Caucasus Armies.³⁴ Behind the Volunteer Army, in the zone of the Soviet main effort, Makhno's partisans controlled a great wedge of territory extending from Aleksandrovka on the Dnepr Bend to Mariupol on the Sea of Azov. Under pressure at the front and threatened in the rear, Denikin had no choice other than to let the Volunteer Army retreat either into the Crimea or toward the Don River and the North Caucasus. Vrangl, to whom Denikin had given command of the Volunteer Army in early December, had recommended going into the Crimea, which could be more easily defended; but Denikin had dismissed Vrangl and ordered the army's main force to go toward the Don because the Cossacks would not continue to fight without it or away from their home territory.³⁵

First Cavalry Army covered 62 miles to and across the Donets River by 28 December and then another 70 miles to Rostov, which it took on 10 January. Eighth Army had reached Novocherkassk, 20 miles upstream on the Don three days earlier. Tenth Army had taken Tsaritsyn on 31 December and was advancing along the left bank of the Don toward the Manych River. Stalin wrote a postscript to his article on the causes of the victory in which he stated, 'Another blow and complete victory will be ensured.'³⁶ When Thirteenth Army and Fourteenth Army reached Mariupol (on the 3rd) and Aleksandrovka (on the 5th), the troops greeted Makhno's followers as comrades and allies, but the higher leadership decided that Makhno's popularity in the Ukraine and among the Red Army men did not serve the Soviet interest and outlawed him and his movement on the 10th.³⁷ On reaching Rostov and the lower Don, First Cavalry Army and Eighth Army were attached to Southeast Front, which was renamed Caucasus Front on 16 January. On the same day South Front, with Twelfth, Fourteenth, and Thirteenth Armies, became Southwest Front. Twelfth Army was covering Kiev, Fourteenth was headed toward Odessa, and Thirteenth toward the Crimea. Remnants of the Volunteer Army still held both, and Makhno's partisans dominated the intervening territory.

THE MOPPING UP

As of mid-January, both sides faced new situations. Caucasus Front, although (by the Soviet count) it did not have a large numerical advantage, 70,000 effectives to 60,000, was in position on the Don River line to finish the campaign with one

more blow. Of Denikin's most reliable force, the Volunteer Army, just enough was left to make up a single corps, and the Don Cossacks were looking longingly across the front toward their home settlements. On the other hand, he was again close – if uncomfortably so – to his recruiting areas in the Kuban and Terek Regions and to his main base at Novorossiysk; and his front, which stretched 1,200 miles from Odessa to Tsaritsyn in October, was reduced to about 400 miles.

On 9 January, wanting to keep the enemy on the run, Shorin ordered First Cavalry and Eighth Armies, without stopping on the Don, to strike south along the Rostov–Tikoretsk Railroad. Over the next several days, Budenny and Voroshilov laid down a barrage of objections: the ground was no good for maneuver, the enemy was too strong and had destroyed all the crossings, the ice on the river was too thin, and the steppe on the other side was too boggy. On the 17th, after Shorin had insisted his order be carried out as given, First Cavalry Army started across the river but returned to the north bank before nightfall and demanded that it either be given infantry support or the order be cancelled. The obstacle was Bataysk, a railroad junction ten miles south of the river that Volunteer Corps troops were defending. Four days later, a second attempt ended similarly.

On the 23rd, Budenny and Voroshilov learned, probably from Stalin who was in Moscow ostensibly tending to affairs related to the Ukrainian Labor Army, that Kamenev had instructed Shorin to give up on the attack in the Rostov sector and concentrate on getting Ninth Army and the Composite Cavalry Corps across the Don 70 miles upstream.³⁸ They thereupon dispatched telegrams to Shorin, Stalin, and Trotskiy (who was in Siberia). Asserting 'a moral responsibility to warn that the Republic will lose its best cavalry and risk much more' if the cavalry army were destroyed, as it would be were it to continue the operations at Rostov, they proposed including the army in the new attack Kamenev had projected. When Shorin, apparently thinking the decision was still his to make, refused to change his orders, they charged him in telegrams to Lenin, Stalin and Trotskiy with having 'driven the cavalry army to the verge of destruction.'³⁹ Early on the 24th, Kamenev ordered Shorin to give First Cavalry Army two infantry divisions and a cavalry division from Eighth Army and shift it by forced marches to Ninth Army's right, where it would also take command of the Composite Cavalry Corps.⁴⁰

First Cavalry Army's redeployment took four days, and by then, Ninth Army and the Composite Cavalry Corps had crossed the Don and advanced to the Manych River, which was actually a chain of shallow lakes and mud flats, indistinguishable from the surrounding steppe in the winter. Soviet accounts generally draw a veil over the next several days' events. The most forthright description is in the Trotskiy Papers, in a telegram sent to Lenin early on 3 February. In it, the Ninth Army commissar reported that Mamontov, with an estimated 20,000 Cossacks, having roundly defeated the Composite Cavalry Corps, the First Cavalry Army, and three infantry divisions on 28 and 29 January, had since gone over to the offensive himself, and was driving Budenny back toward Novocherkassk.⁴¹

Budenny had sent a personal letter to Lenin on 1 February in which he blamed everything untoward that had happened or might happen, including the defeat

Vrangel had dealt him in the previous October, on Shorin. On the 3rd, uncertain how to handle the loss of Novocherkassk, which then appeared imminent, he, Voroshilov, and Shchadenko arranged a teletype conference out of Rostov with Stalin, who had returned to Southwest Front's headquarters at Kursk the day before. Stalin gave encouragement and more. He treasured the cavalry army, he said, 'as the priceless gold of the Republic', and it had to be preserved. Voroshilov asked him to come to Caucasus Front. He replied that he could not agree to do that without first securing Lenin's concurrence, but he disclosed that while he was in Moscow, he had recommended Shorin's removal from command and had arranged to have Grigoriy Ordzhonikidze, who was 'very well disposed toward the cavalry army', appointed to the Caucasus Front RMC.⁴² Ordzhonikidze, who had been the chief commissar at Fourteenth Army, was Stalin's long-time closest associate in the party, a fellow Georgian, and had been with Stalin at Tsaritsyn.

Stalin came back on the line several hours later, apparently after having been in contact with Lenin and the RMCR. He reported that he could not come to the cavalry army's aid in person but would be sending 'two good divisions', one of them the Latvian Rifle Division, and Shorin would be replaced 'today or tomorrow'. The next morning, in a teleconference, he told Ordzhonikidze that he and his 'new *front* commander' had to get rid of Shorin 'without delay' – because he was 'waging war on the cavalry army' – and themselves visit the cavalry army.⁴³

The new Caucasus Front commander, whose name Stalin did not mention to Voroshilov and Budennyi or Ordzhonikidze, although he must by then have known it, was Tukhachevskiy. The RMCR had recalled Tukhachevskiy to Moscow in late November 1919, perhaps at his own request since he would most likely not have regarded Fifth Army as any longer affording a proper scope for his talent, and he had departed to South Front headquarters in Kursk on 22 December with an appointment to take command of Thirteenth Army. On 19 January, he had sent a telegram to Trotskiy stating, 'I earnestly request you to release me from having nothing to do. I have been sitting around aimlessly ... for almost three weeks. ... I can neither obtain a reason for the delay or secure another posting.'⁴⁴ Trotskiy had forwarded the complaint to Stalin, who had let Tukhachevskiy continue to sit.

In the interval between the teleconferences with Voroshilov and Budennyi, Stalin learned about Tukhachevskiy's appointment to Caucasus Front and received a telegram from Lenin containing the Ninth Army report on Budennyi's disaster and an order to go at once to the First Cavalry Army and arrange to transfer reinforcements from Southwest Front. Lenin added that 'to put matters on a proper footing', Stalin would be appointed also to the Caucasus Front RMC. Stalin, who had seemed willing to go in the first teleconference, obviously thought differently during the second. He told Ordzhonikidze the next morning that he would be sending two divisions to be assigned as flank protection for First Cavalry Army, but in his answer to Lenin, he said the Latvian Rifle Division was the only good division he had in the reserve, the others were not worth transferring. He also asserted 'a profound conviction that my journey will not bring about any change in the situation'; added that he was 'not entirely well and would at present

be unable to support a prolonged journey'; and requested to be excused from the assignment.⁴⁵

On 5 February, in a telegram to the First Cavalry Army RMC, Ordzhonikidze and Tukhachevskiy expressed regret over the disturbance in relations between the 'heroic Red cavalry' and its neighbor armies occasioned by the recent defeats, adding also 'a deep conviction' that the 'old comradeship' would be restored and 'the merit and proficiency of the cavalry army deservedly recognized'.⁴⁶ However, the disturbance was by no means ended. Eighth Army had barely managed to cover Novochoerkassk when, on 7 February, the Volunteer Corps crossed the Don and recaptured Rostov, raising a vision of another long retreat on the Soviet side. Not daring to commit First Cavalry Army again in the Rostov–Novochoerkassk area, Tukhachevskiy ordered Budennyi to take the army out to the Tsaritsyn–Tikhoretsk railroad, 90 miles east of Rostov, and mount the kind of sweeping attack behind the enemy that the army claimed was its only proper employment. The cavalry army and a three-division infantry shock group advanced ten miles beyond the Manych–Torgovaya Station on the 14th. Three days later, a Cossack corps under General A. A. Pavlov threw them back to the river.⁴⁷ Lenin telegraphed to Ordzhonikidze and Smilga that he was 'extremely disturbed by the state of our troops on the Caucasus Front, the complete collapse of Budennyi, the slackening off on the part of all of our troops ... and the growing strength of the enemy'. It was essential, he stated, 'that every nerve be strained' and 'emergency measures put through with revolutionary zeal'.⁴⁸

One who was in no wise disposed to strain his nerves or display revolutionary zeal in Caucasus Front's interest was Stalin. When Kamenev issued an order on the 18th to transfer reserves from the Ukrainian Labor Army, Stalin refused, insisting that the Central Committee would first have to call him to Moscow to review the matter.⁴⁹ On the 20th, Lenin, expressing concern that the Donets Basin was in danger, asked him to speed up transfer of the Latvian Rifle Division and the 42nd Rifle Division (apparently the second good division he had promised two and a half weeks earlier). In response, he protested, 'It is not clear to me why ... the Caucasus Front should be primarily my responsibility.' 'Procedurally', he argued, 'the reinforcement of the Caucasus Front is entirely the concern of the Military Revolutionary Council of the Republic ... not that of Stalin, who is already overworked as it is.'⁵⁰

The successes on the Don–Manych line had, in fact, revived Denikin's hopes somewhat. But Eighth Army regained Rostov on 23 February, and two days later, First Cavalry Army and the infantry shock group defeated Pavlov's Cossacks, who numbered 10,000 at most. During the next week, Budennyi developed a threat to the Don Army's and Volunteer Corps' rear that made them retreat southwestward across the Kuban toward the Taman Peninsula and Novorossiysk. Budennyi and Voroshilov received Orders of the Red Banner for their achievement. Another so decorated was Semen Timoshenko, a 25-year-old former cavalry private who had been with Budennyi since Tsaritsyn and had taken command of 6th Cavalry Division in November 1919.⁵¹

By 1 March, Tukhachevskiy's armies were all advancing, and Denikin's were collapsing. First Cavalry Army reached Tikhoretsk, 65 miles northeast of Novorossiysk, on the 9th and then turned away to the northeast of Novorossiysk; it then turned away to the southeast, toward the Terek River. Had Budennyi taken Shorin's route to Tikhoretsk, the end could have come sooner and with far greater finality. Before the last ships left Novorossiysk, on 26 March, Denikin had evacuated some 35,000 Volunteer Corps and Don Army troops to the Crimea through the port and across the seven-mile-wide Kerch Strait.⁵² Denikin signed over command in the Crimea to Vrangeli on 4 April and departed for Constantinople aboard a British ship. Yudenich had gone into exile in England in December. Kolchak had been executed on 7 February in Irkutsk, where the Soviet Fifth Army also recovered the gold reserve lost at Kazan. Vrangeli became the Regent and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of South Russia.

Defeat and Victory

THE 'MOMENT OF VICTORY'

Opening the Ninth Party Congress on 29 March 1920, Lenin told the delegates they were meeting at the 'moment' of victory 'of the Soviet revolution in the first country to make this revolution' and 'victory over the combined forces of world capitalism and imperialism'. He announced another long-awaited event as well: the outbreak of communist revolution in Germany. (A general strike in Berlin had frustrated a right-wing coup, the Kapp Putsch; and in the aftermath, a 'Red Army' had sprung up in the Ruhr, and a 'Soviet Republic' had been proclaimed in Saxony.) 'The proletarian Soviet power in Germany', he said, 'is spreading irresistibly. The time is not far off when we shall be marching hand in hand with a German Soviet government'.¹

The congress's main business was to adopt a 'unified plan' for dealing with the economic consequences of the Civil War: near-total breakdowns in agriculture, industry, transportation, and finance. In the Central Committee's view, the unified plan had to impose democratic centralism on the peacetime economy and to provide for labor mobilization on essentially the same terms as had been employed to mobilize the armies. Trotsky proposed treating workers as labor soldiers, subject to the sorts of punishments given soldiers who failed to carry out orders. The trade union delegates protested that democratic centralism would deny them a voice in management and make them and the party 'a subservient gramophone' for the top leadership. The congress resolved to uphold democratic centralism and directed the trade unions to shift their effort to imposing discipline on the workers. During the congress, the Workers' and Peasants' Defense Council renamed itself the Council of Labor and Defense, therewith becoming the supreme economic authority in peace as well as in war and putting production on the same footing as war.²

Lenin also gave the congress some news: within the week, Latvia, Finland, and Poland had offered to open peace negotiations. He told the delegates that the Polish offer had to be treated very cautiously, but the revolutionary movement was growing in Poland as it was in Germany, and the Polish bourgeoisie were 'throwing out offers of peace' because they could not afford to gamble on war any longer.³ If not quite yet at the time he spoke, certainly a few days later, Lenin

believed the conference site, Borisov, stipulated in the Polish proposal had to be ‘absolutely rejected’ because, being inside their front, it would give the Poles an undue propaganda advantage.⁴ Allegedly for the same reason, the Poles rejected the Soviet alternative, a meeting on neutral ground somewhere in Estonia. An additional Polish refusal to declare a truce except in the immediate Borisov area, besides recalling their humiliation at Brest-Litovsk, convinced Lenin and Trotskiy that the Poles were not prepared to offer acceptable terms.

PILSUDSKI VERSUS TUKHACHEVSKIY

On 25 April, on a broad front between the Pripjat Marshes and the Carpathian Mountains, three Polish armies attacked Southwest Front. The magnitude of the effort in an area in which the Polish commander in chief, Pilsudski, had not previously shown much interest was a surprise but a not entirely unwelcome one, since it afforded an opportunity to resolve the conflict with Poland on Soviet terms. In December 1919, the Allied Supreme Council had formally designated a line centered on Brest-Litovsk and running roughly due north and south from there as the provisional eastern Polish boundary and had recognized Polish sovereignty over all former Russian territory west of the line. The council also stipulated that the provisional aspect would apply only to eastward extensions of the boundary. Since the front was well east of the line (as much as 300 miles) along its whole length, the line’s effect had been to limit the Polish and increase the Soviet risk. But the Allies had not defined their commitment to Poland, and the British had, after December, shown themselves to be increasingly inclined toward coming to terms with Soviet Russia.⁵ The Polish offensive was sufficiently strong to bring the Soviet–Polish war out of the obscurity that had enveloped it for more than a year – and constitute a demonstrable provocation – without posing a decisive strategic threat.

Over the past month, Kamenev and the Field Staff, in which Shaposhnikov had become the operations chief, had drafted plans for continuing the war with Poland under various contingencies. The front had been quiet. Stalin, apparently regarding his work as finished, had left the political side of the Southwest Front RMC to his deputy, R. I. Berzin, and returned to Moscow a week before the party congress. On 26 April, the Politburo charged Kamenev, Stalin, and the Field Staff with organizing a large-scale troop transfer from Caucasus Front to Southwest Front.⁶ First Cavalry Army was already on the way. Ordzhonikidze, probably on instructions from Stalin, had sent Budenny and Voroshilov to Moscow in early April. Stalin had arranged meetings with Lenin, Kamenev, and Shaposhnikov; and the cavalry army had disengaged at Caucasus Front on 4 April to begin an 800-mile march to the western Ukraine.⁷

The Politburo heard reports from Stalin and Kamenev on 28 April and approved a plan Kamenev presented for a counteroffensive. The plan designated West Front

as the main *front* of the Republic. Its armies, Fifteenth and Sixteenth, were to stage a 350-mile drive north of the Pripyat Marshes to Warsaw. Southwest Front's Twelfth, Fourteenth, and First Cavalry Armies would make a secondary thrust south of the Pripyat Marshes toward Brest-Litovsk. When they reached the western edge of the marshes and secured contact with Sixteenth Army at Brest, they would pass under West Front's control and continue to advance toward Lublin and Warsaw.⁸

Tukhachevskiy arrived at the West Front headquarters in Smolensk on the 29th, with Smilga as his commissar, and took command there the next day. On the 30th, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars called on 'all workers, peasants, and honorable Russian citizens' to join in repulsing the Polish invaders.⁹ On 2 May, Aleksey Brusilov, the best-known and most widely respected former tsarist general, became chairman of a special advisory committee to the commander in chief. The committee, composed of ten former generals, who, like him, had thus far stayed out of military affairs, appealed to all former officers 'to come to the defense of the Motherland'.¹⁰

General Pilsudski had negotiated an alliance with the Ukrainian *Ataman*, Petlyura, before he opened the offensive. Petlyura had hardly any troops, but his involvement revived armed Ukrainian separatism throughout the western Ukraine, where Makhno's bands by themselves were giving Southwest Front more trouble than it could conveniently handle. Polish Third Army advanced 135 miles in 13 days and, early on 7 May, occupied Kiev, which Twelfth Army had evacuated the day before to escape an encirclement by Polish Second Army coming from the south.

While losing Kiev in such short order was a distinctly unpleasant development, it dovetailed nicely with the Soviet plan by providing highly visible evidence that the Poles were bent on seizing indisputably Russian territory and therewith justifying a drastic response. The offensive had also not interfered with the Soviet deployment north of the Pripyat Marshes, and West Front had the Poles outnumbered there by 81,500 troops to 61,000. On 17 May, on Tukhachevskiy's right wing, Fifteenth Army, A. I. Kork in command, opened an attack toward Minsk, the capital of Belorussia and the first major objective on the road to Warsaw. Sixteenth Army, under N. V. Sollogub, joined in two days later. Kork's divisions crossed the Berezina River and gained 70 miles by the 23rd.¹¹ The next day, however, they were at a standstill everywhere, and on the 25th Tukhachevskiy and Kamenev agreed that they appeared to be entering 'a difficult period of stubborn fighting'.¹²

STALIN AND BUDENNYI AT SOUTHWEST FRONT

The Politburo reappointed Stalin to the Southwest Front RMC and 'placed him in the structure' of the RMCR on 18 May.¹³ Since the Soviet sources do not indicate that Stalin had been officially removed from the Southwest Front RMC, and since

his being ‘in the structure’ of the RMCR did not necessarily make him a full member, the reasons for the actions are hard to discern. A likely possibility appears to be that Stalin had been quietly removed from Southwest Front because of his propensity for ignoring the established command channels and was sent back specifically subordinate to the RMCR. If that was the case, it made no impression on Stalin. A day after he arrived back at Southwest Front, Lenin was having to tell him to address communications to Trotskiy, the Chairman of the RMCR, as well as to himself.¹⁴ Also, not in any apparent hurry to get to the front, Stalin stayed in Moscow another eight days, occupied with committee meetings in the Council of Labor and Defense and with writing a long article for *Pravda* in which he applied his theory of the stability of the rear to the Polish armies. Pilsudski’s troops, he concluded, were more reliable than Kolchak’s and Denikin’s had been because national spirit gave them a stable rear in Poland; but their advance into Russia, Belorussia, and the Ukraine were isolating them in hostile territory, and they would suffer for it as the Germans had in 1918.¹⁵

When Stalin’s train left Moscow for Kharkov on 27 May, it had a car attached carrying a group of students from the General Staff Academy who were being assigned to temporary duty with the First Cavalry Army. They were young, in their early twenties, cadets more than candidates for the general staff. Those in their class who had had previous military training had been posted to the field in 1919. But they were no longer mere beginners; they had been at the front before. Kirill Meretskov, for instance, had been a detachment commissar in the fighting at Kazan in 1918 and detailed as a divisional deputy chief of staff during the 1919 summer campaign against Denikin. They were a new breed in the Red Army: workers and peasants being brought up by former generals to be military professionals, hence military specialists. In some quarters, probably nowhere more than in the cavalry army, they were looked upon skeptically as ‘academics’. Stalin, who had a notoriously low tolerance for specialists of any kind, spent an hour with them in Kharkov. Meretskov, for whom it was the first of what in later years would be many such meetings, has left a thumbnail description of Stalin’s style in dealing with military underlings. With the students, all of whom had cavalry training, seated in front of him, Stalin paced, rolled his pipe in his hands, slowly asked trivial questions, and listened intently to the answers. Could they handle horses? Did they know on which side to mount? Could they saddle a horse properly? He dismissed them with the admonition: ‘Those who don’t know how a horse smells have no business in the First Cavalry Army.’¹⁶

The Politburo had given Stalin the mission of ‘taking all possible measures to raise the First Cavalry Army’s combat capability’.¹⁷ By prevailing Red Army standards, the army was a magnificently outfitted mobile force. When it assembled at Rostov in mid-April for the last stage of the march west, it had 4 cavalry divisions plus a brigade (about 18,000 troops), 5 armored trains, 4 armored car detachments, 18 airplanes, 58 artillery pieces, and 300 machine guns. Budennyy headed the roster of legendary heroes, and the army, credited with having decided the campaign against Denikin, ranked as the Red Army’s elite. For those reasons, the army was

an important military asset. On the other hand, its RMC routinely refused orders it did not like, altered those it accepted, carried them out to suit itself, and submitted false reports. Although he was amply conscious of Stalin's background presence, Tukhachevskiy had ventured to take Budenny and Voroshilov to task on those scores at least twice while they were under his command.¹⁸

On 26 April, the day after the Polish offensive began, Yegorov, the Southwest Front commander, ordered Budenny to hurry the 4th Cavalry Division to the front by train. Budenny, more concerned about possibly losing control of the division than about the crisis at the front, refused, insisting that it was impossible to move the division by train; and Yegorov rescinded the order after repeating it and getting the same response.¹⁹ Moreover, the troop composition, which had from the first not struck Lenin and the party leaders other than Stalin as appropriate for a proletarian revolutionary force, had deteriorated. Andrey Eremenko, who was a regimental chief of staff, estimated that 20–50 per cent or more of the Cossacks recently recruited in the Kuban and Terek regions were 'Denikinists' who had taken cover in the army while awaiting an opportunity to go over to the enemy.²⁰ Shchadenko, who had been responsible for internal political supervision, was relieved on 4 May, but his replacement was another founding member of the Tsaritsyn group, S. K. Minin.

First Cavalry Army, designated as the main force in the counterattack against Polish Third Army, assembled west of the Dnepr River at Uman, a hundred miles southwest of Kiev, in the third week of May. Its mission, in conjunction with Twelfth Army, which was to cross the Dnepr north of Kiev and advance southwestward, was to strike north and cut Polish Third Army's communications lines into Kiev. Two Fourteenth Army divisions covered its left flank; and on its right, the Fastov Group, two infantry divisions under Iona Yakir, were positioned for a parallel thrust to Fastov, a railroad junction 25 miles southwest of Kiev.

The counterattack, begun on 26 May, traversed 25 miles of Ukrainian partisan-held territory in four days, stalled when it hit the Polish line, but recovered after Yakir's pressure forced the Poles to reinforce Fastov with troops from the front opposite Budenny. The 4th Cavalry Division discovered a weak spot on 6 June through which it drove 50 miles to Zhitomir in two days. Southwest Front's radio station at Kremenchug broadcasted, 'To all, all, all ... Southwest Front's heroic cavalry army has broken through the enemy front. ... an impetuous blow by elements of the cavalry army took Zhitomir at eleven o'clock on June 9.'²¹

The decisive breakthrough did not actually come until 9 June, when Yakir took Fastov, which enabled First Cavalry Army's main force to come abreast on the railroad west of Fastov, thereby opening a 25-mile-wide gap in the Polish front. The stage was set for a classic encirclement: a 35-mile advance north to the Kiev–Korosten railroad would block all of Polish Third Army's escape routes. By radio, Yegorov ordered Budenny on the 10th to continue north and link up on the Kiev–Korosten railroad with two Twelfth Army divisions coming south out of a bridgehead on the Dnepr. A second message, transmitted a few hours later, told Budenny his help was no longer needed 'in the east'; the Fastov Group and

Twelfth Army could handle things there; and he should turn the cavalry army west toward Zhitomir. Shortly after midnight, in a long teleconference with Yegorov, Kamenev protested that he ‘absolutely’ did not understand why the cavalry army was being sent west when it should be going north and east. Yegorov replied that the cavalry army was being positioned to begin the *front*’s second mission, which was to dislodge Polish Second Army; and Kamenev responded that if the second mission were begun before the first was finished, neither one would succeed. Yegorov subsequently revised the order, but the message was not sent until late in the night on the 11th. Stalin, the expert at determining the direction of the main effort, cosigned all three messages.²²

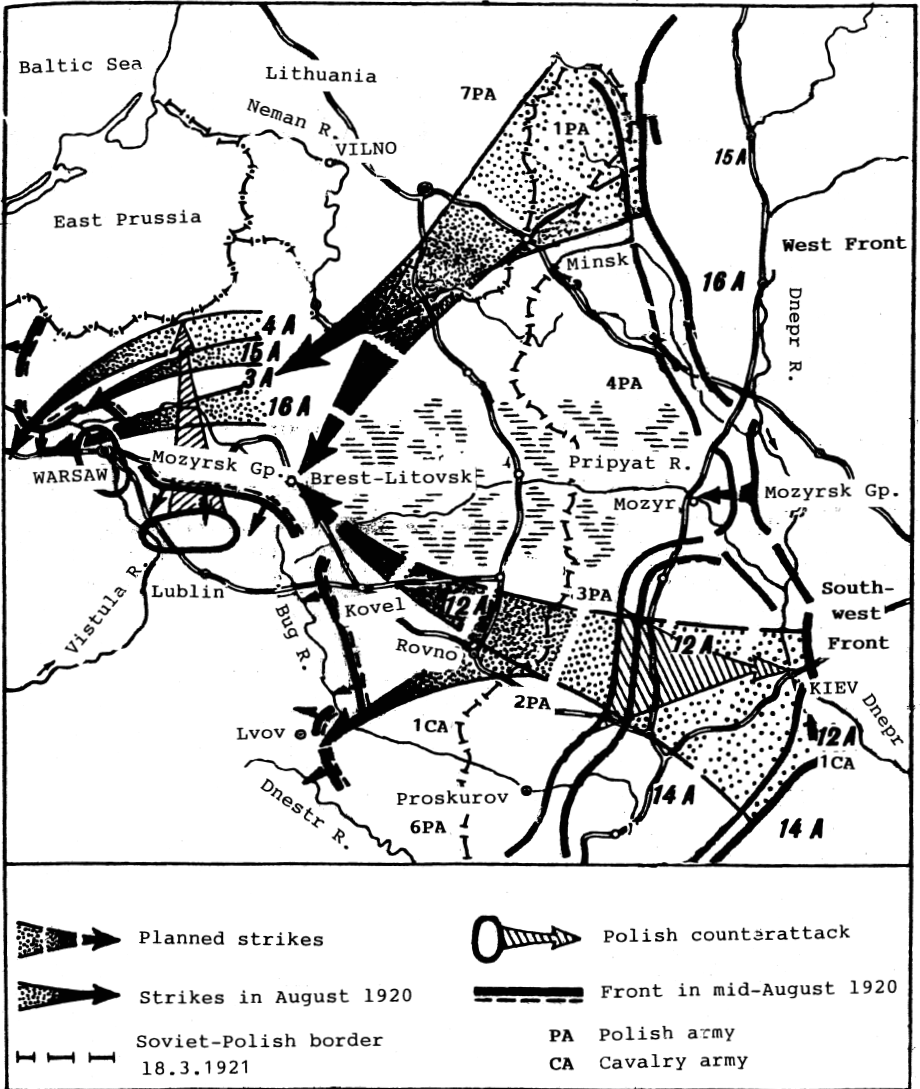
Budenny says in his memoirs that he ‘knew the turn west would open a route to the northwest for Polish Third Army’. But what was to be done? ‘We gave our troops the order to occupy Zhitomir.’ For the next three days, he adds, the army lost radio contact with Southwest Front and finally had to send an airplane to find out what was happening.²³ Yegorov told Kamenev on the 12th that First Cavalry Army had acknowledged receiving the third order. However, the army did not begin to execute it and two others sent later until the 14th. Two days later, 14th Cavalry Division came within 20 miles of the railroad, but by then, the Polish Third Army, which had evacuated Kiev on the 12th aboard a column of trains interspersed with four armored trains, was out of the encirclement and settling into a front at Korosten. On the 15th, conceding that ‘the encircled Polish Third Army has stubbornly fought its way through to Korosten’, Yegorov had redirected the offensive toward Rovno and Brest.²⁴

THE GENERAL OFFENSIVE

Meanwhile, the situations north of the Pripjat Marshes and on the Crimean front had taken highly unpleasant turns. By 8 June, Polish counterattacks had recovered practically all of the ground lost to West Front’s two armies in May. Tukhachevskiy had to give over the rest of the month to regrouping. On 7 June, Vrangal attacked out of the Crimea and in five days, pushed west to the lower Dnepr and east to Melitopol on the Sea of Azov. Fearing that the setbacks at West Front and the Crimea would attract a renewed Allied intervention, the Central Committee issued circular letters on 11 June calling for massive mobilization of workers and party members and searches for deserters and draft evaders.²⁵

Tukhachevskiy opened his second offensive on 4 July. The plan was the same as it had been in May except that on the right wing, in the area of the main thrust, he now had, besides Fifteenth Army, the newly activated Third Army, Fourth Army, and III Cavalry Corps. Third and Fourth Armies flanked Fifteenth Army on its left and right, and III Cavalry Corps, under G. D. Gay, was to make a wide sweep through Lithuanian territory off the outer right flank. Sixteenth Army’s mission again was to skirt the Pripjat Marshes and take Brest. Tukhachevskiy

DEFEAT AND VICTORY



Map 3: The 1920 Soviet-Polish War

initially committed 91,500 troops, just 10,000 more than in May. But West Front had received 58,000 fresh infantry and cavalry in June, and its total strength including support troops, which had been 347,000 in June, would rise by 100,000 in July.²⁶

In the second week of July, the general offensive projected in the April plan was progressing splendidly. First Cavalry Army finished a week of stiff skirmishing

around Rovno on the 10th, and West Front took Minsk on the 11th. Yegorov issued a directive on the 11th in which he announced that the enemy was in full retreat along the whole line opposite West and Southwest Fronts and designated First Cavalry Army as the main force in the continuing advance toward Brest.²⁷ Stalin, who was in Moscow during the week, gave an interview to *Pravda* in which he stated that ‘the breakthrough effected by our cavalry in the Zhitomir area was undoubtedly the decisive factor in the radical change at the front’ because it ‘knocked the arrogance out of the Poles, undermined their faith in their own strength, sapped their morale’.²⁸

The Soviet general offensive had an instantaneous effect in Poland. On 7 July, the Polish Government appealed for aid to the Allied Supreme Council, which happened to be meeting in Spa, Belgium, on matters concerning German reparations. Two days later, Polish Premier Wladyslaw Grebski arrived in Spa and assured the Allies that Poland was prepared to abandon its demands in the east and make peace on any terms the council thought proper, asking only that the Allies promise support if the Bolsheviks refused a fair peace and invaded Poland. The council gave Grebski a two-part offer, which he unhappily accepted. It would call for an armistice, the line to be the ethnic boundary established in December 1919, and a peace conference to be held in London. If the Russians refused, the Allies would then determine what kind of support they could give Poland. The note sent to Moscow on 11 July, over the signature of British Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon, requested an answer within a week and stated that the signatories to the Versailles Treaty were ‘bound ... to defend the integrity and independence of Poland within its legitimate ethnographic frontiers’.²⁹ Although Curzon had very little to do with either, in Moscow, the note at once became the ‘Curzon Ultimatum’, and the proposed armistice line became the ‘Curzon Line’.

When Stalin arrived back at Kharkov late on the 12th, a message from Lenin summarizing the Curzon note awaited him. Lenin also pointed out that the ethnic boundary, which in the December 1919 version had only applied to former Russian territory, had been extended south into Galicia, where it passed 50 miles east of Lvov; and he asked Stalin ‘to hasten orders for a furious intensification of the offensive’.³⁰ Southwest Front’s armies had orders the next day to push forward ‘most decisively and energetically’. On the 15th, a Galician revolutionary committee attached to Fourteenth Army proclaimed a soviet republic in Galicia. On the 17th, Yegorov and Stalin ordered First Cavalry Army, which was headed northwest, to shift its ‘main forces’ southwest toward Dubno, on the Rovno–Lvov railroad, ‘in order to screen a drive [by Fourteenth Army] to Lvov’.³¹

The response to Curzon’s note went out on 17 July, and it, no doubt, had a bearing on Southwest Front’s Lvov order. Trotsky had recommended accepting the ‘ultimatum’ with reservations. Lenin believed the time was ripe for carrying the revolution into Poland; and the Politburo, including Stalin, although he had cautioned against an assumption that the Poles could be easily defeated on their own territory in his *Pravda* articles, supported him. The reply rejected the Curzon terms in their entirety by stating a willingness on the Soviet Government’s part to

make peace and grant Poland a somewhat more favorable boundary than the Curzon Line if the Poles requested direct negotiations. Although there was a strong hint in the message that peace would require a Polish Government capable of sustaining 'fraternal relations' between the Russian and the Polish masses, the British urged the Poles to accept the Soviet offer. They said they would but delayed making the approach to Moscow.³²

July 22 was a crucial day on both sides. A high-level Anglo-French military mission arrived in Warsaw prepared to give advice and some weapons and supplies but nothing more. Red Army's Fifteenth Army, Fourth Army, and III Cavalry Corps were crossing the Neman River, the last major natural obstacle east of Warsaw, and entering ethnic Polish territory. At noon, the Polish Government radioed a request to Moscow for an armistice and asked the Soviet Government to designate a place where the negotiators could meet.³³ From Moscow, victory appeared to be in sight. The peace offer was likely to take the Allies' minds off the violation of the Curzon Line, and the only further requirement would be to keep the negotiations from commencing in earnest until after Warsaw had been taken. Felix Dzerzhinskiy, himself born into the minor Polish gentry, was organizing a Polish bureau of the Central Committee and a Polish revolutionary committee. Once he and his associates, backed by three or four armies, were ensconced in Warsaw, the negotiations could proceed.

To the commander in chief, Kamenev, who was in Minsk conferring with Tukhachevskiy, the outlook appeared at least equally bright. He and Tukhachevskiy agreed that having lost the Neman River line, the Poles could not build another front east of Warsaw; West Front could cover the remaining 140 or so miles to the city in about three weeks; and Southwest Front's originally planned secondary thrusts to Brest and Lublin would not be needed. On the basis of that assessment, Kamenev drafted a short directive giving Tukhachevskiy until 12 August to take Warsaw and limiting Yegorov's mission to having Twelfth Army secure contact with West Front's left flank. From Kharkov, Yegorov and Stalin immediately responded with a proposal to have Southwest Front deliver a concurrent 'main blow' into Galicia to and beyond Lvov. Their rationale, which must have come from Stalin, was that Lvov, the political center of Galicia, would become the base from which revolution would spread through the Western Ukraine and 'intensify the fight against the Polish bourgeois landowners'. On 23 July, Kamenev having approved, Yegorov ordered First Cavalry Army and two infantry divisions from Twelfth Army, again under Yakir, to take Lvov 'no later than July 29'.³⁴

First Cavalry Army was 65 miles northeast of Lvov on 23 July. In the next four days it advanced 15 miles, but by the 29th, Polish counterattacks had pushed it back ten miles. Tukhachevskiy's right wing, meanwhile, had gone 40 miles past the Curzon Line; his left was nearing Brest; and Dzerzhinskiy was establishing his revolutionary committee as the provisional government of 'liberated' Poland. On the 30th, Kamenev ordered West and Southwest Fronts to step up the tempo of their operations. He told them the Poles were so badly off that they 'absolutely had to have a breathing spell' and were likely to begin pushing hard for an armistice.

It was essential, therefore, to make certain before an armistice was granted that the Polish authorities could not use it to rest and rebuild their forces. Yegorov then ordered Budenny to take Lvov ‘not later than August 3’.³⁵

THE VRANGEL PROBLEM

Stalin had been engaged in building up the front against Vrangel since June but owing to the competing demands of the Polish front, had not gotten very far. He had activated the Second Cavalry Army there in July with four skeleton divisions (a total of 4,800 sabers, 600 bayonets, and shortages in horses and weapons). Stalin, his reasoning egocentric as always, had contended throughout that, although Poland was the far stronger enemy, first priority had to be given to the campaign against Vrangel. At the height of the June crisis, he had recommended going over to the offensive against Vrangel at once – on the theory that a quick victory over Vrangel would release troops for the Polish front. Lenin had dismissed the idea as ‘manifest Utopia’.³⁶ In his July *Pravda* article, he had insisted that ‘so long as Vrangel is intact, so long as he is in position to threaten our rear, our fronts will be unsteady and insecure, and our successes on the Polish front cannot be lasting’.³⁷

In late July, it began to appear to others besides himself that Stalin had been prescient. An offensive Vrangel launched on the 25th was, within a week, threatening the Donets Basin and sparking Cossack uprisings in the Kuban (the Kuban River basin adjacent to the Crimea on the east). On 2 August, Trotskiy told the Politburo it was ‘essential to recognize the front against Vrangel as having vast significance in its own right, to give it a separate status of its own, and to charge Comrade Stalin with forming a Military Revolutionary Council’. The time had also arrived, he said, at which Southwest and West Fronts should be combined and subordinated to the West Front RMC.³⁸ The Politburo adopted both proposals within the day, and Lenin informed Stalin that he had been assigned to organize the South Front RMC.

Stalin responded indignantly with a demand to be relieved of service at the front entirely. He apparently suspected that he was being shunted aside, and he was probably not wholly mistaken. His strategic contribution to the war, the Lvov operation, had gone completely stagnant. After receiving the full text of the Politburo decisions the next day, he professed to be in general agreement and made a ‘practical’ suggestion: the armies should be transferred to West Front, and the Southwest Front RMC, together with its staff and command apparatus, should become the South Front RMC, which would save the time and effort involved in organizing another *front* RMC. A plenum of the Central Committee approved ‘Stalin’s variant’ on 5 August.³⁹ Therewith, the Central Committee also automatically restored Stalin’s control at Southwest Front until the transfers were completed.

Kamenev, on the 6th, ordered Southwest Front to place First Cavalry Army in reserve for rest and to prepare for an unspecified ‘decisive new blow’. Yegorov

complied in principle, but only two of Budenny's divisions actually went into reserve. The other two, it was said, were tied up in heavy fighting.⁴⁰ When Kamenev consulted Tukhachevskiy two days later on how to effect the transfers, Tukhachevskiy cited practical problems: the difficulty of coordinating three armies physically separated from his main front and the need to establish new communications and supply lines. Getting the communications redirected to his headquarters in Minsk, he thought, would take 10–14 days. Kamenev proposed forming an intermediate command to take over the three armies as an operational group, which also would take time. Both apparently regarded a delay of week or two as acceptable.

On the 9th, Twelfth Army intercepted a Polish radio message indicating that Pilsudski was assembling a force southeast of Warsaw for a counterattack northward out of the Lublin area. In a teleconference the next day, Tukhachevskiy and Kamenev did not agree on how to interpret the information. Tukhachevskiy believed Pilsudski would have to put all the strength he could muster against the encirclement of Warsaw from the northwest that West Front's right wing was then developing. Kamenev worried about the front southeast of Warsaw where the West and Southwest Front's flanks were very loosely joined; and early on the 11th, telling Southwest Front that Twelfth and First Cavalry Armies would be needed for a strike toward Lublin, he asked for a proposal as to how the redeployment could be accomplished. On the 12th, Southwest Front recommitted the two cavalry army divisions it had been holding in reserve to the Lvov operation. During the past several days, reports that Vrangal was about to invade the Kuban had also come in; and the reply to Kamenev, sent late on the 12th, concerned itself with those and ignored the projected Lublin operation. Southwest Front proposed to shift 6th Cavalry Division to the Crimea at once and ready the rest of the cavalry army for a quick transfer there.

Kamenev responded shortly after midnight with a prohibition against detaching 6th Cavalry Division from the cavalry army and an hour later sent an order placing Twelfth Army and First Cavalry Army under West Front as of noon on the 14th. Yegorov had an implementing directive to the armies drafted (15 hours later), but Stalin refused to countersign it because, he insisted, Kamenev should have made the decision three days earlier, before First Cavalry Army was recommitted in the Lvov operation. The regulations prohibited a commissar's withholding his signature for other than political reasons or suspicion of treachery, but Stalin was, of course, no stickler for regulations where he himself was concerned. Berzin, claiming that the matters involved were outside his sphere of responsibility, also refused to sign until early on the 14th, when Sklyanskiy forwarded a direct order from Trotskiy to sign. The directive then did not reach Budenny until late on the night of the 14th; and when it did he could regard it as not requiring action on his part, since it did not mention any change in the cavalry army's mission. On the afternoon of the 15th, Tukhachevskiy dispatched an order to Budenny to take his and Yakir's divisions out of the Lvov front; however, it had to go via Southwest Front and did not arrive until 24 hours later. When it did it lacked a commissar's signature, which invalidated it.⁴¹

CRISES AGAIN AND A PEACE CONFERENCE

August 16 brought portentous developments everywhere. Counterattacks hit Tukhachevskiy's right-wing armies, which were headed south on a line extending 80 miles northwest of Warsaw; and a captured document disclosed that a much stronger counterattack, for which Pilsudski had assembled six of his best divisions as a shock group under his personal command, would come out of the Lublin area on the 17th. Vrangl's best general, Ulagay, was advancing fast into the Kuban after having landed some 4,500 troops north of the Taman Peninsula and was thereby lending credibility to an alliance Vrangl had made with the *atamans* (chiefs) of the Kuban, Don, Terek, and Astrakhan Cossacks. First Cavalry Army, making its first significant advance in three weeks, came to within 30 miles of Lvov, but Tukhachevskiy now desperately needed the army at Lublin, and Stalin and Yegorov had let Budenny and Voroshilov know that the Lvov operation was a pretext for keeping the army under their control until it could be sent to the Crimean front.⁴²

Budenny and Voroshilov sent Tukhachevskiy a telegram early on the 17th (after the missing signature had been traced to a purported telegrapher's error), telling him they were beginning the final drive to Lvov and would put the army at his disposal after it was completed. He responded with an order 'to strain every nerve' to change direction toward Lublin, but Budenny and Voroshilov had in the meantime, without waiting for an answer, gone off to the front aboard an armored train and stayed out of contact with their staff for the next two days. Stalin went to Moscow on the 17th to attend plenary Politburo and Central Committee meetings occasioned by the crises at the fronts. On the 19th, the Politburo decided – it would seem on motions by Stalin – to designate the Vrangl front as the main front and to divert the 6th Cavalry Division there. It also resolved – it would seem on Trotsky's motion – to reconsider the second decision if Kamenev protested 'on military grounds'.

According to Budenny, when he and Voroshilov came back to their headquarters two hours before midnight on the 19th, read Tukhachevskiy's two-and-one-half-day-old order, and learned about what had been happening east of Warsaw, they proclaimed themselves thoroughly perplexed. They wanted to help their Red Army comrades at West Front, they said, but doubted they could accomplish much by going toward Lublin, since Pilsudski's shock group was no longer there; moreover, their original mission, to take Lvov, was not completed. To Tukhachevskiy they reported that the cavalry army was presently fighting off heavy counterattacks outside Lvov but expected to take the city in another two or three days and thereafter could begin the march north.

On 20 August, the retreat from Warsaw became a rout. The Politburo assigned Trotsky and Stalin to mobilize another 10,000 communists and workers, and Lenin ordered Smilga to draft Belorussian workers and peasants as replacements, even if they had to be sent to the front 'in sandals and bathing suits'. In a personal

message to them, Trotsky demanded that Budenny and Voroshilov begin carrying out Tukhachevskiy's orders at once. However, he added a postscript admonishing them to execute the withdrawal from the Lvov area in a way that would not jeopardize the troops being left behind, and they interpreted it as requiring the cavalry army to stay at Lvov. The next day Voroshilov dispatched a lengthy assessment to Trotsky and Stalin in which he talked about a flood of enemy reinforcements pouring into Lvov in numbers that would endanger the whole southern sector if the cavalry army left and maintained that the army was doing more by its presence at Lvov to draw Polish strength away from West Front than it could do anywhere else. As a result, the cavalry army marked time at Lvov until the 25th, when the Poles reached Brest-Litovsk on Tukhachevskiy's left, the Neman River line on his right, and Fourth Army, III Cavalry Corps, and two Fifteenth Army divisions were going into German internment in East Prussia to avoid capture. At the end of the month, having gone about 75 miles north from Lvov, First Cavalry Army marched into a trap Polish Third Army had laid for it east of Zamostye. Third Army closed the encirclement on the 31st but, returning the favor the cavalry army had done it in June, failed to block the rear exit tightly enough. Budenny broke out in three days and in another 12, with the Poles on his heels all the way, retreated 130 miles to Rovno.⁴³

August 17 was Stalin's last day at Southwest Front. During the discussions in the Politburo, he charged Trotsky and the RMCR with responsibility for 'a fundamental defect of our armies', a failure to develop sufficient reserves, and argued that the Central Committee should assume direct supervision of the entire military establishment.⁴⁴ His own and Southwest Front's performance must have come under critical scrutiny as well. The decision on 6th Cavalry Division was highly tentative when it was made, and nothing more was heard of it thereafter. The RMCR recalled Gusev from Caucasus Front on 29 August, and on 3 September, he took over Stalin's former post at Southwest Front, at the same time assuming responsibility for organizing South Front.

The Tenth Party Conference convened in Moscow on 22 September to develop a party position on peace with Poland. The armistice negotiations, which had broken down in late August, had resumed on the 21st with the added aspect of a preliminary peace conference and had been moved to neutral ground in Riga, Latvia. The front, meanwhile, had begun to stabilize as it approached the line on which the conflict had begun in April, and both parties wanted to avoid the additional strains that the oncoming autumn *rasputitsa* and the winter would impose. Although the outlook had only recently been very much brighter, Lenin managed, in his opening speech as published in *Pravda*, to find encouraging aspects in the existing situation: Soviet armies had advanced to 'the walls of Warsaw' the last anti-Bolshevik stronghold fully controlled by the Entente, still held 'a hundred versts' (75 miles) of formerly Polish-occupied territory, and would still win the war if the Poles insisted on a fight to the finish.⁴⁵ In the closed sessions, the tone changed. Stalin defended the Central Committee's decision to embark on the offensive as 'absolutely correct' and blamed its failure entirely on poor organization. Minin,

who represented First Cavalry Army, and some others, taking their cue from Stalin, charged West Front with having plunged blindly ahead without considering the enemy's capabilities and called on Trotsky to accept responsibility for the shortcomings in the military administration.⁴⁶

FRUNZE VERSUS VRANGEL

Ironically, the Polish victory was potentially as ominous a development for General Vranghel as a Soviet victory would have been. If it terminated the Soviet–Polish war, his position would in short order become hopeless. Moreover, his own recent initiatives on the mainland and an outburst of anti-Soviet guerrilla activity in the Ukraine brought on by the Polish advances were putting pressure on the Bolsheviks to pay a heavier price than they otherwise might have to end the hostilities with Poland and give him their undivided attention before winter came.

Frunze and part of his Turkestan Front staff left Tashkent on 10 September aboard a train that had been given the right of way over all other traffic between there and Moscow. Trotsky had suggested him as a candidate for the South Front command in early August, but 'Stalin's variant' had reserved the appointment for Yegorov. Gusev, however, could hardly have seen anything but advantage in having himself and the East Front group's star performer on stage together for what promised to be the grand finale, and probably on his urging, Lenin had personally put Frunze's appointment through the Central Committee.⁴⁷ On 21 September, after Frunze had arrived in Moscow, the RMCR activated South Front, with Second Cavalry, Sixth, and Thirteenth Armies; and two days later, Kamenev detached First Cavalry Army from Southwest Front and placed it in his personal reserve with orders to march to the South Front area 'with all possible speed'. He expected, he added, that the army would 'justify in full measure the confidence the workers' and peasants' Republic places in you'.⁴⁸

Stalin's military biography credits him with having organized South Front 'and outlined a plan for the annihilation of Vranghel' and attributes the victory to his 'adamant will and brilliant strategy, which pervaded Frunze's plan of operations'.⁴⁹ Kamenev's taking First Cavalry Army under his direct control, Stalin's almost simultaneous appointment (September–November) as the Politburo's plenipotentiary for political affairs in the Caucasus, and the removal in early October of Shchadenko, whom Stalin had appointed chief commissar in Second Cavalry Army, suggest a concerted attempt to keep the Tsaritsyn group from exerting a disruptive influence and Stalin's will from pervading the campaign. For Frunze, himself practiced in the art of insubordination, and for Kamenev, the effort was going to be a strenuous one.

From Kharkov on 28 September, Frunze told Lenin the start of the offensive against Vranghel would depend on when First Cavalry Army arrived. In a comprehensive assessment sent five days later, he rated the cavalry army's slowness, 'to

which I am constantly drawing the Commander in Chief's attention,' as 'the worst' of several impediments to a timely start. Lenin thereupon called on Budennyi to take 'heroic measures' to ensure an early arrival, and Kamenev pointedly reminded him that by the timetable he had originally been given, the army was due in the South Front area on 12 October.⁵⁰ According to Budennyi's account, he and Voroshilov wanted to comply, but the army was beset by hostile partisan bands.⁵¹ On the 7th, Kamenev informed Trotskiy that the offensive could begin on the 17th, if the cavalry army speeded up, but not before the 28th, if it did not. 'My efforts to hasten Budennyi's movement,' he added, 'have brought no results so far; and I consider it necessary for you to put pressure on the cavalry army RMC, since possibilities for faster movement do in fact exist.'⁵²

First Cavalry Army was vital to Frunze's plan because he proposed to prevent Vrangeli's main force's escape into the Crimea by using it and Second Cavalry Army to block the eastern entrances to the peninsula, the Isthmuses of Gonchara and Genicheski. His actual key element was Sixth Army, which would make the breakthrough for the cavalry armies and block the Isthmus of Perekop. Formed in September and with Kork commanding in October, Sixth Army had six infantry divisions, three of them the best available: the Latvian Rifle Division, Blyukher's 51st Rifle Division (brought from Siberia), and the 52nd Rifle Division (manned by Polish volunteers). Uborevich commanded Thirteenth Army, and Frunze's former chief of staff, V. S. Lazarevich, was reconstituting a Fourth Army staff to take over the northern arc of the perimeter between Sixth, First Cavalry, and Second Cavalry Armies on the west and Thirteenth Army on the east. Second Cavalry Army, increased to about 8,000 sabers, was under F. K. Mironov, a former Cossack lieutenant colonel who had been condemned to death for disobeying RMCR orders and pardoned by the Central Executive Committee, of which he was an elected Don Cossack member. On the 19th, although problems remained, chief among them that First Cavalry Army was 'moving as slowly as before,' Frunze issued an operation directive and set 28 October as the starting date for the offensive.⁵³

On 21 October, the First Cavalry Army RMC sent an assessment of the projected offensive to Lenin, Trotskiy, Kamenev, and Frunze. The army, it stated, could not join the offensive for a number of reasons. The division and two brigade commanders in 6th Cavalry Division, who had been arrested in late September for counter-revolutionary activity, had not been replaced; and 11th Cavalry Division was still awaiting reinforcements.⁵⁴ Moreover, Frunze's directive was badly conceived and did not incorporate provisions for seizing the peninsula itself. The offensive would therefore have to be postponed at least until the 31st; all the cavalry would have to come under a single command; and the directive would have to be rewritten and the deployment altered so that the attack could be carried not only to but through the isthmuses in one stroke.

The assessment brought Kamenev to Kharkov on the 24th for a meeting with Frunze and the army commanders. Budennyi, claiming he could not be away from his troops for the time the trip would take, failed to appear; and Frunze then

ordered him to be at Apostolovo, which was within much easier travel distance, the next day. Lenin and Trotskiy sent a joint telegram ordering ‘the most heroic measures to speed up the First Cavalry’s concentration’.⁵⁵ Having expected Lenin to choose his plan over Frunze’s, Budennyy arrived in Apostolovo in an apprehensive mood. His first question at their meeting was whether Frunze had read the assessment. Frunze replied that he had read ‘every word’ and nevertheless expected the cavalry army to carry out the directive as given because it could not be revised. Lenin, he continued, had imposed a requirement to have the offensive completed before winter; defeating Vrangl outside the Crimea was the most expeditious way of accomplishing that; and Budennyy ought to keep those considerations in mind. Kamenev, who was also present, asked whether Budennyy had received Lenin’s and Trotskiy’s telegram. Budennyy replied that he had and ‘we are doing everything possible to be ready to go into action on time’. Frunze reminded him, further, to execute orders precisely and maintain contact with *front* headquarters.⁵⁶

The offensive began, not quite on time, on 28 October. Frunze had 99,500 bayonets and 33,600 sabers to Vrangl’s (by Soviet estimate) 23,000 bayonets and 12,000 sabers. He had also negotiated another temporary alliance with Makhno’s partisans.⁵⁷ Regardless of Frunze’s overwhelming numerical superiority, Vrangl had regarded his cause as lost since 18 October when a Soviet–Polish armistice and preliminary peace settlement had been announced.⁵⁸

Sixth Army made the breakthrough on the first day. The most disturbing surprise for both sides was the sudden onset of a cold spell that dropped the temperature far below freezing and seemed to indicate that winter, for which neither was prepared, had arrived. Sixth Army blocked the Isthmus of Perekop the next day, and First and Second Cavalry Armies were at the eastern entrances to the Crimea in two days but failed to set up a solid front. In four more days, Vrangl’s cavalry scattered Budennyy’s and Mironov’s divisions, and his troops escaped across the Gonchara Isthmus.

The failure to sustain the encirclement necessitated a hasty redeployment for a second operation – and later lent some support to a contention that Budennyy’s had been the better plan after all. Vrangl, however, had lost artillery, heavy equipment, and great quantities of provisions and ammunition on the mainland; and for him, survival depended entirely on how long fortifications built earlier on the isthmuses could be defended. He did not believe that would be very long and, on 3 November, ordered ships sufficient to embark his entire force to be assembled at the Crimean ports. Before daylight on 8 November, Blyukher’s 51st Rifle Division began storming the Turkish Wall, a massive earthwork built across the entrance to the Perekop Isthmus in the sixteenth century. When Vrangl learned the following night that Blyukher had crossed the Turkish Wall and (supported by the Latvian Rifle Division, 52nd Rifle Division, and elements of Second Cavalry Army) was advancing south toward the second, less formidable, line of fortifications, he began the evacuation. The last ships sailed for Istanbul on the afternoon of 16 November. According to Vrangl, all of his troops and supporters who wanted to go, some 145,000 persons, had been embarked in good order, even with some ceremony.

From this it appears that South Front was not in what could accurately be described as hot pursuit. First Cavalry Army had the honor of taking Sevastopol on the 15th. Second Cavalry Army occupied Yalta on the 17th.⁵⁹

RECRIMINATIONS

The victory over Vrangel put a definite, if somewhat anticlimactic, end to the Civil War. The sting of the defeat in Poland lingered. Talking to the prominent German communist Clara Zetkin shortly after the armistice, Lenin blamed insufficient supplies and reinforcements – and ‘our political miscalculation: the expectation of a revolution in Poland’. On the other hand, he shifted much of the fault for the miscalculation to the Polish peasants and small bourgeoisie, whose social and revolutionary insensitivity led them to regard the Red Army men as enemies, not ‘brothers and liberators’, because they ‘had to requisition bread and other necessities’.⁶⁰ At the Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets in December 1920, he depicted the outcome of the Polish war as a moral victory, adding, ‘Comrades, you also know, of course, that the temporary setbacks we suffered in the war with Poland and the difficulty of our situation at certain moments were due to our being obliged to fight Vrangel.’⁶¹ In his report to the Tenth Party Congress in March 1921, Lenin tried to shelve the issue by saying,

Our offensive, our too swift advance almost as far as Warsaw, was undoubtedly a mistake. I shall not now analyze whether it was a strategic or a political error, as that would take us too far afield. Let us leave it to future historians, for those of us who have to keep beating off the enemy in a hard struggle have no time to indulge in historical research.⁶²

However, like its western counterpart, the August 1914 ‘Miracle of the Marne’, the retreat from the Vistula could not be quietly put to rest. Lecturing at the War Academy in early 1922, Tukhachevskiy pointedly suggested that the outcome of the Polish campaign could have been different, even in the last phase, if Southwest Front had coordinated its operations with West Front’s.⁶³ The first version of Stalin’s military biography contended that Southwest Front’s victory at Kiev enabled West Front to launch its general offensive and the setback at Warsaw denied Southwest Front a victory at Lvov. The analytical volume in the first official history of the Civil War, which lists Tukhachevskiy as an editor, quoted Pilsudski’s assertion that the gap between West and Southwest Fronts was the key to his counterattack’s success.⁶⁴ In his time, Stalin, of course, had the last word; and he chose to direct it at a more important enemy than Tukhachevskiy. The final version of the military biography states:

The subsequent operations on the Southwestern Front brought the Red troops to the very gates of Lvov. Only the setback which our troops received

near Warsaw as a result of the treasonable orders issued by Trotsky and his followers at the General Headquarters of the Red Army halted the Mounted Army, which was preparing to attack Lvov and was only ten kilometers away from it.⁶⁵

In the post-Stalin period, his performance at Southwest Front was one of the aspects of his career subjected to the most intensively critical investigation. On the other hand, his and Budenny's invention, the cavalry army, remains enshrined as 'an outstanding achievement of Soviet military art', and the First Cavalry Army is said to have 'covered itself with everlasting glory on the battlefields of the Civil War'.⁶⁶ The latest (completed 1960) official history of the Civil War assigns responsibility 'in the main to Trotskiy and the Commander in Chief, who neglected to add First Cavalry Army to West Front's forces during the preparation for the Warsaw offensive', and secondarily, to 'the Southwest Front RMC, which strove to keep First Cavalry Army in its hands for the liberation of Western Galicia and defeat of Vrangal'.⁶⁷ Those judgments rest on two distinctly questionable tacit assumptions, namely, that Stalin, Voroshilov, and Budenny would not have refused First Cavalry Army's participation in the Warsaw offensive under all circumstances and that First Cavalry Army would have decided the issue had it been engaged.

Class War and Military Reform

NEP AND THE MILITARY SYSTEM

Pravda confirmed the Civil War's having ended in an announcement on 15 December 1920 that 'because military action has ceased at the fronts, the Field Staff of the *Revvoysensoviet* of the Republic will no longer issue daily operations reports'. In the same issue it gave the country a new slogan: 'The fronts are quiet. There is work [to be done] in the rear'.¹ A week later, the Eighth Congress of Soviets inaugurated the 'Period of Peaceful Socialist Development' with a 'search for a new economic policy' and authorized an 'Order of the Red Banner for Labor'.²

Heroic measures would be needed. The war and the existing economic policy, war communism, had all but totally devastated the economy. Steel output was down to 5 per cent of the 1913 level, coal to 30 per cent.³ The railroad system, which both sides had exploited to the limit in the war, was collapsing; and the coal shortage forced the locomotives on all except high-priority trains to burn wood, thereby cutting their power by more than half. In February 1921, the Politburo required Frunze, Tukhachevskiy, Dzerzhinskiy, and other party and military bigwigs to relinquish their personal trains, which did more to point up the crisis than to alleviate it. A quarter of the arable land was not being cultivated, and 48 per cent less grain was harvested in 1920 than had been in 1913. Food, coal, and industrial materials shortages had depopulated the cities. Moscow had lost 700,000 of its 1914 1.2 million population, Petrograd, 1.3 million of 2 million. The three next largest cities, Kiev, Odessa and Kharkov, barely had a quarter-million each.⁴

Concurrently with 'peaceful socialist development', a period resembling war more than peace, 'the Liquidation of the Last Hotbeds of Counterrevolution and Intervention', was under way.⁵ Frunze, as plenipotentiary of the RMCR in the Ukraine, was engaged against Makhno's bands in the east and Ukrainian separatists in the west. Other separatists held stretches of Belorussia and Karelia. Vast areas of Siberia and Central Asia had yet to be brought under Soviet control; and Japanese forces continued to occupy Vladivostok, the area east of the lower Amur River, and northern Sakhalin Island.

On the whole, the problems stemmed more from Soviet policy than from the war. In Tambov Province, southeast of Moscow, starvation, brought on by government

requisitioning and general mismanagement, had provoked a peasant insurrection that would eventually require a whole army under Tukhachevskiy to be committed before it could be put down.⁶ In mid-February 1921, food and coal shortages brought on strikes in Petrograd; the sailors of the Baltic Fleet, mostly peasants who were already deeply agitated by what they were hearing from their families about conditions in the countryside, demonstrated sympathy for the strikers.⁷ On 17 February, at the behest of Stalin, as People's Commissar for Nationalities, and his associates, Grigoriy Ordzhonikidze and Sergey Kirov, the heads respectively of the Caucasus and Transcaucasus Bureaus of the Central Committee, the Soviet Eleventh Army invaded Georgia to suppress a communist government there that was claiming autonomy.⁸

On 3 March, some 27,000 sailors mutinied at Kronstadt, and five days later, the Tenth Party Congress convened in Moscow. It was terribly embarrassing to have the party holding its first peacetime congress with the much-publicized stalwarts of the October Revolution up in arms against it. Lenin, in his opening address, dismissed the mutiny as an insignificant incident instigated by 'whiteguard generals' that would be 'put down in a few days, if not hours'; but in opaque party jargon, he also tacitly admitted that the peasant sailors were reacting to their class's economic distress.⁹ As Lenin spoke, Tukhachevskiy was leading the Seventh Army in an assault on Kronstadt that failed within hours. The mutineers were better organized and more resolute than had been expected, and the peasant soldiers sympathized with the sailors, whose grievances they shared. Two days later, after Trotskiy gave a somber report in a closed session, 300 volunteers, about a third of the delegates, Voroshilov among them, set out for Petrograd to work among the troops. The RMCR sent along a couple of middle-level Civil War heroes, the ex-sailor Dybenko and I. F. Fedko, to lead shock detachments. Although the government refused to negotiate with the mutineers, Lenin hurriedly initiated what became known as the New Economic Policy (NEP) by pushing a resolution through the congress that authorized the Central Committee to replace forced requisitioning with a graduated tax in kind on the peasants' crops.¹⁰

Before the NEP could have a more than slightly cosmetic effect, the burden of the Red Army, which had swelled to 5.5 million men during the war against Poland, would have to be lifted from the economy. The Army, being by then the largest in the world by far, had a certain prestige value, but it also constituted a mass of unproductive consumers and did not possess military power commensurate with its numbers. Only about a third of its troops, 1.8 million, were in organized units, and of those, barely 600,000 were classified as combat effective. The Central Committee had decided in December 1920 to demobilize 2 million men, which would reduce the army to the level it had reached before the Polish war, but Trotskiy had already told the Ninth Party Congress in March 1920 that the economy could not sustain that strength. He had put forward and the congress had adopted a plan for cutting back the Red Army and instituting a territorial militia in which the troops would support themselves and contribute to the economy while performing their military service.¹¹

In the interval between the Ninth and Tenth Congresses, the militia idea had generated determined opposition among the military communists who had found careers in the regular army. To avoid having 'the question of the Army' reduced to a futile discussion of the relative advantages and disadvantages of a militia at the Tenth Congress, Trotsky arranged a closed session at which he gave 'a factual picture of what we possess in the way of an army' and threatened 'the severest party punishment' for any disclosures outside the congress.¹² What he told the delegates was sufficiently sensitive to have been kept secret ever since, but it failed, nevertheless, to get the action he wanted. The congress decided it would be 'wrong and dangerous' to go over to the militia system before the international and domestic situations had improved; therefore the Red Army would have to be retained for the time being, although partial conversions to the militia might be started in such places as Petrograd, Moscow and the Urals, which had large proletarian populations.¹³

Very likely, the crisis atmosphere arising out of the Kronstadt mutiny, the outcome of which was uncertain until two days after the congress adjourned, worked against Trotsky – although it had helped Lenin get the resolution on the NEP through – but other, deeper-seated and more durable, forces had also come into play. The revolution having succeeded, the delegates were seeing themselves as prominent figures, leaders in their own right who no longer depended on Lenin's and Trotsky's guidance for survival. Lenin's aura shielded him, but Trotsky, the late convert, was vulnerable, and the power he wielded was drawing together groups that had little or nothing in common other than opposition to him.

Stalin was still some rungs down the party ladder but becoming solidly situated to exploit the forces at work against Trotsky without having to expose himself. He had acquired a second commissariat, that of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate, created in 1920 to search out and eliminate bureaucratism and red tape in government agencies. An enlarged Central Committee of 25 full and 15 candidate members elected in the Tenth Party Congress significantly strengthened his position in the party's upper reaches. Frunze, Voroshilov, Ordzhonikidze, and Vyacheslav Molotov became full members; Kirov, Gusev, and Kuybyshev became candidates. Voroshilov, Ordzhonikidze, and Kirov, although dependent on Stalin, had achieved some prominence in the party on their own; Molotov, hitherto a bland nonentity, was completely subservient to Stalin. Frunze, Gusev, and Kuybyshev, while not previously members of Stalin's military cohort, were more than willing to lead the attack on Trotsky. After the congress, the Central Committee elected two new members to the Politburo, G. V. Zinoviev as a full member and Molotov as a candidate. In the party order of precedence, Zinoviev ranked next to Lenin, being both the Petrograd party chief and chairman of the executive committee of the Comintern, the Communist International. Zinoviev's inclusion in the Politburo was doubly advantageous to Stalin: Trotsky and Zinoviev were declared enemies, and he replaced N. N. Krestinskiy, who had been Trotsky's ally.

In restricting discussion of the militia system at the Tenth Party Congress, Trotsky had succeeded only in bringing to the fore a controversy that had been

developing in the background for nearly two years. Gusev and Frunze had come to the congress armed with a set of 22 theses on Red Army reorganization which, by being kept from the floor, probably gained more favorable attention than they would have otherwise. In one, Gusev pointed out that the resolution adopted at the Ninth Congress specified a gradual conversion to the militia system. In the others, he and Frunze outlined ways in which the existing Red Army could be strengthened and made a more effective instrument of the Soviet state and the revolution. The Tenth Congress declared that it was ‘in no way disposed’ to alter its previous resolution, and the ‘method and tempo’ of the conversion would ‘depend entirely’ on future developments ‘in a number of areas’.¹⁴

Trotsky and the former military opposition could be taken to have nearly reversed their earlier positions. However, Gusev and Frunze were arguing, as they long had, for a regular army in which political commitment, not conventional military expertise, was the prime requisite for leadership. The greater part of their theses – and of the Tenth Congress’s resolution – concerned the means of expanding party control in the Red Army. Trotsky proposed to organize the militia on regular army lines and incorporate the best Red Army divisions as cadres and to provide the militia with up-to-date weapons and technology. When Lenin, smarting from the Kronstadt affair, suggested closing down the Navy for a year and later called for it to be abolished altogether, Trotsky insisted the Navy could not be ‘liquidated’ because some parts of it had to be retained for sweeping mines, coastal defense and other purposes.¹⁵

TROTSKIY AND UNIFIED MILITARY DOCTRINE

Nevertheless, in promoting the militia system, Trotsky had committed himself to a compromise with economic necessity and thereby given his opponents an issue on which they could build loftier and politically far more attractive positions. Tukhachevskiy had, already in February 1921, made a sweeping argument for the Red Army in a pamphlet in which he asserted that a country in which a socialist revolution had succeeded had a right to extend the revolution to neighboring states and the world by whatever means it could. Of those, he had contended, a regular Red Army was the most effective; whereas, a militia, being by nature too unwieldy and technologically unsophisticated, would constitute a betrayal of the revolution.¹⁶

Gusev, who had returned to the RMCR as chief of the Red Army Political Directorate, published a brochure, *The Lessons of the Civil War*, addressed to the German Communist Party, in which he assumed that all future proletarian revolutions would result in class wars, as that in Russia had. Consequently, foreign communist parties ought to take the Soviet Red Army as their model. Territorial organizations, such as militias, he advised, would be inadequate because they could only be relied on to fight ‘for their own houses and hearths’.¹⁷

In the theses circulated at the Tenth Party Congress, Frunze had contributed six in which he called for the Red Army to be attuned in all respects to 'the military task confronting the Republic', which he – like Gusev and also Tukhachevskiy – took to be the conduct of class war. To that end, he proposed development of a 'unified proletarian military doctrine' based on a 'scientific-proletarian theory of war' which would eliminate the necessity to rely on 'narrow military specialists' in the class wars likely to occur 'in the near future'.¹⁸ After the congress, Frunze founded a journal, *Army and Revolution*, at his headquarters in the Ukraine, and in its first issue, June 1921, he contributed a lengthy article titled 'Unified Military Doctrine and the Red Army'. Therein he set out to prove that every state possesses a distinctive military doctrine which is determined by 'the general political line of its dominant social class' and that a Soviet doctrine could be derived from the Red Army's experience. The fundamental consideration, he asserted, was the Soviet state's unique situation: it was engaged in a permanent conflict with the entire bourgeois world, 'a war to the death, a war demanding colossal endurance, discipline, steadfastness, and inflexibly unified will'. A study of the Civil War, he implied, would show the Red Army to have already met the test. The political outlook of the working class had instilled an offensive-mindedness and predilections for activeness and high mobility that the bourgeois world could not match. In the Civil War, the Red Army had routinely maneuvered on a grand scale, and its cavalry had conducted independent operations; whereas, the 'imperialist' armies had conducted the World War as a sterile contest for position. Therefore, he concluded, the Red Army would have to be preserved and strengthened, and the militia system could only be instituted to the extent that it did not impair the Red Army's missions.¹⁹

Although he was occupied with the nationality problem in the Caucasus, Stalin, as he had during the Civil War, took time occasionally to cultivate an image as an authority on current general questions and to take positions that, while not original, he could subsequently claim as his own. In August 1921, he published an article in *Pravda* in which he reduced the results of the party's taking power to two: it had become 'the party of peaceful construction' in Russia, and it had been transformed 'into an international force, into the party of revolution on an international scale'. In doing so it had acquired 'colossal reserves' of forces and resources, among them the Red Army. Henceforth its tasks would be to carry out peaceful construction at home and fulfill the requirements of its position as 'the party of international revolution' by all the means at its command, including 'strengthening the Red Army'.²⁰

After the Kronstadt mutiny, Tukhachevskiy directed the campaign against the insurgents in the Tambov Province and then, in late August 1921, became the commandant of the Military Academy of the Red Army. Earlier in the month, in conjunction with the army reorganization, the General Staff Academy had been charged with giving courses in higher command as well as general staff training and renamed the Military Academy. The idea of a general staff did not, in any event, consort well with proletarian principles. Six months earlier, the Main Staff

and the Field Staff had been merged, reduced, and renamed simply the Red Army Staff. Frunze had proposed in his theses that the ‘General Staff’ should be transformed into the true ‘military-theoretical brain of the proletarian state’ by including in it ‘the very strongest military-political workers’.²¹

Tukhachevskiy’s was not a routine appointment and must have required some arranging, probably on Gusev’s part. His credentials were distinctly weak. The RMCR had given him, along with Frunze, Yegorov, and Uborevich, honorary membership in the general staff corps, but that would hardly have qualified him to direct general staff training. However, the academy had two functions: teaching and development of doctrine. On the latter, the faculty could claim to speak with as much professional authority as then existed in Soviet military circles, since its members (except for Dybenko and Fedko, who were adjunct communist role models) had all served with more or less distinction as general staff officers in the imperial army. The militia system and the unified military doctrine conflicted with their most fundamental perceptions of viable military organization, on the one hand, and sound doctrine, on the other – and both threatened to diminish their value and that of military specialists in general to the Soviet state. The Political Directorate in the RMCR had learned that ‘the new, progressive views [pertaining to the significance of the Civil War experience], which the adjuncts and auditors were required to introduce and promote in discussions were getting hostile receptions from the professors’. Tukhachevskiy’s mission was to work with the party organization in the academy to ‘battle backwardness and conservatism’ in the faculty, which proved to be ‘not only difficult but also protracted’.²²

On 1 November, in Trotsky’s presence, the academy conducted a formal debate on doctrine. Tukhachevskiy spoke for the unified military doctrine, stressing the need to study the Civil War experience, especially the Red Army’s employment of the offensive and maneuver, and insisting that the army’s ‘special characteristics’ could not be preserved in a militia. A former general, A. A. Svechin, who specialized in strategy and headed a faculty committee studying the World War experience on the Western Front, was the chief spokesman, of a half dozen or so, for the faculty. His views on the militia system were already well known, he having opposed it since Trotsky’s theses were first published; consequently, he left that subject to the others and concentrated his fire on the unified military doctrine, which he condemned as a fallacious conception that would impose ‘censorship’ on military thought. Civil and revolutionary wars, he argued, had nothing to offer to military theory because they were entirely ‘empirical’; therefore, the World War was the only recent war worth studying. Trotsky, who delivered the closing remarks, chided Svechin for having forgotten that ‘no government in any country has ever possessed as much theory as ours’ but then went on to dismiss the unified military doctrine as ‘nothing but an inflated lot of mysticism and metaphysicism’. Finally, he told both sides they were wasting time arguing over doctrine: the real problem affecting the Red Army was that ‘our economy is in disorder and improving extremely slowly’.²³ All those present knew what Trotsky said was true. The country could not afford a mass standing army. The Army was scheduled to be cut

to 1.6 million men by the year's end and to 800,000 in the nine months thereafter, a number that also would not be sustainable.²⁴ It was a matter 'of shoes and rations', not doctrine, Trotsky insisted; but to his listeners, it was also a matter of careers and ambitions.

Trotsky, for his part, overestimated his power to reason and ridicule 'mysticism and metaphysicism' out of existence in a party fraught with questionable theory. After the debate, he told Lenin that 'a great deal of nonsense and verbiage is being generated ... around this one bombastic word ... military doctrine' and he was writing a corrective pamphlet.²⁵ Printed in December 1921, under the title 'Military Doctrine or Pseudo-military Doctrinarism', the pamphlet, itself by no means short on verbiage, opened with a stern ideological reproof: 'Marxism does not give ready-made formulas. Least of all does it do so in the area of military affairs.' And it concluded with the equivalent of a cease-and-desist order: 'Instead of verbose, wildly innovative new military doctrine pompously proclaimed, we need systematization of experience, improvement in organization, and attention to detail.'²⁶

Unfazed, Frunze countered with 15 theses on the unified military theory, which he presented and had adopted with as much ceremony as he could muster at a conclave of the commanders and commissars in the Ukraine and the Crimea. In the theses, he categorically declared mobility, maneuver, initiative, activeness, decisiveness, and offensive-mindedness to be exclusive special characteristics the Red Army had acquired through its working-class orientation. He asserted, as well, the inevitability of class war and the Red Army's obligation to uphold 'proletarian interests not only in its own country but also in the whole world'.²⁷

Meanwhile, the demobilization was progressing toward the 800,000-man level set for September 1922, and the last chance to halt or reverse it would come at the Eleventh Party Congress in March–April 1922. Before the congress opened, debate on either military strength or Frunze's theses was ruled out of the plenary sessions. Famine was spreading across the countryside, and Lenin told the opening session of the congress that the government was heading into a financial crisis.²⁸ Moreover, at Genoa, Italy, a top-level European trade conference to which Soviet Russia and Germany had been invited was in progress. It was the first opportunity for both to break out of their diplomatic and economic isolation. Neither really expected to come away with much, but their delegations had taken the precaution of negotiating a bilateral trade treaty (signed on 16 April 1922, as the Treaty of Rapallo) in which they extended full diplomatic recognition to each other and covertly expanded the basis of the military collaboration begun a year earlier.²⁹ The unified military doctrine's class war implications would have destroyed whatever prospect there was for securing concessions at Genoa and could have caused the Germans to have second thoughts about their treaty.

Nevertheless, the Central Committee authorized a separate, apparently closed, military section meeting, which was held on 1 April. Seventy-two delegates attended, among them Voroshilov, Budenny and Minin. Frunze and his supporters, Voroshilov and Minin of course included, were promoting Budenny as the

embodiment of proletarian military genius. Tukhachevskiy was present as the West Front delegate. He had returned to command there in January after a notably short tour of duty at the Military Academy – which Trotskiy may possibly have helped to an early end. The proceedings, in which Trotskiy and Frunze were the contenders, were more like a prizefight than a debate.

Trotskiy, whose position as people's commissar entitled him to speak first, went on the attack, dismissing the unified military doctrine as 'wrong in theory and useless in practice', and then proceeded to refute the first thesis. In it Frunze asserted his key theoretical premise: that a unified doctrine could be achieved by applying the Marxist method of analysis to the whole range of military affairs. Marxism, Trotskiy countered, was a scientific method, but making war was not subject to scientific analysis. It was a 'practical art', a 'skill', a 'trade', that properly learned and with some genius could be advanced to a high art. It drew on various sciences, but it could be no more subjected to Marxist theory than could 'architecture or veterinary medicine'. Turning to the remaining theses, he poked fun at the idea that the Red Army could have discovered or acquired a monopoly on the so-called special characteristics, mobility, maneuver, the offensive, and so forth. He pointed out that the Army had learned what it knew about maneuver, for instance, from the enemy; and reminding the group that the French 1921 field service regulations emphasized the offensive, asked whether they were seeking to adopt a proletarian doctrine 'with Marshal Foch's approval'.³⁰

In his response, Frunze appeared to back away from the unified military doctrine while defending it. He had never wanted, he insisted, to do more than bring military affairs into 'a certain theoretical balance ... with our social experience'. He was, he said, 'no advocate of the idea that we are creating a special proletarian strategy and tactics', adding that he merely 'chuckled' when he read articles claiming 'that we have overthrown all the old principles and brought new strategy and tactics into being'. He went on to charge Trotskiy with deliberately exaggerating the Red Army's shortcomings and falsely accusing the army leadership of idealizing the past. According to Trotskiy, he said, 'it appears that we accomplished absolutely nothing in the military sphere'. This, he continued, was 'objectively wrong and psychologically damaging'. It was far better to 'idealize our experience than to underrate it'.³¹

From the objective standpoint, Trotskiy won the match. The congress decided to give priority to 'the government's effort to establish peaceful economic relations with the bourgeois states' and made possible future strengthening of the Red Army to 'alleviate the burden of the working masses [in the bourgeois states] entirely dependent on the government's success at strengthening peaceful relations'.³² Frunze, who chaired the military section, had presented the draft resolution in the plenum with a unanimous recommendation from the section for its adoption. Since the meeting at which the military section accepted the resolution was held on 30 March, the unified military doctrine was a dead issue two days before the confrontation with Trotskiy took place.³³ However, whereas Frunze had taken the setback at the previous congress in his stride, this time, after the congress, he

abandoned the public campaign to promote the doctrine. Three years later he gave the reason why. He told a Central Committee commission studying political literature that he had explained the unified military doctrine to Lenin and Lenin had told him he was 'wrong', had admonished him – essentially as Trotskiy also had – to concentrate on the fundamentals of military development, and had added that 'it seems to me that our military communists are still insufficiently mature to pretend to the leadership of all military affairs'.³⁴ Nevertheless, right or wrong, Frunze had put forward a doctrine that without being formally adopted, would remain compellingly attractive to the party and the military; and in doing so, he had managed to bring Trotskiy's commitment to the military interests of the party into question.

TROTSKIY UNDER FIRE

The congress had also brought Frunze into firm contact with Stalin's circle. Voroshilov, who, in addition to his membership in the Central Committee, had acquired an important military command, had joined him in sponsoring the military section meeting and had led a supporting attack on Trotskiy from the floor. (First Cavalry Army had been dissolved in May 1921 without being formally deactivated.) Voroshilov had been given command of the North Caucasus Military District, and Budennyi had become the deputy commander while retaining nominal command of the cavalry army. Budennyi's memoirs depict him as a gregarious intermediary through whom the principal figures signaled their willingness to continue the collaboration. After the congress, Frunze asked him to be sure to bring the military questions to Stalin's attention. Stalin, in turn, characterized Trotskiy's opposition to the unified military doctrine as 'the same old tune' and declared himself in full agreement with Frunze. Later, Frunze also asked Budennyi to tell Voroshilov that he 'wanted very much' to get together with him to discuss 'Army reform'.³⁵

The day after the congress closed, a Central Committee plenum elected a secretariat consisting of Stalin, as General Secretary of the Central Committee, and two associates, Molotov and Kuybyshev. The secretariat was a new creation thought of primarily as a device for providing continuity in the routine management of the party, but the party was on the verge of the most serious continuity crisis imaginable. Lenin's health had been deteriorating for more than a year, and he had been in seclusion, trying to recover, for three months before the Eleventh Congress. Seven weeks after the congress, he had a stroke. The illness restricted his capacity for leadership and by its nature, raised the question of succession. Three men, Zinoviev, L. V. Kamenev, and Stalin, considered themselves prime candidates. Zinoviev, as head of the Petrograd party organization, and Kamenev, who headed the Moscow organization, had far better *prima facie* qualifications than Stalin, who had never exercised personal leadership on a significant scale. On the other hand, the three

had a common arch enemy in Trotsky, who outranked them all in his own, in Lenin's, and in the party's esteem – and Stalin had positioned himself to direct the attack on Trotsky. The issue in the four-way struggle would ultimately have to be decided in the political arena, but Trotsky's control of the Army gave him a potent trump that he might play.

After May 1922, Lenin's illness, which was kept secret from the party at large and the public, was always on the minds of the Kremlin's inner circle. Stalin, not previously noted for hard work, labored feverishly to bring the party apparatus under his control and exploited his and his partners' factions to frustrate Trotsky in the Politburo and the Central Committee. In July, after Lenin had recovered sufficiently to resume work at his country house outside Moscow, Stalin made himself the Politburo's go-between. Trotsky loftily ignored his enemies' sallies against him and gave them ammunition by peevishly evading an appointment as deputy chairman of the Council of People's Commissars that Lenin had asked him – through Stalin – to take. He had been at odds with Lenin over financial policy since before the stroke, and the appointment would have required him to put into effect financial measures to which he objected. When Lenin returned to Moscow, in early October, he found the party machinery well tuned and running smoothly with Stalin at the throttle.³⁶

Before another stroke disabled him in December, Lenin's satisfaction with Stalin's performance had vanished. Late in the month and in early January, Lenin dictated piecemeal a political testament and a set of supplementary notes. The testament recommended Stalin's removal from the general secretaryship. The notes he proposed to use himself if, as the doctors predicted he might, he recovered sufficiently to take part in the Twelfth Party Congress scheduled for April 1923. In the notes, he condemned the terms on which Stalin had forced Georgia to enter the USSR (which came into being officially on 30 December 1923). Stalin and Dzerzhinsky, he stated, 'should be held politically responsible for this truly Great Russian nationalist campaign', and the party needed 'to make an example of' (dismiss) Ordzhonikidze, who had struck a Georgian communist leader during the negotiations.³⁷ Early in the new year, in articles in *Pravda* and a letter to the Central Committee, Lenin attacked the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate, which Stalin had headed until April 1922 and which, as a party organ, continued to be one of his responsibilities. 'Everybody knows', Lenin wrote, 'that no other institutions are worse organized than those of our Workers' and Peasants' Inspection and that under present conditions nothing can be expected from this People's Commissariat.'³⁸ In the first week of March he informed Trotsky of the charges he intended to level against Stalin, Dzerzhinsky, and Ordzhonikidze at the congress and asked Trotsky to bring them if he could not be present.³⁹ On 9 March, Lenin had another stroke.

The Twelfth Party Congress (17–25 April 1923) was – on the surface – remarkably harmonious. Isaac Deutscher's explanation, which corresponds with Trotsky's own on most points, appears valid: Trotsky believed an open confrontation was unnecessary because the victory had been won beforehand by Lenin, who had set

off the 'bomb' in a note on the Georgian affair sent to Kamenev the day before the congress began.⁴⁰ Trotsky had thereupon disclosed the documents he had received to the Politburo and, as a condition of his not pursuing the matter in the congress, extracted a commitment from Stalin to make an 'immediate and radical change' in his policy and behavior.⁴¹

Trotsky went to the conference with another victory of sorts in his pocket: the military question that had roiled the last three congresses had been resolved essentially as Trotsky had argued it should be. The December 1922 plenum of the Central Committee had decided that the Red Army could not be sustained at the 800,000-man level and would have to be cut to 600,000 by 1 February 1923. Since a 600,000-man army could not have come anywhere near absorbing the available conscripts, introduction of the territorial militia system could no longer be delayed; and with some irony, the task of defending the resolution on the militia at the Tenth All-Russian Congress of Soviets later in December had fallen to Voroshilov and Frunze.⁴²

Stalin, while outwardly complying with Trotsky's terms, used the congress to start work on his own 'bomb'. Citing Lenin's *Pravda* articles, he introduced and had adopted new charters assigning virtually unlimited investigative powers to the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate and to its counterpart in the party, the Central Control Commission. After the congress, his colleague in the secretariat, Kuybyshev, became people's commissar of the Inspectorate and chairman of the Control Commission; and on 2 June, the Central Committee charged Kuybyshev with setting up a commission to investigate the military administration. He, in turn, named Gusev to head the commission, whose members were drawn from the Inspectorate and the Control Commission.⁴³ Trotsky could not very well object: in the past, he had repeatedly called for more zeal from the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate.

Lenin, paralyzed and unable to speak or write, retired to the country again after the congress. The possibility of his ever being able to resume anything like normal activity was exceedingly remote, but as had happened the year before, his condition improved dramatically after a few months. Crippling tension pervaded the Politburo. Six of its seven full members were against Trotsky, but in the world outside the Kremlin, he towered above them all. Zinoviev was getting no closer to making good his claim to the succession and was seeing Stalin's hold on the party apparatus grow stronger.⁴⁴ At its September plenum, on a motion by Zinoviev, the Central Committee voted to assign five of its members, Zinoviev, Stalin, Voroshilov, Ordzhonikidze and Lashevich, to the Revolutionary Military Council, which had just been converted from the RMCR to the RMCU (Revolutionary Military Council of the Union). When Trotsky asked to be relieved of all his state and party offices, Stalin, fearing to engage in so open a test of strength at that time, surrendered his appointment to the RMC – and the others followed.⁴⁵ Never one to leave an opponent in complete possession of the field, Stalin had Budenny brought to Moscow in October and installed as the Red Army's inspector of cavalry. Stalin told him the party needed men in key positions who – like him – could properly

understand its directives and carry them out. Trotskiy, he added, was ‘defiantly opposing’ the Central Committee.⁴⁶

On a hunting trip in late October, Trotskiy contracted a respiratory infection that developed into a persistent, debilitating fever. At the end of December, all their other attempted treatments having failed, the Kremlin doctors ordered him to cease all work and take an at least two-month rest cure in the less rigorous climate on the southeastern shore of the Black Sea. He left Moscow on 18 January 1924; and upon learning of Lenin’s death (on the 21st), in a stunning display of fatuousness and gullibility, he consulted Stalin and took Stalin’s advice not to return to Moscow.⁴⁷

Stalin probably had no more reason than Trotskiy did to have anticipated Lenin’s death, but he had expected to pursue the work on his ‘bomb’ during Trotskiy’s absence. Gusev’s commission was still at work in January listing all the conceivable shortages and shortcomings in the armed forces. For financial and other obvious reasons, those were many but they did not add up to a revelation. Everybody knew the whole state system was chaotic. Something more was needed; and to provide it, a Central Committee plenum had, on 14 January, appointed a ‘high-level commission of experts’. Gusev chaired the commission, and Frunze, Voroshilov, Ordzhonikidze, and Lashevich were its most prominent members.

Lenin’s death seems to have given the work a powerful impetus and to have markedly sharpened its focus. The Central Committee heard the findings on 3 February. Gusev, reporting also for the first commission, drew a picture of a military high command dominated by senior military specialists. Lashevich declared, ‘The Red Army Staff is out of contact with and does not understand the psychology of the Red Army.’ Frunze diagnosed the Red Army’s condition as being ‘extraordinarily grave’ and anticipated no improvement ‘without a thoroughgoing personnel change in the central organs’. Ordzhonikidze described the RMCU as having so far deteriorated that it could not do anything of practical significance. Taking aim directly at the main target, Voroshilov attributed all the problems in the armed forces to Trotskiy’s having ‘isolated them from the party’ and to his ‘efforts to remove them from Central Committee control’. Stalin, assuming what had formerly been Lenin’s prerogative, provided a concise and definitive summation: ‘If we were to get into a war, we would be dealt a total defeat.’ The plenum then authorized the Politburo to devise ‘decisive means for liquidating . . . the deficiencies in the armed forces.’⁴⁸

FRUNZE TO THE FORE

A day later, Frunze became the chairman of a commission on military reform; two weeks later, he was designated plenipotentiary of the Council of People’s Commissars in the RMCU; and on 11 March, a Council of People’s Commissars decree dismissed Trotskiy’s long-time deputy, E. M. Sklyanskiy, and appointed

Frunze to replace him. After Frunze made a 'courtesy' trip south together with several other Central Committee members to inform Trotskiy about what was being done, a second decree appointed a new RMCU that included, along with Frunze, who also became the deputy People's Commissar of Military and Naval Affairs, Voroshilov, Budenny, Ordzhonikidze, and others no better disposed toward Trotskiy than they.

The April Central Committee plenum apparently was in a hurry to get the military question settled. Trotskiy was still on leave but could be expected to return in time for the Thirteenth Party Congress in May. In short order, the plenum heard a report from Frunze, pronounced the administrative reform in the Red Army 'fully guaranteed', and the work of the commissions completed, and gave the RMCU a directive. The last contained three charges: to establish the territorial militia, to place party members in responsible command and staff positions throughout the Army, and to 'improve the Army's material condition to the extent commensurate with the general financial circumstances of the Union.'⁴⁹

The Thirteenth Party Congress was the first in the post-revolution period at which the armed forces did not appear on the agenda. This was remarkable enough to necessitate a press release from Frunze assuring the Army it had not been neglected: its interests, he said, were taken into account in a number of ways.⁵⁰ That, of course, did not explain the omission. The Army had not been left off the agenda for its benefit but because the military question was no longer the best weapon against Trotskiy. His enemies had taken over the militia system and were making it their own, and they were the majority in the RMCU. As the people's commissar and chairman of the RMCU he still possessed some potential for staging a counterattack like the one in the September 1923 Central Committee plenum. On the other hand, Trotskiy's absence and Lenin's death had enabled Stalin and his associates to broaden and bring into the open the backstage campaign they had been conducting against Trotskiy. At the congress, they charged him with the most egregious sins a party member could commit: having broken party discipline and having put himself at the head of an inner party opposition.⁵¹ Trotskiy rejected the charges but did not respond to his accusers in kind, and he let the intervention in his commissariat pass without a word.⁵²

The most critical part of the military reform, the personnel changes in the top command, was accomplished before the congress. In addition to his deputyships in the commissariat and the RMCU, Frunze became the chief of the Red Army Staff and commandant of the Military Academy. He brought Tukhachevskiy into the staff as his deputy and retained his predecessor, P. P. Lebedev, who had been a principal target of the investigations but also belonged to the old East Front group, 'for important special missions.'⁵³ Frunze also abolished the post of Supreme Commander in Chief but kept that other old member of the East Front group, S. S. Kamenev, in the RMCU by appointing him to the Red Army Inspectorate along with Budenny. Voroshilov and Ordzhonikidze, as Central Committee members, sat in the RMCU to strengthen party control. Additionally, the designation plenipotentiary of the Council of People's Commissars in the RMCU passed to

Voroshilov, putting him on a nearly equal footing with Frunze, and he acquired command of the Moscow Military District, a vital post in the event of a coup attempt on Trotsky's part.⁵⁴ A. S. Bubnov, also a Central Committee member, came into the RMCU as chief of the Political Directorate, and I. S. Unshlikht joined as chief of army supply. Both were Stalin's men and had served on the Gusev investigating commission.⁵⁵

If Frunze and the others had expected to engage Trotsky in a dramatic confrontation, they were disappointed. He had, since 1918, left the military administration largely to Sklyanskiy; and the state of his health during 1924 led him to devote all the energy he could muster to the power struggle within the party – in which, contrary to his enemies' suspicions, he did not contemplate bringing the military into play. On 15 January 1925, before leaving for another rest cure in the south, he resigned from the commissariat and the RMCU. Frunze thereupon became the people's commissar and chairman of the RMCU (later also a candidate member of the Politburo). Voroshilov and Lashevich became his deputies in both positions. Tukhachevskiy was named chief of the Red Army Staff, but Kamenev assumed the functions because Tukhachevskiy returned to the Western Military District (the former West Front) as a result of a nervous Soviet reaction to a slight warming in German–French relations.⁵⁶

FRUNZE'S MILITARY REFORM

The 1924 reform retained the military organizational structure essentially as it had evolved since 1918. The Council of Labor and Defense continued as the highest state body exclusively concerned with military affairs. The council's concern with labor was merely vestigial. The labor armies had been disbanded during and after the Polish War, and Trotsky's proposal to impose military discipline on the work force had been rejected except for the introduction of a brigade system in factories and on collective farms. The NEP and Lenin's death had much reduced the council's power. The NEP gave economic recovery priority over military requirements, and Lenin's successor as chairman, A. I. Rykov, acquired only a fraction of Lenin's authority.⁵⁷ The RMCU also occupied a more modest place in the Soviet state. Frunze did not possess anywhere near Trotsky's stature. He was entirely beholden to the Politburo and the Central Committee for his appointments, and his connections to the inner circles of both were tenuous. He had been nothing more than Stalin's tool in the campaign against Trotsky, and his access to Stalin was always indirect, through Voroshilov, Ordzhonikidze, and Budenny, his nominal subordinates in the RMCU.

The Navy and Air Force commands had been converted in 1923 into directorates 'in the Red Army'. Their directors, V. I. Zof for the Navy and P. I. Baranov for the Air Force, both old Bolsheviks whose previous experience had been as military commissars, sat in the RMCU on the same footing as Army branch inspectors.⁵⁸

Although the Navy was no longer in danger of being disbanded, it was still under a political cloud from the Kronstadt mutiny, and its strength stood at the 35,000-man level reached in 1921. Three battleships, two cruisers, 11 destroyers, and some torpedo boats made up the fleet. All were run down, and some had been recovered from the bottom of the Black Sea.⁵⁹ A major building program was out of the question for financial reasons and because the main shipyards and work force were now in independent Estonia. The Air Force had 321 aircraft and 8,300 men in 1924.⁶⁰ Although they were more than a hundred fewer than had been flyable when the Civil War ended, most of the aircraft apparently were new foreign models. Air power enjoyed high favor in the party as a means of achieving technological advancement relatively cheaply and expeditiously, and the Central Committee had appropriated 41 million gold rubles from the imperial treasure, the only existing hard currency, to finance aircraft purchases abroad and the German collaboration.⁶¹

FRUNZE ON MILITARY DOCTRINE

On becoming chief of the Red Army Staff, Frunze, in keeping with his vision of a 'military brain' for the Soviet state, restored the functional division that had existed before 1921. Retaining war planning in the Red Army Staff, he shifted the day-to-day management responsibilities to the Red Army Main Administration. He had modified his earlier conception of strategy-making to the extent of including military knowledge in the process – which also required the 'natural and obligatory' understanding of Leninist teaching on class war and the relationship between war and politics.⁶² The most representative figure in the reformed Red Army Staff was Vladimir Triandafilov, the operations chief. Thirty years old, Triandafilov had commanded battalions as a captain in the World War, had joined the Red Army in 1918 and the party in 1919, and had graduated from the Military Academy in 1923.⁶³ However, the 'military brain' of the state would not be an autonomous organ but would provide 'material in accordance with the Defense Council's requirements.'⁶⁴

In the Military Academy, Frunze gave Tukhachevskiy and Triandafilov chairs of strategy and operational art respectively, and named as his successor and commandant R. P. Eydeman, a Latvian junior officer in the World War, who had joined the party in 1917 and had advanced from Red Guard commands early in the Civil War to command of the Thirteenth Army late in the Polish War. Otherwise, those who had learned their craft in the Civil War predominated in the junior and adjunct faculty, and the military specialists continued to hold the majority of the chairs.⁶⁵ The unified military doctrine did not again become an issue, probably because Frunze regarded it as an inevitable concomitant of his leadership. In November 1924, he stated two goals that he wished to see accomplished 'in the next few years': the academy's development into 'a hotbed of military-scientific knowledge' and 'reliance on Marxist methodology in all areas of military-scientific inquiry.'⁶⁶ He allowed study of the World War to continue and conceded that 'from the

abstract-theoretical point of view', the Civil War might have represented 'a decline in military art' but, nevertheless, mandated heaviest concentration on the Civil War. The form war took, he maintained, derived from 'specific historical determinants', and 'the victory of October' had opened 'the epoch of proletarian revolution'. Henceforth, all wars would be class wars, and 'national wars' of the World War variety would not be possible. Therefore, the Civil War in all its aspects, even unsophistication, was the model for the future; and since validity was guaranteed a priori, all that was needed was to collate the data.⁶⁷

Frunze also gave the analysis a frame of reference: long-term coexistence with the capitalist world was not possible, and any war involving the Red Army would automatically be a class war. Class war would not be fought over trivial disputes that could be quickly resolved but would be a conflict between 'mutually exclusive social, political, and economic systems'; consequently, it would be prolonged and decisive. Technology would figure heavily, and in a 'war of machines' the Soviet Union had a long way to go to match the capitalist states. On the other hand, mass would predominate and would allow the Soviet Union to exploit its manpower superiority to the full, while internal class conflicts would prevent capitalist states from arming their masses and compel them to rely on technology. Above all, the Soviet Union would have to remember that it was 'a besieged fortress' and could not anticipate any kind of armed conflict other than one in which it would have to commit people 'in broad masses' and all of its resources.⁶⁸

The most sensitive issues with which Frunze concerned himself were those affecting the status of a military profession in a communist state. Trotsky's decline and fall brought the military communists into what they regarded as their rightful place at the top. In the end, with Stalin's help, that much had been easy. The Army, however, was still a long way from being assimilated into the Soviet system. The demobilization had eliminated many military specialists from the rolls, but a substantial number had to be retained, particularly in the staffs and the Military Academy, because a regular army of the type the military communists had come to prefer could not be organized and trained without them. Frunze's own orientation on organizational matters was conventional, even somewhat traditionalist. He retained Brusilov, for instance, as a special advisor in the RMCU after Budenny had supplanted him in the cavalry inspectorate. In 1925, he instituted a single designation, Red Army Commander, for all command personnel, thereby eliminating the military specialist/military communist distinction. Frunze, speaking as a military communist, maintained that all commanders 'who went through the fire of the Civil War and were steeled along with us' had earned a right to serve on equal terms with party members.⁶⁹ On the other hand, and more importantly, the military communists, in losing their separate status, gained an implied professional status they had not previously possessed. As a further mark of professionalism, Frunze established junior, intermediate, and senior command grades and authorized insignia for each.⁷⁰

However, the most vital distinction affecting the command structure, that between the commander and the commissar, could not be readily eliminated. The

party's interest had to be paramount always, and unity of command, command vested entirely in a military professional, whether a party member or not, always constituted a potential threat. The party, moreover, had come to regard political surveillance and indoctrination as at least coequal with command. Trotsky had always claimed an adequate separation existed to ensure unity of command, but that had not been confirmed in practice. Frunze initiated a gradual transition to unity of command in two forms. In one, a commander who was also a party member and 'an authority on communism' could act as his own commissar – with a political assistant. In the other, the commander was responsible for training and administration, the commissar for political work, and they shared responsibility for morale, discipline, and combat-readiness. In both, the military councils, composed of the commander, commissar, and chief of staff, continued at the levels in which they had previously existed.⁷¹ Since, as of early 1925, no more than a third of the commanders were party members, the pool of eligibles for the first form was automatically limited.⁷² The second form, by dividing the military responsibility, gave commanders less unity of command than Trotsky's original regulations had; and neither form eliminated the possibility of rivalries and conflicts. Commanders and commissars both continued to be subject to surveillance by the OGPU (Organization for State Security), which had replaced the *Cheka* in 1923.

FRUNZE'S RED ARMY

On 29 October 1925, Frunze underwent a surgical operation, and two days later, he died from aftereffects of the anesthetic. His colleagues gave him a state funeral and a grave outside the Kremlin wall near Lenin's tomb. Stalin, as the Central Committee's spokesman, professed himself overcome by emotion and delivered a few incongruously banal remarks.⁷³ The Military Academy became the Frunze Military Academy on 5 November, and Voroshilov, by Stalin's grace, became the People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs a day later, although party and military seniority gave Lashevich a somewhat better claim to the succession.

The Soviet periodization concludes the reform period at Frunze's death, the assumption being that, besides having set new courses in command and doctrine, he had brought the mixed cadre (regular) and militia system into existence. Objectively viewed, his most important achievement was that he reconciled himself and the military leadership in general to the mixed system. He did so by treating the militia as a temporary expedient and assuming a constant and compelling requirement for a cadre army in the range of 1.5–2 million men. Those who believed a small cadre army would suffice he characterized as 'childish babblers'.⁷⁴

Frunze's 1924 table of organization fixed the Red Army strength at 562,000 total troops, of which 529,865 (including 10,246 in the Air Force) belonged to the Army proper and 32,125 to the Navy. It was a predominantly Russian army in

which the other nationalities received only 12,859 spaces. The infantry had 232,795 spaces, cavalry 66,842, artillery 9,151, and armor a token 2,107. The cadre Army could give two years' training to about 300,000 recruits, a third of one annual conscription class.⁷⁵ Although the cadre strength was a bare 10 per cent of the pre-demobilization peak, it equaled the maximum number of effectives that had existed at any time during the Civil War. For its size, Frunze had rather ruefully observed, the cadre Army was expensive because the commissar system doubled the cost of every command space.⁷⁶

The militia was designed, when fully functional, to give eight months' training over a five-year period to the full annual conscription classes, less the number training in the cadre Army. Sixteen territorial divisions had been activated before 1924. By October 1926 there were 39, which, at full strength, could have accommodated about half the potentially available conscripts. The militia apparently included about a dozen divisions situated in the Ukraine, Belorussia, and other non-Russian areas. Although the command cost was relatively high (for the same reason as in the cadre Army), the ordinary soldier, who received 281 rubles pay over five years, cost less than his counterpart in the cadre Army, who was paid 535 rubles for two years' service.⁷⁷

The New Order

STALIN AS CUSTODIAN OF LENINISM

After Lenin died, Stalin hastened to seize for himself the custodianship of Leninism, the most precious legacy of the departed leader. Trotskiy, Zinoviev and Kamenev based their claims to the succession on personal stature as theoreticians. Stalin, having no such status, formulated a gospel according to Lenin in which, as the self-appointed defender of the faith, he forged weapons against his rivals and developed a platform to support his own candidacy.

No sooner had Lenin died than Stalin set about writing *Foundations of Leninism*, a purportedly straightforward introduction to the study of Leninist theory and methodology published in April 1925. Since Trotskiy's challenge to the Central Committee in the previous September, a rift had been developing in the façade of Bolshevik solidarity. The issue was party leadership, but the triumvirate chose to put Trotskiy on the defensive by charging him with having created a 'left opposition' to support his 'erroneous views' on the role of the peasantry. In *Foundations*, Stalin took as an example Marx's theory of permanent revolution, with which Trotskiy was so closely identified that his name did not need to be mentioned. The theory, as Trotskiy had adapted it after the 1905 revolution to the Russian lack of both a strong middle class and a large working class, had two distinct but inseparable parts. The first assumed that the revolution would have to pass through at least two stages before it could become proletarian and required the proletariat to assure 'permanence' (continuity) in those by allying itself with the peasantry, the largest and least advanced class. The second assumed that a proletarian revolution could not succeed in Russia alone and therefore required at least several successful revolutions in countries with more highly developed working classes. Lenin had incorporated both parts into his own general theory, differing with Trotskiy only on the form the alliance with the peasantry would take.

The 'Russian permanentists' (i.e. Trotskiyites), Stalin asserted, had 'underestimated the role of the peasantry' and altered Marx's idea of permanent revolution, thereby 'making it unfit for practical use'.¹ Lenin, on the other hand, he implied, had correctly anticipated that the bourgeois revolution could pass directly into the proletarian revolution, as had happened in October 1917. To give the point a somewhat clearer focus, he added references to Lenin's 1920 pamphlet, '*Left-Wing*'

Communism, an Infantile Disorder, which had accused the western European ‘left-wing’ of being so rigidly doctrinaire that they rejected opportunities to promote revolution.² When Trotsky pointed out that Zinoviev and Kamenev had formed a left opposition during the October Revolution, Stalin, dismissing his partners’ ‘mistakes’ as ‘quite irrelevant here’, launched an open campaign in which he undertook to demonstrate that Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution was a deliberately contrived attempt to discredit Lenin’s theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat.³

But Stalin had a nagging problem. The victory of a proletarian revolution in Russia was one thing, and contrary to the theory of permanent revolution, it had been accomplished. Reaching the revolution’s objective, a complete socialist system, was quite another. Trotsky had predicted – and the party leadership unanimously accepted – that even given a successful revolution, bourgeois economic power would prevent socialism from developing in just one country, particularly a backward country like Russia.⁴ Consequently, Stalin was always having to differentiate an utterly false from an indisputably correct aspect of permanent revolution. In December 1924, he had, as E. H. Carr has put it, ‘a flash of originality so rare in Stalin’s career that it has sometimes been described as an accident.’⁵ He attacked Trotsky as a prophet of doom who, if a revolution did not occur elsewhere, gave the revolution in Russia just two choices, ‘to rot away or to degenerate into a bourgeois state’. This he contrasted with what he called ‘Lenin’s theory of the victory of socialism in one country’. In support, he cited a 1923 essay in which Lenin had proposed using the NEP to form worker and peasant cooperatives. Combining a disclaimer and an assertion in a single sentence, Lenin had concluded, ‘This is not yet the building of socialist society, but it is all that is necessary and sufficient for this building.’⁶

After Trotsky’s sudden resignation from the military and naval affairs commissariat a month later eliminated him as the potentially strongest contender in the power struggle, Stalin converted his ‘flash of originality’ into a platform program that could be made credible to a handpicked majority at the Fourteenth Party Congress, which convened in December 1925. Zinoviev and Kamenev lent a reluctant support by allowing approbatory references to socialism in one country and the NEP as a ‘necessary step’ toward socialism to get into the resolutions of the Fourteenth Party Conference in April and those of the Central Committee October plenum.⁷ At the congress, Stalin for the first time assumed Lenin’s former prerogative of composing and delivering the Central Committee’s report.

He told the delegates that the ‘new feature, the decisive feature’ in foreign relations was ‘that a certain temporary equilibrium of forces has been established between our country, which is building socialism, and the countries of the capitalist world’ and the result was a period of ‘peaceful coexistence’. The postwar economic crisis in Europe was passing away, and the ‘flow of the revolutionary tide’ was becoming an ‘ebb’. ‘This means’, he added, ‘that the question ... of the proletariat capturing power any day is not now on the order of the day in Europe.’ It would therefore be necessary, he continued, to advance gradually toward socialism

by using the NEP to develop cooperation with the peasantry and state capitalism to promote industrialization. Socialism would be completely achieved 'when the revolution is victorious in Germany or in France, or in both countries together'. 'But,' he added, 'even if we do not receive outside assistance ... we shall not abandon our work.'⁸

Stalin spoke as if what he said was confirmed party policy. Zinoviev, Kamenev and their partisans objected to the idea of the NEP, the peasants and state capitalism as the road to socialism – and by implication, to the General Secretary's assumption of a right to set party policy. In doing so, they put themselves in the position of challenging the earlier decisions by the party conference and the Central Committee plenum; consequently, they were immediately dubbed the 'new opposition' (since Trotskiy and his group already had the left opposition to themselves). The congress adopted Stalin's program as he had stated it, condemned 'deviation', and called on the Leningrad party organization to take action against the 'completely incorrect' behavior of its delegation. Giving Lenin as its authority, it added, 'the land of the proletarian dictatorship possesses all that is needed to build a full socialist society'.⁹

The Fourteenth Party Congress capped the year of the military reform. Frunze had believed that coexistence could never be anything but transitory. In February, he had told an audience in Leningrad that talks then going on among the capitalist countries could 'one fine day' culminate in a concerted drive against the Soviet Union. To think differently would be 'stupid, inexcusable, and a betrayal of the interests of our revolution'.¹⁰ At the January Central Committee plenum, Stalin, manifestly having not yet definitely decided to pursue socialism in one country, had talked about threats of war and prospects of revolutions in capitalist countries; therefore, he had insisted, the Soviet Union could not 'sit with folded arms', but had to be prepared militarily 'to throw the decisive weight in the scales'.¹¹ His theme at the Fourteenth Party Conference in May had been 'a certain lull' in the progress toward revolution in Europe. At the party congress in December the lull became a period without an end in sight. That could and would change but was, nevertheless, profoundly significant for the whole future course of Soviet military affairs. Stalin had conclusively demonstrated that henceforth he alone would define the national interest.

The immediate effects were to prolong the period of retrenchment in military affairs and consign the armed forces to a distinctly passive role in relation to the class struggle. The congress would eventually go into the record as the 'congress of industrialization', but what Stalin had asked for and received were declarations of principle for which concrete applications had yet to be devised. At the congress, Voroshilov entered the Politburo, in which Frunze had only been a candidate, as a full member, but the purpose was to build a majority for Stalin. The congress also strengthened his and Stalin's hand in the military and naval affairs commissariat. Lashevich, who joined the 'new opposition', was removed as the deputy and replaced by Unshlikht. Having arrived close to the top of the political pyramid, Voroshilov busied himself with the campaign against the 'new opposition', which

for the next two years even took precedence over that against the Trotskyites, and with establishing a presence in various party organizations. Frunze's high-flown theorizing had, no doubt, bored him; and as people's commissar, he was not disposed to encourage innovation. Budenny, Unshlikht, an ex-commissar and former *Cheka* man, and Dybenko, who had settled into an Army career and replaced Unshlikht in the supply branch, were types Voroshilov preferred to have in leading positions.

MILITARY REFORM CONTINUED

Tukhachevskiy, who had returned to Moscow when Frunze died, would certainly not have been Voroshilov's – or Stalin's – choice to be Chief of the Red Army Staff; but he was widely regarded as the outstanding Soviet military figure, and not accepting him would have raised questions, particularly since he would also have had to be dropped from the RMCU, where he had retained his seat while at the Western Military District. Keeping him on was hardly easier. The defeat in Poland still rankled, and Tukhachevskiy had, on occasion, disparaged the role of cavalry in future wars. While the 'search' for Frunze's successor was on, he had declared Ordzhonikidze to be the logical choice because, of the possible candidates, he alone had the necessary 'talent, dedication and capacity for work'.¹²

Tukhachevskiy never doubted that as long as he headed it, the Red Army Staff should be the brain of the army. He was also a believer in permanent revolution, and he had, in 1920, proposed setting up a general staff in the Comintern to prepare for civil war world-wide.¹³ In 1926, he published *Questions of Contemporary Strategy* in which he characterized war as imposing ever-increasing demands on manpower and production. Therefore, no level of preparedness could be considered adequate; war would always require more. Since the capitalists already possessed far greater means, the Soviet Union, while embarking on industrialization, was going to have to consider how it would protect its system in the future.¹⁴

The present did not offer full scope to a chief of staff's talent and ambition. Stalin was right: stability and prosperity had set in in the capitalist world. In the Soviet Union, the NEP functioned well enough to ward off another famine but could not sustain a more than modestly elevated level of support to the military. In 1928, the fifth year after the military reform began, the cadre strength stood at 617,000 men, and the territorial militia had 1.8 million in training on a two-year cycle. Non-Russian ethnic groups made up 10 per cent of the total. The military and naval affairs commissariat also directed the *OSOAVIAKHIM*, a 2.3 million-member 'society' of young people being introduced to military technology, particularly aviation and chemical warfare.¹⁵ The 55,000-man increase in cadre strength had gone to the Navy and Air Force.

The Navy had reconditioned its three battleships and added two cruisers, three destroyers and 14 submarines to the fleet. All were rebuilds. Having also acquired

numbers of new patrol and coastal defense vessels, it had established a naval presence in the Baltic and Black Seas.¹⁶ The Air Force had increased its personnel to 30,000 and, benefiting from the gold allotment, had acquired between 1,200 and 1,400 aircraft, at least a third of which could be specifically classified as fighters or bombers. The domestic aircraft industry, under development since early in the decade, could produce airframes, mostly modeled on foreign types, but could not yet build engines. The Army had 92 tanks of various provenances and was about to get the T 18, a light tank of its own design, into production.¹⁷

By social origin, the command personnel were 29.4 per cent workers, 34.4 per cent peasants and 36.2 per cent 'others'. The worker contingent had gained 12 per cent since 1920, but the 'others' had increased by 2 per cent as well.¹⁸ Tukhachevskiy, Shaposhnikov, Kamenev, Yegorov, Uborevich, Yakir and A. I. Kork, the entire top staff and command contingent (except for Budenny) fell into the 'others' category. The careers of those who possessed more acceptable social lineages but had not made a mark in the Civil War were in the doldrums. Zhukov, Rokossovskiy, and Eremenko had commanded cavalry regiments for five years or more. Vasilevskiy, in the 'others' category and not a party member, was commanding a militia infantry regiment.

More than three-quarters of the corps, division and regiment commanders and nearly half of the lower grades had been invested with unity of command.¹⁹ Retention of the RMCs in the higher commands and the military/political functional division lower down very much limited the number who were both commander and commissar, and those did not have sole authority in political affairs. Zhukov and Rokossovskiy were among the few permitted to act in both capacities. Experienced commissars could qualify by taking a one-year course in command. Ivan Konev, who had been a commissar since 1918, completed the course and became the commander/commissar of a regiment in 1928.

Although the unity of command would elsewhere hardly have been considered anywhere near complete, it aroused misgivings among the Army political personnel that in 1928, under the leadership of the Tolmachev (later Lenin) Military-Political Academy, the school for commissars, blossomed into the 'inner-Army opposition'. After the RMCU failed to pacify the opposition, the Central Committee issued a resolution in February 1929 which, on the one hand, upheld unity of command and, on the other, guaranteed that the military function would not take precedence over the political. Henceforth, candidates for unity of command were required to take preparatory courses at the Military-Political Academy.²⁰

STRENGTHENING DEFENSIVE CAPABILITY

The results of the Fifteenth Party Congress (December 1927) made 1928 a transitional year: the left and 'new' oppositionists had been totally defeated and driven out of the party; the NEP was being phased out; agricultural collectivization was beginning; and the First Five-Year Plan was being put into final form. The

Congress's resolution on the five-year plan specified that 'maximum attention' was to be given to the parts of the economy 'in general' and industry 'in particular' that would be important to defense and economic stability 'in wartime'. Heavy industry was to be given top priority because it could most quickly generate economic power and defense capability.²¹

The main resolution, however, that on the Central Committee's report, only called for 'continuous strengthening of the defensive capability'.²² In the report, to put the British breach of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in May 1927 and the subsequent collapse of his effort to control the Chinese revolution in the light least damaging to him, Stalin had alluded darkly to the 'strengthening of interventionist tendencies in the camp of the imperialists'. But he insisted that coexistence was possible; the capitalists could be bought off indefinitely; and they, even the British and Americans, could be brought around to extending credits and trade agreements that would promote the industrialization. War would come, he said, but not until 'the proletarian revolution matures, or ... the colonial revolutions have matured, or ... the capitalists come to blows over the division of the colonies'.²³ His listeners knew that the tide was running against all of those developments. The Locarno Pacts appeared to have eliminated the potential for war in Europe. The labor unions involved in the British general strike of 1926 had categorically rejected revolution as an aim; Soviet efforts to intensify the class conflict in Britain had provoked a diplomatic crisis; and the Kuomintang in China had turned on and demolished its communist wing.

The use of 'continuous' in the resolution on the Central Committee's report implied that a strengthening of the armed forces already in progress would continue along existing lines. Voroshilov had reported to the congress that there were some problems with manufacturing tank armor but, otherwise, the weapons industry was advancing fast and would soon be able to supply everything the armed forces needed in case the 'imperialists' attacked.²⁴ Before the congress, the RMCU had adopted a five-year plan the guiding principle of which was that defense capability should be adjusted to the 'country's overall economic development'.²⁵ The Central Committee confirmed it in early 1928.

Tukhachevskiy had for two years envisioned a military aspect of industrialization involving much more than mere compatibility with the general economy. Early in 1927 he had projected a 'unified military academy' that would conduct research and development on a grand scale for all the armed forces.²⁶ Not satisfied with the RMCU's five-year plan – in which he had figured only as a member of a drafting committee Unshlikht chaired – he had submitted a counterproposal to Voroshilov and Stalin after the party congress. In it he maintained that armed forces did not just need more weapons and equipment, they needed entirely new types, long-range airplanes, fast tanks, radio communications, and so on; and those required an industrial establishment separate from the general economy. Voroshilov, with Stalin's concurrence, characterized the proposal as 'unrealistic'.²⁷

Tukhachevskiy had also argued for a clear-cut assignment of responsibility for planning and organization that would convert the Red Army Staff into a true

general staff. In an April 1928 letter to Voroshilov, Yegorov, Budenny and Dybenko charged the Red Army Staff with being engaged in 'seizing control over all matters pertaining to development and operational control of the Red Army'. They suggested that the best type 'personality' to head the Red Army Staff would be 'a gifted organizer who likewise, and in the main possesses experience in practical military work'. A subsequent RCMU meeting, after hearing Tukhachevskiy, concluded that the Chief of the Red Army Staff he envisioned would 'plan, direct and evaluate, all in accordance with his own criteria'. Tukhachevskiy then asked, through the party channel, to be reassigned.²⁸

In May 1928, on Stalin's recommendation, the RCMU named Shaposhnikov Chief of the Red Army Staff. Since Shaposhnikov had been brought in a year earlier to command the Moscow Military District, his appointment might have been under consideration for some time. He had ample experience, and was a military specialist in the old style who had not yet joined the Communist Party – and would not until 1930. A believer in the general staff system, he had (in 1927) published *The Brain of the Army*, a study of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff; but the work was purely academic and in no way attempted to provide a model for the Red Army. Tukhachevskiy received a choice post, the Leningrad Military District, very likely because a return to his old command, the Belorussian Military District, could have been taken as a hostile gesture toward Poland and thereby interfered with Stalin's campaign to prolong coexistence. Any lesser appointment would have provoked speculation at home and abroad. For Tukhachevskiy, Leningrad in some significant ways provided a more congenial milieu than Moscow did. It had military-technological institutes and personnel left over from the imperial regime. Sergey Kirov, who had supplanted Zinoviev as the party chief there in July 1926, had known Tukhachevskiy since the Civil War and shared his outlook. Although he was a loyal Stalinist, Kirov, having inherited the most nearly autonomous fiefdom in the country, was bent on making the most of it. And he had much to exploit: virtual possession of the Navy, other significant military installations, and a potentially very large share in the industrialization program. Like Tukhachevskiy, he saw himself as an innovator, science and technology as the primary instruments of progress, and advancement as achievable by quantum leaps.

TUKHACHEVSKIY, TRIANDAFILOV, AND MILITARY THEORY

On the world scene in the late 1920s, the future of war and future wars were concurrently the most prominent concerns. The World War, on passing into history, had left two commitments: one moral, to abolish war; the other intellectual, to rescue the art of war from the paralysis that had overcome it in 1914. The first appeared about to be met in August 1928 when the governments of France and the United States, as co-sponsors of the Paris Peace Pact, invited all nations to join in renouncing war as an instrument of national policy. In Geneva, under League

of Nations sponsorship, a 21-nation commission was drafting terms for general disarmament. However, since the signatories to the peace pact had agreed that their general renunciation of war did not apply in every individual instance and the League commission had made no progress in two years, war, although ‘out-lawed’, was still possible. Nevertheless, since 1918, peace had prevailed ever more strongly; and in 1928, the British Government put military budget planning under a ‘ten-year rule’ which assumed that war henceforth would always be at least ten years distant.

Future war was, consequently, a hypothetical concern. But in it, two problems, the World War battlefield experience and the potential role of technology, clearly predominated. Conventional military opinion regarded war in the future as far more likely to repeat the World War pattern than to diverge from it. Superiority of the defensive would prevail; deep defenses would necessitate attacks in depth; and all other arms would have to be combined in support of the infantry to achieve movement. Sophisticated tactics incorporating advanced armored vehicles and aircraft could provide mobility on the battlefield, provided technological advancement did not preponderantly benefit the defensive. At any rate, masses of men and material would be required; successive lines would have to be penetrated, making advances discontinuous; and annihilation, the rapid destruction of the enemy’s will to resist, would be a less likely outcome than attrition. Governments, armies and peoples would have to accept a prolonged test of endurance; and the best strategy would be the one that imposed the greater share of destruction on the enemy.

More radical thinkers contended that technology could transform warfare. Colonel J. F. C. Fuller and Captain B. H. Liddell Hart advocated letting machines replace masses of men. They envisioned fleets of tanks and aircraft engaging each other at high speed in short, decisive battles.²⁹ An Italian general, Giulio Douhet, pronounced the airplane, the ‘offensive weapon par excellence’, capable of fighting and winning wars entirely by itself.³⁰ Air Marshal Sir Hugh Trenchard, Chief of the British Air Staff, contended that aerial bombing could destroy an enemy’s will to resist by breaking his civilian morale.³¹ The transformational theories were short on empirical evidence. The British Army tested a makeshift experimental mechanized force of about 300 vehicles in 1927 and 1928; thereafter, money – and interest – ran out.

The idea that war could be abolished in the world organized as it was conflicted with fundamental Marxist–Leninist doctrine but dovetailed nicely with Stalin’s announced commitment to coexistence. Although it had not been given an opportunity beforehand, as the other great powers had, to enter reservations, the Soviet Union, declaring it had none, became an early signatory to the Paris Peace Pact. To further evince sincerity, it then negotiated a protocol with several neighboring states, including Poland and Romania, with whom it had notoriously strained relations, by which they put the pact into force among themselves before the full ratification process was completed.³² Maxim Litvinov, Stalin’s most accomplished negotiator, headed a large Soviet delegation in the disarmament

commission. In January 1929, after the commission refused to consider a Soviet proposal for immediate total disarmament, Litvinov argued for progressive-proportional disarmament, which appealed to the public, though not to the commission.

Future war was a more complex question in the Soviet Union than elsewhere. In the abstract, class conflict differentiated any war in which Soviet forces engaged from every other possible kind. Additionally, Frunze's theory and conventional Soviet military opinion took the Russian Civil War to be a model for the future at least equally viable as any other in its practical aspects and vastly superior in political derivation. On the other hand, no matter what model eventually prevailed, foreign thinking, whether conventional or radical, embraced a wide range of vital concerns relative to warfare in a technological age on which neither the Civil War nor Marxist-Leninist doctrine gave substantive guidance. Trotsky had been right on that score, which in no way mitigated the problem.

What the Soviet military most needed was not the futuristic theory of Fuller, Liddell Hart and others (although they perhaps gave it more serious consideration than it received elsewhere) but to understand technological warfare in its current state. For such a study, the foreign conventional assessment confirmed the German March 1918 offensive as the most advanced point of departure; and the information from the German side was the most comprehensive and accessible. One particularly valuable item in the German literature was the General Staff's directive 'The Attack in Positional Warfare', which, in January 1918, had formulated the doctrine that became known as the 'Hutier' tactics (after General Oscar von Hutier, who commanded the Eighteenth Army in the March offensive).³³

In an article, 'War as a Problem of Armed Conflict', printed in the first (1928) edition of *The Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, Tukhachevskiy analyzed the currently prevailing conditions under which major wars would have to be fought. The World War, as it was fought on the Western Front, he concluded, had introduced permanently decisive changes. Technological means had become dominant on the battlefield and in four years had compelled the contestants to double their industrial capacities. Henceforth, adequacy of industrial production would be the first consideration in war planning; and all strategies, whether offensive or defensive, would center on the industrial bases. Defenses would be deep and always re-enforceable and renewable over railroads reaching back into the interior. Attacks would have to go deep; and to dream, as all parties had in 1914, of annihilating the enemy's armies in a single stroke was utterly futile. Fronts would be broad, and successive operations alternating with periods of positional warfare would be the rule. The objectives would be to carry the war to the enemy's territory and destroy his industrial base, which he, in turn, would defend to the absolute limit.³⁴

Tukhachevskiy undertook to place warfare in an up-to-date strategic setting. Triandafilov did the same a year later in much greater detail for war on the battlefield. In *The Character of Operations of Contemporary Armies*, he assumed the 'task of investigating all matters which determine the character of ... [such]

operations' and came as close to achieving that goal as any Soviet theorist would in the period between the world wars.³⁵

Dividing the subject into two parts, he dealt first with the state of the armies, particularly those that had fought on the Western Front in the World War. Like Tukhachevskiy, he concluded that the most significant development in the years 1914 through 1918 had been the progressive quantitative and qualitative increase in technological means, and the trend was continuing in the postwar years. Consequently, if the major capitalist countries went to war again, they would do so with much more numerous and effective weapons of all kinds, ranging from rifles and machine guns to tanks, aircraft and chemical agents. The German Army, for instance, had conducted its 1914 offensive with 20 artillery pieces per kilometer of front and in its 1918 offensive had employed 128 pieces per kilometer.³⁶ Tanks and other forms of motorization had been in 'a new phase of development' since the war, while the Red Army had yet to acquire its first experience with motorization.³⁷ Flatly rejecting Fuller's and Liddell Hart's small armies theories as reversions to the eighteenth century motivated by capitalist fears about their working classes' reliability, Triandafilov predicted that mass armies would be the standard and technology would have to provide them with weapons and transportation.³⁸ The main branches would be infantry and artillery, with tanks supplementing and in part substituting for artillery. That aviation would continue to grow as a supporting branch was 'absolutely clear'. Cavalry would have a supporting role, though a less important one in western than in eastern armies.³⁹

Operations, the subject of Part Two, was Triandafilov's principal concern, specifically the deep offensive operation. With regard to the latter, he pointed out, the World War progression had been inversely proportionate to the technological means. In their August 1914 drive across Belgium to the Marne River, the German armies had advanced 5–6 km (3.1–3.72 miles) per day against the heaviest resistance they encountered and otherwise gained as much as 10 km (6.2 miles) per day. In the March 1918 offensive on the Somme River, regarded as the model for the future even by the former Allies, specially trained and equipped German shock armies with massive artillery support managed no more than 3.5–5 km (2.2–3.1 miles) per day. 'Success in contemporary operations', he concluded, 'is achieved slowly, only as a result of enormous effort and repeated attacks.'⁴⁰ The 1914 rates would not be reached again unless some one army could muster a force of tanks large enough to shift the whole balance. Broad frontal attacks could not produce 'operational yields', penetrations to depths between 10–35 km (6–21.7 miles). The initial operation in a series designed to achieve substantial depth would need to employ 'combination blows', two or more separate, simultaneous blows that would interact with each other to form 'pincers' which could 'envelop, capture, annihilate the enemy' and 'inflict a sufficiently sharp defeat to free the attacker's hand with respect to the rest of the front'.⁴¹ Dealing the blows would require shock armies heavier than those employed in the World War and fully equipped with the latest technology.

Triandafilov's longest lasting accomplishment was to establish norms as an essential permanent component in Soviet military theory. The character of

operations, as he saw it, could be comprehensively quantified in terms of widths and depths, rates of movement, strengths required, weapons per kilometer of frontage, supplies, reinforcements, and so forth; and the resulting numbers could be applied as norms for planning and for judging performance. In that respect he had anticipated exactly the course the civilian sector would take in the five-year plans.

STALIN'S WAR LEADERSHIP

Concurrently a bright star that many had failed to recognize was rising. On Stalin's fiftieth birthday (21 December 1929), Voroshilov published *Stalin and the Red Army* 'to partially fill a gap' in the biography of 'our friend'.⁴² According to him, attacks 'focused on Comrade Stalin during the past five or six years' had kept his 'truly exceptional role at the most critical moments in the Civil War' from coming to light. Drawing on 'little-known documents', Voroshilov corrected the record.

In the entire three years of the Civil War, Voroshilov maintained, Stalin was 'the only person' the Central Committee continually rushed from one threatened front to the other, its 'specialist in cleaning the war department's Augean stables'. And he never failed. At Tsaritsyn, Perm, and Petrograd, he restored the stability of the rear. On the southern front in 1919, his plan, which the Central Committee adopted, defeated Denikin's armies and proved him a 'true strategist of civil war'. The 'historical significance' of his invention, the First Cavalry Army, was 'well known', but it was not all. He had also created 'shock groupings' and determined the main directions in which to concentrate attacks. After he had defeated Denikin, Stalin's 'authority as a first class organizer and war leader was beyond question'; and the Central Committee relied on him to organize the major operations.⁴³ In the Polish war, his victories in the western Ukraine had made West Front's march on Warsaw possible; and First Cavalry Army would assuredly have captured Lvov, if West Front 'had not failed to take Warsaw'.⁴⁴ Subsequently, he had organized the campaign against Vrangal, and 'only illness' had taken him away from that task.

Stalin's entitlement to recognition as a war leader did not rest solely on the myths he had worked at developing throughout the Civil War and Voroshilov had recounted with embellishments. He had held crucial positions in the field and been close to the center of the decision-making process. In a leadership structure in which all claims to distinction derived from the Civil War, his *prima facie* record was as good as any. Although he disdained systematic study of military theory, he had also applied himself sufficiently in that sphere to have formulated a set of principles for the conduct of war. The first of those, stability of the rear, converted a commonly accepted wartime practice going back to the medieval 'peace of the castle' into a license for ruthless repression. In the second, he identified selection of the site for the main effort as the principal function of strategy, because 'determining the direction of the main blow means deciding in advance

the nature of operations during the whole period of the war ... [and] to the extent of nine-tenths, the fate of the whole war'.⁴⁵ In that respect, he had, according to Voroshilov, displayed 'enormous talent'.⁴⁶ He had, as well, defined 'the task of the art of war' as being 'to ensure having all arms of the service, bring them to perfection and skillfully combine their operations.' This required adaptation to the forms of war. Whereas the cavalry could often decide the issue in a war of maneuver, 'in positional warfare, heavy artillery and aircraft, gas and tanks decide everything'.⁴⁷ A fourth principle was that supply, including weapons production, and the formation of reserves were too important to be entrusted to the military staffs or civilian agencies without the Central Committee's close oversight. In addition to manpower, he categorized reserves as consisting of territory, natural resources, food supply, industrial potential, and for the Soviet state exclusively, the proletariat in capitalist countries and disaffected colonial populations.⁴⁸

On the outcome of the Civil War, Stalin had made an outstandingly perceptive observation with profound implications for the future, namely, that the White armies' fatal weakness had been their peripheral position in 'the border regions of Russia', which were populated by diverse ethnic groups with conflicting national aspirations. On the other hand, 'Inner Russia, with its industrial and cultural and political centers, Moscow and Petrograd and with its nationally homogeneous population, principally Russian, became the base of the revolution'.⁴⁹

SOCIALIST DEVELOPMENT VERSUS RED MILITARISM

In 1929 and 1930, Stalin was again 'under attack'; this time by Bukharin, Rykov and Tomskiy, who had been his allies in the campaigns against the left and 'new' oppositions but now formed the 'right deviation'. They argued that a rush into socialism would, in the short term, impair the economic gains the NEP had made and in the longer term could do no more than raise worker productivity, which the NEP was already doing. To confound the 'deviationists', Stalin, at the April 1929 Central Committee plenum, called for an 'optimum five-year plan' that, while continuing the drive toward socialism, would promote new industrial development, particularly in heavy industry, in order to mechanize agriculture.⁵⁰ Later in the month, with punctilious concern for party legality, he had the Sixteenth Party Conference authorize the Central Committee to devise an optimum plan and include 'significant strengthening of the country's defensive capability'.⁵¹

On 15 July 1929, Stalin took part in a joint meeting of the Central Committee and the RMCU that subsequently would come to rank as a decisive turning point in Soviet military affairs, the inception of the 'technological reconstruction of the armed forces'. The immediate results, however, were a good deal less definite than they would later appear. The Army received a commitment that its existing equipment and supply shortages would be 'liquidated' over the next three years. During the next two years, its mission would be to acquaint itself with the requirements

of up-to-date artillery and tanks. (According to Budenny, Stalin added a warning: 'We do not want tanks to be turned in a few days into useless heaps of metal.')⁵² The main requirement with regard to the Air Force would be to accelerate its advancement toward the qualitative level of the bourgeois states.⁵³ The time-frame, overall, was loose, since the First Five-Year Plan would continue into 1933.

The optimum five-year plan needed to be confirmed by a party congress. Although the outcome of one could hardly have been in doubt and party conferences customarily did not precede congress by more than a few months, Stalin did not issue a call. In November 1929, the RMCU created a post, Chief of Armed Forces Armament, which it gave to Uborevich with a charge to 'manage all matters pertaining to technological rearmament, motorization and mechanization.'⁵⁴

On 11 January 1930, Tukhachevskiy, to whose mind the program for technological reconstruction thus far developed was grossly inadequate, sent a letter to Voroshilov. Progress toward socialism, he wrote, required that reconstruction of the armed forces be based on 'all the latest technology and the capability of massive military-technological production'. New divisions and artillery, air, and armored forces would have to be created. Those would have to be handled 'in new proportions, by new organizational structures, and according to new forms of operational art'.⁵⁵ Implied were a military-industrial and a military expansion that went far beyond just modernization of the existing forces.

After an apparently lengthy futile wait for an answer from Voroshilov, Tukhachevskiy sent the proposal to Stalin. Stalin did not answer directly but in a letter sent through the military channel, which Voroshilov read out at a RMCU meeting. The proposal, Stalin wrote, was an 'un-Marxist approach to the question and advanced illusory ideas'. I would 'liquidate the socialist development' and replace it with 'a system of Red militarism'. Tukhachevskiy appealed to Stalin to reread the proposal, adding that it was not predominantly concerned with preparations for future war but with 'economic power' and, therefore, would not impair progress toward socialism. Stalin did not reply.⁵⁶

Internationally, in late 1929 and early 1930, the stability Stalin had noted earlier showed signs of breaking down. In Manchuria in July 1929, Chinese Nationalist troops occupied the Soviet-owned and operated Chinese Eastern Railroad. Blyukher, who had until two years before been Chiang Kai-shek's military advisor, organized the detachments in the eastern territories into the Special Far Eastern Army and in November regained control of the railroad. Although assembling the troops had been the only real problem, the army received the honorific title 'Red Banner', and the Central Committee voted Blyukher a special Order of the Red Banner. After January 1930, Japanese insistence on parity in battleships with Britain and the United States threatened to break up the London Naval Conference, which France and Spain had already refused to attend; and Germany, disregarding the limits imposed on it under the Versailles Treaty, was pushing to completion its first pocket battleship. From the Soviet point of view, the most significant development, no doubt, was the onset of economic depression throughout the capitalist world after the stock market crashes in October 1929.

The depression and the Chinese Eastern Railroad affair, which sharply strained relations with Japan and evoked censorious reactions in London and Washington, were sufficient, together with the other outstanding issues, to bring Stalin to call for a party congress in June 1930. In a plenum held before the congress, the Central Committee added two amendments to its July 1929 resolution on technological reconstruction of the armed forces. Those charged the RMCU with keeping the plan under review from the standpoints of '(a) numerical strength, in order not to be inferior to our probable enemies in the main theater of war, and (b) technology, to ensure that the decisive types of armament, aircraft, artillery and armor, will be superior to those of the enemy'.⁵⁷

Stalin's report to the Sixteenth Congress focused on the depression. Taking up a favorite theory of Lenin's, he posited a bipolar world in which the Soviet Union was 'the citadel of revolution' and the United States 'the principal capitalist country', the citadel of capitalism. The Soviet Union, by its example, was revolutionizing the working classes and colonial peoples everywhere. The United States, as the country in the most severe economic decline, would give 'colossal impetus' to the depression, which was itself already not an ordinary cyclical event but the consequence of capitalism's massive internal contradictions complicated by the effects of the 'imperialist war'. The crisis was, moreover, 'laying bare and intensifying the contradictions and antagonisms between the major imperialist countries'. Capitalism was in rapid decay, and the result would be 'an epoch of wars and revolutions'.

He did not, however, see in this the dawning of the opportunity that he had told the last congress would inevitably come. The Soviet state, he told the delegates, was alone and 'encircled' by capitalist states, which, although they were divided among themselves and would increasingly be coming into conflict with each other, shared a common antagonism toward the Soviet Union and could be expected to consider 'whether it would not be possible to solve this or that contradiction of capitalism, or all the contradictions together, at the expense of the USSR'. Therefore, while relying on its growing economic, political and military strength to deter 'adventurist attacks', the Soviet Union would have, above all, to continue 'undeviating pursuit' of its peace policy 'with all our might and with all the means at our disposal'.⁵⁸

The delegates, as was to be expected, approved all the economic proposals stemming from the Sixteenth Conference and one other which Stalin introduced at the congress, namely, that production be accelerated, particularly in heavy industry, in order to complete the First Five-Year Plan a year ahead of schedule. The actual main objective of the latter was to accelerate the preparations for the 'optimum five-year plan', which would become the Second Five-Year Plan, but the speed-up in the factories and on the farms had to be made palatable to the working masses. The final resolution, therefore, changed the party line, giving strengthening defense ('to prevent international imperialist intervention') a prominent place in the drive for economic self-sufficiency and calling on the party 'to mobilize the working class and peasant mass ... in support of the Red Army, Navy and Air Force'.⁵⁹

In October, the Central Committee authorized the 'Decade of Defense' to revive the presumed spirit of the Civil War. The idea, one of the few he is known to have had, came from Budenny, who claimed the result was 'an ardent display of love for the army and navy' and readiness to do 'everything possible' to support the armed forces.⁶⁰ Nationwide, for ten days, beginning on 15 November, the tenth anniversary of the victory over Vrangel, parades and meetings commemorated 'the heroic past of the Civil War' and directed the workers' attention to the need to provide the Red Army with 'aircraft, dirigibles, motorization and mechanization.'⁶¹ Uborevich's appointment in November as deputy people's commissar for armament provided a clearing house for problems associated with the technological reconstruction. The year ended, however, without notable progress having been made in the military sphere toward putting into effect the conference, congress, and Central Committee resolutions on the technological reconstruction made during the last year-and-a-half.

MILITARY CORRECTNESS IN A POLITICAL CONTEXT

The armed forces' emergence as a major beneficiary of the five-year plans had brought them also into the political storm attending the drive toward socialism. The party congress had called for 'a decisive struggle against all forms of deviation from the party line'; and the OGPU was taking a hard look at the left-over military specialists, who by definition constituted a pool of potential right deviationists.⁶² This was, no doubt, why Shaposhnikov sought the honor of a party membership that October. But, as many had learned, party membership gave slight protection; and in Tukhachevskiy's particular case, even candidacy in the Central Committee would have availed little against the judgment Stalin had pronounced on his January 1930 proposal.

By coincidence, in part, and as a concomitant, in part, of the decisions that were having to be made regarding the technological reconstruction, the past year had, as well, brought a long-standing dispute over the nature of contemporary war to an acrimonious climax. In 1926, A. A. Svechin, the former general who had led the military specialists' resistance to Frunze's unified military doctrine, had published a work entitled *Strategy*. Since Tukhachevskiy's departure to Leningrad, he had been the Frunze Academy's resident authority on the subject. He contended, in agreement with the majority of foreign military professionals, that war of attrition was inescapable in the currently prevailing circumstances and battles of annihilation would only be fought, if at all, when one side or the other was near exhaustion.⁶³ Shaposhnikov, ever cautious, agreed that in 'all probability', attrition would predominate in any future war but chided Svechin for having failed to recognize that a 'possible strategy of annihilation' could not be ruled out in the case of 'a large, internally stable country free from class conflict'.⁶⁴ Tukhachevskiy and Triandafilov, as has been seen, conceded the likely impossibility of a war's being decided

by annihilation alone but insisted that victory depended overwhelmingly on offensive capability. In *Contemporary Armies*, Triandafilov gave just six pages out of close to 200 to defensive operations.

The movement toward technological reconstruction had brought Tukhachevskiy's program within the range of practical feasibility, but its theoretical foundation had simultaneously been undermined. The coincidence mentioned above had lofted Svechin's side of the argument out of the theoretical realm. In 1929, France, the presumed pacesetter in military technology, had begun building the Maginot Line, a commitment of the most permanent kind to the strategy of attrition. On the other hand, Stalin's peace policy placed Tukhachevskiy in the position of espousing a strategy for a war that might not occur and could well prove impracticable if one did. Moreover, while attrition was not a form compatible with revolutionary war, it would give full scope to the Soviet Union's strategic asset most respected by its potential opponents, the vast Russian land.

The Red Army and the *Reichswehr*

GENERAL HANS VON SEECKT AND THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

On 10 November 1918, a day before the armistice, the high command of the German *Wehrmacht* (armed forces) in effect legitimized the recently declared republic by agreeing to defend it against ‘Bolshevik’ challenges and demobilize the armies in good order. In doing so, it renounced its subordination to the emperor and became an autonomous partner in the republic, a ‘state within a state’. In early 1919, having brought the troops home and vigorously, even brutally, suppressed left-wing opposition to the republic – and shown itself considerably less willing to do the same with the right – the General Staff took up the question of the armed forces’ future, which was also being considered at the peace conference in Versailles. On 21 February 1919, the National Assembly, in a decree drafted in the General Staff, abolished the *Wehrmacht* and created a *Reichswehr* (national defense force) consisting of a *Reichs Heer* (army) and *Reichs Marine* (navy). What had been the Army High Command (*Oberkommando des Heeres*) became the more innocuous-sounding *Heeresleitung*, Army Command, *Leitung* actually connotating guidance more than command. The Army’s former commander in chief became the mere Chief of the Army Command. The General Staff disappeared altogether, and a *Truppenamt* (Troop Office) appeared in the space it had occupied.¹

General Hans von Seeckt, who had been the progenitor of the *Reichswehr*, became the first chief of the Troop Office in September 1919. In the interim, on 25 July, Germany had signed the Treaty of Versailles, which contained military provisions far more stringent than Seeckt had anticipated. He had expected to be allowed at least a 300,000-man army; the treaty set a 100,000-man limit, in which no more than 4,000 could be officers. The Army was to have no more than 102,000 rifles and carbines, 1,134 light and 792 heavy machine guns, 252 mortars, 204 77-mm. cannon, and 84 105-mm cannon. The navy was restricted to 15,000 men, of which no more than 10 per cent could be officers, six battleships, six light cruisers, 12 destroyers, and 12 torpedo boats. The officers in both services were required to serve at least 25 years, the enlisted men 12 years; and no more than 5 per cent were to be discharged in any one year. All armament in excess of the specified numbers

was to be turned over to the Allies as reparations. Aircraft, submarines, and poison gas were prohibited, also the manufacture and importation of those or any other weapons or war material. The General Staff was also prohibited – and the war academy that trained its personnel.² An Inter-allied Military Control Commission with sweeping police powers enforced the terms.

Seeckt regarded the peace treaty as the wellspring of the next war and his mission as being to create without overtly contravening the treaty an army capable of expanding rapidly without losing effectiveness. He had in hand the personnel of the most proficient general staff in the World War. Since the General Staff had already been abolished in name, all that was needed was to make its functions invisible by leaving the Troop Office in Berlin and dispersing them among the military district commands. Man for man the *Reichswehr* could easily be the best qualified armed force in the world. But the next war would not be fought only with infantry and cavalry armed with rifles, machine guns, and a few cannon; and without access to all the implements of war, the *Reichswehr* would be no match for even a third-rate power. Making that inescapable had been the Allies' primary objective. To ensure Allied unanimity, the French delegation had inserted a blank section, Article 116, into the treaty to accommodate the Russian demands for reparations after the victory in the Civil War, which was expected, of course, to go to the White forces. The Bolsheviks were looked on everywhere as a gang of wild-eyed revolutionaries. The new German Government, itself the product of a revolution of sorts, had broken relations with them after an attempt in early 1919 to organize *soviets* (in German *Räte*) in Berlin and elsewhere. The German Social Democrats, the largest party in the republic, abhorred them. In early 1919, Seeckt had said that 'of all the incomprehensible things in German war policy' the most incomprehensible were 'the negotiations with the Soviet regime and its recognition as a state' at Brest-Litovsk.³

In March 1920, Seeckt became Chief of the Army Command, which empowered him to formulate military policy and deal directly with the *Reichswehr* minister and the president of the republic. By then, he was coming to believe the only way Germany could regain Great Power status was through an alliance with a victorious Soviet Russia of the sort Otto von Bismarck had maintained with the Imperial Government in the nineteenth century.⁴ In early July, Seeckt and *Reichswehr* Minister Otto Gessler attended a conference in Spa at which the Allies emphatically reconfirmed the military provisions. In a situation estimate issued on 26 July, Section T1 (operations) of the *Truppenamt* concluded that 'the Entente has not given up exerting all its might to destroy Germany. ... Germany must free itself from the shackles of the Entente by means of Soviet Russia without falling prey to Bolshevism.' Regarding the Polish–Soviet War then at its height, it added, 'Germany has no interest in giving Poland any sort of help against Russia. If Poland collapses, the whole structure of the Versailles will shake.'⁵

Just then that prediction appeared to be on the verge of fulfillment. In late July, the armies on the right wing of Tukhachevskiy's attack toward Moscow made contact with the German troops on the East Prussian border, who, in a spirit of,

to say the least, benevolent neutrality, offered them supply and transport assistance. In the middle of the month, after the Polish commander's, General Jozef Pilsudski, counteroffensive cut them off, the main forces of the Soviet Fourth and Fifteenth Armies became the *Reichsheer's* guests in East Prussia for a time. Seeckt used the period of direct access to send Enver Pasha, the former Turkish War Minister, to Moscow. Enver, whose chief of staff Seeckt had been for a time during the war, shared Seeckt's thinking on a German–Russian connection and wanted to create a place in it for Turkey. In mid-October, he returned to Berlin well provided with money to pursue the matter further. In January 1921, having by then established a direct contact with Trotsky through Viktor Kopp, a member of Trotsky's entourage who was in Berlin ostensibly to manage prisoner of war affairs but more interested in talking with the Foreign Office about a trade agreement and, even more, with Seeckt about a secret arms compact, Seeckt established a Special Group R (Russia) in the Troop Office.⁶

On 7 May, Trotsky informed Lenin that the Germans were willing 'to cooperate with us in restoring our war industry' and to help in building an air force and a submarine fleet.⁷ In an early June meeting, Seeckt disclosed the negotiations to Reichs Chancellor Joseph Wirth, Foreign Minister Ago von Maltzan, and *Reichswehr* Minister Gessler. Wirth left the response up to Maltzan, who pronounced the effort to be 'entirely in the interest of German–Russian policy', but stipulated that the Foreign Office should not be privy to 'the technical execution of this plan'.⁸ The collaboration was to take two forms; German investment in and operation of Russian arms plants and Russian production of munitions for export to Germany. The Russians appeared ready to do business, but the Special Group R had no money on which to base offers, and German industry regarded the Russian economy as hopelessly disorganized. The only German concern to express a firm interest was the Junkers aircraft company, which was going to be hit exceptionally hard by the treaty restrictions. Finally, in January 1922, Wirth allotted the Special Group R 150 million paper marks, which owing to rampant inflation were worth about three-quarters of a million US dollars. In March, the Special Group R gave Hugo Junkers a contract to build 'boxes' in Russia and as start-up capital, 140 million paper marks. On 28 February 1923, after nearly a year of intensive negotiations, the Council of People's Commissars confirmed a contract that permitted Junkers to take over a former aircraft plant in Fili, an industrial suburb of Moscow, for the purpose of developing and building all-metal aircraft.⁹

RAPALLO, THE RUHR, AND LOCARNO

One contract was not much to show for more than two years' effort, but 1922 also brought Seeckt an unanticipated dividend. The peace conference had regarded Russia under the Bolsheviks as unfit for membership in the community of nations; and the treaty had imposed on Germany a bill for reparations amounting to the

whole cost of the war for the western European Allies to be paid in kind at the highest rate the German economy could support. On 10 April 1922, a European conference which was expected to hear Russian and German appeals for reconsideration convened in Genoa, Italy. When the French Government announced at the outset that it would refuse to countenance any changes in either instance, the Russian and German delegations withdrew to Rapallo, a nearby seaside resort, where they wrote a treaty in which they granted each other full diplomatic recognition and most favored nation status, abjured all claims to reparations, and pledged neutrality in the event either should be attacked by a third party. The treaty at once acquired a conspiratorial aura and raised suspicion of a collateral military engagement, which pleased Seeckt – who was actually not involved – because it would ‘above all intimidate Poland’.¹⁰ Poland was and in fact would remain the assumed third party in the treaty.

On 11 January 1923, Germany having defaulted on some of its 1922 reparations shipments, French and Belgian troops entered the Ruhr industrial complex to seize control of the goods at their source, and the German Government declared a state of passive resistance. The ensuing shutdown of the Ruhr sent the mark into freefall: by August, it was down to 4.6 billion to the dollar. On 11 August, the British Foreign Office notified the French and Belgians that the British Crown Council had found the occupation of the Ruhr illegal and contrary to the Treaty of Versailles and that the German reparations debt would have to be based on ability to pay as determined by an international committee. The French responded that they would not withdraw until Germany stopped the passive resistance and reparations deliveries resumed. On 13 August, the German *Reichstag* formed a new government under Gustav Stresemann, who, on 26 September, terminated the passive resistance. The republic was on the verge of collapse. On 9 November, President Friedrich Ebert, exercising a constitutional power, declared a national emergency and turned executive power over to Seeckt. By then, communist uprisings were taking place in Hamburg and Saxony and right-wing paramilitary groups were mobilizing in Bavaria.¹¹ Seeckt ignored the latter and took his mission to be ‘to strangle the communists in Germany but collaborate with the Soviet regime’.¹²

For the Red Army and the Special Group R, 1923 was a year of business as usual. On 14 May, they began to put the final touches on two contracts: one for a German firm to produce poison gas under the cover name ‘Bersol’ in a chemical plant near Samara, the other for a Soviet engagement to supply artillery ammunition to the *Reichswehr*. Payment was to be in gold marks, which were not subject to inflation and of which Germany supposedly had none. By the year’s end, the Germans had promised 200 million gold marks and committed 75 million, and the Russians had promised 5.7 million.¹³ By then, also, Seeckt had pretty well disabused the Soviet leadership of the idea that Germany was ripe for communist revolution.

The surrender in the Ruhr, which was widely seen in Germany as comparable to that in 1918, brought Stresemann’s chancellorship to a swift end but gained him

stature abroad that enabled him to continue as foreign minister and for the first time engendered sympathy for Germany in world opinion. On the other hand, France, its image as innocent victim having become somewhat tarnished, had to agree to accept an international committee's judgment on the reparations dispute. The United States, which had been seeking to avoid becoming embroiled again in European problems and claimed no reparations, agreed to participate; and on 24 January 1924, a committee, henceforth known by the name of its chairman, Charles G. Dawes, an American economist, began work and on 9 April submitted a report later to be known as the Dawes Plan. It established a schedule of graduated payments but still left the total bill oppressively high, and Stresemann needed until August to get it passed in the *Reichstag* by a slim margin. On 1 September 1924, the plan went into effect, and France, as required in it, terminated the Ruhr occupation.¹⁴ The Russians eyed the entire proceeding, which they saw as an effort to draw Germany into the western camp, with deep concern. Stresemann assured them that Germany was as much as ever committed to the Treaty of Rapallo, but from their point of view there was a distinct difference between a situation in which two parties had a relationship only with each other and one in which one of the parties had another relationship, particularly if the other was a prospective enemy of both.¹⁵

For what he declared to be a policy of fulfillment of the treaty terms, Stresemann was reviled by the German nationalists and celebrated abroad as a great statesman. In Locarno, Switzerland, on 16 October 1925, Stresemann signed a treaty with the former Allies, less the United States, in which Germany, in effect, pledged never to attempt to regain territory it had lost to France under the peace treaty and in a codicil, pledged not to attempt to regain territory lost to Poland by force. Separately, Germany and Poland also negotiated an arbitration treaty.

The Locarno Treaties paved the way for Germany's entry into the League of Nations on 10 September 1926, as a member of the League Council, at that. Stresemann received the Nobel Peace Prize on 10 December 1926; and a month later, as an afterthought, the Inter-allied Military Control Commission was dissolved.¹⁶ Stresemann's treaties, as the Russians saw them, were crass efforts to curry favor with the imperialists made worse by their own inability to do the same. France would not negotiate unless the Soviet Union agreed to assume the tsarist government's huge debt to France it accumulated between 1890 and 1918; and the British were on the verge of breaking off relations over Soviet involvement in the 1926 general strike.¹⁷ To mitigate the damage from Locarno, Stresemann negotiated the Treaty of Berlin with the Soviet Union (24 April 1926), which reiterated the provisions of Rapallo and committed both parties not to enter any coalition that imposed an economic or financial boycott on one of them. In Paris and London, a few saw the treaty as contrary to the spirit of Locarno, but no one cared to fuss about it.¹⁸

RESURGENCE IN GERMANY, DISASTER IN RUSSIA

In the years of Stresemann's ascendancy the military relations also underwent significant changes. In 1924, Frunze, as Chief of the Red Army Staff, replaced E. M. Sklyanskiy, who as Trotskiy's deputy had been the German's chief point of contact; and Voroshilov became the military and naval affairs commissar. On the German side, in December 1926, the passionately anti-military Social Democratic faction in the *Reichstag* managed to force Seeckt's resignation as a consequence of his having permitted the Hohenzollern crown prince to attend the annual maneuvers that year. The financial problems Seeckt had at first experienced were over. The inflation had wiped out the German domestic war debt; and after the Ruhr Battle ended, a currency reform rapidly brought the mark back to its pre-war level. The Dawes Plan restored German credit internationally, and a loan expected to gross 800,000 gold marks floated in October 1924 brought in over a billion.¹⁹ The republic had entered its good years. The Special Group R's effort to establish a clandestine armament industry in Russia, however, was a complete disaster. In two years of operations, the Junkers plant in Fili produced many requests for additional subventions but few aircraft. The German management of 'Bersol' had the same appetite for money, and eventually proved itself incapable of making poison gas. In early 1927, both plants reverted to Soviet ownership.²⁰ On the other hand, the Soviet arms industry had fulfilled its contract for artillery ammunition. By December 1925, 400,000 75-mm rounds were stored in Leningrad ready for shipment. In the summer of 1926, suddenly anticipating an ammunition shortage, the Troop Office had three ships dispatched to pick up the entire lot, some 3,000 tons. Unloading cargoes of that nature and volume and concealing them was unlikely to go unnoticed; and coming exactly at the time Germany was being admitted to the League of Nations and Stresemann was about to receive the Nobel Prize, it was at the least a monumental impropriety. Some newspapers took note of it; and the Social Democrats raised questions in the *Reichstag*; but the *Reichswehr* had enough support there to head off a full inquiry. Abroad, the governments, press, and public were more interested in celebrating what appeared to be the renunciation of war in Europe. The *Reichswehr* for its part, concluded that the sea route was too insecure to sustain a secret rearmament.²¹

On 31 December 1926, with reference to the recent exposures, Josif Unshlikht, an experienced party watchdog who was the deputy chairman of the RMCU and the military and naval affairs commissariat, sent the following recommendations to Stalin:

1. Our attempts to attract German investments in our military industry through RWM [*Reichswehr Ministry*] have failed. So in the future we will have to refuse the organization of joint (with RWM) military-industrial ventures.
2. Our future joint work with RWM, while outwardly continuing to maintain a friendly spirit, must exploit the tactical and operational experience of the Germans

and, most important, technical innovations (in artillery, tank engineering, communications, etc.). But we must bear in mind that we should not allow them to penetrate into the organization of our Army.

3. To continue our joint work in tank school and aviation school and in aviachemical tests.²²

LIPETSK, TOMKA, AND KAMA

As Unshlikht indicated, the program was to some extent already in progress. In 1923, the *Reichswehr*, to subsidize the Fokker aircraft plant in Holland, had ordered 100 fighters including 50 Fokker D XIIIIs, which were then still in development. When the order was completed, in the summer of 1924, the Army Command having not yet decided what to do with them had them crated and shipped to Russia. In early 1925, the Army Command established a requirement for an advanced flight school. The D XIIIIs, which were then the highest performance fighters in existence, became the school's equipment. The Soviet air staff provided a site near Lipetsk, 200 miles south of Moscow. The *Reichswehr* covered the construction costs and supplied the staff, there then still being a large number of experts in all the aspects of military flying in Germany who were eager to practice their skills. The school opened in the spring of 1926 in the guise of a research institute for civil air operations, and the staff and students all wore civilian clothes. The *Reichswehr* paid the costs of instruction, and half the student spaces were at Soviet disposal.

The German command saw the school as an increment in the clandestine rearmament program. Candidates for commissions in the, as yet, nonexistent air force were to be given a year's training in German civilian flying schools and then a summer's experience at Lipetsk in flying the latest model fighters. Thereafter they would go into the reserve. Some active duty officers with wartime flying experience were given refresher courses at Lipetsk. The objective was to create a token air force that could be manned and put on display at the moment the treaty restrictions were overcome. By the end of the 1930 training year, the *Reichswehr* had a secret roster of 168 trained fighter pilots, enough to man three squadrons, and 100 pilots trained as artillery observers. Of 36 active officers who took the Lipetsk course in 1928, 17 went on to become air force and army generals in the world war. On the Soviet side, the Lipetsk venture was a great disappointment. What it needed, the Soviet command insisted, was not pilot training, but information on air war doctrine and technology and assistance in research and development.²³

Chemical warfare was a field in which the Special Group R and its Soviet contacts shared an equally compelling interest. At Podosinki, near Moscow, German technicians conducted aerochemical experiments in 1926 using nonpoisonous substances with similar physical characteristics to war gases. Fearing more exposures, Stresemann called a halt to the work in 1926. Work resumed in 1928

at an installation on the Volga River north of Saratov known as ‘Tomka’ in which some 40 German technicians with Russian assistants tested all of the World War I gases and various modes of delivery, particularly aerial. Nearby, in 1928, the Red Army, with German advice and assistance, began operating its own much larger chemical warfare facility.²⁴

In early 1926, Unshlikht and the *Reichswehr* representatives agreed to set up a tank school for which a site had been found near Kazan. It was given the name ‘Kama’, and construction began in 1926 but was stopped in 1927 for the same reason as Tomka. When finally opened, in 1928, it had a staff of 40 German technicians and 60 Russian associates but no tanks. The work being done in Germany was still mostly on paper. The Red Army had several models under development, but Voroshilov refused to loan any of those because, in the Soviet view, the main purpose of the enterprise was to give the Red Army access to German technology, not the reverse. The school had to make do with a few imported British tanks until early 1929 when six ‘large tractors’ (45-ton heavy tanks) designed and built by Krupp works in Germany arrived. A year later, four ‘light tractors’ (9.5-ton light tanks) came from the same source. Kama was a different sort of school than Lipetsk; its mission was not to train tank drivers but to produce a small body of experts thoroughly educated in everything having to do with tanks from development and testing to operation and employment. The courses consisted of a summer devoted to the machines, a winter to theory, and a summer to field exercises. On the course objectives German and Soviet opinion differed. The Germans, thinking in terms of a small professional army, wanted to give intensive instruction to about a dozen officers at a time. The Red Army, having no such limitation, wanted to run through the maximum number that could be accommodated: in 1930, 25 officers, in 1931, 40, in 1932, 100.²⁵

Kama was also charged with testing and evaluating German tank prototypes. In August 1932, during a visit to Kama, the inspector of German motorized troops, General Oscar Lutz and his chief of staff Lt. Col. Heinz Guderian concluded together with Soviet representatives that the ‘large tractor’, which had five turrets, would serve best as the model for a 20-ton tank with three turrets. The Red Army, again seeing no reason for limiting itself, developed two tanks from the ‘large tractor’, the T 28 medium, 28 tons with three turrets, and the T 35, 45 tons with five turrets. The German motorized troops inspectorate, having problems with the weight bridges in Germany could carry and the functions of tanks, focused its development on the ‘light tractor’, which became the precursor of the German Mark I and II light tanks of the early World War II period.²⁶

PERSONNEL EXCHANGES

In his December 1926 report to Stalin, Unshlikht made it clear that he regarded the second of his original three points as the most significant, not only as a means

of avoiding such fiascos as Fili and 'Bersol' but also because it would enable the Red Army to acquire vicariously the war experience it lacked. The objectives would be to gain access to the German 'tactical and operational experience in the world war and the further development of such experience'. One way to accomplish that, he indicated, would be through 'participation of our specialists in German military games, maneuvers, etc.'²⁷ Seeckt and Unshlikht had agreed to such visits some months earlier. In May 1927, the German Foreign Office approved direct contacts between the general staffs, and the RMCU authorized travel to Germany for study.²⁸

Like the joint ventures, the Unshlikht program was in progress before it went into effect. In late April 1926, I. P. Uborevich, now a 30-year-old army commander second rank who commanded the North Caucasus Military District and was a member of the RCMU, had gone to Berlin to learn as much about the German military system as could be assimilated in one year. Since there was no general staff or war academy, much of the time was spent in field trips to visit the location in which the general staff functions were situated and to observe training exercises of various kinds. In July, he was attached for a month to an infantry regiment. In August, he observed radio-controlled cavalry maneuvers; and thereafter, he attended the annual (September) maneuvers. His German instructors found him so apt a student that they invited him back for a second year (1928) expecting, through him, to make the Red Army an effective ally. In his January 1929 report to Voroshilov, he gave his objectives as having been to gain 'general acquaintance with the Germans' strategic, tactical, organizational, and technical views on the present-day army, methods of training troops, and basic principles of the German General Staff's structure and operation'. In the report he listed and described 'highly interesting [German] achievements in a good number of fields'. Regarding his stay, he added, 'I think that in the near future they [the Germans] are going to ask for a similar favor on our part, that is, for our inviting several of their representatives to come to our country for a long-term stay.'²⁹

Actually, it appears that the German Troop Office was not interested in having its officers attached to the Red Army Staff for long periods. The exchanges were decided at the beginning of each year. On the Soviet side they had to be approved by Stalin; on the German an endorsement from the Foreign Office was sufficient. The participants, for the most part, traveled in groups of ten or so; observed maneuvers and troop exercises; and visited schools. At least 200 Soviet officers took part in the exchanges, some more than once. Of those, 20 were given courses in general staff work similar to those the Troop Office gave its own officers. Iona Yakir, the 30-year-old commander of the important Kiev Military District, performed so brilliantly in the two-year general staff course that his German instructors regarded him as a budding military genius. Two others took six-month courses, and the rest, including I. F. Fedko, V. K. Triandafilov, A. I. Yegorov, the ex-sailor P. E. Dybenko, K. A. Meretskov, and S. K. Timoshenko. Timoshenko's ratings ranged from 'above average ... a clear, open, soldierly personality' to 'the mentality of a railroad porter'.³⁰ In 1929–30, General Hans Halm, chief of staff of

the Berlin Military District, spent a year in Moscow as a ‘guest’ of the Red Army Staff. In the eight years after 1925, approximately 100 German officers participated in the exchanges.³¹ The Germans appear to have regarded the exchanges as a kind of missionary activity on their part. In their internal correspondence the Russians, apparently alluding tongue-in-cheek to the Rapallo and Berlin Treaties, frequently referred to the Germans as ‘the friends’.

INDUSTRIAL AND GENERAL STAFF COLLABORATION

A materially more profitable form of exchange for both parties developed between the Red Army and German arms manufacturers. For example, on 3 May 1929, the Krupp company accepted a ten-year contract for 1.85 million US dollars, under which it would ‘pass over to the Soviet side all the experience and knowledge gained by it in all production spheres, which are its specialty or which it has had occasion to study’; and provisions would be made for Soviet representatives to work at its facilities in Germany when necessary. All experience and knowledge the Krupp firm had gained before 1918 would be passed over without reservation; that gained between 1918 and the date the contract was signed would be passed over ‘only with the *Reichswehr*’s agreement’: and ‘new designs’ would require the agreement of the German Government in each instance.³² German Navy and Air Force as well as Army suppliers also participated. Since Stalin always regarded the British Navy as the worst Soviet enemy after the Poles and the most dangerous, bar none, Unshlikht was prepared to afford the *Reichs Marine* a very large place in the exchange program, but because it was critically short of officers, it could not accept and in 1931, having become committed to building a new high seas fleet, abandoned the Soviet connection. Nevertheless, it had by then released some of its late-World War submarine blueprints to the Russians, and its chief supplier of submarine diesel engines had sold some engines to them. The Heinkel aircraft company received a contract for 20 flying boats and launching catapults.³³ These and a large number of contracts with other firms may have kept many alive that would otherwise have had to go out of business and in general helped speed German rearmament after 1933.

Like a pair of shipwrecked sailors clinging to the same piece of driftwood, the *Reichswehr* and the Red Army were constantly in touch with each other, sometimes directly, sometimes through intermediaries, otherwise by observation. Shared antipathy to the works of the Paris Peace Conference, particularly to its chief beneficiary, Poland, held them together. The territory they had both lost to Poland sustained a powerful mutual grievance. France, Poland’s advocate and protector, had just enough presence to necessitate their constant mutual reassurance. Each wanted the other’s unconditional support against Poland, but without a formal commitment to an alliance. The Red Army was in a strategically stronger position than the *Reichswehr*, which, having the French Army at its back, was not a likely

partner in the kind of resolution to the Polish question the Russians wanted. The *Reichswehr*, on the other hand, although it was no more amiably disposed toward the Poles than the Red Army, was, after 1925, being brought out of its isolation from the West by Stresemann's foreign policy.

EFFECTS OF LOCARNO

Seeckt's resignation, in which Stresemann was said to have had a hand, was a major turning point in the *Reichswehr*'s development. As he saw it, his mission was to accelerate rearmament by hook or by crook, and he had regarded the Locarno agreements as pusillanimous concessions to the erstwhile Allies. The military resented the Foreign Office's 'intrusion' into their private sphere, but they had to recognize, however grudgingly, that Locarno had both facilitated the illegal rearmament, in fact made it almost child's play, and brought legal rearmament within the realm of possibility, even probability.³⁴

Unshlikht, perhaps, saw the latter development before his German contacts did. On 31 December 1926, he told Stalin,

After Germany's [success in] weakening its political dependence on the Entente countries [Britain and France] and obtaining the right to vote in the League of Nations, there remains less and less room for illegal armaments and more and more fancied possibility to obtain the expected results legally.³⁵

After 1926, the *Reichswehr* did begin to think in terms of more than just accumulating enough hand weapons and light artillery to beat off a Polish attack. The Army was engaged in providing itself with the organization and weaponry it would need to stage an overnight rearmament when the time was ripe. The Soviet connection was expected to figure more prominently than Unshlikht seems to have thought.

During the years of the collaboration, the *Reichswehr* maintained with the Soviet High Command and with its activities in Russia through the 'Moscow Central', a branch of the Special Group R headed by a major and a captain, both reserve officers. They and all other German military personnel in the Soviet Union were required at the behest of the Foreign Office to wear civilian clothes at all times and take assumed names. Those requirements stifled direct contacts at the policy-making levels until early 1927, when the Foreign Office withdrew its ban. In July, Colonel Hilmar von Mittelberger, chief of the Troop Office's organization branch, which was heavily engaged in readying the Army management for its role in the anticipated expansion, took eight officers from the Troop Office, including two generals, on a visit to Moscow. A year later, Voroshilov, who described him to Stalin as 'the closest assistant to the head of the *Reichswehr* on Russian problems', allowed him to inspect the military schools in the Moscow area (schools were one of his major concerns), granted him an interview, and sent him on a several weeks'

tour.³⁶ Between 1927 and 1932, Mittelberger visited the Soviet Union ten times, after 1928, as In 1, inspector of military schools (illegal under the peace treaty) and of the nucleus air force (highly illegal), which made him *de facto* the Chief of the Army Command's closest advisor on the Soviet relationship.³⁷

TOURS AND MANEUVERS

In 1928, Voroshilov added a facet to the exchange program: he invited the chief of the Troop Office, General Werner von Blomberg, to attend the Red Army's annual maneuvers. It was the sort of invitation generally reserved for one's declared allies; and it was given, with one exception, annually thereafter without a requirement for reciprocity (probably because the chief of the Red Army Staff at that time, Shaposhnikov, and his successor, Yegorov, being military specialists, were deemed short on political credentials). In mid-August, Blomberg and three of his officers went to Moscow, where he had meetings with Voroshilov, Shaposhnikov, and others. At the outset, Voroshilov asked him whether the Red Army could depend on the *Reichswehr's* support in the event of a Polish attack, adding that in the event of a Polish attack on Germany, the Soviet Union was prepared to render 'every kind of help'. In Seeckt's time, the question would not have posed a problem, but in the wake of Locarno Blomberg had to beg the question, and Voroshilov responded that 'this is a decisive question for the Soviet Union'.³⁸

Blomberg also declared an increase Voroshilov requested in the number of exchanges to be a matter for the political authorities to decide. Subsequently, traveling by private railroad car and boat on the Volga River, Blomberg visited Kama, Tomka, and Lipetsk, where he observed exercises in air-artillery coordination. From 7 to 10 September, his group observed the 'all-Union' maneuvers staged near Kiev, conducted by Shaposhnikov, and followed by a simulated defense of Kiev against a 150-plane air attack. In his report, Blomberg concluded that Kama, Tomka, and Lipetsk were 'vital for our armament' and that the strengthening the Red Army received from the exchanges was 'in the German interest'; and the cooperation was 'therefore a long-term necessity'.³⁹

When Blomberg's successor, General Kurt von Hammerstein-Equord, made the tour the next year, Voroshilov told him relations between the Soviet Union and Germany were so good that 'the question of our discussion can now only be whether we can manage to find ways of improving and concretizing our relations'. He then went on to point out that the *Reichswehr's* being able to test its tanks at Kama in no way benefited the Red Army, which needed assistance it could only get from a joint design office. With regard to Tomka, he complained about 'the modesty and scarcity of technical means' deployed there, particularly since the 'German chemical industry is still unsurpassed in the world'.⁴⁰

In 1930, most likely as a consequence of the hostile OGPU scrutiny the Soviet professional military leadership was under at the time, Hammerstein was not

reinvited. The next year, Hammerstein having become chief of the Army Command, his successor, General Wilhelm Adam, received the invitation – from Yegorov not Shaposhnikov – also not to the maneuvers but to an October–November tour that included not only Kama, Tomka, and Lipetsk but Kharkov and Kiev as well. It was the most elaborate such event to date, with an unprecedented welcoming dinner in Voroshilov’s Kremlin apartment, public appearances in parade uniform at Lenin’s Tomb and in Kharkov and Kiev, and an alcoholic farewell party at which Budennyi kissed Adam on both cheeks. The warmth of the welcome was not unpremeditated: the Soviet Union was engaged in negotiating a nonaggression treaty with France, and its contents were bound to be on the minds of Adam and his operations chief, Lt. Col. Erich von Manstein, whom he had brought along. In their first meeting, Adam told Voroshilov that the German ‘soldiers’ were ‘slightly uneasy’ about negotiations for a nonaggression treaty then going on between the Soviet Union and France, would ‘certainly be much more anxious’ if such negotiations were begun with Poland, and it would be ‘very unpleasant’ if such negotiations were in any way to validate the existing German–Polish border. Voroshilov assured him that there ‘is not, and cannot be, anything directed against Germany’ in the negotiations with France and any pact made with Poland ‘can have reference only to Soviet–Polish mutual nonaggression obligations’, and then went on to reiterate all the complaints about Kama, Tomka, and Lipetsk he had made to Blomberg and Hammerstein.⁴¹

HOW THEY SAW EACH OTHER

The relatively long visits gave the participants opportunities to derive judgments of each other from fairly close observation. Blomberg concluded that the men in the highest positions were ‘outstanding in ability and dedication but lacked the breadth and depth of experience required at their level of leadership’. And he judged the troop command structure to be impaired throughout by extreme variations in general and military education and to be incapable at the intermediate and low levels of more than following simplified routines.⁴² Mittelberger judged the students in *Vystrel*, the most select group in the Red Army, capable of surpassing the level of the tsarist army ‘in about ten years’. In the Frunze Academy and other intermediate institutions, he found the quality of instruction and the students to be ‘not very promising’, and to him the primary objective of the courses for company-grade officers appeared to be to provide about a fifth-year level of elementary education.⁴³ On the other hand, Mittelberger, Blomberg, and Adam were pleased to see that the courses all followed ‘the German model’.⁴⁴ Those who had chances to see the troops came to the same opinion they had held in the World War: ‘soldiers good, training satisfactory, technical equipment insufficient, leadership poor’. Those of the Germans who had contact with Tukhachevskiy regarded him as an opportunistic political type who did not

fit into the ‘Soviet milieu’ and credited him with enough personal courage to repudiate communism if it seemed to him feasible.⁴⁵

Voroshilov communicated the following estimate of the Germans to Stalin:

... we, at the cost of material sacrifices, have done a lot to establish good relations with the *Reichswehr*. However, we have never forgotten that the *Reichswehr* is ‘friendly’ with us (though in its heart hating us) only because of the existing conditions, because of the necessity to have a ‘safety valve’ in the East, and to have a trump card for threatening Europe. The friendship and cooperation of the *Reichswehr* has gone along the lines of giving less and worse, but exploiting us more fully.⁴⁶

Vasily Levichev, the Soviet military attaché in Berlin, and four officers in the corps to military district commander range who had visited Germany submitted the following report to Voroshilov:

... it seems to us that in the fields of motorization, artillery, and communications facilities the Germans stand much higher than they reveal to us. We are convinced that Germany is at an extremely high level of motorization, mechanical engineering, and electrical engineering. ... Our schools [practice] mass production, but ... our schools have less exposure to wartime conditions than German ones. The political education in [their] general syllabus does not take as much time as it does in the Army of the Proletarian State. ... We have a tendency in schools to convert self-training into a collective and brigade [activity]. It is necessary for a commander to acquire skills for independent work. Great stress is laid on it in German schools, and as a result, quite independent commanders are really produced.⁴⁷

The Russians’ extravagantly high estimation of German technology in particular, according to Mittelberger, made it almost impossible to persuade them that the German rearmament was still in its earliest stage and had not produced any secret weapons. The Germans’ star student, Uborevich, told Voroshilov it had been possible to study tactical doctrine and training methods adequately but questions about technology had, for the most part, been met with silence or incomplete answers. Nevertheless, he strongly recommended that the relationship be continued ‘because the Germans have so far been the only window through which we can study foreign military accomplishments’. On the other hand, Kirill Meretskov recalled in his memoirs how the Germans’ confidence that written orders would be carried out as given ‘made us smile at times’. It was clear, he said, that ‘such absolute automatism was inapplicable in the Red Army’.⁴⁸

STALIN AGAINST THE GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATS

In 1928, on a recommendation from Stalin, the Sixth Congress of the Comintern ordered the German Communist Party to direct all of its activity against the

German Social Democratic Party. Angered at the Social Democrats' continuing hold on the majority of the German working class, he declared that the Social Democratic Party had to be destroyed and Adolf Hitler brought to power before the German workers would see the light and support the revolution.⁴⁹ By 1928, paramilitary fighting organizations had become an integral feature of German party politics. All claimed legitimacy as supposed war veterans associations. The only one to support the Republic was the Social Democrats' *Reichsbanner Schwarz Rot Gold* (literally, banner of the Reich, black, red, gold). The Nazis' SA (storm troopers) and the Communists' RFB (red front fighters' alliance) had mostly spent their time fighting each other until 1928, when the RFB joined the SA in attacking the *Reichsbanner*. In the 1928 *Reichstag* elections, the Social Democrats received 153 seats, the Communists 54, and the Nazis 12. In the 1930 elections, with the economic depression deepening, the Social Democrats dropped to 143 seats, the Nazis rose to 107, and the Communists to 77. At that point, the Social Democrats, who in the past had often lent the support of their very large bloc to governments from which they could expect no benefit other than the preservation of the democratic system, announced that, henceforth, they would not join any coalition that did not offer relief to their working-class constituents. Without the Social Democrats' support or that of the Nazis or Communists a majority could not be found, and the only solution was a resort to presidential emergency powers in the constitution that authorized a temporary presidential dictatorship. An election in July 1932 decreased the Social Democrats' seats to 133, while increasing the Communists' to 89 and the Nazis' to 230. Hitler refused to form a cabinet unless he was guaranteed complete control. The SA men, who numbered some 400,000, were becoming restive and threatening to decide the issue in the streets, and the RFB, under Stalin's orders, was doing its best to undermine the Republic. A special election held in November 1932 reduced the Social Democrats' seats to 121, raised the Communists' to 100, dropped the Nazi's to 196, and brought the country to the verge of civil war.

MILITARY COLLABORATION IN FULL BLOOM

During the four years of political turbulence in Germany, the Red Army–*Reichswehr* relationship tranquilly went its own way, and the governments, in 1931, extended the 1926 treaty of friendship and neutrality indefinitely.⁵⁰ Gustav Stresemann had died in October 1929, but by then his policy was self-sustaining and would soon be gaining momentum from the depression. In June 1930, 12 years after the war, the Allies' occupation of the German Rhineland, the German territory east of the Rhine River, ended. Thereafter, the Hoover Moratorium of 7 July 1931 suspended reparations payments for one year; and on 9 July 1932, a reparations conference extended the moratorium for another three years, after which a single 3 billion mark (750 million dollar) payment would terminate the reparations. During most

of 1932, a League of Nations-sponsored disarmament conference met in Geneva. Having determined early on that no conceivable scheme of disarmament would be acceptable to all parties, it accepted in principle a German demand that it be allowed to rearm to parity. After a lengthy and inconclusive debate over the rate at which Germany should be allowed to reach parity, it dissolved at the end of the year, leaving the *Reichswehr* free to assume that the military provisions of the peace treaty were at least moribund.⁵¹ Indirectly, the *Reichswehr* was also benefiting from the Soviet five-year plans. The Soviet Union was the only country in the world expanding its industrial plants in the depths of the depression. Since the Soviet Union was primarily tooling up for military production, its German suppliers, for the most part, also figured in the *Reichswehr* rearmament and were, consequently, willing to finance Soviet sales out of their own capital in return for government guarantees against default.⁵² By giving work to firms that might otherwise have succumbed to the depression, the Soviet purchases also helped to speed up German rearmament after 1933. In 1932, Soviet purchases accounted for from 60 to 90 per cent of German exports in machine tools, dynamos, cranes, earth-moving equipment, and steam and gas turbines; and those could well have been the same for all other exports.⁵³

Hammerstein's advancement from chief of the Troop Office to the Army command marked the high point of the *Reichswehr*'s collaboration with the Red Army. In 1930, to the Russian's considerable satisfaction, the Lipetsk operation was converted from training to research, development and testing, and the aging Fokker D XIII's were employed in developing fighter bomber techniques. In the next year, the reviving German aircraft industry had a half-dozen fighter prototypes ready to be tested. In 1932, another half-dozen were ready, and two types of light bomber went through their final tests.⁵⁴ Also in 1930, the Rheinmetall firm accepted a contract similar to the earlier Krupp contract in which it agreed to set up a joint artillery design shop in Moscow. Uborevich had visited the Rheinmetall plant and been enormously impressed by what he saw.⁵⁵ The Foreign Office saw a certain incongruity in 'building up the Russians' arms industry at the very moment they are trying to overthrow us'.⁵⁶ Hammerstein insisted, 'The relations with Moscow are a pact with Beelzebub, but we have no other choice.'⁵⁷

The Soviet 1932 exchange parties were mainly interested in studying the resurgent German arms industry. Hammerstein had decreed,

The Chief of the Army Command considers it in the interest of better relations between the two armies to say more rather than too little. Under no circumstances may the Russians be given an impression that we want to withhold something.⁵⁸

In September, Tukhachevskiy, as chief of the armaments administration in the military and naval affairs commissariat, headed an elite six-man party of visitors to the fall Army maneuvers. The President of the Republic and former Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg welcomed them in person. Afterward, they stayed on for three weeks to visit arms plants and study a steel casting process Krupp had

developed that showed great promise for such applications as tank turrets. Owing to the tumultuous political situation, General Adam had to forego attendance at the Red Army maneuvers that year but sent Manstein to represent him.⁵⁹

ADOLF HITLER IN POWER

On 30 January 1933, Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany by a presidential appointment, that is, without a majority in the *Reichstag*. That development clearly did not bode well for the Marxist parties, and the secretary general of the German Communist Party, Ernst Thälmann, for the first time disregarding his instruction from Moscow, joined the Social Democrats in calling for a vote of no confidence in the Hitler cabinet. A week later, however, on orders from Stalin, Thälmann announced that there would be no collaboration with the Social Democrats. In any event, one of Hitler's first acts after being appointed was to disband the *Reichstag* and order new elections. By the day of the elections, 5 March, Thälmann and hundreds of his party colleagues were under arrest, charged with complicity in setting a fire that had burned out the *Reichstag* building on 27 February; and anyone attempting to cast a vote for the Communist Party would have been jailed on the spot.⁶⁰

On 23 March, still without a majority, Hitler, posing as the nation's champion against revolution, with his *Reichswehr* Minister, Blomberg, on the podium behind him, demanded and received 'temporary dictatorial powers.' It was necessary, he said, because communism was 'a Satanic doctrine' that would have to be 'totally rooted out and eliminated in Germany'. This, he added, was a German domestic concern that would not 'influence relations with other powers with whom we have ties of common interests.' 'Specifically,' he said, his government was disposed to maintain 'friendly and mutually beneficial relations' with the Soviet Union.⁶¹ Two days later, the Comintern announced that Thälmann had been disowned and dismissed for 'incorrect conduct'.⁶²

The transition appeared to have been made without a hitch. On 28 April, Hitler welcomed a new Soviet Ambassador, Lev Khinchuk. A week later, Germany ratified an extension of the Treaty of Berlin. In response to an invitation from Tukhachevskiy, General Alfred von Bockelberg, chief of the Army Weapons Branch, spent three weeks in May touring Red Army armaments and munitions plants, including a great new chemical complex in Stalinogorsk. Voroshilov promised him enduring friendship with the *Reichswehr*; Tukhachevskiy assured him Tomka could be reopened in the summer; and he undertook to arrange tours of German chemical plants.⁶³ On 28 July, the chief of the Army Command, Hammerstein, gave a farewell breakfast for four Red Army senior commanders who had completed a six-month general staff course. That evening, Khinchuk gave a supper at which Blomberg and Hammerstein were present. Khinchuk spoke of the 'established friendship'

between the two armies, and Blomberg responded that ‘every precondition’ for strengthening their friendship was being met.⁶⁴

The warmth of the remarks did not, in fact, conform to the state of the relationship. In his report to Moscow, Khinchuk added, ‘I told Blomberg about the difficulties I had to experience due to the sudden attacks of policemen and storm troopers against our offices and our Soviet citizens.’⁶⁵ In his so-called ‘seizure of power’, Hitler employed the SA as a police force against the political opposition, the communists in particular, and it was a good deal less than punctilious in observation of the distinction between German and Soviet communists that had prevailed under the republic. In April, Khinchuk’s predecessor, Nikolay Krestinskiy, had complained to the German Foreign Office about ‘contradictions between the official statements ... about the unchanged character of Soviet–German relations’ and ‘daily’ acts of hostility against Soviet nationals and official bodies without diplomatic immunity.⁶⁶ Hitler’s government was, indeed, speaking with two voices, that of the Foreign Office bureaucracy and that of the unofficial but vociferous National Socialist government in which Alfred Rosenberg, a Baltic German and rabid Russophobe, formulated policy in accordance with his own preconceptions and Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*. Under the prevailing circumstances, Hitler was the only one who could have brought Rosenberg and the storm troopers to heel, and he did nothing.⁶⁷

THE PARTING

For 11 years, largely owing to the *Reichswehr*’s successfully established claim to being a state within a state, the *Reichswehr*–Red Army ‘friendship’ had more or less flourished in defiance of the principle that military organizations exist to serve the interests of their governments, not their own. The government of the republic had often slighted its own interests to satisfy the perceived military requirements; but Hitler was in no wise disposed to condone a state with *his* state and, what was worse for the *Reichswehr* and Red Army, was engaged in profiling himself as the nation’s champion against Soviet communism. The *Reichstag* fire and widespread starvation in the Soviet countryside resulting from forced collectivization in the previous year gave his propaganda chief, Joseph Goebbels, a windfall of material. Although it was being reported worldwide, the publicity given to the famine in the German press appears to have been regarded in the Soviet Union as a deliberate violation of the friendship treaties.

On 1 June, three days after Bockelberg’s return, the Red Army Staff notified Special Group R through the military attaché’s office in Moscow that the program for Tomka Tukhachevskiy had agreed to could not ‘take place’ and that the Red Army would not be sending any students to Kama in the coming summer. The reason given a day later was that no money was available in the budget.⁶⁸ At the 8 July farewell supper, the counselor of the Soviet Embassy, N. K. Vinogradov,

told Blomberg's deputy in the *Reichswehr* ministry, General Walther von Reichenau, that the Red Army's military relationships had to conform to Soviet political relationships, and the cancellations were a natural reaction to an 'aggravated' political situation. Reichenau declared the *Reichswehr* to be, 'as it used to be' in favor of extending German–Soviet friendship, and Blomberg to have great influence on Hitler, particularly with respect to moderation of his policy on the Soviet Union. He also hinted pointedly that Hitler depended on the *Reichswehr*, not it on him.⁶⁹ Blomberg had apparently indeed been a staunch promoter of the Soviet connection, but he and Reichenau were also, as the only members of the Nazi Party in the top echelon of the *Reichswehr*, much more dependent on Hitler than he on them.

That summer, the fighter pilot training course at Lipetsk ran as scheduled in the midst of a general collapse. In early July, the Red Army cancelled its participation in the *Reichswehr*'s courses and exercises for the current year.⁷⁰ On 22 July, the German military attaché informed the Red Army Staff that for financial reasons, the *Reichswehr* would have to withdraw from Lipetsk at the end of the summer.⁷¹ On 3 August, again through the military attaché, on notice as short as it had been given respecting the courses and exercises, the *Reichswehr* announced that no German officers would attend the fall maneuvers.⁷² Therewith, although apparently no order to that effect had been given on either side, demolition of the military cooperation was completed.

The stations at Lipetsk, Kazan (Kama), and Tomka were liquidated amicably, ending at Lipetsk on 11 September. The Russians allowed the Germans to evacuate as much of their property as they wished, even giving special permission for three prototype Junkers all-metal, two-seat fighters to be flown out; and the Germans turned over the installations, most of which they had financed, in good condition. On 19 September, Tukhachevskiy gave a 'grandiose' farewell reception for the *Reichswehr*'s Moscow Center, which was reported in the newspapers.⁷³ Both parties maintained throughout that the military friendship was as solid as it ever had been, the problem was entirely political. Subsequently, over a period of several months, Voroshilov, Tukhachevskiy, and Yegorov repeatedly told members of the German Embassy that a few words from Hitler modifying his attitude would suffice to restore the relationship.⁷⁴ Apparently no one in a position to do so had the courage to approach Hitler.

The Tukhachevskiy Era

TECHNOLOGICAL RECONSTRUCTION

On 30 January 1930, Tukhachevskiy appealed to Stalin a second time for reconsideration of his then year-old commentary on technological reconstruction. The assessment Voroshilov read to the RMCU, he said, had resulted in his being dismissed as director of defense analysis in the Frunze Academy and excluded from all discussions pertaining to defense capability. The fault in the entire affair, he contended, lay with the Red Army Staff, which had misled Stalin and Voroshilov by ‘twisting the meaning of my proposals’ and ‘concocting columns of false figures.’ ‘The Red Army Staff’s appraisal,’ he concluded, ‘is not only disgraceful ... but discloses a rank conservatism opposed to accepting progressive new missions resulting from the successes of industrialization and socialist development.’¹

The expansion of the five-year plans, however, had brought to the fore in the Politburo a body of support for Tukhachevskiy that Stalin could not disregard; and without which, one thinks, Tukhachevskiy would not have been elected to the Central Committee or have risked approaching Stalin as he did. In November 1930, Kuybyshev and Ordzhonikidze, Tukhachevskiy’s longest-standing patrons in the party, had, between them, assumed control of the whole economy. Kuybyshev had become chairman of *Gosplan* (the state planning commission), which was responsible for developing and supervising the five-year plans, and concurrently deputy chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars and the Council of Labor and Defense. Ordzhonikidze had become chairman of the Supreme Council of the National Economy, the vast bureaucracy that supervised economic institutions, and concurrently the People’s Commissar for Heavy Industry. He was the last Politburo member left who could talk to Stalin man-to-man. According to Budenny, the RMCU had tired of hearing him demand, ‘Speed up the tempo.’ His favorite target in the RMCU had been Budenny, whom he had twitted about how he would look after the cavalry was gone sitting on top of a tank with his mustache bristling and his saber drawn.² Kirov, who had collaborated with Ordzhonikidze and Kuybyshev during the Civil War and as a leading member of Stalin’s team in the struggles against the various oppositions, had in four years transformed himself from a purger into a popular figure in Leningrad of the type then known in the United States as a ‘booster.’ He saw in industrialization an

opportunity to restore Leningrad to its former stature as the most advanced city in Russia. With Kuybyshev and Ordzhonikidze, he shared an ebullient faith in the ability of socialism to accomplish anything. For him, the sort of technological reconstruction Tukhachevskiy advocated engendered no misgivings and held great promise for the Navy. In May 1930, he had become a member of the Leningrad Military District's RMC, thereby acquiring a partnership with Tukhachevskiy and a direct voice in all matters affecting the district or its relationship with the people's commissariat.

The OGPU was on the hunt in the winter of 1930–31. It claimed to have 'exposed' some 3,000 former officers and military specialists as 'wreckers' devoted to impeding Soviet progress for the benefit of capitalism. Leningrad, because it had military and naval technical schools inherited from the imperial armed forces that employed numbers of their old instructors, was especially hard-hit. Moscow had its share too. Svechin and several other former generals in the Frunze Academy were arrested in April. A few weeks later, Tukhachevskiy was the main speaker at a meeting in the Leningrad academy for the study of communism called to 'condemn the reactionary theories' of Svechin and those arrested with him. 'Svechin,' he said, 'in every possible way, opposes the possibility of a Red Army offensive against capitalist countries. Consciously or unconsciously, he is an agent of interventionist imperialism.'³

Also in April, without a successor being named, Shaposhnikov was suddenly transferred to the Volga Military District headquartered in Samara, well away from the military center. In June, most likely as a sign that nothing worse was to be expected, the RMCU awarded him honorary appointments as commander of an infantry regiment and a cavalry regiment but a month later made Yegorov chief of the Red Army Staff.⁴

On 19 June, Tukhachevskiy returned to Moscow, replacing Uborevich as armed forces armament chief with the rank of deputy people's commissar. At the same time, very likely also with some backing from Ordzhonikidze, Kuybyshev and Kirov, Ya. I. Alksnis became commander of the Air Force and V. M. Orlov of the Navy. Theirs were the first such appointments in either service since the Civil War that were based more on professional than on political qualifications, although the latter remained more than routinely important in the Air Force and Navy, and they had both begun their careers as political commissars. Alksnis, 35 years old, had been appointed deputy Air Force chief in 1926 after graduating from the Frunze Academy and had subsequently qualified as a military pilot. Orlov, 37, had completed the naval academy in 1926 and thereafter commanded the Black Sea Fleet.⁵

The five-year plan was beginning to show results. In 1931, the Army received 740 armored vehicles modeled after two British designs, the Carden-Lloyd 3-ton 'tankette' and a Vickers 8-ton light tank. The Air Force received its first entirely Soviet-built aircraft, 100 bombers and 120 fighters. Among weapons in production since 1930, artillery output doubled to nearly 2,000 pieces and that of machine guns, at 40,000 pieces, almost quadrupled.⁶ The first effect was to restore career mobility

for those in the middle ranks who showed promise of being able to handle the technological problems the new weapons brought with them. Rokossovskiy and another cavalryman, D. G. Pavlov, advanced after successfully commanding regiments in the Chinese Eastern Railroad incident, Rokossovskiy to a division, Pavlov to a mechanized brigade command. Zhukov and Vasilevskiy moved into the Red Army Staff in early 1931, Zhukov as Budenny's assistant in the cavalry inspectorate and Vasilevskiy into the newly formed combat readiness branch.

Attendance in military schools and academies, which had begun to be strongly encouraged in 1928, became a requirement by Central Committee decree in June 1931. The total number of Frunze Academy graduates through 1928 had been 3,200; by 1932, it rose to 16,550.⁷ An inadequate pool of candidates who possessed sufficient general education and literacy imposed limitations throughout the school system and in the command structure, where many already in the highest places had little or no formal education, military or other. For them, the Frunze Academy devised an unstructured curriculum that allowed them to set their own schedules, meet in segregated discussion groups, and devote their attention mainly to the Civil War. Since the Frunze Academy's principal mission was to provide staff training, many who were satisfied with careers in troop command had considered it not worth their while to seek admission. To those, the academy offered an eight-month course in higher command that gave Zhukov, Konev, Timoshenko, Rokossovskiy and others of the World War II top command echelon their most advanced academic training.⁸

The Mukden incident of September 1931 and the Kwantung Army's subsequent rapid expansion throughout Manchuria added an important new dimension to the never-warm Soviet–Japanese relationship, a long common boundary extending over 600 miles deep into the Asian mainland. To keep pace with the resultant growth of the Kwantung Army, the Special Red Banner Far Eastern Army's strength was doubled (to 200,000–300,000 troops), and the army received tanks, aircraft, and weapons from the new production.⁹ But Stalin did not abandon his peace policy. In December 1931, he offered Japan a nonaggression treaty, which was refused. After the Japanese proclaimed the state of Manchukuo in March 1932 and hoisted its flag also over the Chinese Eastern Railroad, he accepted the transfer of sovereignty and a vague assurance that Soviet rights would not be impaired. Later in the month, he refused to assist the League of Nations Lytton Commission's investigation, claiming it was an intrusion into Manchurian domestic affairs.¹⁰

In May 1932, after a nearly two-year silence, Stalin sent Tukhachevskiy a letter in which he stated that his initial appraisal of Tukhachevskiy's proposal on the technological reconstruction had been erroneous and apologized for not having rectified the matter earlier.¹¹ So uncharacteristic a gesture would seem to have had to reflect a profound shift in Stalin's thinking. A genuine sudden reversal of his attitude toward Tukhachevskiy appears highly unlikely. Japan, always a problem, had created a threat but not on an order of magnitude that justified the program Tukhachevskiy had proposed and was implementing. In fact, Stalin had been exactly right: it constituted Marxist militarism and exceeded any reasonable need

for defense of the Soviet state. The error he most likely believed he had made was that he had failed to anticipate an opportunity for European revolution, which was presenting itself and would amply justify a venture into militarism.

In September 1933, the Soviet Union concluded a treaty of friendship, neutrality, and nonaggression with fascist Italy. After Hitler withdrew Germany from the Geneva Disarmament Conference and from the League of Nations in October and particularly when he thereafter began intensively cultivating improved relations with Poland, Stalin countered with projected shifts in Soviet policy. On 12 December, the Central Committee adopted a resolution on collective security in which it declared Soviet readiness to enter the League of Nations and proposed a regional peacekeeping organization for eastern Europe. Later in the month, a Soviet initiative led to talks in Paris looking toward a French–Soviet mutual assistance treaty.¹²

STALIN'S PEACE POLICY

Stalin made war a theme of the Central Committee's report to the Seventeenth Party Congress in January 1934. The bourgeois powers, he told the delegates, were heading toward a new imperialist war as a way out of the economic depression. 'Our foreign policy is clear', he said; 'it is a policy of preserving peace and strengthening trade relations with all countries'. Those who tried to attack 'our country', he added, would 'receive a crushing repulse to teach them in the future not to poke their pig snouts into our Soviet garden.' As he had at the Sixteenth Congress, he added a warning to the bourgeois governments thinking of solving their economic problems at Soviet expense that they would have to contend with their own working classes' opposition.¹³

He went on to describe a two-track foreign policy. On one, progress was being made toward rapprochement with countries that had formerly been hostile toward the Soviet Union, most notably France and Poland. The purpose of the other was to demonstrate that there was no such thing as a Soviet orientation specifically toward any one country or group of people. Japan's refusal to negotiate a nonaggression treaty, for instance, and its continuing obstreperousness over the Chinese Eastern Railroad would not deter the search for better relations with that country. Since the Soviet Union was on the best of terms with Italy, he hinted, fascism would clearly not preclude a revival of the treaty relationship with Germany.¹⁴

Stalin primarily credited the success he claimed for the peace policy to the growing Soviet military power, and an objective of the congress was to prepare the party and the country for an additional massive shift toward military production in the Second Five-Year Plan. Tukhachevskiy, returning to the argument he had put forward years earlier, told the delegates that little had yet been done to meet the demands a war would generate. 'To deploy sufficiently gigantic technological resources to smash any country intruding on us', the industrial base would have to be greatly expanded and much more heavily concentrated on military production.¹⁵

On the whole, Stalin expressed greater confidence in the peace policy than he could justifiably have felt. The Soviet position was, in fact, becoming more precarious, not improving. On 26 January 1934, the day Stalin addressed the congress, Poland signed a nonaggression pact with Germany. France, although dismayed by its eastern ally Poland's defection, did not regard the Soviet Union as a desirable substitute and would have preferred an 'eastern Locarno', a multilateral agreement that would commit both Germany and the Soviet Union to guaranteeing the status quo in eastern Europe.¹⁶ In the two-track policy, Stalin gave invitations to Germany and Japan that neither had shown any desire to receive. Stalin was having to contemplate foreign affairs in a more concrete aspect than he had done formerly. The threat of war, no longer primarily a convenient rhetorical device, confronted him more directly than he had imagined it would, and his room to maneuver was proving far less spacious than he had thought it would be.

Hitler's challenge to the European order and the Japanese incursion into China had consequences also for Soviet military policy. How seriously those were taken had been dramatically disclosed to William C. Bullitt in December 1933 when he went to Moscow to present his credentials as the first US Ambassador to the Soviet Union. Voroshilov had staged a banquet for him that he described as 'almost unbelievable in retrospect'. Among those attending had been Molotov, Livinov, Kuybyshev, Ordzhonikidze, and Yegorov (but, perhaps significantly, not Tukhachevskiy). To Bullitt's huge surprise, Stalin, breaking his rule against contact with foreign representatives, greeted him at the door and saw him out several hours and many toasts later.¹⁷ During the evening, Stalin dropped broad hints that he was prepared to establish a very special relationship with the United States, at one point inviting Bullitt to come see him 'at any time, day or night'. Voroshilov asked how soon military and naval attachés would arrive and requested that they be assigned deputies who were aviation experts. There was much talk about war with Japan, and Stalin introduced Yegorov as 'the man who will lead our Army victoriously against Japan when Japan attacks'. He also asked Bullitt, as a personal favor to help the Soviet Union buy used railroad track in the United States, saying it would speed the extension of the Transiberian Railroad around Manchuria. Litvinov confided a fear that a long war with Japan would give Germany and Poland time to arm for an attack in the West.¹⁸

The approach to Bullitt exemplified as well the Soviet Union's problematical situation relative to the noncommunist world. The United States had as significant misgivings about the Soviet Union as it did about Japan or Germany. Prior to recognition, it had received mostly equivocal responses to requests for assurances with regard to the activities of the Comintern, propaganda, espionage, and religious and civil rights. After recognition, the \$500,000,000 Russian war debt took first place on the US agenda; and the Johnson Act of January 1934, which prohibited loans to nations in default on existing debts, placed a solid obstacle in the way of large Soviet purchases on credit, such as railroad track. Two months later, when Bullitt returned to Moscow to take charge of a fully staffed embassy, he reported that 'the honeymoon atmosphere had evaporated completely', and no progress

was being made in any direction – not even on the relatively inconsequential matter of quarters for the embassy.¹⁹

THE ARMS RACE

Similar impediments had, of course, longer and more deeply afflicted Soviet relations in Europe. Their persistence made the Soviet Union a less disruptive presence than Germany on the continent only in terms of military potential. The German *Reichswehr* beginning open rearmament was an instant threat. The Red Army, in the midst of an intensive technological reconstruction, was merely an unassessable anomaly, hence, another major detraction from Soviet credibility as a participant in European collective security. However, since Stalin was not disposed to make the fundamental political compromises that would generate confidence, his best prospects for achieving acceptability as a potential ally lay in the military sphere.

The five-year plans enabled the developing Soviet industrial base to be represented as being capable of strongly competing in the most advanced technological areas, particularly aircraft design and manufacture. An offshoot of the former partnership with the German Junkers firm, the TB-3, a four-engine, all-metal monoplane heavy bomber, the first of its kind in the world, went into accelerated production in 1933; and 250 made a public appearance at the 1934 May Day parade in Moscow. Anthony Eden, the highest ranking British official yet to have visited the Soviet Union, was given a tour in April 1935 of the Junkers-built plant near Moscow, in which the TB-3s were built.²⁰ Two very advanced fighters, the I-15 and I-16, passed their initial flight tests in 1933 and were rushed into production. Both were exhibited at the 1935 Milan international air show. The I-15, an elegantly designed biplane, was generally regarded as the best in the show. Ironically, the I-16, a low-wing, cantilever monoplane, which was the fastest fighter in existence drew less attention because the observers took its performance data to be obvious Soviet propaganda. In 1933, development began on the SB-2 (fast bomber), a twin-engine, all-metal monoplane. Just over a year later, after the prototype proved capable of outrunning any foreign fighter then in existence, it went into production. By 1935, the May Day, October Revolution and Air Force Day parades were featuring up to 1,000 aircraft.²¹

The Navy, although its technological achievements were negligible, was publicized as being about to realize Peter the Great's and his successors' dream of untrammelled access to the world oceans. The White Sea–Baltic (Stalin) Canal, opened in August 1933, was announced as the first stage in a strategic engineering program that would enable fleets to traverse the continent from the White Sea and the Baltic to the Black Sea. Subsequently the Navy activated a Northern Fleet at Murmansk, and much publicity was given to exploits in Arctic waters and efforts to open a northern passage to the Pacific Ocean.

Germany's return to conscription in March 1935 intensified concerns for collective security. In May, France and Czechoslovakia negotiated mutual assistance pacts with the Soviet Union; but their general staffs harbored doubts about the Red Army's value as an ally and, as their German counterpart had, shied away from explicit military commitments. To counteract that resistance, the annual maneuvers were again brought into play. With French, Czech, and Italian observers present, the 'Great Kiev Maneuvers' of September 1935, conducted over a 150-mile course from the western border to Kiev, engaged 65,000 troops, more than 10,000 tanks, 600 aircraft, and 300 artillery pieces. Hundreds of tanks organized into mechanized corps simulated slashing flank attacks, and 1,200 parachutists dropped from the capacious wings of TB-3s. Films of the maneuvers were later shown at Soviet embassies abroad.²² French, British, and Czech officers witnessed an equally spectacular display a year later in the Belorussian Military District, which lay astride the direct Berlin–Warsaw–Moscow line.²³

Displays, however, could not demonstrate the Red Army's potential compatibility in an alliance devoted to preserving the established European order. Since the French and British Armies were far less disposed than the *Reichswehr* had been to consort intimately with 'the army of the revolution', an at least superficially credible image adjustment was called for. A 'Soviet Army' might well have modified foreign military and governmental perceptions, but Stalin's abiding confidence in foreign working-class attachment to the Red Army ruled out that. Instead, Stalin, by stages, reworked the organizational structure to bring it into technical compatibility with bourgeois practice and eliminate overt class war implications. In June 1934, the People's Commissariat of Military and Naval Affairs became the People's Commissariat of Defense, and the Revolutionary Military Councils of the Union, the military districts and the armies went out of existence. An 80-member Military Council replaced the RMCU. It included branch chiefs, military district commanders, fleet commanders and more and was obviously better suited to act as a discussion group than as a decision-making body.²⁴

Just in time for the September 1935 Kiev maneuvers, the Red Army Staff, renamed the General Staff, was designated the planning and executive agency for the defense commissariat. Concurrently, the Central Committee withdrew its ban on personal military ranks and authorized one, Marshal of the Soviet Union, that would leave foreign colleagues in no doubt as to its bearers' status. The traditional ranks through colonel in the Army and captain in the Navy were restored as well. Apparently to preserve proletarian appearances, the general officer grades were required to make do with abbreviations of formerly assigned functional designations: *komdiv* (division commander), *komkor* (corps), and *komandarm* (army commander in two grades). Naval flag officers were designated *flagman* in four grades.

In November 1935, Stalin put on display a high command that rank for rank, could handily match any other. The Central Committee approved five appointments to marshal of the Soviet Union, five to *komandarm* first rank, ten to *komandarm* second rank, and two each to the highest naval ranks, *flot* (fleet) *flagman* first and

second rank. High ranks conferred in such large batches in peacetime appeared elsewhere as typically gauche Soviet extravagance, particularly since four of the marshals, Voroshilov, Budenny, Blyukher and Yegorov, to the extent they were known abroad at all, were regarded as having been lofted well above their levels of professional competence. On the other hand, in the appointments on the whole, military qualifications were the principal criterion. Of the 24 recipients of flag rank, Voroshilov was the only erstwhile military communist, whereas a full dozen, among them Kamenev and Vatsetis, had been military specialists. All the others in the Army, even Budenny and the ex-sailor Dybenko (a *komandarm* second rank) possessed more or less valid military credentials. The positioning of the fifth marshal, Tukhachevskiy, was artfully devised on the one hand, coupled with his deputyship in the defense commissariat it assured his being perceived as the top military professional; on the other, it left his status in the Army command structure undefined.

The pace of Tukhachevskiy's advance to stage-center in the military tableau was being set from the outside by the German resurgence and bourgeois resistance to a Soviet alignment. German reversion to conscription announced on 16 March 1935, and the related French agreement on 2 May to enter a mutual assistance pact, had marked the beginning of an enhancement in Tukhachevskiy's role that could hardly have originated elsewhere than with Stalin. The German action precipitated a Politburo decision in May to phase out the territorial militia and increase the cadre forces by some 600,000 over an 885,000-man strength authorized in 1933.²⁵ The conversion to the cadre system, which was bound to be enormously expensive; the mutual assistance pact, which, owing to the French doubts about the Red Army's effectiveness, lacked a military convention and faced an uncertain future in the ratification process; and the commitment to the two-track peace policy confronted Stalin, as the sole spokesman on national policy, with an awkward dilemma. A second voice was needed, one just sufficiently authoritative to sustain progress on one line without jeopardizing the other.

TUKHACHEVSKIY AT THE FORE

Tukhachevskiy made his debut as a commentator on current national policy in the 31 March 1935 *Pravda*, two days after an official Soviet proposal for a mutual assistance pact had been delivered in Paris. Under the headline 'Current German War Plans', he described 'Hitler's imperialist plans' against the Soviet Union as 'self-evidently' also providing a 'convenient cover' for a German war of revenge against France and Belgium.²⁶ Using the same title, he published an article in the April issue of the Defense Commissariat's journal, *Voyenny Vestnik*, in which he predicted that by summer 1935, the German Army would be 'forty per cent' larger than the French Army and nearly equal to the Red Army and cast doubt on a recent claim by Marshal Philippe Pétain that the Maginot Line would discourage

a German attack, even with numerically superior forces.²⁷ In the meantime, during the interval between the German announcement of conscription and the mutual assistance offer to France, Stalin had sent a strong signal that the alternative track remained open. On 23 March, he sold the Chinese Eastern Railroad to Japan for a quarter of his original asking price and thereby also relinquished the long-standing Russian insistence on extraterritorial rights in Manchuria.²⁸

Although they were incomplete, the mutual assistance pacts appeared to be a firm threshold to a greater success; and from May to September, Tukhachevskiy coordinated the Red Army Staff, the operations faculty of the Frunze Academy, and the Kiev Military District staff in a painstaking effort to assure a conclusive result from the Kiev maneuvers. Subsequently, the Paris newspaper *Le Temps* quoted from a report in which the chief French observer, General Lucien Loiseau, rated the Red Army as ‘one of the most powerful armies in Europe’ and credited it with ‘tremendous [technological] superiority over other European forces.’²⁹ But the year ended with no progress made toward either ratification or agreement on the military aspects of the mutual assistance pact with France.

On 15 January 1936, in a speech printed that day in *Izvestia* and subsequently republished as a brochure entitled *Defense Requirements of the USSR*, Tukhachevskiy called on the Central Executive Committee to endorse a heavy increase in the military budget. Depicting Germany, in collusion with Japan and Poland, as building strength for an attack on the Soviet Union, he concluded that the Red Army would have to be increased to 1.3 million men within the year.³⁰

King George V’s funeral at the end of January provided a fortuitous opportunity to employ Tukhachevskiy in a different setting. In Paris, the Franco-Soviet mutual assistance pact was moving uncertainly toward a vote in the Chamber of Deputies under a cloud of German accusations that it broke the Locarno Agreement, in which Germany and France had each pledged not to join coalitions hostile to the other. England had, during the past year, distanced itself from collective security in any form. With the latter concern uppermost in mind, the President of France, Albert Lebrun attended the funeral, taking with him – no doubt as a reminder of past comradeship in arms – Marshal Pétain, General Maurice Gamelin, the inspector general of the army, and General Marcel Déat, the air minister. Stalin, apparently acting on Lebrun’s example, sent Litvinov and Tukhachevskiy to represent the Soviet Union.

Tukhachevskiy was politely received in London, shown about the defense ministries, and given an interview with General John Dill, the army chief of operations and intelligence. Dill apparently kept the conversation confined to the film of the Kiev maneuvers, which he had seen, and to parachute troops as a potential new element in strategy.³¹ Litvinov pointedly told Eden, who had just become Foreign Secretary, that the Soviet Government was on the verge of giving up its search for collective security. Tukhachevskiy apparently was under orders not to raise the subject himself.³² His primary mission may, in fact, have been to establish contact with Lebrun’s party, particularly with General Gamelin. If so, he scored what, in the Soviet view, could have been judged a remarkable success.

Gamelin, besides being the inspector general, was vice president of the Superior Military Council, which made him the designated commander in chief in the event of war.³³ His position gave him the last word on relations with foreign armies, but his attitude toward the mutual assistance pact was ambiguous, and he had been evasively noncommittal on terms for a military convention. At a meeting in London, Gamelin invited Tukhachevskiy to stop in Paris on his trip home. On 10 February, probably transforming the stopover into more of an occasion than Gamelin had intended, Tukhachevskiy and *Komkor* Vitovt Putna, the military attaché in London, came to Paris, and Ubovich arrived from Moscow. The French reception was more elaborate than that in London had been and generated enough publicity to establish Tukhachevskiy as a key figure – while also raising questions about his previous relations with the German military.³⁴

The Chamber of Deputies voted to ratify the mutual assistance pact on 27 February 1936; and Hitler, responding to that alleged infringement with an outright breach of Locarno, remilitarized the German Rhineland a week later. After dithering for the better part of a month, the British and French announced a very tentative revival of the staff talks that had been the cornerstone of their pre-World War I relationship.³⁵ On 9 April, six days before the talks began in London, Moscow announced Tukhachevskiy's elevation to the newly created posts of first deputy defense commissar and chief of the war readiness directorate.³⁶ Until then, Army Commissar First Rank Yan Gamarnik had been a co-deputy in the defense commissariat. Tukhachevskiy's appointments corresponded as exactly as could have been managed to Gamelin's in the French Army, and their timing constituted an unmistakable signal of Soviet readiness for staff talks, at least on a military convention to round out the mutual assistance pact. In August, the British Army, which had thus far shown no interest at all in a relationship with the Red Army, received an invitation to send four observers to the Belorussian maneuvers.³⁷

MILITARY THEORY IN THE TUKHACHEVSKIY ERA

The year 1936 marked the high point of Tukhachevskiy's career and of Soviet military thought in the period between the world wars. By then also, the questions of when and how the next war would be fought had ceased to be purely hypothetical. From the Soviet point of view, another 'imperialist' war was definitely brewing and the task was to beat the 'imperialists' at their own game, which, since 1933, had become progressively more clearly discernible. In early 1936, the Academy of Sciences and the Commissariat of Defense jointly published a survey, *Armament of Capitalist States in 1935*. Citing Ludendorff's *Total War* (1935), General Sebastiano Visconti-Prasca's *The Decisive War* (1934) and General Douglas MacArthur's final report as Chief of Staff, United States Army (September 1935), the survey concluded that the capitalist countries had finally dropped their

pretenses about disarmament and small armies and with Germany in the lead, were returning to the heavily armed, mass conscript armies of the World War. The next war, then, would pose the same problems as the last but on a much enlarged scale: defenses would be deeper and made more formidable by new technology. The only viable answer would be to perfect techniques of maneuver that could penetrate the enemy's defenses and carry the war deep into his territory.³⁸

The survey, in which he, no doubt, had a hand, vindicated Tukhachevskiy's long-standing preoccupation with deep operations and stated the basic premises from which he proposed to work as the war readiness chief. His mandate, if it was that, had been slow in coming. In 1932, he had published the first volume in a projected (but never completed) three-volume work, *New Questions of War*, in which he assumed that technology would make deep battle, the tactical component of deep operations, the dominant form of future wars. Deep battle, he maintained, would depend on tanks being orchestrated in conjunction with other arms to achieve depth and mobility.³⁹ This, as Tukhachevskiy well knew, made armor the primary source of battlefield mobility and directly contradicted Frunze's gospel of the Red Army's 'special mobility'. In December 1934, at a meeting with Tukhachevskiy and some others who wanted to have deep battle recognized as a new form of war, Voroshilov had declared it to be a characteristic of all wars, past as well as future; therefore, the question was not how to regard deep battle 'in all of its diversity' and 'in its multiple manifestations'. Yegorov added that deep battle, as Tukhachevskiy conceived it, gave tanks predominance, whereas experience 'shows infantry in the decisive role with all the technical means supporting it'.⁴⁰

Deep operations and deep battle did not ever receive general acceptance in the Red Army of the 1930s. They were principally concerns of small groups in the General Staff and the Frunze Academy that collaborated with Tukhachevskiy in converting his and Triandafilov's theoretical work into practicable doctrine. Triandafilov had been killed in an airplane crash in 1931, and thereafter his closest associate was Aleksandr Sedyakin (*komandarm* second class in 1935), who, apparently with Tukhachevskiy's help, had become the Red Army Staff/General Staff's deputy chief for war readiness in 1933. Sedyakin had been a staff captain of engineers in the imperial army and most recently commandant of the Dzerzhinsky Military-Technological Academy in Leningrad, which Tukhachevskiy had regarded as a key component in his 'unified military academy' scheme *Kombrig* (1935). G. S. Isserson, who chaired the operations faculty in the Frunze Academy (after 1936 the faculty of operational art in the General Staff Academy), and his colleagues provided support, as did also the military district commanders Yakir and Uborevich.⁴¹ As chief of the General Staff, Yegorov held a pivotal position in the transition from theory to doctrine. According to Isserson, Yegorov 'liked all new ideas' but did not understand them.⁴² His December 1934 statement on deep battle indicates that he took his cues from Voroshilov in judgmental matters.

Western theory in the 1930s – also accepted in the Soviet Union – held that success in the next war would demand getting in a first strike that would carry the war (and the consequent destruction) to the enemy's territory and thereafter

successively shatter defense lines several times deeper and stronger than those of the World War.⁴³ Soviet deep operations doctrine, as far as it was developed, concentrated on the objective of deep battle, which was assumed to be breaking through an opposing defense line 90–150 miles deep at speeds exceeding the best achieved in the World War, about 6 miles per day. Tukhachevskiy calculated that tanks and aircraft would enable the *rassekayushchiy udar*, a heavy, wedge-like thrust said to have been used against Denikin in 1920, to sustain rates between 9 and 12 miles per day.⁴⁴ If the ‘bourgeois’ armies could not surpass their best World War rate, the Red Army would have a decisive advantage.

Tanks, shock armies and air power were to generate the mobility. Tukhachevskiy envisioned deep battle as requiring three categories of tanks: one for close infantry support in assaults on fortifications, another for infantry support in the open field, and a third for independent strikes against deep objectives. The first would make the initial breakthrough; the second would assist the infantry in the exploitation; and the third would drive through the gaps. The aircraft would bomb the enemy’s rearward installations and his communications lines and presumably deliver parachute troops.⁴⁵ Apparently regarding the third category as the most vital component of deep battle, Tukhachevskiy had activated four mechanized corps, each with about 500 tanks and some 200 other armored vehicles, by early 1936. By then he had also formed the headquarters of an air army to assume operational control of the TB-3s and other bombers coming off the production lines. Isserson’s group provided a projected organization for shock armies, which would employ one or two mechanized corps and four or five infantry corps, but none was activated.⁴⁶

The French Maginot Line, begun in 1928, had added a widely accepted requirement to preparations for the next war in Europe: border fortifications designed to frustrate surprise attacks and to stall an opponent until one’s mobilization was completed. The Soviet Union had started its version, popularly referred to as the Stalin Line, in 1931, and the work continued until September 1939. Owing to its length, over 800 miles from the Finnish border north of Leningrad to the Black Sea, the Stalin Line could not be constructed entirely in concrete, and field fortifications were dug in the less vulnerable areas.⁴⁷

Although the doctrinal status of deep battle continued in doubt, Voroshilov allowed a set of ‘Instructions for Deep Battle’ to be issued to the higher commands in March 1935. In December 1936, the technological reconstruction and conversion to the cadre system having by then necessitated new comprehensive guidance on employment of the Red Army in combat, he endorsed the *Provisional Field Service Regulations 1936 (PU 36)*.⁴⁸ Tukhachevskiy had headed the drafting commission. The standard Soviet post-Stalin formulation has been that *PU 36* incorporated ‘all of the fundamental principles of deep battle tactics and some elements of deep operations’; and hence, it constituted the highest stage of deep operations theory reached anywhere in the pre-World War II period.⁴⁹ That being as it may, *PU 36* undoubtedly stands as a profoundly significant document on the genesis of modern Soviet military art.

PU 36 gave as first principles maneuver, surprise, close coordination of combined arms, and carrying the war to the enemy's territory. 'The infantry,' it stated, 'in cooperation with the artillery and tanks, decides the outcome of the battle. Therefore the other types of forces operating jointly with the infantry are carrying out their missions in the interests of the infantry.' 'Strategic cavalry' was to be 'capable of independent action under all combat conditions.' Tanks, possessing 'great mobility, strong fire power, and great striking force,' could also act independently, but 'due consideration' had to be given 'to the technical limitations of the equipment.'⁵⁰

PU 36 concerned itself primarily with two tactical situations: meeting engagements and advances against an enemy on the defensive in prepared positions. The meeting engagement, an encounter between two forces advancing more or less in the open, was presumed to be the first form of battle to occur after the outbreak of hostilities and likely to be repeated frequently thereafter in successive stages of the war. It would be a contest for the initiative and would determine who had the first chance at carrying the war to the enemy's territory. The advance against a prepared position would take place after a successful meeting engagement or in the course of an offensive against an opponent on the retreat. In it 'all the principal combat elements' were to be 'so coordinated as to bring the entire depth of the enemy position under simultaneous attack'. This would include the artillery, infantry-support and long-range tanks, and aircraft; but the full depth assumed was that of a single defensive line, about 12 miles, not the 90–150 miles contemplated in the deep operations theory.⁵¹

PU 36 positioned the Red Army in the mainstream of then current tactical doctrine. The German *Reichswehr*, anticipating release from the treaty restrictions on its manpower and weaponry, had compiled new field service regulations in 1933 that it published in 1936, when the time had come. Its approaches to general principles, combined arms, and tactical situations were much the same as those in *PU 36*. It, however, envisioned the deep thrust as having a single overriding objective, namely, to achieve the most effective possible encirclement of the opposing forces.⁵² *PU 36*, on the other hand, took the depth of the enemy's position to be the determinative consideration and subordinated the encirclement of his forces to it.

THE 1936 MANEUVERS

The 1936 maneuvers in the Belorussian Military District are said to have tested both the deep operations theory and *PU 36*. Six infantry and four cavalry divisions, 1,200 tanks and over 1,000 aircraft participated. Voroshilov and Tukhachevskiy were present together with the foreign observer teams. General Archibald P. Wavell, then a division commander, headed the British team and General V. H. Schweisguth, Loiseau's successor in the General Staff, the French. Their reports have survived, and a member of the British team, Colonel Giffard

Martel, published a memoir in 1947.⁵³ Those shed light on both the assimilation of deep operations theory in the Red Army and on the maneuvers' main purpose, which was to make an impression on potential allies.

What the observers saw was an enactment of a meeting engagement played out over four days. Tanks and cavalry charged at each other over marked courses; parachutists rode the wings of TB-3s; machine guns and antitank guns popped out of buried emplacements with hinged covers. The weather being somewhat rainy, stretches of corduroy road had been laid across wet spots; and the referees were obviously engaged in keeping the action in tune with a script. The observers were impressed almost to the point of being awestruck by the quantity and quality of the tanks and aircraft but also regarded the manner in which those were handled as almost beneath serious criticism. Martel, a specialist in armor, said the tank formations 'appeared just to bump into each other'. Tactically, except for the parachute drops, he concluded, the Red Army 'seemed content to follow the normal teaching of continental armies' and was clearly having difficulty doing that. A 'bludgeon with iron spikes', it could deliver powerful blows but ones that could also be easily evaded.⁵⁴ Schweiguth's and Wavell's reports judged the Red Army to be a potentially formidable opponent on its own territory but not capable of waging war outside it against a major European power.⁵⁵ These were not strictly objective findings, since British policy was already firmly set against involvement with the Soviet Union and French military opinion was turning in that direction; but they did, on the whole, conform with those the more favorably disposed German observers had made earlier.

The maneuvers dealt a mortal blow to Stalin's quest for a Franco-Soviet military convention. In talks with his Soviet hosts, Schweiguth disclosed that he and his colleagues in the General Staff believed Poland's refusal to permit Soviet troops on its territory made Soviet military intervention against Germany 'an illusion'. Afterward, Gamelin and Edouard Daladier, the war minister, used Schweiguth's report in an effort to dissuade the foreign ministry from entering into military talks with the Soviet Union.⁵⁶ In early 1937, Stalin, bypassing Tukhachevskiy, called on Shaposhnikov, who was then commanding the Leningrad Military District, to draft a basis for a military convention. The result, two variants, arrived in Paris in February. The first variant proposed direct Soviet intervention against Germany if Poland could be persuaded to grant transit. The second offered economic and military assistance by air and sea. The French response dismissed 'precise' agreement on military assistance as unnecessary and therewith, according to Gamelin, 'indefinitely suspended' the discussion.⁵⁷

LESSONS OF WAR

In May 1937, Tukhachevskiy published an article, 'On the Red Army's New Field Service Regulations', simultaneously in the army newspaper, *Red Star*, and the

party journal, *Bolshevik*. Essentially it proclaimed the Red Army's arrival at the forefront of modern tactical doctrine, but two passages interposed pronounced dissonances. In one, Tukhachevskiy took issue at some length with 'comrades' who opposed mechanization. Among them he identified three groups: die-hard believers in the Red Army's 'special mobility', doubters who insisted tanks could only operate under certain conditions, and those who contended that direct infantry support would be tanks' only effective role. In the other, he addressed a challenge to his views on mechanization that he could not refute and had not anticipated when *PU 36* was written.

The Spanish Civil War had begun in July 1936, and Italian, German, and Soviet intervention had made it the closest approach to a European war since 1918 and the Red Army's first involvement in revolutionary war. General Francisco Franco, leading the insurgents, had taken the offensive with experienced Spanish and Italian troops, Italian and German air support, and a heavy array of late-model weaponry. The defending Republican forces were, in the main, an untrained militia with some Soviet equipment and Red Army 'volunteers'. Nevertheless, after a brief mobile period, Franco's offensive had stalled completely: the new technology appeared to be decisively favoring the defensive. Tanks, in particular, had proved ineffective against infantry armed with antitank weapons. These developments placed Tukhachevskiy in the position of having to justify a tactical doctrine derived from a disproved theory. Conceding that the strengthening of the defense was 'undeniable', he reduced the problem to a question of mass to which he gave contradictory answers. Maintaining, on the one hand, that what had happened in Spain ought to be attributed primarily to the 'imperialist's' penchant for small army theories, he contended, on the other, that offensive mass would simply have to be increased to where it could overwhelm the defensive whatever the cost.⁵⁸

The article was the epitaph of an era. On 10 May 1937, an emergency decree restored the commissar system in its original form throughout the armed services. Tukhachevskiy was relieved of his post in the defense commissariat a day later and ordered to leave at once to take command of the Volga Military District. Recalled to Moscow on the 26th, he was expelled from the Army and remanded to NKVD custody. Stalin told a Military Council meeting on 2 June that a 'German-Fascist financed military-political conspiracy against Soviet power' had been uncovered in the Red Army and that the NKVD had proof of Tukhachevskiy's having passed Soviet war plans to the Germans. On the 11th, a special military court heard the NKVD's evidence against eight alleged ringleaders, chief among them Tukhachevskiy, Uborevich, Yakir, and Kork. Death sentences for treason were carried out the next day. As further evidence of 'wrecking', Tukhachevskiy, Uborevich, and Yakir had been charged with having built up the mechanized forces to weaken the cavalry.



1. Self-propelled assault gun stopped to fire.



2. Motorcyclists move out.



3. Column of Pz IIIs passing a village.



4. Heavy machine gun firing from cover.



5. Village residents watch their homes burn.



6. Light machine gun covering an advance.



7. Infantry crossing the Dnepr River.



8. Halftrack towing a 37 mm antitank gun.



9. Bringing up a 105 mm howitzer.



10. A 42 mm antitank gun in action.



11. A 150 mm being fired.



12. Bridge collapsed under the weight of a horse.



13. An 88 mm antiaircraft gun ready to fire at ground targets.



14. Artillery observers during direct fire.



15. Machine gun crew in action.



16. Pz IIIs crossing the steppe.



17. After the battle.



18. Self-propelled assault gun passes a burning KV-1.



19. Guarding a bridge.



20. Supply train bivouacking on the steppe.



21. Crossing a tank trap



22. Captured Red Army men march to the rear.



23. A four-barreled 20 mm anti-aircraft gun protects a bridge.



24. First snow.



25. Trucks waiting to resume their advance.



26. Loading a 105 mm medium gun.



27. Heading into the storm.



28. A hopeless case.



29. Antitank gun snowbound.



30. The horses have had enough.



31. Digging out.



32. Trekking to the rear.

Stalin's Military Reform

KIROV, KUYBYSHEV, AND TUKHACHEVSKIY

The Tukhachevskiy episode was an anomaly in the great Stalin purge. Other than as an every bit as devastating and chronologically concurrent event, it had little in common with the political purge. In 1936, Stalin's former partners Zinoviev and Kamenev and in 1938, Bukharin and Rykov, were subjected together with their alleged accomplices to extended show trials in which the charges and evidence were elaborately contrived. The 'Trotskyite Center' trial in early 1937 did the same with persons chiefly noted for having been associated with Trotsky at one time or other. The careers of almost all the accused had either been terminated or gravely beclouded for as much as a decade beforehand. In the Tukhachevskiy case, the verdict was not announced until after the sentences had been carried out, and whether a trial had even taken place was left in doubt. Moreover, only weeks earlier, the careers of the chief defendants had seemingly been secure. Tukhachevskiy had been scheduled to represent the Soviet Union at the coronation of King George VI in London on 12 May. Yakir and Uborevich had held their military district commands until 29 May.

Most significantly, the Tukhachevskiy case appeared to have had a substantively different origin and not to be, like the others, merely a vendetta against Stalin's old rivals. The charges in the military cases, while plentifully interspersed with banal references to Trotskyism and 'wrecking', alleged recent and ongoing criminal acts and ongoing conspiracies. Voroshilov paved the way for the disclosure of the executions with a statement to the troops that the Tukhachevskiy group had plotted to kill the top leadership, including him and Stalin, and to cede the Ukraine to Germany.¹ Later he added that they had sold vital military secrets to 'a foreign power'.²

Diplomats and other foreign observers generally considered it likely that Stalin's repressions had generated some kind of military opposition to him, but according to Loy W. Henderson, the first secretary in the American Embassy, none believed those executed were guilty of the crimes attributed to them. On the other hand, Henderson reported a rumor circulating in the Moscow population that the French had discovered a military plot and turned the information over to the Soviet Government; and more importantly perhaps, the Czechoslovakian President Edvard Benes had advised the French to be careful in dealing with the Soviet

General Staff because ‘those behind it were maintaining relations with Germany’ which gave grounds for suspicion.³ In his 1961 speech to the Twenty-Second Party Congress, Nikita Khrushchev seemingly confirmed that Benes had sent a similar warning to the Soviet Union but also confirmed that the extensive rehabilitation proceedings then just completed had produced no valid evidence against Tukhachevskiy or those executed with him.⁴

Nevertheless, in terms of origins and rationale, the Tukhachevskiy case had one common connection to the political trials: the Kirov assassination in December 1934. It provided the impetus for the uncovering of the allegedly widespread Trotskiyite plot against the party leadership that figured in the subsequent political trials. Stalin, however, also profited from it in another respect sufficiently to raise a strong suspicion that he had been the actual plotter, which was enhanced by Kuybyshev’s sudden death less than two months later from unspecified natural causes. At the Seventeenth Party Congress, Kuybyshev, as the now successful architect of the five-year plans, and Kirov, as the most genuinely popular figure in the party, had been perceived as significant figures in their own right. Kirov, though certainly not deliberately, had even entered the perilous sphere of potential rivalry with Stalin. His appearance on the rostrum had aroused a standing ovation, a greeting previously reserved exclusively for Stalin; in the balloting for the Central Committee, his affirmative votes had exceeded Stalin’s by a large margin; and there had reportedly been talk of nominating him to replace Stalin as General Secretary.⁵ Stalin’s choice of successors indicated that he had, at the very least, detected a problem worth correcting. Andrey Zhdanov, who replaced Kirov, was a relative newcomer on the national scene, and Stalin required him to retain his seat on the party secretariat, which necessitated his presence in Moscow and made him a more or less absentee chief of the Leningrad party organization. Kuybyshev’s post at Gosplan went to V. I. Mezhlauk, Voroshilov’s and Stalin’s Ukrainian henchman from the Civil War.⁶ Tukhachevskiy’s performance in the congress had been, as far as a relationship to Stalin was concerned, more that of an independent authority even than Kirov’s or Kuybyshev’s, and he had committed the colossal *faux pas* of mentioning Stalin’s name only once in his entire speech.

Kirov’s and Kuybyshev’s deaths, moreover, lost Tukhachevskiy the support that had brought him to the fore, and his continued rise thereafter depended on nothing more reliable than Stalin’s desire to give the Red Army a patina of bourgeois respectability.⁷ During or shortly after the 1936 maneuvers, Stalin must have concluded that Tukhachevskiy had failed him. By then also the world situation had taken an alarming turn, most ominously for the Soviet Union.

THE MILITARY PURGE

In October 1936, Germany and Italy had formed the Rome–Berlin Axis, and a month later, the existence of the German–Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact had

been revealed. Germany and Italy proclaimed a willingness to enter mutual security agreements with all countries except the Soviet Union. Germany and Japan professed their pact to be directed exclusively toward preventing the spread of communism, but nobody believed the Comintern could be a target separate from the Soviet Union. None of this could have greatly surprised Stalin, since it confirmed what he had believed all along; nevertheless, it impelled him to reassess his military policy in the light of his foreign policy's having stalled on one track and being overtly threatened with a collision on the other.

As always with Stalin, the overarching concern was his own position. The decisive question therefore was whether a military command structure which he had all along tolerated mainly as a cosmetic device would serve him properly in a genuine emergency. The Tukhachevskiy case prepared the country and the armed forces for the answer, and it was that the time had come to ensure the stability of the rear, as Stalin conceived it, at any cost. Having begun at the top, the purge spread outward and downward along the command and staff lines as the NKVD developed charges, made arrests and passed and carried out sentences. For three years, it was part of the military routine and attracted outside attention only when particularly prominent figures suddenly became the subjects of negative newspaper comment.

The Tukhachevskiy trial touched off a domino effect: associates, subordinates and acquaintances, past and present, of those executed became instant suspects, and the investigation branched off into new lines as it progressed. Sedyakin, Tukhachevskiy's collaborator, was isolated in a minor post, the Baku anti-aircraft command.⁸ Kork's former bailiwick, the Frunze Academy and its collection of tsarist relics, was raked over thoroughly; and specific charges no longer being necessary, Vatsetis, Svechin and others were taken into custody simply as 'enemies of the people'.⁹ Uborevich's successor, *Komandarm* First Rank I. P. Belov, had been a member of the court that passed sentence on Uborevich. He soon disappeared and was replaced by *Komandarm* Second Rank M. P. Kovalev. *Komkor* Danilo Serdich, one of Uborevich's corps commanders, was arrested in July 1937.¹⁰ Another, Rokossovskiy, was arrested in August.¹¹ Rokossovskiy survived. Serdich did not. Zhukov took over Serdich's corps, but only after hostile interrogations that led him from then on to expect an arrest any day.¹² Zhukov quite likely fared better than his colleagues owing to his having worked directly under Budenny and having thereafter commanded the 4th Cavalry Division, which had been Timoshenko's division in the First Cavalry Army.

The *komkors* were the backbone of the command structure, and they were hard hit. They were close enough to the top to be significant targets, and they were ubiquitous. Since no active army commands existed except in the Far East, the corps were the highest operational formations. *Komkors* also commanded the lesser military districts, and they were chiefs of staff and section chiefs in the higher staffs and the technical branches. When Isserson, later, and foreign observers at the time talked about 'the decapitation of the Red Army', they had in mind Tukhachevskiy, Uborevich, Yakir and a few others, but those were the figureheads among whom there might or might not have been a Red Napoleon. The actual

decapitation occurred in the *komkor* rank. In wartime, it would have to provide the army, army group and higher commanders, which, in fact, it did do – but belatedly and from the qualitative point of view, in barely adequate numbers.

In July 1938, a bulge developed in the execution rate of persons prominent enough to be given more or less public death notices either then or later, that is, ones at the military district commander level or higher, which would have excluded most *komkors* and all lower ranks. In that month, the executions jumped suddenly to 18 from one or two a month since June 1937. Stalin, having come into a direct confrontation with Japan, had most likely decided to lay exemplary emphasis on the principle of stability of the rear, which may account also for the apparently representative selection of victims. The largest contingent were six military district commanders, among them Belov and Dybenko, who had briefly commanded the Leningrad Military District and had served on the Tukhachevskiy court. The Air Force lost its chief, *Komandarm* Second Rank Ya. A. Alksnis, and the Navy its commandant, Fleet *Flagman* First Rank V. M. Orlov, and the commander of the Pacific Fleet, Fleet *Flagman* First Rank G. P. Kireyev. Sedyakin and the Army chiefs of intelligence, Army Commissar Second Rank Ya. K. Berzin, armor, *Komandarm* Second Rank I. A. Khalepskiy, and chemical warfare, Corps Engineer Ya. M. Fishman, were all executed on the same day, 29 July. Vatsetis and Svechin died in July 1938, as did also *Komkor* A. I. Gekker, who had been a military specialist in the Civil War and was most recently assigned to the General Staff. A currently or even recently active military career was not a requirement. The July 1938 roster included N. V. Krylenko, the first People's Commissar for Military Affairs and commander in chief, and I. S. Unshlikht, Voroshilov's former deputy.¹³ Krylenko's military activity had ceased in March 1918 and Unshlikht's in 1930.

THE MAIN MILITARY COUNCIL

In April 1937, Stalin began revising the defense structure to meet his requirements, the first and foremost of which was to gather all the lines of control firmly but unobtrusively into his hands. On 28 April, he abolished the Council of Labor and Defense and replaced it with – owing to his presence in it – a far more powerful body, the seven-member Defense Committee under the Council of People's Commissars. Molotov was the designated chairman. Stalin, Voroshilov, 'and others' were members. The 'others' were probably drawn from the civilian sector, where the political purge made rapid personnel turnover the rule. The Defense Committee was charged with 'coordinating all measures pertaining to questions of defense relating to the intensifying military threats against the USSR',¹⁴

The return to the commissar system in May terminated what unity of command had existed and restored the military councils in the military districts, fleets and lower commands. It by no means, however, gave commissars immunity from the purge. Jan Gamarnik, the chief of the armed forces' political administration,

would have died with Tukhachevskiy had he not committed suicide a week and a half before the trial. A commissar was likely to have an all but impossibly difficult time explaining why he had not detected and reported his military opposite number's alleged crimes. One's party record gave small protection. Although the political police, under its various designations, had supposedly existed to protect the party, the party as such had for long, perhaps forever, controlled it. The NKVD, since its inception, had been responsible in all matters solely to the Special Sector of the Central Committee, which was Stalin's personal secret chancellery, closed to all in the party except him and a small hand-picked staff.¹⁵

Stalin did not reinstall the RMCU, which had topped the military council structure until 1934. He probably had two reasons for not doing so: a certain lingering concern for foreign bourgeois sensitivity to the word 'revolutionary' and a doubt that the kind of collegial body the RMCU had been would exercise the control he wanted. Therefore, he allowed the Military Council, the 80-member successor to the RMCU, to continue at the commissariat level. It possessed no control power at all, but he had another way of securing that. He made his 'secretary' and right-hand man, L. Z. Mekhlis, an army commissar first rank and sent him to replace Gamarnik at the head of the political administration. Mekhlis was an arrogant, ruthless zealot who quickly and permanently established himself among the military as the most despised, feared and hated representative of the commissar system. In November 1937, Stalin advanced his and Voroshilov's associate from the days of the Tenth Army at Tsaritsyn and the First Cavalry Army, Ye. A. Shchadenko, to army commissar first rank and appointed him chief of the army's command personnel directorate, which decided officer assignments and promotions and was normally under military headship.¹⁶ Henceforth, nearly to the end of Stalin's life Mekhlis and Shchadenko would figure prominently in his relationship with the military professionals.

In February 1938, the German military system underwent a major revision that seems to have attracted Stalin's attention. Hitler created an armed forces high command to serve directly under him as commander in chief of the armed forces. Although it was not then Stalin's style to head anything openly other than the Communist Party, he apparently saw merit in Hitler's general idea. In March, he abolished the Military Council and created the Main Military Council. The legal niceties were, of course, duly observed (in Council of People's Commissars Decree No. 322 confirmed by the Central Executive Committee on 13 March 1938).¹⁷

The Main Military Council more closely approximated a wartime general headquarters than any body that had existed in the defense commissariat since the Civil War RMCR. Voroshilov chaired the council. Stalin was a member, along with Fedko, Blyukher, Budenny, Shaposhnikov, G. I. Kulik, Mekhlis, and Shchadenko. *Komandarm* First Rank Fedko had replaced Yegorov as first deputy people's commissar and commander in chief designate. Yegorov, who had inherited the post from Tukhachevskiy, had been transferred to the Transcaucasus Military District in January 1938 and was on a year-long road to oblivion. Blyukher, as

commander of the Special Red Banner Far Eastern Army, was likely soon to be engaged in active operations. Budennyi had been given command of the Moscow Military District in June 1937 to prevent that sensitive post's falling into the hands of an enemy of the people. *Komandarm* First Rank Shaposhnikov was chief of the General Staff. *Komandarm* Second Rank Kulik headed the Main Artillery Directorate, which he had taken over in 1937 when his predecessor ran afoul of the purge. Kulik's qualifications for the post were minimal. The actual chief qualification was that he had served as the First Cavalry Army's artillery commander. His presence on the council was owed to that and to Stalin's penchant for artillery, on which he regarded himself as an expert and did not want advice. The council, in fact, was heavily weighted to give Stalin an authentic claim to be its most knowledgeable member. Only Fedko and Blyukher could have regarded themselves as qualified for their positions in their own right. Shaposhnikov had more professional expertise than either of them, but in the atmosphere of the time and the light of his past, every moment of his continued existence depended entirely on Stalin. For the event that he might need additional leverage in the council, Stalin had the advantage of sitting in – and hence controlling – the Defense Committee, through which he could give orders to himself and the council.

Meretskov, who had stayed in staff work after completing the German general staff courses ten years earlier, was, in his position as deputy chief of the General Staff, secretary of the Main Military Council. His memoirs give a brief, guarded, but nonetheless somewhat revealing description of what was then the Soviet military high command in action. The council met two or three times a week, and the meetings were long and, particularly for the secretary, arduous. Much time was taken up with hearing reports from commanders and chiefs of staff of the 16 military districts. Although Meretskov does not so state, the district commands were then changing at a fast clip, and Stalin believed in judging new appointees in face-to-face encounters. Stalin attended meetings 'frequently,' which probably means off and on; and when he did he usually invited those present to dine with him, in which case the discussion continued into the night. Whether he was present or not, all decisions and proposals considered went to Stalin, and he, after acting on them as suited him, returned the results to the defense commissariat through the appropriate channels. The great advantage of this, according to Meretskov, was that 'virtually every military or military economic issue was settled with the direct participation of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU'.¹⁸ Stalin, of course, could also issue decisions on the same kinds of issues without the council's participation.

The Main Military Council put Stalin a large step ahead of Hitler in one important respect. Hitler was the armed forces commander in chief, but the Army General Staff retained its separate status and a claim to being the primary war planning agency. The Main Military Council co-opted the Red Army General Staff as its (in effect, Stalin's) planning and executive body – hence, the Main Artillery Directorate, etcetera. One directorate, the GRU (Main Intelligence Directorate) came directly under Stalin's control and together with the NKVD greatly strengthened

his voice in military affairs. The NKVD, as the party's guardian against counter-revolution, had monopolies on domestic intelligence and counterintelligence and since all foreign governments were by definition counterrevolutionary, a practically unlimited mandate in foreign intelligence. All of its information went to Stalin's secret chancellery. The Red Army had, since the Civil War, an intelligence directorate, the RU, which was confined to military intelligence but, by any other than Soviet standards, was very large. It had not been under military command at least since 1924, when Ya. K. Berzin, an old-school Chekist, took over. In the personal rank distribution, Berzin became an army commissar second rank. In November 1938, he was executed; and his chief executioner, the NKVD commissar, N. I. Yezhov, thoroughly purged the RU and incorporated it into the NKVD before it became the GRU. After Stalin, to spruce up the NKVD's image a bit, disposed of Yezhov in December 1938, the GRU acquired a military chief, but it was firmly under the NKVD's thumb and locked into the secret chancellery channel.¹⁹ Consequently, Stalin was the only member of the Main Military Council who had access to a complete intelligence picture, and it behooved the intelligence services to make the picture satisfactory to him.

TECHNOLOGICAL RECONSTRUCTION IN THE NAVY

While he was reforming the command structure, Stalin, for the first time, took more than a routine interest in naval affairs. Technological reconstruction of the Navy involved such large problems that it had seemed scarcely worth pursuing on an other than token basis. It would have required heavy preliminary investment in yards and docks and development of highly specialized technology and skills the country did not possess. Return in the form of tangible power would be slow to materialize because warships could not be built as fast as aircraft or tanks and because the Soviet Union would have had to start from a position actually further down on the world power scale even than the German Weimar Republic. In fact, it was so far down and so unsatisfactorily situated with regard to the geographical requirements of sea power that the first and most difficult problem had been to devise a credible mission for the Navy. The Navy, of course, also did not have the display potential of the Army or the Air Force.

In the late 1920s, the Navy had settled on a 'mosquito fleet' of light surface vessels no larger than destroyers, submarines, and aircraft that would conduct 'little war', a naval guerrilla war off the coasts to protect the ground forces' seaward flanks.²⁰ Having acquired the German diesel engines and plans, the Navy was best positioned to start a submarine building program.²¹ In 1930, the RMCU had given the Navy, as its share in the technological reconstruction, a directive to build a modest aggregation of vessels (destroyers, submarines, motor torpedo boats, coastal guard ships, and minesweepers), naval aircraft, coastal fortifications, and defensive minefields.²² In 1933, the Council of Labor and Defense

had amended the program to provide for building ‘a powerful underwater fleet’,²³

In August 1933, I. S. Isakov, one of the first Soviet-trained Navy men to qualify for higher command, had taken a squadron of two destroyers, two frigates, and two submarines through the White Sea–Baltic Canal to Murmansk where it became the Northern Flotilla, the nucleus of the Northern Fleet. The expedition had been a publicity stunt with a somewhat sharper focus than most.

Isakov was a leading organizer of a recently conceived ‘new school’ of naval strategy. Opposed to the ‘old school’ battleship fixation prevalent among the tsarist holdovers, it held the ‘little war’ theory as well to be inadequate and contended that a navy relying principally on cruisers could execute effective offensive operations against the supply and communications lines of an otherwise superior enemy.²⁴ The ‘new school’ theory had influenced the decision to expand the submarine program. In 1935, work had begun on the *Kirov* class cruisers, the first warships that size to be wholly Soviet-built (with Italian technical assistance).²⁵

Stalin knew very well that the Navy had reached its technological ceiling in 1935, but the next two years had raised, for him, compelling new considerations. Intervention in the Spanish Civil War, 1936–38, had demonstrated the difficulty of projecting military power far away from one’s own territory without a full-fledged navy, and in December 1936, Japan’s repudiation of the 1922 and 1930 naval limitation agreements with the United States and Great Britain had radically altered the world naval situation.²⁶ The Japanese action had not only terminated the limits on numbers of battleships but also on their size, which had been restricted to 35,000 tons. Germany, not a party to the limitation agreements, had laid down the *Bismarck* (45,000+ tons) in 1936. Japan had put the *Yamato* (70,000+ tons) on the ways in 1937. A naval race had begun in which, theoretically at least, all participants started at zero since 35,000-ton ships would be so far outclassed that they could not figure significantly in the final tally. Such an opportunity had been too good for Stalin to let pass. In November 1936, the foreign affairs commissariat had initiated negotiations to have specimen battleships built in the United States.²⁷

The Navy received a substantial, though then still mostly cosmetic, advancement in status in December 1937, when it was given a people’s commissariat. Army Commissar First Rank A. P. Smirnov, who had been commissar of the Baltic Fleet before replacing Orlov after his arrest four months earlier, became the first people’s commissar of the Navy. The main reason for the change apparently was to give the Navy more credibility in the negotiations for battleships. Activation of the Main Naval Council in April 1938 released the Navy from its organizational ties to the defense commissariat but did not give it coequal status. Smirnov chaired the council; Isakov was the deputy; and Fleet *Flagman* Second Rank L. M. Galler, like Shaposhnikov a former imperial staff officer, became the chief of the Main Naval Staff. The Baltic, Black Sea, and Pacific Fleet commanders and some others were members, but Stalin was not among them. He appointed Zhdanov to represent him in the council.²⁸ Although Zhdanov was a very powerful figure by any conventional reckoning, he was no substitute for Stalin.

BATTLE AT LAKE KHASAN

On 1 July 1938, the Red Army acquired its first *front* command since the West Front of the Polish War was abolished in April 1924. Relations with Japan had steadily worsened after July 1937 when the Kwantung Army staged the Marco Polo Bridge Incident to justify an all-out advance against China. By early 1938, the Soviet Union was heavily engaged in supplying arms and military advisors to Nationalist China and expanding its own Far Eastern forces, which the great distances involved made an exceedingly costly and laborious undertaking. In June 1938, Blyukher's Special Red Banner Far Eastern Army, deployed in the most exposed area, the Maritime Province north of the Korean peninsula and east of Manchuria, had over 100,000 troops. Since an additional large increase was scheduled, at the end of the month the Main Military Council divided the existing army into the First and Second Far Eastern Armies under Blyukher's staff as the Headquarters, Red Banner Far Eastern Front.

During the next six weeks, under notably complicated conditions, the Main Military Council received its first experience in directing an operation and the Red Army its first test against a foreign opponent. The locale was an isolated, one-by-three-mile sliver of territory about 80 miles south of Vladivostok. In it were situated, on the east, Lake Khasan, which reduced the width of the land area involved by about a third, and on the west, paralleling the lake, a steep ridge with prominent, 500-foot heights at either end. Three Manchurian–Russian boundaries with equal claims to validity had been drawn through the area in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, one on the east shore of the lake, one along the western slope of the ridge, and the last about a mile farther west along the Tumen River. Neither Soviet nor Japanese troops had occupied the area in question until the second week of July 1938, when a Soviet infantry regiment and two border guard companies began laying barbed wire and digging trenches along the west slope of the ridge.

In Moscow, on 15 July, Japan entered a demand that the troops be withdrawn to the east shore of the lake, which was immediately rejected. The Japanese Government seems to have wanted to keep the incident diplomatic, but the Kwantung Army had notoriously little patience with diplomacy. It sent an infantry division under General Kamezo Suetaka to the scene with an order to await the outcome of the negotiations in Moscow. The order, however, could apparently be construed to apply only to the initial situation, in which the Soviet occupation had been limited to the southern height. On 31 July, Soviet troops having appeared a day earlier also on the northern height, Suetaka attacked and seized the whole ridge.

Although the initial provocation came from the Soviet side, the Main Military Council may well have been entertaining second thoughts about the advisability of an outright military confrontation by the time Suetaka took the matter into his own hands. The purge had arrived in the Far East, and Blyukher was its most prominent target. In May 1938, *Komkor* G. M. Shtern had been assigned as

Blyukher's chief of staff, for which post his qualifications were manifestly slight. On the other hand, his appointment was obviously not made lightly. A career commissar, he had, since 1929, been Voroshilov's assistant 'for important special missions', the most recent of which had been in Spain as military advisor to the Loyalist Government – and guardian of the Soviet interest. With Shtern engaged, the case against Blyukher was most likely scheduled to be made and settled in short order; but a hitch developed in June, when G. S. Lyushkov, the NKVD chief in the Far East, disappeared; and it became more serious in July, after Lyushkov resurfaced in Japan.

When he learned of Suetaka's success, Blyukher ordered another two infantry divisions and two mechanized brigades to the Lake Khasan area. On 2 August, he and Shtern went there to witness a counterattack by the original division, the reinforcements being slow to arrive owing to extremely poor roads south from Vladivostok. After the counterattack failed, which it quickly did, Blyukher received an order from the Politburo to take command of the operations in person and not leave the vicinity without express permission from Voroshilov. Two days later, Voroshilov ordered him to bring the entire Far Eastern Front and the Trans-Baikal Military District to a full war footing including deployment at the frontiers, and left him to do that 500 miles away from his headquarters, in Khabarovsk. A second counterattack began on 6 August. By then, Mekhlis had arrived as representative of the defense commissariat; on orders from Moscow, Shtern had been given sole command of operations; and he and Mekhlis had been authorized to report directly to Voroshilov and Shaposhnikov. For Blyukher, being shunted aside did not in any wise constitute relief from responsibility, and the ensuing five-day engagement was a far from model performance.

Shtern had 32,000 troops, 345 tanks, 250 aircraft (180 of them bombers), and 237 artillery pieces. He failed to get more than half of the infantry and three-fourths of the tanks into action; nevertheless he had massive superiority over Suetaka's 9,000 troops, 37 artillery pieces and no tanks or air support. But he also had a handicap that would have posed problems for a more experienced commander than he: an order, presumably from Stalin, prohibiting any incursion into Japanese territory. That meant having to advance uphill from the lake shore to the top of the ridge over terrain in which tanks were practically useless and which heavily favored the defense in other respects. On 10 August, when Shtern's troops were still short of the summit but his advantage in numbers was clearly making Suetaka's situation hopeless in the long run, the Japanese Government proposed to let the commanders on the spot settle the incident between themselves. Moscow accepted, and a ceasefire went into effect at noon on the 11th. Two days of negotiations resulted in Suetaka's agreement to relinquish the heights and leave Shtern in possession of the claimed Soviet boundary.²⁹

The Main Military Council met on 31 August to hear reports from Blyukher and Shtern. Navy, air force and military district representative were present. Blyukher's statement on the *front* command's role drew 'uniformly harsh' criticism.³⁰ Shtern's report on the battle was warmly received. At the end, Stalin, as he often did, made a 'suggestion': since the *front* command had not proved its

worth, why not abolish it and rely on the armies? There being no objections, command of the now First Independent Red Banner Far Eastern Army went to Shtern. The fighting had taken place in the First Army's zone, and Shtern had remarked slightly on the commander's performance in his report. The commander of the existing Second Army, *Komkor* Konev, was reconfirmed. Voroshilov then told Blyukher that because the *front* was abolished, he would no longer be needed in the Main Military Council and since no other assignment befitting his rank was available, he should go to the Black Sea resort at Sochi for a rest.³¹

Arrested on 22 October in Sochi, Blyukher died in the Lefortovo Prison in Moscow on 9 November, charged with having been a spy for the Japanese since 1921.³² So long a criminal career necessitated a thorough search for accomplices. In September 1938, Stalin suddenly offered Meretskov an opportunity to get command experience at the Volga Military District. Meretskov had been Blyukher's chief of staff in 1935/36. He, for one, seems to have overcome his difficulty relatively easily, and he was shifted to command of the Leningrad Military District in early 1939.³³ Rokossovskiy fared less well. Having had a Polish father and having served in the Far East between 1922 and 1925 kept him tightly enveloped in two clouds of suspicion.³⁴

LESSONS OF THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

The Sudeten Crisis in the summer of 1938 may to some extent have been accountable for the inconsistencies in the handling of the Lake Khasan incident, and the threat of war in Europe it raised undoubtedly precipitated a hasty Soviet withdrawal from direct engagement in the Spanish Civil War. The 'volunteers' were all brought home by summer's end, even though the war itself was not moving rapidly toward a conclusion. Some returned to discover that the Spanish experience and the effects of the purge combined to boost their careers beyond all normal expectations. Others learned that service abroad could be equated with treason. While not as large as those of Italy or Germany, the Soviet participation had been substantial. Some 3,000 Red Army 'volunteers' had served with the Republican forces; and the Republic had received (allegedly in exchange for the Spanish gold reserve) in excess of 800 aircraft, 450 tanks and other armored vehicles, 1,500 artillery pieces, 500,000 rifles, 15,000 machine guns, and ammunition and aerial bombs.³⁵

Although the intervention in Spain failed, it was taken to have generated a priceless fund of experience. As Isserson put it, the war in Spain 'opened the curtain somewhat on the battlefield of the future', an intensely significant concern to all armies and above all to the Red Army.³⁶ Moreover, to military analysts from many nations, peering over each other's shoulders, so to speak, it offered a completely consistent picture from start to finish. At no other time during the century had armies possessed so apparently reliable a model from which to work.

In articles published in 1938 in the General Staff's new journal, *Military Thought*, *Kombrig* S. Lyubarskiy drew a single overarching lesson from the Spanish experience: 'History repeats itself.' The defensive superiority that had dominated the World War had reasserted itself more strongly in Spain. Advanced technology had benefited it more than it had the offensive. Deep operations had showed even less promise than in the World War. While the deep operation might well be the only effective offensive form, it would demand 'enormous strength and the most advanced technological means'; and the war would still 'assume a prolonged character'.

Lyubarskiy concluded that technology would figure more heavily in battles than ever before, but the infantry mass would ultimately decide wars. Artillery would indisputably retain its place as the most important support weapon, and improvised and permanent fortifications would be essential. The airplane had matured into a powerful offensive and defensive weapon, and the contest for air supremacy over the battlefield would henceforth be a permanent characteristic of warfare.

The tank, in Lyubarskiy's estimation as also in those of most non-Soviet analysts, had given a distinctly mixed performance. On the offensive, it had provided indispensable moral support for the infantry. In fact, infantry attacks had seldom succeeded without it. On the other hand, it had not achieved either 'large or small successes' independently of the infantry. The visions of tank formations breaking through prepared positions or even advancing across the open field had not materialized. Moreover, the tanks had frequently experienced 'great difficulties' without artillery support; and they had been vulnerable to antitank guns as light as 20mm, which indicated that infantry platoons could probably be armed to defend themselves against tanks.³⁷

Kombrig A. N. Lapchinskiy, who held the air tactics chair in the Frunze Academy, completed a book, *The Air Army*, in 1938, shortly before he was caught up in the purge. As most other commentators on air doctrine also did in the 1930s, he identified three primary air missions: long-range (strategic) bombing to destroy the enemy civilian population's morale; interdiction bombing directed against the enemy's communications lines; and close battlefield support. The war in Spain, he concluded, had proved the last to be by far the most significant, because it had demonstrated that 'only destruction of the enemy armed mass's will to fight secures victories.' Bombing attacks on cities, such as those on Madrid and Guernica, had neither damaged civilian morale nor impaired the armed mass's will to fight; hence, bombing civilian targets would not be worthwhile as long as the enemy was holding his own on the battlefield. Interdiction strikes against an adversary's communications lines would be profitable only if they could be executed without detracting from the effort on the battlefield.³⁸

INTERNATIONAL CRISES AND THE PURGE

Internationally, the Soviet situation in 1938 was the worst it had been since 1918. Japan tightened its grip on China; Germany began its drive for hegemony in Europe; and collective security was moribund. Hitler's annexation of Austria in March and his subsequent threat to go to war with Czechoslovakia over the Sudetenland brought Europe to the threshold of the long-anticipated second imperialist war. On the other hand, however, the eastward thrust of the German expansion coupled with British refusal and French extreme reluctance to call Hitler's hand appeared to substantiate Stalin's prediction that the bourgeois states might attempt to evade capitalism's inherent predatory pressures by deflecting them toward the Soviet Union.

Preventing the latter development had been the highest priority Soviet foreign policy objective since Hitler came to power in Germany, and in 1938, it gave Soviet policy something the French and British Governments, for their part, did not perceive: a sufficiently vital interest in seeing Czechoslovakian territorial integrity preserved even if doing so entailed some risk of war. The policy, however, had two built-in limitations: the Soviet Union would not unilaterally confront Germany, and in the event of a German armed attack on Czechoslovakia, the USSR would not be the first to take military counteraction. The absence of a military convention kept the form Soviet engagement might take in question throughout. A proposal to hold staff talks Litvinov made in early September 1938 brought no response. The French Foreign Minister, Georges Bonnet, would not act without British concurrence, which he knew he could not have gotten, and he suspected the Soviet actual objective might be to get France embroiled with Germany alone.³⁹ Gamelin asked, 'What can be expected of it [the Red Army] after its generals and high-ranking officers have been put to death by the thousands?'⁴⁰ On 28 September, the day before the Munich Conference began, the defense commissariat informed the French military attaché that in addition to 30 infantry divisions, 10 cavalry divisions, and seven tank brigades, it had 548 combat aircraft ready to go to Czechoslovakia.⁴¹

On 2 October, the Soviet news agency, *TASS*, announced that the Soviet Government neither had nor would have anything whatever to do with the Munich Conference or the decisions made there.⁴² However, Stalin and Voroshilov must have known the Red Army's ability to handle its share in the proposed Soviet solution would, to say the least, have been doubtful. In November 1938, Voroshilov gave the Main Military Council a report on the purge:

In 1937–38 we cleaned about 40,000 men [officers] out of the Red Army. In 1938 alone, we promoted and advanced over 100,000 men to new assignments. Enormous changes have been made in the army leadership: only 10 of the original [80-member] Military Council members remain.⁴³

The loss in the Military Council amounted to nearly 90 per cent of the top leadership, truly a decapitation.

With the Red Army in such a state and Hitler on the loose in Europe, Voroshilov's report must have had a double purpose: to claim a victory for the purge and somewhat reduce the pressure on the survivors. In September, Lavrenti Beria had superseded Yezhov in the NKVD, from which he would be ousted entirely in December before being sent to join his victims. Beria was no less ruthless than Yezhov, but he was more subtle and infinitely more ambitious. But the purge did not end: Stalin's principle of the stability of the rear required its continuance. After Yezhov was pronounced guilty of gross excesses, Beria found it politically and personally expedient to go after Yezhov's accomplices in the NKVD and slow the effort against the military. Nevertheless, in June 1939, 2,400 military cases were awaiting trial.⁴⁴

Approaching the ‘Second Imperialist War’

A SOMEWHAT NEW COURSE

Stalin told the Eighteenth Party Congress (10–21 March 1939) that the second imperialist war had become ‘a fact’. Its distinguishing feature, he said, was the absence of a declared war. Germany, Italy and Japan had engaged in aggression against Abyssinia, Spain, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and China, Britain, France and the United States were holding back, waiting for and ‘to some extent’ encouraging the aggressors to become deeply embroiled, particularly in China and against the Soviet Union. Reverting to the two-track policy he had formulated at the 1934 congress, he said, ‘We stand for peace and the strengthening of business relations with all countries’. The Soviet Union, he added, stood also for ‘support of nations which are victims of aggression’ and was ‘ready to deal two blows for every blow delivered by instigators of war who attempt to violate the Soviet borders’.¹

On 15 March, German troops occupied Czechoslovakia. Thereafter Hitler repossessed Memel from Lithuania on the 19th, offered Poland Slovakia in exchange for Danzig and road and railroad rights across the Polish Corridor on the 21st, and forced Romania to guarantee oil and other raw material deliveries to Germany. On 14 and 15 April, the British and French Governments, having already done so, themselves proposed that the Soviet Government extend unilateral guarantees primarily to Poland and Romania. The Soviet Government responded on the 17th with a counterproposal to form a three-power mutual assistance pact under which each would pledge military aid to the others in the event they were attacked and the three would be jointly committed to help all of the eastern European states between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea defend themselves against aggression.² On the same day, the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin asked German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop’s deputy whether Germany would allow certain Soviet orders placed with the Czech Skoda works before 15 March to be filled and suggested that Moscow regarded the question as a means of ascertaining German willingness to ‘cultivate and expand’ its trade relations with the Soviet Union.³

On 3 May, Molotov replaced Litvinov as People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. Two days later, Karl Schnurre, the German Foreign Office's chief specialist for east European trade, told G. A. Astakhov, the Soviet Embassy's trade representative, that the Skoda contracts would be fulfilled. Astakhov expressed satisfaction and asked whether Germany would also be willing to resume negotiations it had suspended in February 1939 on a general trade agreement with the Soviet Union.⁴ In another conversation some days later, he remarked that there were no substantive foreign policy conflicts between Germany and the Soviet Union and that the British–Soviet negotiations were 'hardly likely to produce the result England wants'. He predicted as well that Molotov's 'great significance as a personality' would figure heavily in future Soviet policy.⁵

In an interview with Molotov on 20 May, the German Ambassador, Count Friedrich Werner von der Schulenberg, proposed bringing Schnurre to Moscow for a review of the trade agreement and received a tantalizingly enigmatic reply. The Soviet Government, Molotov said, believed the Germans had all along been 'playing a game'; therefore, the negotiations could not resume until 'the necessary political basis' was created. Asked what the basis might be, Molotov replied it was a question both governments would have to think about and refused to say more.⁶

Molotov gave a foreign policy address to the Council of People's Commissars on 31 May. Foreign observers, many of whom had doubted, probably mistakenly, whether Litvinov spoke for Stalin, believed Molotov did so. He spoke at length about past Anglo–French policy failures and expressed doubts about those countries' willingness even yet, while seeking guarantees for Poland and Romania, to extend reciprocity to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, in which the Soviet Union had a special interest. 'While conducting negotiations with England and France', he added, 'we see no necessity for refusing to have commercial relations with such countries as Germany and Italy.' There were, he continued, indications that trade talks with Germany broken off in 1938 might be resumed. To Japan, Molotov issued a warning: the Soviet Government would 'not tolerate any provocations by Japano-Manchurian military units on its borders' or on the borders of the Mongolian People's Republic, with which it had a mutual assistance treaty. It would also apply 'in full measure' to China in compliance with 'Comrade Stalin's statement about support for peoples that have fallen victim to aggression'.⁷

In the remarks on Japan, Molotov was alluding to an as yet unpublicized incident then developing along the Khalkhin Gol (Halha River). The Japanese regarded the river as the eastern boundary of Outer Mongolia, and the Mongolians placed the border some ten miles east of the river to take in a small Mongolian settlement, Nomonhan. Early in the year, the Main Military Council had added 345,000 troops to the Red Army's permanent active duty strength and earmarked a large part of them for the Transbaikal Military District and the LVII Special Corps, which was stationed in the Mongolian People's Republic.⁸ In April, the Kwantung Army had ordered its units on the Manchurian frontiers to 'nip [Soviet and Mongolian] ambitions in the bud by completely destroying' their forces in disputed areas. On 28 and 29 May, some 1,500 Red Army and Mongolian troops with tanks

and artillery had inflicted a sharp defeat on 2,000 less heavily armed Japanese in the 10-by-40-mile strip of desert and swamp between the Khalkhin Gol and Nomonhan.⁹

THE NOMONHAN INCIDENT

The Kwantung Army considered itself obligated by policy and honor to restore the boundary on the river and deal the intruders a severe lesson. Molotov's warning to Japan on 30 May constituted an only slightly veiled Soviet commitment to a more definitive outcome than had been achieved in the previous two days. Hence, the Soviet General Staff, like the Kwantung Army, believed it would need to mount a dramatic encounter to achieve an adequately impressive effect. Of course, no such conclusion could have been reached without Stalin's concurrence, which he gave with a proviso that the drama be played out between the disputed borders and that Soviet troops under no circumstances violate the recognized Japanese border.¹⁰ From Richard Sorge, a German newsman working in Tokyo as a GRU agent, Stalin had learned that the Japanese High Command had placed the Kwantung Army under a similar restriction.¹¹ The Red Army's task, as Stalin defined it, was to secure the political and psychological objectives without expanding the potential area of conflict and 'getting pulled into a prolonged war'.¹² That gave the General Staff a twofold requirement, namely, to match any challenge the Kwantung Army might mount east of the Khalkhin Gol, but avoid any actions that could provoke escalation on the Japanese side.

Because the Japanese had proved somewhat the better in air encounters, the General Staff, on 29 May, sent the deputy chief of the Air Force, *Komkor* Ya. V. Smushkevich and a group of experienced pilots, 17 of them designated Heroes of the Soviet Union who had served in Spain and China, to provide on-the-spot training in combat tactics.¹³ On 2 June, Voroshilov, looking for somebody with experience but not enough rank to attract Japanese attention, sent *Komdiv* Zhukov to take over LVII Corps and develop a plan for the next round in accordance with Stalin's requirements. Zhukov had commanded cavalry corps since 1937, among them the VI Cossack Cavalry Corps which was comprised of former First Cavalry Army divisions, and had just completed testing an experimental tank-cavalry corps.¹⁴

Through June, the air forces sporadically skirmished overhead while the buildups proceeded on the ground. The Kwantung Army had the advantage of an established base 100 miles to the north at Hailar on the Chinese Eastern Railroad, and by the month's end, it had the 23rd Division deployed with 24,700 troops and artillery, tank, and cavalry reinforcements. All of Zhukov's additional troops, equipment and supplies, including the trucks to bring them the 400 miles from the closest rail-head, had to come over long distances on the Trans-Siberian Railroad. According to Soviet figures, he had 12,500 troops, was outnumbered by 2:1 in artillery but had a 3:1 superiority in tanks.¹⁵

On the night of 2 July, assuming an authority it had not been granted, the Kwantung Army permitted a strike across the river. Its planners had convinced themselves that a quick thrust along the west bank would bring the Soviet bridgehead to a spectacular collapse, and they had given little thought to what resistance, if any, might be met. The 23rd Division completed its final deployment expecting possibly to encounter ‘something more than ten armored vehicles.’¹⁶ The actual number was closer to 400.¹⁷ While engineers erected a pontoon bridge during the night of the 2nd, infantry crossed to the west bank by boat and advanced six miles south along it by midday on the 3rd. In the afternoon Soviet tanks swarmed in from the west and south; and the division commander, Lieutenant General Michitaro Komatsubara, realizing that his force could not survive the now quite likely event of the tanks’ getting through to the bridge, ordered a ‘change of course,’ in more plain language, a retreat back to the bridge and over the river. Owing to the Soviet armor’s failure to mount a concentrated attack, the bridge stood through another day and two nights, and before daylight on the 5th, the 23rd Division was regrouping for a frontal drive against the bridgehead.¹⁸

Although Komatsubara’s brief excursion across the river most notably demonstrated from first to last the consequences of overconfidence abetted by poor intelligence, it had an instantaneous and profound impact in Moscow. The Japanese had, in Stalin’s view, broken his terms of engagement, and that could under no circumstances be allowed to go unrequited. On 5 July, no doubt with Stalin participating, the Main Military Council ordered Shtern to activate a ‘front group’ headquarters at Chita and from there coordinate the two Far Eastern armies and the LVII Corps. Mekhlis and Shchadenko thereupon departed for Chita to represent the council on the scene.¹⁹ Chita, 300 miles east of Lake Baikal, was the railroad center on which all Soviet forces in the Far Eastern provinces and Mongolia depended. Kulik, the council’s artillery specialist, was taking a group of weapons experts to the battle area, among them *Komkors* N. N. Voronov and D. G. Pavlov, the chiefs of army artillery and armor.²⁰

Zhukov’s position was at that point apparently at least somewhat uncertain. Considering the Japanese weakness in armor, Komatsubara had gotten away relatively unscathed, and he still held the initiative east of the river where advances against the Soviet bridgehead had been made. For a week, in day and night attacks reminiscent of the World War, Komatsubara’s infantry stormed the bridgehead, compressing it to a 20-mile width and maximum 5-mile depth and demolishing five Soviet bridges. On 14 July, Kulik, apparently assuming an entitlement to intervene, insisted to Zhukov and to Moscow that to avoid losing it, the artillery had to be taken out of the bridgehead. Zhukov protested that the infantry would then also have to be withdrawn because it could not survive on the east bank alone.²¹ Komatsubara happened just then to have been promised heavy artillery from Japan and was at the point of slacking off his attack until it arrived. In another day or two, the pressure relaxed sufficiently to warrant a stronger Soviet commitment.

On the 19th, Voroshilov recalled Kulik to Moscow, and the General Staff redesignated LVII Special Corps as First Army Group, thereby elevating it to a provisional

status somewhere between a corps and an army. Komatsubara had the heavy artillery emplaced three days later and from 23 to 25 July mounted a 'general offensive'. The Kwantung Army, as it had before the excursion to the west bank, wanted a quick victory; and when no sign of one had materialized by the 25th, ordered Komatsubara to shift to the defensive.²² On the 30th, with the front showing no signs of an early Japanese return to the offensive, Zhukov received a promotion to *komkor*. Therewith, although he was still subordinate to Shtern under the 5 and 19 July directives, his credit apparently stood high enough in Moscow to enable him to squelch an effort by Shtern to intervene in the operational planning.²³

In early August, the Kwantung Army activated the Headquarters, Sixth Army under Lieutenant General Rippei Ogisu and gave it command on the Outer Mongolian border including the Nomonhan sector, where the 23rd Division continued digging in while Ogisu and his staff reviewed their options. Zhukov was receiving and deploying a flood of reinforcements, two infantry divisions, a tank brigade, two artillery regiments and more.²⁴ With superiorities – at least 1.4 : 1 in infantry, 1.7 : 1 in artillery, 1.9 : 1 in aircraft, and 4 : 1 in tanks – all of which had gone undetected on the Japanese side, he opened an offensive on 20 August.²⁵

Stalin's order confining Soviet operations to the disputed territory and Japanese Sixth Army's honor-bound determination to hold its ground at any cost forced Zhukov to engage in a bloody 11-day melee despite his numerical superiorities. By nightfall on 31 August, having encircled part of the Japanese force and pushed the rest east across the Manchurian border, Zhukov completed his mission, but Japanese Sixth Army by then had three divisions deployed outside the battle area for a counteroffensive and was receiving a fourth.²⁶ In the past week, however, the political scene in Europe had undergone a profound change.

THE NAZI-SOVIET PACT

The search for a 'political basis' to sustain the trade talks with Germany had progressed haltingly in June and into July. Both parties had striven to avoid taking the initiative. But time was less a constraint on the Soviet Union than on Germany, and on 26 July, Schnurre had told Astakhov that Germany was prepared to enter into a political relationship that would accommodate the vital interests of both parties. Astakhov had thereupon responded that the Soviet Union regarded its interests as threatened by 'the free hand' Germany had gained in eastern Europe through the Munich Agreement and by the German–Japanese connection under the Anti-Comintern Pact. From then on, the negotiations had accelerated in pace with the deepening German–Polish crisis. The trade agreement had been signed in Berlin on 19 August. On the same day, Molotov had sent a draft of a nonaggression pact to Berlin, and Ribbentrop had, through Schulenburg, assured Molotov that Germany would recognize Soviet interests in a secret protocol. On the 23rd,

Stalin had chaired a three-hour session in his Kremlin office during which he, Molotov, Ribbentrop, and Schulenburg completed the pact and protocol.²⁷ Stalin, with Molotov's obsequious concurrence, had maintained a thin pretense that he was an unofficial participant, but the speed at which decisions were made convinced Ribbentrop and Schulenburg, who was seeing Stalin face-to-face for the first time after nearly ten years in Moscow, that there was no higher authority.

Early on the 24th, after the signing had been completed and the Germans had gone, Stalin summoned members of the Politburo to a small celebration at his dacha. Nikita Khrushchev, who was there as party chief of the Ukraine, recalled years later that Stalin, in a high good humor, said, 'We have just played a game to see who could trick the other. And I tricked them. Ribbentrop brought a nonaggression pact, and we signed it.'²⁸ He then went on to summarize the secret protocol, in which Germany recognized Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Bessarabia as constituting a Soviet sphere of interest and, in the event of a victory over Poland, ceded the Polish territory east of the Narew, Vistula and San Rivers to the Soviet Union. Khrushchev and his colleagues immediately understood the 'trick': Stalin had extracted a splendid gain from a situation in which, by his and their lights, he could otherwise only have lost, either by having to fight in the Anglo-French interest or by standing on the sidelines while German power expanded eastward.

Although Khrushchev merely alluded to the nonaggression pact as the *quid pro quo* in the deal, it may well have been regarded as a more clever coup than the protocol. Its determinative clauses, Articles II and IV, specified that if either party 'became the subject of military action involving a third power', the other 'would not support that power in any way' and that neither party 'would participate in any kind of power grouping directly or indirectly aimed against the other'.²⁹ The first covered the very likely event of a German attack on Poland, but could equally be applied to 'incidents' in the Far East. The second gave Germany largely superfluous insurance against the Soviet Union's honoring its prior commitment to France, but cast a cloud over a secret protocol to the Anti-Comintern Pact in which Germany and Japan had pledged mutual political support against the Soviet Union.

JAPAN'S ABOUT-FACE

To the Japanese Government, although it had received several days' advance notice from Berlin, the announcement of the nonaggression pact was nearly as great a shock as it was to the British and French Governments, who to the last had no inkling of what was afoot. In remarkably short order, the Japanese reached a conclusion that was going to become the mainstay of their foreign policy for the next six years, in short, that to insure against future German double-dealing and, more importantly, to procure a free hand in East Asia for the likely event of a European war, Japan would have to seek an accommodation with the Soviet Union.

Until 1 September, when Germany invaded Poland, the Imperial General Headquarters (IGHQ) believed a counteroffensive in the Nomonhan area was a necessary preliminary to negotiations. In light of the new situation, the IGHQ, on 3 September, ordered Kwantung Army to halt offensive preparations at once. A direct order from the Emperor could not be disputed, but the commanding general insisted that the army, nevertheless, had a sacred obligation to strike through the enemy front to recover the dead troops and abandoned weapons. Although specious, it was a powerful argument, and it might have prevailed had the British and French declarations of war against Germany on 3 September not raised, for Japan, the very promising possibility of another world war. On the 8th, the IGHQ sent officers to replace the commanding general and four senior staff officers at Kwantung Army; and in Moscow on the 9th, the Japanese ambassador proposed a truce pending an agreement on the boundary in question.³⁰

THE 'MARCH OF LIBERATION'

At that point, Stalin was also having to contend with surprises. He had, no doubt, initially expected the only difference between the outcomes of the Czechoslovakian and Polish crises to be that he would receive a goodly share in the latter. After 1 September, his principal concern was to avoid being trapped into helping the Germans break the Polish resistance, the Polish capacity for which he and his military advisors apparently vastly overrated. On 5 September, Molotov told Ribbentrop that 'concrete action' to occupy the Soviet share of Poland would be 'absolutely necessary at a suitable time', but the government also wished to avoid 'excessive haste'.³¹ Soviet convenience, however, was not a consideration in the German timetable. On the 9th, when Ribbentrop informed him that German troops had entered Warsaw, Molotov, to conceal his surprise, sent perfunctory congratulations, adding that a Soviet military action would begin 'within the next few days'.³²

The Soviet troops on the western frontier were not ready to march anywhere. The campaign in Outer Mongolia was consuming a river of motor fuel and putting an enormous strain on the railroad system. By the 8th, the Japanese Sixth Army had been elevating its pressure at the front for the past several days. An all-out battle in the Far East and a march into Poland could not have been concurrently undertaken without risking an acute embarrassment, if not a disaster, in one or the other. Moreover, under the influence of the Spanish Civil War experience, Stalin and his military advisors apparently could not, even with the evidence before them, bring themselves to believe a sustained high-speed offensive was possible. On the 10th, Molotov told Schulenburg that the Soviet estimates were being derived from a statement in a message Ribbentrop had sent on the 3rd that the Polish forces would be defeated 'in a few weeks'; therefore, the Soviet forces would take 'two or three more weeks' to get ready.³³

The 16th was a day of decisions in Moscow. At 6:00 a.m., Schulenberg delivered a message from Berlin which stated that Polish resistance was ending in the German sphere of influence, and unless the Soviet Union could ‘set a day and hour’ on which its intervention would begin, the German forces would have to extend their advance into the Soviet sphere.³⁴ At that hour, the negotiations with the Japanese were not completed, but shortly afterward, a truce, effective at once, was announced in both Tokyo and Moscow in terms that led the foreign press to speculate on a German–Soviet–Japanese partnership.³⁵

An order for a ‘March of Liberation into the Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia’ had gone out to the Belorussian and Kiev Special Military Districts on 10 September.³⁶ Under it, they became the Belorussian Front (Kovalev) and Ukrainian Front (Timoshenko) with four armies and three armies respectively. The army staffs had been activated in late August; but time being short and speed having become an absolute necessity, the execution was given over to ad hoc ‘mobile groups’ of tanks and cavalry. The strongest of those were two ‘*front* mobile groups’, each composed of a tank corps, a tank brigade and a cavalry corps. Their missions, on the northern and the southern flank, were to close the Lithuanian, Hungarian and Romanian frontiers. A half dozen other groups were deployed to traverse the east–west roads.³⁷

The assumption was that organized resistance would not be encountered and it proved correct, but eastern Poland did not in other respects afford the parade-ground conditions that customarily accompanied Red Army maneuvers. The distances to be covered, about 150 miles to the Bug and another 100 or so to the Narew, Vistula and San, and the number of tanks involved, well over 2,000, posed a challenging problem in logistics. However, there was no time for anything except getting the mobile groups to the border and on the move. The ‘march of liberation’ began on time, but on the second night, an order went out to drain the fuel from a third of the tanks and leave them behind. From that point on, the supply situation became precarious in all respects. No doubt, more, perhaps many more, tanks were left behind, particularly by the ‘*front* groups’, in which the tank corps also generated massive traffic jams. When the northern ‘*front* group’ made contact with the Germans at Bialystok on the 22nd, it was out of motor fuel and rations and had to be given an emergency resupply by air.³⁸ After the junctions with the Germans at Bialystok, Brest-Litovsk, and Lvov on the 22nd and 23rd, the march to the Narew–Vistula–San line continued in stages at intervals of a day or two and was completed on 2 October.

THE TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP

On 20 September, Molotov asked for another meeting in Moscow, telling Schulenburg that Stalin believed the time had come for a final decision on Poland, which he now thought ought to be partitioned along the line designated

for the spheres of influence. Ribbentrop agreed, and the meeting was set for the 28th. On the 25th, Stalin 'suggested' an alternative: to eliminate a source of potential 'friction' that might mar the German–Soviet friendship, he would relinquish his share of the ethnic Polish territory, essentially the area west of the Bug River, in return for Germany giving up its claim on Lithuania. The game to see who could trick who resumed in Moscow three days later with Stalin clearly holding all the trumps. Germany did not want to be the sole oppressor of the Poles or to have the Soviet Union make a clear sweep in the Baltic States, but it dared not assume Stalin was bluffing. The British and French declarations of war had made Soviet neutrality much more valuable than it had been in August, and a British naval blockade was transforming Soviet economic support into a vital component of the German war economy. Moreover, the war with the Western Powers reduced Germany's capacity to fulfill its economic obligations under the trade agreement practically to zero since the items involved were almost entirely armament-related. Consequently, Stalin's bargaining power was greater than he knew, and he was likely to profit a good deal less than he might have. The Treaty of Friendship and its secret protocol negotiated on the 28th complied entirely with his specifications. Ribbentrop, however, did not leave empty handed. The announcement of the treaty called on England and France to terminate the war and declared that if they failed to do so, the German and Soviet Governments would 'engage in mutual consultations' with regard to necessary measures.³⁹

COMMAND INSTABILITY

Effects of the purge persisted in the upper reaches of the armed forces' command structure throughout 1939. Blyukher, Yegorov, and Fedko were not replaced in the Main Military Council. Of Tukhachevskiy's former functions which Yegorov and Fedko had inherited, the first deputyship went into abeyance and war readiness was shifted to a General Staff directorate under *Komkor* V. N. Kurdyumov. The People's Commissar of the Navy was (after August 1938) *Komandarm* First Rank M. N. Frinovskiy, a former commander of NKVD border guards who had been given his army rank to qualify him rank wise for the naval appointment. Beria removed him as a member of the Yezhov clique in April 1939, and the appointment went to Fleet *Flagman* Second Rank N. G. Kuznetsov, a 36-year-old career navy man to whom the purge had brought spectacularly rapid advancement. The purge in the Air Force had left no one with anywhere near sufficient rank and experience to replace Alksnis. *Komandarm* Second Rank A. D. Loktionov, who had acquired some familiarity with aviation serving on military district staffs, held an interim appointment while returnees from Spain worked at upgrading their qualifications. One of them, Ya. V. Smushkevich, only recently advanced to *komkor*, took over the command in November 1939, and the Air Force therewith declined to a more junior status than it had held in Alksnis's later years.

Owing mostly to the purge, command instability afflicted the armed forces at all levels. In the military districts, all commanders and 90 per cent of the deputies and chiefs of staff had been removed during 1937–38, and the corps and division had lost 80 per cent of their commanders and 90 per cent of their chiefs of staff and staff officers.⁴⁰ In early 1939, nearly three-quarters of the command and staff positions above the regimental level were held by recent appointees installed without regard to their qualifications.⁴¹ Stalin's purpose apparently was to teach an object lesson he regarded as more important than any other concern of the Soviet state, namely, that everyone, himself alone excepted, was dispensable. The lesson was well learned, even by those who seem to have enjoyed a certain immunity. Zhukov disclosed years later that because he had believed the abrupt summons to Moscow in June 1939 meant the same 'end' for him as had already arrived for many others and a file of 'lethal' evidence against him existed somewhere, he had 'joyfully' accepted the assignment to the Khalkhin Gol as a reprieve.⁴² What some, like Shaposhnikov or Isserson – or Vasilevskiy, who, besides having been Uborevich's protégé, did not join the party until 1938 – must have felt can only be imagined. But they were still better off than the survivors, probably the majority of them, who had to assume the burden of personal insecurity and the weight of positions for which they possessed little or no competence.

THE SECOND TECHNOLOGICAL RECONSTRUCTION

While Stalin was engaged in attempting to eradicate one long-standing problem, the incompatibility of a Marxist–socialist state and a traditional military system, the crises in Europe and the Far East lent urgency to another, the perceived requirement to develop armed forces equal or superior in every respect to all others.

The Third Five-Year Plan, begun in 1938, raised the goals for basic metals, petroleum products and electricity by 50–100 per cent and vastly expanded the investment in industrial plant construction, but another concern, at least equally as crucial as production, had emerged. The technological reconstruction of the armed forces was proved to have been based on technology that was destined for early obsolescence. Keeping abreast of the rearmament going on abroad required a second and more demanding technological reconstruction.

The technological deficiencies were most pronounced in the Air Force, which became aware in 1938 that its aircraft of almost every type had fallen beneath the world standard. Improved versions of the I-15 and I-16 fighters then going into production were outclassed by high-performance fighters, the Messerschmitt Me (Bf) 109, Supermarine Spitfire, and Hawker Hurricane, the likes of which did not yet even exist on the Soviet designers' drawing boards. The SB-2 fast bomber had lost its edge over fighters and was inferior to the German He 111 medium bomber in range or bomb load. The DB-3, a twin-engine long-range bomber introduced

in 1937, was not a match for the He 111 in its first state but was capable of further development, which would take time. By comparison with the US B-17 Flying Fortress, which went into production in 1938, the TB-3 was a museum piece. On the other hand, output increases in bombers and fighters in 1938 of 2,000 aircraft each almost doubled the numbers of the obsolescent types on hand in the previous year. Another boost added 2,744 bombers and 3,726 fighters in 1939.⁴³

In February 1939, a conference called to determine how the Air Force's technological lag could be most quickly 'liquidated' recommended accelerated development of advanced bomber, fighter, and *shturmovaya* (assault) aircraft. The last type originated in the idea, first put forward a year earlier, of a 'flying tank,' an armored, low-level ground attack aircraft. A meeting in the spring in the Kremlin at which the design chiefs and possibly Stalin were present laid down specifications for the types and established as deadlines: September–October 1940 for design tests and May–June 1941 for readiness to go into production.⁴⁴

In the Navy, technological reconstruction virtually amounted to a rebirth. The building race gathering momentum among the established naval powers offered an opportunity to project Soviet power worldwide that Stalin could not resist. At a meeting in the Kremlin on 19 December 1938, Stalin lectured the Main Naval Council on 'combined forms of battle,' which he maintained could be conducted by navies with battleships, cruisers, and 'other powerful ships.' The Navy, he said, would be ready to conduct such battle 'in eight or ten years'.⁴⁵ The Supreme Military Soviet had already established a requirement for 'a powerful high seas fleet'.⁴⁶ In 1939, the Navy, in addition to expanding its existing submarine and surface ship construction, had building programs under way for initial classes of four 60,000-ton battleships and two 35,000-ton battle cruisers.⁴⁷

Rapid expansion of the Red Army generated heavy demands for artillery and small arms, neither of which had figured prominently in the first technological reconstruction. The artillery, except for some heavy pieces that looked well on parade, and infantry – as was also the case elsewhere – were armed with weapons dating back to the early years of the century.⁴⁸ Like the Air Force, the Army was having simultaneously to maximize output of dated weapons and develop generations of new ones to replace them.

The tanks, as a result of an ironic twist, were approaching a situation almost identical to that of the aircraft. The tank directorate had in progress plans for two models designated as medium (26 tons) and heavy (47 tons), the T 34 and the KV (Kliment Voroshilov). If they lived up to expectations, they would set new world standards in speed, firepower, armor, and technology, which, of course, Soviet industry would also have to meet.

In June 1939, a commission in which almost all levels of command from the Main Military Council to the infantry divisions were represented was appointed to make recommendations on the Army's force structure, particularly with regard to the role of armor. Because a number of the members were involved in the Khalkhin Gol incident and the march into Poland, the commission did not get to

work in earnest until October and then drifted into a deadlock. Although German panzer divisions had given spectacular performances in Poland, one faction contended that the experience in Spain had proved tanks could not be assigned independent missions and the existing five mechanized corps should therefore be disbanded. Another, also ignoring the panzer divisions' performance, insisted that the war in Spain had merely shown mountainous country to be unsuitable for deployment of large armored units. On 21 November, with Stalin present, the Main Military Council took up the commissions' report and, apparently irked by the poor showing on the march into Poland, ordered the mechanized corps' disbandment forthwith.⁴⁹

THE 'MOST OFFENSIVE-MINDED' ARMY

Revised field service regulations, *PU 39*, confirmed the political commissars as alter egos of the commanders with whom they served and paid markedly less attention to deep operations theory than *PU 36* had. Its primary purpose seems to have been to elevate aphorisms such as the following to the status of general principles:

- The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics will respond to any enemy attack with a crushing blow involving all the might of its armed forces.
- If an enemy unleashes war on us, the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army will be the most offensive-minded of all the attacking armies that ever existed.
- The great power and invincible strength of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army derives from its absolute devotion to Lenin and Stalin.
- The Workers' and Peasants' Red Army is the most civilized of all the armies on Earth.
- The Workers' and Peasants' Red Army's mission are international; they have worldwide historical significance.⁵⁰

Although the above harked back to Frunze in tone, they no longer relied for support on class characteristics of the proletariat. Stalin and a self-proclaimed geneticist, Trofim Lysenko, had recently announced the emergence of a new human species, Soviet man.⁵¹ Lysenko was an agronomist who had propounded a theory that conditioning could transform the genetic makeup of living things within a short time, the 20 years, for instance, that the Russian people had lived under communism. As a result of such conditioning, *PU 39* asserted: 'The Red Army relies on the new man of the Stalinist epoch. Without him all technological means of [armed] struggle are useless; in his hands, they become formidable weapons.'⁵²

THE WEHRMACHT, 1933–39⁵³

Under Hitler, the *Reichswehr* had experienced a transformation of monumental proportions.⁵⁴ He withdrew Germany from the Disarmament Conference and from the League of Nations on 14 October 1933 and, having thereafter received no noteworthy reaction from Britain and France, in December authorized the Army to raise its strength to 300,000 men by the end of March 1938. In June 1934, Hitler declared the *Reichswehr* and the Nazi Party to be the two coequal 'pillars' supporting the state, which the military took as confirming their claim to autonomy. But in August, upon assuming from the powers of the Reichs President – including command of the armed forces – Hitler required all military personnel to swear allegiance 'to the death' to him.⁵⁵

In March 1935, when the Army was at 21 divisions and 280,000 men, Hitler, taking no notice of the Treaty of Versailles, raised the Army's projected strength to 36 divisions, reintroduced conscription, and revealed the existence of the Air Force. By then the Air Force had been at work for two years building a so-called 'risk air force', one heavy enough in bombers to deter a French attempt to enforce the peace treaty. Its main effect was as a kind of wake-up call for the British, who suddenly felt very vulnerable, and attempted in June to appease Hitler with a naval agreement that gave Germany an entitlement to a navy 35 per cent the size of the British navy without restrictions on the types of ships. Also in June, the *Reichswehr* became the *Wehrmacht*, the *Reichswehr* Minister the War Minister, and the *Truppenamt* what it had always been, the General Staff. The services became *Das Heer* (Army), *Die Luftwaffe* (Air Force), and *Die Kriegsmarine* (Navy), each with its own *Oberkommando* (high command), and *Oberbefehlshaber* (commander in chief). The Air Force was the most favored: it had its own ministry (after 1933) and its own general staff, and Hitler's deputy, Hermann Goering, was its minister and commander in chief.

In 1936, Hitler, having dealt France the most egregious provocation yet by remilitarizing the German Rhineland, began building the West Wall, a line of concrete bunkers and tank traps, as a not entirely serious counterpart to the French Maginot Line.

In the Army General Staff and the troop commands, the senior generals took the most profound lesson of the World War to have been that technological progress disproportionately favored the defense; hence, attrition would similarly supersede annihilation, and the next war would be even more pronouncedly static than the last had been. However, Hitler's 21-division program, which he raised in 1935 to 36 divisions, opened room near the top for younger men who had spent the stagnant years of the 1920s thinking about a better way to fight the next war. Guderian, Manstein and some others contended that divisions composed of tanks supported by motorized infantry and artillery could supply sufficient maneuver capability to support a war of annihilation. The infantry and cavalry branch chiefs, both of whom saw threats to their branches' traditional

roles, were adamantly opposed, but Hitler was an automotive buff and Blomberg prided himself on being open to innovations. In the summer of 1935, before the Army's first tank, the Panzer I, a light 5.5 tonner armed with two machine guns, was in serial production, three panzer divisions were added to the 21-division program. A year later, when those were completed, their battalions each had twelve Panzer I's, in some instances the chassis only.

In February 1938, Hitler summarily dismissed Blomberg, who had recently entered into an inappropriate marriage, and General Werner von Fritsch, who had been accused of homosexual activity, and used the opportunity thereby created to terminate what remained of the armed forces' status as a freestanding 'pillar of the State'. Moral peccadilloes did not interest him unless they could be made to serve some larger end, and Blomberg and Fritsch had given him that. At a secret meeting in the previous November, he had told the military chiefs they would have to be ready for war in five to seven years. Blomberg and Fritsch had raised strong objections, which he might have expected from Fritsch but not from Blomberg, who had until then been acquiescent to a fault. Apparently convinced that the military were in serious need of his personal supervision, he abolished the war ministry on 4 February 1938, and replaced it with the OKW armed forces high command, under himself as *Oberstebefehlshaber* (supreme commander). He turned over the in-house management functions of the ministry – but no command authority – to General Wilhelm Keitel as 'chief' of the OKW. As his personal staff, he activated a small OKW 'Operations Staff' under Colonel Alfred Jodl. In the matter of the Army command, he found a more tractable commander in chief in General Walter von Brauchitsch, with whom, moreover he could get off to a good start by supplying the rather large amount of money Brauchitsch's wife was asking for a divorce.

Having revised the military command structure to suit himself, Hitler began, sooner than he had said at the November 1937 conference, to set the stage for the war he had predicted. On 11 March 1938, the Germans carried out a semi-military annexation of Austria – during which motor fuel shortages threw the march of the panzer troops into confusion. On 30 May, the Führer directive (strategic directive) for Case GREEN opened with the following sentence: 'It is my irrevocable decision to destroy Czechoslovakia in the foreseeable future by military action.'⁵⁶ By then Hitler had issued a demand for the Sudeten German area of Czechoslovakia so provocatively highhanded that it frightened even his generals and produced signs of incipient disaffection among them. The chief of the Army General Staff, General Ludwig Beck, resigned. Beck's successor, General Franz Halder, shared his sentiments entirely, only was more discreet. When the public reaction neared panic, Hitler accepted the gift of the Sudetenland in the Munich Agreement of September 1938 but regretted having not gone to war. On 15 March, when the remainder of Czechoslovakia surrendered under an ultimatum, he insisted, nevertheless, on sending troops in battle order to take possession of Prague.

The civil war in Spain did not affect the German Army as much as it did the Red Army. The early reversion to positional warfare and the poor showing of

armor merely confirmed what the conservative generals had always expected. Those who regarded the tank as the decisive technological support of the offensive pointed out that Spain was one of the least likely venues in the world for a valid test.

The Air Force was more significantly involved in Spain than the Army. Its 'Legion Condor' was the Fascists' chief air support from the beginning of the war to the end. The Air Force did not expect anything significant with regard to its then presumed main mission, strategic bombing, to result from the activity in Spain. The Legion's long-time chief of staff and last commander, Wolfram von Richthofen, was, however, like Guderian, a dedicated propagator of innovative ideas. From the experience in Spain, he concluded that single- and twin-engine bombers of the types the Legion had, all of which had a dive-bombing capability, could decisively enhance the offensive effectiveness of ground forces. His ensuing proposal that the Air Force assume close tactical ground support as a major mission received a cold reception from the strategic bombing advocates, but single and twin-engine bombers were all the Air Force had – or would ever have.

In 1937, metals shortages, particularly in iron and steel, began to disturb the armament program; nevertheless, as of 1 September 1939, the Army was in no respect inferior to its counterparts in the world, and the Air Force was the most modern. The Army had 30 infantry, 6 panzer, and 12 other division-size units, 2.75 million troops on active duty, with an almost equal number in the reserves. The Air Force had 4,093 first-line aircraft, of which 1,176 were medium bombers, 366 dive-bombers, and 1,179 were fighters. In the latter categories, the *Luftwaffe's* strength was double that of the combined British and French air forces. The Army's tank park consisted of 1,445 Panzer I's; 1,224 Panzer II's (10 tons, 1 20-mm cannon, 1 machine gun); 221 Panzer IV's (17–25 tons, 1 75-mm cannon, 1–2 machine guns); 274 Panzer 35/38s (formerly Czech light tanks, 6.5–16.5 tons, with 1 57-mm cannon and 2 machine guns, maximum); total 3,257.

The 'Most Pressing and Deadly Threat'

THE WINTER WAR

Stalin had always regarded recovery of the Baltic States and Finland as essential to Soviet security and domination of the Baltic littoral – Finland, particularly because its border on the Isthmus of Karelia was also a bare 20 miles north of Leningrad. Although the Soviet Union had put forward several requests for military access to Finnish territory since the Sudeten crisis of 1938, the summer of the Polish crisis passed quietly for Finland.¹ In June, however, Stalin ordered Meretskov, who was still commanding the Leningrad Military District, to begin preparations for and draw up a plan for a 'counterblow' against the Finnish armed forces should they initiate a 'military provocation'.² On 12 October, having in the previous week and a half coerced Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into similar agreements, Stalin offered the Finns a mutual assistance pact in exchange for extensive territorial concessions. The Finns considered the one as much a threat to their independence as the other; the negotiations broke down at the end of the month. On 26 November, Moscow radio announced that Finnish troops had staged a provocation at a border post on the Isthmus of Karelia. On the 30th the Soviet 'counterblow' began.

Stalin did not want a mere counterblow; neither did he want a real war; he wanted something like the German drive through Poland, the success of which he apparently attributed wholly to Polish irresoluteness in the face of superior power. In July, he had told Meretskov to make the projected operation 'short and swift: and think of it as exemplifying the full strength of the USSR'. According to Meretskov, the objectives were to 'throw the enemy back from Leningrad, ensure the security of the frontier in Karelia and the Murmansk region', and teach the Finns a stern lesson.³ The Soviet deployment suggests a less benign purpose. Three armies were positioned on the Finnish eastern border, from north to south: Fourteenth Army (two divisions) – at Murmansk, to seize Petsamo, the Finnish port on the Barents Sea; Ninth Army (five divisions) – just below the Arctic Circle, to advance some 200 miles to the head of the Gulf of Bothnia and there cut the only railroad that could carry outside aid

to Finland; Eighth Army (seven divisions) – off the eastern shore of Lake Ladoga, to drive north and west around the lake in conjunction with the offensive on the Isthmus of Karelia. Together they had over 200,000 infantry and at least 900 tanks.

On the Isthmus of Karelia, Seventh Army (14 divisions, 1 tank corps plus 2 tank divisions, over 200,000 infantry and 1,800 tanks) was to demolish the Mannerheim Line and put itself in position to strike westward toward Helsinki.⁴ To avoid an appearance of threatening Leningrad, the Mannerheim Line had been built during the 1920s and 1930s as two 20-mile belts across the Isthmus of Karelia. The first, a system of dugouts, some concrete pillboxes, wire entanglements, and minefields, was artfully designed to harmonize with the landscape and enable a relatively small covering force to disjoint an attack. In the second, five solid lines of trenches interspersed with log and concrete bunkers confronted the attacker.⁵ The chiefs of the Red Army artillery and armor branches, N. N. Voronov and D. G. Pavlov, commanded the artillery and tanks attached to Seventh Army. After the deployment was completed, Meretskov, following a 'last minute suggestion' from Stalin, suppressed whatever doubts his lack of troop command experience might have aroused and took command of Seventh Army.⁶ Stalin then assumed exclusive strategic and operational control and the deciding voice in tactical matters – probably, since those would have been his anyway, to leave no doubt as to where the credit for the anticipated victory belonged.

A single, overwhelming consideration (as Stalin expected), dominated Finnish Commander in Chief Marshal Carl Mannerheim's planning: his was a country of 7 million people sharing a long, open border with a hostile neighbor that had 190 million. His army could only fight to delay defeat. Time was all that could be won. Pitched battles would have to be avoided because, for a field army of just 295,000 men, they would merely hasten progress toward the point at which the losses became prohibitive. Although it had not been neglected, the army was modestly equipped. Other than in the nature of the Finnish terrain, its advantages were mainly intangible. It did not have to bear an ideological burden; a large number of its senior officers had been trained in Germany during the World War; and it had maintained contacts in Germany and with the former Allies in the interwar period. The Soviet 2 : 1 superiority in infantry was about the minimum for an offensive against a determined opponent. Stalin had miscalculated on that score; but his confidence in reserves was as strong as it had been during the Civil War; and those he had aplenty, plus absolute superiority in armor, of which the Finns had none.

The offensive on the isthmus opened with a distinctively Soviet ritual, the reconnaissance in force (*razvedka boyem*), a period (in this instance six days) of probing attacks of up to battalion strength intended to detect the enemy's weak and strong spots. It was supposed to enable the higher commands to determine their points of main effort. Of course, it also alerted the enemy. The offensive began in earnest on 6 December with thrusts on both sides of the isthmus. Hampered by barbed wire, tank traps, and mines and harassed by ambushes and

deftly mounted counterattacks, both stalled within a week. At the turn of the year, Meretskov was straining to preserve a token initiative, and Stalin was rushing in reserves to revive the offensive at a time when the Soviet Union was sinking to an abyssal low in world opinion. On 1 December, Stalin, by recognizing a puppet Finnish Government under Otto Kuusinen, had disclosed his real objective; and the League of Nations had expelled the Soviet Union two weeks later. Worse still, from Stalin's point of view, the lull that had set in western Europe, the so called 'phony war', deflected world attention toward Finland and made him appear to be a more wanton aggressor than Hitler, while Finland acquired a reserve of sympathetic admiration abroad that would serve it well later.

Above all, the collapse of Stalin's blitzkrieg was a self-inflicted fiasco. In his memoirs, Mannerheim compared the Soviet performance in December to that of 'a badly conducted orchestra in which the instruments were played out of tune'. He wrote,

The artillery kept up heavy fire, but it was badly directed and badly coordinated with the movements of the infantry and armor. Tanks might advance, open fire, and return to their starting point before the infantry had even begun to move.⁷

Mannerheim's metaphor was exactly right. The commanders in the field, from Meretskov on down, lacked sufficient grasp of their parts to play them in unison; and Stalin's direction, which required that virtually every note be cleared through him, ruled out a sustained tempo. Moreover, the instruments were inadequate. Two-way radios were rare items in the Red Army's inventory and apparently nonexistent in Seventh Army until Meretskov received a set sometime in January 1940.⁸ The Red Army had no centralized supply system. The armies and their principal subordinate commands were individually responsible for their supply procurement. The tables of organization assigned the supply function to the chiefs of staff as a collateral responsibility; consequently, it was all but certain to be neglected in hectic situations. Also, trucks were not organic equipment in field forces. The five-year plans had assumed that in a war emergency, motor transport and rations would be requisitioned from the civilian sector. By January, the civilian motor pools as far south and east as Moscow had been drained without meeting the demand. The five-year plans had assumed, too, that farm tractors, built to run at low speeds on level ground, could double as artillery prime movers under combat conditions.⁹

The armies north of Lake Ladoga had made fast starts in early December. Unopposed, Fourteenth Army had occupied Petsamo. Ninth Army, at first also unopposed, divided its force into three groups spaced 50–75 miles apart and aimed due west toward the Gulf of Bothnia. Eighth Army directed its attack toward the eastern terminus of the Mannerheim Line. The Eighth and Ninth Armies' moment of glory was brief. Meretskov's failure on the isthmus enabled Mannerheim to divert some of his reserves, and by the end of December, all the Soviet thrusts were stopped, Eighth Army's just short of its objective. Lightly

armed but fast-moving Finnish ski troops had immobilized and isolated ten or a dozen Red Army divisions in the depths of the Finnish wilderness.¹⁰ Over the next month and a half, as Finnish marksmanship, cold, and hunger demolished the onetime Soviet spearheads, the outside world formed its opinion of the Red Army from press photographs of starved, half-frozen Soviet soldiers and abandoned equipment. The resulting image of a broken-down Soviet steamroller gave an ironic twist to an admonition Meretskov had given earlier: 'The whole world has its eyes on us, and the prestige of the Red Army is the guarantee of the Soviet Union's security.'¹¹

The offensive on the Isthmus of Karelia resumed on 1 February. By then the command structure had been reorganized, and the infantry, artillery and tanks had been about doubled. For form's sake, the number of aircraft had also been increased, even though limited visibility in the subarctic winter practically rule out battlefield air support. The zone of main effort, the western third of the isthmus had been assigned to Seventh Army (15 divisions). An army headquarters, Thirteenth Army (12 divisions) under *Komkor* V. D. Grendal, had been activated in the eastern zone. A *front* headquarters, Northwest Front under Timoshenko, had been activated to coordinate the armies' operations.¹²

On 11 February, having completed the approach march through the Finnish covering zone, Seventh and Thirteenth Armies assaulted the first line in the Mannerheim Line. Seventh Army broke through but stalled at the second line on the 17th and had to begin a ten-day regroupment.¹³ His faltering armies were putting Stalin in a grave predicament. Germany and the Allies appeared to be shying away from opening another Western Front; and he had always believed that given an opportunity, the capitalist states would vent their frustrations against the Soviet Union. On 29 January, Mannerheim had appealed to the Allied Supreme War Council for support. At a specially called meeting in Paris several days later, the council had declared itself committed to a military intervention in Finland.¹⁴ On 22 February, through the Swedish Government, Moscow transmitted peace terms to Finland that were militarily crippling but in comparison to Stalin's original objectives, almost generous.¹⁵

When the offensive resumed, on the 28th, Meretskov had ahead of him three lines echeloned to a depth of about ten miles and the fortified city of Viipuri, to which the last two lines were anchored. Mannerheim noticed improvement in the Soviet performance, which he credited to better preparation, but he observed that three weaknesses prevailed throughout: 'a kind of inertia' in the higher commands 'that displayed itself in the formalism and simplicity of the operational plan, which excluded maneuvering and was obstinately pursued to victory or defeat'; over-reliance on the weight of materiel; 'a striking absence of creative imagination where fluctuations of the situation demanded quick decisions'; and a frequent inability to exploit initial successes.¹⁶ But Stalin had the decisive strategic asset, expendable manpower. On 9 March, Mannerheim advised his government to accept the Soviet terms, and the peace treaty went into effect at midday on the 13th. Stalin had stiffened the terms somewhat, but he had also obviously been in

a hurry to end the war. On the morning of the 13th, Viipuri, the last line in Meretskov's zone, and the whole eastern two-thirds of the Mannerheim Line (against which Grendal had made no progress at all) were still in Finnish hands.

At home – and for what it might be worth abroad – Stalin had the war depicted as hard but well fought against an international conspiracy. Over 400 commanders and others were dubbed Hero of the Soviet Union, among them Timoshenko, Meretskov, and *Komdiv* M. P. Kirponos, whose division was alleged to have captured Viipuri on 13 March. Fifty thousand individuals received lesser decorations, and 70 units were granted the Order of Lenin, the second highest decoration.¹⁷

LESSONS LEARNED

From 26 to 28 March, a plenum of the Central Committee acted on the 'results and lessons' of the war with Finland. From 14 to 17 April, for the same purpose and at the Central Committee's behest, the defense commissariat held a conference in which the Politburo and the most senior personnel of the commissariat, the military districts, and the armies participated.¹⁸ Actually, the plenum and the conference were confined to endorsing the results and lessons presented to them. They apparently functioned mainly to prepare the upper levels of the party and the military for major changes in military affairs. The authority to make substantive recommendations went to a commission under Zhadanov, who had been the Leningrad Military District and Northwest Front commissar, and N. A. Voznesenskiy, the *Gosplan* chairman. As an organ of the Central Committee, it functioned directly under Stalin.¹⁹

The outcome was a profound act of self-criticism. In his report to the plenum, Voroshilov first addressed the Stalinist system's obligatory question of fault. Not he, he said, as defense commissar, nor the General Staff, nor the Leningrad Military District command had 'any idea of the peculiarities and difficulties involved in this war'; and the 'relatively rapid victory' had only come about because 'Comrade Stalin virtually conducted all operations and all the organizational work of the front'.²⁰ With that, in a single breath, he placed Stalin above criticism and left the whole rest of the military establishment, himself included, open to doubt. He went on at length to describe the Army's performance in terms similar to Mannerheim's. He disclosed that many senior commanders and chiefs of staff had been removed, 'not merely because their leadership was not doing any good, but because it was doing positive harm'.²¹

In the conference, Stalin gave a preview of the Red Army-to-be. The cult of the Civil War, he said, would have to be abandoned, and its proponents in the leadership would have to be removed to make way for men who understood contemporary war and could build on recent experience. The models would be the current war in Europe and the war in Finland, particularly the Finnish Army's example of

'active defense'. The requirements would be greater freedom to express one's opinions on operational and tactical questions and to criticize existing military principles and practices in order to develop an up-to-date military doctrine.²²

The objectives, as the commission formulated them, were to familiarize the commanders and staffs at all levels with 'the requirements of modern warfare', educate them 'to exercise creative initiative and make correct decisions in fast moving situations', and give the troops 'intensive training under combat conditions.'²³ In short, from top to bottom, the armed forces were to be reeducated in accordance with doctrine that had yet to be developed. Even though Stalin had restricted it to operations and tactics, the reeducation program entailed hitherto impermissible military autonomy and exemption from state policy that demanded conformity, suppressed initiative, and regarded all unlicensed ideas as subversive. To give those credence, the commission recommended that the military leadership be given authority and status appropriate to its assigned role.

On 7 April, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet authorized general officer and admiral ranks for the Army and Navy: in ascending order, major general (equivalent to *Komdiv*, brigadier general US), lieutenant general, colonel general, army general and counter admiral (equivalent to *flagman* second rank, rear admiral US), vice admiral, admiral, fleet admiral. On the same day, Timoshenko, Shaposhnikov, and Kulik became marshals. A day later, Voroshilov having been shifted to the relatively insignificant chairmanship of the defense committee in the Council of People's Commissars (with his rank intact), Timoshenko became People's Commissar of Defense. Zhukov, recalled from the Far East, took over the Kiev Military District. Meretskov, some weeks later, advanced to a deputyship in the defense commissariat, and Kirponos succeeded him in the Leningrad Military District command.

On 4 July, the armed forces acquired 982 generals and 74 admirals. Zhukov, Meretskov, and I. V. Tiulenev became army generals; I. P. Apanasenko, O. I. Gorodovikov, A. D. Loktionov, and G. M. Shtern colonel generals; Pavlov, colonel general of armored forces; and Voronov and Grendal, colonel generals of artillery. Altogether, the lieutenant generals numbered 120, the major generals 852. As an unprecedented expression of esteem, the government newspaper, *Izvestiya*, over a period of five days, published pictures of all the generals.²⁴ More than anything else, the appointment demonstrated the dearth of qualified candidates for the highest ranks. Zhukov was advanced two grades, all the others one; and none, except Zhukov, had given superior performance in a lower grade. Four of the five marshals and four of the 11 colonel and army generals' careers had been built on service in the First Cavalry Army, and their appointments hardly evinced determination to abolish the cult of the Civil War. A number of purge victims released in May as a vaguely conciliatory gesture, Rokossovskiy among them, also received places on the generals' list, but as probationers. Rokossovskiy's previous service under Timoshenko gained him restoration to the equivalent of the rank he had held, major general, which was three grades below Zhukov, who had been his subordinate.

THE 'DEADLY THREAT'

A potentially greater calamity followed close on the heels of the Finnish war. The German May–June 1940 campaign in the Low Countries and France, in six weeks, demolished the Western Front, which Stalin had expected to be the main theater of the imperialist war, in which the capitalist states would exhaust themselves and open the way to the world revolution. Worse still, the German victory cost Stalin the foreign policy asset he most valued: untrammelled possession of the option for war. Later, Nikita Khrushchev said that when word of the French request for an armistice came over the radio, he, Stalin, and all the other Politburo members present had realized instantly that 'the most pressing and deadly threat in all history faced the Soviet Union'.²⁵

Stalin, seeing a threat to Soviet interests – and an opportunity to cash-in on the German victory – in the impending French surrender, had communist governments installed in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia as preliminaries to Soviet annexation. On 28 June, troops under Zhukov's command began a 'march of liberation' into the Romanian province of Bessarabia.²⁶ In July, Japan, having realized that the German victory in Europe had created a power vacuum in Southeast Asia and wanting to exploit it, offered to open negotiations on a neutrality pact, and the Soviet Union accepted.²⁷ British avowed determination to fight on and the beginning of the German bombing offensive against England in August gave some temporary reassurance, but the initiative was unmistakably in Hitler's hands. In September, responding to a British proposal for a coalition against Germany, Stalin told the British Ambassador, Sir Stafford Cripps, that even though a German victory over Britain would put the Soviet Union in a difficult and dangerous positions, 'it was impossible at the present time to invite the certainty of a German invasion of the Soviet Union by any alteration of Soviet policy'. He added that he preferred to risk fighting Germany alone because he believed a victory over Britain would 'appreciably weaken' German military power and possibly prevent Hitler's launching another major campaign.²⁸

REFORM AND REASSESSMENT

The events of the winter and spring added urgency and requirements to the technological reconstruction. In comparison with the Soviet performance in Finland, German employment of armor and air power – in the latter instance, particularly in the form of dive-bombing – had added a new dimension to offensive operations. In May, Stalin rescinded the November 1939 disbandment order and directed Timoshenko to activate nine mechanized corps (two tank and one motorized infantry division) with 1,031 tanks apiece, 546 of them KVs and T 34s.²⁹ Of the over 4,900 KVs and T 34s required, all that existed were a few hand-crafted

preproduction prototypes. Three new fighter aircraft, the LaGG-3, MiG-1, and YaK-1, were cleared for production during the summer, even though they had not been fully tested and only the YaK-1 showed promise of being competitive with foreign types. A prototype *sturmovik*, the I1-2, made its first flight in mid-October and entered production in early 1941.³⁰ On the new western border, construction of 20 fortified districts began in the summer, almost as many as had been built in the Stalin Line, which had 21.³¹

In a decree of 12 August 1940, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, finding 'the command cadres greatly strengthened over the past few years', proclaimed 'full unity of command' in the Red Army and Navy, and converted the commissars into chiefs of 'sections for political propaganda'.³² Some weeks later, new field service regulations, *PU 40*, conveyed the purport of the decree in detail that also implicitly held unity of command to a level somewhat below full. The general principles gave the command function prominence in such formulations as:

- The commander organizes and directs the battle.
- The commander stands at the head of military formations.
- The commander bears complete responsibility for the condition and fighting efficiency of military formations, for operational direction of forces, and for their successful engagement in battle.³³

PU 39 had assigned those powers and responsibilities jointly to the commander and the commissar.³⁴ *PU 40* separated the military and political sections in the command channel as deputy commanders and as were members of the military councils in the higher headquarters. It also retained the reference to 'the new man of the Stalinist epoch' and – in more bellicose form – such aphorisms as

- The Red Army's entire personnel is imbued with a spirit of irreconcilable hatred toward the enemy and an inflexible will to destroy him. If he does not lay down arms and surrender, he will be mercilessly destroyed.³⁵

At the troop level, Meretskov, as Timoshenko's deputy for training, developed a reeducation program conforming with Stalin's call for training under combat conditions and a directive from Timoshenko requiring the troops to be taught 'only what is necessary in war and only what pertains to war'.³⁶ In the early summer, the military districts worked on assigned problems for divisional exercises employing live ammunition that Timoshenko and Meretskov observed and evaluated in August and September. At the last, both judged the infantry's performance to have been excellent. That of the other branches also pleased Timoshenko, but Meretskov noted substantial deficiencies in them, in the armor particularly. Timoshenko's report, as published in *Red Star*, the defense commissariat's newspaper, pronounced the exercises a complete success and declared there was no such thing as blitzkrieg.³⁷

The General Staff Academy's theoreticians were finding they could explain the overnight destruction of the Western Front without postulating a transformation of warfare. Lieutenant General Ye. A. Shilovskiy, a former military specialist who

was the academy's most senior professor and foremost operations analyst, regarded the Anglo-French defeat as the entirely self-inflicted consequence of poor planning and organization, irresolute execution, and defensive-mindedness, all aggravated by tension and dissension between the commands.³⁸ *Kombrig* P. D. Korkodinov's, 'The Nature of Contemporary Combat' attributed the outcome of the campaign in the West to the Germans having exploited up-to-date technology in the form of massed armor with strong air support against opponents 'who put their faith in the combat methods of 1918 with little modernization'. Without such an advantage on one side, he concluded, the contest would have taken a more violent course and could not have been quickly resolved. He credited the Germans with having, nevertheless, introduced a new form of combat 'into wars between capitalist states', but added that 'revolutionary-class war, of course, possesses its own characteristic features, and those will exert great influence on the nature of war as a whole as well as on the forms of combat'.³⁹

BLITZKRIEG RAMPANT⁴⁰

On 9 October 1939, three days after he had terminated the Polish campaign with a victory speech in the *Reichstag*, Hitler composed a directive to the service chiefs in which he required them to submit plans for an offensive on the northern wing of the West Front. The objective would be to take as much Dutch, Belgian, and northern French territory as possible in order to protect the Ruhr industrial complex and secure bases for air and naval operations against England. The next day he read it to the chiefs and gave them copies with instructions that the operation was to be carried out before winter. Brauchitsch, Halder, the army group commanders General Gerd von Rundstedt, Fedor von Bock, and the seven army commanders all concluded at first sight that such an offensive could not get beyond the line of the Aisne and Somme Rivers, which was where the August 1914 offensive had bogged down with ultimately disastrous consequences, and was likely to be overtaken by winter before it did even that. Nevertheless Hitler insisted on keeping the troops deployed and ready for Plan YELLOW, as the operation had become known, until 10 January 1940, when an Air Force pilot carrying part of the plan made an emergency landing in Belgium.

Rundstedt's chief of staff, Manstein, had for more than two months been promoting a plan he maintained would knock France out of the war, not just take some peripheral territory. It involved an initial westward thrust by several panzer corps out of the Ardennes forest to the Channel coast followed by a swift reverse and plunge southeastward behind the Maginot Line toward the Franco-Swiss border. Brauchitsch, Halder, and Rundstedt, whose army group would be the one to execute it, conceded that it would probably bear out Manstein's claim if it worked but would not recommend it to Hitler because it was certain to produce a far worse result than the original Plan YELLOW if it failed. The commanders of

the infantry armies also believed their troops would be deprived of armored support. Manstein finally found an opportunity, on 17 February 1940, to present his plan to Hitler, who accepted it at once.

In the meantime, another strategic problem had arisen. The German war effort was heavily dependent on iron ore from mines at Gallivare well north of the Arctic Circle in Sweden. The ore could be brought to Germany through the Norwegian port of Narvik – even in wartime by ships traveling in Norwegian territorial waters. (It could also come via the Baltic Sea, but that route was icebound a good half of the year.) On 16 February, the British destroyer *Cossack* entered Norwegian territorial waters and recovered 300 captured British sailors from the *Altmark*, which had been the supply ship for the commerce raider *Graf Spee*. Two weeks later, Hitler ordered Jodl's group in the OKW to plan a triphibious combined operation against Norway (and for good measure, Denmark) as a 'peaceful occupation to protect the neutrality of the Scandinavian countries.'⁴¹ He decided to run that operation, WESER EXERCISE, before the new YELLOW and set 9 April as the starting date. The 'exercise' proved to be considerably less pacific, particularly in its seaborne phase, than Hitler had wished; and possession of its main objective, Narvik, was still in serious doubt when Operation Yellow began on 10 May.

Total surprise, air superiority, and the impetus of ten panzer divisions enabled the *Wehrmacht* to impose its will at the outset. On 20 May, Guderian's XIX Panzer Corps took Abbéville at the mouth of the Somme River, thereby cutting off the British and French main force, which had followed its plan and advanced north into Belgium. On 11 June, the thrust behind the Maginot Line began. By then, the Royal Navy had evacuated the Allied troops from Dunkirk and also from Narvik, which a British–French–Polish force had occupied in late May. Eleven days later, France signed an armistice with Germany.

Satisfactory as it was for Hitler and his generals in a historical perspective, the French surrender did not terminate the war and therewith revived the two-front problem. One of the Army High Command's chief concerns had been a Soviet attempt to capitalize on a prolonged campaign. That eventuality had been handily avoided, but Stalin's unilateral incursions into Finland and the Baltic States appeared to demonstrate that he was likely to exploit any opportunity from which he could not be forcibly deterred. On 26 June, the Eighteenth Army had received orders to redeploy to the eastern border. On 3 July, Halder designated 'the question of England and the question of the East' as the chief current concerns of the General Staff and the main point of view on the east as being 'how a military blow can be dealt Russia that will compel it to acknowledge Germany's dominant role in Europe'.⁴²

In his victory speech on 19 July, Hitler pronounced the German–Soviet relationship 'permanently established' on the basis of 'reasonable spheres of interest' beyond which neither Germany nor Russia had taken 'a single step'.⁴³ In a deployment directive issued three days later, Halder ordered Eighteenth Army to be ready to attack at the moment hostile Soviet activity became evident. By

then, Eighteenth Army had 15 infantry divisions stationed behind the eastern border between the Baltic coast and the Carpathian Mountains with Panzer Group Guderian (four panzer and two motorized infantry divisions) in reserve.

On 21 July, Hitler gave Brauchitsch a briefing on the situation with regard to England and the Soviet Union, the gist of which was that England's position was hopeless, but it was trying to prolong the war by involving the Soviet Union; and that Stalin would not risk an attack on Germany but he wanted to keep England in the war long enough to gain time to take what he wanted before peace broke out. Declaring an amphibious attack on England to be the last resort, he told Brauchitsch to have estimates prepared as to how the Soviet Union could be demolished or, at least, occupied deep enough to bring the industrial complexes in the Ural Mountains into bombing range. The next day, Halder called for input from the operations, intelligence, and military-geographic branches of the General Staff, which was then billeted at Fontainebleau, outside Paris, working on an invasion of England.

On the 29th, General Erich Marcks, the Eighteenth Army chief of staff arrived in Fontainebleau. Halder, on whose orders he had been studying the requirements for an operation against the Soviet Union since early in the month, gave him access to the material which had been assembled in-house and set him to work on a plan. In the meantime, Hitler had become convinced that the British would not accept a peace offer he had included in his victory speech. On the 31st, he summoned the service chiefs and their chiefs of staff to his vacation home near Berchtesgaden and gave them a 'definite decision to finish off Russia', because England would not capitulate until then. Besides, he added, a second Great Power on the Baltic was 'useless'.⁴⁴ Hitler also gave 1 May 1941 as the tentative starting date.

Marcks submitted a draft plan on 5 August that met Halder's requirement for a main effort directed at the Moscow area, but he had been working alone, and Hitler's oral directive had expanded the requirement enough to make the war with England an almost incidental concern. On 3 September, General Friedrich Paulus, head of the operational logistics branch in the General Staff, took over further development of the plan. Hitler, who was by then annoyed by Stalin's bullying of Finland, professed to see an incipient Soviet threat to German iron ore shipping in the Baltic Sea and, on 9 September, transferred von Bock's Army Group B headquarters from France with orders to assume responsibility for the entire eastern border from the Baltic Sea to the Carpathian Mountains. Bock, who was headquartered in Posen (Poznan), 140 miles east of Berlin, took over Eighteenth Army and Panzer Group Guderian and brought with him the Fourth and Twelfth Army staffs, ten infantry divisions, one panzer division, and one cavalry division, raising the total divisions deployed to 25 infantry, five panzer, four motorized, and one cavalry.

After July, Hitler was more concerned with keeping the war on track than with the operational planning. He had been rather an apologist for Stalin during the Soviet-Finnish War, even though German public opinion heavily favored Finland; but now he had to keep Finland – and the iron ore – out of Stalin's grasp until the

next spring. Mollifying the Finns was no problem. In August, he secured agreements for German troop and supply transit across Finland to northern Norway, a lease on a strategically significant nickel mine at Petsamo (Pechenga), and released, as a token of more to come, sizable stocks of military supplies and equipment originally destined for Finland that had been impounded during the Winter War. Doing so, however, raised a third-party problem: the German war effort could not afford a rupture in the Soviet deliveries under the trade agreements, and Stalin was again increasingly showing readiness to secure his full sphere of influence by force. Two subsequent events did nothing to ease the situation. On 27 September, Germany, Italy, and Japan signed the Tripartite Pact, thereby converting the Axis into a formal alliance. In early October, the *Wehrmacht* High Command stationed a military mission in Romania, on which Stalin also had an eye.

Hitler's ally, Benito Mussolini, whose troops had entered the war against France a day before the armistice was signed, like Stalin, decided to take what he considered to be his share of the spoils and provoked a flock of embarrassments. Hitler had expected southeastern Europe and the Mediterranean littoral to stay quiet until the Soviet defeat confirmed German hegemony there. Mussolini, regarding both as provinces of a new Roman Empire, opened an invasion of Egypt out of Libya on 12 September and an attack on Greece out of Albania on 28 October. On 11 November, British carrier-borne aircraft bombed the Italian naval base at Taranto, sinking and damaging several ships, and the next day the Italian Navy withdrew from the Adriatic Sea. The British also occupied Crete, which put them within potential bombing range of the Romanian Ploesti oil field. Hitler, assuming the British would also take a foothold on the mainland, concluded he would have to take control of the region before he launched the operation against the Soviet Union, and that involved dealing with some of the most fickle governments and worst terrain in Europe. On 9 December, the British dealt the Italians a resounding defeat at Sidi Barani. Hitler then had the choice of letting Mussolini lose Libya or escalating and prolonging the conflict by introducing German troops, and he chose the latter. Before then, he had given the impression that he had really not made up his mind on any of the issues, the Soviet Union and England included.

In early December, Paulus conducted a war game to verify his and Marcks's planning, and on the 5th, Halder, taking the time frame to be four months and the final objective a line from Arkhangelsk to the middle Volga to mouth of the Don, briefed Hitler. The forces would be deployed in three army groups: North directed toward Leningrad, Center toward Moscow, and South toward Kiev. The main objective would have to be the Moscow region, the political center of the Soviet Union and the heartland of the Russian nation; consequently, Army Groups North and South would have to ensure Army Group Center's effort to accomplish a sweeping encirclement of Moscow by providing cover on its flanks. If the Red Army proposed to make a stand, Halder indicated, it would have to do so at the latest on the line of the Dnepr and Dvina Rivers; therefore, after they had crossed the rivers, the army groups could pause for three weeks to regroup, refit, and

resupply. Basically, Halder, Marcks, Paulus and their colleagues in the General Staff worked on the assumption that to deprive the enemy of his will and ability to fight was the fundamental purpose of war.

The German General Staff's relationship with Hitler was only slightly less subservient than the Red Army General Staff's with Stalin. The Führer directives were composed by General Jodl and his officers under Hitler's supervision. On 18 December, Hitler issued 'Führer Directive No. 21, Case BARBAROSSA'. It retained the form while demolishing the concept of the General Staff plan. Under it, once the initial breakthrough was completed, Army Group Center was to divert 'strong motorized forces' to help Army Group North destroy the Soviet forces in the former Baltic countries; and only after that had been done would Army Group Center be allowed to advance on Moscow, which he dismissed as strategically insignificant.⁴⁵

MOLOTOV IN BERLIN

On 13 October 1940, the Soviet attitude having become peevish toward Germany and downright belligerent toward Finland and Romania and needing to avoid a rift that would disrupt the Soviet deliveries under the trade agreements – which were exactly on schedule, while the Germans' were 50 per cent in arrears and falling – Ribbentrop, in a lengthy personal letter to Stalin, depicted all of the German actions thus far as aimed at strengthening the partnership and invited Molotov to Berlin to receive at first hand Hitler's thoughts on 'issues of decisive importance to our peoples'.⁴⁶ After a significant interval and with thanks for the 'very instructive analysis of recent events', Stalin, on the 21st, accepted for Molotov.⁴⁷ After another interval, this time of four weeks, Molotov arrived in Berlin with an entourage of some 60 people on the morning of 12 November for a two-day stay. Since, as Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, he was the nominal chief of government, Hitler was at the station to greet him. On the same day, however, Hitler informed the military chiefs that regardless of the talks' outcome, the operational planning would continue as previously ordered.⁴⁸

In their first meeting, Molotov reiterated the instructions Stalin had given him. The first – and foremost – concerned Finland. Stalin, he said, regarded the 1939 treaty agreements as having been fulfilled except for one point, namely, Finland; and he wanted to determine whether the part of the treaty pertaining to Finland was still in force. He believed it was. Stalin had also expressed concern over Soviet treaty rights in Romania and Bulgaria. In his letter, Ribbentrop had described the recently signed Tripartite Treaty as a kind of blueprint for a 'New Order' in Europe and Asia in which the Soviet Union might want to participate. Stalin wanted to know what the meaning of it was and what role the Soviet Union would have in it; and he had expressed an interest in knowing the 'tempo and form' of the New

Order in Europe.⁴⁹ Evidently, Stalin had concluded a new game was afoot, one he did not like but could not ignore.

Hitler responded that Germany recognized the Soviet Union's primary political interest in Finland and itself had no interests there other than as a source of lumber and nickel for the duration of the war and as a temporary route of access for its troops going to northern Norway. Molotov insisted that, nevertheless, issues existed, Finland among them, and would have to be clarified, which could be done without war 'if Germany cooperated'.⁵⁰ Hitler then took the 'clarification' on himself. Germany, he pointed out, did not 'desire any new conflict in the Baltic'; and the 1939 treaties did not provide for 'revision by force of arms'; Germany had, in contrast to the Soviet Union, not occupied any Finnish territory.⁵¹ He ended with the flat admonition that 'there must be no war with Finland because such a conflict would have far-reaching repercussions'. Molotov was left to complain lamely that 'this ... introduced a new factor, which was not included in the 1939 treaties'.⁵²

In the discussion of Stalin's instructions pertaining to southeastern Europe, Hitler was less acerbic but no more accommodating. In response to Stalin's principal concern, the German troops stationed in Romania, he stated unequivocally that the troops were there at the request of the Romanian Government to protect the Romanian oil fields, which were vital to the German war effort, against air or ground attack. To claims for a special Soviet relationship with Bulgaria and for a voice in the control of the Black Sea Straits, he offered favorable consideration – in the future.⁵³

As Ribbentrop explained it to Molotov on the second night, the Soviet Union would be invited to form an association with the members of the Tripartite Pact solely for the purpose of partitioning Europe, Asia, and Africa among them after the British defeat. Japan, he suggested, would take a sphere of influence in southeastern Asia, Italy in north and eastern Africa, Germany in central Africa, and the Soviet Union 'in the direction of the Indian Ocean'. Molotov expressed Soviet willingness to participate in forming spheres of influence, but added that since the British had not yet been defeated it would be better to resolve the outstanding issues in Europe first.⁵⁴

Hitler probably had the considerable satisfaction of having put Stalin in his place. Molotov went home rebuffed, with only a draft of a tentative treaty to show for his effort. In his memoirs, Vasilevskiy, who was a member of Molotov's party, said, 'All the members of the delegation shared a general impression of the trip: the Soviet Union needed as never before to be prepared to resist German aggression'.⁵⁵ Khrushchev, who was with Stalin when Molotov gave his report, said it 'strengthened our general conviction that war was inevitable and probably imminent'.⁵⁶

Stalin, however, was not to be discouraged. On 26 November, Molotov informed the German Ambassador, Schulenburg, that the Soviet Union was prepared to accept the draft of the 'Four Power Pact' Ribbentrop had outlined on the 13th, subject to the following conditions:

1. Provided that the German troops are immediately withdrawn from Finland.
2. Provided that within the next few months the security of the Soviet Union in the [Black Sea] Straits is assured by the conclusion of a mutual assistance pact between the Soviet Union and Bulgaria.
3. Provided that the area south of Batum and Baku in the general direction of the Persian Gulf is recognized as the center of aspirations of the Soviet Union.
4. Provided that Japan renounces her rights to concessions for coal and oil in Northern Sakhalin.⁵⁷

Manifestly, Stalin still believed he had a strong position from which to negotiate.

War Plans

THE LAY OF THE LAND

Before September 1939, the Red Army General Staff's chief concern in Europe was Poland. That changed somewhat after 1933 but mostly in the sense that Hitler's advent converted Poland to a 650-mile-wide buffer in the west. The demarcation line agreed to during the 1939 war wiped out Poland, eliminated the buffer, and shifted the German boundary some 300 miles eastward. Subsequently, in their tinkering with the demarcation line, Stalin and Hitler established the basic strategic preconditions for a German–Soviet war. Stalin insisted on having the scene of the First Cavalry Army's outstanding exploit in the Polish war, Lvov and the district west of the Bug River in which it was located; and Hitler, as a *quid pro quo*, annexed the Suwalki Strip, a 25-by-50-mile piece of Lithuanian territory on the eastern boundary of East Prussia. The Soviet military occupation of Lithuania in the summer of 1940 gave the German–Soviet border a pronounced serpentine appearance. Two westward-oriented bulges, each about 100 miles wide at the base and 80 miles deep, one, in the north, west of Bialystok, the other in the south, west of Lvov, became from the military operational point of view two Soviet salients. Together they threatened the main German rail and road junctions in the occupied territory, Krakow and Warsaw, in the farther extension, also Breslau and Berlin; but on their flanks, eastward-oriented German salients by which they were half-encircled had developed.

The 100-by-250-mile Pripjat Marshes, situated just south of Brest, were the determinative physical feature of the entire area west of the Dnepr and Dvina Rivers. Impassible either lengthwise or crosswise, they had to be taken into separate account in all planning. Moreover, planning south of the marshes also had to include a 450-mile-long border with Romania.

The border in former Polish territory was in existence barely a year, that with East Prussia, only a matter of weeks. The Stalin Line – actually a loose chain of 13 'fortified districts' – was left behind the pre-1939 border; a forward strategy required a new, closer and tighter, chain. Much of the military infrastructure was also still behind the old border, and railroad freight and passengers were having to be transhipped at the old border until the tracks could be relaid to the Russian gauge.

'CONSIDERATIONS' ON STRATEGIC DEPLOYMENT

In the summer of 1940, the Soviet strategic outlook was less propitious than it had appeared to be the year before. The second imperialist war, in which Stalin had long expected to present the Red Army with a golden opportunity to come to the aid of the European working classes, had taken an unforeseen turn that gave the *Wehrmacht* uncontested dominion on the continent. One could no longer play games with Hitler, and the technological reconstruction of the Red Army would take another two or three years. On the other hand, Hitler's two-front-war problem, although mitigated, had not been resolved, and the ability to sustain his war machine had not been much enhanced. All in all, from Stalin's point of view, it appeared that Hitler could not abandon the Soviet connection; but it was also apparent that the war was approaching the point where the role of essentially a passive bystander would no longer be either safe or profitable; and even the paragon of neutrality, the United States, was beginning to revise its stance.

Since the Red Army's most sacred obligations were to defend the Marxist–Leninist accomplishments in Russia against the jealous assaults of the capitalist world in its death throes and to carry the red banner abroad in response to – or anticipation of – calls from the capitalist countries' working classes, it should always be ready to take to the field on short notice. Indeed, as has been seen, much effort was expended on military theory and doctrine; but the 1920s and early 1930s were a period of slow recovery from the last war for all European armies, the Red Army included. The next war was still the subject of unfocused speculation, not strategic and operational planning. Until well into the 1930s, as has been seen, the Red Army, although beginning to benefit from the technological reconstruction, was predominantly a territorial militia (74 per cent in 1934) looked at askance by the other European armies.

The decisions to convert to a cadre (standing) army and to establish a general staff – under close political supervision – made the year 1935 a turning point. Early on, adopting a then widely held view that mobilizations in future wars would be completed in secret before hostilities began, the General Staff instituted mobilization planning as the first essential of war readiness. Subsequently, the total manpower increased, and the territorial militia was phased out. In 1935, the total troop strength stood at 930,000, in 1936, at 1.1 million. The mobilization plan for 1938 and 1939, *MP 38*, set the eventual full mobilization strength at 6.5 million and the anticipated strength on 1 January 1939. On 1 January 1938, the actual strength was 1.5 million.¹

In the fall of 1938, after the Munich Conference had awarded the Sudetenland to Germany, the operations branch of the General Staff developed, under Shaposhnikov's direction, a plan entitled 'Considerations on the Most Likely Enemies, Their Armed Forces and Possible Operations Plans, and the Basic Strategic Deployment of the Red Army in the West and the East'.² Owing to the purge then in full swing, it was the current General Staff's first engagement with war

planning as well as with Germany as an enemy. Aside from Shaposhnikov, the top officers in the General Staff were all newcomers who had recently completed abbreviated courses in the General Staff Academy: Lieutenant General N. F. Vatutin was the first deputy chief of the General Staff; Lieutenant General G. K. Malandin, chief of operations (Meretskov was off acquiring command experience at the Volga District); and Major General A. M. Vasilevskiy, deputy in operations.³ Each had accumulated 20 or more year's military experience, but their selection was evidently based on their having shown more promise than most of those whom the purge was propelling upward. As the lowest in rank, Vasilevskiy was the coordinator. The procedure required the plan, which was classified 'Top Secret', to be written in a single longhand copy by the coordinator, who was responsible for its security at all time and for amendments, additions and deletions.⁴ An oversight committee of the Main Military Council composed of Stalin, Molotov, a Politburo member, L. M. Kaganovich, and Voroshilov as chairman, accepted it on 28 November 1938.⁵

'Considerations' was more a strategic estimate than a plan. It assumed a rather unlikely hypothetical two-front war with Germany, Poland, Italy, Japan, also Romania, the Baltic States, and Finland. In the West, it identified two theaters, a western and a southern separated by the Pripyat Marshes, and three potential directions of attack, toward Moscow and on Leningrad, north of the marshes and Kiev on the south. From those it derived two operational variants, the first consisting of a main attack toward Moscow and a secondary attack toward Kiev which would be met by a Red Army counteroffensive and an active defense. In the second, the positions would be reversed; and in both, supporting attacks would be aimed toward Leningrad. Both variants assumed full mobilization before hostilities began and an ability to halt the enemy at the frontier and carry the war to his territory.⁶ Political events overshadowed 'Considerations' in 1939, but by the end of the year, the cadre army's strength exceeded 2 million men.⁷

On 7 May 1940, the Central Committee commission appointed in March (see above, p. 236) reported its findings in the form of a bill of particulars Voroshilov submitted to Timoshenko on the day the latter took over the commissariat. In part, the findings with regard to operational readiness read:

At the time of transfer, the Commissariat of Defense has no war plans: for the West – concerning the Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia [the former Polish territory]; for the Transcaucasus – with regard to sudden changes in the situation [on the border with Turkey]; for the Far East and Transbaikal – in view of changed composition of the forces, the existing plan requires revision. The General Staff does not have accurate information on the coverage of the state borders.

Again in part, with regard to readiness for mobilization, they read:

The Commissariat of Defense does not have an up-to-date mobilization plan. The Commissariat of Defense has not yet managed to eliminate the

defects encountered in the partial mobilization of September 1939. Obsolete directives on mobilization issued to the troop commands and military commissariats have not yet been reworked.⁸

Nevertheless, it appears that, on the whole, Voroshilov's incompetence, monumental as it was, was less to blame than the current drastic loss of experienced personnel and the upsurge in hitherto unanticipated planning requirements.

Shaposhnikov's team, with Vasilevskiy again the coordinator, worked during the summer on updating 'Considerations'. Having Poland out of the way and a common boundary with Germany, as Shaposhnikov saw it, clarified but did not fundamentally alter the strategic situation. Both parties would still have to by-pass the Pripyat Marshes, so the Leningrad, Moscow, and Kiev axes remained their offensive and defensive menu.

At a dinner meeting and planning discussion in his quarters in late August, Stalin, seemingly out of the blue, expressed concern for Shaposhnikov's health, 'suggested' he accept a posting as deputy people's commissar for military engineering and fortified districts, and, hearing no objection, named Meretskov his successor. When Meretskov attempted to excuse himself on grounds of inexperience, Stalin promised to release him as soon as a better candidate could be found.⁹

As of August 1940, mobilization was in piecemeal progress along the entire western frontier. All the frontier military districts, except Leningrad, had been granted the supplementary designation 'special', which entitled them to army group type organization and operational contingents of armor, heavy artillery, and other technological equipment. The Belorussian Special Military District had, since 1938, been the Belorussian Front. For a month in 1939 and on 11 July 1940, it was renamed Western Special Military District. The Kiev Special Military District had, since 1938, been partially mobilized as the Ukrainian Front. In September 1939, renamed the Kiev Special Military District, it had conducted the 'liberation' of Bessarabia and northern Bukovina. The Baltic Military District, formed on 11 July, became the Baltic Special Military District on 17 August 1940, with primary responsibility for defense of the former German–Lithuanian border. The Leningrad Military District, although not designated 'special', was substantially reinforced and had within its territory the Northwest Front, which had been reorganized but not disbanded after the Winter War.¹⁰

At the end of July 1940, Timoshenko and Shaposhnikov took to Stalin (as chief of the party) and Molotov (as chief of the government), for their 'examination', an updated set of 'Considerations'.¹¹ Taking briefly into account a possible two-front war with Germany and Japan and a pro-German coalition of European states, it singled out 'the West', that is, the post-1939 boundary with Germany as the most likely and most significant scene of a strategic confrontation. Specifically, it sited the German main effort north of the mouth of the River San (on the Vistula River 100 miles southeast of Warsaw). The weight of the attack would be directed northeastward along the line Warsaw, Brest, Kiev, Smolensk, and Moscow. A German main effort south of the San, toward the Ukraine and the Caucasus,

could not be entirely ruled out; but the most likely strength distribution would be two-thirds north and one-third south of the mouth of the San. Consequently, the Red Army's main forces would have to be deployed north of the San (and of the Pripyat Marshes) and those south of the marshes limited to an 'active defense' of the Western Ukraine and Bessarabia.

The suddenness of Shaposhnikov's relief as chief of the General Staff strongly suggests that dissatisfaction with 'Considerations' figured more significantly in Stalin's decision than concern for Shaposhnikov's health. Anyhow, Meretskov's first assignment from Timoshenko was to give the southwestern sector (the Kiev district) more prominence in the 'Considerations', which he did in a revision he and Timoshenko submitted to Stalin and Molotov on 18 September.¹² By then, the Baltic Special Military District had been activated on the northern border of East Prussia, which added 150 miles of frontage without materially affecting Shaposhnikov's premises. The latter were retained in the Meretskov version as the bases for two strategic variants, both with West Front as the Red Army main force. The first assumed a German main force concentrated south of Brest in the Lublin area and aimed for Kiev. In that event, West Front would shift its weight south of Brest to collaborate with Southwest Front against the German attack.¹³ Meretskov's General Staff was out of Shaposhnikov's school, hence committed, as Uborevich and Tukhachevskiy had been and their German friends of the 1920s still were, to the war of annihilation, which required carrying the war to the enemy's own territory and defeating his main forces, wherever they might be, by the most expeditious means. To them, planning a war of attrition was simply impermissible.

Stalin accepted no such distinction: for him, attrition was the very essence of strategy. He had seen it bring western Europe close to revolution in the World War. He had seen it give the victory to Bolshevism in Russia; he had waited some 20 years to see the second imperialist war do the same worldwide. Thus far, it had not lived up to his expectation; nevertheless, he told the British Ambassador Cripps he would back a German invasion of Britain for time and the effect it would have on German strength. Moreover, with the Finnish war still fresh in his mind, he would hardly have been disposed to let the Red Army's main forces be positioned for a march on Berlin. If it came to war, he told Timoshenko and Meretskov, Hitler would need the agriculture, industry, and resources of the Ukraine and the Caucasus to sustain his war effort; therefore, the German main forces would have to be deployed on the southwest, and the Red Army's would have to be there too.¹⁴ A revised first variant submitted to Stalin and Molotov on 5 October and approved on the 14th assigned six armies to Southwest Front, four to West Front, which was to conduct active defense on its right and provide flank support for Southwest Front on its left.¹⁵ Although Stalin's decision on the main effort resolved the question of the variants, his remark to Cripps indicates that he regarded 'Considerations' as applying to a still hypothetical contingency.

READINESS ASSESSMENT

The Main Military Council closed the year 1940 with an eight-day, top-level command conference designed to appraise the Red Army's combat readiness and give the senior officers, particularly the military district commanders and branch chiefs, an opportunity to display mastery of their craft. The Chief of the General Staff, Meretskov, the commanders and chiefs of staff of the 14 military districts, the service branch chiefs, the heads of General Staff directorates, and some others had prepared papers on assigned subjects. All the members of the Main Military Council except Stalin, who was at his country house recovering from an illness, were present. Stalin, no doubt, received detailed reports on the proceedings from Timoshenko and the members of the Politburo who attended. The papers were grouped into three general categories: the Red Army's readiness, the offensive in contemporary operations, and the defensive in contemporary operations. The first paper in each group was to be the most comprehensive, and the others would treat aspects of the subject or be commentaries on the main paper.

Meretskov, whose paper on readiness was the first in the conference, sounded a discordant note at the outset. His observations, he asserted, showed the year's training program not to have met the demands of actual battle and to have disclosed that 'shortcomings in operational and general military proficiency exist in the upper command structure, the troop commands, army and *front* staffs, and especially in aviation'.¹⁶ In his memoirs, Meretskov said Timoshenko became visibly 'watchful' for signs that the criticisms were aimed at him.¹⁷ A dozen co-speakers addressed aspects of the readiness program, among them the chief of the General Staff's war readiness directorate, who pointed out that many units had not received any training at all because they were in the labor force for the fortified districts under construction. Konev remarked that many officers recently advanced to division commands had never commanded regiments.¹⁸

Zhukov delivered the paper on the offensive. In it, he attributed the German victories in Poland and France primarily to surprise and the shock of powerful blows against weak and irresolute opponents. Since, as he saw it, the same conditions would not exist in a war against the Soviet Union, the problem was not how to adjust offensive operations to a whole new style of warfare; it was, instead, to determine how the Soviet Union could bring materiel and manpower to bear most effectively in a prolonged war of attrition.¹⁹ Pavlov, the leading speaker on armor in the offensive, declared, 'We can rightly give one tank corps the mission of destroying one or two enemy tank divisions or three to five enemy infantry divisions.'²⁰ Another specialist in armor, Lieutenant General P. L. Romanenko, proposed to give the Soviet *fronts* striking power superior to that the German spearhead armies had displayed by organizing shock armies heavy in armor, air support, artillery and automatic weapons.²¹

Army General I. V. Tiulenev, who owed his rank and his position as commander of the Moscow Military District mostly to his having been Budenny's long-time

deputy, delivered the first paper on the defensive. He proposed covering the western frontier with a belt of fortifications consisting of army sectors 62 miles wide and 62–84 miles deep manned by 12 divisions. One of his co-speakers pointed out that the current authorized strength of an army was 15 divisions, and the armies were expected to attack as well as defend.²² Meretskov apparently had made the most significant comment on the defensive in his paper; that the experience of the war in the West showed the potential value of the defensive to be seriously underestimated in Soviet doctrine.²³

In his summation delivered on 31 December, Timoshenko declared that the conference had ‘deepened and broadened’ the reconstruction of the Red Army and given it a ‘military ideology’ (doctrine?) of its own. It was interesting, he said, to trace the stages by which the ‘military ideology’ had assimilated questions on the nature of contemporary operations and also problems pertaining to the Red Army’s readiness. Citing Zhukov’s paper, he asserted that the war in the West had not produced any strategic innovations; and to take the operations conducted there ‘as models for our western theater’ would be wrong ‘because our operational theory must take into account diverse theaters with various geographic conditions’. Furthermore, because it would be necessary ‘to saturate a very long front with the modern means of war’, general-purpose field armies would be the rule. A major war in the ‘present epoch’, he concluded, would be ‘intense and protracted’, and single operations would achieve ‘finite aims’ resulting only in the long term in the attainment of strategic objectives. Therefore, the Red Army did not ‘rely on lightning war’.²⁴ Although the summation slighted the immediate concern, readiness to confront an enemy who believed in lightning war would eventually acquire an almost prophetic aspect.

After the conference, the military district commanders and their chiefs of staff stayed on in Moscow to participate in two war games, the first sited between the Baltic Sea and the Pripyat Marshes, the second between the marshes and the Black Sea. The General Staff had devised situations involving forces at strengths it believed Germany and the Soviet Union might actually deploy at the outset of a war begun on 15 July 1941. The first game pitted 65 ‘Red’ (Soviet) infantry divisions against 60 ‘Blue’ infantry divisions, and the sides were about equal in armor. The second game, played in the area of the presumed German main effort, engaged 81 ‘Red’ infantry divisions against 85 ‘Blue’ infantry divisions, and the ‘Red’ force had a better than 2 : 1 superiority in armor. In conformity with the general requirement to carry the war to the enemy’s territory, the ‘Red’ mission in both games was to halt an initial ‘Blue’ attack and launch a counteroffensive. Representing army group and army staffs, the teams on each side numbered several dozen players. In the first game, Pavlov commanded the ‘Red’ and Zhukov the ‘Blue’ team. In the second, Zhukov commanded the ‘Red’, and Pavlov and General F. I. Kuznetsov each commanded on ‘Blue’ army group.²⁵

The General Staff had designed the games to let the players demonstrate collective ability to direct predominantly infantry armies (what Timoshenko had called general purpose field armies) in situations demanding rapid shift from the

defensive to the offensive. Based on the assertions in *PU 40* of innate Red Army superiority, the ‘new Stalinist man’ and others, the planners had also rated one ‘Red’ division as equal in combat effectiveness to one and a half ‘Blue’ divisions on the offensive and three ‘Blue’ divisions on the defensive and had therefore required the ‘Red’ forces to defend and attack with no more than a small numerical superiority in the first game and a slight inferiority in the second.

In the first game (2–6 January), the ‘Blue’ command staged two surprise attacks, and the ‘Red’ command reacted too slowly to prevent its fortified zone being broken through. In the second (8–11 January), the ‘Red’ armies withstood the ‘Blue’ attack but failed to bring off a counteroffensive.²⁶ All in all, the games showed command and staff proficiency to be about the same as it had been in the war with Finland.

Stalin had followed the games closely. On 13 January, while they were in the midst of compiling an assessment, he summoned Meretskov and the most senior players to the Kremlin. He was manifestly appalled by their performance but also disposed to treat them as neophytes in need of guidance rather than as confirmed incompetents. He assigned the blame for the deficiencies disclosed in the games principally to Meretskov, whose responsibility, he said, had been to give the players clear-cut, realistic situations. In a statement no one else present would have dared make, he characterized the references to the Red Army’s moral superiority in *PU 40* as political agitation which was to be disregarded ‘in a circle of future *front* and army commanders’. When Meretskov explained that the games were not concerned with overall superiorities but with the commanders’ ability to improvise local superiorities in fluid situations, Stalin pronounced local superiorities useless ‘in our age of mechanized and motorized armies’. One’s forces, he continued, needed to have ‘means for maneuver’ at their disposal that would enable them to regroup and go over to the offensive without pausing to scrape together local superiorities. Zhukov’s success in the first game, even though on the wrong side, was apparently, in Stalin’s estimation, the games’ only worthwhile result. After Zhukov gave his report, Stalin ‘proposed’ Meretskov’s relief as chief of the General Staff and ‘nominated’ Zhukov to replace him.

Thereupon, the second game having been barely mentioned, the discussion changed course. In his apparently spontaneous remarks to Meretskov, Stalin had stated a requirement for mechanized armies. Kulik protested that tanks were a sheer waste of money because artillery would reduce them to junk in no time; and Timoshenko, hastening to modify his position on all-purpose field armies, asserted that nobody in the army except Kulik doubted the worth of mechanized armies. Stalin dismissed Kulik as someone who would abolish motors altogether and continued, ‘War now is war of motors, motors on land, motors in the air, and motors on the water and under the water. Victory goes to the largest number of motors and the most reserve power.’ He then asked the commanders of frontier military districts how many mechanized corps in addition to the nine already planned they would need to provide themselves with mechanized armies.²⁷

In closing, he reproached the General Staff again for not having given the military districts ‘problems they will have to solve in actual war’ and laid down specific requirements to prepare for a two-front war and to learn how to conduct ‘a war of fast movement and maneuver’. ‘War’, he added, ‘is approaching fast and now is not distant. ... We must gain a year-and-a-half to two years’ time to complete the armament plan.’²⁸

STALIN’S PLAY FOR TIME

At the turn of the year 1940/41, the Axis war effort was for the first time in visible disarray. Hitler had wanted a quiet year in which to build up his forces for the attack on the Soviet Union; but his ally Mussolini, seeking mastery of the eastern Mediterranean, had, in September 1940, launched the Italian Tenth Army into a drive out of Libya toward the Suez Canal and had, in October, dispatched three divisions across the Albanian–Greek border. The Greek Army turned the tables in November, and after mid-December, the Italians were constantly on the verge of being driven out of Albania. In late December, the British two-division Western Desert Force opened an offensive against the nine-division Italian Tenth Army and in January 1941 was driving westward across Libya at speeds equaling those the German panzer divisions had achieved in Poland and France. Meanwhile, British carrier-based torpedo bombers had, on 11 November 1940, disabled half the Italian battle fleet in a raid on Taranto, and Royal Air Force squadrons had been deployed in Greece, which brought them within bombing range of the Romanian oil fields, Germany’s chief source of supply. Together, those developments appeared to portend a significantly stronger British resurgence than had been deemed possible after Dunkirk.

Stalin, it seems, concluded that propitious conditions for clarifying the status of the Soviet–German accords would result from the burgeoning British success in Libya and Mussolini’s discomfiture in Greece. In mid-January, the Soviet Union renewed its demand for the nickel mining concession in Finland and threatened, if the matter were not settled quickly, ‘to bring order into the situation by certain means’. When the Finns, after consulting Berlin, interposed the question of the German contract, it broke off the negotiations and stopped all Soviet exports to Finland.²⁹ Later in the month, it notified Germany that a German troop presence in Bulgaria would be taken as a violation of Soviet security interests; and Soviet deliveries to Germany thereafter took a sharp drop.³⁰

That Stalin would have imagined he could gain a year-and-a-half to two years’ time by browbeating Germany and Finland seems most unlikely. On the other hand, the possibility that the British resurgence would revive Hitler’s concern about a two-front war could well have led him to expect Hitler would be impelled to resolve the outstanding issues with the Soviet Union and convert the invitation to join the Tripartite Pact into a businesslike offer. In any case, he evidently believed

war could be avoided in 1941. On 18 January, he talked with Meretskov about a requirement for additional mechanized corps. Meretskov had by then officially returned to his former post as deputy for training in the defense commissariat, but Zhukov, whom the Politburo had appointed chief of the General Staff on the 14th, was in Kiev turning over the military district command to his successor, Kirponos. Taking summer as the only logical season in which to start a war, Meretskov reported that until the summer of 1941, existing commitments would absorb the entire tank output, but the General Staff believed new mechanized corps could be activated by the spring of 1941. Saying it was unlikely that the Soviet Union could keep out of the war until 1943 but ‘conceivable’ that war could be delayed until 1942, Stalin pronounced the ‘matter of when and how the mechanized corps should be activated subject to further discussion.’³¹

ZHUKOV’S AMENDMENT TO ‘CONSIDERATIONS’

On 10 February 1941, Stalin convened the Eighteenth Party Conference to give the industrial commissariats notice of impending large new armament programs. After the conference, which, to no one’s surprise, had endorsed his proposals, he authorized the General Staff to add 106 air regiments equipped with the latest model aircraft and 20 mechanized corps (20 mechanized and 40 tank divisions) similarly equipped to its 1941 requirements. The air regiments would need 6,260 aircraft, 60 each. As of 1 January 1941, 115 T 34 and 246 KV tanks had been built. Together, the new mechanized corps and the nine already activated but not fully equipped required 15,834 T 34s and KVs, which left about 15,500 still to be built.³² Stalin may have been giving himself an excuse for not contemplating war in 1941.

When Zhukov took over the General Staff, he ordered the operations branch to ‘amplify the Considerations’.³³ Since 1938, the operatively most significant purpose of ‘Considerations’ had been to assess potential enemy strength and develop therefrom a mobilization plan and associated ‘Covering Plan for the State Frontier’ that would complete the armed forces’ strategic deployment on or before the day war was declared. ‘Considerations’ always assumed the West to be the main theater by a large margin and Germany by far the main enemy. The Meretskov version’s estimates of enemy strengths were

- for all potential enemies: 280–90 infantry divisions, 11,750 tanks, 18,000 aircraft;
- for Germany alone: 243 divisions, including 8 motorized and 15–17 tank divisions, 10,000 tanks plus 15,000 aircraft total;
- for German deployment against the Red Army: 173 divisions, including 8 motorized and 15–17 tank divisions, 10,000 tanks and 13,000 aircraft;
- for the likeliest German allies, Finland, Hungary, and Romania: 60 divisions, all infantry, plus 550 tanks and 2,100 aircraft.

The numbers for the Red Army's deployment were

- against Germany and its European allies: 175 divisions, including 7 motorized and 16 tank divisions, 10 cavalry divisions, plus 15 tank brigades (equivalent to 8½ divisions) and 159 air regiments (6,422 aircraft, 'available 15 September 1941'), no tank numbers given.³⁴

On 3 March 1941, Timoshenko and Zhukov submitted an 'amended plan for strategic deployment' to Stalin and Molotov.³⁵ While acknowledging the possibility of a two-front war, it concentrated on the requirements of a war with Germany and its European allies. The total German strength increased to 260 divisions, including 20 tank and 15 mechanized divisions, 10,000 tanks and 15,000 aircraft. Against the Red Army, Germany would be able to field 200 divisions, including 20 tank and 15 motorized divisions, 10,000 tanks, and 10,000 aircraft. Finland, Romania and Hungary would add 68 infantry divisions, 810 tanks, and 1,600 aircraft.³⁶ Against those, the Red Army would have to commit 260 divisions, including 27 motorized and 54 tank divisions and 7 cavalry divisions, plus 253 air regiments.³⁷

From those figures, the amendment concluded that, although the most likely German main effort would be directed southeastward to capture Kiev and the Ukraine, the concentration of their main force in East Prussia and the Warsaw area for thrusts toward Leningrad and Moscow could definitely not be ruled out; consequently there was a 'serious danger' the fighting there would be 'protracted'. In view of those circumstances, the amendment concluded, the strategic deployments needed 'examination'.³⁸ Stalin advised Zhukov to 'assemble the urgent questions and submit them to the government'.³⁹ On 10 April, Zhukov called on Vasilevskiy to devise an operational deployment scheme in conformity with a 'basic mission' requiring the Kiev and Belorussian Military Districts to prepare an offensive that would 'destroy the enemy's Lublin-Radom grouping' (that is, a German main force north of the mouth of the San River).⁴⁰

GERMAN STRATEGIC DEPLOYMENT

The German Army's deployment directive for BARBAROSSA issued on 31 January 1941, allotted three army groups, six armies, and four panzer groups. The panzer groups, formed by doubling the panzer corps of the 1940 campaign in the West, could better have been designated armies; but concern that the independence thereby given them would degrade the performance of the conventional armies led to each being attached to an army. Army Group North, under Field Marshal Wilhelm von Leeb, was to deploy Eighteenth Army and Sixteenth Army, with Fourth Panzer Group attached, in an initially narrow sector on the northern border of East Prussia. Von Bock was to be prepared to concentrate Army Group Center's Ninth Army and Third Panzer Group in the Suwalki Strip on the north

side of the Bialystok Salient and Fourth Army and Second Panzer Group on the south in the vicinity of Brest. Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt's Army Group South's Sixth Army and First Panzer Group and Seventeenth Army would initially have to assemble on the north side of the Soviet Lvov Salient in a confined space between the Pripyat Marshes and the Carpathian Mountains. Fourth and Sixth Armies, being on the most direct approaches to Moscow and Kiev, would have Field Marshals Günther von Kluge and Walter von Reichenau commanding.

The operations were to be 'so conducted that the mass of the Soviet Army is destroyed in western Russia by deep-thrusting panzer spearheads, and the withdrawal of effective elements into the depths of the Russian space is prevented'. Hitler, however, had introduced a variant: after making the initial breakthrough, Army Group Center would have to divert Third Panzer Group to assist Army Group North, and the advance eastward would not resume until Leeb had cleared the Baltic coast and taken Leningrad. In conferences with the military chiefs since December 1940, as in the BARBAROSSA directive, he had displayed obsessive concern that the Russians would seize control of the Baltic Sea and cut Germany off from its supply of Swedish iron ore. The 'main objective', he insisted, had to be to have the Baltic area and Leningrad 'in hand'. If the Soviet armed forces went into an unanticipatedly sudden collapse, 'then, and only then', it might be possible to advance simultaneously on Leningrad and Moscow.⁴¹

General Halder, looking forward to a sudden Soviet collapse, included the Hitler variant in the deployment directive but made it clear there and in his supplementary commentaries that the General Staff expected Army Group Center to follow an undeviating course via Minsk and Smolensk to Moscow. Bock's first strategic objective was to be Smolensk, which would put the Army Group across the Dnepr–Dvina River line and halfway to Moscow. The key words were to be 'Speed, No Stops, No Waiting'; therefore, no chances for the Red Army to dig in, on the Dnepr–Dvina line, for instance.⁴² On the Army Group's outer wings, Second Panzer Group would break through at Brest, Third Panzer Group at Suwalki, and lead their armies on deep thrusts to Minsk that would encircle the entire Bialystok and cover half the 300-mile distance to Smolensk.

Army Group North, its final objective Leningrad, would commit Fourth Panzer Group in a 300-mile, single-pronged strike to and across the Dvina River, which, together with Army Group Center's crossing of the Dnepr, would deprive the Red Army of its best natural defense line west of the Volga River.⁴³ With just one panzer group, Leeb would not be in position to conduct a double envelopment – nor was Rundstedt. The Army had only about a third more tanks than in the 1940 campaign but was having to double the panzer divisions to provide even somewhat watered-down tank strengths for four panzer groups.⁴⁴

Army Group South's starting position was decidedly awkward: its zone of operations would extend to the Black Sea, but its initial deployment had to be confined to occupied Polish territory for the sake of security. The introduction of really large numbers of German troops into Hungary or Romania, even though both had signed on as allies, could hardly have gone unnoticed. The German

Eleventh Army would be activated after the operation began, but it would be all infantry and mostly Romanian infantry at that. Sixth Army, with First Panzer Group in the lead and Seventeenth Army on its right, would have to break through a narrow front on the north face of the Soviet Lvov Salient and make a 300-mile run down the southern edge of the Pripyat Marshes to Kiev. Thereafter, the great eastward bend of the Dnepr south of Kiev might afford an opportunity for an encirclement.⁴⁵

The plan was not disclosed to Japan or Italy, or to the recently acquired members of the Tripartite pact, Romania and Hungary. The latter would be briefed on their roles later. Finland had reacted favorably to broad hints that its position *vis-à-vis* the Soviet Union was about to undergo a decisive change, but the Finns were chary of entering a contractual agreement. Hitler, for his part, having developed a high opinion of the Finnish Army and its commander-in-chief, Mannerheim, was prepared to accept the Finns' collaboration on their terms. In his estimation, Army Group North's taking Leningrad was incidental to its making a junction with the Finns. On his insistence, Halder had included an expeditionary force for northern Finland in the Barbarossa directive and put the Army of Norway staff to work on planning and preparing an appropriate operation.⁴⁶

The *Luftwaffe*, conforming with a requirement of the Barbarossa directive, prepared to match its deployment in the East with that of the Army. In each army group area, an air fleet command with the same authority in the air as an army group's on the ground was to commit air corps and flak (antiaircraft) corps to the furtherance of the ground forces' objectives. The air fleets were organized primarily to reinforce the points of main effort on the ground. Second Air Fleet, with an allotment of 1,367 combat and the strongest transport aircraft would, under Field Marshal Albert Kesselring, bring II and VII Air Corps and I Flak Corps to Army Group Center. Fourth Air Fleet, with IV and V Air Corps and II Flak Corps, 887 combat and transport aircraft, under General Alexander Löhr, would join Army Group South. Army Group North would initially have to get along with First Air Fleet's I Air Corps, 592 transport and combat aircraft and the 'Baltic Sea Air Command', 194 reconnaissance and liaison aircraft, under General Alfred Keller.⁴⁷

On Hitler's orders (repeatedly given because the *Luftwaffe*, like other air forces of the time, was known to harbor a preference for strategic bombing) the air fleets were to destroy as much of the Red Army Air Force as they could at the outset of the campaign and thereafter, together with the tanks, 'concentrate on the decisive points ... most closely bearing on the ground operations'.⁴⁸ Therewith, the air corps and panzer groups became equal partners, and the flak corps supported both. In potential for mobility, the Army Group Center force structure complied to the full with Stalin's 'War of Motors'. Air reconnaissance for the Army field commands began on 15 March 1941.⁴⁹

Stalin Deceived

THE GAME BEGINS

In the New Year, the stream of data affecting Stalin's calculations had grown. The German Africa Corps had joined the battle in Libya; German diplomatic pressure on Yugoslavia and Bulgaria signaled an intervention in Greece as well; and with the approach of spring, intelligence agencies worldwide were busily trying to divine Hitler's next big move. In February, to cloak the deployment for BARBAROSSA, which was bound to become more visible as it progressed, the German Armed Forces High Command mounted an elaborate strategic deception, Operations SHARK and HARPOON (simulated preparations for an invasion of Britain from France and Norway). They were designed to offer the Soviet Union and all other interested parties, including those expected to become Germany's allies, a smorgasbord of disinformation from which several wrong but for the Soviet Union somewhat reassuring conclusions could be drawn: that (1) Hitler had not yet made up his mind and was keeping England and the Soviet Union open as options; (2) England would be next, and (a) the buildup in the East was a deception, (b) the buildup in the East was to provide security for the German rear, and (c) Hitler would beforehand exploit the buildup in the East to impose massive economic and political demands on the Soviet Union. The simulated starting date for the attack on England was 1 August.¹

Hitler had proffered the bait in his annual 'Day of the Seizure of Power' (30 January, 1933) speech, a long diatribe against England, in which he pronounced the war to have been 'practically decided' in 1940 and promised 'decisive blows in this year' (1941) whose 'historical import' the British would have to acknowledge. They could also not expect help from America (where the United States was then enacting the Lend-Lease program) because 'every ship that comes before our torpedo tubes, escorted or not, will be torpedoed'. He did not know, he said, whether the British still hoped to draw other (European) states to their side, 'but we have considered and taken into account every imaginable possibility'. With regard to food and raw materials, he added, 'We have provided for everything.'²

In the light of the experience in Finland, the Molotov mission to Berlin, and the December–January readiness assessment, Stalin was disposed to regard the barest chance of avoiding war at whatever cost as a window of opportunity.

Hitler's response to the Soviet moves against Finland, the Baltic States, and Romania, a military buildup in the East, had already by the fall of 1940 put Stalin on notice that the terms of the partnership were subject to Hitler's unilateral revision. Thus preconditioned, Stalin could hardly have taken the equivocal allusions in Hitler's 30 January speech as anything but specific and very likely ominous references to the German-Soviet partnership; on the other hand, so taken, they would also have appeared to confirm that Hitler was, nevertheless, steering clear of a two-front war. In those respects, the latter respect, his estimates would have been only slightly more pessimistic (from the Soviet point of view) than the British intelligence staffs' estimates, which from January to March 1941 consistently predicted Germany would not attack Russia until after England had been defeated and assumed the German-Soviet relationship to be about as close as it had ever been.³

In comparison with 1939, however, Stalin had no really solid options. Although the British were currently showing an unexpected amount of fight, the value of the Soviet guarantee against a two-front war had shrunk drastically and depended entirely on Hitler's not being the gambler he was. On the other hand, relations appeared to be about as they had been in August of 1939. At the top, Hitler and Stalin stayed in the background, each seemingly awaiting the other's next move. Stalin was expecting further word about Soviet membership in the Tripartite Pact, but Hitler had none to give, having not even mentioned it to his treaty partners.

As they had in 1939, the trade delegations had stayed at work, and by March, Stalin had abandoned the obstreperous approach to the Finnish question. In March, the Soviet tone toward Finland moderated progressively, and grain, petroleum, and other deliveries to Germany 'rose by leaps and bounds'. During the month, the Soviet representatives contracted to deliver 1.4 million tons of grain by September 1941, and the Germans undertook to make good by May the arrears in the German 1940 deliveries.⁴ Also in March, the German air attaché in Moscow managed to arrange a week's tour of the Soviet aircraft plants reminiscent of the 1920s for a party of German aeronautical experts.⁵

A JAPANESE CONNECTION

On 24 March, Japanese Foreign Minister Yosuke Matsuoka, en route to Berlin and Rome via the Trans-Siberian Railroad to discuss a projected Japanese strike through Southeast Asia to Singapore, stopped for a day in Moscow to take advantage of an unexpected invitation from Stalin. The negotiations on a mutual security compact then appeared to be permanently deadlocked over a Soviet demand that Japan relinquish the concessions in northern Sakhalin Island and a Japanese counterdemand that the Soviet Union sell northern Sakhalin to Japan. Matsuoka's conversation with Stalin apparently did not go beyond vague expressions of goodwill, but Stalin suggested he make a longer stop on his return trip.

Hitler and Ribbentrop told Matsuoka their relations with the Soviet Union were correct but strained, the Soviet demands caused them to regard Soviet membership in the Tripartite Pact as a dead letter, and Germany would provide all the assurance against a Soviet attack Japan needed for its advance toward Singapore. On the other hand, their general assessment of the war situation and strongly expressed desire to see Japan embark on the road to Singapore would have led him to surmise that England was their most immediate concern and have reminded him that under similar circumstances in 1939 they had given their obligations to Japan somewhat short shrift.

Matsuoka said that since Molotov had already dismissed the Japanese proposal on Sakhalin as ‘a joke’, he did not expect any result from further talks other than a reiteration of previous positions; but after he arrived in Moscow, on 7 April, he was clearly bent on getting an agreement.⁶ In the first three days’ talks, he not only dropped the demand for northern Sakhalin Island but also his initial insistence on a nonaggression treaty and accepted, instead, a less comprehensive neutrality treaty. Nevertheless, Molotov refused to withdraw the Soviet demand pertaining to the Japanese-held concessions in northern Sakhalin, and the deadlock remained unbroken on 12 April, the day before Matsuoka’s scheduled departure.⁷

However, developments elsewhere during the past two weeks and Matsuoka’s wholly uncharacteristic about-face in the negotiations had redirected Stalin’s thinking. In Moscow on the night of 5 April, the Soviet Union had entered into a treaty of friendship with Yugoslavia. On the morning of the 6th, Germany attacked Yugoslavia. In accordance with the letter of an agreement to consult each other before taking actions in the Balkan area, a notice from Moscow had reached Berlin early on the 5th and one from Berlin had arrived in Moscow early on the 6th.⁸ Although he had not promised anything but friendship, Stalin apparently had thought the Balkan affair could be prolonged into midsummer.⁹ By 12 April, the Yugoslav Army was on the brink of defeat; a British expeditionary force in Greece was in deep trouble; and Stalin’s initiative had become an embarrassing *faux pas*. But Matsuoka had provided the almost next best thing to an invitation from Hitler.

Since no Japanese diplomat had ever before in the Soviet experience voluntarily yielded on substantive points in a negotiation, it could be assumed that the visit to Berlin must have strongly enhanced his desire for an agreement. Had Matsuoka so much as surmised that a German–Soviet conflict was imminent, northern Sakhalin would have been the least of his demands; consequently, he had come to believe Japan would need a Soviet guarantee, even a relatively weak one, for some time to come. On the night of the 12th, Stalin, who had not taken part in the negotiations before then, in a man-to-man talk with Matsuoka, waived the question of the concessions; and a neutrality treaty was written and signed the next day. The diplomats assembled to see Matsuoka off that night were given a rare experience: Stalin, who almost never appeared in public places, joined them on the station platform together with Molotov. Loud enough to be heard by most present, he spoke to Matsuoka of a German–Soviet–Japanese partnership that

would henceforth 'take care of' Europe and the Far East. He then summoned Schulenburg, threw his arm around the ambassador's shoulders, and declared, 'We must remain friends and you must now do everything to that end.'¹⁰

For Stalin, the neutrality treaty's value as insurance against a two-front war was manifestly a minor consideration, if any at all; otherwise, his rejecting the nonaggression treaty, which would have offered broader coverage, would have made no sense. He also would have had no worthwhile reason to stall the negotiations over the concessions in Sakhalin after Matsuoka had dropped all the Japanese conditions, since, as Matsuoka had told Ribbentrop, exploitation of the concessions was already 'being hampered in every conceivable way by the Russians'.¹¹ Nor could he have expected the neutrality treaty alone to be taken as a significant advance in Axis–Soviet relations. He appears, in fact, to have been predominantly concerned with staging a charade from which an audience in Berlin could draw several inferences: namely, that he was willing to support the Axis Powers against England (and the United States); that the neutrality treaty did not infringe on Japan's obligations under the Tripartite Pact – as a nonaggression treaty might have done – although the possibility does not seem to have bothered Matsuoka; that the Sakhalin question having been shelved, the other precondition for Soviet entry into the Tripartite Pact would also be negotiable directly with Stalin.

STALIN, WARRIOR AND APPEASER

The spring thaw comes late and progresses slowly in Russia. Prospective invaders are well advised to wait until the floods have subsided and the roads cease to be rivers of mud, but then it behooves them to start promptly because the autumn rains, which have much the same effect, set in in October. For the Soviet Union, the time from mid-May to late July was the most dangerous; it could be assumed that Hitler would at least not unleash a general war thereafter. Because his air and motorized-mechanized forces, which were heavily engaged in the Balkans throughout April, would need some weeks to refit and regroup, he would also have to make a late start. On the other hand, a buildup was unmistakably underway on the German side of the border. On 30 April, the intelligence branch of the NKVD reported heavy eastbound military traffic through Warsaw and that all the railroads in German-occupied Poland had been closed to passenger traffic. The military intelligence chief, Golikov, reported on 5 May that in the past two months the number of German divisions in the border area had grown from 70 to 107.¹²

The arrival of spring also imposed a time limit on Stalin. He still believed Britain was in first place on Hitler's agenda; but in view of the German buildup in Poland, the lateness of the season, and Hitler's continuing silence, he had to consider that he might soon be in the position of having to respond to an ultimatum. His estimate was probably about the same as the one then current in British intelligence

circles, namely, Hitler was in the process of intimidating the Soviet Union and would soon demand some form of guarantee, perhaps control of the Soviet economy. The British believed Stalin would accept the German demands.¹³ Stalin himself most likely did not know whether he would or not, but on successive days in early May, he made two announcements that set the course Soviet policy, planning, and preparation would follow for the remainder of the prewar period.

In the Kremlin on 5 May, Stalin addressed the officers who were being graduated that day from the Moscow military academies. The members of the Politburo and the most senior officers of the armed forces were also present. Although the event was not secret and Stalin's speech has generally been referred to as the decisive turning point in Soviet prewar military policy, the full text of his remarks has yet to be made public. The official history of World War II credits them with having demonstrated that the 'political and military authorities of the Soviet Union' then knew war was inevitable.¹⁴ According to Zhukov, Stalin spoke of the Red Army as 'a new army ... equipped with modern weapons' and declared psychological and political preparation for war to be the most pressing current requirements.¹⁵ In a 1989 interview, former General N. G. Lyashchenko, who was present as a Frunze Academy graduate, said Stalin 'told us war with Germany was certain; and if it could be avoided for another two or three months, our mission would, in the meantime, be to raise combat readiness in the units to which we were being assigned'.¹⁶ In view of his other actions, however, he must have regarded the time-frame he gave as a worst-case contingency.

At the May Day parade that year, the Soviet Ambassador to Germany, V. M. Dekanosov, stood on Stalin's right, the place of honor on the reviewing stand atop Lenin's tomb. On 6 May, Stalin, who had not held an office in the government since 1922, assumed the chairmanship of the Council of People's Commissars and made Molotov his deputy and foreign affairs commissar. Schulenburg reported general agreement in the Moscow diplomatic corps that since everybody already knew Stalin was the *de facto* head of the government, he had merely given legal affirmation to the message to Germany embodied in the negotiations on the neutrality treaty with Japan.¹⁷ Among his first acts in office, he expelled the embassies of the Yugoslavian, Norwegian, and Belgian governments-in-exile on 9 May.¹⁸ On 14 May, the Main Military Council, of which Stalin was still chairman, instituted a propaganda campaign to make 'all Red Army personnel' aware that the Soviet Union proposed to 'conduct offensive and totally crushing war' that would 'decisively liquidate the hotbed of war on its own territory'.¹⁹

'CONSIDERATIONS', THE MAY SUPPLEMENT²⁰

On 15 May 1941, responding to the charge Stalin had given the General Staff in March, Zhukov and Timoshenko presented to Stalin for his 'examination' a 'Supplement' to the 'Considerations' 'for the event of war with Germany and its

allies'. With the two-front war problem resolved, at least on paper, it was a comprehensive strategic plan for war with Germany and embodied an operational scheme that eliminated variants as well. Clearly meant to be taken as the General Staff's definitive effort, it treated a German attack as an impending possibility.

The German 'concentration on the borders of the Soviet Union as of 15.4.41' was given as '86 infantry, 13 tank, 12 motorized, and 1 cavalry, in all, 120 divisions and assuming that under the present political circumstances, Germany wanted to attack the USSR, it could muster a total 180 divisions against us'. The 'probable' German main force, 100 divisions, would be deployed south of the line Brest–Demblin 'to launch a strike toward Kiev'. Additional strikes could be expected northward out of East Prussia, westward from Suwalki and Brest, and southward toward Lvov. Outside the main area of engagement, Finland would contribute 20 infantry divisions, Hungary 15, and Romania 25. Since the Germans would 'presently be completing their deployment and installing their rear elements', they would have 'an opportunity to pre-empt us in our deployment and deliver a surprise blow'. In order to prevent that and 'not give the German command the initiative, it will be necessary to forestall the enemy attack at the moment he is completing his deployment but has not yet organized a front and coordinated his forces'.

The strategic missions would be to destroy the German main force deployed behind the Bug River south of Brest, advance about 150 miles due west within 30 days, and thereafter take East Prussia and the remaining former Polish territory. The initial task would be to smash the German armies east of the Vistula River between Warsaw and Krakow, the presumed hub of German overland communication with its allies in southeastern Europe. The operations would pit 152 Red Army against an estimated 100-division German main force. As Southwest Front, the Kiev district's armies would conduct the Red Army's main effort, a 125-mile thrust to Krakow. Concurrently, West Front's left wing would undertake a 90-mile drive to Warsaw. Northwest Front would join the advance into East Prussia. North Front and Southwest Front's deep left wing would mount an 'active defense' against the Finnish, Hungarian, and Romanian forces. Out of a total 303 divisions in its field forces, the Red Army was to commit 258 divisions on the western frontier, 210 divisions to North, Northwest, West, and Southwest, 48 to a high command reserve for West and Southwest Fronts. Of its 218 air regiments, 165 in the West, 144 of those to the North, Northwest, West and Southwest Fronts.

The *fronts'* mission would be:

- *North Front* (Leningrad Military District), three armies with 21 divisions, 18 air regiments, and the Northern Fleet (Navy), to defend Leningrad, Murmansk, the Kirov Railroad, and together with the Baltic Fleet, 'ensure control of the Gulf of Finland'.
- *Northwest Front* (Baltic Military District), three armies with 23 divisions and 13 air regiments, to cover Riga and Vilnius with an active defense; keep the enemy confined to East Prussia, and not permit landings on the Baltic coast.

- *Western Front* (Western Military District), four armies, 45 divisions and 21 air regiments, to conduct an active defense on its right in conjunction with Southwest Front's attack; strike with its left wing in the general direction of Warsaw; destroy the enemy's Warsaw grouping and take Warsaw; destroy the enemy's Lublin–Radom grouping; advance to the Vistula River; and with mobile forces, take Radom.
- *Southwest Front* (Kiev Military District), eight armies, 122 divisions and 91 air regiments, to encircle and destroy (with the *front's* right-wing armies) enemy's main grouping east of the Vistula River in the Lublin district; to attack and destroy at the same time the enemy in the Krakow–Katowice area and take Krakow; to continue the offensive in a westerly or northwesterly direction, destroy the northern wing of the enemy's front, and occupy the remaining former Polish territory and East Prussia; to defend the state borders with Hungary and Romania and be prepared to direct enveloping blows against Romania with the objective of demolishing the Romanian right wing.

THE COVERING PLAN AND OTMOBILIZATSIYA

Red Army doctrine mandated the development and implementation of a 'Covering Plan for the State Frontier' as the first stage in preparation for a general war. It had, particularly in the event of war with Germany, a dual objective; to protect the main forces' deployment against surprise attack and to preserve its secrecy until the last moment of 'peacetime'. Its purpose was to coordinate the two most critical preparatory functions, *mobilizatsiya* and *otmobilizatsiya*, in a manner that would enable the armed forces to begin 'wartime' operations the moment peacetime ended by a declaration of war or some other means. The *mobilizatsiya*, concerned with calling up, organizing, and equipping the cadre forces, had, under *MP 38* and its successive revisions, raised the cadre strength to 4.2 million men by 1 January 1941. *MP 41* in its final form (February 1941) raised the number to be mustered by mid-1942 to over 8.7 million.²¹ The *otmobilizatsiya*, the main concern of the 1941 covering plan, was the secret deployment of the 'first strategic echelon', which was to consist of the Northwest, West, and Southwest Fronts ranged to depths of 60–250 miles on 970 miles of border from the Baltic Sea to Lipkani on the Prut River. In peacetime, it would prevent incursions across the border. When war started, it would hold the border until a second strategic echelon, to be mustered behind the Dvina–Dnepr river line, came forward to begin carrying the war to the enemy's territory.

The first strategic echelon was itself composed of four operational echelons: the first, all infantry and cavalry, 6–30 miles from the border; the second, mostly armor, positioned to launch massive retaliatory strikes, 30–60 miles from the border; the third, district reserves, 60–100 miles from the border; the fourth, supply

depots, remount and repair facilities, hospitals, and other static facilities 100+ miles from the border. The *otmobilizatsiya* was to be completed in peacetime, but the General Staff, apparently assuming the German deployment would be a mirror image of the Red Army's, set M-Day, the day on which mobilization would be announced, as the first day of wartime. In accordance with the creeping war theory, however, the first operational echelon would be expected to beat off incursions across the border by M-Day but would be given until M + 15 to reach offensive operational readiness. Except in the event of a sudden enemy collapse, the first strategic echelon would not open a full offensive until the second strategic echelon had come forward.²² It appears that the pre-emptive 30-day offensive would have had to take place sometime after M + 15.

MP 41, as it began to be put into effect in February 1941 with Stalin's approval, allotted 127 divisions, 1.9 million men, in nine covering armies to the Baltic, Western, and Kiev military districts for the first strategic echelon, which was to be completed by 1 June. The Baltic district, under General F. I. Kuznetsov, was assigned the Eighth and Eleventh Armies; Western district the Third, Seventh, and Fourth; Kiev district the Fifth, Sixth, Twenty-sixth, and Twelfth. The force structure comprised 75 infantry, 4 cavalry, 48 tank and mechanized divisions and 33 fortified districts. Of those, 42 divisions, all infantry and cavalry, were to be deployed in the first operational echelon; 39, more tank and mechanized than infantry, in the second; and 46 divisions, the district (*front*) reserves of armor and infantry, in the third. The first operational echelon also had, under separate command, 11 fortified frontier districts, including the sprawling Brest fortress that controlled the Bug River crossings of the Warsaw–Moscow railroad and highway.²³

The strategic intent of *MP 41* was obviously to preserve the offensive potential of the Soviet salients. The Western district Third Army and its strongest army, Tenth Army, were sited inside the Bialystok salient, leaving Fourth Army and the Brest fortified district to cover the Warsaw highway and railroad and the district's share of the truncated German salient straddling its left boundary. The Kiev district's Sixth, Twenty-sixth, and Twelfth Armies were all to be deployed in the Lvov salient, leaving Fifth Army to hold the face of the German salient opposite the district's right wing. Five mechanized corps in reserve emphatically confirmed the district's status as the main force.²⁴

Even as it went into effect, on 12 February, *MP 41* was again being amended: Stalin approved a wartime strength of 3.7 million men and 304 divisions.²⁵ On 3 March, Zhukov and Timoshenko proposed and Stalin endorsed a 234-division total for the first strategic echelon; but Stalin, believing he could buy off Hitler, at least for the coming summer, and none too confident in his generals anyway, refused to let them accelerate the deployment to meet the new force requirements. Consequently, the *otmobilizatsiya* for the first strategic echelon remained, for the most part, on its original schedule at full 14,000-man strength, 72 divisions at 12,000 men, six at 11,000; motorized and mechanized divisions at 70–80 per cent of full strength; and the overall deployment was to be at 55 per cent of wartime strength.²⁶

On 10 April, Zhukov had ordered Vasilevskiy to revise *MP 41* in conformity with a ‘basic mission’ that would require the Kiev and Western districts to prepare for an offensive that would ‘destroy the enemy’s Lublin–Radom grouping.’²⁷ The result amounted to a second *otmobilizatsiya*. On 13 May, seven armies in the interior military districts received orders to redeploy by 10 July to the line of the Dnepr and Dvina Rivers, where they would become the second strategic echelon. Four more armies (28 divisions) were to be activated by 15 June as Red Army High Command reserves in the first strategic echelon, Twenty-seventh Army for the Baltic district, Thirteenth Army for the Western district, Sixteenth and Nineteenth Armies for the Kiev district. At the same time, Stalin authorized a bulk shipment of some 800,000 service eligibles, disguised as a call-up of reserves for summer training, enough to bring 100 first strategic echelon divisions to full strength.²⁸

As of 1 June, 102 divisions were deployed in the first strategic echelon, 25 less than the February requirement; but the 800,000 reservists would raise the troop strength to 2.6 million, 700,000 more than had been specified in February. The new (15 May) requirement (152 divisions mostly for the Kiev and Western districts) was to be met by the redeployment just begun, which would provide another 86 divisions, 1.2 million troops. The three-district total was then to be 240 divisions (188 Western and Kiev) and 3.8 million troops (3.5 million Western and Kiev).²⁹ The armor, aircraft, and artillery were all in place on 1 June: 9,900 tanks, 5,775 aircraft, and 36,000 artillery pieces and heavy mortars. The tank park included 1,290 KV and T 34 heavy and medium types.³⁰

THE GAME PLAYS OUT

On 14 May, the Main Military Council instituted a propaganda campaign to make ‘all Red Army personnel’ aware that the Soviet Union proposed ‘to conduct offensive and totally crushing war’ that would ‘decisively liquidate the hotbed of war on its own territory.’³¹ In early June, the time to achieve such a capability did not appear to be in jeopardy. The German assault on Crete, begun on 20 May, coming on top of the Balkan campaign concluded on 30 April, gave reason (but not valid reason, since Hitler had already set 22 June for the attack) to expect Hitler would not be able for some time to deploy the forces he would need against the Soviet Union and even that he might be heading in an altogether different direction. Moreover, none of the assumed components of creeping war, ‘diplomatic threats and demands, border skirmishes, front building, and coordination of forces,’ had appeared or been detected.

Nevertheless, time was running short: to take full advantage of the season, Hitler would soon have to disclose his next victim’s identity. In London tension was so high that the Foreign Office, out of sheer frustration, decided to call its ambassador, Cripps, home from Moscow for consultation.³² When he arrived, on

11 June, it found he agreed entirely with the British intelligence agencies' estimate, namely, that Hitler was going to make demands on the Soviet Union, and Stalin would accept them.³³

Some London newspapers, however, reported Cripps's return as a harbinger of closer British–Soviet relations and a German–Soviet falling-out.³⁴ In Moscow, the articles, which obviously could not have been published without official permission or encouragement, acquired additional significance from the arrival in Britain by parachute on 10 May of Rudolf Hess, Hitler's deputy as leader of the Nazi Party. The British Government had kept silent until two days after the event and several hours after German radio reported Hess missing; and a month later it was still treating the affair as a state secret of the highest order.³⁵ From Stalin's point of view, the most likely conclusion, one which neither he nor his successors would later ever give up, was that the British were engaged in an effort to turn Hitler against the Soviet Union. If so, the negotiations appeared not to have made much progress, in which case it could have occurred to Stalin that Hitler was sending the same message to him via the British as he had sent to Hitler in the summer of 1939. At the least, Hitler would have appeared to be still keeping his options open.

On 13 June, by telephone and with Zhukov present, Timoshenko asked Stalin for permission to 'bring the frontier military districts to readiness for war and deploy the first echelons [whether the strategic or operational echelons were meant is not apparent] in accordance with the "covering plan"'. Stalin replied, 'There is no time for that just now. We are preparing a TASS [Soviet press agency] communiqué. It will be published tomorrow'.³⁶

That night, Molotov gave Schulenburg an advance copy of the release. Attributed to 'responsible circles in Moscow', it was a remarkable document that would often be cited in the post-Stalin war literature as evidence of his devotion to peace or of his failure to comprehend the German threat, but rarely seen for what it was – another bid for a German–Soviet dialogue. It denounced the 'rumors in the English press' as 'false and provocative' and stated that 'the recent movements of German troops ... to the eastern and northern parts of Germany must be explained by other motives which have no connection with German–Soviet relations'. With regard to the partnership, it added, '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–German Nonaggression Pact'. The last paragraph rejected an apparently hypothetical charge:

The summer calling-up of the reserves of the Red Army which is now taking place and the impending maneuvers mean nothing but a training of the reservists and a check on the operations of the railroad system, which as is known takes place every year; consequently, it appears at least nonsensical to interpret these measures of the Red Army as an action hostile to Germany.³⁷

In the post-Stalin Soviet war literature, the TASS communiqué would be treated as the most egregious example of Stalin's failure to comprehend the German threat. If so, he had company in England where, 'To the end, the Whitehall intelligence

branches found it difficult to discard the belief that Germany would present Russia with demands and an ultimatum.³⁸

In his office, on the 15th, Stalin told Timoshenko and Zhukov, who had come to convince him it was necessary to bring the armed forces to full war readiness,

Germany is stuck in a war in the West, and I am certain Hitler will not risk creating a second front for himself. Hitler is not such a fool as to not understand that the Soviet Union is not Poland, not France, not England, not all of them put together.³⁹

When they asked permission to deploy another 50 divisions in the first strategic echelon, he told them they already had 149 and sending more ‘to the border ... means war! Do you understand that or not?’⁴⁰ What they were requesting could, in fact, hardly have been concealed.

On the night of 21 June, Molotov called in Schulenburg ostensibly to inform him that the Soviet Government had entered a strong complaint in Berlin with regard to the flights over Soviet territory. He then went on to ask why there had been ‘no reaction whatsoever on the part of Germany to the TASS communiqué’.⁴¹ Schulenburg, who had been kept completely in the dark during the last several weeks, could only answer that he did not know. At four the next morning, Schulenburg was again in Molotov’s office, this time reading to him a lengthy preamble of accusations in the German declaration of war. Molotov, apparently expecting an ultimatum, broke in and asked him to proceed to his government’s demands, but there were none.⁴²

THE CORRELATION OF FORCES

As long as Stalin lived, the disastrous events of 22 June 1941 and some time thereafter were treated in the Soviet war literature, what there was of it, as nothing more than the temporary effects of surprise resulting from the treacherous German attack. It was a politically satisfactory explanation and has retained a significant niche in the literature ever since; but after Stalin’s passing, neither his political successors nor the Soviet Army chiefs – who had been the Red Army chiefs in the war – could, as Stalin had, ignore the magnitude of the losses. In 1956, Nikita Khrushchev gave the responsibility for those to Stalin to accompany him in the grave. Subsequently, however, Khrushchev was more interested in claiming credit for himself than in giving it to the military. Khrushchev’s ousting in late 1964, in which they had a part, gave the generals an opportunity to profile themselves as having been more than just Tukhachevskiy’s hapless understudies. The next year, Vasilevskiy gave an interview in which he ‘revealed’ that the General Staff had developed a war plan, but ‘Stalin and his circle’ had, ‘through their indecisiveness’, kept the armed forces from being put into full war readiness.⁴³ In his memoirs published later, he added:

... if our military units and formations had been mobilized at the proper time, had been deployed as specified in their plans for border war, and had, in accordance with those, organized close coordination between artillery, armor, and aviation, it could be asserted that the enemy would have been dealt such losses already on the first day of war that he could not have advanced farther into our country.⁴⁴

Zhukov admitted that the disaster would very likely have been total if Stalin had authorized the full deployment, but nevertheless, as has been seen, let it appear that the fault was entirely Stalin's.⁴⁵ In his study of wars' beginnings, General S. P. Ivanov took a firm noncommittal stance:

The plan that the Soviet Union worked out to repel fascist aggression was an active and energetic one. ... Planning and preparations for the initial operations were based on the idea of making a powerful retaliatory attack against the enemy. The entire system for strategic deployment of the armed forces was subordinated to this concept. For a number of reasons, however, decisive among which was the error made in determining the time of fascist Germany's invasion of our country – the Soviet Army entered the war without completing operational deployment.⁴⁶

In fact, at the time of Stalin's alleged wrongheaded refusal he was allowing Timoshenko and Zhukov to have their way short of staging a massive provocation. He was wrong, of course, in believing the game was still to be decided, but Zhukov and Timoshenko were at least equally mistaken in imagining they could muster enough strength to resolve the issue in the field.⁴⁷ If anything, Stalin was excessively acquiescent to his generals' desires. On 12 June, Timoshenko, with Stalin's concurrence, ordered the Western and Kiev districts to shift 32 divisions from their reserves westward into the area of the second covering echelon. Likewise, on 18 June, Timoshenko gave the districts their wartime designations as Northwest, West, and Southwest Fronts and ordered them to man their forward command posts and hold themselves ready to organize and conduct 'meeting engagements and repulsing blows' on short notice. In both instances the results were, by normal standards, catastrophic. Having had to make night marches to avoid detection from the air, only four divisions reached their assembly areas by the morning of 22 June. The rest, some 400,000 troops, were strung out on the roads.⁴⁸ The district/*front* commands were not in full working order at either of their headquarters on the morning of 22 June.

In the last two months of peacetime, the General Staff became almost exclusively engaged in expanding the covering plan. Apparently the idea, in the 15 May 'Considerations', of an offensive response to a German attack was not thought to require further development for the time being. In 1996, the Russian General Staff's military history journal published three documents described as the May 1941 operational plans of the Baltic, Western, and Kiev Military Districts.⁴⁹ Timoshenko's directives, sent to the Baltic and Western districts on

14 May and Kiev on the 15th, gave the purpose of the plans as being ‘to cover the *otmobilizatsiya*, concentration, and deployment of the districts’ forces’. That to the Baltic district, itself five pages long, required a detailed plan for defense of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic’s border and the adjacent Baltic coast to be completed by 30 May. Overflights and border crossings could be made ‘only by special decision of the High Command’. The plan would go into effect upon receipt of a coded telegram reading, ‘Proceed to completion of the 1941 covering plan,’ and signed by Timoshenko, another member of the Main Military Council, and the chief of the General Staff.⁵⁰ The Western district was to submit by 20 May a detailed border defense plan; a plan for a defense in depth reaching back 250 miles to the Beresina River; and a plan for evacuation of industrial installations, military and government property, and men eligible for military service. The defense was to have an active character. All enemy attempts to break through the defenses were to be ‘liquidated at once’. Again, none of the plan could be put in effect without a High Command decision.⁵¹ The Kiev district was to submit its detailed defense plan by 25 May. Its charge was the only one to specify something more than an active defense. In case of favorable conditions the district and the armies were to be prepared, on orders from the High Command, to employ their ‘entire defensive and reserve strength in rapid blows’ that would ‘smash the enemy groupings, carry the war to his territory, and capture favorable positions.’⁵² In all three instances, M 15 appears to have been the day on which the plans were to have been fully executed. There is no indication of anything to be done after that date except for the possibility cited in the Kiev district’s plan.

In the Kremlin, on 24 May, Molotov, Timoshenko, Zhukov, Vatutin, and the commanders and members of the military councils (commissars) met with Stalin. There, it is said, ‘more precise instructions on dealing with the aggression approaching from the German side’, were given, but no record of them exists.⁵³ The evidence of the districts’ plans and Timoshenko’s 18 June instructions regarding ‘meeting engagements and repulsing blows’ suggests rather strongly that the General Staff still expected, in accordance with the creeping war theory, both sides to make their bids for the initiative on the basis of information accumulated in the initial skirmishes.

At the outbreak of war, the Soviet armed forces numbered 5.7 million men. The Red Army field forces had 4.5 million of those in 303 divisions of which 61 were tank and 31 motorized divisions. Seventy per cent, 240 divisions, 3.1 million men, were allotted to the western fronts, including North and South Fronts. Of those, 186 had arrived, and the rest were in transit. Northwest, West, and Southwest Fronts had 143 divisions, 2.4 million troops. Of those, West and Southwest Fronts had 118 divisions, 1.10 million troops, and 54 divisions in transit.⁵⁴ The German *Wehrmacht* had 7.3 million men, of which the Army had 5.2 million in 210 divisions of which 21 were panzer and 13 were motorized divisions. The Army’s allotment for BARBAROSSA was 3.05 million men, 148 divisions, of which 124 divisions, 2.6 million troops, were committed against Northwest, West, and Southwest Fronts (94 divisions, 2 million troops, against West and

Southwest Fronts) and 24 divisions in transit or in the High Command reserve.⁵⁵

The Red Army had 12,800 tanks on the western frontier, 9,800 of which (1,475 were KV and T 34 types), were in the Northwest, West, and Southwest Fronts (8,300 in West and Southwest Fronts).⁵⁶ German Army Groups North, Center, and South had a total 19 panzer divisions, 3,350 tanks, of which 2,982 tanks were deployed against Northwest, West, and Southwest Fronts (2,445 against West and Southwest Front), and 2 divisions, 368 tanks, in a High Command reserve.⁵⁷

The Soviet western *fronts* had a total of 7,500 aircraft, of which Northwest, West, and Southwest Fronts had 5,775, 1,475 probably first line. The German Air Force committed 3,800 aircraft, all first line. The Soviet western *fronts* had 47,000 artillery pieces and heavy mortars, 36,000 of them in the Northwest, West, and South Fronts. The BARBAROSSA force had 7,146 artillery pieces of all calibers.⁵⁸

On 22 June 1941, the Soviet first strategic echelon had overall parity in troops and numerical advantages of 2.9 : 1 in armor, 1.5 : 1 in aircraft, and on the order of 5 : 1 in artillery. However, in the categories for which comparable figures are available, personnel and armor, the strength ratios varied significantly. Southwest Front had advantages of 1.3 : 1 in troops and 6.2 : 1 in tanks over Army Group South. At the site of the German main effort, Army Group Center had a 1.3 : 1 advantage in troops and West Front 1.8 : 1 in tanks. Against Army Group North, Northwest Front had 2.9 : 1 superiority in tanks but was outnumbered by 1.7 : 1 in troops. Failure to comprehend what Stalin had called the 'War of Motors' and resulting faulty deployment that put three-quarters of the West and Southwest Fronts' strength out of contention and in jeopardy in the Bialystok and Lvov salients nullified the Soviet numerical advantages and would have done so even had they been greater.⁵⁹ On the other hand, Stalin's insistence on having nearly half of the first strategic echelon deployed at Southwest Front substantially lessened the potential strategic impact of the German main effort.

The Red Army at Bay

THE BATTLES OF THE FRONTIERS

Stalin called the Politburo into session on the night of 21 June. Timoshenko and Zhukov were present to report that a deserter, a German *Feldwebel* (sergeant major) who had crossed the border several hours earlier, had told Southwest Front's interrogators a German attack was set to begin the next morning. The generals brought with them a draft directive ordering the first operational echelon to man its designated positions at the border. Contending that the sergeant might have been sent to provoke just such a Soviet reaction, Stalin substituted a warning to the frontier commands to be on the alert for 'provocative actions' and ready to meet 'possible sudden blows' but to take 'no other measures ... without special orders'.¹ While waiting for the transmission to be completed, Stalin authorized Timoshenko to establish the southern third of Southwest Front's sector immediately as South Front with Ninth and Eighteenth Armies and Army General I. V. Tiulenev in command. Since Tiulenev owed his rank mostly to membership in the First Cavalry Army, Stalin told Zhukov to go to Odessa the next morning and introduce him to the requirements of *front* command. Noticing that the North Front commander, M. M. Popov, as a lieutenant general, had a considerable deficiency in rank, Stalin decided also to send Meretskov to give him tutelage.²

By the time the meeting terminated, shortly after midnight, three air fleets attached to the German army groups had their bombers loaded and poised to hit the Red Army's airfields at first light; their fighters would be on hand to deal with any Soviet aircraft that managed to take off; and their dive bombers would be present at the sites of the ground forces' breakthroughs at about 3:30 a.m. At Army Group North, First Air Fleet had 453 aircraft at the ready; at Army Group Center, Second Air Fleet had 994; and at Army Group South, Fourth Air Fleet had 694. On Hitler's orders, all the aircraft were to concentrate exclusively on close ground support after their first strikes.³

Shortly before Schulenburg arrived in Molotov's office, Timoshenko and Zhukov were in the Kremlin telling Stalin that German aircraft were bombing Soviet installations. Stalin paled but contended it could be a provocation staged by a German general without Hitler's knowledge. By the time Molotov brought the German declaration of war, word had arrived that German ground troops had

crossed the border in a number of places. Zhukov then suggested ‘crashing down on the invaders with the full strength of our frontier districts’ and ‘annihilating them.’ Stalin, still reluctant to believe what was happening, authorized Timoshenko to issue a directive ordering the forces on the frontier to ‘annihilate ... the enemy in the areas in which they have crossed the Soviet border’, but, ‘pending further instructions’, not themselves to cross the border.⁴ By 10:00 a.m. on 22 June, the General Staff knew the worst. Its Operations Report No.1, covering events from 4:00 to 6:00 a.m. in the Northwest, West, and Southwest Fronts’ areas, concluded: ‘The enemy, pre-empting our troops in their deployment, has forced elements of the Red Army to accept battle while engaged in positioning themselves in accordance with the covering plan.’⁵

The German Army Groups struck simultaneously almost to the minute. At Army Group North, Fourth Panzer Group broke through Northwest Front’s center in short order and headed north toward the Dvina River. On Army Group Center’s left wing, Fourth Panzer Group, with Ninth Army following, easily broke out of the Suwalki Strip. On its left, 120 miles to the south, Second Panzer Group, with Fourth Army having to engage the strong Brest fortified district that straddled the main road and railroad to Moscow, was slowed somewhat in crossing the Bug River; but by midday both panzer groups were headed toward Minsk, 180 miles to the east; and West Front’s Fourth, Tenth, and Third Armies were being trapped in the Bialystok salient. Shock and command paralysis at Southwest Front eliminated the need for even a token armored breakthrough and enable Army Group South’s Sixth and Seventeenth Armies to advance unsupported while First Panzer Group regrouped for a drive to Kiev.⁶ The air fleets had virtually total air superiority at daylight; and by midmorning, it was apparent to Stalin as well as the generals that Timoshenko’s directive, which had, in fact, not reached most of the field commands, could not be put into effect.

At noon, reverting to his concerns of the previous night, Stalin ordered Zhukov to go to Southwest Front at once to advise Kirponos and Shaposhnikov, and Kulik to West Front to do the same for Pavlov, saying, ‘Our *front* commanders lack combat experience, and they have evidently become somewhat confused.’⁷ Zhukov he also told to go by air, which was a fantastically dangerous undertaking by then.

When he arrived at Kirponos’s command post in Ternopol just outside the Lvov salient late that night, Zhukov learned from his deputy, Vatutin, that the General Staff could not yet picture what was happening, and Pavlov and Kuznetsov had been out of contact with Moscow and with their own headquarters all day. Vatutin also told him Stalin was about to have Timoshenko issue a strategic Directive No. 3 – on which his signature would also be needed – ordering ‘a counteroffensive with the task of routing the enemy in all directions.’ Zhukov indicated that he only allowed his signature to be affixed because he was told ‘the matter has already been decided on [by Stalin]’.⁸ Zhukov must at once have been aware that the directive, later known as ‘Order Number 3’, was a modified version of the 15 May amendment to the covering plan. Northwest and West Fronts were to ‘envelop and annihilate’ the German forces attacking out of East Prussia and take the Suwalki Strip ‘by

nightfall on June 24.⁹ Southwest Front was to mass its mechanized corps and send them, together with the Fifth and Sixth Armies' infantry, on a 50-mile thrust inside the German border to Lublin, which was also to be taken by nightfall on the 24th.⁹

The speed and strength of the German attack quickly dislocated the rigidly centralized Soviet command structure. Radio was still a novelty in the Red Army, particularly forward of army headquarters. In 1940, the Army had constructed several dozen telephone and telegraph-equipped command posts in the western military districts; but being situated above ground, they were exposed to bombing; their lines were subject to all kinds of hazards; and their connections with Moscow depended on the civilian trunk lines.¹⁰ By the day's end, the German General Staff had received enough information for Halder to conclude that the Soviet forces, having been unprepared in all respects, 'must now take our attack in the deployment in which they stand ... [and] perhaps cannot react operationally at all.'¹¹ Zhukov found the Southwest Front staff confident and in good spirits but saw they obviously had nowhere near enough information to mount the kind of counterattack Stalin wanted. The probably most effective move of the day on the Soviet side was a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet instituting full mobilization. All reservists aged 23–37 were to report for duty the next day, also all men who had seen service between 1905 and 1918.¹²

At the Twentieth Party Congress, in February 1956, Nikita Khrushchev told the delegates Stalin broke down when the war started and 'for a long time ... actually did not direct military operations and ceased to do anything whatever'.¹³ Later, Zhukov contradicted him, saying Stalin had a spell of depression 'in the first hours' but 'quickly returned to normal'.¹⁴ On thing is certain: Stalin did not want responsibility for the events then taking place. He withheld the announcement to the people until the next day and then left Molotov to deliver it. On the 23rd, he responded to a suggestion from Zhukov and Timoshenko that since the *de facto* authority in military affairs was all his, wartime decision-making would be much simplified if he were to place himself at the head of the armed forces by dissolving the main military councils and creating a *stavka*, a general headquarters, the *Stavka* of the High Command. The *Stavka* proper consisted of three *ex officio* members, Timoshenko as defense commissar, commander-in-chief of the armed forces, and chairman of the *Stavka*, Zhukov, as chief of the General Staff, and Kuznetsov, as commanding admiral of the Navy. It also had four appointed members: Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov, and Budenny, the last three being sufficient to give Stalin a majority if he were to need one. He also instituted an advisory group associated with the *Stavka* in which Shaposhnikov, Kulik, Meretskov, Mekhlis, Vatutin, and Malenkov were members.¹⁵ Malenkov, Stalin's office manager, was already an impediment to communication with the Kremlin. Shaposhnikov's, Meretskov's, and Vatutin's inclusion suggest that Zhukov's tenure as chief of the General Staff was in some doubt.

Although Britain and the United States had political differences and deep seated mistrust of the Soviet Union to overcome – and Molotov's address sounded

more like the plea of a heartbroken lover than a call to arms against Nazism – Prime Minister Winston Churchill pledged support on the 22nd and President Franklin D. Roosevelt promised US Lend-Lease aid two days later. But, in Washington, the War Department War Plans Division expected a Soviet defeat in one to three months.¹⁶ In London, the British Joint Intelligence Committee gave the Red Army ‘a few months at the outside’, and the ambassador, Cripps, predicted a German victory in three to four weeks. Nevertheless, Cripps returned to Moscow by air on the 26th accompanied by a military mission charged with assessing the situation on the scene.¹⁷

The Finns, claiming a somewhat independent status as ‘brothers in arms’, not allies, declared war on the Soviet Union on 25 June. Thereafter, Mannerheim, again the commander in chief, deployed his main force, the Army of Karelia, for a strike east of Lake Ladoga toward the Svir River, but delayed the attack until 10 July.¹⁸ Romania, Hungary, and Slovakia declared war as members of the Tripartite Pact. Their military effectiveness was questionable, and their antipathy was as great toward each other as toward the Soviet Union. The German Eleventh Army headquarters was assigned to take command of seven German and 14 Romanian divisions as a potential southern arm of a grand encirclement in the Dnepr River basin. For security reasons, however, it could not be assembled before 22 June and would need until 2 July for its deployment.¹⁹

The German air fleets and panzer groups overwhelmed the Red Army commands with a form of war for which they were wholly unprepared and mostly could not comprehend, a war which substituted mobility for mass to an extreme incomprehensible even to some of the German commanders until well after 22 June. Having committed the irreversible error of basing its main forces close to the border in anticipation of an offensive mission, the Red Army Air Force was largely demolished on the ground and in the air by nightfall on 22 June and would not recover significantly before the end of the year.²⁰ The four panzer groups, with lavish air support, were masters of the battlefield from the outset. The confusion on the Soviet side emanated mostly from the speed and precision of their maneuvers.

Fourth Panzer Group, General Erich Hoepner commanding, quickly dispelled Kuznetsov’s prospects of a static role for Northwest Front. Hoepner’s LVI Corps, one panzer, one motorized, and one standard infantry division under Manstein’s command, made a 170-mile raid and took a bridgehead on the Dvina River on 26 June. By the 29th, when Riga fell to Eighteenth Army, almost the whole line of the lower Dvina was in Army Group North’s possession, and Northwest Front was adrift in the Latvian lowlands.²¹ It was a bravura performance but brought in few prisoners.

On the night of 23 June, the chief of Red Army intelligence, General F. I. Golikov, reported German thrusts toward Volkovysk, 60 miles east of Bialystok, emerging from the northern and southern bases of the salient.²² In accordance with that information and Order Number 3, Pavlov, the next day, ordered mechanized corps to counterattack – against what were elements of Ninth and Fourth Armies’ infantry. By then, Third Panzer Group, under General Hermann Hoth, and Guderian’s

THE RED ARMY 1918–1941



Map 4: The German Advance, 22 June–12 November 1941

Second Panzer Group, virtually unnoticed, and paying no attention to anything not directly in their path, were halfway to Minsk.²³ When their presence was incomprehensible to start with, whole panzer corps could assume the properties of will-o'-the-wisps in the marshy forests of western Belorussia. Hitler, dismayed at the panzer groups' audacity, wanted to rein them in; Hoth, Guderian, and Bock

were disappointed at not being allowed to bypass Minsk and go all the way to the Dnepr.²⁴ Bock observed that the Russians in the development pocket were defending themselves fiercely but futilely.²⁵

On the 26th, Stalin recalled Zhukov from Southwest Front by telephone, telling him, 'A bad situation has developed at West Front. The enemy has approached Minsk. Pavlov is in a state of utter confusion.'²⁶ It would also, no doubt, have been difficult to explain the Chief of the General Staff's absence to the British military mission. Hoth's leading corps reached Minsk the next day. On the 28th, Hoth and Guderian made solid contact at Minsk, and General Eremenko arrived in Moscow from an army command in the Far East. Timoshenko at once appointed him commanding general of West Front and sent him off to Pavlov's headquarters at Mogilev on the Dnepr, 125 miles east of Minsk.²⁷ General Noel Mason-Macfarlane, the head of the military mission, described Timoshenko as 'over-confident and exaggeratedly optimistic' and Zhukov as 'less optimistic and more business-like'. Both refused to give 'precise information on the course of the battle'.²⁸ Arriving at West Front's headquarters on the morning of the 29th, Eremenko, by his account, found Pavlov in the incongruous state of being hopelessly in the dark regarding the *front's* situation and calmly having breakfast. Voroshilov and Shaposhnikov were present and knew what the problems were but had not yet, it seems, done anything about them.²⁹ Stalin railed against Pavlov to the *Stavka* and the General Staff on the 29th, and the next day summoned Pavlov and his chief of staff to Moscow.³⁰

The operation also, although more satisfyingly, perplexed the Germans: the pocket was so large that they had to reduce it in two stages by cutting it in half at the level of Bialystok. When both parts were pronounced secured, on 11 July, they had registered 328,898 prisoners of war, 3,332 captured tanks, and gathered vast quantities of supplies, equipment, and motor fuel.³¹

After the first day, Southwest Front's situation appeared to be stabilizing. Kirponos had five mechanized corps that could be positioned to block Army Group South's Sixth Army – if they could find each other and Sixth Army. By the 24th, he knew that Sixth Army, having driven his Fifth Army east into the Pripyat Marshes and with First Panzer Group in the lead, was driving southeastward behind his Sixth, Twenty-sixth, Twelfth, and Sixteenth Armies, which were falling back under pressure from German Seventeenth Army.³² Rokossovskiy, who commanded the IX Mechanized Corps, said Kirponos, who talked about 'decisive counterattacks' but did nothing, was 'a pair with Pavlov, only weaker'.³³ Rundstedt, who had expected to convert the salient into a large encirclement, developed respect for Kirponos when he observed the armies passing east and south of Lvov. On 30 June, he ordered the First Panzer Group commander, General Ewald von Kleist, to prevent them from digging in the old Stalin Line, which was particularly solid along the former Polish border, by running through ahead of them and meeting Eleventh Army on the other side.³⁴

Also on the 30th, Hoth and Guderian received orders they had wanted all along: to take bridgeheads on the Dnepr–Dvina River line west of Smolensk.³⁵ The

day before, Leeb had directed Hoepner to prepare for a 200-mile northwestward advance to Lake Ilmen.³⁶

STALIN AT THE HELM

The German regroupment gave Stalin a chance to take stock and brace his forces for the next onslaught. On 30 June, he activated the State Defense Committee, the GKO (Gosudarstvennyi Komitet Oborony), a five-man body reminiscent – probably not coincidentally – of the 1918 Politburo with himself as chairman, Molotov as deputy, Malenkov as secretary and Voroshilov and Beria as members. The decree concentrated ‘the full power of the state in the hands of the GKO’ and required ‘all state, party, and military organs to carry out without question all decisions and instructions of the GKO’.³⁷ Somewhat indicative of the range of the GKO’s concerns is the 5 July 1941 decree establishing an eight-man military mission to England headed by the Army intelligence chief, Golikov.³⁸

On 3 July, Stalin, who had made no prior public statement, addressed the nation by radio. He was obviously under strain. His voice was dull and slow. He sounded tired, and he could be heard pausing to drink water as he talked.³⁹ Calling the listeners ‘brothers and sisters’ and ‘friends,’ he told them for the first time, after two and a half weeks in which government communiqués had depicted the fighting as being confined to the border, that Soviet territory had been lost and that the Germans were advancing.⁴⁰ Reiterating instructions given to all party offices four days earlier, he called for evacuation and a scorched earth policy in threatened areas and partisan warfare in enemy-occupied territory. He asked the peasants to drive their cattle eastward ahead of the Germans and the workers to organize *opolcheniye* (home guards) ‘in every town threatened with invasion.’ The speech emphasized the national rather than the ideological nature of the war and characterized Great Britain and the United States as ‘trustworthy partners’ in a common struggle for ‘independent and democratic freedom’.⁴¹ On the 4th and 5th, the GKO initiated mobilization of 170,000 men aged 17–55 for the Moscow *opolcheniye* and ordered war plants evacuated from Leningrad, central Russia, and Kharkov to western Siberia.⁴²

By Stalin’s standards, catastrophic events could not occur without culprits. That the losses, which were indeed astoundingly heavy (590,000 by 9 July), particularly in the captured and missing categories, included officers and generals in substantial numbers aroused his worst suspicion.⁴³ Almost from the first day, a mini-purge was in progress. In Leningrad on the morning of 23 June, Meretskov, whose efforts to increase the forces’ readiness were being shown not to have borne fruit, received an order to report to Moscow at once. On arrival, he learned that he was being appointed a permanent advisor to the *Stavka*. The next day, he, a veteran of the First Cavalry Army, was in jail in the Lubyanka prison charged with a capital crime, making anti-Soviet statements.⁴⁴ When Pavlov and his chief of staff arrived

in Moscow in accordance with Stalin's summons, they were told to return to the front. On the way back, they were arrested and taken to the Lubyanka. Pavlov, his chief of staff, and chief of communications were shot as 'defeatists' on 22 July, and three more West Front generals were awaiting execution.⁴⁵ Also by then, six Air Force generals, including its last three chiefs, were under arrest and one had shot himself. Colonel General Shtern, who had the misfortune of having been appointed chief of anti-aircraft artillery in April 1941, was also under arrest. The whole Air Force command then consisted of seven lieutenant generals, one of whom was the 71-year-old, ex-tsarist general Samoylo, who had been Frunze's military specialist during the Civil War, and in June 1941 became commandant of the Air Force.⁴⁶ On 29 June, the *Stavka* abolished the Air Force chief's status as commander in chief, Air Force and chief of a main directorate (service branch) and left him with a reduced staff and the more modest title 'Commander of the Army Air Force'.⁴⁷

From the talks in Moscow and London, the Russians wanted instant aid and an alliance, which the British were reluctant to offer without much more evidence than they were being given, that the Soviet Union had an appreciable life expectancy. Zhukov submitted a 'shopping list' that included '3,000 fully equipped fighters, a similar number of bombers ... and technical information on numerous secret devices'.⁴⁸ On the other hand, the British could not risk pushing the Russians into the arms of the Germans; and on 12 July, Cripps and Molotov signed an 'agreed declaration' in which both parties pledged 'to render each other assistance and support of all kinds ... [and] neither negotiate nor conclude an armistice or treaty of peace except by mutual agreement'.⁴⁹ On 18 July, in the first of what became a stream of such messages, Stalin called on 'the allies', that is, Churchill and Roosevelt, to create 'second fronts' in northern France and northern Norway during 1941.⁵⁰ He would henceforth always regard the second front as a contractual commitment of the British and Americans, even though the United States was not at war with Germany until December 1941 and did not thereafter have an alliance with either Britain or the Soviet Union.

On 10 July, the GKO reorganized the armed forces' command. The *Stavka* became the *Stavka* of the Supreme Command under Stalin as chairman of the GKO and Molotov as his deputy. Timoshenko continued as defense commissar and commander in chief but farther from the top than he had been. Kuznetsov was dropped, and Shaposhnikov was elevated to full membership.⁵¹ Apparently to provide better management for the rapidly expanding front, the GKO also activated three 'directions', Northwestern, Western, and Southwestern. Since their responsibilities were territorial as well as operational, they could be best described as theaters of operations. The commanders in chief were all marshals and members of the *Stavka*, Voroshilov in the Northwestern Direction, Timoshenko in the Western, and Budenny in the Southwestern. Stalin routinely expected military members of the *Stavka* – and the GKO – to serve away from Moscow.⁵² A decree of 16 July reinstated the commissar system in the armed forces.⁵³

A 'STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE'

A little more than a week of war had brought the Red Army to a perilous state: the Moscow region, the Great Russian heartland, the loss of which Stalin had once believed would be an inescapably fatal blow; the main effort was shown to have been grossly misplaced; an offensive defense was out of the question; and the contest could very likely be decided in one more round. A 110-mile advance east of Minsk would take the German panzer groups across the Beresina River and into the 'Vitebsk Gate', the 50-mile-wide gap between the headwaters of the Dvina and Dnepr Rivers that was probably the most heavily fortified segment of the old Stalin Line. Polotsk and Vitebsk on the north, Orsha and Mogilev on the south, were fortified regions, and Smolensk, 65 miles to the east, was a fortress city comparable to Brest. For an invader, the gap was a land bridge, an elevated stretch of ground across the swampy terrain flanking the rivers across which the main east–west highway and railroad ran.

It had been fully apparent by the fourth day that the offensive defense had been a pipe dream, and also evident that Stalin, whose tenure was not as secure as Alexander I's had been, would not permit a strategic withdrawal of the kind most likely to put a crimp in the Germans' plans. The General Staff's thinking therefore at once centered on the idea of an 'active strategic defense', the objectives of which would be to stop the enemy along the whole front, hold him, wear him down while the strategic reserves were being assembled, and then shift to a 'decisive strategic counteroffensive'. The main effort would be in the center where four armies (37 divisions) originally assigned in the state defense plan to the second strategic echelon would be deployed in the old Stalin Line behind West Front.⁵⁴ On 2 July, Stalin gave Timoshenko, with Eremenko as his deputy, command of West Front reinforced by the Twenty-second, Nineteenth, Twentieth, and Twenty-first Armies.⁵⁵

The next day, having paused briefly to regroup and be resupplied, the panzer groups went back on the attack. In the interim, Hitler had come close to perpetrating what Clausewitz considered to be about the worst possible organizational error: installing two commanders in chief on the same battlefield. He had given Field Marshal Günther von Kluge, the deliberate and methodical commander of Fourth Army, command also of Second and Third Panzer Groups under the designation Fourth Panzer Army. Von Bock, who regarded urging the panzer groups on as his mission, was left with Second Army, which had been in reserve, Ninth Army, and direct control only of the mopping up.⁵⁶ Fourth Panzer Group was to breach the Stalin Line on a broad front and take Smolensk in an approximately 180-mile advance that would terminate at the Yelnya Heights, a range of hills 45 miles east of Smolensk.⁵⁷

Hoth's and Guderian's panzer groups still had the initiative, but Timoshenko's armies, although hastily deployed, were fresh and their leadership was vigorous. By 7 July, stiff resistance and multiple counterattacks brought both panzer groups

to a standstill halfway between the Beresina and Dnepr/Dvina Rivers and brought an admonition from Kluge to wait for infantry to clear the river line and build a bridgehead. Guderian decided to do as he had on the Bug: force a crossing and, ignoring threats on the flanks, strike eastward at full speed. Hoth already had a small bridgehead on the Dvina downstream from Vitebsk. Guderian's divisions pushed through to the Dnepr below Orsha and began crossing without any preliminaries. When they completed the crossing and struck east the next day the effect was almost as great as that on the Bug in June. The XXXXVII Motorized Corps took Smolensk on the 18th, and the XXXVI Motorized Corps had the operation's terminal objective, the Yelnya Heights, in hand on the 20th. By then, Hoth was making a wide sweep east and south behind groups of Red Army divisions still clinging to the river line. On the night of the 21st, 195 First Air Fleet bombers mounting the first concerted attack on Moscow dropped 46,000 incendiaries and 104 tons of explosive bombs.⁵⁸

On 14 July, the *Stavka* authorized a 'Front of Reserve Armies' (four armies) to be deployed behind West Front. Two days later, the GKO ordered work to be begun on defense line centered on Mozhaysk, 35 miles west of Moscow. In London on the 18th, the Czechoslovakian government in exile signed a mutual assistance pact with the Soviet Union; and in Moscow, Stalin received a message from Churchill saying it would be impossible to open a second front of any kind in 1941. On the 19th, apparently to express dissatisfaction with Timoshenko, Stalin 'accepted' the position of defense commissar.⁵⁹

Northwest and Southwest Fronts were also engaged in the active strategic defense. Under Major General P. P. Sobennikov, whose total experience (as commander of Eighth Army) amounted to three months in peacetime and ten days in the war, Northwest Front's mission, to build a solid front between Lakes Pskov and Ilmen, 180 miles south of Leningrad, failed in mid-July.⁶⁰ By the end of the month, Eighth Army was isolated and Eleventh and Twenty-seventh Armies were having to pull away eastward to avoid a pocket Fourth Panzer Group's two corps were maneuvering to form south of Leningrad. But Hoepner was also having a problem: the swampy terrain between the lakes and along the Luga and Narva Rivers was about as hostile to tanks as any could be.⁶¹

Southwest and South Fronts had orders to establish a 'solid' front in the old Stalin Line by 9 July.⁶² By the 8th, against at best sporadic resistance, Rundstedt's armies had overrun the Stalin Line; but owing to the difference between First Panzer Group's and Eleventh Army's speeds and the latter having also to cross a major river, the Dnestr, the opportunity for an envelopment had not arisen. On the 15th, First Panzer Group came within ten miles of Kiev and leaving the city to Sixth Army coming up behind it, began a drive southeastward.

By the month's end, First Panzer and Seventeenth Armies were forming an encirclement around Uman, inside the great bend of the Dnepr. By then, Kleist's armor was also coming into position to cut off South Front's three armies, parts of which were still engaged against the German Eleventh and Romanian Fourth Armies on the Dnestr River.⁶³

COMMAND CRISES

Judging by the number of prisoners and quantities of material thus far taken, Hitler and Halder agreed by the third week of July that their objectives henceforth should be to annihilate what was left of the Red Army's trained manpower and seize enough of its industrial base to prevent its recruiting and equipping more. To Halder, Brauchitsch, the army group commanders, and the panzer group commanders, doing so appeared to be a simple matter of making one or two more deep envelopments like the one they were then completing around Smolensk. Those would quickly engulf the industrial centers clustered around Moscow and the basin of the upper Volga. Hitler, as he had in the early planning, anticipated complications: for one, Army Group North's somewhat wavering progress convinced him that the German position in the Baltic was in imminent danger. As Army Group Center was gathering in another gigantic haul of prisoners, he complained that the Army's super-deep operations were letting too many get away.⁶⁴ On 19 July, in Führer Directive 33, he pronounced the breakthrough of the Stalin Line completed in all sectors and ordered Army Group Center, after mopping up in the Smolensk area, to resume the march on Moscow with its infantry armies and divert its armor northeastward to sever the Leningrad–Moscow road and railroad connections.⁶⁵

Concurrently, Stalin was beginning to institute a mode of operation based on his assessment derived from the Civil War experience that war was essentially a test of the parties' ability to raise and expend reserves. The Front of Reserve Armies was short-lived, in fact, never fully deployed. The active strategic defensive, by requiring forces not directly in the path of the German armor to sit tight on the river banks, resulted in whole armies becoming isolated and immobilized in pockets far behind the German front. In theory, counterattacks breaking through from the east were expected to restore the front to its original position on the rivers; but the Front of Reserve Armies existed just long enough (until 25 July) to complete the transfer of 20 divisions as five 'army groups' (provisional armies) to West Front. Their mission was to restore contact with and reinforce the armies in the pockets.⁶⁶

On the 24th, the *Stavka* activated Central Front in the Gomel area on West Front's south flank, which Third Panzer Group had bypassed on the way to Smolensk. With the Fourth Army staff, F. I. Kuznetsov was installed as *front* commander and given Twenty-first Army, which was still reasonably intact, and Third, Fourth, and Thirteenth Armies, all of which had, to say the least, been roughly used in the Bialystok–Minsk operation. His assignment was to break through the German encirclement from the south and to launch a thrust across the Dnepr toward Minsk.⁶⁷ The combined result would be a double envelopment that would regain the river line and possibly also Minsk. To ensure that outcome, the *Stavka*, on 30 July, began deploying a seven-army Reserve Front behind West Front.⁶⁸

The prospect of a Soviet attempt at a counteroffensive appears not to have disturbed Halder or the generals in the field, all of whom expected to be well on the way to Moscow before it could have any effect. Hitler, however, construed it as necessitating a major revision of the Army's operational doctrine. On 23 July, he added an astounding requirement to Directive No. 33: as long as the Red Army had enough manpower to continue its 'stubborn defensive and headstrong leadership', he contended, it would be necessary to discontinue 'deep operations with remote objectives' and be content with 'small, tight encirclements'. For a start, he proposed one in the Gomel area against the Soviet Twenty-first Army.⁶⁹ The outcome, the Army protested, would be three separate operations, which would delay resumption of a concerted advance toward Moscow until September.⁷⁰ Halder pointed out that Hitler's proposal amounted to foregoing the rewards of deep operations to ensure a 'chain' of tactical victories that would degenerate into a static positional contest.⁷¹

On the 30th, in Directive 34, citing the appearance of Soviet reinforcements and the need to rest, refit, and replenish Army Group Center, Hitler postponed execution of Directive 33 and its amendment and ordered Army Group Center over to the defensive. Although it did not cancel any of the requirements in Directive 33, Halder greeted it as 'a ray of light' that dispelled 'the frightful nightmare of recent days in which, as a result of the Führer's uncompromising attitude, one envisioned the entire eastern operation running out in the sand'.⁷² Concurrently, Halder's opposite number, Zhukov, was encountering an equally unreasoning stand on Stalin's part. Having observed with growing apprehension that Army Group Center's and South's advances were putting them into position to trap the whole Southwestern Front on the west side of the Dnepr, he told Stalin, on 30 July, that Kirponos would have to be ordered to take his armies behind the river. On being told Kiev could then also not be defended, he granted Zhukov's 'request' to be relieved and named Shaposhnikov his successor.⁷³

AUGUST INTERLUDE

Nevertheless, Stalin was in remarkably good spirits: he gave Zhukov command of the Reserve Front and retained him as a full member of the *Stavka* and deputy defense commissar. On the 30th and 31st, in long meetings with Harry L. Hopkins, who had come as Roosevelt's personal fact-finder, he was far more forthcoming than he had been with the British military mission, and in view of what has since become known, gave Hopkins a surprisingly accurate description of the Red Army's condition before the invasion. He did not raise the second front question but did offer American troops a cordial welcome if they were to come to Russia, and he predicted that a solid front west of Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev would be built by 1 October. Hopkins departed full of confidence in Stalin, enough to dispel in his mind – and the President's – the military professionals' gloomy predictions.⁷⁴

At the turn of the month, West Front's counteroffensive had been in progress for nearly two weeks on a 200 miles wide. Being spread out so broadly, the groups of divisions could not achieve effective concentration, but they were preventing the panzer groups from leaving the mopping up to the infantry. Also, the stubbornness with which the counterattacks were conducted, as has been seen, impressed Hitler sufficiently to foment a profound difference of opinion between him and his generals. The 'Rokossovskiy Group', an infantry and two tank divisions under Rokossovskiy, whom Zhukov brought in from Southwest Front, came the closest to an operational success. Its mission was to restore contact with the Sixteenth and Twentieth Armies, which were holding an elongated pocket stretching all the way from Smolensk to the Dnepr that, over most of its length, split Army Group Center down the middle. Twentieth Army was also still occupying an extensive bridgehead on the west bank. The Rokossovskiy Group came within striking distance for a breakout from the pocket on 27 July; but because it would have contradicted their original mission, which was to hold, not evacuate the pocket, Timoshenko did not allow them even to begin preparing for a breakout until 1 August. The number of troops, mostly from Sixteenth Army, that escaped between then and 5 August when the Germans completed the mopping up with a count of 310,000 prisoners and 3,000 tanks destroyed, was small.⁷⁵ Between 1 and 3 August, on the Army Group Center south flank, an infantry corps of Second Army and a panzer corps of Second Panzer Group under Guderian's command encircled and smashed Kuznetsov's Twenty-first Army.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, seen from Moscow, it looked as if West Front had fought Army Group Center to a standstill. Stalin told Hopkins on the 30th that the German pressure on the Red Army had decreased 'in the last ten days'.⁷⁷ By 8 August, he became sufficiently encouraged to take personal responsibility for the conduct of the war as Supreme High Commander. The *Stavka* then became *Stavka* of the Supreme High Command and the General Staff his personal staff.⁷⁸

Although Stalin's reassurances given to Hopkins would eventually be borne out, the condition of the Red Army at the time did not lend them unequivocal support. Five of Reserve Front's seven armies were being built or rebuilt on the scene with newly mustered personnel. In the army infantry, divisions were reduced from 14,000 to 8,000 men; corps staffs were abolished; and as a faster and cheaper means of bringing manpower to bear, brigades of 4,400 to 6,000 men were being formed (159 by the end of the year). In the shopping list Stalin gave Hopkins, he accorded top priority to machine guns and other small arms. The mechanized corps, having again failed to perform as expected, were being converted to tank brigades (93 tanks) and battalions (29 tanks) for service as infantry support. New T 34s and KV's were coming off the assembly lines, as large numbers of light tanks also were; but the recent heavy losses were causing widespread shortfalls in replacements.⁷⁹ The most pervasive problem was the qualitative and quantitative inadequacy of Red Army leadership, which was being exacerbated by the losses the cadre armies of the first and second strategic echelons had sustained.

The Soviet shortcomings, however, were no comfort to Halder. In July he had believed the Soviet reserves were being exhausted in the battle for Smolensk. On 11 August, he concluded:

In the total situation it becomes ever clearer that the Russian colossus ... has been underestimated by us. This conclusion ... applies above all to purely military capability. At the war's outset, we expected to meet 200 divisions. Now we count 360. These divisions certainly do not meet our standards in armament and equipment, and they are often incompetently led. But they are there. When a dozen of them is destroyed, the Russians put in a new dozen. He gains the time to do that by being close to his sources of support while we are constantly moving farther from ours.⁸⁰

Hitler's suspension of Directive 33 left Army Group Center's next mission an open question. The generals, to a man, believed there could only be one answer: the advance on Moscow had to be resumed. Hitler, who was considering two choices, neither of them Moscow, procrastinated. The victory at Smolensk apparently persuaded him that a Red Army seizure of the Baltic littoral was possibly less likely than he had thought. Concurrently, the encirclement of Kirponos's Sixth and Twelfth Armies by Rundstedt's Seventeenth Army and First Panzer Group, completed on 8 August, called his attention – as it did Zhukov's – to the developing situation in the south.

In a 'Supplement to Directive 34', issued on 12 August, Hitler gave the army groups their assignments for 'continuation of the operations'. Army Group South was to 'take bridgeheads across the Dnepr as soon as possible'; take possession of the Crimea; and take possession of the Donetsk River Basin and the Kharkov industrial area. 'In the center of the Eastern Front, the gap [the Pripyat Marshes] between the inner flanks of Army Groups Center and South', and Army Group Center's front was to be extended far enough southward to enable an advance to embrace 'the entire state, armaments, and communications center around Moscow'. The 'operations around Leningrad' would have to be finished before the advance on Moscow began. Army Group North's 'attack in progress' was to result in cutting off Leningrad and a union with the Finnish forces.⁸¹

Having regarded Moscow as the inevitable next objective, Bock, who had already for several days had the 'Guderian Group', the Second Panzer Group and Second Army's corps that had smashed the Soviet Twenty-first Army, headed south. The gap between Mogilev in the north and Kiev in the south, in which Central Front still had a token foothold between Mogilev and Gomel, was about 250 miles wide and cut diagonally northeast to southwest from Bryansk to Kiev by the Desna River. Since Hitler's directive was sufficiently ambiguous to permit an assumption that Moscow might still be the objective and the Desna would have to be crossed in any event, Guderian continued the advance with his armor bearing east as well as south.

Believing the Guderian Group's turn south presaged a strike toward Moscow, Stalin and Shaposhnikov prepared to resume the offensive defense. West Front

and Reserve Front were to go back on the attack in the Smolensk sector to take the pressure off Central Front, which would, in turn, cover a new *front*, Bryansk Front, to be built along the Desna River. Timoshenko was to concentrate on destabilizing Army Group Center's front north of the Moscow railroad and highway, Zhukov's to eliminate the salient aimed at Moscow Guderian had built on the Yelnya Heights. Stalin in person gave Eremenko command of Bryansk Front, which, on paper, was to consist of Thirteenth and Fiftieth Armies, each with eight infantry divisions and one cavalry division, and pronounced him responsible for preventing a breakthrough toward Moscow. When he arrived at his command post in Bryansk, he discovered he had 100 pilots but no aircraft. Subsequently, the ratio changed to three pilots for every plane, most of which were obsolete models.⁸² The active defense resumed on 16 August. On the 19th, Zhukov again told Stalin Southwest Front, not Moscow, was the German objective. Stalin agreed but replied that Bryansk Front would cover Kiev. On the 24th, when Second Army had taken Gomel and Army Group South had established a bridgehead on the east bank of the Dnepr north of Kiev, he dissolved Central Front and with orders now to stop the Guderian Group north of the Desna, passed its armies, the Twenty-first and Fortieth, to Bryansk Front.⁸³

On 18 August, at length and more bluntly than had yet been done, Brauchitsch pointed out to Hitler that Army Group South's and North's objectives were primarily industrial; therefore, Army Group Center's, being 'clearly concerned with the destruction of the enemy forces before it', would have to be given precedence.⁸⁴ On the 21st, Hitler replied, 'The Army's proposal for the continuation of the Operations in the East does not conform with my intentions. I order the following.' The most important objective still to be reached before winter was not to capture Moscow but to take possession of the Crimea, the industrial and coal district of the Donets River, and to cut off the Russian oil supply from the Caucasus – in the north the isolation of Leningrad and junction with the Finns.⁸⁵ On the night of the 23rd, at Halder's behest, Guderian, who reputedly 'knew how to talk to Hitler' and had been ardently dedicated to the Moscow option, went to the Führer Headquarters and came away with a direct order from Hitler to get on with the drive south – which he put into effect on the morning of the 25th.⁸⁶

ZHUKOV AT YELNYA AND LENINGRAD

On 16 August, Zhukov committed the Twenty-fourth Army against the Yelnya salient, which was then being held by one of Guderian's panzer corps. On the 26th, the panzer corps having been replaced by an infantry corps, he increased the pressure. On the 30th, in response to a crisis building in the south, where the Guderian Group was drawing up to the Desna River, he went over to an all-out offensive.⁸⁷ Seeing no chance of exploiting the salient in the near future, Bock ordered it evacuated.⁸⁸ Over the next three days, the Germans withdrew from the

15-by-28-mile salient without the Russians' taking notice.⁸⁹ On the 6th, after having brought the empty positions under heavy fire for a while, the Twenty-fourth Army occupied the salient, and a day later Zhukov congratulated the army on having 'dealt the German forces a crushing blow in the Yelnya district'.⁹⁰ Thereupon, Twenty-fourth Army became the 'birthplace of the Soviet Guards': two of its divisions were redesignated 1st and 2nd Guards Divisions.⁹¹ The Yelnya battle was also accorded worldwide significance as 'the first time in the Second World War the German-fascist forces were forced to the defensive in the main direction'.⁹²

Nevertheless, Stalin's situation was not improving, and he knew it. The confidence of early August had dissipated, and the frustration of being on the defensive was showing. The German bombing had added to it by driving him and the General Staff underground to the sepulchral Kirov Street subway station.⁹³ On 2 September, he sent Churchill a call for a second front 'in this year in the Balkans or in France'.⁹⁴

Apparently having concluded that the 'Soviet man' was not the super soldier he had expected him to be and disposed, as always, to draconian remedies, on 12 September, he ordered every infantry division to organize a 'blocking detachment ... to halt the flight of troops possessed by panic and not refrain from using weapons while doing so'.⁹⁵ In his capacity as chairman of the State Defense Committee, he had decreed, in Order No. 270 of 16 August that all commanders and commissars who became prisoners of war were to be regarded as deserters and their families arrested as 'families of traitors to the Motherland'.⁹⁶ On 13 September he sent another appeal to Churchill, this time for '35 to 40' British divisions to be delivered through 'Arkhangel or Iran' (Iran was brought under British and Soviet control on 31 August).⁹⁷

Since mid-August, the Leningrad defense had taken a pronounced turn for the worse. On 22 August, having by then recovered all the lost Finnish territory east of Lake Ladoga, Mannerheim had opened an offensive in the direction of Leningrad west of the lake.⁹⁸ Army Group North was then completing a sizeable encirclement 25 miles south of Leningrad. On the 23rd, Stalin dissolved the Northwestern Theater, which had proved too much for Voroshilov; gave command of North Front, renamed Leningrad Front, to Voroshilov; and activated Karelia Front to direct operations along the 650-mile frontier between the eastern shore of Lake Ladoga and the Barents Sea, which had been a Northwestern Theater responsibility.⁹⁹ By 1 September, the Finns were at their old border north of Leningrad, having covered in ten days a distance the Red Army had not quite managed in the three-and-a-half-month Winter War. East of Lake Ladoga, the Finns reached their appointed meeting place with the Germans, the line of the Svir River, on the 6th. Two days later Army Group North captured Shlisselburg, the old fortress guarding the point on the lake at which the Neva River begins its course to Leningrad, thereby cutting the city off from all overland and direct water contact with the interior.¹⁰⁰

To Stalin, the final battle for Leningrad appeared to be at hand, and on the 11th, he sent Zhukov to Leningrad Front – with a curt note ordering Voroshilov back to Moscow. Before Zhukov left, Stalin remarked that he was also thinking

of replacing Budenny at the Southwestern Theater and asked who he would recommend. Zhukov replied that Timoshenko had ‘lately acquired considerable practical skill in the organization and conduct of warfare.’ Thereupon, Stalin dissolved the Western Theater, gave Timoshenko the Southwestern Theater, passed West Front to Konev, and shifted Budenny to Reserve Front. The crisis at Leningrad also reminded Stalin of Meretskov, who, having confessed to making ‘anti-Soviet statements’, was still in the Lubyanka awaiting execution. He had him fetched and sent him off to recuperate while familiarizing himself with the situation at Northwest Front.¹⁰¹

Zhukov’s arrival at Leningrad, as seen from the Kremlin, appeared to have an almost magical effect on the Germans, who were then stopping and digging in as Hitler had ordered.¹⁰² Timoshenko was not so fortunate: on the 8th, Second Panzer Group’s point punched through Eremenko’s line on the lower Desna, and First Panzer Group began a northward drive out of a bridgehead on the Dnepr at Kremenchug, 170 miles southeast of Kiev.¹⁰³ In his office, on the 11th, Stalin gave Timoshenko his assignment by demonstration: he conducted a teletype conference with Kirponos, the gist of which was that he should ‘stop looking for lines for retreat and start looking for lines for resistance, and only resistance!’ Above all, he was not to surrender Kiev or destroy bridges on the Dnepr without explicit permission from the *Stavka*.¹⁰⁴

Timoshenko was also being given an object lesson: Budenny had that day asked permission to withdraw Southwest Front from Kiev and the west bank of the Dnepr. On the 15th, the panzer groups’ points made contact 145 miles east of Kiev. Timoshenko and Kirponos remained bound by Stalin’s order of the 11th. On the 16th Timoshenko orally instructed Kirponos to leave a small force in the Kiev fortified district and ‘deploy’ his main body east of the river. Kirponos, remembering what had happened to Pavlov, refused to comply without a confirmation from Stalin. Stalin confirmed the order on the 19th, but by then Kirponos had lost contact with his armies. Kirponos, his commissar, and his chief of staff are said to have been killed in a breakout attempt.¹⁰⁵ The German infantry who mopped up the pocket counted 665,000 prisoners.¹⁰⁶

The Heartland in Peril

TYPHOON, TWIN BATTLES, AND THE *RASPUTITSA*

On 6 September, Hitler issued what he expected to be his last strategic directive of the war in the east. Army Group North's mission he declared completed except for 'solidifying' the ring around Leningrad and the junction with the Finns, both of which Leeb could accomplish at his own convenience. Army Group South would need to finish the battle in progress east of Kiev, after which Rundstedt's armies could pursue the remnants of Southwest Front to Kharkov and beyond and occupy the Crimea. Army Group Center would resume the main effort and under the codename *TYPHOON*, by the end of September prepare a 'decision-seeking' operation against the West, Bryansk, and Reserve Fronts.¹ For the operation, Third and Second Panzer Groups and Second Army were reverted to Bock's command; he was to receive Fourth Panzer Group from Army Group North plus a panzer corps from Army Group South and the services of the VIII Air Corps' ground support specialists. Redeploying the armor over the considerable distances involved was a harrowing business, but Bock was ready by the 27th to set the starting date for Fourth Panzer Group as the 30th and that for his entire 1.9 million-man force as 2 October.² The question for all concerned was whether what could probably have been done in August ought still to be attempted in October.

To Stalin the situation must have appeared much as it had before 22 June. That Hitler could mount an operation against Moscow while the battle for Kiev was at its height or think of making an attempt so late in the season would have seemed most unlikely. On the other hand, he could have come to the comforting conclusion that Hitler, having succumbed to the lure of the resources of the Ukraine and Caucasus, like Denikin and Vrangell, would leave the strategically decisive prize, the Great Russian heartland, to him. Moreover, as before 22 June, he was not unprepared. West Front, under Konev, had six armies on a 180-mile line 125 miles west of the *Mozhaysk Line*. Its left boundary was at the level of *Yelnya*. There three of *Budenny's Reserve Front* armies extended the line 80 miles south to a junction with *Eremenko's Bryansk Front*, which, with three armies, extended south 185 miles to the area in which the Second Panzer Group was operating. Reserve Front also had three armies deployed behind West Front. The total strengths are given as 1.25 million troops, 990 tanks, and 677 aircraft.³ The troop and tank strengths

have probably later been reduced to create an impression that the Soviet *fronts* were fighting against heavy odds – the Germans subsequently captured or destroyed 1,224 tanks.⁴ The real source of the odds, however, was Stalin's continued insistence on a rigid linear defense. The figure for aircraft may actually be somewhat inflated: by 29 September, the Air Force had lost 8,166 planes, by far the greater part of its inventory at the beginning of the war.⁵ Although it cannot be said that the Soviet *fronts* were 'enjoying' the benefits of their interior lines, the odds against them were being reduced by the disadvantages exterior lines were progressively imposing on Army Group Center.

On 28 September, a British–American mission headed by W. Averell Harriman, a capitalist of the first water by birth who had developed an interest in the Soviet Union, and Lord Beaverbrook (William Aitken), a self-made British press lord, arrived in Moscow for a six-day stay. Harriman, based in London, was President Roosevelt's personal envoy with regard to Lend-Lease and war aid in general to Churchill and more recently to Stalin. The mission had two objectives: to give Stalin a show of confidence in his war effort and to offer tangible evidence of support. The, under the circumstances, relatively large delegation, which arrived by air and sea aboard a British cruiser and two US B-24 bombers, lent visible credibility to the first. Harriman expected an offer of a billion dollars in Lend-Lease aid from the President. To take care of the second, Beaverbrook had the much less pleasant tasks of attempting to persuade the Russians that Britain really could not open a second front in Europe or transport 35–40 divisions to the Caucasus and of agreeing to facilitate early delivery by shipping to the Soviet Union large quantities of Lend-Lease goods originally destined for Britain. Initially, apparently believing he was being slighted by having to deal with two, to him, insignificant flunkies, Stalin was so peevish that in the second session, he appeared on the verge of terminating the entire proceeding. By the third, on the 30th, he seems to have concluded that the billion dollars was too good an offer to be fussy about and participated in drawing up the package with, for him, a minimum of haggling. To document his need, he gave Harriman a somewhat less ebullient estimate of the situation than he had Hopkins. He depicted the Red Army as a plucky underdog, outnumbered 3:2 in aircraft, 4:1 in tanks, and 320 divisions to 280, and himself as a victim of British and American political antagonism. He also alluded to a 'grave danger' of a political nature in the Ukraine. On the night of 1 October, just hours before TYPHOON went into full swing, Stalin gave a lavish banquet in which he functioned as the jovial host.⁶

Harriman's account of the conference gives no indication that the delegation learned anything about developments at the front elsewhere than in the Ukraine. Gabriel Gorodetsky has cited a memo in the Beaverbrook Papers, dated 30 September 1941, which states, as if having come from Stalin, that 'the Germans had resumed the offensive with the clear intention of taking Moscow'.⁷ It is doubtful, however, that Stalin would have taken Guderian's attack by itself to be evidence of a clear German intention. During a brief period of somewhat relaxed censorship in the late 1960s, Konev charged Stalin with having known the

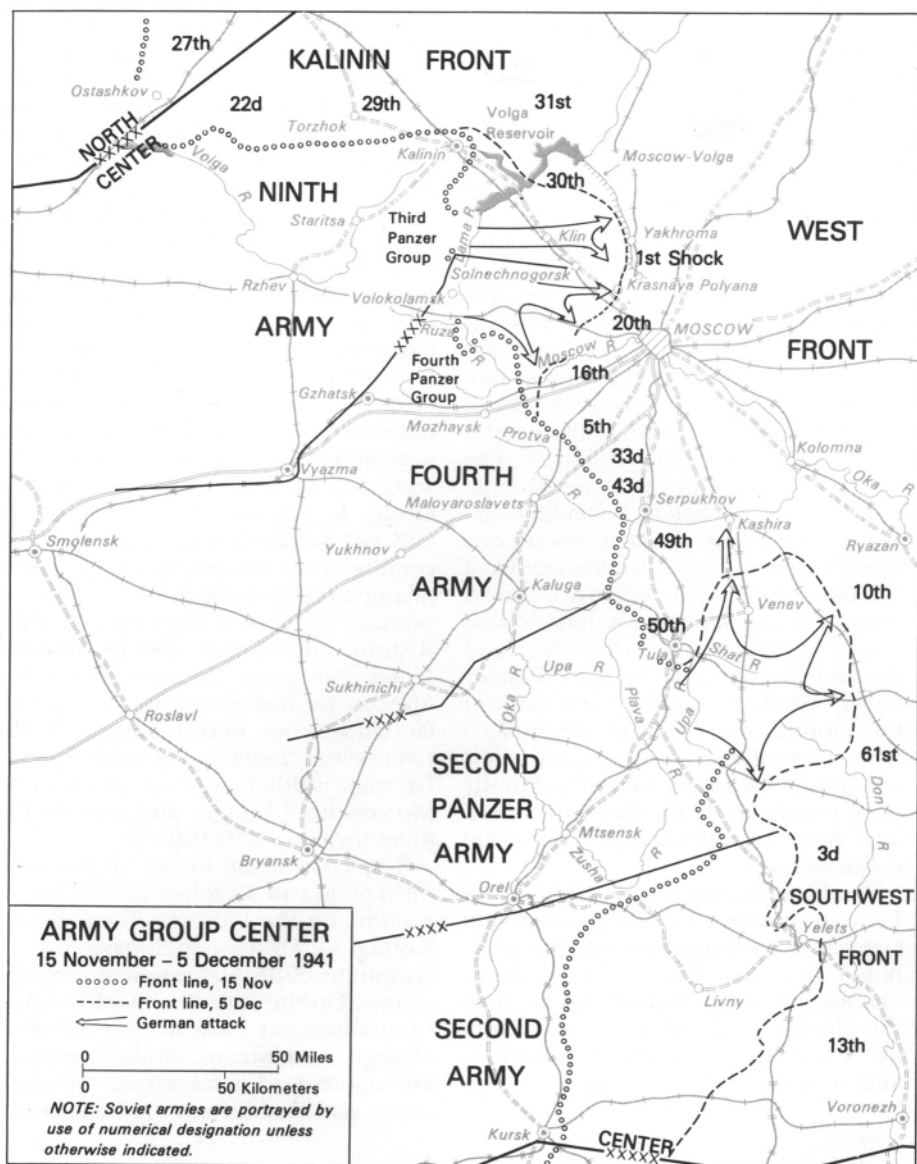
attack was coming but not warning West Front; and Zhukov countered that he had found a warning order from Stalin dated 27 September, in the West Front files when he took over West Front two weeks later.⁸ On 2 October 1941, British Intelligence informed Churchill that it had sent nine warnings of a German offensive buildup to Moscow between 20 and 24 September.⁹ It appears, therefore, that Stalin expected an attack and – at least belatedly – warned the commanders in the field; but as he was bound to have done in any event, he fell victim to the worst kind of military surprise: knowing what to expect and being unable to respond effectively. Guderian's attack began far enough south to have been taken as a flank cover for Army Group South and would account for Stalin's elevated mood on the nights of the 30th and 1st; and that mistake would account for the conference's sudden conclusion on the 2nd, three days ahead of schedule.¹⁰ On the night of the 28th, the first snow had fallen on Moscow.

TYPHOON began in earnest in 'bright autumn weather' (Halder) on 2 October. Third and Fourth Panzer Groups, 100 miles apart north and south of the Warsaw–Moscow Railroad and highway, broke through West Front and headed northeastward on roughly parallel courses, Third Panzer toward Kalinin, 90 miles northwest of Moscow, Fourth Panzer toward Moscow. On the way, they would send spearheads off their inner flanks to close an encirclement at Vyazma, 90 miles east of the West Front line. Fourth Panzer Group (after 5 October, Panzer Army), coming from the south, was aimed well east of Moscow to cut its communications with the Ukraine, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Far East and had detached a spearhead to assist Second Army's infantry in closing an encirclement at Bryansk that would engulf most of Bryansk Front.¹¹

After the second day, Eremenko knew what was about to happen and requested permission to withdraw to less threatened positions. Shaposhnikov told him 'the Supreme Command did not think it wise to maneuver' and ordered him 'to hold fast in the present positions'.¹² In his diary entry for 5 October, Halder gave lyrical vent to his satisfaction, 'TYPHOON's progress downright classical. Enemy in bypassed sectors staying put everywhere, which promises much for the formation of the encirclement'.¹³

On the 5th, having had repeated calls for permission to maneuver from Konev and Eremenko, Stalin sent Molotov and Voroshilov out to investigate Konev's conduct of the battle at West Front, at the same time ordering Zhukov to turn over command at Leningrad to his deputy and return to Moscow. On the 7th, Stalin sent Zhukov to ascertain 'the true state of affairs' at West and Reserve Fronts. According to Zhukov, Konev's and Budenny's failing was that they had been afraid to tell Stalin that the static defense was leaving 'all roads to Moscow open to the enemy'.¹⁴

Third and Fourth Panzer Groups' spearheads met at Vyazma on the morning of the 7th. One of Second Panzer Army's panzer divisions had taken Bryansk the day before. In both instances, Stalin granted the *front* commands' requests after the fact.¹⁵ On the 9th, Halder noted that the Fourth Army's infantry was conducting 'the battle of the Vyazma encirclement in classical fashion'.¹⁶ The general satisfaction



Map 5: Army Group Center, 15 November–5 December 1941

was marred somewhat, as Guderian reported, by the growing realization that the Russians were learning how to use tanks in mass formation and the German Army had no reliable answer to the T 34. The Panzer IV could knock one out, but only if it attacked from the rear and hit the motor cover, neither of which was easy to do.¹⁷ More mobile than their troops and by then having had previous experience,

nearly all the armies' staffs escaped. The number of troops they left behind to be taken prisoner in the Vyazma and Bryansk pockets (673,000, about 100,000 of them at Bryansk) does not suggest fanatical devotion to their men.¹⁸ Eremenko and his armies gave a better account of themselves: they managed to break out of the original pocket on the 10th and make a stand on the Oka River, 80 miles east of Bryansk for another two weeks, while the *rasputitsa* immobilized Guderian's tanks.¹⁹

On the 10th, Molotov submitted a scathing report on Konev; and Stalin relieved Konev and Budennyi, placed the remains of Reserve Front under West Front, and gave the command to Zhukov. While talking to Zhukov about the appointment, he 'abused Konev and Eremenko in the most violent terms' and said Konev was to be removed from duty and brought before a military tribunal. After Zhukov argued that Pavlov, who 'should never have commanded more than a division', was no great loss but Konev was 'an intelligent man' and could 'be useful', he agreed to let Konev stay on as deputy *front* commander. Four days later, he paid Eremenko, who had been wounded the day before, a cordial visit in a Moscow hospital. Budennyi returned to his position on the *Stavka*.²⁰

Zhukov established his headquarters in Mozhaysk. His first concern was to reform West Front in the line of trenches and antitank ditches on which 450,000 laborers, 75 per cent of them women, had been working since early July. The *Stavka* reserve was supplying 14 infantry divisions, 16 tank regiments, and 40 regiments of artillery, about 90,000 men. Another 100,000 were available from the Moscow home guard. Five army staffs to take over command and some of their other personnel were on the scene. Intermittent rain and snow falling on dirt roads was slowing all movement but affecting German operations the most.²¹

On the other hand, Stalin's compulsive procrastination amplified the already imminent threat of disaster. *Pravda's* daily communiqué gave no hint that the Germans were not still stopped at Yelnya and then only referred obliquely to heavy battles in progress near Vyazma.²² Late on the 14th, after Third Panzer Group had taken Kalinin during the day and Fourth Panzer Group had begun breaching the defenses at Mozhaysk, Stalin brought himself to the point of permitting partial evacuation of Moscow. The hasty departure to Kuybyshev, 600 miles east of Moscow on the Volga River, on the 16th, fueled expectation locally and abroad that the Soviet Union's days were numbered.²³ Already on the 10th, the US military attaché in Moscow, who had until then more strongly than anyone else in the diplomatic and intelligence communities, expressed confidence in the Red Army, reported that it seemed 'the end of Russian resistance is not far away'; and Hitler halted German operations out of northern Finland because 'the mass of the Soviet armed forces has been defeated or destroyed in the main war theater.'²⁴ Stalin, who had a train and several aircraft on constant standby, elected to stay in Moscow with the General Staff for the time being.²⁵

Bad as the situation at the front was, it was even worse in another, equally vital respect. Four months of war and territorial losses had reduced Soviet productive capacity by 63 per cent in coal, 68 per cent in pig iron, 60 per cent in aluminum,

and 58 per cent in steel (more in the kind of steel needed for tank armor). In October, after having risen somewhat during the summer, particularly in tanks and aircraft, armament production dropped drastically overall, probably by at least 60 per cent.²⁶ The Moscow and Donets River Basin industrial complexes were having to shut down and begin evacuating. During November and December, they did not deliver 'a single ton' of coal, their output of rolled ferrous metals fell to a third that of June 1941, and ball bearing output was down by 95 per cent.²⁷

The Black Day of the Red Army's 1941 campaign was 18 October. Fourth Panzer Group drove into the Mozhaysk line, past Mozhaysk and Kaluga. In Moscow, stores closed, public transportation stopped running, and panic and looting were breaking out. Stalin, who had already talked with Beria and with the Bulgarian Ambassador about opening negotiations with Hitler through intelligence or diplomatic channels, conferred with Molotov and Beria about a capitulation that would include an offer to surrender all the territory acquired under the Nazi–Soviet Pact, and possibly more.²⁸ On the 19th, the GKO declared a state of siege in Moscow and its environs.²⁹ In and around the city, bridges, rail lines, and government installations, including Stalin's house in the suburbs, were readied for demolition.³⁰ At the front, according to Zhukov, 'Stern measures were introduced to prevent breaches of discipline.'³¹ Stalin asked A. I. Shakurin, an official who reported to him, how things were outside the Kremlin and on being told, said, 'That's still nothing. I think it will get worse.'³² On 2 October in Kuybyshev, possibly anticipating a military mutiny of some sort, Beria had the former colonel generals G. M. Shtern and A. D. Loktionov, and 23 others, including the last three commanders of the Air Force, shot.³³

In the third week of October, the situation of Moscow was less perilous than it appeared to be from the Soviet side. At Kalinin, Third Panzer Group was 100 miles north of Moscow, and Second Panzer Army, at Mtsensk, was 180 miles south of the city. Both were deployed to strike deep behind Moscow. Only Fourth Panzer Group and Fourth Army were capable of posing an immediate and direct threat to Moscow; but Hitler had ordered that no capitulation, if offered, was to be accepted and no German soldier was to enter the city until hunger and disease had done their work. Fourth Army's mission was to form a ring on the 20-mile-diameter belt railway around the city.³⁴ Fourth Panzer Group was making a sweep north and east to clear the way for Kluge's infantry; but what would, a week or so earlier, have been a two-day jaunt, at most, had become a barely perceptible crawl. On roads becoming ever-widening quagmires of mud, Fourth Panzer Group's spearhead divisions were stretched out over 25–30 miles, and the infantry, even though it was also slowed, was sometimes passing the tanks. Third Panzer Group contemplated dismounting the tank crews and going ahead on foot and with *panje* wagons, the Russian peasants' one-horse carts. Bryansk Front, although much reduced, had Second Panzer Army stalled on the Zusha River at Mtsensk; and Kalinin Front, newly formed under Konev with four ex-West Front armies, was giving a new Third Panzer Group commander, General Hans Reinhardt, similar trouble.³⁵

For the first time in the war, the Red Army was able to meet its enemy on almost equal terms. The Germans, moving slowly and confined to the roads, could be confronted head-on and forced to fight for every mile. The T 34 tanks, which had been too few to influence the fast-moving encirclement battles, came into their own. Having wider tracks than the German tanks made them more buoyant in the mud; and their heavy armament and armor allowed one or two T 34s in a roadblock to stop an advance until either 88-mm antiaircraft guns or 10-cm cannon, the only reasonably mobile artillery pieces capable of cracking the T 34's armor, could be brought to bear. Both, though, especially the 88s, were heavy and bulky, hence vulnerable and difficult to move over muddy roads.

At the end of October, Army Group Center was practically at a standstill on a line from Kalinin to the Oka River west of Tula, its center 35 miles from Moscow. Army Group North had, in the meantime, given up on closing the siege line around Leningrad west of Lake Ladoga in September, after Mannerheim had refused to push the Finnish front any farther south west of the lake. Being left then holding an uncomfortable six-mile-wide 'bottleneck' east of Shlisselburg, Leeb, on Hitler's orders, had begun a thrust east on 14 October aimed from Chudovo northeast past Tikhvin to the Finnish line on the lower Svir River. This drive had also slowed, and at the end of the month, the *rasputitsa* stopped it short of Tikhvin. In the last week of October, Army Group South managed to take Kharkov and Stalino and to break through the Perekop Isthmus into the Crimea before the *rasputitsa* also stopped it.³⁶

PREPARING FOR THE WORST

Seen from the Soviet side, the German frustration did not lessen the mortal threats hanging over the country. If Army Group North reached Tikhvin, it would cut the one rail line to the south shore of Lake Ladoga and thereby further isolate Leningrad. At Stalino, Army Group South almost had control of the industry and coal mines of the Donets Basin. The panzer units northeast and south of Moscow were poised to devastate the industrial heart of central Russia and to leave the Soviet forces from the Arctic to the Caucasus stranded at the ends of a disconnected railroad system.

Early on the morning of 7 November, the 24th anniversary of the Communist Revolution, Stalin reviewed an impromptu military parade for the occasion from his accustomed stand atop the Lenin mausoleum. In his address to the troops, most of whom would go directly to the front from Red Square, he called on them to emulate the old Russian national heroes – Alexander Nevskiy who had defeated the Teutonic Knights in the thirteenth century; Dimitry Donskoi who had defeated the Tartars a century later; and Alexander Suvorov and Mikhail Kutuzov who had served the tsars against the French Revolution and Napoleon. In a speech the night before to the Moscow Communist Party organization, he had adopted a similar

Russian nationalist tone. He also told the party leaders about the recent billion-dollar Lend-Lease agreement and blamed the Red Army's defeats so far on the absence of a second front in the West and the incompetence of the air and tank forces.³⁷

In the second week of November, as the weather began to clear and the ground to freeze, the German armor began to move again; and the Army High Command and field commands contemplated a troublesome question raised by the time lost in the *rasputitsa*: where to stop for the winter? Hitherto, all plans and preparations had assumed the campaign would be completed before the year's end. On 7 November, Hitler conceded to Brauchitsch that such vital objectives as Murmansk, the Volga River, and the Caucasus oil fields could not be reached in 1941.³⁸ Two days earlier Halder had told his operations chief to develop 'a basis' – other than victory – on which to close out the current operations. On the 7th, Halder sent every army group and army chief of staff a copy of an 11-page top-secret document and a map of European Russia with two north–south lines drawn on it. One was designated 'the farthest boundary still to be attempted'; the other, 'the minimum boundary'. A note affixed to each informed the recipients that both boundaries would be the subject of a General Staff conference to be held in Orsha in about a week. The 'farthest boundary' ran from Vologda on the north via Gorkiy and Stalingrad to Maykop. It would cut central Russia off from contact with the northern ports, Murmansk and Arkangelsk, and with the Caucasus; and it would bring in hand the entire Moscow industrial complex, the upper and middle reaches of the Volga, and the Maykop oil fields. Whether this action would end the war was doubtful, but it would, as Halder saw it, bring the German forces into an alignment they could maintain indefinitely, 'in case the highest leadership should decide against resuming the attack in the East later'. The 'minimum boundary' terminated in the north on the middle Svir River and in the south at Rostov-on-the-Don; in the center, it passed 160 miles east of Moscow. It would provide a secure tie-in with the Finnish Army on the Svir, bring Moscow and the cluster of industrial to the northeast between Rybinsk and Yaroslavl under control, cut all railroads running toward Moscow from the east, and position Army Group South for later advances to Stalingrad and the Caucasus. But it would still be an interim, not a final, boundary and another offensive would be needed to bring in Vologda, Gorkiy, Stalingrad, and the oil fields at Maykop and Baku.³⁹

In the conference, during the day and night of the 12th, Halder argued that carrying the offensive at least to the minimum boundary was necessary as well as advantageous because the Soviet Union's military and material strength was so great, it could not yet be dismissed as a military threat and simply 'kept under observation'. The Army, he said, would have to 'strive to inflict enough damage on the enemy before the end of 1941 that the troops will not have to pay in blood for what is neglected now'.⁴⁰ The chiefs, who, of course, spoke also for their principals, refused to commit themselves to another major operation. In the end, Halder conceded that operations as extensive as those he had proposed could no longer be considered. The army groups, he said, would, nevertheless, have to get as much

as possible from their troops until about mid-December. Army Group South would have to push ahead, though, 'apparently' not as far as Stalingrad. Army Group Center would not gain 'substantial' ground beyond Moscow, but it would still, at least, have to 'achieve a stronger pressure on the city'. Army Group North would be expected to resume its drive at Tikhvin, close in on Leningrad, and assist Vologda, Gorkiy, Stalingrad, and Maykop would have to be left for the next summer when 'the Russians [would] have a plus in strength and we a minus'.⁴¹

As Stalin looked out over Red Square on 7 November, he could have envisioned the soldiers marching before him trapped a few days later in a pocket with Moscow at its center and himself a refugee, not only driven out of the world capital of communism, but out of Europe. Evidently, he regarded those possibilities as grimly potential realities. He had the *Stavka* at work forming ten new reserve armies on a line from Vytegra, on the southeastern tip of Lake Onega to the Rybinsk Reservoir and from there east and south along the Volga River.⁴² (Essentially the line Halder had designated as the 'farthest boundary'.) Stalin had told Hopkins that a German advance of 150 miles east of Leningrad, Moscow, and Kiev, which this easily would have been, would destroy 75 per cent of the existing Soviet industrial capacity.⁴³

Quantitatively, the Red Army's position was not all that bad. As of 1 December, the troops in the field (not counting *Stavka* reserves) would number 4.2 million and rough parity in tanks, aircraft, and artillery. Small arms were a problem: men lost in encirclement could be more readily replaced than their rifles and machine guns.⁴⁴ The Orsha conference put the totals of Soviet larger units at 160 divisions and 40 brigades and rated their combat effectiveness at below 50 per cent because more than half of those units' troops and officers were believed to be untrained.⁴⁵ The actual numbers as of 1 December, according to Soviet sources, were 279 divisions and 93 brigades. In large part, these units, particularly those from the reserves, lacked training and experience. Interspersed among them, however, was a growing core of seasoned divisions. The individual principally, though indirectly, responsible for this increase of readiness was the Soviet agent in Japan, Richard Sorge.⁴⁶ He had apparently supplied enough information on Japanese plans to let the Soviet Command begin shifting some forces out of the Far East before 22 June. Through Sorge, Stalin had also undoubtedly known about a Japanese decision of 30 June to uphold its neutrality treaty with the Soviet Union and risk a war with the United States.⁴⁷ By autumn, Stalin had either become convinced of Sorge's reliability or desperate enough (or both) to redeploy more troops from east to west. Some had appeared at the front in October, more in November. The *Stavka* had held most back from the front to stiffen the reserve armies being formed. By 1 December, it had transferred 70 divisions from the Far East and brought another 27 divisions out of Central Asia and the Transcaucasus.⁴⁸

Manifestly determined not to let his reserves be frittered away as they had been earlier, Stalin did not deploy another reserve front. Instead, he gave West Front a motley reinforcement: 11 infantry divisions, 16 tank brigades, and 40 artillery regiments in late October; 100,000 troops, 2,000 artillery pieces, and 300 tanks in early November; and 16 home guard divisions composed of workers recruited

in Moscow and surrounding cities. On 10 November, Zhukov received Fiftieth Army from Bryansk Front, which was being deactivated, and a week later he acquired Thirtieth Army front Kalinin Front. These extensions of his flanks gave him control from just south of Kalinin to Tula.⁴⁹

By mid-November, the *Stavka* incorporated almost all of its forces directly or indirectly into the defense of Moscow. West Front was to hold the direct approaches and to counter expected strong armored thrusts west of Kalinin and at Tula. Kalinin Front and Southwest Front were to pin down Army Group Center's flanks and thus prevent Bock's shifting more weight toward Moscow. South Front and Leningrad Front had orders to ready offensives near Rostov and at Tikhvin, respectively, to draw German reserves away from Army Group Center.⁵⁰

In spite of doubts about how much farther he could go, Bock tried to retain his option for a deep thrust past Moscow. He drew his armor inward toward the city somewhat but still had it arching well around and to the east. He aimed Third Panzer Group south of the Volga Reservoir toward the Moscow–Volga Canal; Fourth Panzer Group, via Kalinin, toward the canal; and Second Panzer Army, past Tula to Kashira and Ryazan. Those lines of advance would bring Third and Fourth Panzer Groups out on the Moscow–Volga Canal to strike toward Rybinsk and Yaroslavl, give Second Panzer Army a choice of going north from Kashira toward Moscow or east across the Oka River toward Gorkiy, and leave the close-in encirclement entirely to Fourth Army.⁵¹ As the time grew shorter, however, Bock's doubts increased, and he told Halder and the army and panzer group commanders that he did not expect the army group to have enough troops, supplies, or tanks to get beyond the Moscow–Volga River on the north and the Moscow River in the south. Nevertheless, he let the original orders to the armies stand as given, thereby, as an entry in the Third Panzer Army's after-action report put it, making their missions 'unclear'.⁵²

Zhukov would have preferred to let the Germans make the first move, but Stalin, in keeping with his conception of active defense, insisted on a 'counterblow', which Zhukov duly staged. On 14 November, the Forty-ninth Army, reinforced with a cavalry corps (two cavalry divisions of 3,000 men each, an infantry division, and two tank brigades), hit the Fourth Army's right flank east of Serpukhov. As Zhukov expected, the effort only added a complication to the deployment.⁵³

TYPHOON REVIVED

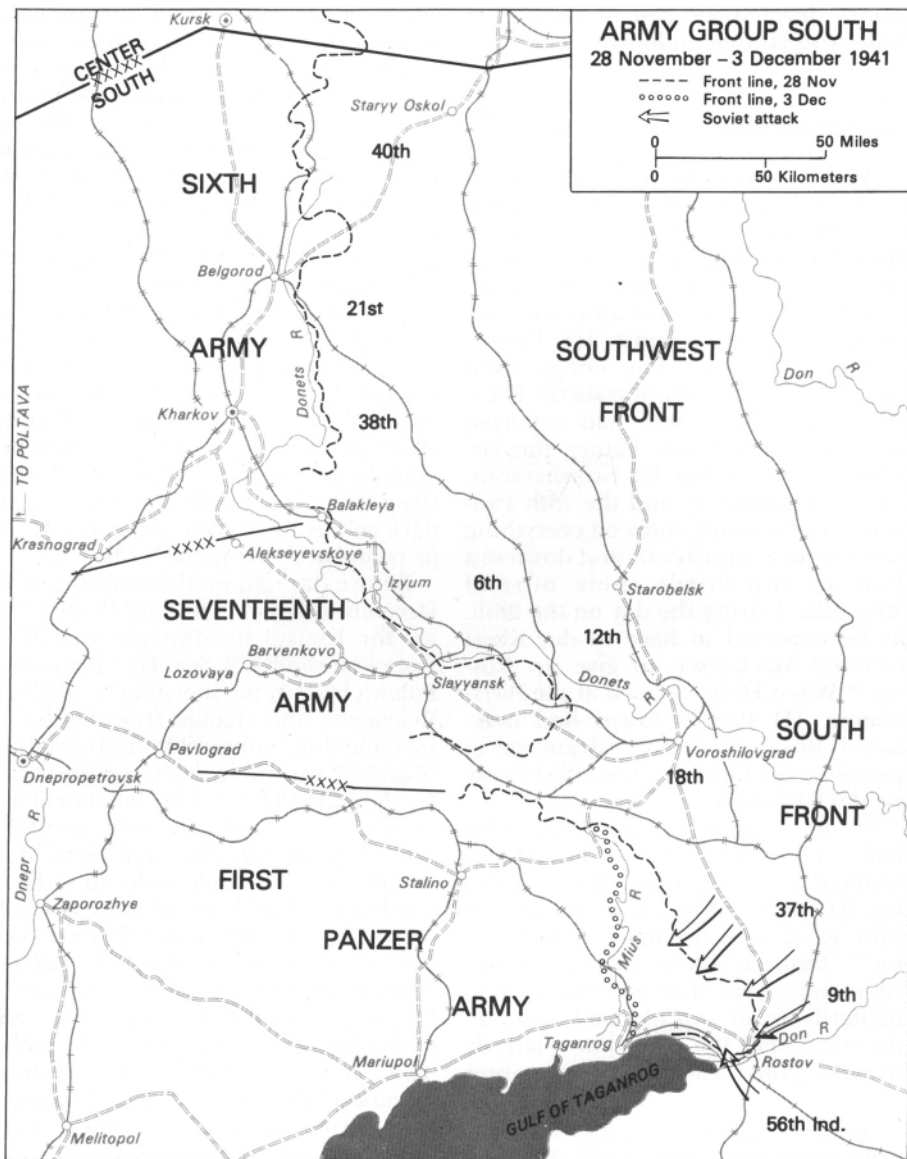
On the morning of 15 November, one of the Ninth Army's infantry corps jumped off ahead of Third Panzer Group south of Kalinin and experienced what Halder noted as 'something new in this war': Zhukov's recently acquired Thirtieth Army gave way without a fight.⁵⁴ Although Third and Fourth Panzer Groups had slightly less luck when they joined in a day later, the Red Army forces against them also fared badly. A 'counterblow' by Sixteenth Army's right wing, reinforced with a

tank division and five cavalry divisions, ran head-on into Fourth Panzer Group's attack east of Volokolamsk and collapsed.⁵⁵ Second Panzer Army began its drive south of Tula on the 18th, and one of its corps covered nearly 25 miles during the day. The following day, Stalin asked Zhukov, 'Are you sure we will be able to hold Moscow? It hurts me to ask you that. Answer me truthfully as a communist.' Zhukov replied that Moscow would be held 'by all means' but said he would need at least another two armies and 200 more tanks. Stalin agreed to provide the armies, but not the tanks, and said the armies would not be ready until the end of the month.⁵⁶

Elsewhere, the Red Army's prospects were also not looking bright. West and north of Rostov, Timoshenko had doubled South Front's strength by deploying two fresh armies, Fifty-sixth Independent Army at Rostov and Thirty-seventh Army, which on 17 November, together with Ninth and Eighteenth Armies, hit First Panzer Army's left shoulder 50 miles north of Rostov. Timoshenko had thought to fulfill the *Stavka's* requirement for a diversion and to block the gateway to the Caucasus, but the first day's results were discouraging: XIV Panzer Corps stood fast on the north while III Panzer Corps broke away to the southeast toward Rostov.⁵⁷

The outlook for an effective diversion at Tikhvin appeared even dimmer: there, Meretskov had taken command of the Fourth Independent Army on 7 November, just as it was losing Tikhvin. On the 19th, responding to 'urgent demands' from the *Stavka*, he went over the offensive with all the reinforcements he had received so far, one infantry division and two tank battalions. Those were actually enough, in view of Army Group North's straitened circumstances, to alter the balance in the Soviet favor, but they were not likely to produce swift or devastating effects.⁵⁸

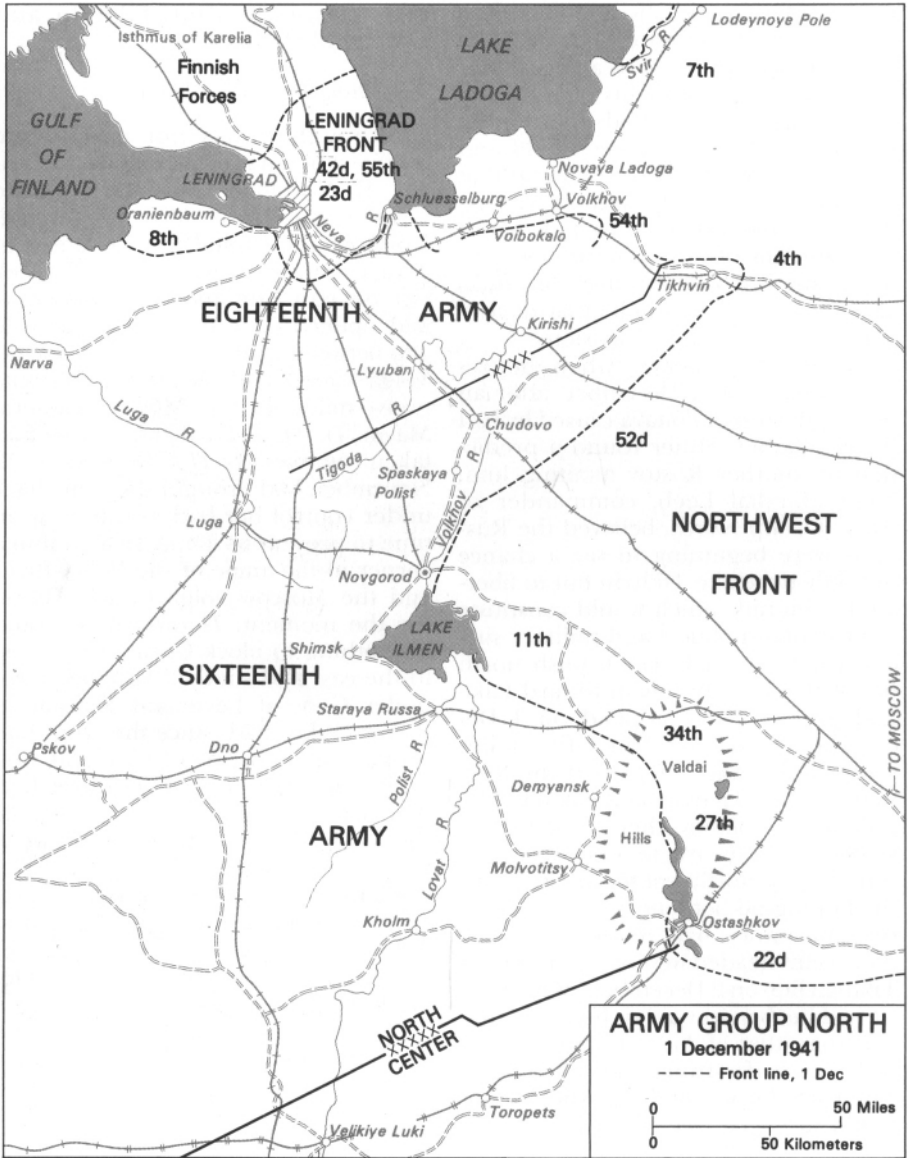
Bock's armor made good speed in the first three days of the offensive. The ground was frozen hard and dusted with light, dry snow. The crews had painted their tanks, trucks, and guns white to blend with the landscape. Shortening days, low-hanging clouds, and snow flurries restricted air support, and temperatures 10–20 degrees below freezing were new to troops so far accustomed to campaigning in warmer seasons. On the other hand, armor could run across country as if it were on paved roads. The fall mud and the summer's dust and mosquitoes were gone. The scenery was also improved. The Belorussian forests and swamps had given way to the Moscow upland, dotted with prosperous-looking villages clean under the new-fallen snow. This, the Germans were uneasily aware, was not the real Russian winter. Third Panzer Group had already told the Army High Command that while infantry could be made mobile in the coldest weather and deepest snow, tanks and trucks did not respond like men and could not be ordered to master difficulties they were not built to meet. Still, meteorological statistics dating back to the early nineteenth century gave no reason to expect snow and extreme low temperatures in the Moscow area before the middle of December. A somewhat more disturbing development occurred on the 18th, when a second 'counterblow' at Serpukhov disclosed the presence of Siberian troops well outfitted for winter.⁵⁹



Map 6: Army Group South, 28 November–3 December 1941

Bock and Halder exchanged opinions that night on ‘what prospects the whole operation still has’. They concluded that both sides were close to the end of their strength and the victory would go to the one who had the stronger will.⁶⁰ Two days later, determined to be that one, Bock, using his special training detachment as a mobile command post, went out to the army group

THE HEARTLAND IN PERIL



Map 7: Army Group North, 1 December 1941

left flank behind Third and Fourth Panzer Groups. From there, he fine-tuned the plan, ordering Fourth Panzer Group to bear east south of Klin on the 23rd. A few hours later, he changed his mind. Since the units on Fourth Panzer Group's left were already in Solnetchnogorsk, he responded to a proposal from Reinhardt to turn Third Panzer Group southeast toward Moscow anyway with

an order to cover Fourth Panzer Group's flank but also to push due east 'as far as possible'.⁶¹

After the 23rd, as Third Panzer Group headed away from Klin, the blitzkrieg once more – and briefly – worked well. On the 27th, 7th Panzer Division reached the Moscow–Volga Canal. The next morning, assuming his mission would still be to push east, Reinhardt took a bridgehead on the east bank of the canal at Yakhroma. During the day, Fourth Panzer Group's spearhead, 2nd Panzer Division, came almost to a standstill 20 miles to the south, west of Krasnaya Polyana, and 12 miles north of Moscow. Echeloned in a 15-mile line on the 2nd Panzer Division's right, Hoepner had the 5th, 10th, and 11th Panzer Divisions, and the SS 'Das Reich' Division, all aimed toward Moscow but barely moving as they crunched head-on into the minefields and fiercely defended earthworks ringing the city. Kluge's Fourth Army left flank was inching ahead, but not enough to keep Hoepner from having to stretch to maintain contact. Guderian had driven a large bulge past Tula on the south, but Fiftieth Army held on grimly around the city, and a raid north to Kashira was drawing swarms of Soviet cavalry and tanks down on the 17th Panzer Division.

On the night of the 28th, Bock, while changing the plan again, symbolically committed his 'last regiment'. Giving Third Panzer Group the Lehrbrigade 900 (actually one battalion), the only reserve he had, he ordered Reinhardt to forget about the Yakhroma bridgehead, turn south along the west bank of the canal and join Hoepner's push toward Moscow.⁶²

Meanwhile, during the past week, Army Group South had achieved a most unwelcome success: on the 21st, in the harebrained style of the Waffen SS, the *Leibstandarte* Adolf Hitler Division had gone off on its own and taken Rostov. Because it was, after Moscow, the most important objective of TYPHOON, and because of the *Leibstandarte*'s namesake, First Panzer Army had to commit the entire III Panzer Corps in the city where it came under attack from the south across the frozen Don River and from the north over the open steppe.⁶³

With Rostov lost, Leningrad isolated, and Moscow in imminent danger, the Soviet strategic position looked worse than ever, but Stalin believed as strongly as Bock and Hitler did that the contest was one of willpower. On 24 November, a *Stavka* directive ordered General Ya. T. Cherevichenko's South Front to destroy First Panzer Army and retake the entire Taganrog–Rostov area.⁶⁴

Tension, no doubt already enormous on the Soviet side, also gripped the Germans in late November. Brauchitsch, not yet recovered from a heart attack earlier in the month, became more and more querulous and impatient for success to smooth his interviews with Hitler. Bock developed the 'Russian disease', diarrhea. Rundstedt lapsed into haughty silence, letting his chief of staff do the talking with the High Command. Hitler was away from his headquarters in East Prussia from the 25th to the 28th, participating in ceremonies in Berlin welcoming two new and reluctant members, Finland and Denmark, to the Anti-Comintern Pact.

The Heartland Preserved

ROSTOV AND TIKHVIN

When Hitler returned to his headquarters in East Prussia, the Wolf's Lair (*Wolfsschanze*), on 29 November, he found awaiting him the rarest kind of news thus far in the war: German troops, SS and panzer troops at that, were retreating. By the 28th, Cherivichenko had massed 21 divisions against III Panzer Corps at Rostov. The corps commander, General Eberhard von Mackensen, had reported several weeks earlier, before the last advance began, that his two panzer divisions, the *Leibstandarte* and the Thirteenth Panzer, were worn out, short on everything from socks to antifreeze, and down to a half to two-thirds their normal strengths. When he arrived at the Wolf's Lair, Hitler learned that Kleist had allowed III Panzer Corps to evacuate Rostov.¹

On the morning of the 30th, Kleist, on his own responsibility, ordered the entire First Panzer Army right wing, including III Panzer Corps, to withdraw behind the Mius River, 45 miles west of Rostov. Tactically, Kleist made the right move. He could not attempt a prolonged stand in the open, and the short but relatively straight Mius offered the best winter line anywhere around. From Hitler's point of view, however, a general making a retreat of such magnitude for any reason was the rankest kind of insubordination. In an afternoon interview with Brauchitsch on the 30th, using 'accusations and invective', he browbeat Brauchitsch into trying to get Rundstedt to delay executing Kleist's order.² When Rundstedt refused and offered his resignation, he dismissed him and early the next day named Reichenau, the Sixth Army commander, to succeed him. After insisting throughout the day that he could establish a line somewhere east of the river, Reichenau finally had to give in after dark and let the withdrawal to the Mius be completed that night. On edge and suspecting a cabal of the generals, Hitler had himself flown to the First Panzer Army headquarters in Melitopol. Fortunately for the Army generals, the SS general, Josef Dietrich, who commanded the *Leibstandarte*, was one of Hitler's closest party comrades and confident enough of his standing to make the affair look like mostly a result of excessive zeal on his part.³ In a 'Report to the Supreme Commander in Chief', of 29 November, Timoshenko and Cherivichenko informed Stalin that the 'Kleist Group' was 'destroyed'.⁴

At the Wolf's Lair, when he returned early on 4 December, after an overnight stop caused by bad weather, Hitler found a prediction of another Rostov awaiting him. A push north out of the Tikhvin salient toward Lake Ladoga had been stopped on the 1st at Volkhov, 35 miles south of the lake. Leeb warned that the Russians were beginning to see a chance not only to retake Tikhvin but to liberate Leningrad as well. Air reconnaissance, he reported, had observed 29 trains headed west on the Vologda–Tikhvin line on the 2nd. If the Russians retook Tikhvin and reopened the railroad to Volkhov, they could readily redeploy the reinforcements they were bringing forward for a strike at the Leningrad bottleneck.⁵

BUILD-UP AT WEST FRONT

November 27 was a day of acute crisis at West Front: the advances of Third and Fourth Panzer Groups past Klin and Solnetchnogorsk had opened a 27-mile-wide gap between Dimitrov, on the Moscow–Volga Canal, and Krasnaya Polyana, 12 miles north of Moscow. General D. D. Lelyushenko, who had taken command of Thirtieth Army on 18 November, had brought the army back under control but had not done so in time to prevent its being pushed into a corner in the angle of the Volga River and the Moscow–Volga Canal. There, for the moment, Thirtieth Army could do nothing to block German progress to the east and south. Rokossovskiy's Sixteenth Army had, since the front was breached between Klin and Solnetchnogorsk, been having to stretch its flank east to cover Moscow and take the whole shock of the German sweep toward the city. Additionally, 17th Panzer Division's thrust toward Kashira was beginning to form a deep pocket around Tula and was putting a Second Panzer Army spearhead within 65 miles of Moscow on the south.

Thirtieth Army's debacle paid one dividend: it had given the *Stavka* early warning of the trouble to come, and so, when the crisis arrived, means were being assembled to meet it. Unlike Bock, Stalin was not yet having to venture his last regiment. In late November, he gave West Front nine infantry divisions, two cavalry divisions, eight infantry brigades, six tank brigades, and ten independent tank battalions.⁶ Of those, three infantry divisions went to Thirtieth Army; an infantry division and the two cavalry divisions were formed into the I Guards Cavalry Corps under General P. A. Belov; a portion of the armor went to the Kashira area; and the rest went to Sixteenth, Fifth, and Fiftieth Armies.⁷ Additionally, as the Germans were passing Klin, Stalin and the *Stavka* began setting up two reserve armies to cover the gap that would be developing farther east. On 23 November, General F. I. Kuznetsov took command of one of them, the First Shock Army, on the line of the Moscow–Volga Canal south of Dimitrov. The shock armies were conceived of as being particularly heavy in armor, motorization, artillery, and automatic weapons but First Shock (and the others of this category formed during the winter of 1941–42) were not so well equipped.

When Kuznetsov arrived in Dimitrov on the 23rd, his command consisted of one infantry brigade. By the end of the month, he had one infantry division, nine infantry brigades, ten separate battalions, a regiment of artillery, and a contingent of rocket launchers; but about 70 per cent of the troops were over 30 years old.⁸

The second of the two new reserve armies, Twentieth Army, was built in what, by 27 November, had become the most critical spot on the entire front, the sector between the right flank of Sixteenth Army and the Moscow–Volga Canal. The area included the much-fought-over village of Krasnaya Polyana. Because of the subsequent behavior of its commander, General Andrei Vlasov, the Twentieth Army's role in the battle for Moscow was always given ambiguous treatment in the Soviet war literature.⁹ In late 1941, however, Vlasov was regarded as one of the most brilliant younger Soviet generals. He had commanded the Thirty-seventh Army, which had been destroyed in the Kiev pocket, but he and his staff had fought their way out. Like Kuznetsov, Vlasov initially had just odds and ends, he said later, a Siberian brigade, some 10,000 criminal convicts, and 15 tanks.¹⁰

In the last week of November, the *Stavka* also began bringing five of the reserve armies formed behind the Volga forward. Three – Twenty-fourth, Twenty-sixth, and Sixtieth – were stationed east of Moscow and one, Sixty-first Army, behind Southwest Front's right flank. The other, Tenth Army, was deployed west of the Oka River, downstream from Kashira in position to block Second Panzer Army's thrust toward Kolomna and Ryazan.¹¹

During the day on 29 November, Third and Fourth Panzer Groups made contact with elements of First Shock and Twentieth Armies at Yakhroma and west of Krasnaya Polyana. Late in the day, after Zhukov had assured him that the Germans would not commit any new large forces in the near future, Stalin turned over First Shock, Twentieth, and Tenth Armies to Zhukov's control for a counteroffensive.¹² During the day also, Third Panzer Group made its turn south, and Fourth Panzer Group registered a small gain. Talking to Halder, Bock said he was afraid that if the attack from the north did not succeed, the battle would soon degenerate into a 'soulless frontal confrontation' similar to the World War I Battle of Verdun.¹³

On the night of the 30th, while his one colleague, Leeb, worried about what might happen at Leningrad once the pressure was off Moscow, and the other, Rundstedt, was a few hours away from dismissal over the Rostov affair. Bock, musing about his own situation, concluded: 'Something does not add up.' During the day, while the panzer groups were again reporting very small gains, the operations branch chief in the General Staff had been on the telephone to Bock talking as if encircling Moscow were only a preliminary to thrusts toward Voronezh and Yaroslavl. When Bock called Brauchitsch later to tell him Army Group Center did not have enough strength to encircle Moscow, much less to do anything more, he had to ask several times whether Brauchitsch was listening. Early the next morning, still wondering whether Brauchitsch had listened, Bock repeated by teletype what he had said the day before, adding that the belief in an impending Soviet collapse had been 'proved a fantasy'. His troops, he said, were exhausted, and the offensive had therewith lost 'all sense and purpose'. The Army Group, he

concluded, was shortly going to be at a standstill ‘before the gates of Moscow’, and it was high time to decide what to do then.¹⁴

TURNED AWAY AT THE GATES

In the morning on 30 November, Zhukov submitted to the *Stavka* a West Front plan for a counteroffensive north and south of Moscow. According to Zhukov, the ‘counteroffensive had been prepared all through the defensive actions’.¹⁵ Zhukov’s long-time chief of staff, Marshal V. D. Sokolovskiy, summed up the strategy as, ‘Let the enemy wear himself down, bring him to a stop, and create the conditions for a subsequent shift to the counterattack.’¹⁶ Both give more credit to that approach than it had earned in the past five months and express greater confidence in it than they were likely to have had at the time. Zhukov says he told Stalin on the night of the 29th that the Germans were ‘bled white’ and gives the essence of the plan as having been to strike past Klin and Solnetchnogorsk 60 miles to Teryaeva Sloboda and Volokolamsk in the north and up to the same distance past Stalinogorsk to the Upa River in the south.¹⁷ Those, however, were not foregone conclusions: the Germans were not stopped and were still in an offensive deployment.

The operation envisioned in the plan appears, in fact, to have been a distinctively tentative cross between a trial balloon and a bold stroke. Stalin, who had been willing during the summer to commit reserve armies to counterattacks as fast as they could be cobbled together, was being remarkably parsimonious in releasing them for this venture. The reserve armies stationed east of Moscow were earmarked for use ‘in the defense in necessary or, if they were not required for that mission, in developing a counteroffensive’; but the decisions as to how and when they could be employed were reserved to the *Stavka*, which meant to Stalin, and he had not yet made up his mind.¹⁸

Doubts were plentiful on both sides. Konev, at Kalinin Front, had a mission for which he had no taste at all: to start a day ahead of West and Southwest Fronts with two of his armies in a strike toward Kalinin. When Vasilevskiy, as acting chief of the General Staff, briefed him on it on 30 November, he rejected it as ‘impossible’. Vasilevskiy’s effort to persuade him that ‘an active operation with a decisive aim’ was absolutely necessary to save Moscow did not reconcile him to the idea of being the first to try.¹⁹ The order for a counterattack Kuznetsov, the First Shock Army commander, received on the morning of 2 December was to have the Zakharov Group attack toward Dednevo and Fedorovka and ‘in the longer run’, strike toward Klin.²⁰ Dednevo and Fedorovka were villages directly opposite the army’s left flank, and the Zakharov Group, parts of three divisions and a tank brigade under General F. D. Zakharov, had been the rear guard at Klin and were pinned down west of the Moscow–Volga Canal by Third Panzer Group’s spearhead. Sokolovskiy wrote later, ‘The main objective of our counterattack was to break up the enemy attack conclusively and give him no opportunity to regroup and dig in

close to our capital.²¹ Zhukov also qualifies his statement of the objectives by saying the 'initial task' was to be 'removing the immediate threat to Moscow' and 'we would need more forces to assign further-going and more categorical missions'.²²

In the first two days of December, it looked as though Bock might have been too pessimistic, and Zhukov's counterattack might very well come too late. To the Germans' surprise as much as to the Russians', Fourth Army's 258th Infantry Division broke through the Red Army line south of the Moscow–Smolensk highway on the 1st. Northeast of Tula, the next day, Second Panzer Army began a hook to the west, which, if it succeeded in pinching off the city, could have brought the Fourth Army right wing into motion. Those successes raised Bock's spirits briefly. Early on the 2nd, he predicted to Kluge that the Soviet defense was near breaking. Later in the day, however, he told Halder that owing to declining strength, cold, and stiffening resistance, 'doubts of success are beginning to take definite form'.²³

On the 3rd, despite even more reasons for doubts, Bock's determination increased slightly. In the morning, when Kluge proposed giving up Fourth Army's attack because it would not get through to Moscow. Bock opted to wait 'two or three days' to see what effect Third Panzer Group could have. By late afternoon, 258th Infantry Division was fighting its way westward out of an encirclement; Fourth Panzer Group had reported its offensive strength 'in the main exhausted'; and Third Panzer Group was embroiled with First Shock Army at Yakhroma. Second Panzer Army was still advancing northeast of Tula but through a blizzard that was piling up snow all along the army group front. Bock then told Hitler's operations chief in the Armed Forces High Command, General Alfred Jodl, that although his troop strength was almost at an end, he would stay on the offensive. The reason he was holding on 'with tooth and claw', he added, was because keeping the initiative was preferable to going over to the defensive with weakened forces in exposed positions.²⁴

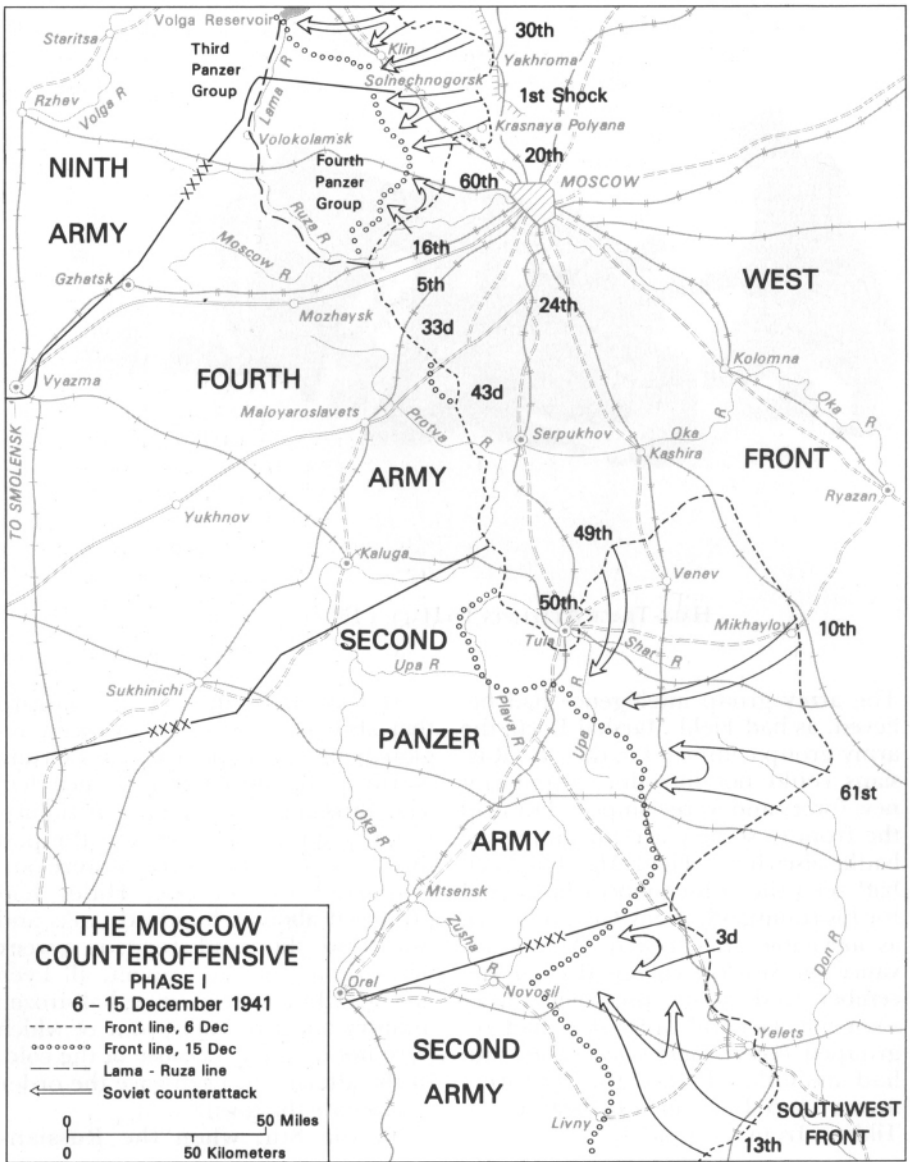
In the previous two weeks, the weather had been getting markedly colder, with temperatures ranging between 0°F and 20°F. On the morning of 4 December, after heavy snowfalls the day before, the temperature stood at -4°F. In the course of the day, Fourth Army went on the defensive, its front quiet. Fourth Panzer group repelled several tank-led local counterattacks southwest of Krasnaya Polyana but declared itself unable to advance until Third Panzer Group came fully abreast. Third Panzer Group, meanwhile, while trying to bring three panzer divisions to bear southwest of Yakhroma, was getting pressure on its front northwest of Yakhroma from Soviet reinforcements, some of which Reinhardt believed were Siberian troops; and Second Panzer Army was regrouping to try again to pinch off Tula. Once more Bock had decided to stay on the offensive. Mildly disturbed by a reported half-dozen new enemy divisions in the front west of Moscow, all well provided with tanks and rocket launchers, he concluded that they were probably not new strength but units shifted from nearby quiet sectors. A counteroffensive, he stated in his last report of the day to the Army High Command, was unlikely: the enemy simply did not have enough forces.²⁵

On 4 December, Stalin approved the 5th for Kalinin and the 6th for West and Southwest Fronts as starting dates. Vasilevskiy delivered the order to Konev in person. That night the temperature dropped to -25°F . One German regiment, on a night march, had over 300 frostbite casualties, and several of its wounded men froze to death. The next morning tanks would not start; machine guns and artillery would not fire because their lubricants and the oil in the recoil mechanisms had congealed; and all the armies reported numerous frostbite cases. In the paralyzing morning cold, Konev's Twenty-ninth Army attacked across the ice-covered Volga west of Kalinin and broke into the Ninth Army line about a mile before being stopped.²⁶ Reinhardt and Hoepner both reported more fresh Soviet troops on their fronts and their own offensive capabilities evaporating. Reinhardt's Third Panzer Group tried to push a wedge south between the left flank of Hoepner's Fourth Panzer Group at Krasnaya Polyana and the Moscow–Volga Canal, but his automatic weapons did not function; the cold quickly drained the troops' spirit; and the attack had barely begun before it had to be called back. In the morning Guderian thought the Second Panzer Army could still take Tula, but by evening his confidence had faded, and he proposed a gradual withdrawal from the whole bulge east of Tula to the Don and Shat rivers. His tanks, he complained, were breaking down in the cold, while Soviet tanks kept running.²⁷

Zhukov's and Timoshenko's orders to begin the attack on the 6th went out to their armies on the 5th. Along the front around Moscow at daybreak on the 6th, the temperature dropped as low as -38°F . In the night Bock had approved Guderian's proposal to withdraw Second Panzer Army, and he had told Reinhardt and Hoepner to 'adjust' their plans for Third and Fourth Panzer Groups to include pullbacks from Takhroma and Krasnaya Polyana to a line covering Klin. He had also called General Rudolf Schmidt at Second Army, which had been drifting slowly eastward toward Yelets for the past several days, and had told him he had better come to a stop; otherwise, his army would soon find itself standing farther east than any of the others.²⁸

The Soviet armies entering the first day of the full counteroffensive gave variously-executed solo performances. Thirty-first Army joined in with the stalled Twenty-ninth Army at Kalinin Front but failed to get across the Volga south of Kalinin. Thirtieth Army made the day's best – and for the Germans most dangerous – showing by breaking into the Third Panzer Group's deep flank northwest of Klin to a depth of eight miles. First Shock and Twentieth Armies hit Third and Fourth Panzer Groups from Yakhroma to west of Krasnaya Polyana, but only Twentieth Army made a gain, a small one, on the southern edge of Krasnaya Polyana. Tenth Army, most of which was still on the march from Syzran, began its attack on Mikhaylov, on the eastern rim of the Tula bulge, with one infantry division and two motorized infantry regiments. The German infantry was outperforming the armor.²⁹ During the day on the 6th, Second Army took Yelets while Southwest Front's Thirteenth Army was shifting to the offensive there. Before noon, Reinhardt told Bock Third Panzer Group would have to start pulling away on its south during the night to provide some armor to put against Thirtieth Army. That

THE HEARTLAND PRESERVED



Map 8: The Moscow Counter-Offensive, Phase I: 6–15 December 1941

meant, he said, his neighbor on the south, Hoepner, would also have to start back soon.³⁰ Somewhat surprisingly, the Soviet pressure subsided everywhere that afternoon, and Bock and Kluge talked about keeping the pace of the withdrawals slow to evacuate all the equipment and supplies.³¹

DISASTER

Sunday, the 7th, dawned clear and cold at the front. Early morning air reconnaissance flights brought back reports of continuing heavy rail traffic toward Moscow and Tikhvin. At ground level, plumes of blowing snow restricted visibility, and roads drifted shut. During the night, the roads running east and southeast from Klin had filled with Third Panzer Group rear echelon trucks and wagons, all heading west. How far west nobody knew. The front had begun to draw away from the Moscow–Volga Canal. First Shock Army was following at a distance behind the panzer group, which because of the weather had already abandoned 15 tanks, three heavy howitzers, a half-dozen anti-aircraft guns, and dozens of trucks and passenger vehicles – more than would ordinarily be lost in a month of heavy fighting. The troops could not tow guns out of their emplacements. The motors of some vehicles would not start; the grease on the bearings of some and in the transmissions of others froze while they were running. The 1st Panzer Division, headed toward Krasnaya Polyana, had turned around during the night with orders to block the Soviet thrust toward Klin. In the morning, it was stretched out over 40 miles, bucking snowdrifts on jammed roads, with its tanks low on fuel.³²

West Front's strongest army, Rokossovskiy's Sixteenth, joined the attack on the 7th along its front west of Krasnaya Polyana; but the most serious threat continued to come from Thirtieth Army, which had deepened its thrust toward Klin during the night.³³ Twenty-ninth and Thirty-first Armies hammered at Ninth Army west and southeast of Kalinin but as yet had nothing to show for it. First Shock and Twentieth Armies, joined by Sixteenth Army, kept Third and Fourth Panzer Groups under frontal pressure without acquiring an outright tactical advantage anywhere. Tenth Army occupied Mikhaylov after a skirmish with the German rear guard. At Fourth and Second Armies the front was quiet.³⁴ The infantry, being less encumbered by – now largely useless – heavy equipment, were able to maintain a somewhat more effective defense.

Although the counteroffensive was developing slowly, tensions were continuously building all along the 700-mile front from Tikhvin to the Army Group Center right flank east of Kursk. The army group was being subjected to a prolonged shock as successive new Soviet units entered the fighting and broke radio silence. Radio monitors picked up signals from dozens more enemy brigades and divisions on the army group front on 7 December than had been there on 15 November, convincing evidence that Bock had been mistaken in his assumption that Zhukov could not commit fresh forces in significant numbers. Leeb was seeing the consequences he had feared for Army Group North materialize. Meretskov had regrouped Fourth Independent Army and had assimilated enough reinforcements by 5 December to bear in on Tikhvin from three sides.³⁵

At Tikhvin, on the 7th, in a blizzard that also spread over the Moscow region in the afternoon, the Army Group North spearhead was almost encircled. Meretskov had received 27 trainloads of troops in the last three days, and the Germans were

outnumbered two to one. Hitler had promised about 100 tanks and 22,000 troops in a week or two, but for the present, all Leeb had in Tikhvin were some half-frozen infantry and five tanks, four of which were not operable because of the cold. In the afternoon, Leeb gave the order to evacuate the town.³⁶

Guderian's Second Panzer Army started the complicated job of reducing the bulge east of Tula. The first two days cost it many vehicles and tanks that had to be abandoned. One corps alone had 1,500 frostbite cases, 350 requiring amputations. Supplies were not getting to the army's railhead at Orel because, as was happening all up and down the front, only insulated Soviet-built locomotives could hold steam in the below-zero cold. The army group had promised an airlift of diesel oil and gasoline for the 8th but had to divert it to Third Panzer Group instead. At Mikhaylov, Tenth Army was throwing trainloads of troops into the front as soon as they arrived. Air reconnaissance on the 8th reported 50 trains headed in each direction between Ryazan and Mikhaylov.³⁷

Second Army, Second Panzer Army's neighbor on the south, held a 180-mile front, the longest of any army in the east. It had seven divisions with 25 miles of frontage for each, nearly two miles for each company. On the offensive, its mission had been to fill in between Second Panzer and Sixth Army, which had been easy as long as Soviet attention was fixed on Moscow and the *Stavka* had no time to worry about open space and a scattering of small provincial towns like Yelets, Livny, and Novosil. On the defensive, though, Second Army, with its one division per 25 miles of front, became all that was standing before Kursk, its chief (and only) railhead and Orel, Second Panzer's chief (and only) railhead. On the 7th, Second Army stopped after taking Yelets, the last town of any consequence within a 50-mile radius. Schmidt, the army commander, proposed, in the next several days, to devastate a ten-mile swath parallel to his entire line and then pull back behind that ready-made no-man's-land to settle in for the winter.

The next day, even more suddenly than it had dropped, the temperature rose above freezing along the whole Army Group Center front. At the Second Army center, south of Yelets, in snow and rain that froze when it hit the hard-frozen ground, half-a-dozen Soviet tanks broke a hole between the 45th and 95th Infantry Divisions and a Red Army cavalry division galloped through. The two German divisions' self-propelled assault guns could barely negotiate the ice and by the next morning, after fresh heavy snow had fallen and blown into drifts in the night, they could not move at all, which was almost immaterial since both divisions had by then also run out of motor fuel. In another day, two more cavalry divisions and an infantry division opened the gap to 16 miles and drove a 50-mile-deep wedge north-westward toward Novosil and Orel. The 95th Division had lost half its strength. The 45th had lost more. Nobody knew how much. Both were out of motor fuel and short on ammunition and rations. Air supply was promised, but aircraft could not fly in the snow and rain. Schmidt told Bock that Second Army was about to be cut in two and driven back on Kursk and Orel, leaving an 85-mile gap in between.³⁸

On the 9th, Bock instructed the army commands to plan to take the entire army group back 60–90 miles to the Rzhev–Gzhatsk–Orel–Kursk line; but he said he

did not believe that would help either, because it would take weeks to prepare the new line, and to start back before then would be ‘an excursion into nowhere’. Furthermore, he said, the losses of equipment sustained in the small withdrawals undertaken so far would be multiplied by the hundreds; and at best, the potential relief would probably be negligible. On the 10th, a promise from the Army High Command of two or three fresh divisions gave Bock a slim excuse for deferring the talk of retreat. However, the divisions would not start leaving the Western Theater until the 16th and could not be expected on the Eastern Front for at least a month.³⁹

Although he would scarcely have imagined it, Bock’s situation might have been worse. From the Soviet point of view, the Red Army’s performance in the first four days of the counteroffensive had been disappointing. A West Front directive issued on the 9th read:

Some of our units are pushing the enemy back frontally instead of going around him and encircling him. Instead of breaking through the enemy’s fortifications, they stand before them and complain about problems and heavy losses. These negative modes of operation give the enemy the chance to redeploy to new lines, regroup, and organize resistance anew.⁴⁰

Zhukov ordered the West Front armies to set up mobile groups with tanks, cavalry, and infantry armed with automatic weapons to strike behind the enemy, particularly against his motor fuel dumps and artillery positions.

On the 10th, the Russians cut the road out of Klin, the Third Panzer Group’s single route to the west. Third Panzer Group described the scene on the road east of Klin:

... discipline is breaking down. More and more soldiers are heading west on foot without weapons, leading a calf on a rope or pulling a sled loaded with potatoes. The road is under constant air attack. Those killed by the bombs are no longer being buried. All the hangers-on (corps troops, Luftwaffe, supply trains) are pouring to the rear in full flight. Without rations, freezing, irrationally, they are pushing back. Vehicle crews that do not want to wait out the traffic jams in the open are drifting off the roads and into the villages. Traffic control is working day and night and barely maintaining some movement. The panzer group has reached its most dismal hour.⁴¹

Guderian characterized his panzer army as a scattered assemblage of armed baggage trains slowly wending their way to the rear. Second Army could not mount a counter-attack against the fast-moving but vulnerable Soviet cavalry because it had no motor fuel and its troops were exhausted. For Bock, everything was going wrong. Ice and snow were tearing down the telephone lines in all directions. He had transferred a security division of over-aged and limited service troops from railroad guard duty to Second Army, where they were unlikely to be of much use; and the Soviet partisans had blown up a bridge on the army group’s main rail line. At Vyazma, two trains crashed head-on and blocked the track. A train of tank cars carrying motor fuel reached Fourth Panzer Group empty. On the 12th, during an

interval when the telephones were working, Halder, on hearing some of the army groups' troubles, pronounced the situation 'the worst crisis in two world wars'.⁴²

VICTORY IN SIGHT

As soon as the counteroffensive was in full swing, Stalin concluded he had won the war and hastened to take the credit. In a New Year's Day editorial in *Pravda* of such immense import that it could only have been written by him, he announced that the Soviet forces had reached 'the turning point of the war' and, with 'their own inexhaustible reserves' and some tanks and aircraft from the United States and Britain would accomplish 'the complete defeat' of 'Hitlerite Germany' during the coming year. He also disclosed the secret of his success: the 'permanently operating factors'. Those were 'the stability of the rear, morale', and above all, 'the quantity and quality of equipment'. They, he said, as if he had known all along, far outweighed the 'temporary factors', such as surprise, on which the Germans relied.⁴³

On the night of 5 January, in a rare full meeting of the *Stavka*, saying, 'we must pound the Germans to pieces as soon as possible so they will not be able to mount an offensive in the spring', he ordered a general offensive on the whole front from Leningrad to the Crimea.⁴⁴ Volkhov Front (activated on 7 December 1941, under Meretskov) was to retake Leningrad. Southwestern Theater, with Southwest and South Fronts, was to retake the Donets Basin and Kharkov. The main effort was to be in the center, where West Front and Kalinin Front, with Bryansk Front and Northwest Front on their flanks, were to engulf the whole of Army Group Center in two sweeping envelopments, the inner closing at Vyazma, the outer 90 miles farther west, at Smolensk.⁴⁵ Zhukov proposed concentrating the offensive entirely in the center, where the Germans were most off balance, but Stalin insisted it was necessary 'to pound the Germans to pieces everywhere'. Afterward, Shaposhnikov told Zhukov he should not have argued because Stalin 'had the question settled'. When Zhukov asked why then his opinion had been sought, Shaposhnikov replied, 'That, my dear fellow, I do not know'.⁴⁶

Zhukov was right in contending that the offensive ought to be limited to the center, where the Red Army already had the upper hand. Army Groups North and South's' fronts were still relatively solid; and breaching them would require levels of operational and tactical proficiency the Red Army simply did not have. Owing to its exceedingly rapid personnel turnover, particularly in the lower and middle levels of command, the Army was very little, if any, more competent performance-wise than it had been in June 1941. Even as it was launching into a general offensive it was trying to 'correct serious operational and tactical deficiencies in directing troop operations', especially offensive operations, in which it had little opportunity to acquire experience during the 1941 campaign.⁴⁷ On 10 January, the *Stavka* sent all *fronts* and armies a directive on offensive operations stating, 'It is necessary that

our forces learn how to break through the full depth of the enemy's defenses and open routes of advance for our infantry, our tanks, and our cavalry'.⁴⁸ The text provided a set of rudimentary principles to be observed in conducting an offensive.

By the first week in January, Army Group Center's situation was becoming stabilized. On 16 December, Hitler had issued an order prohibiting withdrawals without his explicit permission in every instance and demanding 'fanatical resistance in the present positions without regard to enemy broken through on the flanks or in the rear'.⁴⁹ Three days later he had sent Bock home on sick leave and turned the army group over to Field Marshal Kluge, who had accepted the order more wholeheartedly than Bock. Hitler's ruthless enforcement of the fanatical resistance order and the Red Army commands' tendency to follow the line of least resistance slowed the pace of the retreat. Also, one of the deficiencies contributing to the disaster was being corrected: in November, as part of an effort to maximize supply to the front, anti-freeze and winter clothing and lubricants had been stored in Poland to keep Army Group Center's one railroad open for more immediately vital traffic to the front. Those were being brought forward and along with them some items that had not been included in the planning, such as fur parkas and felt boots, the lack of which had been responsible for many frostbite cases.

In November, while he was contemplating having to dig in west of Moscow, Bock had work begun on a winter line called the K Line (Königsberg Line). Somewhat over 300 miles long and 75 miles west of Moscow at its center, it stretched southward from the headwaters of the Volga River north of Rzhev to Orel on the Oka River, mostly along rivers, which were plentiful in that area. It was not much more than an imaginary line, that the Red Army cavalry had already crossed in some places; but by the second week of January, Kluge's armies, commanders and troops alike, regarded it as the only possible instrument of their salvation. On the 15th, Hitler reluctantly, it being the first retreat he had ordered in the war, permitted Kluge to begin a gradual withdrawal of the whole army group to the K Line. In ten days, the armies were all in the line and beginning thrusts north and south off their flanks to close gaps. By 12 February, Army Group Center had a continuous, though thin, front on the whole length of the K Line that covered a lateral road and a railroad in its rear.

Apparently still confident, Stalin, in his order of the day on Red Army Day (23 February), predicted that 'the day is not far off when the Red Army, by a powerful blow, will hurl the brutal enemy back ... and Soviet flags will again wave victoriously over all Soviet soil'. With the approaching victory in mind, he also initiated a shift in Soviet anti-German propaganda by condemning alleged 'foreign press chatter' to the effect that the Red Army aimed to 'annihilate the German people and destroy the German state'.⁵⁰

In early March, while the *rasputitsa* was in control at the front, the *Stavka* took stock of the Red Army's winter performance. The result, although not insignificant, did not presage an early victory: the general offensive had inflicted enough damage – mostly on Army Group Center – to prolong the war but not enough to rule out

The *Stavka*, in a rare instance of self-criticism with Stalin participating, concluded it, as well as the *front* and army commands, had ordered attacks in too many directions, thereby dividing and re-dividing the forces to the point at which objectives could not be fully achieved anywhere. The GKO then decided ‘to prohibit those practices categorically’.⁵¹

Having learned a lesson, the *Stavka* decided not to resume the general offensive and to go over instead to an active defense in the spring, which would allow it to accumulate reserves, munitions, and equipment for a summer offensive. However, at a mid-March meeting similar to that in January, defining the active defense became a problem. The General Staff proposed a static defensive on the whole front in May and June that would ‘halt the enemy’s blows, wear him down and weaken him’, while preparing for a large-scale offensive when adequate reserves were accumulated.⁵² Zhukov and Timoshenko each proposed a build-up for a May or June offensive in his area and static defense elsewhere.⁵³ They, and Shaposhnikov as well, very much doubted that Stalin would accept an active defense without any offensives, and he did not. Asking, ‘Are we supposed to sit in defense, idling away our time, and waiting for the Germans to attack first? We must strike several pre-emptive blows over a wide front and probe the enemy’s readiness.’⁵⁴

In the succeeding weeks, with notable disregard for the lesson recently learned, he ordered pre-emptive blows along the whole front from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea. In the Crimea, the objective would be to clear the enemy from the peninsula. Southwest Front was to strike toward Kharkov from the northeast and southeast. Bryansk Front was to advance past Kursk and Igov, aiming ultimately for Smolensk. Kalinin Front and West Front were to top off the winter by smashing the Rzhev–Vyazma section of Army Group Center’s K Line. Leningrad Front would break the siege of Leningrad; and Karelian Front would mount an offensive north of the Arctic Circle against Finland.⁵⁵ The offensives were to be conducted between April and June and were expected to give the operations in those months ‘an active character’. At the same time the remaining forces would be ‘on the strategic defensive’, reorganizing, regrouping, and assembling and training reserves for the summer offensive.⁵⁶ The pre-emptive blows failed everywhere, most expensively in the Crimea and in the Kharkov area, where the total Red Army losses in captured troops alone numbered a half-million.

The attempt to conduct what amounted to a general offensive concurrently with a strategic offensive was not a reversion to Stalin’s winter euphoria but part of an incongruous combination of a desperate attempt to win the war against all odds and a panic-stricken cry for help, with most, though not quite all, of the winter’s arrogance suppressed. In his May Day order of the day to the Red Army, customarily an occasion for self-congratulation, he announced flatly that victory was not in sight and was not likely to be achieved until the troops and commands became proficient in the art of war. On the other hand, he declared that ‘all the peoples of freedom-loving countries’ looked to the Soviet Union as the ‘force capable of saving the world from the Hitlerite plague’; and the first among those were Britain and the United States, who he said were ‘bound’ to the Soviet Union

'by ties of friendship and alliance and are rendering our country constantly increasing military assistance against the German-fascist invaders'.⁵⁷ The British and Americans, however, were preoccupied with serious problems of their own, the British with North Africa and the submarine war, the Americans with the world war for which they were still wholly unprepared; and the aid they could give the Soviet Union was not the sort that would instantaneously shift the balance in the German-Soviet War.

On 20 May, an almost humble Molotov arrived in London. In his first meeting with Eden he reiterated, as he had many times throughout the winter, Stalin's demand for a treaty and secret protocol guaranteeing the Soviet borders as they had existed during the collaboration with Nazi Germany. However, when the United States Ambassador informed him that 'the United States could not be counted upon to remain silent if secret territorial clauses were included in the treaty', he abandoned the hard line and, in some haste, accepted a conventional treaty of alliance. In Washington, in the first week of June, he tried to secure an American commitment to a second front in 1942, the British having been very discouraging on that score. The most he could get was an ambivalent press communiqué, of which he was the author, stating, 'Full agreement was reached with regard to the urgent tasks of creating a second front in Europe.'⁵⁸ On 24 June, a *Pravda* editorial asserted, 'All of Hitler's military as well as political plans have collapsed ... all prerequisites have been created for defeat of the hateful enemy in 1942.'⁵⁹ The German summer offensive began four days later.

Conclusion

WORLD WAR AND GLOBAL WAR

December 7, 1941, was the United States' last day of a concerted effort to abolish its right to engage in any form of warfare that did not immediately threaten its own borders. In the aftermath of World War I, the American people and their government had come to the conclusion that the world outside the Western Hemisphere would never give up war as an instrument of national policy; therefore, their involvement in it was an experience henceforth to be avoided by all means and without exception.

In the Neutrality Act of 1937, the US Congress wrote the national aversion to war into law which press and public opinion overwhelmingly confirmed in a negative reaction to Roosevelt's suggestion that in a worldwide epidemic of lawlessness, the country would do better to 'quarantine' the perpetrators than to 'quarantine' itself. The Soviet–Finnish Winter War, during which the Neutrality Act forced the country into strict neutrality shared only with Nazi Germany, validated the President's metaphor.¹ The Congress did subsequently begin revising the law on neutrality in some respects while maintaining absolute prohibitions on US troop or financial involvement in foreign wars. In June 1940, after the Franco-British defeat on the Continent, it permitted the transfer of some Army small arms and artillery to the British. In August, it also authorized a loan of 50 destroyers to the British Navy in return for leases on sites for bases in the Bahamas and the Caribbean. The so-called 'destroyer-deal', which could be regarded as an exchange of property equally profitable to both parties, became the model for the Lend-Lease Act of March 1941, which, in turn, appeared to enable the United States to retain its neutrality and assume a decisive role in the war as well. The Lend-Lease program had much public appeal: it would, as Roosevelt interpreted it, make the United States the 'arsenal of democracy' from which qualified governments could draw the arms and whatever else they needed to fight the war. Additionally, the American manpower on the production lines would enable recipient nations to devote more of their manpower to fighting the war, and the US armed forces would become the 'weapons of last resort'.²

In the summer of 1941, he also edged the country into a hostile diplomatic confrontation with Japan and an undeclared war with Germany. In July, he

embargoed oil shipments to Japan and in September he ordered US naval vessels to 'shoot on sight' at German submarines found operating in the Atlantic Ocean west of Iceland.³ Public opinion saw the President's initiatives thus far as having served the national interest, but 51 per cent of the respondents in a September poll said they did not regard the war going on in Europe as 'our war', and in October, 74 per cent said the United States should 'not declare war on Germany at this time'.⁴ In November, by close votes in both Houses, the Congress passed amendments to the Lend-Lease Act without which Stalin's billion-dollar contract could not have been put into execution.⁵ The vote in no way signaled congressional receptivity to a declaration of war but did show that Charles A. Lindbergh and Senator Burton K. Wheeler, the spokesmen of the America First Committee, which had fought all moves away from strict neutrality, still possessed effective blocks of press and public support.⁶ A perception of national interest sustained the opposition to the war and possibly could have continued to do so indefinitely had Japanese and German blunders not resolved the issue.

On the morning of 7 December 1941, Japanese aircraft, in about 90 minutes, dropped bombs that demolished a large part of the US Pacific Fleet and invalidated a Japanese strategic plan to engage the Americans in a war they would not really fight. The Japanese Navy, by attacking before war was declared, gave the United States a morally impeccable cause. On the 8th, the Congress endorsed the President's declaration of war with but one dissenting vote, and in a poll taken on the 10th, 96 per cent of the respondents approved the declaration of war against Japan.⁷ On the other hand, being at war with Japan and not with Germany, which the Army regarded as the most dangerous enemy, posed a significant strategic risk, since public, congressional, and some military opinion was likely to consider one war at a time sufficient. On the 11th, Adolf Hitler, whose reaction to the undeclared war had until then been deliberately restrained, forgot himself, declared war on the United States, and averted a possibly prolonged and divisive debate over whether the country should take on a second war. Together, Germany and Japan made the country more firmly determined to see the fight through to the finish than it could have become by any other means. The Japanese attack and Hitler's endorsement of it transformed the war going on in the Soviet Union and North Africa into a world war and engaged the United States in a global war that would have to be fought on two fronts half a world apart.

In the United States, a desultory military build-up, subject to frequent harassment in the Congress, had been in progress since the German victory in June 1940, but it had an absurdly long way to go: the Army had a strength in July 1940 of 243,095 enlisted men and 14,000 officers. At that time, goals of a 1.5 million-man Army and a two-ocean Navy that would double the Navy were set for 1 April 1942. Call-ups of the National Guard and the Officers Reserve Corps and the introduction of Selective Service brought the Army field forces to a total 1.3 million officers and men by 1 July 1941; but except for the regular Army, the majority of the enlisted men and many of the officers were untrained.⁸ The Navy was also expanding, but mostly in the direction of a larger presence in the Pacific.

As they grew, the Army, Navy, and the Air Corps (then a semiautonomous branch of the Army) came into competition with Lend-Lease, with respect to which, particularly after the inclusion of the Soviet Union, they did not always have priority.

An innovation in defense policy introduced three days before the Japanese attack set the United States on the road to global leadership. After the amendments to the Neutrality Act gave the President what he could take to be a free hand, he initiated studies to determine how much output for war American industry could achieve in a relatively short time. The first combined estimate, called the Victory Program, was completed on 4 December 1941. Entry into the war necessitated some revisions. The result, as announced in a message to Congress on 6 January 1942, focused on the most significant items of many:

| | <i>For 1942</i> | <i>For 1943</i> |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| Aircraft (bombers and fighters) | 45,000 | 100,000 |
| Tanks | 45,000 | 75,000 |
| Antiaircraft guns | 20,000 | 35,000 |
| Merchant ships (deadweight tons) | 8,000,000 | 10,000,000 |
| Ground and tank machine guns | 500,000 | Expansion not fixed |
| Aerial bombs | 720,000 | Expansion not fixed ⁹ |

Reaching an output at those levels and then sustaining it (as in fact was done) would make the war truly the war of motors Stalin had predicted and transform the industrial power of the United States into the mainstay of the national strategy.

PATRIOTIC WAR

Like the United States, the Soviet Union did not enter the war of its own volition. After the German–Soviet collaboration dissolved in 1933, Stalin’s foreign, military and economic policies were, as has been seen, based on anticipation of another world war, in which the ‘imperialist’ powers (all the Great Powers except the Soviet Union), armed with more powerful weapons and driven by economic and colonial rivalries, would engage in an orgy of mutual destruction. The Soviet Union, standing aside, would play the opposing parties off against each other until they were exhausted and the time was ripe for the Red Army to seize the leadership of the world proletariat in its struggle against capitalism and colonialism. Germany, the cradle of socialism, homeland of the most advanced proletariat in Europe, and near neighbor, always figured as the most essential adjunct of his policy. The United States he saw as having made itself the citadel of capitalism by its entry into the European war in 1917, just in time to forestall a revolution and

the next war as an opportunity for the Red Army to do the same for communism and assure the victory of the proletariat. In August 1939, seeing a chance to hasten the coming of the war and pocket a substantial profit to boot, he had pledged undying friendship with Nazi Germany.

Hitler's betrayal in June 1941 placed Stalin in the, for him, distinctly unpleasant position of having to accept promises of aid from the capitalist British and Americans as the only alternative to the extinction of the Soviet Union. Realizing early on that a war to defend communism was unlikely to arouse strong popular support anywhere and the promotion of communism abroad would not sit well with his new-found friends in the West, yet wanting to preserve an ideological distinction, he placed the German–Soviet war in a category of its own, 'patriotic war'. Eventually, the Russian Republic (RFSR), the ethnic core of the Soviet empire, comprising 60 per cent of its population, furnished the preponderance of the Red Army's manpower. By the November 1941 anniversary of the revolution, Stalin was talking about the 'Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union' as if it were a continuation of the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century wars of the tsars.

The patriotic war theme also enabled him to simulate concurrence with the bourgeois democratic values of his partners in the anti-Axis coalition. On 1 January 1942, China, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union signed the Declaration of the United Nations, which gave a name to the coalition and pledged its members to secure for all peoples the Four Freedoms: of speech, worship, from want and from fear. Roosevelt, their author and a believer in the United States policy of avoiding foreign entanglements of a contractual nature, regarded the declaration as a sufficiently formal commitment to a common cause on the part of the signatory governments. Stalin, however, had already emphatically signaled a strong expectation of something more.

In mid-December 1941, British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden went to Moscow thinking to placate Stalin on the second front issue by offering him an alliance. On arrival, he found himself a large step behind Stalin, he thinking of the November panic, Stalin, having lost all interest in the second front, thinking about the victory soon to be his. For the time being, Stalin wanted an alliance even more than he had wanted a second front, but one that included a secret protocol confirming all the territorial gains he had made under the secret protocols in the treaties with Hitler. Eden had come prepared to go a great distance to satisfy Stalin but not so far as to confirm the results of the very acts that had brought Britain into war in the first place. Roosevelt was willing to extend a good deal of latitude in the interpretation of the Four Freedoms to the members of the United Nations, the Soviet Union in particular; but secret agreements were, in the American view, the great bugaboo of World War I; and he categorically refused to tolerate any such in the present war.¹⁰ Stalin unabashedly continued to assert a right to receive all of the Soviet Union's pre-22 June 1941 gains and then some as a sacred requirement of the patriotic war.

THE 'MAIN AND DECISIVE FRONT'

The last (completed in 1980) official Soviet work concerned with the Great Patriotic War, the *Soviet Military Encyclopedia* and its post-Soviet revision (1994) adjudge the 'Soviet–German front' to have been the 'main and decisive front in the Second World War', and the war, consequently, to have been a contest to determine which side could absorb the most punishment.¹¹ In fact, after December 1941, the world war comprised two wars, the Soviet–German war and the global war, each with its own main and decisive component. In the first, the Red Army's mission was to preserve and expand the Soviet empire by exploiting the awesome coercive power of a totalitarian state to generate 'reserves', a euphemism for 'cannon fodder'. By 4 December 1941, the confirmed Soviet military dead in the official first period of the war, 22 June 1941–18 November 1941, numbered 6.155 million, 21 times the United States total (292,000) for the whole war.¹² The Soviet total dead for the whole war (22 June 1941–9 May 1945), 11.3 million, was about three and a half times the German total for the whole war (1 September 1939–8 May 1945), 3.4 million, and twenty times the United States and British total, 563,000.¹³ The main and decisive component of the global war was the enormous industrial aggregate that made the United States literally the 'arsenal of democracy'. Operating undisturbed behind ocean barriers that were once supposed to keep the country out of war altogether, it provided the mechanical 'muscle' to project American power worldwide.

The wars were wars of words: Germany and the Soviet Union locked in a struggle to determine whether the fascist or communist worldview would prevail. Hitler having made the stronger start, Stalin was obliged to seek comfort and support in the bourgeois capitalist camp. Roosevelt saw the mission of the United States as being to restore the world order to about the status of January 1938 less fascist Germany and militarist Japan. Needing at least two years to complete the Victory Program, he was disposed to overlook Stalin's ideological and political – not to mention humanitarian – records and grant the Red Army full access to the 'arsenal of democracy'. The service of Stalin's 'reserves' in exchange for Lend-Lease aid was an incalculably greater benefit for the United States and its world provided Stalin did not capitulate or come to terms with Hitler, as he had once before, and provided he did not manage to parlay a victory in the patriotic war into hegemony in Europe.

THE 'GREATEST BATTLE IN THE HISTORY OF WARS'

In March 1942, knowing by then that he had not won the war and Germany would be able to stage another summer offensive, Stalin reverted to an 'active defense' of the sort that had served him badly in the previous summer. Spring offensives in

the Leningrad, Kharkov, and Crimea areas cost him another half-million losses in prisoners of war alone before the German offensive started. He also misjudged the site of the German main effort: Hitler's objective was the industry and oil of the Donets Basin and the Caucasus. Stalin believed Moscow would again be the objective; and it was early September, when Hitler had one army group deep in the Caucasus and another closing to the Volga River, before he allowed Zhukov and Vasilevskiy (then chief of the General Staff) to begin planning a counter-offensive using *Stavka* reserves he had husbanded through the summer for the defense of Moscow. The outcome hinged on holding Stalingrad, which in September and October seemed a good deal less than likely; but, as in 1941, Hitler had made a worse error than Stalin had in directing his army groups at a right angle away from each other on long marches over terrain with few roads and both dependent on a single railroad.

The counteroffensive began on 19 November with Operation URANUS, which, in four days, achieved an encirclement of the German Sixth Army at Stalingrad that would rank as an exemplary display of battlefield maneuver by any standard and certainly the Red Army's best ever; but URANUS had three satellites. MARS and JUPITER were to pinch off a large salient Army Group Center was still holding a bare 100 miles west of Moscow. SATURN, a 200-mile thrust southward across the bend of the Don River to Rostov, was to cut off German Army Group B (in the Don bend) and trap Army Group A in the Caucasus. MARS, with Zhukov coordinating West and Kalinin Fronts, began on 25 November and collapsed on 14 December. In early December, when Army Group Don (formerly B), under Manstein's formidable command, was regrouping for a relief operation, the *Stavka* decided to reduce SATURN and, as SMALL SATURN, use it to cover the Stalingrad pocket. Manstein did not get through, but he did manage to hold the lower Don open long enough for Army Group A to evacuate the Caucasus in good order. The ensuing two-month battle of attrition at Stalingrad took some of the glow off the victory and the German Sixth Army's surrender (2 February 1943). MARS and JUPITER were not heard from again.

In his order of the day on 23 February 1943, the Red Army's anniversary, Stalin proclaimed 'the battle at the walls of Stalingrad' to have been 'the greatest in the history of wars'; and he was not niggardly with rewards.¹⁴ Zhukov became the first marshal of the Soviet Union appointed during the war and was also named deputy supreme commander in chief and first deputy defense commissar. Stalin also became a marshal, thereby for the first time associating himself with the military hierarchy. Forty-four units were authorized to incorporate place-names associated with the battle in their designations; 55 received unit commendations; 183 were designated 'guards'.¹⁵

However, Charles E. Bohlen, the US State Department's chief Soviet analyst, observed with concern that Stalin had pointedly omitted his allies in the West from the celebration. On 6 November 1942, in his annual speech on the anniversary of the revolution, he had talked at length about the prospects of the second front and proposed a slogan: 'Hail to the victory of the Anglo-Soviet-American fighting

alliance! In the 23 February 1943 order of the day, he merely remarked that in the absence of a second front, the Soviet Union had ‘borne the whole burden of the war thus far’ and suggested it was now capable of defeating Germany single-handedly.¹⁶

Concurrently with URANUS, the Americans staged Operation TORCH, landings in North Africa (on 8 November 1942). Churchill, who, after Dunkirk, was obsessively chary of confronting Hitler anywhere near his home territory, had promoted them as a surrogate second front. In January 1943, he and Roosevelt met in Casablanca, Morocco, to decide their next move. The American generals wanted to concentrate their forces in England for a cross-Channel attack. Churchill and his generals argued to keep the operations in the Mediterranean. Roosevelt opted for Churchill’s peripheral strategy and agreed to landings in Sicily and southern Italy. Consequently, although the Victory Program was in full swing in terms of both arms and manpower, a second front in northwestern Europe would not be possible until the summer of 1944. To assure Stalin of their determination to see the war through, Roosevelt introduced a pledge not to accept anything but an unconditional surrender from any of the Axis Powers.

At the time, it appeared that the war on the Eastern Front was in a prolonged cyclical mode in which the *Wehrmacht* had the upper hand in summer and the Red Army, aided by ‘General Winter’, staged a partial recovery in the winter. Between November 1942 and March 1943, the Red Army initiated 14 major enveloping operations on the entire front from Leningrad to the Taman Peninsula in the Black Sea. Of those, only URANUS and SMALL SATURN succeeded completely, even though Army Group Don had to abandon vast stretches of territory in December and January to reform its front. In February 1943, Operation STAR, designed to clear the line of the lower Dnepr, retook Kharkov and drove to Dnepropetrovsk only to be itself demolished by an Army Group South (ex-Don) counteroffensive that carried the German front east to the Donets and Mius Rivers, where it had been at the start of the 1942 summer offensive.

In mid-March, the spring *rasputitsa* halted operations on both sides before Manstein could eliminate a 150-mile-long, 80-mile-deep westward bulge with Kursk, a significant road and rail junction, at its center. Inside were two Red Army *fronts*, nine armies. The implications were obvious: Stalin brought the *fronts* up to 1.2 million troops; Hitler invested 900 tanks and 300 self-propelled assault guns in a grand envelopment, Operation CITADEL. Harboring considerable doubts but nevertheless declaring, ‘The victory at Kursk must become a beacon visible around the world’, he allowed the operation to begin on 5 July; but after armored spearheads striking from the north and south failed for eight days to achieve a breakthrough, his qualms overcame him and he canceled CITADEL. Stalin thereupon released nine armies he had been holding as *Stavka* reserves. On 2 August, three Red Army *fronts* hit the two German armies that had formed the southern prong of CITADEL, opening the first Soviet summer offensive, which another six *fronts* joined in the succeeding days. In the first week of September, Hitler had to let his front south of the Pripyat Marshes begin a 200-mile retreat to the Dnepr River.

THE 'DECISIVE TURNING POINT IN THE PATRIOTIC WAR'

In his 6 November 1943 anniversary address, Stalin pronounced the summer offensive, coupled with the Kursk battle, the 'decisive turning point in the Patriotic War' that also 'changed the whole further course of the World War and acquired great international significance'. He also talked of its having 'strengthened the fighting partnership with the Allies', and added, 'Of course, the present operations of the Allied armies in southern Europe cannot be regarded as a second front, but still, it is something like a front.'¹⁷

For the Allies, the Soviet summer offensive was a rude awakening: the Red Army was not only demonstrating an all-seasons capability but was forcing the Germans to the point at which capitulation would be their best option. In that event, southern Italy would be a poor place from which to exert military or political influence, and an authentic second front was not yet even on their agenda. A small staff, COSSAC (Chief of Staff, Supreme Allied Commander), had been set up in England in April, but it received no specific guidance until 2 August, when it was ordered to be prepared to act as 'the executive agency for a return to the Continent in the event of a partial or complete German collapse'.¹⁸ The most significant actual development thus far was that American troops were arriving in England in large numbers as the result of a provision in the Casablanca agreements limiting the troops in the Mediterranean to those already there. The most alarming realization was that Stalin, who was already asserting a right to settle the war in eastern Europe to suit himself, could come into a position to do so in all of Europe.

In the United States, the Soviet summer offensive brought the Army's organization and training phase begun in 1941 to a sudden end and touched off an accelerated deployment overseas that emptied the camps and schools. It also sent Eden and US Secretary of State Cordell Hull on an urgent mission to Moscow to secure an agreement on the post-surrender treatment of Germany. The outcome, a decision to divide Germany into three zones with a tripartite headquarters in Berlin, gave COSSAC a requirement: to devise a plan that would enable the Americans and British to take possession of their zone with at least token forces. In their meeting in Tehran in December, Roosevelt and Churchill gave Stalin a commitment to open a second front in the coming spring.

The summer offensive also introduced a major shift in Stalin's operational conduct of the war. The outcome of the 1942/43 winter offensive, as it well might have, apparently convinced him that the Red Army was not ready to include the two-pronged encirclement as a standard item in its repertoire. Zhukov and the General Staff still favored it, but he insisted they hit the enemy head-on, employing a relic of the Civil War and the Tukhachevskiy period, the salient thrust, a frontal blow delivered on multiple parallel lines to shred the enemy's concentrations. As a result, although they were pushed back, the Germans generally retained their ability to maneuver and exact a heavy toll in casualties.¹⁹

CLEARING THE SOVIET LAND

In preparing the winter offensive set to begin in early January 1944, Stalin, having the undisputed initiative, established 'complete expulsion of the enemy from the Soviet land' as the main objective and ordered three 'blows' on the Kursk model: clearing of the right bank of the Dnepr; complete relief of Leningrad; and reoccupation of the Crimea. The last two were not strategically significant but signaled another major change in the conduct of operations: henceforth, all territory of the Soviet Union or in which it had an interest would have to be documented by military occupation.

The 'three blows' phase confirmed the salient thrust as the Red Army's most consistently effective form of maneuver. It usually did not prevent the enemy's salvaging most of his troops and equipment and by no means exemplified economy of force; but it did not require precision, almost always accomplished something, and was not subject to the embarrassing aftereffects often attendant on failed encirclements. With the help of Adolf Hitler, who insisted on maintaining a rigid front, it also enabled the Red Army to create an illusion of effectiveness comparable to that which the *Wehrmacht* had enjoyed during the heyday of the Blitzkrieg. The first blow, delivered off the right bank of the Dnepr south of Kiev, 24 December 1943–17 April 1944, carried 150–300 miles to the Carpathian Mountains and the lower Dnestr River. The second, 13 January–15 February, terminated the siege of Leningrad but was stopped short by the Panther Position, part of an 'East Wall' Hitler was attempting to build. The third blow, 18 April–12 May, expelled a Germany army from the Crimea, which it would have had to evacuate anyway.

The strategically most significant feature of the three blows was a failed fourth blow, which was to have driven Army Group Center, then still dug-in well east of the Dnepr, back 160 miles and cleared Belorussia to Minsk. This three-month effort, begun in January by three relatively fresh *fronts*, ended with Army Group Center still holding Vitebsk, the Dnepr–Dvina gap, and a 140-mile-long bridgehead east of the Dnepr – this in what would have to be the area of the main effort if the Allied landing materialized in the spring as planned. Both parties were already thinking of a 'race for Berlin', and the winter debacle left the Red Army with nearly 700 miles and the Dnepr River still to cross, while a beachhead on the English Channel would be 200 miles closer to Berlin.

The Red Army's performance in the second and third phases was not incontrovertibly the progression from strength to strength depicted in most Soviet accounts. The simultaneous failure of three *fronts*, 14 armies, against Army Group Center was shown to have stemmed from generalized command weakness that had prevailed earlier. Moreover, the Red Army had reached its peak-deployed strength of 11.1 million men of which 5 million survived, in the first period (apparently in 1941). The peaks of the second and third periods were 8.5 million and 9.9 million, of which 5.9 million and 7.3 million survived. Although it expended manpower as if it did, the Red Army did not have limitless reserves, and

CONCLUSION

its growth slowed in the later periods, in which it also experienced a drastic decline in Russian and Russian-speaking recruits and for the first time, had to draw on the Asian minorities. On the other hand, after 1942 Soviet industry and Lend-Lease provided implements of war in great quantities. The difficulty, as in 1941, was in making effective use of them.

THE RACE FOR BERLIN

The 6 June 1944 landing in Normandy was, next to the United States' entry into the war, the decisive event of the World War. Without it, Europe would have been rescued from German fascism only, in all likelihood, to fall under Russian communism. Although agreements had been made, the race for Berlin was still to be made, and the distance was 150 miles greater from Normandy than from the Channel coast. At Tehran, Stalin had volunteered to have a powerful offensive of his own ready to start simultaneously with the landing. Had that happened, the war might well have ended months earlier than it did; but as a result of the failure to dislodge Army Group Center, it is said, he did not have a plan ready until 23 May, and the final directives did not reach the field commands until 8 June.²⁰

On 23 June, the Red Army launched Operation BAGRATION against Army Group Center. From the size of the deployment, the delay appears not to have been wholly inadvertent. In 11 days, four *fronts* (20 armies) overran Army Group Center to a depth of 150 miles on a 240-mile broad front, thereby, according to the Soviet accounts, proving 'the parallel and frontal attack superior to all other forms of maneuver'. The German General Staff, believing the Red Army would, as it had in the two previous summers, concentrate its effort in the south, had considered Army Group Center's line strong enough to be held with infantry and therefore shifted most of its armor and self-propelled artillery to the south. The ensuing collapse of Army Group Center left the road to Berlin wide open, but Stalin's strategy gave priority to complete occupation of all Soviet and Soviet-claimed territory between the Gulf of Finland and the Carpathian Mountains. Nevertheless, the speed of the advance, which was most apparent in the center, appeared to ensure a Red Army victory in the race for Berlin. On 29 August, when the six *fronts* then engaged north of the Carpathians paused to regroup and resupply, the front was on the Vistula–San River line, 300 miles from Berlin.

On 20 August, three *fronts* under Timoshenko opened an offensive against Army Group South. It was billed as a 'March of Liberation' in support of 'Popular-Democratic and Socialist Revolution in the Central and South-central European Nations', Army Group South having by then been weakened by transfers to Army Group Center. The offensive made fast progress through Romania and Bulgaria but was slowed by a shortening German line as it approached the Hungarian border. On 20 December, a fortified line flanking Budapest and Lake Balaton between the Danube River and the Carpathians brought it to a halt.

In July, while the Russians appeared to be bringing the war to a swift end, the Allies looked as if they might be stuck in Normandy for good. On 2 August, they began an operation to envelop the Germans blocking their way out of the beach-head, but they could not close the pocket until the 20th. Then, however, they had the undisputed initiative and by the 25th were pursuing the exhausted Germans across the Seine River from its mouth to Paris. By the 17th, the Americans were on the German border and the British into Belgium. On 21 October, the Americans took Aachen, inside the border, where they were in the allotted British zone and 300 miles from Berlin; but the pursuit had ended by then, and the West Wall and Rhine River were still to be crossed. On 16 December, three German armies headed toward Antwerp launched an offensive aimed behind the British line and in a week, drove a 50-mile-deep bulge in the American front. It was contained by 1 January, but Hitler kept the armies in the offensive mode until mid-month.

At the end of December 1944, the Red Army General Staff put the finishing touches on a plan to end the war by two simultaneous operations while the Allies were stalled on the western border. In one, First Belorussian Front (Zhukov) and First Ukrainian Front (Konev), totaling 2.2 million troops, 6,400 tanks and self-propelled assault guns, and 46,000 artillery pieces, were to strike from the Vistula to the Oder River in 15 days, and in 30 more take Berlin (Zhukov) and Prague (Konev). In the other, Second Belorussian Front (Rokossovskiy) and Third Belorussian Front (I. D. Chernyakhovskiy), 1.6 million troops, 3,300 tanks and self-propelled assault guns, and 28,000 artillery pieces, were to cover Zhukov's right flank and take East Prussia, West Prussia, and the former Polish Corridor. Army Group Center, their opponent, had 400,000 troops, 1,150 tanks, and 4,100 artillery pieces.²¹

The operation began on 12 January, with Stalin coordinating the *fronts* in person from Moscow. In three days the *fronts* developed 24 parallel thrusts. By 3 February, Zhukov's and Konev's armies were on the Oder from Küstrin – 55 miles east of Berlin – to the Czechoslovakian border. The Americans were then still regrouping in the line they held before the Battle of the Bulge. At the speed he had advanced in the first phase, Zhukov could have taken Berlin and easily beaten the Allies to the Rhine. In fact, that Stalin would have allotted 30 days just to take Berlin rather surpasses belief, particularly since he had already given an example of what would very likely happen if the Red Army were to arrive on the Rhine ahead of the Allies. Plans for joint occupation of Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary similar to those for Germany had been negotiated and Allied military government parties were on the scene in Romania and Bulgaria but being firmly excluded from contact with ready-made communist governments brought in by the Red Army.

Zhukov and Konev had told Stalin they could be ready to resume the advance within a few days after reaching the Oder, and Stalin had indicated he would need a few days to make a decision. A Big Three conference opened at Yalta in the Crimea on 4 February, and again Poland was the main issue. On the 6th, Stalin demanded that the Polish eastern boundary be that of the Nazi–Soviet Pact and

Poland be compensated with German territory in the west, adding, ‘It would be better the war should continue a little longer, although it would cost Russia much blood, so that Poland could be compensated at German expense.’²² On the 8th, to underscore his point, he sent the First Ukrainian Front across the Oder toward its tributary, the Neisse River, which he then demanded as Poland’s western boundary. After Roosevelt and Churchill accepted the eastern boundary but insisted on leaving the western boundary to be decided by the peace conference, he scrapped the original plan and set Zhukov to helping Rokossovskiy clear the Baltic littoral between the lower Oder and the Vistula. On 13 February, apparently to add rather superfluous emphasis, he set Timoshenko’s march through Hungary back in motion.

Allied Supreme Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower’s forces, facing strong resistance and flooded rivers, did not begin to move again until 23 February. For them a turning point in their fortunes came on 7 March, when American troops captured a bridge on the Rhine at Remagen, south of the Ruhr Valley industrial complex. By the 10th, the Allied troops were on the Rhine from the Dutch border upstream to the confluence of the Main. By the 23rd, all resistance on the Rhine had ended; the Americans were breaking out of the bridgehead at Remagen; and the British and Canadians were attacking across the Rhine north of the Ruhr east of the river where resistance dropped off rapidly. Meanwhile, the First Belorussian and First Ukrainian Fronts were marking time east of the Oder, and the march of liberation in Hungary was just recovering from a German counterattack that by 15 March had mangled the Red Army’s crossings on an 80-mile stretch of the Danube River. On the 28th, Eisenhower, contemplating a meeting with the Red Army and wanting to avoid incidents, informed Stalin that he no longer regarded Berlin as a worthwhile objective and would therefore, after completing an encirclement of the Ruhr, advance to the Elbe River and there seek a junction with the Soviet forces along the line Erfurt–Leipzig–Dresden. Stalin, who of course did not believe a word of that, replied the next day that he also believed Berlin had lost its strategic significance and planned ‘only to allot secondary forces in that direction.’²³ As he wrote, Zhukov, Rokossovskiy, and Konev were engaged in a frantic redeployment. In a letter to Roosevelt on 1 April, he asserted that his ‘military colleagues’ had evidence of an agreement between the Allies and the Germans that opened the front to them in return for promised leniency in the armistice terms. Plaintively, he added:

I realize that there are certain advantages resulting to the Anglo-American troops ... seeing that they are enabled to advance into the heart of Germany almost without resistance – but why conceal that from the Russians, and why were the Russians, their allies, not informed?²⁴

On 16 April, First Belorussian Front began its march on Berlin, which surrendered 17 days later. By then, American troops had made contact with the Russians at Torgau, east of Leipzig, on 25 April, and had occupied a full third of the allotted Soviet zone.

WHO WON THE WORLD WAR?

The Second World War began as a sequel to the first but was for two years and three months a European war, which the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor transformed into a world war and the United States' entry made a true global war. The bombs that fell on Pearl Harbor simultaneously demolished Stalin's prospects of co-opting the 'imperialist' world war for the world revolution. Worse still from his point of view, any successes he might have against Germany, short of a swift and overwhelming victory, would automatically benefit the United States in its conduct of the global war.

In the summer of 1943, as has been seen, the Red Army began a two-year 'march of liberation' that in successive battles of attrition, pushed the German forces out of Soviet territory and brought most of east central Europe under Soviet control. It was an epic performance of sorts by both sides, and it established the Soviet Union as a continental superpower: the United States, however, was already a global superpower. After the German surrender, the United States was, to the extent it chose to be, the dominant power in the western hemisphere and western and southern Europe. The Soviet Union held seats in the control council for occupied Germany and in the European postwar planning commission but devoted most of its effort to fostering dissension. By then (in the summer of 1945) it was also four years into a 50-year decline and fall into bankruptcy brought on by persistent misgovernment, the various and heavy costs of the war and a bloated peacetime military establishment. While the United States and its associates, including Germany and Japan, were embarking on the longest period of prosperity in history, the Soviet leadership was clinging to the last refuge of failing enterprises: manipulation of records to magnify its accomplishments and minimize its deficiencies. Regarding those, see the appended 'Notes on Historiography'.

Code Names

German

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| BARBAROSSA (German medieval emperor) | The German 1941 offensive in the Soviet Union |
| CITADEL (<i>ZITADELLE</i>) | The German operation against the Kursk bulge, July 1943 |
| GREEN (<i>GRÜN</i>) | The occupation of Czechoslovakia, March 1939 |
| HARPOON (<i>HARPUNE</i>) | Deception associated with BARBAROSSA |
| SHARK (<i>HAIFISCH</i>) | Deception associated with BARBAROSSA |
| TYPHOON (<i>TAIFUN</i>) | Substitute for BARBAROSSA, September to December 1941 |
| YELLOW (<i>GELB</i>) | The campaign against France and the Low Countries, May–June, 1940 |
| WESER EXERCISE (<i>WESERÜBUNG</i>) | The occupation of Denmark and Norway, April 1940 |

Soviet

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| JUPITER | A galaxy of operations designed to break the German grip on Stalingrad and trap Army Group South in the Caucasus in November – December 1942 |
| MARS | |
| SATURN | |
| SMALL SATURN (<i>MALYY SATURN</i>) | |
| RING (<i>KOLTSO</i>) | The terminal operation against the Stalingrad pocket, January – February 1943 |
| STAR (<i>ZVEZDA</i>) | An operation designed to recover the Ukraine in one strike, February 1943 |

American

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| TORCH | An amphibious operation on the northwestern coast of Africa, November 1942 |
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Notes on Historiography

STALIN'S WAR

The war in Europe officially passed into history 59 minutes before midnight on 8 May 1945. It did so somewhat inelegantly for all parties and downright distressingly for Stalin, who, as the self-appointed architect of the victory had, since March, seen his forces fought to a standstill on the Oder River while the Americans advanced to the Elbe and the Western Allies took the German surrender in Italy without his permission. Worse still, what was left of the German armed forces High Command and the German Government was out of his reach on the Jutland Peninsula; and on 5 May, the British had accepted the surrender of all German troops in north Germany and Denmark. By then, the Americans had crossed the Elbe and ensconced themselves in his assigned zone of occupation. Early on the 6th, a delegation from the German High Command had arrived at Eisenhower's forward headquarters in Reims to receive the surrender terms. Those, as the Act of Military Surrender, were also sent to Stalin with a request for his comments and concurrence. Nothing having been heard from Moscow, the act was signed in the early hours of the 7th with the chief of the Soviet liaison group signing for the Soviet Union. It required all German troops on all fronts to cease fire and stop all movement by midnight on 8 May. Stalin's response came several hours later in the form of a diatribe charging the British and Americans with having granted the German's a dispensation to kill more Russians. Churchill and the new American President, Harry S. Truman, designated 8 May as V-E Day. Stalin demanded a second signing in Berlin to be managed by Zhukov from which the Americans would be largely excluded.

The Berlin signing was not completed until later on the 8th, and a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet designated 9 May the day of victory in the Great Patriotic War. The timing of the surrender slightly beclouded the Red Army's claim to having taken all the capitals in east-central Europe, since the First, Second, and Fourth Ukrainian Fronts did not 'liberate' Prague until three days after the ceasefire.

After 8/9 May, the Soviet Union was also out of the world war. Stalin had promised to enter the war against Japan after Germany was defeated, but he regarded

promises as binding only on other people. Also, a successful American test of the atomic bomb and Stalin's obstructionist behavior at the Potsdam Conference (17 July–2 August), which was to have laid the groundwork for a European peace settlement, had much reduced the American desire for a Soviet involvement against Japan. Stalin, on the other hand, had been determined all along to jump in when he judged the Japanese and Americans to have inflicted maximum damage on each other; and he had a *front* under Vasilevskiy at the ready in the Far East before V-E Day. Although he was aware of the bomb's existence, the Hiroshima explosion on 6 August apparently took him by surprise; and it, coupled with that at Nagasaki two days later, totally overshadowed Vasilevskiy's offensive begun in Manchuria on the 9th. On 2 September, a Soviet delegation headed by a lieutenant general witnessed the formal signing of the Japanese surrender aboard the US battleship *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay. Other than that and the recovery of the southern half of Sakhalin Island, lost to Japan after the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, the Soviet Union received no share in the Japanese occupation.

The war's end turned attention to the pre-22 June 1941 period. In 1948, the US State Department published a copy of the secret protocols to the Nazi–Soviet Pact and the Treaty of Friendship of August and September 1939 (p. 372, n. 31). In the Nuremberg war crimes trial, where the Soviet Union presented itself as a wholly unsuspecting and innocent victim, the German defense, seeking to refute the charge of waging aggressive war by establishing a claim to a pre-emptive strike, presented evidence of a much stronger Red Army deployment – quantitatively at least – than was acknowledged in the Soviet charge.

The succeeding years brought to light glaring weaknesses at the highest level that were never addressed, much less corrected. The victory was more deserving of an apology to the nation than applause for the leadership. The spoils were few: a ramshackle empire, a license to plunder a third of Germany, and an opportunity to keep the world divided – at great expense. That the Soviet Union sustained the heaviest human losses and destruction of property is the one superlative applicable without reservation to the outcome of the Great Patriotic War.

Nevertheless, the victory in the Great Patriotic War and its extension to the world war had deposited a rich load of ideological and political capital surpassing that of the Revolution and even the alleged achievements of Lenin himself. In June 1945, Stalin assumed sole possession of that treasure by 'accepting' a lifetime appointment as generalissimo of the Soviet armed forces. Next after Stalin, Zhukov had previously enjoyed the highest public esteem, particularly in the Western press, which classed him along with Eisenhower, Montgomery, Rundstedt, and Rommel and hardly ever took notice of any other Soviet general. In early 1946, Stalin recalled him from Germany, where he was the Soviet military governor, briefly gave him command of the ground forces, and then for seven years relegated him to out-of-the-way military district commands. But for his reputation abroad, he would most likely have fared much worse.

While Stalin lived, the entire history of the Soviet Union and of the Great Patriotic War was encapsulated in two small volumes. The first, published in 1947

and attributed to one G. F. Alexandrov and six associates, *Joseph Stalin, a Short Biography* (p. 356, n. 20) arrogates exclusive credit for all Soviet successes from the Civil War to the Great Patriotic War to Stalin – and for the Revolution as well – in which Stalin was allegedly Lenin’s closest confidant and guiding light. In 1949, Voroshilov published as his own work the Russian edition of *Stalin and the Armed Forces of the USSR* (p. 399), an equally fulsome volume focused on Stalin’s military leadership. N. A. Voznesenskiy, who as chairman of the state planning committee, deputy chairman of the Central Committee, and next to Stalin, the leading member of the State Defense Committee, was Zhukov’s counterpart in the economic sphere, published an account of the war economy (p. 000, n. 27) in 1947; and Stalin had him shot. War history remained thereafter a subject to be approached with the utmost circumspection.

The emergence of the Cold War in early 1946, marked by Stalin’s declaration in January that war was imminent, his ‘two armed camps’ theory announced a year later, and his rejection of the Marshall Plan for the Soviet Union and its satellites on the ground that it was nothing more than a cover for espionage, criminalized information of any sort, past or present, and made concealment a ruling principle in Soviet historiography.

Stalin’s death, in March 1953, initiated a so-called ‘thaw’, a tentative relaxation of the Stalinist system. In 1955, apparently to document the Communist Party’s right to a major share in the victory, the Central Committee’s Institute of Marxism–Leninism published the first official history of the Great Patriotic War. Written by a ‘writers’ collective’ under the supervision of Professor B. S. Telpukhovskiy and billed as a ‘popular-scientific account’, it runs close to 600 pages. Its objective was to depict the patriotic war in accordance with the ‘scientific tenets’ of Marxism–Leninism, specifically those which identified the First World War as also the ‘First Imperialist War’. It found, no surprise to Marxist–Leninists, that the United States, Britain, and France, having failed to embroil Germany and the Soviet Union in a war, provoked the Second World War, which began on 1 September 1939. The ‘perfidious’ German attack on 22 June 1941 made it necessary for the Soviet Union to take the weight of the German attack on itself and become ‘the leading force’ in the antifascist coalition; and the Western Powers confined their participation to a belated and ineffectual second front. Hence, Stalin, with the advice and support of the Communist Party, became the outstanding leader also in the world war.¹

KHRUSHCHEV’S WAR

For Nikita Krushchev, 1955 was a good year and a bad year. With Zhukov’s help, he beat off an attempt to unseat him and established himself as Stalin’s sole successor with Zhukov as his defense minister. In May, however, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), formerly the US, British, and French occupation

zones, joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), thereby terminating the possibility of its being neutralized. Having no more effective response at hand, he responded by creating the Warsaw Pact, probably, as much as for any other reason, to keep the Soviet satellites from absconding to NATO as well. At the Twentieth Party Congress, in February 1956, the first in his tenure, hence needing to show his mettle, he denounced Stalin's 'cult of personality'. In a secret speech to the congress, he exposed some of Stalin's worst errors and displays of wrong-headedness and promised to subject Stalin's war record to an intensive investigation, the results of which would be made public in a multi-volume history that would provide an accurate account of the entire war; and due credit would be given to the contributions of the Communist Party, the armed forces, and the Soviet people. The speech – in a remarkably short time – found its way into the pages of the *US Congressional Record* and the *New York Times*. Although widely taken at the time to presage the end of the iron curtain, the speech by no means did that. It did, however, have two very significant objectives: one, to bury the worst aspects of the war along with Stalin, the other – and more important – to bring a sanitized record of the war into play as a weapon in the Cold War.

The latter objective was to serve primarily as a means of preserving the Soviet status as an innocent victim of German perfidy and therewith dislodging the FRG from its association with NATO. It was getting some help from the German side: the failed Nuremberg defense was finding support in the reviving West German right wing; and, in 1951, Kurt von Tippelskirch, who had been an army commander on the Eastern Front and held a doctorate in history, published the first German history of the Second World War. He concluded that the German attack on the Soviet Union was entirely unprovoked and the Red Army was not ready for war in June 1941 but surmised that it could have been prepared in another year or two.

The Krushchev speech also generated a requirement to expose 'bourgeois falsifications' of war history, since all bourgeois historians could be assumed to be thralls of powerful groups promoting German *revanchism* and 'militarism and imperialism', of which the United States was the main instigator. In 1957, a commission of 950 Soviet and East German historians undertook to ascertain the most significant tendencies of 'reactionary' Second World War literature. The commission's finding most exploitable as proof of 'revanchism and militarism' was an assertion that von Tippelskirch and his associates, in their references to a possible future Soviet threat, were attempting, 'with feigned objectivity', to reassert the preventive war claim rejected at Nuremberg. This, together with subsidiary 'falsifications', was taken to confirm the 'idea of European integration' and the 'aggressive NATO Pact' as 'nothing but a smoke screen behind which the German militarists and *revanchists* and their militant historians and publicists conduct the ideological preparations for a third world war'.² By way of contrast, the Soviet Union would be depicted as having been unreservedly and permanently committed to the partnership with Germany and, were the FRG to mend its ways, still willing to forgive and forget.

In the late 1950s, the Red Army assumed a mission that, under Stalin, had been prohibited and still remained ominously sensitive: bringing its past to light in a

manner that would support current and future Cold War policy; but the promised multi-volume work would take years to complete. Consequently, there was a gap to be filled.

After his retirement as Chief of the General Staff in 1942, Shaposhnikov had supervised a project to develop collections of materials for that study of war experience that would give middle-level field commanders object lessons from actual battles. From those, Col. Pavel Zhilin, who had worked with Shaposhnikov during the war, headed a team that assembled a clutch of specimens which were published in 1956 under the title *Significant Great Patriotic War Operations*. Significant more as a celebration of the Red Army's prowess than as a work of history, it included enough variety to suggest an effort at objectivity.

In 1958, the defense ministry put out *The Second World War, 1939–1945*, a one-volume, 900-page, 'military historical account'. It established a format for many similar works to follow. Under the general editorship of Lieutenant General S. P. Platonov, its authors were drawn from three ranks: colonel (12), major general (3), lieutenant general (1). Four were doctoral candidates in military history, a field previously not much in demand. The Introduction identified four periods in the Second World War:

- In the first, 1 September 1939–22 June 1941, Germany unleashes the world war.
- In the second, 22 June 1941–18 November 1942, Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union begins the Great Patriotic War and the counteroffensive at Stalingrad brings the period to a decisive conclusion.
- In the third, 8 November 1942–31 January 1943, the Red Army brings about the 'decisive turning point in the Great Patriotic War and the Second World War' by victories at Stalingrad and Kursk and the first Soviet summer offensive. In it, the US forces establish 'some strategic bases' in the Pacific Ocean, complete the North African campaign together with the British, and take a foothold in southern Italy.
- The fourth, January 1944–9 May 1945, terminates the Great Patriotic War and the Second World War. Subsequently, the Soviet Union declares war on Japan, and the Red Army's destruction of the Japanese Kwantung Army forces Japan to surrender unconditionally.³

In the text, Stalin is mentioned occasionally, Krushchev frequently, and Zhukov not at all. Zhukov had run foul of Krushchev and been sent into forced retirement.

In 1960, a team of two generals and eight colonels, all doctoral candidates in the Frunze Academy, published *Fighting Mission of the Soviet Armed Forces*, a history of the armed forces since 1918 focused particularly on battles and the higher command personnel, including victims of Stalin's purge.

By the end of the 1950s other approaches were in progress. In 1957, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs published (in English) two volumes of Stalin's wartime correspondence with Roosevelt and Churchill, apparently to reconfirm Stalin's position in the Big Three, which was being somewhat threatened by the de-stalinization. The

correspondence, consisting mainly of brief and superficial exchanges, shows him only to have been a rather disagreeable pen pal. In 1959, the defense ministry began publishing the *Military-Historical Journal*, a monthly magazine that would follow the whole subsequent course of Soviet/Russian military historiography. In its early years, it catered particularly to high-ranking memoirists.

The first two of six volumes in the promised *History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union 1941–1945* appeared in 1961 as a product of the Great Patriotic War Section (created in 1957) in the Central Committee's Institute of Marxism-Leninism, which would seem to indicate a special interest on the part of the Central Committee's chairman, Khrushchev. Volume 1 covers the interwar period and the first period of the Second World War, 1 September 1939–22 June 1941, and informs the readership that there are henceforth to be two periodizations, one for the Great Patriotic War and one for the Second World War. The second period of the patriotic war, 18 November 1942–31 January 1943, is to be the third period of the world war, the third period of the patriotic war, 31 January 1943–9 May 1945, to be the fourth period of the world war; and the Soviet 'decision to honor its obligations to its allies' by attacking the Japanese forces in China becomes the 'most significant event in the fifth and last period of the world war'.⁴

Volume 2 bears the title *The Soviet People Repulse the Perfidious German Attack on the Soviet Union and Create Conditions for a Radical Turning Point in the War*. The conclusion proclaims the 'greatest result of the first period' to have been that the Red Army, by means of a strategic defensive, 'wore down and bled white the main grouping of the German-fascist armies and accumulated the strength for a decisive counteroffensive'.⁵ Stalin, who firmly believed there was no such thing as a defensive success, had, during his lifetime, not given Eremenko, who commanded Stalingrad Front, or Vasily Chuikov, who commanded the army in the city, a marshal's star. Khrushchev would probably have agreed in principle with Stalin, but he was engaged just then in providing himself with a cult of personality by inflating his own war record.

As first secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party and the political member of the military council in the Southwestern Theater and, later, the Stalingrad Front, Khrushchev had credentials somewhat similar to Stalin's. He took credit for having managed the Ukrainian state, organized and directed the partisan movement, and inspired the troops and populace.⁶ In reality, as Stalin had indicated to Harriman, the Ukraine was heavily anti-Soviet; the anti-Soviet partisans were more active than the pro-Soviet partisans; and the implication that the defenders of Stalingrad served up the victory to them did not sit well with the troops who had fought in the battle to retake the city.

On 14 October 1964, Khrushchev, whose handling of the 1961 Cuban Missile Crisis had aroused fierce resentment, particularly among the Army contingent in the Central Committee, was charged with 'subjectivism and voluntarism [*sic*]' and stripped of the general secretaryship of the party. Leonid Brezhnev, his long-time protégé and right-hand man, deserted him and took over as general secretary. In Volume 6 of the *Great Patriotic War*, the 'Summing-up',⁷ published in 1965,

Khrushchev no longer figures as a significant person; Zhukov is back among the top military; Stalin is acknowledged as ‘the Supreme Commander in the entire war’; but the strategic decisions are no longer ‘the sole result of his personal creativity but were developed in cooperation with field commands, the defense commissariat, and under the constant influence of the Communist Party.’⁸

BREZHNEV’S WAR

The transfer of power began a spell of readjustment that appeared at first to moderate the dictatorship by dividing power between the party and the government. Aleksey Kosygin became the chairman of the Council of Ministers (before 1946, peoples’ commissars), that is, prime minister. Stalin, of course, had never needed to be anything more than general secretary, but Brezhnev was not Stalin. His outstanding qualification was that he had made himself acceptable to the old-line military who, alarmed by the possibility of their being replaced by missiles, believed the army that had won the patriotic war and the world war was worth preserving whatever the cost. On the other hand, economic problems resulting from the war and the Cold War and Khrushchev’s self-serving stewardship made necessary renovation and embellishment of the patriotic war as a icon.

In 1965, the main political directorate of the Army and Navy and the military history branch of the General Staff issued *Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, Short History*. Announced as a ‘popular-scientific account’ based on the six-volume history, in fact, ‘disclaimer of’ would be a better description. The first phase of the patriotic war is cast throughout as a trial and error learning process consciously undertaken; and the first phase of the second period, begun on 18 November 1942, is said to have been a ‘triumph of Soviet military art that totally demolished the military doctrine of the German armies’. The ‘destruction of the enemy on the Volga [at Stalingrad]’ becomes ‘the greatest military-political event of the Second World War’, to which nothing comparable ‘exists in the history of war’.⁹

Historiographically, the English language offspring of the *Short History* may be more significant than its parent. Published by the same editorial board and authors’ collective, it would, had it been written by ‘bourgeois’ historians, have been condemned as the rankest sort of falsification. The periodizations are not perceptible; the question of who won the world war never arises; and Stalingrad gives way to Kursk in the battle sweepstakes.

The middle and late 1960s were a time of uncertainty. The United States was turning from a strategy of massive retaliation to flexible response, which meant that Europe in general and Germany in particular could no longer rely on an American nuclear umbrella. The FRG, which had formerly depended wholly on the United States for its defense, was angling for a direct line to the USSR and receiving some encouragement from the Soviet side, but the going was not entirely smooth. On 9 February 1967, the Soviet Government sent a note to the

FRG accusing it of permitting the rebirth of Nazism and militarism and of pretending 'to speak in the name of the entire German people',¹⁰ On 9 May, however, Kosygin and US President Lyndon Johnson had an amicable meeting in Glassboro, New Jersey, and thereafter talk of détente burgeoned. Everywhere a new era appeared to be in the offing – nowhere more than in Czechoslovakia, where a distinctly lukewarm communist, Alexander Dubcek, took office in February 1968. The result was the 'Prague Spring', in which new freedoms were confirmed almost daily.

In early August a new Czech constitution sanctioned political parties other than the Communist Party. On 20 August, Soviet, Polish, East German, Hungarian, and Bulgarian troops marched on Prague, arrested Dubcek, and replaced him with an uncompromising old-line communist. The operation took less than a day. To NATO, which had always assumed the Soviet military could not prepare a major strike without its being detectable several weeks in advance, the Soviet performance was a total surprise: nothing was expected until Soviet tanks were in Prague. The FRG went into a shock deepened by an accusation from Moscow that German *revanchism* was responsible for the Czech attempt to escape from the Soviet fold and a broad hint that the Soviet Union was considering unilateral military action against the FRG as authorized in Articles 53 and 107 of the United Nations Charter. The movement toward détente would resume in a few months, and the Soviet Union would promise not to resort to the articles in the UN Charter; but allusions to German perfidy, *revanchism*, Neo-Nazism, and militarism had proved ominously effective in Soviet–German relations.

At a time of economic decline and of having very little to show for the sacrifices the war had imposed, the Brezhnev incumbency exploited and inflated the war's fading glory. In 1973, under the direction of Marshal A. A. Grechko, the military history institute of the defense ministry began publishing a 12-volume *History of the Second World War*. During the second period of the patriotic war, 18 November 1942–January 1943, Grechko had commanded the Eighteenth Army in the Caucasus and Brezhnev had been his chief political officer. The history found the Eighteenth Army's role to have been much more significant than had previously been thought. From 1967 to 1976, Grechko was also minister of defense. In 1976 (to 1981), under Grechko's direction, an eight-volume *Soviet Military Encyclopedia* began publication. In the Soviet war literature, it is the most free of political claptrap and the best source of basic information. The Second World War history energetically continues and expands the 'unmasking' of the 'preventive war legend' and the exposure of 'falsification'.¹¹

Having made clear how far he would tolerate liberalization in historiography (not very much), Brezhnev showed himself prepared to permit limited disclosure, especially with respect to the 1941 summer disasters, which had been passed over in rather unseemly haste in the earlier histories and could provoke speculation that the Soviet Army might still be similarly vulnerable. In his memoirs (1968), Zhukov describes the Red Army as having been mainly the victim of Stalin's interference with what would have been an effective defensive deployment. A

1974 study of the initial period of war, directed by General S. P. Ivanov, chief of the General Staff Academy, proffers a more forthright assertion:

The plan that the Soviet High Command worked out to repel fascist aggression was an active and energetic one. ... Planning and preparations for the initial operations were based on the idea of making a powerful retaliatory attack against the enemy. The entire system for strategic deployment of the armed forces was subordinated to this concept. For a number of ... reasons, however – decisive among which was the error made in determining the time of fascist Germany's invasion of our country – the Soviet armed forces entered the war without completing operational deployment.¹²

The Ivanov study also discloses that Stalin had approved two plans, one begun in the winter, the other in the spring of 1941: the first being the one Zhukov had described, the second, actually the 'Considerations', having included 'winning air supremacy' and 'disrupting the enemy's strategic deployment'.

A year later, in his memoirs, Vasilevskiy added substance:

... if our military units and formations had been mobilized at the proper time, had been deployed as specified in their plans for border war, and had, in accordance with those, organized close coordination between artillery, armor and aviation, it could be asserted that the enemy would have been dealt such losses already on the first day of the war that he could not have advanced farther into our country.¹³

Zhukov, Ivanov, and Vasilevskiy, of course, knew much more precisely whereof they spoke, as many others, no doubt, did.

The Soviet switch to détente, the 1970 Treaty of Moscow between the Soviet Union and the FRG, and the Final Act of the European Security Conference (1975) diminished the threat of Soviet military intervention and for some years, modified the tone of Soviet opposition to NATO; but the volumes of the *History of the Second World War*, appearing at the rate of somewhat more than one a year, kept the 'unmasking of the preventive war legend' and its associated 'falsifications' current. Volume 12 (1982) devotes 15 pages to 'The Reactionary Character of Bourgeois World War Two Historiography', in which Volume 3 of the US Army's German–Soviet War series, *Stalingrad to Berlin: The German Defeat in the East*, is a specimen. The author, Earl F. Ziemke, is revealed to have used the term 'defensive minded' in one reference to the Red Army. Volume 12 also assesses the effectiveness of the Red Army's military theory, art of war, and strategy. With regard to the first, it declares the 'commanders and staffs' to have been determined to 'master the most modern theory of deep operations' and the provisions of *PU 39* to have been entirely correct. In reference to the latter, the 'outstanding operations of the Soviet forces' become examples of 'creative development and mastery of strategic, operational, and tactical art at all levels'. Lastly, the war against Germany and Japan 'clearly demonstrates the high leadership attainments of the Soviet commands, their operational and strategic maturity, and the superior military

capability of the entire armed forces personnel'.¹⁴ The twelfth volume also declares the Soviet Union to have provided the basis on which the antifascist coalition was formed but does tacitly acknowledge the size of the forces engaged and area involved to have been largely accountable for that.¹⁵ Volume 11 may be the only place in the Soviet literature where 15 August 1945 is given as the end of the Second World War, not 2 September, which suits the Soviet version of its war with Japan much better.¹⁶

Choosing what could hardly have been a less felicitous time from the standpoint of the Soviet condition, the authors of Volume 12 also resort to reviving the 'crisis of capitalism theory' that for long encouraged Stalin. The 'contradictions of capitalism' are, in their estimation, multiplying; cyclical crises have already broken out in 1948/50; 19 million people are out of work in 1980; in the United States and other NATO countries, the military-industrial complex is 'militarizing entire nations'.¹⁷

On 27 December 1979, Soviet forces entered Afghanistan to restore to power a recently elected communist government that had been promptly overthrown. The Soviet Union declared it was acting in accordance with the 'Brezhnev Doctrine' enunciated in 1968 during the Czech crisis, which required the community of communist states to police its members. The United States maintained that the invasion was a challenge to its 'containment' doctrine that required it to prevent Soviet expansion beyond the 1945 boundaries of it and its satellites. The result was an instantaneous and virulent revival of the Cold War.

In early 1980, a NATO decision to station intermediate range nuclear missiles in Germany and the western European government's decision to rebuild their armed forces, combined with the catastrophic state of the Soviet system and failure to make headway in Afghanistan, brought on the most intensive campaign against 'bourgeois falsification' yet seen. Volumes devoted exclusively to the subject published in 1983, 1984, and 1985, 'exposed' thousands of 'falsehoods' and 'insinuations' in Western war literature.¹⁸ The objective was to indict the United States and its allies as engaged in an alleged 'global conspiracy' against the Soviet Union. Fostering a 'myth of a Soviet threat' in which a 'preventive war legend' figured prominently headed the Soviet charges.¹⁹ Both are 'deliberate falsehoods' because, 'Historical facts irrefutably confirm that the Soviet Union never planned any kind of aggressive action, never contemplated and does not contemplate any kind of attack.'²⁰ In all three volumes, the US Army's *Stalingrad to Berlin* floats busily amidst accusations the specific application of which is often difficult to discern since there are a myth of a German preventive war, a Soviet preventive war legend, and a general preventive war myth or legend. The assumption seems to be that anything written without the benefit of 'Marxist-Leninist scientific' guidance is automatically disseminating some falsehood or other.

In the Soviet Foreign Ministry's journal, *International Affairs*, Neo-Nazis, militarists and other *revanchist* groups hitherto characterized as baleful influences become outright instruments of official policy:

Against the background of sharper political struggles in the FRG and the mass movement against the deployment in its territory of American first-strike nuclear missiles, the ‘Neo-Nazi reserve’ is used by the country’s ruling quarters to do the ‘spade work’, i.e., for kindling anticommunist hysteria and chauvinism and hunting progressive forces.²¹

GORBACHEV’S ‘OPENNESS’

In the early 1980s, the Soviet Union drifted steadily toward its final crisis. Brezhnev died in 1982 without doing anything to terminate the conflict he had begun. Neither of his immediate successors, Yuri Andropov or Konstantin Chernenko, was in power long enough – or competent – to do anything significant about the state of the nation or the war in Afghanistan. On 11 March 1985, a day after Chernenko died, Mikhail Gorbachev became general secretary of the Communist Party. In a V-E Day speech on 9 May 1985, Gorbachev said, ‘It would be relevant here to point out the increasing danger of West German *revanchism* which is being reanimated with the active participation of the United States’ leadership.’ At the Twenty-seventh Party Congress in February 1986, he inaugurated a policy of *glasnost* (openness) and called for an ‘early and complete’ reappraisal of the Second World War in keeping with ‘concrete [Marxist–Leninist] scientific principles’ and a ‘continuing struggle against bourgeois ideology, revisionism, and dogmatism’. One of the outstanding achievements of *glasnost* was the ‘discovery’, in 1989, that there had been secret protocols to the Nazi–Soviet Pact and the 1939 Treaty of Friendship.²²

In the midst of those developments, the West German *Bundeswehr*’s Military History Research Institute began publishing a projected eight-volume history which, owing to the institute’s having accepted the Soviet contention that the July 1941 battle at Yelnya decided the war against Germany, bears the title *Germany and [not in] the Second World War* and is therefore catalogued in most libraries as German not Second World War history even though the battle was fought in the world war by the Soviet periodization. Volume 4, *The Attack on the Soviet Union*, appeared in 1983. Although confined to the planning and conduct of the 1941 summer campaign, it is a monumental, 1,170-page, six-author volume designed to address, for the first time in an officially sponsored work, the whole range of issues devolved from the conception and execution of Operation Barbarossa – at the head of which the preventive war thesis stands. In the introduction, Manfred Messerschmidt, the institute’s chief historian, passes summary judgment on it: Barbarossa ‘had nothing to do with a preventive strike; neither Hitler nor the military planners took a Soviet attack into consideration; they were set on a war of annihilation and territorial conquest’.²³ However, Joachim Hoffman, the author of the section entitled ‘The Soviet Union on the Eve of the German Attack’, maintains that the Soviet planners ‘had their own

offensive in view' and raises a question – which he answers in the affirmative at substantial length:

Even though the military-political situation of the USSR did not permit entry into the war in 1941, would it not be conceivable that the Soviet government, after consolidating its war machine and in the event of a favorable development in the general situation ... could have been prepared to intervene militarily as it did in 1945 in the war against Japan?²⁴

In *International Affairs*, Professor D. Eichholtz, head of historical research in the East German Academy of Sciences, after identifying numerous 'distortions' in Hoffman's analysis, concluded, 'The author also enlarges on the alleged aggressive intentions of the Soviet leaders in 1940–41 brazenly resurrecting the crude Nazi lie about the alleged pre-emptive character of the war unleashed by Hitler's Germany.'²⁵ Rezhe-shevskiy's *Bourgeois Historiography of the Second World War* finds Volume 4, particularly its Introduction, 'more realistic than its predecessors' but 'at the same time ... repeating on many important questions far from scientific, dubious conceptions long reiterated in bourgeois historiography'. The 'threat of a possible [Soviet] attack' is dismissed as nothing more than a 'disguised variant version of preventive war.'²⁶

THE 'GLOBAL LIE'

In an article ostensibly commemorating Zhukov published in 1990, Vladimir Karpov, who, as first secretary of the Soviet writers' union and a member of the Communist Party's Central Committee, held a leading position in the *glasnost* program, included a much abbreviated transcript of the 'Considerations on the Strategic Deployment Plan of the Soviet Armed Forces'. As the most significant single passage in Soviet Second World War historiography its first sentence bears repeating:

Assuming that Germany has installed its rear services and is about to bring in its armies, it could possibly pre-empt our deployment and launch a surprise attack. In order to prevent that it is necessary to deny the German command the initiative, pre-empt the enemy's deployment and attack the German armies at the moment they are found to be in the final deployment stage but have not yet organized a front and the coordination of forces.²⁷

Karpov presents the 'Considerations' as an example of what Zhukov's military genius would have accomplished in June 1941 had Stalin been as receptive to Zhukov's advice before the German invasion as he was during the battle for Moscow. He concludes that if the plan contained in the document had been put into effect, the Germans would have been dealt such a shock that, even if they had 'come to their senses in a week or ten days', they would have been forced on to the defensive during the first months of the war.²⁸

In 1988, General Dimitri Volkogonov, as head of the defense ministry's military history institute, charged with producing the promised new and accurate war history, published an interim report, *Stalin, Triumph and Tragedy*, in which he also quotes the passage cited above, describing it as a handwritten note Stalin probably never saw and, in any event, had not approved.²⁹

Subsequent disclosures by B. N. Petrov, V. N. Kiselev and Walerij Danilov, in the Soviet *Military-Historical Journal* and the *Austrian Military Journal* showed the 'Considerations' to in fact have been an amendment to the 'Fundamentals', a basic strategic plan ('About the Fundamentals of Red Army Strategic Deployment in the West and the East in 1940–41') written in 1940.³⁰ As such the 'Considerations' provides the missing link in the Soviet historiography of the immediate prewar period and casts new light on the German–Soviet war guilt controversy.

Soviet military force reductions announced in December 1988, the disintegration of the Soviet bloc in eastern Europe in the next year, and Gorbachev's January 1990 acceptance of German reunification 'in principle', welcomed in the West as the definitive end of the Cold War, were, in the Soviet military leadership's view, dire threats to the army's privileged position in the state and 'triggered a process of "politicization" in the army'.³¹ The military's contribution to *glasnost* had been negligible before Karpov published the 'Considerations' in March 1990, and certainly would not have permitted revelation of which the German news magazine *Der Spiegel* called 'a secret of world historical significance' for anything less than a compelling reason. As *Der Spiegel* put it, it was an admonition to the political leadership to remember where failure to heed one's military advisors could lead – and supposedly had.³² Moreover, besides being a significant political and literary figure, Karpov had first-class credentials as a spokesman for the Army, having been a colonel and one of the elite who had been awarded the title 'Hero of the Soviet Union' during the Great Patriotic War.³³ To Gorbachev, as commander in chief of the armed forces, the moral of Karpov's parable would have been abundantly clear. In fact, he had perhaps anticipated it on 12 February, when he rejected a proposal by Helmut Kohl, the West German chancellor, for a united Germany committed to NATO.³⁴ The Karpov article must have resonated at least within the army: the Petrov, Kiselev and Danilov articles all build on it.

By late 1991, the Army regarded itself as confronted with a struggle for survival comparable to that which it had experienced in the summer of 1941. The Warsaw Pact was dissolved; the non-Russian republics were talking about organizing their own armed forces; the Communist Party, formerly the Army's unflinching source of support, had been suspended; and Gorbachev, who had resigned as general secretary and commander in chief of the armed forces, had fallen prey to the false doctrines of democracy and capitalism. It was time to let the Army see for itself how the political leadership, that is, Stalin's, had once before left it – and the country – in the lurch. In that context, the 'Considerations' ceases to be a reminder of what might have been and becomes 'an extraordinarily significant document that allows us to understand better the conditions at the beginning of the war and the reverses in that period'.³⁵ In the issue in which the Petrov article appears, the

Military-Historical Journal began publishing without comment a series of hitherto top secret documents pertaining to the prewar period. Danilov concedes that the 'Considerations' shows the Soviet political and military leadership not to have hewed until the last minute 'to a defensive line as straight as the Nevskiy Prospect in St Petersburg' but concludes, as Petrov and Kiselev also do, that 'it in no way diminished the German war guilt, since it was merely a belated response to a long-planned German aggression'.³⁶ Such remembrance of the past complicated the German reunification: Gorbachev allowed Germany to remain in NATO but entered a clause in the 'Two Plus Four Treaty' completed in September 1990 that gave the Soviet forces basing rights in East Germany until 1994 – and in effect left the decision on final withdrawal to whatever government might be in power in the Soviet Union four years hence.

In 1990, seeking to acquaint its Soviet counterpart with the diversity of scholarly discussion customary in the West, the Military History Research Institute sponsored a volume of essays commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the attack of the Soviet Union. Thirty-five scholars from ten countries contributed papers on a multitude of subjects, but obviously centered on the German–Soviet war.³⁷ Gabriel Gorodetsky of the University of Tel Aviv examined Stalin's prewar strategy and concluded that 'the Soviet reaction to the German deployment ... renders absurd any suggestion that Stalin was on the brink of mounting an offensive against Germany'.³⁸ Hoffman recapitulated his estimate of the Soviet deployment given in Volume 4 of *The German Reich and the Second World War* and maintained that although Hitler did not have prior knowledge, 'he pre-empted an attack by Stalin with his own attack'.³⁹ Volkogonov and two of his deputies in the Soviet Military History Institute, Generals Yuri Kirshin and Anatoli Chor'kov, provided the Soviet contribution. Volkogonov confined himself to the nature of Stalin's leadership.⁴⁰ Kirshin argued that its qualitative deficiencies rendered the Soviet deployment's numerical strength meaningless.⁴¹ Chorkov attributed the Red Army's initial reverses entirely to the 'treacherous' German attack 'in breach of its word and of the existing nonaggression pact'.⁴²

The Military History Research Institute's effort to promote conventional scholarly discourse was itself pre-empted by the Soviet armed forces' mounting existential crisis. On 19 June 1991, Marshal Sergey Akhromeev, Gorbachev's personal military advisor, prohibited publication of the first volume in the projected eight-volume history of the Great Patriotic War, calling it 'full of lies that would damage the USSR and the Communist Party'. He also dismissed Volkogonov as head of the Military History Institute and chief editor of the history.⁴³ So much for *glasnost* in military affairs. Expressions of political disaffection in the armed forces such as the Karpov, Petrov and Kiselev articles were also ruled out. In May 1992, when Boris Yeltsin created a defense ministry in the Russian Republic, he announced that military personnel were free to engage in political activity but they would have to resign from the service first.⁴⁴ The central archive of the Soviet Ministry of Defense then passed to presidential control under orders to guard state secrets more closely.⁴⁵

From a different angle, somewhat the same can be said of *The German Reich and the Second World War*. Volume 4 – after a lawsuit – presents Hoffman’s thesis in the text and in a single, somewhat ambiguous, sentence repudiates it in the conclusion ‘Moscow harbored no offensive intention with regard to 1941 and did everything to avoid giving Berlin grounds for an invasion.’⁴⁶ In Volume 6, *The Global War*, published in 1990, the Military History Research Institute, anticipating ‘new perceptions and interpretations’ from the Soviet side, consigned further consideration of ‘the Soviet conduct of war in the larger context’ to Volume 8, which, to date, has not been published.⁴⁷

In 1996, under the title ‘The End of Global Lies’, the *Military-Historical Journal* undertook to bring ‘the propagandistic commotion aimed at “proving” Soviet aggressiveness in the prewar years ... to a logical conclusion’ – and at NATO’s then pending decision to admit former Warsaw Pact members. In three installments, it printed the ‘operational plans’ the Baltic, Western, and Kiev military districts had developed on Timoshenko’s orders in late May 1941. Those are said to have ‘categorically prohibited not only a preventive blow but also any flights or attacks across the state frontier without a decision by the High Command.’⁴⁸ However, the first sentence of Timoshenko’s directive shows the plans to have been ‘operational’ only in a very limited sense, if at all: it reads, ‘for the purpose of covering the overt mobilization (*otmobilizovaniya*), concentration and deployment of your district, you will prepare.’⁴⁹ The plans themselves manifestly apply only to a 15-day period – or until the High Command authorized ‘flights and advances across the border.’⁵⁰ Nevertheless, a possible ‘logical conclusion’ does, with the benefit of hindsight, come to mind, namely, that the German–Soviet War was a no-holds-barred fight to the death between equally ruthless totalitarian states, which both lost.

The ‘global lie’ controversy bids fair to not only continue but to gain strength in the twenty-first century. The NATO–Russia Founding Act on Mutual Cooperation and Security of 27 May 1997 established a NATO–Russia Permanent Joint Council. In the first week of September 1997, a month after the former Warsaw Pact members Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary joined NATO, the then president of Germany, Roman Herzog, anticipating a fresh wave of accusations, paid a state visit to Moscow. He and Boris Yeltsin, both approaching the end of their terms in office, agreed that ‘if our peoples’ reconciliation is to be advanced, a German–Russian commission of historians will have to be charged with the very difficult but necessary task of laying the past to rest.’⁵¹ The German press took passing notice. Five years later, on 28 May 2002, a NATO–Russia Summit in Rome issued a declaration, ‘NATO–Russia Relations: A New Quality’, in which it abolished the Permanent Joint Council and replaced it with a NATO Liaison Mission in Moscow.

In its 1994 edition, the *Soviet Military Encyclopedia* renewed the probably most brazen distortion of all, which reads,

In the interest of bringing the Second World War to a rapid end and liquidating the seats of aggression in Asia, the USSR, true to its obligations to its

allies, declared war on Japan on 8 August 1945. On 9 August, Soviet forces began operations in Manchuria against the Kwantung Army. ... The Soviet Union's entry into the war and the destruction of the Kwantung Army hastened the Japanese unconditional surrender. On the eve of the USSR's entry into war with Japan, 6 and 9 August, the USA, for the first time employing nuclear weapons, exploded two atom bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki without any military necessity. That barbaric act was meant above all to demonstrate the USA's power, and aimed at putting pressure on the Soviet Union in the resolution of postwar problems.⁵²

A passage on the Japanese casualties of the bombs does somewhat mitigate the brutality attributed to the act by reducing the number given in the first edition, 468,000, to 227,600.⁵³

Notes

I: THE MILITARY REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE

1. Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1937), v. I, p. 182.
2. Robert Paul Browder and Alexander F. Kerenskiy, eds, *The Russian Provisional Government 1917* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1961), v. I, p. 135.
3. The Bolsheviks were all relatively young. Lenin was 47, Stalin 38, Kamenev 34, and Vyacheslav Molotov, one of the superseded group, was 27 (Trotsky was 40). Seniority, as it would subsequently also be in the Communist Party and the Soviet military, was in large part qualitative. Stalin and Kamenev, for instance, traced theirs back to the movement's beginning in 1903 and could claim to be Lenin's personal disciples. A. F. Kerenskiy, *The Catastrophe* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1927), pp. 261–3, 300–2.
4. Leon Trotsky, *My Life* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970), p. 287.
5. Heinz Abosch, *Trotzki Chronik* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1973), p. 36.
6. See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), v. XXIV, pp. 84–6.
7. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Kommunisticheskaya partiya sovetского soyuza v rezolyut-siyakh syezdov, konferentsiy i plenumov TsK* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Politicheskoy Literatury, 1970), v. I, p. 509.
8. Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 296.
9. Browder and Kerenskiy, *Provisional Government*, v. III, p. 1707.
10. Trotsky, *Russian Revolution*, v. III, p. 93.
11. Abosch, *Chronik*, p. 39.
12. Trotsky, *Russian Revolution*, v. III, p. 113.
13. Browder and Kerenskiy, *Provisional Government*, v. III, p. 1770.
14. *Ibid.*, v. III, pp. 1776–8.
15. Lenin, *Works*, v. XXVI, p. 234.
16. *Ibid.*, v. XXVI, p. 239.
17. In addition to the works already cited, the following have been used in this chapter: P. N. Sobolev, ed., *History of the October Revolution* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1966); Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *The February Revolution: Petrograd, 1917* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1981); Oskar Anweiler, *The Soviets: The Russian Workers, Peasants, and Soldiers Councils* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975); John Reed, *Ten Days That Shook the World* (New York: International Publishers, 1967); David Shub, *Lenin* (New York: Doubleday, 1948); Stefan T. Possony, *Lenin: The Compulsive Revolutionary* (Chicago, IL: Henry Regnery, 1964); Isaac Deutscher, *Stalin: A Political Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949); Leon Trotsky, *Stalin* (New York: Stein & Day, 1967).

2: 'ALL POWER TO THE SOVIETS'

1. Reed, *Ten Days*, p. 110.
2. The Latvian infantry had passed a pro-Bolshevik resolution at a congress in May 1917. They had also retained their combat effectiveness and had borne the brunt of the fighting during the German offensive against Riga in September. Uldis Germanis, *Oberst Väciētis und die Lettischen Schützen im Weltkrieg und der Oktoberrevolution* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1974), pp. 261–3, 300–2.
3. Kerenskiy, *Catastrophe*, pp. 340–4.
4. The rank Antonov-Ovseenko, Krylenko, and other Bolshevik commanders referred to as lieutenants held was that of *praporshchik*, which was a less than fully commissioned grade and was usually given to recently graduated cadets. Sometimes, as in Krylenko's case, it was given to men whose education entitled them to better than enlisted status but whose political attitudes made them undesirable as officers. After November 1917, it was quite a worthwhile rank to have held since it denoted professional military competence above the non-commissioned level without carrying the stigma of having been an officer.
5. Albert Rhys Williams, *Journey into Revolution: Petrograd, 1917–1918* (Chicago, IL: Quadrangle Books, 1969), p. 125.
6. A requirement to exclude Trotsky from this (and all other) affairs in which he took a leading positive part necessitates a more elaborated contrived treatment in Soviet narrative accounts than in reference and summary works. Therefore, on the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee after 7 November see *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* (hereafter *BSE*), 3rd edn (Moscow: Izdatelstvo 'Sovetskaya Izdatelstvo Entsiklopediya', 1981), v. IXX, p. 489f and on the field staff see S. S. Khromov, ed., *Grazhdanskaya vojna i voyennaya interventsiya v SSSR entsiklopediya* (hereafter *GVE*) (Moscow: Izdatelstvo 'Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya', 1983), p. 233f and M. V. Zakharov, ed., *50 let vooruzhennykh sil SSSR* (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo, 1968), p. 17. See also Reed, *Ten Days*, p. 149, and Ronald Segal, *Leon Trotsky* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979), p. 183.
7. Reed, *Ten Days*, pp. 173–219, 350–52; Williams, *Journey*, pp. 143–54; Kerenskiy, *Catastrophe*, pp. 345–66; Robert V. Daniels, *Red October* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), pp. 203–6; N. N. Sukhanov, *The Russian Revolution 1917* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 667; P. E. Dybenko, *Die Rebellen* (Hamburg: Carl Hoym, 1923), pp. 107–24; F. F. Viktorov et al., *Istoriya Ordena Lenina Leningradskogo voyennogo okruga* (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo, 1974), pp. 16–22.
8. S. S. Lototskiy et al., *Armia sovetskaya* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Politicheskoy Literatury, 1969), p. 19; N. N. Azovtsev et al., *Grazhdanskaya vojna v SSSR* (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo, 1980), v. I, p. 76.
9. Trotsky, *Russian Revolution*, v. III, p. 290.
10. F. N. Petrov, ed., *M. V. Frunze* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Politicheskoy Literatury, 1962), pp. 103–13; S. S. Khromov, *History of Moscow* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1981), pp. 160–4; and G. N. Golikov, ed., *Velikaya Oktyabrskaya sotsialisticheskaya revolyutsiya entsiklopediya* (hereafter *VOE*) (Moscow: Izdatelstvo 'Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya', 1977), pp. 270–3, 320.
11. Lenin, *Works*, v. XXVI, pp. 296–8, 303–7.
12. Sobolev, *October Revolution*, pp. 170–3, 201, 204f, 228–31; Germanis, *Väciētis*, p. 269.
13. The number of troops actually present or accounted for was apparently about a third lower. Although the combat losses had been relatively low during the year, the *front* commands, which had 6.9 million men in March 1917, had shrunk to 4.9 million by 7 November. P. A. Rotmistrov, ed., *Istoriya voyennogo iskusstva* (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo, 1963), v. I, p. 370; *VOE*, pp. 186, 520, 530, 693.
14. Lenin, *Works*, v. XXVI, pp. 308–12; Sobolev, *October Revolution*, pp. 174–6, M. Bonch-Bruyevich, *From Tsarist General to Red Army Commander* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1966), pp. 193–215.

15. B. N. Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo 'Nauka', 1967), v. VII, pp. 262–4; *GVE*, p. 368; S. A. Tyushkevich *et al.*, *The Soviet Armed Forces: A History of Their Organizational Development* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1983), p. 12; Germanis, *Väcietis*, p. 273.
16. The officers had all been implicated in Kornilov's revolt and were being held on Kerenskiy's orders. On the Revolutionary Field Staff and other preparations against the counterrevolution see Zakharov, *50 let*, p. 19; Sobolev, *October Revolution*, p. 236.
17. F. E. Khatsevich, *Soldat velikikh boyev* (Minsk: 'Nauka i Tekhnika, 1982), pp. 219–23.
18. V. Akshinskiy, *Kliment Yefremovich Voroshilov* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Politicheskoy Literatury, 1974), pp. 23–55.
19. Lenin, *Works*, v. XXVI, pp. 24, 73.
20. J. V. Stalin, *Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), v. IV, pp. 2–25; Lenin, *Works*, v. XXVI, pp. 261–3; Judah L. Magnes, *Russia and Germany at Brest-Litovsk* (New York: Rand School of Social Sciences, 1919), pp. 28, 31, 37.
21. Lenin, *Works*, v. XXVI, p. 382.
22. *Ibid.*, v. XXVI, pp. 423–5; Dybenko, *Rebellen*, pp. 136–9; Sobolev, *October Revolution*, pp. 333–5.
23. Although 'Blyukher' (*Blücher*) was possibly the most obvious-sounding pseudonym to appear in the Russian revolutionary movement, it was not a *nom de guerre* in the same sense as the others. Some members of the Medvedev peasant family (settled in Barshchinka northwest of Moscow) into which Blyukher was born had gone locally by that name since one of their forebears, on his return from the Napoleonic Wars, had been given the nickname 'Marshal Blyukher' (after the Prussian Field Marshal Gebhard von Blücher).
24. Ministerstva Oborony SSSR, Institut Voennoy Istorii, *Sovetskaya Voennoy Entsiklopediya* (hereafter *SVE*) (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo, 1979), v. III, p. 272; V. K. Blyukher, 'Revolutsionnye otryady rabochikh, krestyan i kazakov yuzhnogo urala v boyakh za sovetskogo rodinu', in T. S. Krivov, ed., *Na yuzhnom Urale* (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo, 1958), p. 72.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 69–74; Nikolay Kondratyev, *Marshal Blyukher* (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo, 1965), pp. 71–80.
26. S. M. Korolivskiy, *Pobeda sovetskoy vlasti na Ukraine* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo 'Nauka', 1967), p. 407.
27. *VOE*, pp. 226, 655; *GVE*, pp. 249, 639; *SVE*, v. IV, p. 39, v. VIII, p. 411; Korolivskiy, *Pobeda*, pp. 402–10; Volodymyr Kubijovyc, *Ukraine: A Concise Encyclopedia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), pp. 740–2; Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, v. VII, pp. 191–9, 208–12.

3: BIRTH OF THE RED ARMY, WAR, AND PEACE

1. That the Soviet Army had been an army of a wholly new type since its inception was a fundamental premise of Soviet military thought. Its distinguishing characteristics as a type are given in the following passage from a work devoted entirely to that theme: 'V. I. Lenin repeatedly emphasized that to repel foreign imperialist invaders and put down domestic counterrevolutions above all required a powerful army. That army could only be an army of a new type: an army of free workers and peasants; an army led by the proletariat and its advance guard, the Communist Party; an army with iron military discipline and central direction, with well established party-political work and systematically structured political education of its commanders and soldiers.' N. I. Shatagin and I. P. Pusanov, *Sovetskaya armiya – armiya novogo tipa* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1957), p. 13.
2. Lenin, *Works*, v. XXIV, p. 472, v. XXIX, p. 152; Zakharov, *50 let*, p. 24.
3. N. I. Savinkin, ed., *KPSS o vooruzhennykh silakh Sovetskogo Soyuza* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1981), p. 25; Zakharov, *50 let*, p. 24.

4. Lenin, *Works*, v. XXVI, pp. 507, 576.
5. Bonch-Bruyevich, *Tsarist General*, pp. 225–41; *GVE*, pp. 194, 498.
6. Bonch-Bruyevich, *Tsarist General*, pp. 245–7; Ponomaraev, *Istoriya SSSR*, v. VII, pp. 340–5; Zakharov, *50 let*, p. 27.
7. Magnes, *Russia and Germany*, pp. 154–6.
8. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Istoriya grazhdanskoy voyny v SSSR, 1917–1922* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Politicheskoy Literatury, 1957), v. III, pp. 114–16; Trotskiy, *Stalin*, p. 253; Deutscher, *Prophet Armed*, pp. 389–93.
9. John W. Wheeler-Bennett, *Brest-Litovsk: The Forgotten Peace* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1966), p. 265; Magnes, *Russia and Germany*, p. 161.
10. Zakharov, *50 let*, pp. 21–3; Sobolev, *October Revolution*, p. 227; Akshinskiy, *Voroshilov*, p. 57; Carl Mannerheim, *The Memoirs of Marshal Mannerheim* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1954), pp. 134–53; A. G. Mazour, *Finland between East and West* (Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand, 1956), p. 50.
11. Abosch, *Chronik*, p. 53.
12. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Kommunisticheskaya partiya sovetского soyuza v rezoliutsiyakh i resheniyakh syezdov, konferentsiy i plenumov TsK*, v. II, p. 26.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 28. On the Left Communists see *BSE*, 1973, v. XIV, p. 224; *GVE*, p. 319.
14. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Resolyutsiyakh*, v. II, p. 27; Lenin, *Works*, v. XXVII, p. 126.
15. The results of the vote, although the Soviet accounts strive to avoid doing that, indicate that the Left Communists were more than just a handful of opportunists momentarily led astray by Bukharin, an inveterate deviationist. See *BSE*, 1973, v. XXIX, p. 381; *GVE*, p. 655; Lenin, *Works*, v. XXVII, p. 576.
16. Lenin, *Works*, v. XXVII, p. 162.
17. Soviet literature depicted Trotskiy as, on the one hand, wholly indifferent toward and ineffectual in all of his offices and, on the other, as a dedicated, though also ultimately ineffectual, subversive. See Bonch-Bruyevich, *Tsarist General*, pp. 265–7; Yu. I. Korablev, *Lenin i sozdaniye krasnoye armii* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo 'Nauka', 1970), pp. 199–202, 221, 262–4.
18. Abosch, *Chronik*, p. 43; Tyushkevich, *Armed Forces*, p. 25.
19. Lenin, *Works*, v. XXVII, pp. 560, 567.
20. A. I. Todorskiy, *Marshal Tukhachevskiy* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Politicheskoy Literatury, 1963), pp. 18–30; T. G. Butson, *The Tsar's Lieutenant, the Soviet Marshal* (New York: Praeger, 1963), pp. 25–7.
21. A. Vasilevskiy, 'Marshal B. M. Shaposhnikov', in *ViZh*, October 1972, pp. 32–7.
22. Karl Radek, 'Leo Trotski – Organisator des Sieges', in *Die Rote Armee, ein Sammelbuch* (Marburg: Karl Hoym Verlag, 1923), pp. 45–51; S. I. Gussev, *Die Lehren des Bürgerkrieges* (Hamburg: Verlag der Kommunistischen Internationale, 1921), p. 21; Petrov, *Frunze*, p. 117; *GVE*, p. 312; Trotskiy, *My Life*, p. 437.
23. Lenin had stopped Soviet assistance to the Finnish Red Guards in late April, and on 15 May, the last body of Soviet troops on territory Finland claimed evacuated Fort Ino on the Isthmus of Karelia after destroying its batteries, which had, together with those at Kronstadt, controlled the seaward approaches to Petrograd. Akshinskiy, *Voroshilov*, pp. 57–71; Ponomaraev, *Istoriya SSSR*, v. VII, p. 351; N. N. Azovtsev *et al.*, *Grazhdanskaya Voyna v SSSR* (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo, 1980), v. I, pp. 126–8; Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Dekrety sovetской vlasti* (hereafter *Debrety*) (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Politicheskoy Literatury, 1959–72), v. II, p. 237f; Lenin, *Works*, v. XXVII, p. 381.
24. The agreement that Stalin signed for the Council of People's Commissars allowed the Czechs to travel 'not as a military unit but as a group of free citizens' and to carry sufficient arms (100 rifles and 1 machine gun for every 1,000 men) for self-defense 'against attempts from the side of the counterrevolutionaries'. P. N. Pospelov, ed., *Dokumenty i materialy po istorii sovetского-chekhoslovatskikh otnosheniy* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo 'Nauka', 1973), v. I, p. 55.

25. Stalin's telegram of 9 April appears in *ibid.*, p. 39.
26. George Williams, Samara Branch, to DeWitt C. Poole, US Consul, Moscow, 1 June 1918, in US Diplomatic Post Records, Russia, Part II, Reel 8, frames 430f.
27. The background of the Czech uprising is treated in great detail in Victor M. Fic, *Revolutionary War for Independence and the Russian Question: Czechoslovak Army in Russia 1914–1918* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1977), and Victor M. Fic, *The Bolsheviks and the Czech Legion: The Origin of Their Armed Conflict* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1978). See also Edwin P. Hoyt, *The Army Without a Country* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), pp. 55–119; Pospelov, *Otnosheniy*, v. I, pp. 17–99; Ponomaraev, *Istoriya SSSR*, v. VII, pp. 412–15; *GVE*, p. 656f.
28. Peter Kenez, *Civil War in South Russia, 1918* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971), pp. 133–49; *GVE*, p. 193; Blyukher, 'Revolutsionnye otryady', in Krivov, ed., *Yuzhnom Urale*, pp. 74–80; G. Kh. Eikhe, *Ufinskaya avanturya Kolchaka* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1960), p. 287; Azotsev, *Grazhdanskaya vojna*, v. I, p. 157.
29. Korablev, *Lenin*, p. 279.
30. Radek, 'Leo Trotski', pp. 45–51.
31. The imperial military district headquarters which had opposed the Bolsheviks in Petrograd, Moscow, Kiev, and elsewhere had been abolished on 23 February 1918. A military district headquarters had been reactivated in Petrograd after the government moved to Moscow in March. It was and would remain in a somewhat different category than the others.
32. Korablev, *Lenin*, pp. 285–91; Azotsev, *Grazhdanskaya Vojna*, v. I, p. 171. On the April and May decisions and decrees relating to the Red Army see also A. A. Yegorovskiy *et al.*, *Istoriya uralskogo okruga* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1970), pp. 25–31, and particularly *Dekrety*, v. II, pp. 62–70, 151–7, 235–40, 287–9, 343, 428, 507.
33. *Dekrety*, v. II, p. 569f.
34. Korablev, *Lenin*, p. 250.
35. *Dekrety*, v. II, p. 429.
36. Lev Nikulin, *Tukhachevskiy: biograficheskiy ocherk* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1963), p. 46.
37. Lenin, *Works*, v. XXVII, pp. 529–31.
38. Sir Robert H. Bruce Lockhart, *British Agent* (New York: Garden City Publishing, 1933), p. 296.
39. Lenin, *Works*, v. XXVII, p. 533.
40. Sir Robert H. Bruce Lockhart, *Diaries of Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart* (London: Macmillan, 1973), v. I, p. 38.
41. L. Trotskiy, *Kak vooruzhalas revolyutsiya* (hereafter *KVR*) (Moscow: Vysshiiy Voennyy Redaktsionny Sovet, 1923), v. I, pp. 303–19; *Dekrety*, v. II, pp. 541–4.
42. *GVE*, pp. 663, 681; Petrov, *Frunze*, pp. 125–30.
43. K. E. Voroshilov, *Stalin and the Armed Forces of the USSR* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1951), p. 10.
44. Stalin, *Works*, v. IV, pp. 118–23.
45. Korablev, *Lenin*, p. 289.

4: 'IN A FIERY RING OF FRONTS'

1. Lenin, *Works*, v. XXVII, pp. 314, 365–81, 507–11, 529–31.
2. US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Russia, v. II, 1931–1932* (hereafter *FRUS*) (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1935), pp. 241–6.
3. The senior American officer was the captain of the cruiser *Olympia*, which had docked at Murmansk on 24 May. Kenneth Bourne and D. Cameron Watt, eds, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print* (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1984), Part II, Series A, v. I, pp. 148–50; Charles

- Maynard, *The Murmansk Venture* (New York: Arno Press, 1971), p. 28; Leonid I. Strakhovskiy, *The Origins of American Intervention in North Russia* (1918) (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1937), pp. 44–9.
4. Pospelov, *Otnosheniy*, v. I, p. 137; *FRUS, Russia*, v. II, p. 242.
 5. Maynard, *Murmansk Venture*, pp. 43–51. See also Viktorov, *Leningradskogo okruga*, p. 43, which gives the detachments' missions but not the outcomes, and Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Iz istorii grazhdanskoy voyny v SSR* (Moscow: 'Sovetskaya Rossiya', 1960), v. I, p. 29.
 6. Erich Ludendorff, *Urkunden der Obersten Heeresleitung* (Berlin: E. S. Mittler & Sohn, 1920), pp. 488–90; Hans W. Gatzke, 'Zu den deutsch-russischen Beziehungen im Sommer 1918', *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, no. 1 (March 1955), p. 85.
 7. Gatzke, 'Beziehungen,' pp. 77–9, 85–91.
 8. Z. A. B. Zeman, *Germany and the Revolution in Russia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 139.
 9. Gatzke, 'Beziehungen,' pp. 85, 90, 93.
 10. The theses were not published until more than a decade later and not necessarily without omissions. The Central Committee approved them on 13 May, after a report which has not been published. Lenin reported on them the next day to the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and the Moscow Soviet, but he apparently did not suggest the possibility of a military agreement of any kind. That report was published a day later in *Pravda* and *Izvestia*. (The All-Russia Central Executive Committee's approximately 200 members constituted the Soviet legislative authority in the intervals between congresses of soviets, and it had a strong and vocal Left Social Revolutionary and left-wing Bolshevik minority, which may account for the odd joint meeting with the much less important – and far less contentious – Moscow Soviet.) Lenin, *Works*, v. XXVII, pp. 360–4, 592.
 11. Richard Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917–1921* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), v. I, pp. 182f, 212f; Strakhovskiy, *Origins*, pp. 161–5; Winfried Baumgart, *Deutsche Ostpolitik 1918* (Vienna: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1966), pp. 102–5.
 12. Gatzke, 'Beziehungen,' pp. 78f, 83f.
 13. Winfried Baumgart, *Von Brest-Litovsk zur deutschen Novemberrevolution* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), p. 59; Lenin, *Works*, v. XXVII, p. 533.
 14. Trotskiy, *My Life*, p. 395.
 15. In Ekatrinnburg on 12 July, the Ural regional Soviet decided to execute Nicholas II and his family, which was done four days later. David Footman, *Civil War in Russia* (New York: Praeger, 1962), p. 99; Pospelov, *Otnosheniy*, v. I, p. 148; Azovtsev, *Grazhdanskaya voyna*, v. I, p. 181; William Henry Chamberlain, *The Russian Revolution, 1917–1921* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), p. 90.
 16. John Bradley, *Allied Intervention in Russia* (New York: Basic Books, 1968), p. 99; Chamberlain, *Revolution*, p. 58.
 17. Lenin, *Works*, v. XXVII, pp. 536, 544. Peasant unrest was widespread in the summer of 1918 and after. The Soviet authorities attributed not only it but also armed uprisings such as that at Yaroslavl and the formation of White Guards to the *kulaks*. That the *kulaks* could have been sufficiently numerous or politically organized to have been so influential is doubtful.
 18. Azovtsev, *Grazhdanskaya voyna*, v. I, p. 182; T. F. Karyaeva, ed., *Direktivy komandovaniya frontov Krasnoy Armii (1917–1922)* (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo, 1971), v. I, pp. 396–406; T. F. Karyaeva, ed., *Direktivy glavnogo komandovaniya Krasnoy Armii (1917–1920)* (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo, 1969), p. 103; I. Mints, ed., *Dokumenty po istorii grazhdanskoy voyny v SSR* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Politicheskoy Literatury, 1940), v. I, p. 364; Todorskiy, *Tukhachevskiy*, p. 35; Lenin, *Works*, v. XXVII, p. 552.
 19. Karyaeva, *Direktivy frontov*, v. I, pp. 405–8; *Dekrety*, v. III, pp. 109–14.
 20. Akshinskiy, *Voroshilov*, p. 64; K. E. Voroshilov, *Lenin, Stalin i Krasnaya Armiya* (Moscow: Partinoye Izdatelstvo, 1934), p. 44; Karyaeva, *Direktivy frontov*, v. I, p. 289.

21. Stalin, *Works*, v. IV, pp. 124–6.
22. Voroshilov, *Lenin, Stalin*, p. 46.
23. Akshinskiy, *Voroshilov*, p. 72; Aleksandr Zolotrubov, *Budennyi* (Moscow: ‘Molodaya Gvardiya’, 1983), pp. 25–7; Mints, *Dokumenty*, v. I, pp. 221.
24. GVE, pp. 193, 405–7; Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. III.
25. Baumgart, *Ostpolitik*, pp. 106–9, *Brest-Litovsk*, pp. 91, 94; Fritz Fischer, *Griff nach der Weltmacht* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1964), pp. 768–72; Germany, Reichsarchiv, *Der Weltkrieg 1914 bis 1918* (Berlin: E. S. Mittler & Sohn, 1942), v. XIII, pp. 390–2. See also Louis Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1951), v. I, pp. 128–30.
26. Karyeva, *Glavnogo komandovaniya*, pp. 63, 77, 108; Trotskiy, *My Life*, p. 396; GVE, p. 223; Baumgart, *Brest-Litovsk*, pp. 95, 100.
27. Jan M. Meijer, ed., *The Trotsky Papers 1917–1922* (The Hague: Mouton, 1964), v. I, pp. 91, 107.
28. Zakharov, *50 let*, p. 41.
29. N. I. Shatagin, *Organizatsiya i stroitelstvo Sovetskoj armii v period inostrannoy voyny interventsii i grazhdanskoy voyny* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1954), pp. 129–33; Korablev, *Lenin*, p. 319; Azovtsev, *Grazhdanskaya voyna*, v. I, p. 173.
30. Baumgart, *Ostpolitik*, p. 110; Karyeva, *Glavnogo komandovaniya*, p. 108f, *Direktivy Frontov*, p. 426.
31. Wheeler-Bennett, *Brest-Litovsk*, pp. 429–38; Baumgart, *Ostpolitik*, p. 203.
32. Trotskiy, *My Life*, pp. 395–410.
33. GVE, pp. 18, 376, 405; Azovtsev, *Grazhdanskaya voyna*, v. I, pp. 184–7; Korablev, *Lenin*, pp. 314, 319; Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Iz istorii*, v. I, p. 150.
34. Pospelov, *Otnosheniy*, pp. 153, 161, 172; FRUS, *Russia*, v. II, p. 374–5.
35. FRUS, *Russia*, pp. 287–90, 328; George F. Kennan, *Soviet–American Relations in the Atomic Age* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1965), v. II, pp. 412–15; Frederick Palmer, *Newton D. Baker* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1931), pp. 316–23.

5: AN ARMED CAMP

1. *Dekrety*, v. III, pp. 266, 267.
2. Jane Degras, ed., *Documents on Soviet Foreign Policy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), v. I, p. 98f.
3. *Dekrety*, v. III, p. 268.
4. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, pp. 67, 93–7, 107; Bonch-Bruyevich, *Tsarist General*, pp. 306–8, 311, 331.
5. Rattel had replaced Bonch-Bruyevich in the Supreme Military Council on 27 August after the latter, who was no doubt aware of Vatsetis’s pending appointment, had resigned. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Iz istorii*, v. III, p. 151; Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, pp. 105, 123.
6. GVE, pp. 246f, 376–8, 540; Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, p. 125; Karyeva, *Direktivy frontov*, v. I, p. 438.
7. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, p. 127f.
8. *Dekrety*, v. III, p. 372f; Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, p. 119.
9. Karyeva, *Glavnogo komandovaniya*, p. 54; GVE, p. 216.
10. *Dekrety*, v. IV, pp. 150–60; Gussew, *Lehren des Bürgerkrieges*, pp. 67–70.
11. Trotskiy, *My Life*, p. 438.
12. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, pp. 91, 117, 149; GVE, p. 28; Korablev, *Lenin*, p. 333; Kirill Meretskoy, *Serving the People* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1971), pp. 45–56; Azovtsev, *Grazhdanskaya voyna*, v. I, p. 174.
13. Stalin, *Works*, v. IV, pp. 131, 133.

14. Karyaeva, *Direktivny frontov*, v. I, pp. 131, 133f.
15. Zakharov, *50 let*, p. 53, gives 60,000. South Front report in Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Iz istorii* (v. I, p. 502) gives the Tenth Army strength as of 30 October 1918 as 66,664, and the combined total of the Cossacks facing Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Armies as approximately 85,000.
16. I. L. Sorokin, whom Stalin had appointed to command the North Caucasus forces, was executed on 1 November 1918, after he had arrested and had shot the North Caucasus government and party leadership and a member of the Eleventh Army RMC.
17. Mints, *Dokumenty*, v. I, p. 396.
18. The events of the second Tsaritsyn encirclement and the circumstances attending it are covered in Karyaeva, *Direktivny frontov*, v. I, pp. 343–59; Mints, *Dokumenty*, v. I, pp. 383–97; Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskaya voynv*, v. III, p. 256–9; Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, pp. 135, 141, 153, 159–63; *GVE*, p. 407; Azovtsev, *Grazhdanskaya voyna*, v. I, p. 228f; Ya. M. Sverdlov, *Izbrannye proizvedeniya* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Politicheskoy Literatury, 1960), v. III, pp. 33–9.
19. In his autobiography and his Stalin biography, Trotsky alludes to a meeting with Stalin aboard Sverdlov's train. The meeting, as Trotsky describes it, probably could only have occurred during Stalin's return to Moscow in early October and does not appear very likely to have taken place then. According to Trotsky, they did not talk about Stalin's future, only about that of others in the Tsaritsyn group.
Trotsky apparently renewed Stalin's appointment to the South Front RMC, but Stalin did not serve in that *front* headquarters again until October 1919. Stalin, *Works* (v. IV, p. 468), and other Soviet accounts, including *GVE* (p. 495), list Stalin as having been appointed to the RMCR 'by decision of the Council of People's Commissars' on 8 October 1918, while he was in Moscow, which appears impossible since Lenin transmitted Stalin's request for an appointment to Trotsky on 23 October. Trotsky, who also was not above shaping the facts to suit his purposes, reproduces part of the 23 October message in Stalin (p. 295) but not the passage referring to an RMCR appointment, his contentions being that Stalin was not interested in military affairs and evaded repeated attempts to bring him into the RMCR until the spring of 1920 when an appointment was forced on him. See Trotsky, *My Life*, p. 443, *Stalin*, pp. 273, 289, 295; Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, p. 160; Sverdlov, *Izbrannye*, v. III, p. 210.
20. The *Pravda* article was reprinted in Joseph V. Stalin, *The October Revolution* (New York: International Publishers, 1934), pp. 28–30. Subsequently Stalin claimed the 'practical work' he had attributed to Trotsky for himself and the reference to Trotsky was deleted in Stalin, *Works* (v. IV, pp. 155–7). See G. F. Alexandrov *et al.*, *Joseph Stalin, a Short Biography* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1949), p. 55.
21. *KVR*, v. I, p. 335; Trotsky, *Stalin*, p. 291.
22. Lenin, *Works*, v. XXVIII, pp. 128–31.
23. *Ibid.*, v. XXVIII, pp. 137–50, 179; Baumgart, *Brest-Litovsk*, p. 225; *Dekrety*, v. IV, pp. 3–10.
24. Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations*, v. I, pp. 33–55; George Stewart, *The White Armies of Russia* (New York: Macmillan, 1993), pp. 239–44; Claus Grimm, *Vor den Toren Europeas, 1918–1920* (Hamburg: Velmede Verlag, 1963), pp. 20–5, 41–6; Bourne and Watt, *Documents*, Part II, Series A, v. I, pp. xxiii, 370–9.
25. Lenin, *Works*, v. XXVIII, p. 125; Karyaeva, *Glavnogo komandevaniya*, v. I, pp. 130–1; Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Polnoye sobraniya sochineniy* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Politicheskoy Literatury, 1963), v. I, p. 221.
26. Lenin continued to issue orders and instructions to the military commands as he saw fit. While he frequently used the titled Chairman of the Defense Council in conjunction with them, they always represented an exercise of his personal prerogative.
27. *Dekrety*, v. IV, pp. 92–4, 150–7; Trotsky, *Stalin*, p. 291.
28. Mints, *Dokumenty*, v. I, p. 396.

29. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, p. 165; *KVR*, v. I, p. 350.
30. Voroshilov gave the Tenth Army strength as 'over 70,000 in infantry, cavalry and artillery – all trained' (Mints, *Dokumenty*, v. I, p. 399). The figure cited in Antom Antonov-Ovseyenko, *The Time of Stalin* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), p. 9, as having been given to the Eighth Party Congress. South Front reported a somewhat smaller figure, 66,664 (Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Iz Istorii*, v. III, p. 502). See also Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, p. 165.
31. Mints, *Dokumenty*, v. I, pp. 396, 400; *GVE*, pp. 345, 442, 519, 668; Karyaeva, *Glavnogo komandovaniya*, v. I, pp. 117–27, *Direktivny frontov*, pp. 593–612; Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, p. 197.
32. Karyaeva, *Direktivny frontov*, pp. 253–6, *Glavnogo komandovaniya*, v. I, pp. 611–30; *GVE*, pp. 385, 407.
33. Korolivskiy, *Grazhdanskoy voyna na Ukraine*, v. I, pp. xv–xviii; Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, pp. 237, 241–5.
34. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. III, pp. 354–7; *GVE*, pp. 448–51; Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, pp. 29–31.
35. See Trotskiy, *My Life*, p. 44, where Trotskiy associates the 'rotten compromise' with Voroshilov's removal from Tenth Army. See also Trotskiy, *Stalin*, p. 295f, where he associates it with Stalin's effort to secure a reappointment to South Front, and Documents 138 and 139 in Meijer, *Trotsky* (v. I, pp. 247–51), which show it to have been associated with the Rukhimovich appointment.
36. A. Denikin, *The White Army* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1930), pp. 204–11, 235–7, 240–3; Zolotrubov, *Budennyy*, pp. 32–7; Karyaeva, *Direktivny frontov*, pp. 683–6.
37. Kondratyev, *Blyukher*, pp. 149–53; Stalin, *Works*, v. IV, pp. 202–28.
38. Ullman, *Relations*, v. II, pp. 55–8; *GVE*, pp. 418–20; Georg von Rauch, *Geschichte der baltischen Staaten* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1970), pp. 50–9; Hagen Schulze, *Freikorps und Republik, 1918–1920* (Boppard am Rhein: Harald Boldt, 1969), pp. 133–5.
39. S. M. Klyatskin and A. F. Gorlenko, 'Doklady I. I. Vatsetisa V. I. Leninu', *Istoricheskiy Archiv*, no. 1, 1958, pp. 41–71; Shatagin, *Organizatsiya*, pp. 131–3; Karyaeva, *Direktivny frontov*, pp. 205–10.
40. A. Denikin, *White Army*, pp. 250–9.
41. *KVR*, v. I, p. 172.
42. Nothing approaching a complete account of the debate on military policy has been made public. The Trotskiy resolution, which is referred to in the Soviet literature as the Sokolnikov resolution or the Central Committee resolution, is printed in Robert H. McNeal, ed., *Resolutions and Decisions of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), v. II, pp. 73–83. On the proceedings otherwise, see *GVE*, pp. 98, 120; Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. IV, pp. 42–6.
43. Akshinskiy, *Voroshilov*, p. 82.
44. Stalin, *Works*, v. IV, p. 258f.
45. McNeal, *Resolutions*, v. II, pp. 81–3; Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, pp. 319–22, 325–34.
46. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, p. 333.
47. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. IV, p. 47.
48. Tyushkevich, *Armed Forces*, p. 79; I. A. Korotkov, *Istoriya sovetskoy voyennoy mysli* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo 'Nauka', 1980), p. 23; Korablev, *Lenin*, p. 419.
49. B. N. Ponomaraev, *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1963), p. 311; Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. IV, pp. 42, 45.

6: THE TEST OF BATTLE ON THREE FRONTS

1. Karyaeva, *Glavnogo komandovaniya*, p. 542f, *Direktivny frontov*, v. II, p. 619; *GVE*, p. 281.
2. A. S. Bubnov, *O krasnoy armii* (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo, 1958), p. 75; F. Novitskiy, 'Protiv Kolchaka i na putyakhk Turkestanu', in A. S. Bubnov *et al.*, eds, *Grazhdanskaya vojna* (Moscow: 'Voenny Vestnik', 1928), v. I, pp. 165–7.
3. *GVE*, pp. 51, 281, 316, 394, 631, 654, 676.
4. Shatagin, *Organizatsiya*, p. 190; Lenin, *Works*, v. XXIX, p. 275.
5. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Iz istorii*, v. II, pp. 151–3.
6. Novitskiy, 'Protiv Kolchaka', p. 173.
7. Frunze reacted more mildly to Tukhachevskiy's negative response than to Gay's, saying, according to his biography, only that he would then have to rework the directive. Gay's presence in the command he appears, from the first and not without reason, to have regarded as a threat to his own position. Gay – and others as well – no doubt believed that his credentials as a hero entitled him to precedence over Frunze. The impression of Gay as weak-kneed and irresolute, which comes mostly from Frunze and his adherents, must be taken as a stratagem in a power struggle. Karyaeva, *Glavnogo komandovaniya*, pp. 553–5; Petrov, *Frunze*, p. 158f; Nikulin, *Tukhachevskiy*, p. 73.
8. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, p. 361.
9. Karyaeva, *Glavnogo komandovaniya*, pp. 556–8.
10. Karyaeva, *Direktivny frontov*, v. II, pp. 660–2.
11. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Iz istorii*, v. II, p. 77.
12. Christopher Dobson and John Miller, *The Day They Almost Bombed Moscow* (New York: Atheneum, 1986), p. 238.
13. Chapayev took command of 25th Rifle Division on 19 April 1919. He had been one of the first group selected to attend the General Staff Academy, but being barely able to read and write, he had dropped out after two months. D. M. Furmanov, *Chapayev* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya Literatura, 1964), p. 63f.
14. Karyaeva, *Direktivny frontov*, v. II, pp. 667–72.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 672–80; M. W. Frunze, *Ausgewählte Schriften* (Berlin: Ministerium für Nationale Verteidigung, 1960), pp. 122–4.
16. Frunze had interposed Gay's dismissal and his own appointment to command Turkestan Army as preconditions for 'fast and smooth' execution of orders. Karyaeva, *Glavnogo komandovaniya*, v. II, pp. 679, 682.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 682–4.
18. Nikulin, *Tukhachevskiy*, p. 74; Todorskiy, *Tukhachevskiy*, p. 53.
19. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. IV, p. 112; Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, pp. 443, 445; S. S. Kamenev, *Zapiski o grazhdanskoy vojne i voyennoye stroitelstvo* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1963), p. 7; Karyaeva, *Direktivny frontov*, v. II, p. 687f.
20. *GVE*, p. 622; Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Iz istorii*, v. II, pp. 200–2; Karyaeva, *Direktivny frontov*, v. II, p. 687f.
21. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. IV, p. 121; Novitskiy, 'Protiv Kolchaka', v. I, p. 178; Petrov, *Frunze*, p. 78.
22. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Iz istorii*, v. II, p. 543; Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. IV, p. 174; Dimitry V. Lehovich, *White against Red* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974), p. 281; Dobson and Miller, *The Day*, p. 269.
23. *GVE*, pp. 115, 133, 158, 202, 446, 594.
24. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, pp. 417–31 *passim*.
25. The declarations of allegiance to Kolchak were pro forma concessions to the British, who wanted a unified opposition to the Bolsheviks for political reasons. Distance, poor communications, and the commanders' egoism ruled out centralized command or coordinated operations.

26. Estonian National Historical Committee, *Estonian War of Independence* (New York: Eesti Vabadusvoitlejate Liit, 1939), pp. 31–33; Grimm, *Toren*, pp. 209–29; GVE, p. 204.
27. Viktorov, *Leningradskogo voyennogo okruga*, p. 68; Lenin, *Works*, v. XXIX, pp. 402, 403.
28. Stalin, *Works*, v. IV, p. 268.
29. Karyaeva, *Direktivny frontov*, v. II, p. 94.
30. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, pp. 521–5; Trotsky, *My Life*, p. 452.
31. Institut Marksizm-Leninizm, *Iz istorii*, v. II, p. 328; Karyaeva, *Direktivny frontov*, v. II, p. 98, *Glavnogo komandovaniya*, p. 572; Lenin, *Works*, v. XXIX, p. 407.
32. Dobson and Miller, *Day*, pp. 252–5. Agar sank the *Oleg* on the night of 17 June in an unauthorized mission for which he received the Victoria Cross. By then his action could no longer have affected the outcome of the mutinies.
33. Viktorov, *Ist. L.V.O.*, p. 71; Institut Markizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoye voyny*, v. IV, p. 163, *Iz istorii*, v. II, p. 338.
34. Rodzyanko, who was well known in England where he had served in the British Army for a time after the Bolshevik revolution, had been associated with the affairs of the Northern Corps since January 1919 and had commanded the corps since 1 June, most likely expecting it to become independent soon.
35. Grimm, *Toren*, p. 248.
36. Stalin, *Works*, v. IV, p. 272; Institut Markizma-Leninizma, *Iz istorii*, v. II, p. 341; G. N. Karayev, *Razгром Yudenicha v 1919 godu* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1940), p. 227; Estonian National Historical Committee, *Estonian War*, p. 33.
37. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, pp. 550–3.
38. Karyaeva, *Direktivny frontov*, v. II, pp. 686f, 689, 701, *Glavnogo komandovaniya*, p. 571f.
39. Stalin, *Works*, v. IV, p. 272.
40. Karyaeva, *Glavnogo komandovaniya*, pp. 584, 814, 822.
41. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoye voyny*, v. IV, p. 122.
42. Karyaeva, *Glavnogo komandovaniya*, pp. 429–33; Ya. P. Krastynya, *Istoriya latyvshskikh strelkov* (Riga: Izdatelstvo 'Zinatne', 1972), p. 448.
43. Trotsky, *My Life*, p. 454; Krastynya, *Strelkov*, p. 447; Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, p. 587.
44. GVE, p. 495; Trotsky, *My Life*, p. 452, *Stalin*, p. 314f; Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, pp. 579–85.

7: THE DECISIVE BATTLES

1. Trotsky, *My Life*, p. 452.
2. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, p. 592.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 522f.
4. Lenin, *Works*, v. XX, pp. 436, 437.
5. The Central Committee plenum had decided to transfer the military headquarters from Serpukhov to Moscow when the change in command took place.
6. Trotsky, *Stalin*, p. 316.
7. Bonch-Bruyevich, *Tsarist General*, pp. 346–50.
8. Stalin, *Works*, v. IV, p. 281.
9. Karyaeva, *Direktivny frontov*, v. II, p. 110, *Glavnogo kommandovaniya*, pp. 381–4; Viktorov, *Leningradskogo voyennogo okruga*, p. 77.
10. Lehovich, *White against Red*, p. 289.
12. GVE, p. 18; Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. IV, p. 222.
11. Karyaeva, *Glavnogo kommandovaniya*, pp. 438–40; Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. IV, p. 222; Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, p. 605.
13. Karyaeva, *Glavnogo kommandovaniya*, pp. 461–6; Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, pp. 665–7.
14. Karyaeva, *Glavnogo kommandovaniya*, p. 467; Peter N. Wrangel, *Always With Honor* (New York: Robert Speller, 1957), p. 97.

15. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. IV, pp. 238–40; Karyaeva, *Glavnogo kommandovaniya*, p. 477.
16. Shatagin, *Organizatsiya*, p. 201.
17. Trotskiy, *Stalin*, p. 322.
18. Lehovich, *White against Red*, p. 356; Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. IV, p. 258.
19. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, pp. 687–91; Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. IV, p. 268.
20. Voroshilov, *Lenin, Stalin*, pp. 53–5; Stalin, *Works*, v. IV, pp. 285–8, 478.
21. Krastynya, *Strelkov*, pp. 446–7, 449.
22. On the defense of Petrograd see Trotskiy, *My Life*, pp. 427–35; *GVE*, p. 404; Viktorov, *Leningradskogo voyennogo okruga*, pp. 80–9; Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, pp. 729–31; Krastynya, *Strelkov*, pp. 528–39; Lenin, *Works*, v. XXX, p. 80.
23. *GVE*, p. 114; Krastynya, *Strelkov*, pp. 452–91.
24. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. IV, p. 284.
25. Stalin, *Works*, v. IV, p. 289.
26. Zolotrubov, *Budennyy*, pp. 50–67; *GVE*, p. 114; Karyaeva, *Direktivnyy frontov*, v. II, p. 378; N. I. Savinkin and K.M. Bogolyubov, *KPSS o vooruzhennykh silakh Sovetskogo Soyuza* (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo, 1980), p. 112.
27. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. I, p. 761.
28. *Ibid.*, See also Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Iz istorii*, v. II, p. 554; Stalin, *Works*, v. IV, p. 481.
29. *GVE*, pp. 383f, 607, 632, 635; Krastynya, *Strelkov*, pp. 19, 503–5.
30. Lenin, *Works*, v. XXX, p. 219.
31. Stalin, *Works*, v. IV, pp. 296–300.
32. Zakharov, *50 let*, p. 107; Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Iz istorii*, v. II, pp. 824, 826.
33. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. II, pp. 3–7, 9, 13–15.
34. *GVE*, pp. 195, 383.
35. Lehovich, *White against Red*, p. 367f.
36. Stalin, *Works*, v. IV, p. 303.
37. Michael Palij, *The Anarchism of Nestor Makhno, 1918–1921* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1976), p. 209f.
38. The designation ‘composite’ was applied to units that did not conform to the standard tables of organization. The Composite Cavalry Corps became First Cavalry Corps in May 1920.
39. Zolotrubov, *Budennyy*, pp. 76–8.
40. Karyaeva, *Glavnogo kommandovaniya*, p. 728.
41. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. II, p. 25.
42. Zolotrubov, *Budennyy*, p. 81.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
44. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. II, p. 11.
45. *Ibid.*, pp. 25–9.
46. Zolotrubov, *Budennyy*, p. 82.
47. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. IV, pp. 295–8; *GVE*, p. 586.
48. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. II, p. 39.
49. Todorskiy, *Tukhachevskiy*, p. 61.
50. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. II, pp. 61, 67.
51. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. IV, p. 298.
52. Wrangel, *Honor*, p. 138.

8: DEFEAT AND VICTORY

1. Lenin, *Works*, v. XXX, p. 442.
2. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Kommunisticheskaya Partiya v rezolyutsiyakh i resheniyakh syezдов, konferentsiy, plenumov Tsk* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Politicheskoy Literatury, 1983), v. II, pp. 240–51.
3. Lenin, *Works*, v. XXX, p. 451f.
4. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. II, p. 141.
5. Ullman, *Relations*, v. III, pp. 45–50.
6. Karyaeva, *Direktivy frontov*, v. III, p. 141.
7. Zolotrubov, *Budennyy*, pp. 87–94.
8. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. V, p. 91.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 68f.
10. The committee, which also had four commissars assigned to it, was said to have been charged with applying its military experience to administrative, economic, transportation, and supply questions. Brusilov's work and presence on it seems to have been considered valuable. *GVE*, p. 76; I. I. Rostunov, *General Brusilov* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1964), pp. 199–201.
11. *GVE*, p. 338.
12. Karyaeva, *Direktivy frontov*, v. III, p. 35.
13. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. V, p. 101. Trotskiy, in *Stalin*, p. 275, confirms Stalin's appointment to the RMCR.
14. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. II, p. 199.
15. Stalin, *Works*, v. IV, pp. 331–40.
16. Meretskov, *Serving*, p. 37.
17. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. V, p. 101.
18. Zolotrubov, *Budennyy*, p. 84; S. M. Budennyy, *Proydennyy put* (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatelstvo, 1965), v. II, p. 12.
19. Budennyy had – more circumspectly – done the same to Kamenev in Moscow in March. Kamenev had wanted to transfer First Cavalry Army to West Front by train, which would have removed the predominantly Cossack army from its native habitat in the south and perhaps have dispersed it. Budennyy had persuaded Kamenev and Lenin that the army could travel faster on horseback and be redeployed sooner if it went to Southwest Front. At the time, however, the need for reinforcements had appeared to be much greater at West Front. *Budennyy, Put*, v. II, pp. 14–25, 40–2.
20. A. I. Eremenko, *Pomni voyny* (Donetsk: Izdatelstvo 'Donbass', 1971), p. 67f.
21. *Budennyy, Put*, v. II, p. 119.
22. Karyaeva, *Direktivy frontov*, v. III, pp. 177–84.
23. *Budennyy, Put*, v. II, pp. 126, 130.
24. Karyaeva, *Direktivy frontov*, v. III, pp. 188, 190, 191; *GVE*, p. 256.
25. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Iz Istorii*, v. III, pp. 207–9.
26. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. V, pp. 134–6; *GVE*, p. 240.
27. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Iz istorii*, v. III, p. 312.
28. Stalin, *Works*, v. IV, pp. 348–53.
29. Ullman, *Relations*, v. III, pp. 146–9.
30. Karyaeva, *Direktivy frontov*, v. III, p. 215.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 217, 219; *GVE*, p. 139.
32. Ullman, *Relations*, v. III, pp. 165–7, 180–3.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 182.
34. Karyaeva, *Direktivy frontov*, v. III, pp. 225, 226, *Glavnogo kommandovaniya*, pp. 643, 644; S. F. Naiga, *O nekotorykh voprosakh istorii grazhdanskoy voyny v SSSR* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1958), p. 222.

35. Karyaeva, *Glavnogo kommandovaniya*, p. 645, *Direktivy frontov*, v. III, p. 239.
36. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. II, p. 241.
37. Stalin, *Works*, v. IV, p. 353.
38. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. II, p. 241.
39. Budenny, *Put*, v. II, p. 304; Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. V, p. 153.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
41. On events from 8 to 15 August see Karyaeva, *Glavnogo kommandovaniya*, pp. 648–54, 709, 711f, *Direktivy frontov*, v. III, pp. 79–82, 251–6; Budenny, *Put*, v. II, pp. 303, 307–10, 318; Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. V, p. 155.
42. GVE, p. 85; Karyaeva, *Glavnogo kommandovaniya*, pp. 657–9; M. K. Dziewanowski, *Joseph Pilsudski, a European Federalist* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1969), p. 303; Wrangel, *Honor*, pp. 243, 249–53; Budenny, *Put*, v. II, p. 310.
43. Karyaeva, *Direktivy frontov*, v. III, pp. 84–8; Budenny, *Put*, v. II, pp. 322, 335–9, 370–85; Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. II, pp. 263, 265; Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. V, p. 159; Norman Davies, *White Eagle, Red Star: The Polish – Soviet War, 1919–20* (London: MacDonald, 1972), pp. 226–31.
44. Stalin, *Works*, v. IV, pp. 358–62.
45. Lenin, *Works*, v. XXXI, pp. 275–9.
46. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. V, p. 177.
47. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. II, p. 177.
48. Karyaeva, *Glavnogo kommandovaniya*, pp. 668, 758.
49. Voroshilov, *Stalin*, p. 43.
50. Karyaeva, *Glavnogo kommandovaniya*, p. 767, *Direktivy frontov*, v. III, pp. 395, 408.
51. Budenny, *Put*, v. III, p. 30.
52. Karyaeva, *Glavnogo kommandovaniya*, p. 770.
53. Petrov, *Frunze*, pp. 226, 238.
54. Timoshenko transferred from 6th to 4th Cavalry Division on 5 August, and O. I. Gorodovikov took over 6th Cavalry Division on 27 October. The name of the arrested commander is not to be found.
55. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. II, pp. 439–41.
56. Budenny, *Put*, v. III, pp. 65–70.
57. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. V, p. 200.
58. Wrangel, *Honour*, p. 295.
59. GVE, pp. 284f, 448; Zakharov, *50 let*, pp. 138–48; Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskoy voyny*, v. V, pp. 195–212, 414; Wrangel, *Honor*, pp. 311–27.
60. Clara Zetkin, *Erinnerungen an Lenin* (Berlin: Verlag für Literatur und Politik, 1929), p. 20.
61. Lenin, *Works*, v. XXXI, p. 173.
62. *Ibid.*, v. XXXII, p. 173.
63. M. N. Tukhachevskiy, *Izbrannye proizvedeniya* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1964), v. I, p. 167.
64. Voroshilov, 'Stalin i krasnaya armiya', in *Lenin, Stalin*, p. 58; Bubnov, *Grazhdanskaya voyna*, v. III, p. 441.
65. Voroshilov, *Stalin*, p. 44.
66. SVE, v. IV, p. 13, v. VI, p. 203.
67. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Grazhdanskaya voyny*, v. V, p. 156.

9: CLASS WAR AND MILITARY REFORM

1. Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, v. VIII, p. 15.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 33–5.
3. Roger A. Clarke, *Soviet Economic Facts, 1917–1970* (London: Macmillan, 1970), pp. 53, 61.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 111; Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, v. VIII, pp. 21, 25.

5. SVE, v. III, p. 19.
6. See Antonov-Ovseenko's report on an investigation of the Tambov uprising in Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. II, pp. 485–563.
7. Paul Avrich, *Kronstadt 1921* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), pp. 71–4 and *passim*.
8. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. II, pp. 375–81; SVE, v. IV, p. 184, v. VI, p. 108.
9. Lenin, *Works*, v. XXX, pp. 183–5; GVE, p. 306.
10. See Avrich, *Kronstadt*, pp. 152–6, 193–210; Ponomarev, *Istoriya SSSR*, v. VIII, p. 40.
11. Tyushkevich, *Armed Forces*, pp. 93, 122; Karyava, *Direktivy frontov*, v. IV, p. 219; Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Rezolyutsiyakh*, v. II, pp. 92–101.
12. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. II, p. 397.
13. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Rezolyutsiyakh*, v. II, p. 377.
14. Walter Darnell Jacobs, *Frunze: The Soviet Clausewitz* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhof, 1969), pp. 23–9; Institute Marksizma-Leninizma, *Rezolyutsiyakh*, v. II, p. 377. The Gusev-Frunze theses appear in full in S. I. Gusev, *Grazhdanskaya voyna i krasnaya armiya, sbornik statey* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1958), pp. 120–7.
15. Meijer, *Trotsky*, pp. 415, 573–9.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Erich Wollenberg, *The Red Army* (Westport, CT: Hyperion Press, 1973), pp. 171–3; M. N. Tukhachevskiy, *Die Rote Armee und die Miliz* (Leipzig: Kleine Bibliothek der Russischen Korrespondenz, 1921), *passim*.
18. Gussev, *Die Lehren des Bürgerkrieges*, p. 17 and *passim*.
19. M. V. Frunze, *Izbranniye proizvedeniya* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1984), p. 29f.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 41, 42, 45, 47–9.
21. Stalin, *Works*, v. V, pp. 108–13.
22. Frunze, *Proizvedeniya*, p. 29.
23. A. I. Radziyevskiy, *Akademiyi imeni M.V. Frunze* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1973), p. 53.
24. KVR, v. III, pt. 2, pp. 201–9.
25. Tyushkevich, *Armed Forces*, p. 123.
26. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. II, p. 627.
27. KVR, v. III, pt. 2, pp. 212, 239.
28. Frunze, *Proizvedeniya*, pp. 200–4.
29. Lenin, *Works*, v. XXXIII, p. 305.
30. Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), v. III, p. 605.
31. KVR, v. III, pt. 2, pp. 212, 214, 250, 254.
32. Frunze, *Proizvedeniya*, pp. 83–99.
33. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Rezolyutsiyakh*, v. II, p. 529.
34. See Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Odinadtsatyy sezhd RKP (b), stenograficheskiy otchet* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Politicheskoy Literatury, 1961), p. 496f.
35. Korotkov, *Mysli*, p. 80.
36. Budenny, *Put*, v. III, pp. 291, 292; Zolotrubov, *Budenny*, p. 168.
37. Adam B. Ulam, *Stalin, the Man and His Era* (New York: Viking Press, 1973), p. 214.
38. Meijer, *Trotsky*, v. II, pp. 805, 809.
39. Lenin, *Works*, v. XXXIII, p. 490; Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Unarmed* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 88.
40. Trotsky, *My Life*, pp. 485–7.
41. Deutscher, *Prophet Unarmed*, pp. 90–3.
42. Trotsky, *My Life*, pp. 485–7.
43. I. V. Berkhin, *Voyennaya reforma v SSSR, 1924–1925 gg.* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1958), p. 46f; Tyushkevich, *Armed Forces*, p. 130.
44. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Rezolyutsiyakh*, v. III, pp. 89–94; V. V. Kuybyshev, *Izbranniye proizvedeniya* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Politicheskoy Literatury, 1988), v. II, p. 435; Berkhin, *Reforma*, p. 55.

45. Shub, *Lenin*, pp. 380–4.
46. Deutscher, *Prophet Unarmed*, pp. 111, 112; Zolotrubov, *Budennyi*, p. 174.
47. Budennyi, *Put*, v. III, pp. 323, 324.
48. Deutscher, *Prophet Unarmed*, pp. 118, 132; Trotskiy, *My Life*, p. 489.
49. Berkin, *Reforma*, pp. 59–65.
50. *Ibid.*, pp. 69, 70; Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Rezolyutsiyakh*, v. III, p. 196.
51. Frunze, *Proizvedeniya*, pp. 166–9.
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54. SVE, v. IV, p. 580.
55. *Ibid.*, v. IV, p. 52, v. VI, p. 108; Akshinskiy, *Voroshilov*, p. 266.
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59. *Ibid.*, v. II, pp. 205, 243.
60. Jürg Meister, *Soviet Warships of the Second World War* (New York: Arco Publishing, 1977), p. 7.
61. V. S. Shumikin, *Sovetskaya voyennaya aviatsiya 1917–1941* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo ‘Nauka’, 1986), p. 83.
62. Zakharov, *50 let*, p. 175.
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10: THE NEW ORDER

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2. *Ibid.*, pp. 25, 45. See also V. I. Lenin, ‘*Left Wing*’ *Communism, an Infantile Disorder* (New York: International Publishers, 1940).
3. Stalin, *Works*, v. VI, pp. 346, 364. See also Naomi Allen, ed., *Leon Trotskiy, the Challenge to the Left Opposition, 1923–25* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1975), pp. 227–38.
4. Leon Trotskiy, *1905* (New York: Random House, 1971), p. 317f.
5. E. H. Carr, *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926* (London: Macmillan, 1965), v. II, p. 38.
6. Stalin, *Works*, v. VI, p. 394f; Lenin, *Works*, v. XXXIII, p. 468.
7. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Rezolyutsiyakh*, v. III, pp. 388, 414.
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10. Stalin, *Works*, vol. VII, pp. 11–14. The talks referred to were presumably ones pertaining to German admission to the League of Nations then going on in Geneva, Switzerland.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
12. Koritskiy, *Tukhachevskiy*, p. 170.
13. John Erikson, *The Soviet High Command* (London: Macmillan, 1962), p. 785.
14. Tukhachevskiy, *Proisvedeniya*, v. I, pp. 244–58.
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20. Akshinskiy, *Voroshilov*, p. 178; Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Revolutsiyakh*, v. IV, pp. 120–23, 247; *SVE*, v. II, p. 247.
21. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Revolutsiyakh*, v. IV, pp. 276, 281.
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23. Stalin, *Works*, v. VII, pp. 291–6.
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25. Ivanov, *Tukhachevskiy*, p. 234.
26. Koritskiy, *Tukhachevskiy*, p. 304f.
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34. Tukhachevskiy, *Proizvedeniya*, v. II, pp. 3–23.
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36. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 87, 88.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 123, 145, 148.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 156. *The Attack in Positional Warfare* (Ludendorff, *Urkunden*, p. 642) put it more simply: 'The tactical envelopment of the entire positional segments is already to be aimed at in the deployment for the breakthrough battle.'
42. Reprinted (1934) in Voroshilov, *Lenin, Stalin*, pp. 41–61.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
45. Stalin, *Works*, v. V, p. 167.
46. Voroshilov, *Lenin, Stalin*, p. 60.
47. Stalin, *Works*, v. V, p. 173.
48. *Ibid.*, v. IV, pp. 360–62, 388–94.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 297f.
50. *Ibid.*, v. XII, pp. 1–113 *passim*.
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52. Budenny, *Put*, v. III, p. 340.
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11: THE RED ARMY AND THE REICHSWEHR

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4. Carsten, *Reichswehr*, pp. 48–51.
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16. Bühler, *Bismarck*, pp. 576f, 581–8.
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27. Dyakov and Bushuyeva, *Red Army*, p. 58.
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42. F. L. Carsten, 'Report by Two German Officers on the Red Army', *Slavonic Review*, v. XLI (1962), pp. 217–44.
43. Ibid., p. 228.
44. Zeidler, *Reichswehr*, p. 259.
45. Ibid., pp. 251, 256, 257.
46. Dyakov and Bushuyeva, *Red Army*, p. 111.
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48. Zeidler, *Reichswehr*, pp. 248, 249; Meretskov, *Serving*, p. 77.
49. Kennan, *Russia*, pp. 286–9.
50. F. A. Krummacher and Albert Wucher, *Die Weimarer Republik* (Munich: Verlag Kurt Desch, 1965), pp. 253, 304.
51. Ibid., pp. 406, 407.
52. Some American companies, most notably the Ford Motor Company, engaged in similar ventures, but without government protection; and they endured substantial losses. See Mira Wilkins and Frank Hill, *American Business Abroad* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1964), p. 217–27.
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55. Dyakov and Bushuyeva, *Red Army*, pp. 93–5, 241.
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57. Ibid., p. 275.
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59. Ibid., p. 15f.
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61. Max Domarus, *Hitler Reden und Proklamationen, 1932–1945* (Munich: Sueddeutscher Verlag, 1965), v. I, pp. 230, 231, 236.
62. Droste, *Chronik*, v. II/I, p. 36.
63. Zeidler, *Reichswehr*, pp. 287–89.
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66. Ibid., p. 292f.
67. Hilger and Meyer, *Allies*, pp. 255–7.

68. Dyakov and Bushuyeva, *Red Army*, p. 279f.
69. *Ibid.*, pp. 300–2.
70. Zeidler, *Reichswehr*, p. 289.
71. Dyakov and Bushuyeva, *Red Army*, p. 160.
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73. Dyakov and Bushuyeva, *Red Army*, p. 307.
74. Zeidler, *Reichswehr*, p. 293.

12: THE TUKHACHEVSKIY ERA

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2. Budenny, *Put*, v. III, p. 340f.
3. Shchetnikov and Starkov, *Marshal*, pp. 235–7.
4. Shaposhnikov, *Vospominaniya*, p. 550.
5. *SVE*, v. I, p. 150 v. VI, p. 18.
6. *IVMV*, v. I, p. 214.
7. *Ibid.*, v. I, p. 265.
8. Radziyevskiy, *Akademiy*, pp. 85–7.
9. N. P. Sunstov *et al.*, *Drasnoznamenenny dalnovostochnyy* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1985), pp. 104–6.
10. Dietrich Geyer *et al.*, *Osteuropa-Handbuch, Sowjetunion, Aussenpolitik* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1972), v. I, p. 264.
11. Tikhachevskiy, *Proizvedeniya*, v. I, p. 13.
12. *IVMV*, v. I, pp. 284, 285.
13. Stalin, *Works*, v. XIII, pp. 300, 303, 312.
14. *Ibid.*, v. XIII, pp. 308–11.
15. Nikulin, *Tikhachevskiy*, p. 177.
16. Jonathan Haslam, *The Soviet Union and the Struggle for Collective Security in Europe, 1933–1939* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1984), pp. 36–8.
17. To maintain a fictitious separation of the party and the government, foreign officials, no matter what their rank, were given access only to the nominal head of state, Mikhail Kalinin. In 1935, Anthony Eden, in Moscow by direct invitation and the highest ranking British political figure to visit Russia since the revolution, had, after much negotiation, to content himself with a meeting in the Council of Peoples Commissars Offices at which Stalin was present. Anthony Eden, *Memoirs* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1962), v. I, pp. 139, 170. Herbert von Dirksen, the German Ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1928 to 1933 and an ardent advocate of military collaboration with the Soviet Union was never granted an interview with Stalin. Herbert von Dirksen, *Moscow, Tokyo, London* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952), p. 118.
18. Orville H. Bullitt, ed., *For the President, Personal and Secret* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1972), pp. 66–9.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
20. Enzo Angelucci and Paolo Matricardi, *Complete Book of World War II Aircraft, 1933–1945* (New York: Military Press, 1988), p. 384; Eden, *Memoirs*, v. I, p. 178.
21. Gerald Howson, *Aircraft of the Spanish Civil War* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1990), pp. 197, 276; Shumikhin, *Aviatsiya*, pp. 134, 188.
22. *SVE*, v. V, p. 121f; *IVMV*, v. I, p. 299.
23. *SVE*, v. V, p. 121.
24. *SVE*, v. II, p. 273, v. VII, p. 8.
25. Zakharov, *50 let*, p. 198.

26. V. A. Anfilov, *Proval 'blitskriga'* (Moscow: 'Nauka', 1974), p. 82; *IVMV*, v. I, p. 299.
27. Tukhachevskiy, *Proizvedeniya*, v. II, p. 233–9.
28. Geyer, *Sowjetunion*, v. I, p. 266. Tukhachevskiy privately gave a direct signal to the recently appointed German military attaché, General Ernst Köstring, in October 1935, telling him he 'cherished a profound hope' that Germany and the Soviet Union would 'come together again' and adding that a war between the two would be 'an appalling misfortune for both countries' because 'the Red Army had learned a great deal'. See US Department of State, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945* (hereafter *DGFP*) (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1954–57), Series C, v. IV, p. 779.
29. *Le Temps*, 20 September 1939, in Paul Renaud, *In the Thick of the Fight* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1955), p. 48.
30. M. N. Tukhachevskiy, *Zadachi oborony SSSR* (Moscow: Partizdat Tsk VKP(b), 1936), *passim*.
31. Koritskiy, *Tukhachevskiy*, pp. 227–30.
32. Haslam, *Soviet Union*, p. 78.
33. Robert Allen Doughty, *The Seeds of Disaster: The Development of French Army Doctrine, 1919–1939* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1985), p. 17.
34. Shchetnikov and Starkov, *Marshal*, p. 247f; Butson, *Tsar's Lieutenant*, pp. 202–4.
35. Brian Bond, *British Military Policy between the Two World Wars* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), pp. 225–7.
36. Koritskiy, *Tukhachevskiy*, p. 234.
37. Giffard Martel, *The Russian Outlook* (London: Michael Joseph, 1947), p. 13.
38. Akademiya Nauk SSSR, Institut Mirovo Khozyaystva i Mirovoy Politiki, *Vooruzheniya kapitalisticheskikh strani v 1935 g.* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1936), pp. 3–20.
39. Richard Simpkin, *Deep Battle* (New York: Brassey's, 1987), pp. 1939–41; M. V. Zakharov, *Voprosy strategii i operativnogo iskusstva v sovetskikh voyennikh trudakh* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1965), p. 116.
40. M. V. Zakharov, 'O teorii glubokoy operatsii', in *ViZh*, October 1970, p. 14.
41. The General Staff Academy opened in November 1936, and the Frunze Academy thereafter confined itself to providing elementary staff training to meet the demand for lower level staff officers that the conversion to the cadre system was creating.
42. G. S. Isserson, 'Razvitiye teorii sovetskogo operativnogo iskusstva v 30-te gody', *ViZh*, January 1965, p. 41.
43. Inter-Parliamentary Union, *What Would be the Character of a New War?* (London: Victor Gollanz, 1933), pp. 23–37; Hermann Foertsch, *Kriegskunst Heute und Morgen* (Berlin: Zeitgeschichte Verlag Wilhelm Andermann, 1939), pp. 228–40.
44. Zakharov, 'O teorii', p. 12; Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Istoriya velikoy otchestvennoy voyny Sovetskogo Soyuzha, 1941–1945* (hereafter *IVOVSS*) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1961), v. I, p. 444; B. V. Panov *et al.*, *Istoriya voyenogo iskusstva* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1984), pp. 75, 92.
45. *SVE*, v. II, pp. 574.
46. Anfilov, *Proval*, p. 117; Olaf Groehler, *Geschichte des Luftkriegs* (Berlin: Militärverlag der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1980), p. 135; *SVE*, v. VIII, p. 171.
47. *IVMV*, v. I, p. 262.
48. Zakharov, 'O teorii', pp. 15, 22.
49. Zakharov, *Voprosy strategii*, p. 22; Isserson, 'Razvitiye teorii', p. 46; *SVE*, v. VI, p. 405.
50. Narodnyy Kommissariat Obrony, *Vremennyy polevoy ustav RKKK 1936 (PU 36)* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1937) pp. 9–12, in NARS RS-833.
51. *Ibid.*, pp. 83–101; *SVE*, v. II, p. 575, Fig. 1.
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54. Martel, *Outlook*, pp. 14–23.

55. Ronald Rader, 'Anglo-French Estimates of the Red Army, 1936-1937', in David R. Jones, ed., *Soviet Armed Forces Review Annual* (Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1980), p. 271.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 273; Reynaud, *Fight*, p. 58.
57. Maurice Gamelin, *Servir* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1946), v. II, pp. 245-50.
58. M. N. Tukhachevskiy, 'O novom polevom ustava RKKKA', in Tukhachevskiy, *Proizvedeniya*, v. II, pp. 245-50.

13: STALIN'S MILITARY REFORM

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2. *Time*, 21 June 1937, p. 24.
3. US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Soviet Union, 1933-1939* (hereafter *FRUS*) (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1952), p. 385; Renaud *Fight*, p. 58.
4. Thomas P. Whitney, ed., *Khrushchev Speaks* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1963), p. 440.
5. Dimitri Volkogonov, *Stalin, Triumph and Tragedy* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991), pp. 201-13; Roy Medvedev, *O Stalin i Stalinizma* (Moscow: 'Progress', 1990), p. 295; Yu. Pompeev, *Khochetsya zhit i zhit* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Politicheskoy Literatury, 1978), p. 198.
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9. Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), p. 226.
10. G. K. Zhukov, *Vospominaniya i razmishleniya* (Moscow: Novosti, 1990), v. I, pp. 219-21.
11. V. I. Kardumov, *Rokossovskiy* (Moscow: 'Molodaya Gvardiya', 1972), p. 147.
12. Zhukov, *Vospominaniya*, v. I, pp. 222-7.
13. The death dates of those named, except Fishman, appear in their entries in *SVE*. Michael Morozov, in *Die Falken des Kremel* (Munich: Langen Müller, 1982), pp. 176-9, provides a comprehensive (1936-40) list in this category.
14. *SVE*, v. IV, p. 266, v. VII, p. 410; N. I. Savinkin, *Silakh*, p. 268.
15. See Niels Erik Rosenfeldt, *Knowledge and Power: The Role of Stalin's Secret Chancellery* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde & Bagger, 1978), *passim*.
16. *SVE*, v. V, p. 273, v. VIII, p. 550.
17. *SVE*, v. II, p. 566f.
18. Meretskov, *Serving*, p. 95.
19. See Rosenfeldt, *Chancellery, passim*; *SVE*, v. I, p. 453; Simon Wolin and Robert Slusser, eds, *The Soviet Secret Police* (New York: Praeger, 1957), pp. 10-17; Victor Suvorov, *Soviet Military Intelligence* (London: Hamilton, 1984), pp. 240, 242 and *passim*; John J. Dziak, *Chekisty* (Lexington, MS: Lexington Books, 1988), pp. 60, 184-6.
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21. Meister, *Warships*, p. 166.
22. *IVMV*, v. I, p. 262.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 269.
24. Robert W. Herrick, *Soviet Naval Strategy* (Annapolis, MD: US Naval Institute, 1968), pp. 19-27.
25. Meister, *Warships*, p. 39.
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30. Kondratyev, *Blyukher*, p. 289.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 289; Zakharov, *Generalnyy shtab*, p. 143.
32. Kondratyev, *Blyukher*, p. 289.
33. Meretskov, *Serving*, p. 97; Whitney, *Khrushchev*, p. 239.
34. Kardumov, *Rokossovskiy*, p. 147f.
35. Yakovlev, *Nakanune*, pp. 93–5; *SVE*, v. V, p. 550.
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40. 'Peritinax', *The Gravediggers of France* (New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1944), p. 8.
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14: APPROACHING THE 'SECOND IMPERIALIST WAR'

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5. *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 47.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 49–52; A. P. Bondarenko *et al.*, *God krizisa* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Politicheskoy Literaturny, 1959), v. I, p. 482f.
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10. Zakharov, *Generalnyy shtab*, p. 157.
11. F. D. Volkov, *Podvig Rikharda Zorge* (Moscow: 'Maniye', 1981), p. 37; Coox, *Nomanhan*, v. I, pp. 320–39.
12. Zakharov, *Generalnyy shtab*, p. 157.
13. M. Novikov, *Pobeda na Khalkin-Gole* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Politicheskoy Literaturny, 1971), p. 39.

14. G. K. Zhukov, *The Memoirs of Marshal Zhukov* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1971), pp. 145–9.
15. Coox (*Nomonhan*, v. I, p. 261) shows the Japanese records to be painstakingly complete on everything but numerical strengths. The numbers used here, both Japanese and Soviet, are from N. F. Kuzmin, *Na strazhe mirnogo truda, 1921–1940* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1959), p. 212. Those appear to be somewhat high, though not unreasonably so, for a Japanese force that consisted in the main of 13 infantry battalions and 5 engineer companies.
16. Coox, *Nomonhan*, p. 262.
17. *SVE*, v. VIII, p. 353.
18. Coox, *Nomonhan*, v. I, pp. 320–39.
19. A. N. Radzievskiy, 'Organy upravleniya sovetskimi voyskami v period voyennykh deystviy na Khalkhin-Gole', *ViZh*, no. 8 (1939), p. 48.
20. N. N. Voronov, *Na sluzhbe voyennoy* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1963), p. 122.
21. Zakharov, *Generalnyy shtab*, p. 154; Konstantin Simonov, 'Marshal Zhukov', in *Ogonek*, 1986, no. 48, p. 8.
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23. Simonov, 'Zhukov', p. 8.
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26. Detweiler and Burdick, *Asia and the Pacific*, v. II, p. 417.
27. Höfkes, *Verbindungen*, pp. 109–13, 174–84, 199; Bondarenko, *Krizisa*, v. II, p. 277.
28. Yakovlev, *Nakanune*, p. 267; N. S. Khrushchev, 'Memuary Nikity Sergeevicha Khrushcheva', *Voprosy Istorii*, July 1990, p. 86. See also N. S. Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1990), p. 46, which gives a slightly different version.
29. Höfkes, *Verbindungen*, pp. 319–21; Bondarenko, *Krizisa*, v. II, pp. 319–21.
30. Detweiler and Burdick, *Asia and the Pacific*, v. XI, pp. 417–33. Coox, *Nomonhan*, v. II, p. 90.
31. Raymond James Sontag and James Stuart Beddie, *Nazi–Soviet Relations, 1939–1941* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1948), pp. 86, 87.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
35. See, *New York Times*, 16 September 1939, p. 1, col. 8; *Time*, 25 September 1939, p. 24; *New Statesman and Nation*, 23 September 1939; *Spectator*, 22 September 1939, p. 394.
36. The designation 'special' was given to the Belorussian and Kiev Military Districts in July 1938 when their levels of readiness were raised in conjunction with the Munich Crisis.
37. *SVE*, v. II, p. 434, v. VIII, p. 181.
38. Eremenko, *Pomni*, pp. 108–23; Voronov, *Sluzhbe*, pp. 132–4.
39. Sontag and Beddie, *Relations*, pp. 101, 102, 105–8.
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42. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
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44. *Ibid.*, pp. 214–17.
45. N. G. Kuznetsov, *Nakanune* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1963), p. 227.
46. Basov, *Flota*, p. 138.
47. Meister, *Warships*, pp. 20f, 22, 39–43, 59–65, 184–208.
48. Voronov, *Sluzhbe*, pp. 111, 112.
49. Anfilov, *Proval*, p. 117; Zakharov, *Generalnyy shtab*, pp. 177–79.
50. Narodnyy Komisariat Oborony, *Polevoy ustav (PU 39)*, pp. 9, 10, 14, 32, in NARS, R5-833.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
52. This section is based on Federal Republic of Germany, Military History Research Office, *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg* (hereafter FRG, *Zweite Weltkrieg*) (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1979), v. I, pp. 400–87.

53. Bühler, *Bismarck*, pp. 717–19.
54. FRG, *Zweite Weltkrieg*, v. I, p. 524.
55. *Ibid.*, v. II, p. 252.
56. *Ibid.*, v. II, p. 268. See also Fridolin von Senger und Etterlin, *Die Kampfpanzer von 1916–1966* (Munich: J. F. Lehmanns, 1966), pp. 555–69.

15: THE 'MOST PRESSING AND DEADLY THREAT'

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2. Meretskov, *Serving*, p. 105.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 105–9.
4. The strength figures on infantry and tanks here and to follow are derived from the allotments given in the Soviet 1939 tables of organization. Tillotson, *Finland*, pp. 134, 144; *SVE*, v. VII, p. 419, map after p. 400.
5. *SVE*, v. V, p. 123; Tillotson, *Finland*, pp. 96–114.
6. Meretskov, *Serving*, p. 108.
7. Mannerheim, *Memoirs*, pp. 350–67.
8. Meretskov, *Serving*, p. 112.
9. *IVMV*, v. III, pp. 428f; *IVOVSS*, v. I, pp. 417–19, 453, 476.
10. Tillotson, *Finland*, pp. 135–48.
11. Meretskov, *Serving*, p. 112.
12. *SVE*, v. VII, map after p. 400.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 419.
14. Earl F. Ziemke, *The German Northern Theater of Operations, 1940–1945* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1959), p. 23; *Time*, 19 February 1940, p. 22.
15. Tillotson, *Finland*, p. 173.
16. Mannerheim, *Memoirs*, pp. 360–7.
17. *SVE*, v. VII, p. 420.
18. Korotkov, *Mysli*, p. 267.
19. Zakharov, *50 let*, p. 244.
20. Volkogonov, *Stalin*, p. 365.
21. *Ibid.*
22. Zakharov, *Generalnyy shtab*, p. 185.
23. *IVMV*, v. III, pp. 430, 431.
24. I. I. Kuznetsov, 'Generalnyy 1940 goda', *ViZh*, no. 10 (October 1988), p. 30.
25. N.S. Khrushchev, *Remembers*, p. 134.
26. *IVMV*, v. III, p. 371.
27. *Ibid.*, v. III, p. 354.
28. Gabriel Gorodetsky, *Stafford Cripps' Mission to Moscow, 1940–1942* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 125.
29. Zakharov, *Generalnyy shtab*, p. 186f; M. M. Kiryana, *Voyenno-technicheskiy progress i vooruzhennyye sily SSSR* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1982), p. 137.
30. William Green and Gordon Swanborough, *The Complete Book of Fighters* (New York: Smithmark, 1994), pp. 325, 385f, 599. A twin-engine bomber, the DB-3, was already in production in late 1940. Air frames for 79 Pe-8 (TB-7) four-engine heavy bombers said to have been the equal of US B-17 had they been built. But no suitable engine for them had been developed. Olaf Groehler, *Geschichte des Luftkriegs 1910 bis 1980* (Berlin: Militärverlag der DDR, 1981), pp. 291, 303, 307, 326.
31. Zakharov, *Generalnyy shtab*, p. 176.

32. Savinkin, *Silakh*, p. 289f.
33. Narodnyy Komissariat Oborony SSSR, *Polevoy ustav Krasnoy Armii 1940 g.* (cited as *PU 40*) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1940), pp. 10, 25.
34. *PU 39*, p. 32.
35. *PU 40*, p. 10.
36. V.A. Anfilov, *Bessmertnyy podvig* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo 'Nauka', 1974), p. 128.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 129f; *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 2 October 1940.
38. Ye. A. Shilovskiy, 'Vidy operatsiy', *Voyennaya Mysl*, January 1941, pp. 20–31.
39. P. O. Korkodinov, 'Karakter sovremennykh boyev', *Voyennaya Mysl*, February 1941, pp. 72–86.
40. This section is based on FRG, *Zweite Weltkreig*, v. II, pp. 238–68, v. IV, pp. 185–269.
41. Ziemke, *Northern Theater*, p. 16.
42. Franz Halder, *Kriegstagebuch* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1963), v. II, p. 6.
43. Domarus, *Hitler*, v. II, p. 1556.
44. Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, v. II, p. 49.
45. Walther Hubatsch, *Hitlers Weisungen für die Kriegführung, 1939–1945* (Koblenz: Bernard & Graefe, 1983), p. 86.
46. Sontag and Beddie, *Relations*, p. 213, also pp. 195–209.
47. Hilger and Meyer, *Allies*, p. 321.
48. Hubatsch, *Weisungen*, p. 71.
49. Sontag and Beddie, *Relations*, p. 232.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 238.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 239.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 240.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 244f.
54. *Ibid.*, pp. 251–4.
55. A. M. Vasilevskiy, *Delo vsei zhizni* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1974), p. 111.
56. Khrushchev, *Remembers*, p. 132.
57. Sontag and Beddie, *Relations*, p. 258.

16: WAR PLANS

1. Zakharov, *50 let*, p. 198; *IVMV*, v. I, p. 270, v. II, p. 199; Y. A. Gorkov, *Kreml Stavka, Genstab* (Tver: 'RIF', 1995), p. 38.
2. Zakharov, *Generalnyy shtab*, p. 125; Gorkov, *Kreml*, p. 57.
3. *SVE*, v. II, pp. 27, 32, v. V, p. 95.
4. Valery Danilov, 'Hat der Generalstab der Roten Armee einen Präventivschlag gegen Deutschland vorbereitet?', *Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift*, January 1993, p. 42; Gorkov, *Kreml*, p. 56f.
5. Zakharov, *Generalnyy shtab*, p. 56.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 125–8.
7. *IVMV*, v. II, p. 199.
8. 'Akt o prieme Narkomata Oborony Soyuza SSSR', *ViZh*, January 1992, p. 8f; E. I. Zyuzin, 'Gotovilli SSSR preventivniy udar', *ViZh*, no. 2 (February 1992), pp. 7–29.
9. Vasilevskiy, *Delo*, p. 100; Meretskov, *Serving*, p. 122.
10. *SVE*, v. I, p. 434, v. IV, pp. 165, 615, v. VI, p. 517, v. VII, p. 301.
11. Published in *ViZh*, December 1991, pp. 17–20. See also Gorkov, *Kreml*, p. 56; Zakharov, *Generalnyy shtab*, p. 213.
12. Gorkov, *Kreml*, p. 56.
13. S. Timoshenko, K. Meretskov, ... to Stalin, Molotov, 'Soobrazheniya', 18 September 1940, *ViZh*, February 1992, pp. 22–9; Gorkov, *Kreml*, p. 58.

14. Gorkov, *Kreml*, p. 58; Zakharov, *Generalnyy shtab*, p. 220. See also Volkogonov, *Stalin*, p. 397.
15. Zakharov, *Generalnyy shtab*, p. 219.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 195; M.I. Kazakov, *Nad kartoy bylykh srazheniy* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1971), p. 52.
17. Meretskov, *Serving*, pp. 124, 125.
18. Anfilov, *Proval*, pp. 136, 154.
19. Zakharov, *Generalnyy shtab*, p. 196; Anfilov, *Proval*, p. 136.
20. Kazakov, *Nad kartoy*, p. 55.
21. Zakharov, *Generalnyy shtab*, p. 196f.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 198–201.
23. Meretskov, *Serving*, p. 124f.
24. Anfilov, *Proval*, pp. 167–9; Zakharov, *Generalnyy shtab*, pp. 203–7.
25. Zakharov, *Generalnyy shtab*, pp. 195–211.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 239–48.
27. *Ibid.* The account of the Kremlin meeting thus far is based on *ibid.*, pp. 58–61.
28. Eremenko, *Pomny*, p. 129f.
29. Wiehl, *Aufzeichnung*, 19 January 1941, in US Department of State, German Foreign Ministry Records B19/B003955.
30. Gerhard L. Weinberg, *Germany and the Soviet Union, 1939–1941* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954), p. 152f.
31. Meretskov, *Serving*, p. 129.
32. *IVMV*, v. III, p. 420; Tyushkevich, *Armed Forces*, p. 239; Shuminkin, *Aviatsiya*, p. 241; Zhukov, *Memoirs*, p. 198.
33. Gorkov, *Kreml*, p. 60.
34. Timoshenko, Meretskov ... to Stalin, *ViZh*, February 1992, pp. 24–7.
35. S. Timoshenko, G. Zhukov ... to Stalin, Molotov, ‘Rassmotreniya utochennyy plan strategicheskovo razvertyvaniya’, *ViZh*, February 1941, pp. 18–22.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 21f.
39. Gorkov, *Kreml*, p. 61.
40. B. N. Petrov, ‘O strategicheskome razvertyvanii Krasnoy Armii nakanune voyny’, *ViZh*, December 1991, p. 12.
41. Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitlers Strategie, Politik und Kriegführung, 1940–1941* (Frankfurt: Bernard & Graefe, 1965), pp. 368–72; FRG, *Zweite Weltkrieg*, v. IV, p. 240f.
42. Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, v. II, p. 258.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 467.
44. FRG, *Zweite Weltkrieg*, v. IV, p. 185.
45. Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, v. II, p. 265f.
46. See Ziemke, *Northern Theater*, pp. 121–8.
47. FRG, *Zweite Weltkrieg*, v. IV, pp. 299–318.
48. Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, v. II, p. 336.
49. FRG, *Zweite Weltkrieg*, v. IV, p. 302.

17: STALIN DECEIVED

1. S. P. Ivanov, *Nachalnyy period voyny* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1974), p. 165f; Ziemke, *Northern Theater*, p. 138; *IVMV*, v. III, p. 440; Zhukov, *Memoirs*, p. 223; Domarus, *Hitler*, v. I, pt. 2, p. 1696; Barton Whaley, *Codeword BARBAROSSA* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1973), pp. 247–66.
2. Domarus, *Hitler*, v. I, pt. 2, pp. 1662, 1663.

3. F. H. Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979).
4. Sontag and Beddie, *Relations*, p. 270.
5. They were so impressed, particularly by the capacity of the plants, that Goering pronounced them defeatists and forbade them to talk about what they had seen. FRG, *Zweite Weltkrieg*, p. 290.
6. Sontag and Beddie, *Relations*, pp. 318, 327.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 280–316, 321, 322.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 316–18, 319.
9. James E. McSherry, *Stalin, Hitler and Europe* (New York: World Publishing, 1970), v. II, p. 212.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 217f; Sontag and Beddie, *Relations*, pp. 321–4.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 309.
12. I. Zh. Yebrenev, 'Voyennye razvedchiki dokladyval', *ViZh*, February 1992, pp. 38, 39.
13. Hinsley, *Intelligence*, v. I, pp. 467–9.
14. *IVMV*, v. II, p. 439.
15. Zhukov, *Memoirs*, p. 227.
16. Foreign Broadcast Information Service, JPRS Report, 'Soviet Military Affairs', 10 July 1989, p. 61. In 1992, Lev Bezymenskiy, a veteran Soviet publicist, claiming that no stenographic record of Stalin's speech had been made, published a reconstruction that he said dated from 1948. In it, Stalin appears to have compared the Soviet armed forces very favorably with their German counterparts but only to have adopted a somewhat bellicose tone in responding to one of the subsequent toasts. Bezymenskiy also interviewed Lyashchenko, whom he quotes in the same terms as given above but without the 'two or three months' reference. Lev Bezymenskiy, 'Die Rede Stalins am 5 Mai 1941', *Osteuropa*, March 1992, pp. 242–64.
17. Sontag and Beddie, *Relations*, p. 338.
18. McSherry, *Stalin*, v. II, p. 223.
19. V. N. Kiselev, 'Upryamye fakty nachala voyny', *ViZh*, December 1991, pp. 10–17, February 1992, pp. 14–22.
20. This section is based on S. Timoshenko and G. K. Zhukov, 'Prilozheniye, soobrazheniya po planu strategicheskogo razvertyvaniya sil sovetskogo soyuza na sluchay voynys Germaniye i yeye soyuznikami', *Novaya i Novershaya Istoriya*, no. 3 (May–June 1993), pp. 5–10.
21. Gorkov, *Kreml*, p. 40.
22. *IVMV*, v. III, p. 439f, v. IV, pp. 25–8; Ivanov, *Nachalnyy period*, p. 205f; Petrov, 'Razvertyvannii', pp. 12–14; Gorkov, *Kreml*, p. 41.
23. *IVMV*, v. III, p. 437; Ivanov, *Nachalnyy period*, pp. 213–15; Anfilov, *Bessmertnyy*, pp. 173–5.
24. *IVMV*, v. III, p. 437, n.4, map 38; Zhukov, *Memoirs*, p. 251.
25. Gorkov, *Kreml*, pp. 40, 41, 44.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
27. Petrov, 'Razvertyvannii', p. 12.
28. *IVMV*, v. III, p. 440; Ivanov, *Nachalnyy period*, p. 180f; *SVE*, v. III, p. 108, v. VIII, p. 118; I. Kh. Bagramyan, *Tak nachinalas vojna* (Kiev: Izdatelstvo Politicheskoy Literatury Ukrainu, 1984), pp. 66–8.
29. Kiselev, 'Fakty', p. 16; G. F. Krivosheyev, *Grif sekretnosti snyat* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1993), pp. 162–4.
30. *SVE*, 2nd edn, 1994 (hereafter *SVE 2*), v. II, p. 36. A report on the condition of the tanks on 1 June 1941, places 83 per cent (8,244) of those in the Baltic, Western and Kiev districts in the top two of four categories: 'new' and 'well maintained and fully operational'. The KVs and T 34s, of course, were setting a standard that rendered all the others obsolete, but they had the same effect on German tanks as well. See N. P. Zolotov and S. I. Isaev, 'Boyegotovy byli ...', *ViZh*, November 1989, pp. 75–7.
31. Kiselev, 'Fakty', p. 15.
32. Gorodetsky, *Cripps*, p. 146.
33. Hinsley, *Intelligence*, v. I, p. 146.

34. Gorodetsky, *Cripps*, p. 157.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 131–5.
36. Zhukov, *Vospominaniya*, p. 366.
37. Sontag and Beddie, *Relations*, p. 345f.
38. Hinsley, *Intelligence*, v. I, p. 480.
39. Zhukov, *Vospominaniya*, v. I, p. 366.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 367.
41. Sontag and Beddie, *Relations*, p. 355.
42. Domarus, *Hitler*, v. II, p. 1734.
43. Vasilevskiy, *Delo*, p. 116.
44. Yu. A. Gorkov, 'Nakanunye 22 iyunya 1941 g', *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya* (November–December 1992), p. 6n.
45. Ivanov, *Nachalnyy period*, p. 185.
46. On the Red Army's readiness problems in detail see David M. Glantz, *Stumbling Colossus: The Red Army on the Eve of World War* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1998).
47. Bagramyan, *Voyna*, p. 76; Anfilov, *Proval*, p. 201f; Zhukov, *Vospominaniya*, v. I, p. 366.
48. Yu. A. Gorkov and Yu. N. Semin, preparers, 'Operativnye plany prigranichnykh voyennykh okrugov 1941 goda svidyetyelstvuyut: SSSR ne gotovilsya k napadyeniyu na Germaniyu' (Operational plans of the western border military districts for 1941 testify: the USSR did not prepare an attack on Germany), *ViZh*, January–February 1996, pp. 2–15, May–June 1996, pp. 4–17, July–August 1996, pp. 2–17.
49. *Ibid.*, May–June 1996, pp. 4–17.
50. *Ibid.*, January–February 1996, pp. 5, 8.
51. *Ibid.*, May–June 1996, pp. 5, 7, 17.
52. *Ibid.*, July–August, pp. 2, 3.
53. Gorkov, *Nakanunye*, p. 4.
54. *SVE* 2, v. II, p. 36; *IVMV*, v. IV, p. 18; Gorkov, *Kreml*, p. 44.
55. US Department of the Army, Pamphlet 20–261a, *The German Campaign in Russia, Planning and Operations, 1941–1942* (hereafter USDA, Pamphlet 20–261a) (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1955), pp. 38–41.
56. *SVE* 2, v. II, p. 36.
57. USDA Pamphlet 20–261a, pp. 38–41.
58. *SVE* 2, v. II, p. 36; FRG, *Zweite Weltkrieg*, v. IV, pp. 270, 316.
59. See also Glantz, *Colossus*.

18: THE RED ARMY AT BAY

1. Zhukov, *Memoirs*, p. 232.
2. A. A. Pechenkin, 'Kommanduyushche frontami, 1941 goda', *ViZh*, June 2001, p. 4.
3. FRG, *Zweite Weltkrieg*, v. IV, pp. 307–15.
4. Zhukov, *Vospominaniya*, v. II, pp. 9, 10; Yu. A. Gorkov and Yu. N. Semin, 'Stratigcheskiye proshchety verkovnogo? ...', *ViZh*, August 1992, pp. 21, 29.
5. Yu. A. Gorkov, 'Nakanunye 22 Iyunya 1941 g', *Novaya i Noveishaya Istoriya*, November–December 1992, pp. 3–5.
6. FRG, *Zweite Weltkrieg*, v. IV 452, 463, 471; Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, v. II, pp. 4–6.
7. Zhukov, *Memoirs*, p. 239.
8. *Ibid.*
9. O. A. Rzheshesvskiy, ed., *Velikaya Otechestvennaya Voyna, 1941–1945* (hereafter VOV) (Moscow: Politicheskoy Literatury, 1990), p. 418.
10. V. D. Danilov, 'Razvitiye sistemy organov strategicheskogo rukovodstva s nachalom Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny', *ViZh*, June 1987, p. 29.

11. Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, v. III, p. 5.
12. VOV, p. 419; P. A. Zhilin, ed., *Velikaya Otechestvennaya Voyna, kratkiy nauchno popularnyy ocherk* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Politicheskoy Literatury, 1970), pp. 106–10.
13. *Congressional Record*, 84th Congress, 2nd sess., 4 June 1956, p. 9395.
14. Zhukov, *Vospominaniya*, v. II, p. 10.
15. Throughout the war, *Stavka* was used in somewhat the same way as ‘the White House’ in American practice, that is, as a reference to the highest political and military authority, namely, Stalin, but with a great deal more specificity. All references to *Stavka* decisions can be taken as synonymous with ‘Stalin’. Danilov, ‘Razvitiye,’ p. 26.
16. US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1941* (hereafter *FRUS*) (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1958), v. I, p. 625; Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins* (New York: Harper, 1950), p. 305; Gorodetsky, *Cripps*, pp. 172–4.
17. J. M. A. Gwyer, *Grand Strategy* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1964), v. III, pt. 1, p. 90; Gorodetsky, *Cripps*, p. 178.
18. Ziemke, *Northern Theater*, p. 190.
19. FRG, *Zweite Weltkrieg*, v. IV, p. 473.
20. *Ibid.*, v. IV, Supplement, map 3; *IVMV*, v. IV, map 2.
21. *Ibid.*, v. IV, p. 463.
22. Gorkov and Semin, ‘Proschety,’ p. 32.
23. VOV, pp. 30, 31; Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, pp. 156–8.
24. Klaus Gerbert, ed., *Generalfeldmarschall Fedor von Bock: The War Diary 1939–1945* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Military History, 1995), pp. 225–7; Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, v. III, p. 23f.
25. Gerbert, *Bock, Diary*, p. 227.
26. Zhukov, *Memoirs*, p. 255.
27. A. I. Eremenko, *The Arduous Beginning* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1966), p. 51.
28. Gorodetsky, *Cripps*, p. 179.
29. Eremenko, *Beginning*, p. 65.
30. Khrushchev, *Remembers*, p. 132; Zhukov, *Memoirs*, p. 260.
31. Kurt von Tippelskirch, *Geshichte des Zweiten Weltkrieges* (Bonn: Athenaenum, 1956), p. 426.
32. FRG, *Zweite Weltkrieg*, p. 184.
33. K. K. Rokossovskiy, *A Soldier’s Duty* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970), p. 24; K. K. Rokossovskiy, ‘Soldatskiy dolg’, *Vizh*, August 1989, p. 60.
34. FRG, *Zweite Weltkrieg*, v. IV, p. 426.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 456.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 464.
37. N. S. Gishko, ‘GKO postanovlyayet...’, *Vizh*, February 1992, p. 33. Other members were added in 1942.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
39. Ulam, *Stalin*, p. 541.
40. Alexander Werth, *Russia at War: 1941–1945* (New York: Dutton, 1964), pp. 162–5.
41. *IVOVSS*, v. II, p. 57.
42. Gishko, v. II, p. 33f; VOV, p. 36.
43. Krivosheyev, *Grif sekretnosti snyat*, pp. 162–4.
44. Pechenkin, ‘Kommandyushche’, p. 10; Meretskov, *Serving*, p. 141.
45. Pechenkin, ‘Kommandyushche’, p. 5.
46. VOV, p. 63; A. Samoylo, *Dve zhizni* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1963), p. 326.
47. Shuminkin, *Aviatsiye*, p. 225.
48. Gorodetsky, *Cripps*, p. 181.
49. Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1971), v. II, p. 14.
50. VOV, p. 39.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 420.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 37; V. D. Danilov, 'Glavnye kommandovaniya napravleniy v Velikoy, Otechestvennoy Voyny', *ViZh*, September 1987, pp. 17–23.
53. *VOV*, p. 39.
54. Ivanov, *Nachalnyy period*, p. 273; *IVMV*, v. IV, p. 44.
55. *Ibid.*, v. IV, p. 46.
56. FRG, *Zweite Weltkrieg*, v. IV, p. 453.
57. *Ibid.*, v. IV, p. 456.
58. *Ibid.*, v. IV, pp. 456f, 692; Tippelskirch, *Weltkrieg*, p. 191; Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, pp. 167–74.
59. *VOV*, pp. 39, 40.
60. Ivanov, *Nachalnyy period*, p. 273.
61. *IVMV*, v. IV, maps 2 and 3.
62. Ivanov, *Nachalnyy period*, p. 273.
63. K. S. Moskalenko, *Na yugo-zapadnom napravlenii* (Moscow: 'Nauka', 1969), pp. 46–55; *IVOVSS*, v. II, pp. 98–103; *IVMV*, v. IV, map 3; FRG, *Zweite Weltkrieg*, v. IV, Supplement, map 8.
64. Percy Ernst Schramm, ed., *Kriegstagebuch des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht* (hereafter *OKW, Kriegstagebuch*) (Frankfurt: Bernard & Graefe, 1961–65), v. I, p. 1031.
65. Hubatsch, *Weisungen*, p. 140.
66. *SVE*, v. VII, p. 399; Zhukov, *Memoirs*, p. 274; Rokossovskiy, *Duty*, p. 25.
67. *SVE*, v. VII, p. 399 and map.
68. *Ibid.*, v. VII, p. 93 and map.
69. *OKW, Ktb*, v. I, p. 1031.
70. *Ibid.*, v. VII, p. 1032.
71. Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, v. I, p. 121.
72. *Ibid.*, v. III, p. 134.
73. Zhukov, *Memoirs*, p. 288f.
74. Sherwood, *Hopkins*, pp. 330–44.
75. *SVE*, v. VII, pp. 398–400; Rokossovskiy, *Duty*, pp. 25–39; Tippelskirch, *Weltkrieg*, p. 191.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 191f.
77. Sherwood, *Hopkins*, p. 335.
78. Zakharov, *50 let*, p. 267.
79. I. E. Krupchenko, *Sovetskiye tankovye voyska* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1973), pp. 12–14; M. V. Zakharov, *Proval gilerskogo nastupleniya na Moskvuu* (Moscow: 'Nauka', 1966), p. 165; Sherwood, *Hopkins*, p. 339; Ivanov, *Nachalnyy period*, p. 277; S. A. Tyushkevich, ed., *Sovetskiye vooruzhennyye sily* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1978), p. 139; *IVMV*, v. IV, p. 61.
80. Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, v. III, p. 170.
81. Hubatsch, *Weisungen*, pp. 148–50.
82. Eremenko, *Beginning*, pp. 201–14; Zhukov, *Memoirs*, p. 295; *IVMV*, v. IV, p. 76f; *SVE*, v. II, p. 609, v. VII, p. 427, v. VIII, p. 93.
83. Zhukov, *Memoirs*, p. 295; Eremenko, *Beginning*, pp. 216–18.
84. *OKW, Kriegstagebuch*, v. I, pp. 1055–9.
85. *Ibid.*, v. I, p. 1062.
86. Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, p. 203–6.
87. *VOV*, p. 425.
88. Gerbert, *Bock Diary*, p. 302.
89. Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, v. III, p. 308.
90. *VOV*, p. 425.
91. *SVE*, v. II, p. 496, v. III, p. 308.
92. *VOV*, p. 54.
93. S. M. Shtemenko, *The Soviet General Staff at War, 1941–45* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1981), v. I, p. 43. Moscow was bombed 59 times between 21 July and 25 October, but the total of bombs dropped was only 1,000 tons, less than 20 tons per night. FRG, *Zweite Weltkrieg*, v. VI, p. 692. In retaliation, 13 Soviet Baltic Fleet twin-engine bombers bombed

- Berlin on the night of 8 August. Flying from Saaremaa Island off the coast of Estonia, they are said to have flown 81 missions (one aircraft = one mission?) before the end of the month when the island was lost. Groehler, *Geschichte*, p. 327.
94. VOV, pp. 52, 94.
 95. F. D. Volkov, *Vslet i napadeniye Stalina* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Spektr, 1992), p. 198.
 96. VOV, p. 424.
 97. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
 98. Ziemke, *Northern Theater*, pp. 188–94.
 99. VOV, p. 38.
 100. Ziemke, *Northern Theater*, pp. 190–200.
 101. Konev had been commanding Nineteenth Army in the Reserve Front. Zhukov, *Vospominaniya*, pp. 140–4.
 102. Pechenkin, ‘Kommanduyushche’, p. 10; Meretskov, *Serving*, p. 141.
 103. FRG, *Zweite Weltkrieg*, v. VI, Supplement, map 23.
 104. Zhukov, *Memoirs*, pp. 297–9.
 105. *IVMV*, v. IV, pp. 83–5; *SVE*, v. IV, pp. 160–2; Vasilevskiy, *Delo*, pp. 146–8; I. Kh. Bagramyan, *Velikogo narodna synovya* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1984), p. 195.
 106. Tippleskirch, *Weltkrieg*, pp. 199–201.

19: THE HEARTLAND IN PERIL

1. Hubatsch, *Weisungen*, pp. 150–3.
2. FRG, *Zweite Weltkrieg*, v. IV, pp. 516, 573, 677; Gebert, *Bock, Diary*, p. 319.
3. *SVE*, v. I, p. 494.
4. FRG, *Zweite Weltkrieg*, v. IV, p. 761.
5. VOV, p. 57.
6. W. Avril Harriman and Elie Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, 1941–1946* (London: Hutchinson, 1976), pp. 87–91. The Ukrainians in large numbers, the peasantry in particular, welcomed the Germans as liberators, but Hitler solved that problem for Stalin by refusing to grant preferential treatment to any segment of the Soviet population, particularly in the Ukraine, where he proposed to employ the indigenous population as cheap industrial and agricultural labor under a German ruling class.
7. Gorodetskiy, *Cripps*, p. 243f.
8. FRG, *Zweite Weltkrieg*, v. VI, p. 761; Zhukov, *Vospominaniya*, v. II, p. 207.
9. Hinsley, *Intelligence*, v. II, p. 207.
10. The delegation appears to have had no further contact with Soviet officials after the night of the banquet and to have departed on the 4th without any of the customary formal farewells.
11. Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, v. II, pp. 263–5; *SVE*, v. I, map after p. 456.
12. Eremenko, *Beginning*, p. 240.
13. Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, v. III, p. 267.
14. Zhukov, *Vospominaniya*, v. II, pp. 215–17.
15. Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, v. III, p. 272.
16. Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, p. 233.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 234.
18. OKW, *Kriegstagebuch*, v. I, p. 1231.
19. Eremenko, *Beginning*, pp. 246–65; Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, pp. 234–42.
20. Zhukov, *Vospominaniya*, v. II, p. 215; K. M. Simonov, ‘Zametkik biografii G. K. Zhukova’, *ViZh*, August 1987, p. 56.
21. *SVE*, v. I, p. 494; Zhukov, *Vospominaniya*, v. II, p. 217.
22. Harriman and Abel, *Envoy*, p. 106.

23. VOV, p. 61.
24. Sherwood, *Hopkins*, p. 107; Harriman and Abel, *Envoy*, p. 107; Hubatsch, *Weisungen*, p. 161.
25. Volkov, *Stalina*, p. 201.
26. S. P. Platonov, *Vtoraya Mirovaya Voyna 1939–1945* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1958), p. 243; IVOVSS, v. II, pp. 158–60.
27. Nikolai Voznesenskiy, *The Economy of the USSR during World War II* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1948), p. 23.
28. Volkov, *Stalina*, p. 201.
29. VOV, p. 426.
30. Volkov, *Stalina*, p. 201.
31. Zhukov, *Memoirs*, p. 331f.
32. A. I. Shakurin, 'Aviatsionay promyshlenost v gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyna', in *Voprosy Istorii*, January 1975, p. 142f.
33. VOV, p. 63.
34. OKW, *Kriegstagebuch*, v. I, p. 1070.
35. Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, pp. 233–44; USDA, Pamphlet 20–261a, pp. 79–81.
36. Ziemke, *Northern Theater*, pp. 200–2; Tippelskirch, *Weltkrieg*, pp. 202–6.
37. IVOVSS, v. II, pp. 252–4; Werth, *Russia*, pp. 162–5; Volkov, *Stalina*, p. 202.
38. Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, v. III, p. 281.
39. *Lebenswichtige russ. Rü Industrien u. Verkehrslinien sowie anzustrebende Operationsziele, Karte I*, in AOK 18 35945/1 file NA. See also Earl F. Ziemke, 'Franz Halder at Orsha', *Military Affairs*, no. 39 (1975), pp. 173–6.
40. H. Gr. Nord, *Der Chef des Generalstabes, Ia Nr. 769/41, 2123.41*, in AOK 18 35945/1 file NA.
41. H. Gr. Süd, *Der Chef des Generalstabes, Ia Nr. 21.23.41*, in AOK 18 35945/1 file NA.
42. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma, *Velikaya otechestvenniya voyna sovetskogo soyuza (Kratkaya istoriya)* (hereafter VOV (*Kratkaya istoriya*)) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1970), p. 124; IVOVSS, v. II, p. 257.
43. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 338.
44. VOV (*Kratkaya istoriya*), p. 129.
45. H. Gr. Nord, *Der Chef des Generalstabes, Ia Nr. 769/41, Denkschrift über die Besprechung beim Chef des Gen-StdH am 13.11.41*, in AOK 18 35945/1 file NA.
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49. M. Kazakov, 'Sozdaniya i ispolzovaniye strategicheskikh rezervov', *ViZh*, December 1972, pp. 45–9.
50. VOV (*Kratkaya istoriya*), p. 124.
51. H. Gr. Mitte, *Ia Nr. 2250/41, Befehl für die Fortsetzung der Operationen, 31.10.41*, in Pz, AOK 4 22547/14 file NA.
52. Pz. AOK 3, *Ia Nr. 520/42, Gefechtsbericht Russland, 1941–42, 29.4.42*, in Pz. AOK 3 21818/2 file NA; Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, v. III, p. 290.
53. IVOVSS, v. II, p. 256; Zhukov, *Memoirs*, p. 338.
54. Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, v. III, p. 290.
55. Rokossovskiy, *Duty*, p. 70; IVOV, v. II, p. 256.
56. Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, p. 251; Zakharov, *Proval*, p. 39.
57. IVOVSS, v. II, p. 222; IVMV, v. IV, pp. 120–2.
58. Meretskov, *Serving*, pp. 157–70; IVMV, v. IV, p. 113; Wilhelm von Leeb, *Tagebuchaufzeichnungen und Lagebeurteilungen* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt Stuttgart 1976), pp. 392–94.
59. Pz. AOK 3, *Ia nr. 520/42, Gefechtsbericht*; Pz. AOK 3, ICAO, *Klimatische Verhältnisse an der oberen Volga im Winter, 27.10.41*; Pz. AOK 3 20839/5 file.

60. Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, v. III, p. 294.
61. Pz. AOK 3, *Gefechtsbericht Russland, 1941–42*, Pz. AOK 3 21818/2 file.
62. *Ibid.*
63. Pz. AOK 1, *Ia nr. 5108/41*, Pz. *Armee Befehl*, Nr. 31, 22.11.41, in Pz. AOK 1 19194/5 file NA.
64. *IVMV*, v. IV, pp. 120–2; *IVOVSS*, v. II, p. 223.

20: THE HEARTLAND PRESERVED

1. *III-AK, Stichwort-Beurteilung der Lage, 29.10.41*, in Pz. AOK 1 58689 file NA; Pz. AOK 1, *Ia Nr. 5119/41*, Pz. *Armeebefehl Nr. 38, 28.11.41*, in Pz. AOK 1, 19194/5 file NA.
2. Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, v. III, pp. 317–22.
3. Pz. AOK 1, *Ia Nr.1294/41*, an die *Herren Kommandierenden Generale, 3.12.41*, in Pz. AOK 1 19194/6 file NA.
4. *VOV*, p. 428.
5. *H. Gr. Nord, Ia Kriegstagebuch, 1–31 Dezember 1941*, in H. Gr. Nord 75128 file NA; Leeb, *Tagebuchaufzeichnungen*, pp. 401–3.
6. D. D. Lelyushenko, *Moskva-Stalingrad-Berlin-Praga* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo ‘Nauka’, 1970), p. 73.
7. Marshal V. D. Sokolovskiy puts the strength of a tank brigade at that time at one battalion of T 34s, one battalion of light tanks, and one motorized infantry battalion. He places the independent tank battalions at eleven T 34s and 3 KVs. Figures for independent tank battalions given in Krupchenko, *Tankovye voyska*, indicate 30–60 tanks. See V. D. Sokolovskiy, ‘Die sowjetische Kriegskunst in der Schlacht vor Moskau’, *Wehr-wissenschaftliche Rundschau*, no. 1 (1963), pt. 2, p. 87.
8. V. N. Yevstigneyev, *Velikaya bitva pod Moskvoy* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1961), p. 178; Zhukov, *Memoirs*, p. 340.
9. Zakharov, *Proval*, p. 278.
10. After his surrender to the Germans in early 1942, Vlasov became the commander of the German-sponsored Russian Liberation Army. Sven Steenberg, *Vlasov* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), pp. 16–19.
11. *IVOVSS*, v. II, p. 271; *IVMV*, v. IV, p. 280.
12. Zakharov, *Proval*, pp. 256–66. See also F. I. Golikov, ‘Reservnaya gotovitsiya kzashchite stolitsy’, *ViZh*, May 1996, pp. 65–76.
13. Gebert, *Bock, Diary*, p. 373f.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 376.
15. Zhukov, *Memoirs*, p. 348.
16. Sokolovskiy, ‘Kriegskunst’, p. 76.
17. Zhukov, *Memoirs*, p. 338.
18. Vasilevskiy, *Delo*, p. 164; *VOV*, p. 110.
19. Zakharov, *Proval*, p. 283.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 278–81; Yevstigneyev, *Velikaya bitva*, pp. 144–7.
21. Sokolovskiy, ‘Kriegskunst’, p. 92.
22. Zhukov, *Memoirs*, p. 348.
23. *H. Gr. Mitte, Ia Kriegstagebuch, Dezember 1941, 2 Dezember*, in H. Gr. Mitte 26974/6 file NA.
24. *Ibid.*, 3 December 1941.
25. *Ibid.*, 4 December 1941.
26. Yevstigneyev, *Velikaya bitva*, p. 183; *IVOVSS*, v. II, p. 277.
27. Pz. *Gr. 4, Ia Lagebeurteilung, 5.12.41*, in Pz. AOK 4, 13763/7 file NA; Pz. *Gr. 3, Ia Morgenmeldung, 6.12.41*, in Pz. AOK 3 16911/30 file NA; *H. Gr. Mitte, Ia Kriegstagebuch, Dezember 1941, 5.12.41*, in H. Gr. Mitte 26974/6 file NA; Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, p. 284.
28. *H. Gr. Mitte, Ia Kriegstagebuch, Dezember 1941, 6.12.41*, in H. Gr. Mitte, 26947/6 file NA.

29. VOV, pp. 112–13; Zakharov, *Proval*, pp. 135, 260; IVOVSS, v. II, p. 280.
30. H. Gr. Mitte, *Ia Kriegstagebuch, Dezember 1941*, 6.12.41, in H. Gr. Mitte, 26974/6 file NA.
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Pz. Gr. 3, Ic Abendmeldung*, 7.12.41, in Pz AOK 3 16911/36 file NA.
33. *Ibid.*
34. Yevstigneyev, *Velikaya bitva*, pp. 188–90.
35. Zakharov, *Proval*, p. 262.
36. H. Gr. Mitte, *Ia Nr. 2799/41, an Pz. Gr. 4*, 7.12.41, in Pz. AOK 4 22457/14 file NA; Leeb, *Tagebuchaufzeichnungen*, p. 404; Meretskov, *Serving*, p. 171.
37. H. Gr. Nord, *Ia Kriegstagebuch*, 12–31.12.41, 7.12.41, in H. Gr. Mitte 26974/6 file NA; Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, pp. 260–1.
38. H. Gr. Mitte, *Ia Kriegstagebuch, Dezember 1941*, 8–9.12.41, in H. Gr. Mitte 26974/6 file NA; Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, pp. 260–1.
39. AOK 2, *Ia Kriegstagebuch Russland, Teil II*, 8.12.41, in AOK 4 16690/2 file NA.
40. VOV, p. 114.
41. *Pz. AOK 3, Gefechtsbericht Russland, 1941–1942*, in Pz. AOK 3 21818/2 file NA.
42. H. Gr. Mitte, *Ia Kriegstagebuch, Dezember 1941*, 11.12.41, in H. Gr. Mitte 26974/6 file NA.
43. Pravda, 1 January 1942. See also G. F. Alexandrov *et al.*, *Josif Vissarionovich Stalin, Kratkaya bibliografiya*, 2nd edn (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Politicheskoy Literatury, 1949), p. 195. Examples of Stalin's method of stabilizing the rear were the campaigns against the *kulaks* and the drowning of 5,000 former tsarist officers in the Volga during the Civil War. Morale was apparently a presumed product of political indoctrination.
44. Zhukov, *Memoirs*, p. 352; IVMV, v. IV, p. 306.
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48. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
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53. *Ibid.*, v. V, p. 113; VOV, p. 139.
54. Zhukov, *Memoirs*, p. 365; Bagramyan, *Tak shli my k pobede*, pp. 48–54.
55. Zhukov, *Memoirs*, p. 366.
56. IVMV, v. V, p. 115; Meretskov, *Serving*, p. 207.
57. IVMV, v. V, p. 114.
58. USSR Embassy, Washington, DC, *Information Bulletin, Special Supplement*, December 1943, pp. 29–31.
59. Harriman, *Envoy*, pp. 137–9; *Pravda*, 24 June 1942.

21: CONCLUSION

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7. Cantril and Strunck, *Public Opinion*, p. 978.
8. Kent Roberts Greenfield, Robert R. Palmer, and Bell I. Wiley, *The Organization of Ground Combat Troops* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1947), pp. 1, 10; Langer and Gleason, *War*, p. 184.
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10. See *FRUS*, 1942, v. III, pp. 493–529.
11. *SVE*, v. II, p. 54; v. II, p. 32.
12. The Red Army total troops deployed and KIA by periods were:

| | <i>Deployed</i> | <i>KIA</i> |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| First period: 22 June 41–18 Nov. 42 | 11,162,000 | 6,155,000 |
| Second period: 19 Nov. 42–end 43 | 8,538,000 | 2,553,000 |
| Third period: Dec. 44–9 May 45 | 9,892,000 | 2,564,000 |
| Total | | 11,272,000 |

Source: *SVE* 2, v. II, pp. 40, 42, 45.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 158; Robert Goralski, *World War II Almanac, 1931–1945* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1981), pp. 225, 226, 228. The figures on Red Army dead here and above do not include 3.5 million prisoners of war in German hands by December 1941 or 3 million who died before the war ended.
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4. *I VOVS*, v. I, pp. ix–xxvii.
5. *Ibid.*, v. II, p. 487.
6. *Ibid.*, v. II, pp. 433, 435, 448, 452, 478, 480.
7. *SVE*, v. VIII, p. 394; v. I, p. 587.
8. *I VOVS*, v. VI, p. 218.
9. *VOVS (Kratkoy istoriya)*, p. 226f.
10. *I VMV*, v. XII, p. 574.
11. *Ibid.*, v. I, p. vi.
12. Ivanov, *Nachalnyy period*.
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14. *I VMV*, v. XII, pp. 290, 310, 338.
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17. *Ibid.*, v. XII, pp. 386–95.
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38. *Ibid.*, pp. 343–59.
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49. See above, note 45 and text.
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