

**The
Red Army's
Do-It-Yourself
Nazi-Bashing
Guerrilla
Warfare
Manual**

The Partisan's Companion

Updated and Revised Edition
1942

Edited by
Lester Grau and Michael Gress



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FOREWORD

The June 1941 German invasion of the Soviet Union caught the Soviet leadership unprepared. As the remnants of the Red Army staggered back toward Moscow, the German forces swept over the Soviet countryside, capturing thousands of square miles of Soviet countryside. There was little to stop them. The Soviet Union desperately threw half-trained soldiers in their path while they looked for other ways to slow the Fascist invader. One possible weapon was guerrilla forces. While the Soviet leadership espoused guerrilla war, they did not want the common people to rise against the Germans. Even in these perilous times, the Soviet government wanted control. The Soviet answer was not to employ locals. Rather they quickly formed army reservists, party activists and secret police into partisan detachments and sent them into the German-occupied areas. Unfamiliar with the local area, surrounded by the enemy, and short on food and equipment, these initial detachments accomplished little, and few survived.

In 1942, when the Soviet Union decided to expand partisan war to incorporate the local Soviet citizens now living under German occupation, they did so while also extending Soviet control over the guerrillas. Military officers were assigned to lead the guerrilla bands. Military discipline was extended over the bands, and they were reorganized into squads, platoons, companies and battalions. A central partisan staff provided command and control over the guerrillas from Moscow. The partisans were trained to a common standard. Communist Party organizations were reintroduced, and the secret police watched the Germans—and the partisans.

By 1943, it was obvious that Germany was losing the war. The partisan ranks swelled as did the training requirements for the partisan commanders. This 1943 edition of the *Partisan's Companion* helped train the new guerrillas to a common standard in a hurry. It is an interesting document that covers partisan tactics, German counter-guerrilla tactics, demolitions, German and Soviet weapons, scouting, camouflage, anti-tank warfare, anti-aircraft defense, defense against a chemical attack, hand-to-hand combat, first aid, field living and winter survival. It can be read by individual partisans, but is really designed for squad and platoon-level

instruction. This handbook contains the Soviet lessons of two bitter years of war and provides a good look at the tactics and training of a mature partisan force. It is geared to the partisan detachment (battalion) and smaller units. The partisans already were men and women who were expected to be reasonably self-sufficient, capable of making simple repairs and constructing their own shelter, camp ware, skis, snowshoes, and sleds. Their units were supposed to move and live clandestinely, harass the enemy, and support the Red Army through reconnaissance and attacks on the German supply lines. They were also the agents of Soviet power and vengeance in the occupied regions.

Soviet historians credit the partisans with tying down ten percent of the German army and with killing almost a million enemy soldiers. They clearly frustrated German logistics and forced the Germans to periodically sideline divisions to hunt the partisans. They clearly were part of the eventual Soviet victory over Germany.

This Soviet concept of central control of guerrilla warfare did not end with World War II. Communist guerrillas in China, Korea, and Vietnam were also centrally controlled, trained, and directed. Later, this model was employed in various "wars of national liberation" and even by the Fedayeen in Iraq.

So, I invite you to sit back and learn the not-so-arcane skills of being a Nazi-hunting partisan while freezing in the Pripet Marshes.

David M. Glantz
Mark W. Clark Visiting Professor of history
The Citadel, Charleston, South Carolina

PREFACE

This book has been more influential than its size might indicate. It is the final edition of the Soviet manual used to train guerrillas to fight the Nazis. It has gone through two previous editions, so this is the battle-tested material that a partisan really needed to know. It provided instruction in Russian on partisan tactics, field craft, weapons and survival. It assumed that the reader had little or no military training. The value of the book did not pass with the end of the war. During the 1960s and 1970s, the Soviet Union provided instruction on guerrilla war to citizens of the Third World, many of them students at the Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow. This instruction was designed to support “wars of national liberation” in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Asia. The Partisan's Companion was a base document for the course material used to train the future guerrillas.

During the Great Patriotic War (the Soviet Union's fight with Germany during World War II), the Soviet Union fielded the largest partisan force in history. During the war, there were some 1,100,000 men and women served as partisans in some 6,000 detachments.¹ The Soviet Union had been in existence for just over two decades, but Russia had a lengthy experience in guerrilla warfare.

Russian history is liberally sprinkled with peasant rebellions, break-away Cossack hosts, run-away serfs, unhappy minorities and religious dissenters. The vastness of Russia allowed dissatisfied subjects to evade Tsarist control—and sometimes to attack the Tsar's representatives.

When Napoleon invaded Russia in 1812, guerrilla bands sprang up to harass the lines of communication and rear area of the invading armies. The guerrillas were initially local militia or poorly-armed peasants who fought as part of a village band—or a band formed from several hamlets. These guerrillas functioned independently of government control and their actions were not coordinated with the military plan. The guerrillas harassed invaders and made supply difficult, but were outside government control. Frequently they were merely brigands and opportunists loosely disguised as patriots. In order to establish some order, responsiveness and cooperation with the partisans, General Mikhail Barclay de Tolly and Field Marshal Pyotr Bagration formed partisan detachments from their regular forces to support their armies. These

partisan detachments were composed of Cossacks, cavalry, infantry and Jaeger (light-infantry) forces. They sometimes cooperated with the local partisan bands, but the detachments more often fought on their own. The partisan forces grew into partisan armies. The primary lesson the Russians drew was that partisans are a useful ally when the actions of the peasant bands are subordinated and integrated into the unified plan of action of the regular armed forces.²

As the Russian Empire expanded, the Russian Army gained considerable experience battling guerrilla forces of conquered and incorporated peoples. This was particularly true in the Caucasus, particularly in Dagestan and Chechnya where Imam Shamil conducted a long guerrilla struggle against Tsarist control. The Chechen/Dagestan campaign was finally won by the axe and the rifle. The Russians deforested the mountain redoubts where the guerrillas hid while systematically capturing their fortress villages.

During the Russian Civil War, following directly on the heels of World War I, guerrilla forces fought across the torn Russian empire. Some of these guerrilla bands were clearly allied with the Reds or the Whites or the various foreign interventionist forces. Others were freelancers who formed temporary alliances with either or both sides. Still others were bands of nationalists, anarchists and brigands that were beyond any governments' control. The guerrillas that were allied with one side or another were often of limited value as their actions were uncoordinated with those of the maneuver forces.

During the 1920s and 1930s, the Soviet Union had its next major experience with partisan forces. Islamic nationalists in the Fergana Valley of Soviet Central Asia rose in revolt against Soviet rule. After several fumbling starts, the Soviets conducted a coordinated military, economic, political and internal development campaign that shattered and disbursed the *Basmachi* [bandit] movement.

Partisan warfare was a key element of Soviet defense planning during the early 1930s. Ya. K Berzin, the head of the Red Army Intelligence Service and Iona Yakir, the commander of the Kiev Military District established partisan detachments, schools, bases and weapons depots in the Kiev, Belorussian and Leningrad Military Districts. These detachments even participated in formal maneuvers. Cadres who were members of the military, party or secret police prepared to lead partisans in the event of an invasion. The military printed partisan training manuals and prepared other materials. The NKVD (the forerunner of the KGB) formed its own

professional partisan detachments. Many of the partisan instructor cadre would serve in the Spanish Civil War.³

But preparation for partisan war was threatened by a crucial debate over the optimum strategy to defend the Soviet Union. There were two camps. The first, led by Marshal Tukachevsky, advocated an offensive or annihilation strategy. If the Soviet Union was invaded, the Red Army would respond with an offensive that would immediately invade the territory of the attacker and defeat the enemy on his own territory, forcing the enemy to bear the destruction of his own infrastructure. The second camp, led by General-Major Svechin, advocated a defensive or attrition strategy. If the Soviet Union was attacked, the border troops and Red Army would fight a deliberate retreat, drawing the enemy deep into the Soviet Union where his lines of communication would be overextended, his logistics strained and his strength dissipated. Then the Red Army would mass forces and launch a powerful counteroffensive, destroying the enemy.⁴ Partisan warfare was a major component of the defensive strategy.

Eventually, the annihilation school won the debate and Defense Commissar Kliment Voroshilov declared that Soviet territory was inviolable and that the Red Army could handle any threat. The advocates of partisan warfare were branded defeatists or traitors who were preparing to hand the forward areas and their military stores over to a putative enemy. The partisan cadre were disbursed and purged. Many were imprisoned or killed. The manuals were destroyed.⁵

During 1938, the Soviet Union invaded Finland. The Finnish Army fought the Red Army to a standstill in the snow-covered forest swamps of Karelia. The Finns did this with a combination of regular forces manning the fortified Mannerheim Line and small raiding groups hitting the flanks and rear areas of their enemy.

Germany and the Soviet Union agreed to divide Poland and when Germany invaded Poland, the Red Army followed suit. The Red Army was deployed in Poland, forward of its forward defense lines, when Germany invaded the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941. The Red Army was overwhelmed and could not launch an immediate offensive into Germany. The attrition school was right. Large areas of the Soviet Union fell under German control. In some areas, the Germans were initially greeted as liberators, however German attitudes of Slavs as *untermenschen* muted this welcome. While some inhabitants openly collaborated and supported the Germans, others resisted their arrival. Most bided their time. The Red Army was reeling back from a major defeat. Thousands of soldiers were

captured or killed. Others were now trapped behind German lines. They eventually became the basis for the first partisan resistance units. The trapped soldiers took their weapons into the forests to resist the Germans.

The Soviet Union was fighting for its very existence, so it used every weapon at its disposal. This included guerrilla war. On 3 July 1941, Stalin addressed the nation by radio:

In areas occupied by the enemy, guerrilla units, mounted and on foot, must be formed, diversionist groups must be organized to combat the enemy troops, to foment guerrilla warfare everywhere, to blow up bridges and roads, damage telephone and telegraph wires, set fire to forests, stores, transports. In the occupied regions conditions must be made unbearable for the enemy and his accomplices. They must be hounded and annihilated at every step and their measures frustrated.⁶

However, guerrilla war was a two-edged sword, since the stability of the state was threatened by these very partisans. During the Civil War, Red partisan bands flaunted Communist political and military control and some even defected to the Whites. The area now under Nazi control had recently suffered under the famine induced by the Soviet forced collectivization of agriculture. The area had then experienced the wrenching experience of forced industrialization and the purges. The Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as well as Eastern Poland had been recently forcibly incorporated in the Soviet Union and their loyalty was suspect at best. Local partisans operating behind enemy lines were beyond direct state control. Would they stay loyal and uncontaminated by exposure to foreign ideology and nationalist/separatist movements? Or would they be the center of an organized resistance to the reestablishment of Soviet power after the war? There had to be some way to organize and control the partisans.⁷ Yet the trained partisan cadres and manuals were gone.

The Soviet Union hurriedly formed and trained partisan detachments to infiltrate into the enemy rear area. This was no haphazard selection of keen local volunteers sent back to fight in their own neighborhoods. These partisans were loyal communist party and Komsomol [young communist] members, civil war veterans, and NKVD [forerunner of the KGB] members and Red Army reservists. In October 1941, the Red Army's Main Political Administration authorized the reissue of an outdated Civil War manual as the first edition of the *Partisan's Companion*.⁸

The book was published in Moscow on 27 December 1941 with a press run of 50,000 copies. The few attempts to update it included a political speech by Stalin, a brief chapter on German weapons (one rifle, one pistol, one submachine gun and one grenade) and a chapter on fighting on skis from the Winter War with Finland. An NKVD official who read the book quipped “I attentively read this manual as advised and then I put it in my files where it remains as a historic document”.⁹

Since the first partisan groups formed for infiltration were composed of party loyalists, they were primarily city dwellers. The Red Army was getting the healthiest and most fit men, so the partisan bands got the less-physically fit and older party loyalists. There was a shortage of weapons and radios everywhere, so the partisan detachments were under-equipped. The detachments were rushed through training and infiltrated behind enemy lines.

These initial detachments did not do well. They were not local and did not know the neighborhood. The locals did not flock to their standard. The Germans were hunting them. There was little or no support and logistics structure in place. Regional historians estimate that only seven percent of these initial partisans in the Ukraine and 17 percent of the Partisans around Leningrad survived until the spring of 1942. The underequipped partisans of 1941 did little damage to the enemy, but their ranks were thinned dramatically by the enemy, disease, starvation and the weather.¹⁰

Partisan fortunes improved in 1942. The Germans were stopped on the outskirts of Moscow, proving to the locals that the Germans could be stopped. The German treatment of the population in the occupied area was intolerable and many of the locals took to the forests to form guerrilla bands. They were joined by the Red Army soldiers who had been trapped behind enemy lines by the German rapid advance or who had escaped from German captivity. The soldiers brought military training and discipline to the partisans. Molodaya Gvardia [The Young Guard] Printing House published the 2nd Edition of the *Partisan's Companion*. It was much different book than the first edition. It incorporated the hard lessons of the current war—lessons that had been paid for in blood.

On 30 May 1942, the Soviet Government formed the Central Staff of the Partisan Movement (*Tsentralnyy shtab partizanskogo dvizheniya*). Panteleimon K. Ponomarenko, the Belorussian Party First Secretary, was appointed head of the staff. The staff, and Ponomarenko, would remain in power until 13 July 1944.¹¹ Ponomarenko had little understanding of the logistics and tactics of partisan warfare, but he was a party bureaucrat that

understood that the partisan war would be fought as a political, as well as a military, contest. He shared Stalin's concern that the partisans must remain under Soviet control.¹² The main staff departments were operations, intelligence and political. Ponomarenko was pulling the Red Army, NKVD and Party partisan detachments under Moscow's control. The operations department planned partisan missions, sent new detachments behind enemy lines, disbanded or combined detachments, provided tactical, technical and training material and coordinated the actions of subordinate partisan staffs. The operations department dispatched Red Army officers to command detachments and provide support to the Red Army. The intelligence department assigned reconnaissance missions, located newly formed or previously unknown partisan detachments and provided political and economic assessments of occupied territories. The political department conducted propaganda and agitation campaigns in the occupied territories, maintained contact with underground party organizations and publicized partisan actions in the Soviet media.¹³

In September 1942, Stalin issued the People's Commissariat on Defense Order 189, "On the Tasks of the Partisan Movement". The order gave state sanction and support to a popular mass partisan movement against Germany. The ordinary people were finally being brought into the guerrilla war. The partisans were to continue to attack German targets, disrupt German administration, prevent German seizure of grain and collect intelligence. They were also to conduct propaganda and agitation. The movement was expanded to include all Soviet nationalities that had German soldiers on their territory.¹⁴

The Central Staff of the Partisan Movement struggled to put the expanding bands of local partisans under central control. Military discipline was instilled in the bands by incorporation of Red Army soldiers and officers. Regular military organization and a command structure were imposed as detachments were organized into companies and platoons. Partisan detachments (battalions) were incorporated into Partisan divisions and Partisan armies. There was a concerted effort to get radios and radio operators to the Partisan detachments. In the summer of 1942, some 30% of the detachments had radio contact with external stations. By November 1943, almost 94% of the detachments had radio communications with the Central Staff. Party organizations were reestablished within the occupied regions.¹⁵ The NKVD established surveillance of enemy activity, as well as detachment activity.

The partisan movement expanded dramatically in 1943. The victories

at Stalingrad and Kursk showed that the German Army advance was stopped and that Germany was going to lose the war. For the fence sitters, this was the last opportunity to join the partisans and prove their loyalty to the Soviet Union and avoid later repercussions. The shortage of available German forces was accompanied by a German contraction of the territory they controlled. They had fewer forces to control their rear area and so they withdrew into the larger towns. This ceded large areas to the partisans and facilitated their recruitment efforts. The partisans recruited vigorously. Many locals joined the partisans to escape the German forced drafts and export of factory slave labor from the occupied regions.¹⁶

Logistic support to the partisans improved. During 1943, the Soviets used some 12,000 aviation sorties to deliver supplies behind enemy lines. They provided some 60,000 rifles, 34,300 submachine guns, 4,200 machine guns, 2,500 antitank rifles and 2,200 mortars along with ammunition and hand grenades.¹⁷

This 3rd Edition of the *Partisan's Companion* was published in May 1943 to support this growth in the number of partisans. It has 360 pages and was printed in 50,000 copies. It is a very different book from the first edition. There is no chapter on map reading. The partisans were local and they knew the territory. The Red Army officers assigned to the detachments could read maps to arrange supply drops and the like. There is no chapter on fighting on skis. The partisans frequently moved on skis, but rarely fought on them. The chapter on hand-to-hand combat remained mostly unchanged from the 1920s, while the chapter on German weapons was greatly expanded as was the chapter on Soviet weapons. The partisan tactics, German counter-guerrilla tactics, partisan air defense and chemical warfare chapters were completely new. The 3rd Edition was published in the Soviet Far East, reflecting the Soviet relocation of industry to the East.

In the end, the partisan movement was a success. It peaked in strength in July 1944 with some 280,000 partisans simultaneously under arms.¹⁸ Russian historians credit it with killing, wounding or capturing a million enemy personnel. They further credit it with destroying some 4,000 armored vehicles, 58 armored trains, 10,000 railroad engines, 2,000 railroad bridges and 65,000 trucks and cars. They also credit it with tying down ten percent of the German armed forces. The Central Staff of the Partisan Movement was disbanded on 13 January 1944.¹⁹ Most of the Soviet territory was liberated at that point and Moscow was eager to discover which partisan detachments were reluctant to stand down, turn

in their weapons or support the return of Soviet power.

After the Germans were defeated, however, the Red Army had to defeat and root out partisan forces in the Ukraine and Baltic Republics. Stalin's fear of loss of control was justified, but by 1950, the major partisan units were defeated. The last partisans in the Baltic Republics surrendered in 1983.

This 3rd Edition of the *Partisan's Companion* did not become a mere curiosity and rarity on a library shelf. Guerrilla war was a prominent feature of the post-World War II world. European colonial powers were opposed by their subjects in the Middle East, Africa, Asia and the Pacific. Governments in Latin America were challenged and sometimes overthrown by local guerrilla groups. Mao Tse Tung came to power in China at the head of a guerrilla army. European empires contracted and disappeared as colony after colony gained independence following "wars of national liberation". During the Korean War, which had a significant guerrilla component, China and the Soviet Union cooperated closely to prop up North Korea and oppose the United Nations forces. However, the alliance between the two major communist powers eventually strained as both nations vied for leadership of the global communist movement. Both countries vied for influence in the uncommitted nations of the so-called "Third World". This influence included foreign and military aid as well as training for guerrilla warfare for disaffected citizens of countries that were friendly to the West. The 3rd Edition of the *Partisan's Companion* was a basic document for this training in the Soviet Union.

In October 1974, Panteleimon Ponomarenko was still deeply involved with guerrilla war. The grand old man of Soviet partisans was now a respected lecturer at the secret school for Arab "revolutionaries" at Novoe Nagoronoe in the Pushkin district some forty miles outside of Moscow (there were several such schools for different language groups in the Soviet Union). During one lecture to Palestinian guerrillas and Iraqi Baathists, Ponomarenko was speaking in detail about ways of hiding weapons in the forest. The leader of the Iraqi students gently reminded Ponomarenko that there were no forests in Iraq or Palestine. Without missing a beat, Ponomarenko merely substituted 'desert' for 'forest' in his lecture notes and continued to the edification of his students.²⁰

This secret school prepared thousands of Arab "revolutionaries" over its twenty-year existence. Saddam Hussein, who admired Stalin, implemented Soviet methods of mass indoctrination, totalitarian control and party building. This extended to the Baathist party cellular organiza-

tion and ubiquitous secret police.²¹ The Baathist Fedayeen trained to become guerrillas to fight an invader. The US Army ended up fighting guerrillas whose training was based on the 3rd Edition of the *Partisan's Companion*.

Mike Gress grew up in Siberia where he and his friends used to play 'partisans and fascists' using stick 'guns' and pinecone 'hand grenades'. Everyone's father had served in the war. One of Mike's friends had his father's copy of the 3rd Edition of the *Partisan's Companion* and it served to sharpen their imaginations, the accuracy of their play and their survival skills. The book made a lasting impression on young Mike. Years later, Mike discussed the existence of this tactically important book while fishing with Les Grau, another Russian speaker. Les and Mike searched Russian libraries and archives for the book, but did not have a lot of luck. Finally, after almost a decade, a Russian researcher located a library copy and photocopied for them. The original book was not printed for the ages. The paper was poor quality and the photocopy did not improve the quality of the illustrations. Mike and Les went to work. The Russian was usually no problem, but the illustrations were. Fortunately, Mike's son Alex is a computer wizard. Alex found many of the illustrations in other Russian-language publications or on the Russian web. Alex enhanced or redid the other illustrations. Many of the illustrations are now sharper than those in the original.

We offer this English-language translation to the reader in the hope that it will provide not only a tactical appreciation for partisan combat but also an appreciation for the Spartan conditions and stoic realities of partisan life. It is a training manual, but in it, the reader can detect the hardiness and stubbornness of a people determined to defend their land.

Notes to Preface:

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2 Yu. F. Sokolov, "Partizanskoe dvizhenie v Otechestvennoy Boynе 1812" [The Partisan Movement During the Patriotic War 1812], Voennaya Entsiklopediya [Military Encyclopedia]. Volume 6, Moscow: Voenizdat-Military Publishing House of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, 2002, 280-281.

3 Kenneth Slepyan, *Stalin's Guerrillas: Soviet Partisans in World War II*, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006, 20-21.

4 Jacob W. Kipp, "Mass, Mobility, and the Red Army's Road to Operational Art", Ft. Leavenworth: Soviet Army Studies Office, 1988.

5 Slepyan, 21.

6 Slepyan, 15 citing *Pravda* of 3 July 1941, page 1 using translation from Joseph Stalin, *The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union*, New York: International Publishers, 1945, 15.

7 Slepyan, 2-3.

8 Slepyan, 30. An excellent translation of this first edition is available as *Partisan's Companion: Deadly Techniques of Soviet Freedom Fighters During World War II*. Paul J. Schmitt is the translator and Paladin Press is the publisher. Some of the illustrations in this book are based on illustrations from the Schmitt translation.

9 Slepyan, citing page 191 of V. I. Boiarskii, *Partizany i Armiia; Istoriia uteriannykh vozmozhnostei* [Partisans and the Army: History of Misplaced Possibilities], Minsk: Kharvest, 2003.

10 Slepyan, 28, 32 and 33.

11 Knayaz'kov, 274.

12 Slepyan, 42-43,

13 Slepyan, 114.

14 Slepyan, 47-49.

15 V. N. Andrianov, "Partizanskoe dvizhenie v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voynе 1941-1945" [The Partisan movement in the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945], *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* [The Great Soviet Encyclopedia], 1977.

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18 Andrianov.

19 Knyaz'kov, 275.

20 Evvgenii Novikov, "The De-Baathification of Iraq", *The Jamestown Foundation*

21 Novikov

СПУТНИК ПАРТИЗАНА

THE PARTISAN'S COMPANION

**THE
GUERRILLA FIGHTER'S
HANDBOOK**

3rd Edition (expanded)

OGIZ¹
FAR EAST STATE PUBLISHING
1942

XXV ANNIVERSARY OF THE GREAT OCTOBER SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

**The Report of the Chairman of the State Defense Committee
Comrade J. V. Stalin
to the mutual celebratory session of the Moscow Soviet Workers
Deputies including Communist Party and social organizations
of Moscow
November 6, 1942**

Comrades!

Today we celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the victory of the Soviet revolution in our country. 25 years passed since we established the Soviet system. We are standing on the threshold of the 26th year of the existence of the Soviet system.

Customarily, at celebratory sessions dedicated to the October Soviet revolution we sum up results of work by state and party organizations during the past year. I am entrusted to present to you the summary report about those results in the last year – from November of the past year to November of this year.

During this period, our state and party organs' activities have been conducted in two directions: on the one direction, the peaceful development and organization of a strong rear area and logistics for our *Front's* struggle – and on the other direction; organizing and conducting the Red Army's defensive and offensive operations.

1. Organizing Activity in the Rear Area.

During this period, the non-combat related activities of our leading organs was devoted to the relocation of our industry – military as well as civilian – to the eastern part of our country; to the evacuation and resettlement of our labor force and industrial equipment in the new places; to the expansion of the arable lands in the East and to enlarging the winter wheat crop there. And, finally – to the radical improvement of the work process at our enterprises, which work for the war *Front* and to the strengthening of work discipline in the rear areas – at factories and industrial plants as

well as at the collective and state farms. It needs to be said that this was a most difficult and complex organizational task on a grand scale for all our Narkomats (ministries), including – the railroad. But we were able to overcome the difficulties. And today our plants and our collective and state farms, despite all the problems of war time are undisputedly working satisfactorily. Our military plants and related enterprises honestly and conscientiously supply the Red Army with cannons, mortars, aircraft, tanks, machine-guns, rifles and ammunition. Our collective and state farms also honestly and conscientiously deliver food to the population and the Red Army and raw materials to our industry. We shall admit that never before has our country had such a strong and well-organized rear area.

The result of all this complex organizational and creative work is seen not only in our country but in the people in the rear area. The people have become more organized, less negligent and more disciplined. They have learned to work under war time conditions, begun to understand their duty to the Motherland and to her protectors at the *Front* – the Red Army. In the rear area, there are fewer and fewer dimwits and slobs without a sense of civic duty. And there are more and more well organized and disciplined citizens.

But the past year was, as I have already stated, not only the year of civic development. It was at the same time the year of the Patriotic war against German invaders, who despicably and perfidiously invaded our peaceful country.

2. Military Actions on the Soviet-German *Front*

As to the military activity of our leading organs during the past year – it expressed itself in the development and support of the defensive and offensive operations of the Red Army against the German-Fascist troops. It is possible to divide the combat actions on the Soviet-German *Front* during the past year into two periods: the first period – predominantly a winter period, when the Red Army, after repulsing the German thrust on Moscow, went over to the initiative and began an offensive routing the German forces. In this four-month period, it advanced up to 400 kilometers in some areas. The second period was the summer when German-Fascist troops, emboldened by the absence of a Second *Front* in Europe, collected all their free reserves and broke through our *Front* on the South-western direction. They grabbed the initiative and in some

areas advanced up to 500 kilometers during this five-month period.

Military actions during the first period, especially the successful actions of the Red Army in the Rostov, Tula, Kaluga regions, near Moscow, Tikhvin and Leningrad, revealed two significant facts. First, they have shown that the Red Army and its combat cadre have grown into a serious force which is capable of not only withstanding the thrust of the German-Fascist troops – they can defeat them in open battle and turn them back. Also, they have shown that the German troops, despite all their steadfastness, have some serious fundamental defects, which under specific favorable conditions can lead to their defeat by the Red Army. We cannot dismiss as an accident the fact that the German troops, which crossed all Europe in a triumphal march and smashed the first-class French army in one stroke, that these forces met real resistance only in our country. And not only resistance – they were forced to retreat from occupied positions by more than 400 kilometers, leaving behind colossal numbers of weapons, vehicles and ammunition. It cannot be explained only by the winter conditions.

The second period of military actions on the Soviet-German *Front* was characterized by the shifting the situation in favor of the Germans, who regained the initiative. They broke through our defense in the South-western direction, moved ahead and approached the Voronezh, Stalingrad, Novorossiysk, Pyatigorsk and Mozdok areas. Using to their advantage the absence of a Second *Front* in Europe, the Germans and their allies threw all their free reserves at the *Front*. They directed them on one axis – in the South-west – creating there a very significant superiority in forces and thus achieving considerable tactical success.

Obviously, the Germans are not that powerful at the moment that they can conduct offensives on three axes – South, North and Center, as happened during the first months of the German summertime offensive last year. But they are still powerful enough to organize serious offensive actions on one select axis.

What major objective did the German strategists pursue when they started their summer campaign on our *Front*? If we judge this from the commentaries of the foreign press, including German, the impression would be that the major goal was the capture of the oil-rich regions of Grozny and Baku. But the facts disprove such an assumption. The facts tell us that their advance on the oil-rich regions of the USSR is not the main, but a supporting goal.

What then was the main goal of the German offensive? It was to encircle Moscow on the eastern side, to cut her off from the Volga and Ural

logistics bases and after that to attack Moscow directly. The movement of German troops' on the southern axis toward the oil-rich regions had a supporting goal: it was not only and not so much to capture those regions but to divert our main reserves to the South and weaken our Moscow *Front*, thus making their direct attack on Moscow more successful. It explains why the main grouping of the German forces is now not in the South but in the Orel and Stalingrad areas.

Recently, our people captured an officer of the German General Staff. He had with him a map that showed the plan of the advance with its 1941 timetable. The document stated that the Germans planned to capture Borisoglebsk by July 10, Stalingrad – July 25, Saratov – August 10, Kuibyshev – August 15, Arzamas – September 10 and Baku – September 25.

The document clearly supports our information that the main goal of the German summer campaign was to encircle Moscow from the East and after that to attack her directly, at the same time moving on the southern axis to divert our reserves far from Moscow and weaken the Moscow *Front* to make it easier to attack Moscow.

In short, the main goal of the German summer campaign was to encircle Moscow and finish the war that year.

Last November the Germans intended to capture Moscow with a direct attack, force the Red Army to capitulate and thus finish the war in the East. They fed their soldiers with these illusions. But they miscalculated, as we know. They were burned in their direct attack on Moscow and intention to capture Moscow by an encircling maneuver and finish the war here. They again are feeding their befuddled soldiers with those illusions. As is known their calculations proved wrong again. As a result of chasing two hares – the oil and the Moscow encirclement-the German-Fascist strategists found themselves in a difficult position.²

In this way, the tactical success of the German summer offensive displayed the obvious unreality of their strategic planning.

3. The Matter of the Second *Front* in Europe

Who can explain the fact that the Germans were, after all, able to retake the military initiative and achieve some serious tactical successes on our *Front*?

It explained by the fact that the Germans and their allies were able to assemble their uncommitted reserves and send them to the Eastern *Front*

creating a major superiority in forces on one axis. There is no doubt that without such measures, the Germans would not be able to have any success on our *Front*.

But how did it happen that they could take the reserves and send them to the Eastern *Front*? There is a reason – the absence of the Second *Front* in Europe gave them that opportunity to conduct such an operation without risk to themselves.

Thus the major reason for their tactical success on our *Front* this year is the absence of a Second *Front* in Europe. This gave them the opportunity to throw all their uncommitted reserves to our *Front* and build a major superiority in forces on the South-Western axis.

Let us make an assumption that the Second *Front* existed in Europe – the same as it existed during World War I. Let's say that *Front* would divert 60 German divisions and 20 divisions of their allies. What situation would that create for the Germans at our *Front*? It is not difficult to grasp that their situation would be pathetic. Even more, it could be the beginning of the end of the German-Fascist troops because the Red Army would not be fighting where they are now but would be fighting near Pskov, Minsk, Zhitomir, and Odessa. And that means the German-Fascist army would face a catastrophe. Since that has not happened, it is due to the absence of the Second *Front* in Europe.

Let us to look at the Second *Front* question from a historical perspective.

During World War I Germany was forced to fight on two *Fronts*: in the West – mainly against England and France and in the East – against Russian troops. Thus the Second *Front* against Germany did exist. Out of 220 divisions which Germany had at the time, they positioned no more than 85 German divisions on the Russian *Front*. If we add the Germans' allies forces, namely 37 Austro-Hungarian divisions, two Bulgarian and three Turkish divisions, there was a total of 127 divisions fighting against Russian forces. The rest of the German and their allies divisions held the *Front* primarily against English and French troops. And a part of German forces were tied up in garrison duty in the occupied part of Europe.

That is how things stood during World War I.

How do things stand now, during World War II, let's say in September of the current year?

By confirmed data, without any doubt, out of the 256 divisions which Germany has today, no less than 179 are stationed at our *Front*. If we add other divisions: 22 Romanian, 14 Finnish, 10 Italian, 13 Hungarian, one Slovak and one Spanish, then we would have 240 divisions fighting at our *Front*. The

rest of the German and their allies divisions are garrisoning the occupied countries (France, Belgium, Norway, Holland, Poland, Czechoslovakia, etc.). Part of these troops is fighting in Libya and Egypt against England, but the Libyan *Front* only diverts four German and 11 Italian divisions.

Instead of the 127 divisions that we faced during World War I, we now face no less than 240 divisions. Instead of 85 German divisions, 179 German divisions are now fighting the Red Army.

And that is the main and fundamental reason for the tactical successes of the German-Fascist forces on our *Front* during the summer of this year.

Quite often, the German invasion of our country is compared to Napoleon's invasion of Russia. But this comparison does not hold up to examination. Out of 600 thousand troops that invaded Russia, Napoleon had only 130-140 thousand troops near Borodino. That was all he could spare to the fight for Moscow. And yet the Red Army faces more than three million troops armed with the most modern weapons. How can one make any type of comparison?

Sometimes the German invasion of our country is compared to the invasion of Russia by Germany during World War I. But this comparison also does not hold up. First, during World War I there was a second *Front* in Europe which sharply hampered German activities. In this war there is no second *Front* in Europe. Second, in this war there are twice as many troops fighting against us then in World War I. It is clear that there is no comparison.

Now you can imagine how serious and extraordinary are the difficulties that confront the Red Army and how great is the heroism that the Red Army displays while fighting a war of liberation against the German-Fascist occupiers.

I think that no other country and no other army could withstand such a thrust by the ferocious bands of German-Fascist brigands and their allies. Only our Soviet country and the only our Red Army are capable of bearing such the onslaught (**Tumultuous applause**). And not only to bear it, but to overcome it.

Quite often the question is asked: Will there be a Second *Front* in Europe? Yes, there will, sooner or later. And it will be not just because we need it, but because our allies need it to no less a degree than we do. Our allies certainly understand that, after the fall of France, the absence of a Second *Front* could bring a bad end to all freedom-loving countries, including their own.