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BY I. I. GAGLOV
(FOUO)

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Translation

BIOGRAPHY OF GENERAL A. I. ANTONOV

By

I. I. Gaglov



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BIOGRAPHY OF GENERAL A. I. ANTONOV

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FROM THE AUTHOR

General of the Army Aleksey Innokent'yevich Antonov belongs to the remarkable galaxy of Soviet military leaders who were reared by the Communist Party. General A. I. Antonov's personal file contains service and party references that were written at various times and by various peoples. And in each one of them is the phrase: "Wholeheartedly devoted to the Leninist party's affairs."

Aleksey Innokent'yevich Antonov traveled the path from division staff worker to chief of the General Staff of the Soviet Armed Forces.

General of the Army S. M. Shtemenko, who for many years worked together with A. I. Antonov, writes that Aleksey Innokent'yevich "was one of those supervisors of the General Staff who gave unreservedly of himself to the job assigned by the people and the party and shouldered the burden of responsibility for solving the most complicated tasks of armed conflict."

A. I. Antonov was in the Armed Forces for more than 40 years, devoting all his efforts and knowledge to strengthening them and to extolling them. His path as soldier, officer and general is an example for emulation by those who now stand guard over the achievements of October and who are ready to march under the banner of the Soviet Armed Forces.

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Documents of the Central Party Archives of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism under the CPSU Central Committee, the Central State Archive of the Soviet Army, the Central Archive of the USSR Ministry of Defense, and the Central Museum of the USSR Armed Forces were used in working on this book. Also used were the memoirs of marshals of the Soviet Union A. M. Vasilevskiy, G. K. Zhukov and K. K. Rokossovskiy, General of the Army S. M. Shtemenko and Col Gen L. M. Sandalov.

Generals and officers who had worked with A. I. Antonov on the Southern Front, in the Black Sea Group of Forces and in the General Staff were of great help to the author. The author expresses deep gratitude to them.

THE BEGINNING OF THE GREAT JOURNEY

In the ancient Belorussian city of Grodno there is a quiet green street. It now bears the name A. I. Antonov, but formerly it was called Iyerusalimskaya Ulitsa. At the end of the last century it was inhabited by artisans, officials and officers of the local garrison. The family of officer of the 26th Artillery Brigade Innokentiy Alekseyevich Antonov lived on this street in a small wooden house. An emigrant from Siberia, broad-shouldered and stocky, he was a man of strong character. Striving to obtain a higher education, Innokentiy Alekseyevich independently studied many disciplines and mastered the German and French languages. His wife-Tereza Ksavert'yevna, a Pole by nationality--was well matched with him. Her father had been sent to Siberia to take part in the rebellion of 1863-1864. A woman of great and kind heart, she devoted all her efforts to educating her children.

On 15 September 1896 a son was born in this family and was named in honor of his grandfather Aleksey, an officer of the Russian Army. He was the second child. The first--a daughter Lyudmila--had already started to walk by this time. The brother and sister, who grew up together, bore great love and respect for each other throughout their whole lives. Many years later Lyudmila Innokent'yevna recalled: "The genuine love and friendship in the family were not broken once by a sharp word or quarrel. There were neither lies nor hypocrisy. We spoke in Russian and Polish. Both of them became mother tongues for us. From an early age we became accustomed to respecting a person of any nationality, and we learned to love our motherland."

The father told Aleksey about the history of the city and about military battles. Age did not yet allow him to delve deeply into what he heard, but the tenacious childish mind remembered much.

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Aleksey remembered throughout his whole life the Sunday walks with his father about the town and its environs. Often, nearly all the boys of Iyerusalimskaya Ulitsa took part in them. They learned that Grodno is one of the most ancient cities of Belorussia. They walked especially often to Zamkovaya Hill, to the former palace of the Polish king. Many historical monuments were preserved here. Pointing them out, Innokentiy Alekseyevich talked about Russian history. For the first time the children heard about the many wars that the Russian and Belorussian people had waged against foreign invaders.

At any early age Aleksey learned much about the military service. He liked the strict order of the day that was established at home. He was delighted when his father took him with him to the camp, which was in a forest not far from Grodno.

His love for his native district and for Russia and for its history grew with age. His mother often read historical stories aloud. The brother and sister took a liking to reading. They knew many of the poems of Pushkin and Lermontov by heart. Later came an enthusiasm for the tales of Gogol' and the works of Nekrasov and Nikitin.

In 1904 Captain Antonov was transferred to service in the city of Ostrog of Volynskaya Province, to the post of battery commander. And here Aleksey continued to become acquainted with cultural and military monuments, which were no less numerous on the city-fortress's territory than at Grodno. Here was the well-known Ostrog Greek-Slavonic school. The Russian pioneer printer Ivan Fedorov lived and worked in Ostrog in the late 70's and early 80's of the 16th century. Monuments of Ukrainian architecture of the 15th and 16th centuries were preserved in the town.

Aleksey entered the preparatory school in Ostrog. Tall, somewhat bashful, and responsive to his comrade's requests, he found many things to his liking. Aleksey was distinguished also by his knowledge: he read well and solved problems quickly. He studied diligently and had excellent marks in almost all disciplines. He liked history, geography and literature more than the other subjects.

Innokentiy Alekseyevich saw that his son and his comrades visited the sites of bygone engagements with great eagerness and loved military games above all others. He began to encourage the interest toward everything military in every way and imperceptibly but purposefully to prepare Aleksey for army service. In the summer, when Captain Antonov rode out into the field with his battery, he took his son with him. In his free time they were always seen together. The desire to follow his father's path grew in Aleksey each year.

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In 1908 the Antonov family was struck by great grief--Innokentiy Alekseyevich died. Aleksey took this irreplaceable loss very hard.

The Antonov family's life had not been easy before. Now it became even more difficult. The small pension for the father was not enough. In order to make ends meet, the mother began to tutor students for examinations. The sister and brother took upon themselves part of the domestic tasks.

New experiences came into this difficult period of life--World War I started. The city of Ostrog became a scene of combat operations. The population hurriedly abandoned it. And Tereza Ksavert'yevna left with the children for Petrograd, to go to relatives.

In the spring of 1915 a new misfortune struck the Antonov's: after a difficult illness Tereza Ksavert'yevna died. With the death of the mother, payment of the father's pension was discontinued. There was nothing to live on.

It was necessary to decide what to do next. In choosing the correct decision, the father's lessons and the whole lifestyle in Grodno and Ostrog helped Aleksey to choose the right decision. His father's words were recalled: "Never give up. Weigh events and the situation thoroughly. Show will power and it will find accurate reflection in actions and behavior connected with overcoming difficulties."

After a few days of meditation, the decision was adopted: to work and to study. Rapid completion of the preparatory school and a solid knowledge of general-education subjects enabled Aleksey to pass the entrance examinations to Petrograd University. Antonov was enrolled in the physico-mathematical department. Along with two comrades, Aleksey went to work at a plant and there mastered the specialty of grader. It was not easy for the young fellow. The plant's owner did not consider the fact that Aleksey and his comrades were studying. Workers, taking upon themselves part of the work of the students, came to their rescue. Here, at the plant, he knew for the first time the strength of the collective and comradely mutual support.

It turned out that he also helped the workers, especially the women, most of whom came to the plant from the nearby village. At their request, Aleksey wrote letters to the front and read the newspapers.

Here at the plant Aleksey felt the approaching revolutionary events of 1917. Daily intercourse with the workers opened his eyes to a great extent. He began to think more often about the injustice of the existing order. It was not by hearsay that Aleksey knew about the workers' difficult life. He saw how the daily heavy work wore the workers out. But this did not disturb the plant's owner. Only the profits concerned him. The middle-aged worker Ivan Sizov, limping on his left foot, who taught the beginners, told them about the programs of the various parties and about the Bol'sheviks, the Men'sheviks, the S.R.'s [members of the Socialist Revolutionary Party] and the Cadets. Time would pass and

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Antonov would himself learn to examine the subtleties of revolutionary events and the demands of the various parties, but he remembered those first lessons for a long time.

In 1916, at the height of the war, Aleksey Antonov was called into the army and sent to the Pavlov Military School. The accelerated course of training was completed in less than a year. In December the newly turned out shore-based warrant officer was entered on the rolls of the Yeger Guards Regiment.

The young officer sympathized with the soldiers, who among themselves cursed the war and condemned the politics of the Tsarist autocracy. In 1917 Antonov was sent to the front.

For 6 days echelons of the regiment moved westward across Russia. They detrained not far from Stanislav, where the regiment became a part of the 8th Army of the Southwestern Front. Here the February bourgeois-democratic revolution found shore-based warrant officer Antonov.

The workers and soldiers hoped that after the overthrow of the Tsarist autocracy, peace would follow, and they would receive land, bread and freedom. However, the Provisional Government promoted the slogan: "The war to a victorious conclusion!" The bourgeoisie considered that continuation of the war would permit it to grab full power completely in the country.

The party of the Bol'sheviks under V. I. Lenin conducted a struggle for peace, against the war, which even under the new government remained imperialistic.

Aleksey Antonov did not understand the whole depth of the events that were transpiring, but he sympathized completely with the soldiers, who demanded peace and condemned the predatory war and who supported the Bol'shevik's program.

Now at that time the armies of the Southwestern Front had been preparing for an offensive. The Provisional Government had counted on diverting the masses of soldiers from the revolution.

The regiment in which Antonov served was stationed some tens of kilometers from the forward position. Once at night it was redeployed to a portion of the division sector that was engaged in defense. On 18 June 1917 the regiment, along with other units of the army, shifted to the offensive south of Stanislav, after an artillery preparation. The enemy did not stand up to the blow and began to retreat. By 27 June the 8th Army had occupied Galich and, on the following day, Kalush. However, the offensive soon came to a halt. And on 16 July the German Army struck a counterblow. In one of the engagements Antonov was wounded in the head by a fragment. He was carried away from the field of battle in the arms of a soldier of the platoon.

In the hospital Antonov found out about the collapse of the offensive, and more news was awaiting him. He was awarded an order for bravery displayed in battle. But the greatest award for him were the soldiers' letters with wishes for his quickest possible recovery.

The wound made its presence felt for a long time. As demanded by the doctors, shore-based warrant officer Antonov was evacuated to one of the Petrograd hospitals. After his recovery they transferred him to the Yeger Guards Reserve Regiment.

The war hastened the approach of the socialist revolution. In all of May and especially in June 1917, strikes occurred continually throughout the whole country, with demands for an 8-hour workday and improvement in the workers' living conditions. About 500,000 people participated in a mass demonstration that was held in Petrograd on 18 June. The overwhelming majority of the demonstrators walked under the slogan, "All power to the Soviets!" The revolutionary situation built up in the villages. In the army, cases of refusal to fight occurred. A worried mood reigned also among the soldiers of the Yeger Guards Reserve Regiment. Aleksey Antonov, who had taken closely to heart the expectations and concerns of the people, drew increasingly closer to the soldiers. At elections for assistant adjutant, several candidates were named but an absolute majority of the soldiers voted for Antonov. He justified this trust. At the call of the Bol'sheviks, Antonov took an active part in neutralizing the Kornilov Mutiny.

Petrograd's workers found out about this mutiny on the evening of 27 August. They replied to the open act of counterrevolution with a powerful revolutionary upsurge. At plants and factories, in the soldiers' barracks and on naval ships, a wave of crowded meetings and gatherings surged, their participants expressing their readiness to do battle for the defense of the revolution.

A meeting was also held in the reserve regiment. It was a stormy one. Representatives of many parties spoke. But the speeches of the Bol'shevik orators produced the greatest impression on Aleksey Antonov. They explained that Kornilov had risen in revolt not against the Provisional Government, as the S.R.'s and Men'sheviks had tried to present the matter, and that this government was a participant in the Kornilov Mutiny. And the soldiers responded to the call of the Bol'shevks to come out in defense of the revolution. The meeting adopted a resolution that stated that the regiment "awaits the call to action to preserve the revolution from the assault on it from the treasonous side."*

New detachments of Red Guards were being formed at industrial enterprises. At the call of the Bol'shevik Party and the Soviets, military units of the capital garrison began to prepare for combat operations against the Kornilov forces. Soldiers' committees directed this work. In accordance with

*"Oktyabr'skoye vooruzhennoye vosstaniye" [The October Armed Insurrection]. Book 2, Leningrad, 1967, p 150.

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the committee's instructions, Aleksey Antonov, together with other comrades, managed to obtain weapons and formed composite detachments and squads for dispatch to positions. Despite the fact that there were elements of a pro-Kornilov mood on the staff of the Petrograd Military District, the Kornilov proponents were compelled to meet the troops half way.

During the day, on 28 August, a sentry patrol was posted at Petrograd, Krasnoye Selo and Tsarskoye Selo. The city was surrounded by three lines of wire entanglements. Composite detachments, companies and parties of the Volynskaya, Yeger, Grenadier, Moscow, Izmaylov and other regiments took up positions. Aleksey Antonov was in a composite detachment that occupied a position not far from Pulkovo Heights. Along with the soldiers, he was ready for combat: trenches were dug and barriers were built.

The attempt to smother the revolution collapsed. A Kornilov speech was overwhelmed by workers, soldiers and sailors, led by the Bol'shevik party.

Units of the Petrograd garrison that were true to the revolution returned to their barracks. In all, several days passed before the shore-based warrant officer left them. But what days they were!

Each day meetings and conferences were held. Antonov recalls especially the meeting of officer personnel at which Commissar of the Military-Revolutionary Committee I. Ye. Zaytsev spoke. Aleksey, who was not far from the improvised stand, devoured each word. Zaytsev spoke about what agitated everyone in the regiment: about the crushing defeat of the Kornilov Mutiny and about the new interrelationships of class forces. The slogan, "All power to the Soviets!" again was the order of the day. But now it signified armed insurrection against the bourgeois government and it was for the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat. The resolution adopted at the meeting indicated that the "present moment is the next stage of the revolution and has to be gone through," and that "the officers will go through it along with the regiment."*

A. I. Antonov adopted the Great October Socialist Revolution with his whole heart. He left the regiment before its breakup. On 1 May 1918 Antonov was transferred to the reserve and entered the Petrograd Forestry Institute. He successfully combined study with work on the Petrograd Foodstuff's Committee. However, he was not in the reserve for long. The young Republic of the Soviets was going through trying days. Foreign interventionists and domestic counterrevolutionaries had unleashed the Civil War in the country. They had one purpose--to eliminate Soviet power and to plant the landlords and capitalists on the workers' necks again. The Communist Party, led by V. I. Lenin, organized an armed rebuff against the enemies. Everywhere Red Army regiments and divisions were formed.

During these troubled days, when the fate of the revolution that the Great October had won was being decided, Aleksey could not sit peacefully on the

Ibid, p 301.

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Foodstuffs Committee. He began service in the ranks of the Red Army. A. I. Antonov called it a first school in practical life, a higher military academy. "There my preparation to be a staff officer and a military leader began," he said.

Antonov received his baptism of fire in the fall of 1918, at Lugansk, in the 1st Moscow Workers' Division. This division's regiments had been formed from factory workers in Moscow's Zamoskvoretskiy Rayon in October-November 1918. And already in December they had gone into battle in the Voronezh area of the Southern Front. In a short time the division went hundreds of kilometers in combat.

In the post of assistant chief of staff of the 3d Brigade, A. Antonov proved himself a capable specialist who knew military affairs well and a modest and responsive comrade. Many people turned to him for assistance, and he willingly extended it. Antonov well understood that the Red Army was radically different from the old Tsarist army. One idea, one great purpose--to serve the people and to defend its interests with weapons in hand--linked the commanders and Red Army members. At Lugansk he saw with what courage and self-sacrifice the communists fought the enemy. The division held sections up to 20-30 kilometers--from the shore of Severskiy Donets to the height of Ostraya Mogila, right where a White Guard column and infantry attacked most furiously.

A heated battle flared up at one of these heights in April 1919. The 135th Regiment, which had been formed from Moscow workers, defended it. The Whites began the attack when a party meeting was being held in the regiment. Division Commissar G. Zveynek was reporting on the decisions of the 8th RKP(b) [Russian Communist Party [Bol'shevik]]. The communists went directly into combat from the party meeting. Zveynek was in the first ranks. He cold-bloodedly directed fire against the oncoming White Guards. He shot one with a rifle and bayoneted another. The soldiers took the commissar as an example and fought to the last ditch.

At another height, the 128th Red Banner Regiment held its position until there was but one communist left in each company. The regiment broke out from the encirclement and went to the disposal of the division. Ahead walked the wounded regimental commissar, M. Volkov.

When the division went into battle there were 500 communists in its ranks. After the battle 50 remained. The rest died the death of the brave. And among them were 20 commissars of small units. Despite the heavy losses, the division continued to wage combat. In those days, A. Antonov wrote: "The battles were bitter...the regiments withstood 5-6 attacks each of superior enemy forces...Red Army men, inspired by the commissars and communists, did not leave the field of battle, even when wounded."

In this extraordinarily difficult situation Antonov also showed courage. With a group of Red Army men who found themselves not far from the division staff, he came in time to the aid of the 1st Battalion of the 135th Regiment.

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On 21 April alarm sirens were sounded at Lugansk. White Guard units had approached the city. The 1st Moscow Workers' Division, suffering great losses, barely withstood the enemy's onslaught. On the orders of the division commissar, A. Antonov went to the city's military-revolutionary committee for assistance. In a few hours the division had been augmented by 300 men. Under the leadership of A. Antonov they underwent a brief course of training and went into battle. Many of them showed high courage and bravery. Platoon commander G. Orlov annihilated 13 White Guards, but he himself perished in battle. Communist machine-gunner P. Puzanov was credited with tens of enemy cavalymen.

Having exhausted the White Guards units in defense battles, Lugansk's defenders on 29 April went over to the offensive. The 1st Moscow Workers' Division undertook mutual actions with the 1st Lugansk Workers' Regiment and the 15th Inza Rifle Division in the area of the Ostraya Mogila height. By the end of the day this height had been taken by storm.

The engagement for Lugansk continued until 27 May. On this day Denikin's men, after gathering great forces, took the city. Holding the enemy in check, regiments of the 1st Moscow Workers' Division went off in the direction of the large Cossack village of Liski. In June a decision was adopted to absorb the remainder of the division into the 15th Inza Rifle Division, which had been formed in 1918 from various Red Army units and partisan detachments. In September and October 1918 this division participated as a part of the 1st Army, which M. N. Tukhachevskiy commanded, in the offense at Simbirsk, Syzran' and Samara. In battles at the approaches to Syzran' the 2d "Volunteer" Division of the Whites and three separate White Guards infantry regiments were routed. On 3 October 1918 Chasti of 1st Army units entered the city. Continuing the offensive as a part of this army, the Inza division liberated Saratov and, after a slight rest, joined the battle for Buguruslan, Buzuluk and Kazan'. At the start of 1919 it was transferred from the Eastern Front to the Southern Front. Here it distinguished itself in the January offensive, where it inflicted the main blow on the enemy southwest of Novokhopersk.

Especially stubborn battles developed in the area of Abramovka. White Guards, after concentrating large forces, resisted desperately. Several times the enemy went over to the counterattack. Soldiers of the 2d Battalion of the Orel Regiment displayed high courage. Inspired by regimental commissar M. Khatskevich and singing the "Internationale," they rushed to the attack and repulsed the White Guards.

Being acquainted with the division's history, Aleksey Antonov was increasingly permeated with a respect for its past, and he admired its present history. Splendid commanders and political workers served in it. And Antonov strove to be a worthy successor to the combat traditions of the brigade and the division.

Despite the heroic actions of the Red Army units, the Denikins continued to attack. On their side was numerical superiority, and they were better supplied. The RKP(b) Central Committee Plenum that convened 3-4 July

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1919 worked out measures for organizing a rebuff to Denikin's soldiers. The Central Committee appealed to party organizations and to the whole country with the letter, "Everyone to the Struggle with Denikin," which was signed by V. I. Lenin.

Hundreds of thousands of workers, peasants and representatives of the laboring intelligentsia responded to this Communist Party appeal. Beginning in July an augmentation began to arrive at the front, among whom were many communists. The new augmentation reinforced the Inza Division, including the 3d Brigade. Aleksey Antonov was charged with familiarizing himself with the arrivals' military training. It turned out to be low. In a short time training exercises were organized in the study of weapons and combat training. It was supervised by Antonov. But this did not release him from staff work.

Participating along with the division in numerous engagements, A. Antonov persistently studied military affairs and expanded his political horizon. He learned the skill of examining and evaluating the phenomena of social life from the class standpoint and of drawing correct practical conclusions on his own.

A. Antonov knew how to see everything that was new that the Civil War had introduced into tactics. Unlike the first world war, with its positional form of battle, the battles of the Civil War were of a maneuvering nature. Divisions, regiments and even platoons often acted independently. This brought out in commanders and staff workers a feeling of great responsibility and the capability not to let oneself be lost during conflict with any enemy.

In the battles against Denikin, A. Antonov acquired his first experience in the processing of staff papers. Among the numerous staff documents of the 3d Brigade of the 15th Inza Rifle Division for January and February 1920 were several dispatches about military actions, information about the numerical composition of the brigade, and a scheme for defense. They were all worked out and signed by A. Antonov, who was temporarily filling the post of chief of staff of the 3d Brigade.*

The Red Army became for A. Antonov, as it did also for many others like him, a good political school, and it pointed out the only correct path in life--to be always and in everything with the Communist Party. At one of the meetings, after having discussed the problems of an impending offensive, the new division commissar, Mikhail Petrovich Yanyshev, became acquainted with A. Antonov. This occurred in the fall of 1919, not far from the Levaya Rossosh' settlement, which billeted the staff of the 3d Brigade. An argumentative talk of Antonov's was to Yanyshev's liking. After the meeting he approached him and proposed that they have a talk.

*Central State Archives of the Soviet Army (hereinafter TsGASA), archive 1250, list 1, document 289, sheet 400.

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They sat at a table on which lay a map with the situation plotted. Antonov began to give a briefing. He did this in detail and with competence.

"Where did you learn military affairs?"

"I completed the Pavlov school, then the Southwestern Front, and the June battles of 1917. Right now I am learning at the Civil War fronts."

The conversation lasted more than an hour. Yanyshv liked very much the young staff worker's reasoning about the nature of combat and the new tactics. They also spoke about political topics.

The Red Army division loved its commissar. They loved him for his crystal clear heart and wholehearted devotion to the affairs of the revolution. They knew that Yanyshv had been occupied with revolutionary activity since his youthful years in Vladimirskaya Province, in Ivanovo-Voznesensk. He spent 10 years in political exile. The American journalist Albert Rice Williams, in the article, "Ten Months with Lenin," and in the book, "Through the Russian Revolution," wrote with great warmth about the Russian comrade who was his fellow traveler in the long journey from New York to revolutionary Petrograd and on many trips about Russia's central regions. He was M. Yanyshv. In October days he fought at Moscow's barricades. After the victory of the proletarian revolution he worked actively in party and soviet organs. In the spring of 1919 a detachment of Moscow communists under Yanyshv defended Petrograd from Yudenich's hordes.

Aleksey was grateful that fate had brought him together with this communist. After the first meeting there was a second, and a third. And each of them brought enormous benefit and expanded his political horizon. On the recommendation of Yanyshv he began to read the works of V. I. Lenin. Antonov was especially grateful to the division commissar for support of his idea: to conduct an analysis of combat operations within brigade staffs.

M. Yanyshv spent 7 months in the division. Antonov was imbued with great respect for him. He considered him his ideological mentor and instructor, and he also learned courage from him.

...This was in January 1920. The Inza Division had gone to the northern regions of Donskaya Oblast. Here, close to the large Cossack village of Rodionov-Nesvitayskaya, the division collided with Mamontov's cavalry corps. This was an encounter whose bitterness exceeded nearly all the battles in which he had participated until then.

A noisy avalanche, whooping and howling and waving blades, the enemy cavalry bore down upon the regiment's positions. At full tilt, Mamontov's men forced their way into the Red Army ranks. Antonov saw that Yanyshv was to be found where it was most difficult of all, where the enemy was attacking especially doggedly. It was difficult for the Mtsa Regiment—he was there, it was hard for the Orel Regiment—he was with them. It was not

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for nothing that his soldiers nicknamed him the ubiquitous commissar. His fearlessness and courage inspired and cheered the waverers on.

Antonov also remembered many other battles in which Yanyshv's personal example inspired Red Army men: the engagement at Rostov-na-Donu, the Kuban' campaign, the assault on Novorossiysk. On 25 June 1920 communist Yanyshv perished in the succession of ranks of attacking Red Army men during the assault on the height at the Gokhgeym community. At the instructions of V. I. Lenin, M. P. Yanyshv was buried in Moscow, in a communal grave at the Kremlin wall.

The battles that the 15th Inza Rifle Division had to wage at the end of 1919 and the start of 1920 indicated that its regiments, like those of the whole Red Army, had vanquished the enemy not only by its bravery and boundless devotion to the revolution but also thanks to the growing skill of Red Army men and their commanders. During the years of the Civil War they had learned not only to defend themselves firmly but also to attack skillfully, to use maneuver, and not to become flustered during temporary setbacks. And Aleksey Antonov raised his combat skill and staff sophistication. He frequently substituted for the brigade chief of staff and coped well with the responsibilities.

In battles in the Donbass [Donets Coal Basin] and then at the approaches to Rostov, Antonov continued to master the skills of organizing the control of brigade units.

During the period of the offensive at Rostov, Bataysk, Azov and Novorossiysk, much attention had to be paid to organizing mutual actions, particularly with cavalry. At the Don and Kuban', the 1st Cavalry Army operated successfully with rifle divisions. On 27 March 1920 Novorossiysk was taken by the joint efforts of combined units of the 9th Army, which the Inza Division had also joined. Soon the White Guards were expelled from the whole North Caucasus. But this did not bring the desired peace. The Entente and the Russian counterrevolution had not been checked. New threatening clouds were approaching from the direction of the Crimea.

The 15th Inza Rifle Division went to the Kakhovka area in June 1920 and entered battle straight from the march. Exhausted by a month's march under the scorching June southern sun, the division took to its heels under the incredibly difficult conditions. Wrangel's troops attacked it from all sides. A. Antonov by this time was now chief of staff of the 45th Brigade. He did much to organize a counterattack that wore out the enemy.

Augmented by new divisions, the Red Army at the start of August moved over to the offensive. It pushed across the Dnepr and took the Kakhovka bridgehead, after winning a major role in the rout of Wrangel's troops. The Kakhovka bridgehead was a fortified portion of flat steppe adjacent to the left bank of the Dnepr. Red Army positions covered the ford across the Dnepr and made it possible to break through to the Whites' rear toward the

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Crimea's isthmuses. The Kakhovka bridgehead worried Wrangel considerably and he repeatedly tried to eliminate it.

One of these attempts was undertaken in the middle of October 1920. Wrangel threw into the battle up to 7,000 bayonets and sabers, 68 guns and 200 machineguns. Twelve tanks, 16 armored cars and 15 aircraft supported the infantry and cavalry.* The 51st Rifle Division and part of the forces of the 15th Inza Rifle Division defended the Kakhovka bridgehead. Wrangel's offensive started early on the morning of 14 October. Advancing in the front were tanks and armored cars, and after them came ranks of enemy infantry. According to the enemy's calculations, the tanks should have caused panic among the Red Army men. But this did not happen. Letting the tanks and armored cars pass, the soldiers cut the infantry off from them and then, with artillery fire and grenades, they put the armored vehicles out of action.

Having routed the enemy in defensive battles, the defenders of the Kakhovka bridgehead transferred to a decisive offense and inflicted serious losses on General Vitkovskiy's units. Ten tanks, 5 armored cars, 70 machineguns and much military equipment were captured in these battles.

Simultaneously bitter battles were being fought on the Dnepr. Here Wrangel's men also undertook an offensive, but they lost three cavalry divisions in so doing.

The battles at the Kakhovka bridgehead and beyond the Dnepr in which the Inza division participated were a good school for Antonov. He became better acquainted with the nature of combat and its forms and once again was convinced of how important it is not to lose one's self-possession, even in the most critical minutes, and to weigh the situation soberly in order to make the only correct decision. Later, within the walls of the military academy, Antonov made the following notation in one of his notebooks: "Never lose your self-control and always be military, with a manly spirit and a careful mind."

As a result of the battles of the fall of 1920, Wrangel's main forces in Severnaya Tavriya suffered defeat. It was necessary to deal the final blow to the White Guard troops in the Crimea and to complete the elimination of the counterrevolution in the south of Russia. However, it was difficult to conquer the Crimea: using the peculiarities of the geographical position of the Crimean Peninsula, the enemy created powerful defense structures at the Perekop and Chongarsk isthmuses.

"The Army of the Southern Front," wrote M. V. Frunze in his memoirs, "having carried out with success the primary mission assigned to it--the defeat of the enemy's forces surviving to the north of the isthmuses, by the evening of 3 November was right by the shores of the Sivash, beginning at Genicheski and ending at the Khorla region.

*See "Istoriya grazhdanskoy voyny v SSSR" [History of the Civil War in the USSR], Vol 5, Moscow, 1960, p 197.

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"Feverish work to prepare to cross the Chongarsk and Perekop isthmuses and to conquer the Crimea commenced."*

On the instructions of the commander of the Southern Front, M. V. Frunze, by the evening of 2 November regiments of the 15th Inza Rifle Division had arrived at the shore of the Sivash. On the evening of 6 November, at the invitation of the chief of the division, the oldest peasants of the village met at the division headquarters, which was located in Stroganovka. The command had decided to consult with them on how best to take the division across the Sivash. A. Antonov took part in the meeting. He wrote and noted on the map where it was easiest of all to cross over the Sivash. He, like the chief of staff of the 45th Brigade, had to know all the fords: the brigade was to be in the division's lead column. He was glad when peasant I. I. Olenchuk, who knew the Sivash well, volunteered to go along with the sappers, place the spar buoys and then accompany the column.

The fording was begun the night of 8 November. It was cold. A dense fog from the sea covered the whole place. A northwest wind was driving the Sivash's waters into the Sea of Azov. This facilitated the crossing--the bottom of the gulf was uncovered. The 15th Rifle Division, which at this time had 10,200 infantrymen and 500 cavalrymen, 120 machineguns and 24 light guns,# made use of these favorable circumstances. Ahead went the boldest and most experienced soldiers--communists and Komsomol members, and the best riflemen, machinegunners and scouts. The guide for the assault group was peasant I. Olenchuk.

The former commissar of the 130th Rifle Regiment, A. Shkol'nik recalled: "We managed to get half way across the Sivash, when the water began to slow down the crossing, not only of the artillery but also of the machineguns. It became difficult even for people to move. It was especially difficult for our regiment. A chast of machine guns wound up in the water, and without them the regiment could not wage battle. The situation became critical. Any minute the enemy could assemble his forces and throw us back into the Sivash. At this moment I and the commander of the regiment assembled the machinegun team and proposed that they drag the machineguns out. Undressing to stark nakedness at a temperature of +5 degrees, the Red army men plunged into the water and dragged 36 machineguns out on their shoulders. They quickly cleaned the mud from them and brought them into combat position. Now we met the enemy fully armed."

At 0200 hours a chast of the lead 45th Brigade, after a short-lived engagement, occupied the first line of an entrenched position on the Litovsk Peninsula. A shock column of the 133d Rifle Regiment, which was part of the 45th Brigade, went across the Sivash under destructive machinegun and small-arms cross-fire from the enemy, after having broken through three rows of wire entanglements. After it the whole regiment, which went into

*Frunze, M. V. "Izobrannyye proizvedeniya" [Selected Works], Moscow, 1965, p 100.

#See "50 let Vooruzhennykh Sil SSSR [50 Years of the USSR Armed Forces], Moscow, 1968, p 146.

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battle against the 2d Kuban' Brigade of the White Guards, entered the gap. At daybreak of 8 November the regiment occupied the whole peninsula and provided a bridgehead for the deployment of our main forces. After making the first breach in the enemy's fortification, the regiment was able to inflict with its main forces a flanking blow in the direction of the town of Armyansk. The regiment captured 724 prisoners of war, 1 tank, two 6-inch naval guns on a platform and several carloads of military property.* The enemy threw a chast of the 2d Army Corps and a brigade of the Drozdov Division into a counterattack. The bitter enemy attack was repelled. Soon Barbovich's cavalry corps arrived on the battlefield; in a hurried procedure, it had been transported from Dzhankoy. It fell upon the 127th Msta Regiment of the 15th Division with all its forces. The forces were too unequal. But the Red Army men repelled all the attacks of the Whites and made for an overall success. For this feat the 127th Regiment was awarded the Order of the Red Banner.#

M. V. Frunze found out about the crossing of the Sivash and the joining of battle from dispatches that were in the headquarters of the 6th Army. He asked Army Commander K. A. Avksent'yevskiy to remain in Chaplinka, while he himself went to the shore of the Sivash, to the division headquarters.

..The vehicle stopped near a small wooden house. In the crowded peasant house there was an unimaginable din, the telephone operator shouted, staff chiefs were shouting, and everyone was demanding people, carts and cartridges.

On seeing the front commander, many froze on the spot. Conversations ceased.

"Keep on working, just do not shout so loudly," said Mikhail Vasil'yevich.

Chief of staff of the 15th Division, P. G. Yarchevskiy, reported the situation to the front commander. In conclusion, he said:

"Matters have gone rapidly the whole day. The Sivash was forded almost without loss."

"Who was on shore when the division crossed the Sivash?" asked Frunze.

"The chief of staff of the 45th Brigade, Antonov, has just now returned from the Sivash."

A tall, well-proportioned young man with intelligent large black eyes stood before the commander. M. V. Frunze listened attentively to his report, which was laconic but of utmost clarity, about the crossing of the Sivash, about the needs of the brigade that had gone into battle, and about how Red Army grenades and bayonets had beaten off the counterattacks of the Drozdov soldiers and, with light small-arms fire, had put armored

*TsGASA, archive 1250, list 1, document 586, sheet 26.

#See "50 let Vooruzhennykh Sil SSSR," p 146.

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cars to flight and did not allow themselves to be thrown into the Sivash or be the ruination of the adjacent division.

"Right now the situation is very difficult--the cartridges are gone and there is no water," ended A. Antonov.

"Comrade Yarchevskiy, do you have communication with the 7th Cavalry Division?" the front commander asked.

"We do."

"Tell the division chief to come quickly to me."

Stroganovka did not sleep that night. On the streets people in pointed helmets loomed indistinctly and torches blazed. The divisions that fought for the Sivash were being reinforced. This night and the next 2 days Aleksey Antonov observed how wisely and energetically M. V. Frunze directed the troops and took a number of urgent measures that would enable the situation to be saved. Mikhail Vasil'yevich called the commander of the 6th Army, K. A. Avksent'yevskiy:

"The Sivash is running. Both divisions on that side are cut off, without ammunition and threatened by the enemy's next counterattack....I confirm the order of the 51st Division about a night assault on the Perekop rampart. In case of the slightest delay in carrying out the order, I will not dare to ask for mercy for you before the tribunal...."

He ordered the 15th Division chief of staff, who was standing:

"Rouse Stroganovka, Vladimirovka, Ivanovka and Grigor'yevka. Everyone take spades, straw and reeds--to the Sivash."

The battle was not only against Wrangel's troops but also against the water. The Red Army men and local residents showed mass heroism. For 2 days Antonov did not close his eyes. He did everything to support the brigade's combat capabilities.

For several more days the stubborn battle with Wrangel's troops continued. But the fate of it had been decided beforehand. On 16 November the Crimea became free. On this day V. I. Lenin received a telegram: "Today our cavalry occupied Kerch'. The Southern Front has been eliminated. Front Commander Frunze."*

"You know, of course," said V. I. Lenin, "what extraordinary heroism the Red Army displayed, having overcome obstacles and fortifications that even military specialists and authorities had considered impregnable. One of the most brilliant pages in the history of the Red Army is that complete, decisive and remarkably rapid victory that was won over Wrangel."#

*Frunze, M. V., "Izbrannyye proizvedeniya," Vol 1, Moscow 1957, p 425.
#Lenin, V. I., "Poln. sobr. soch." [Complete Collected Works], Vol. 42, pp 129-130.

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Intervention and the Civil War in Russia had ended. The people had saved their Soviet power and the independence of the socialist motherland. Meetings were held throughout the whole country. The 15th Inza Rifle Division received the honorary title, "Sivashskaya," and was awarded the Order of the Red Banner.

"Heroes of the Sivash!" the order of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic said. "The 15th Rifle Division on the night of 8 November 1920 crossed the Sivash in battle and, in the face of desperate opposition, conducted an offensive on the Litovsk Peninsula. Under enemy drumfire, the division's units had by evening occupied the enemy's entrenchments on the northern extremity of Lake Krasnoye, having captured 4 British weapons and other trophies. On the morning of 10 November chasti of the 15th Division broke through the line of the enemy's entrenchments northwest of Lake Krasnoye, where two cavalry regiments of General Barbovich's corps were surrounded and taken.

"Glory to the Red soldiers, to the valorous liberators of the Crimea's workers.

"Deputy Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic
Sklyanskiy."

Many participants of the assault of the Sivash and Perekop were awarded orders and the Honored Weapon. Aleksey Innokent'yevich Antonov was also awarded the Honored Weapon of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic. In 1923 he was presented an Honorary Certificate. "This Honorary Certificate," it says, "has been issued to Antonov because his active participation in the final combat operations on the Sivash, which ended in the full rout of the White Guard army of General Wrangel, helped to consolidate the achievements of the Great Proletarian October and to provide for the calm and peaceful development of the Soviet Worker-Peasant Republic."

Few knew about these awards. Journalists who met with A. I. Antonov said that it took them great effort to find out from him about participation in the assault on the Sivash. Aleksey Innokent'yevich usually answered their persistent requests with:

"I did not perform special feats. I did not rouse the soldiers to the attack. I carried out the responsibility of a staff worker. I waged war, like everyone did."

During the years of the Civil War, Aleksey Antonov had met many commanders, commissars and staff workers. And from each he took everything that was positive and useful. The meetings with M. P. Yanyshev and M. V. Frunze especially helped him greatly. Several times Antonov saw the commander of the Southern Front. Twice he spoke with him and gave information. He remembered those meetings throughout his whole life.

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After the conclusion of the battles, Antonov undertook to analyze the 45th Brigade's actions in accordance with the fresh evidence. He wrote a brief description of his headquarters during the period of combat activity. The regiments also wrote their histories. Meetings and military-theory conferences were held at which the brigade's combat path was interpreted and individual operations were examined.

The years 1921-1929 went into the history of the Soviet Armed Forces as years when they had converted to a peaceful situation and were reorganized as applicable to the economic and political situation of the Soviet country. V. I. Lenin and the Communist Party set forth a great program of reconstruction work in which the Red Army also took part. In 1920-1921 the army's large units that did not participate directly in combat operations were transferred to a labor status completely or partially. The tasks of the labor armies were to increase the output of fuel and raw materials, to restore destroyed factories and plants and to do agricultural work. The 15th Sivashskaya Rifle Division, in which A. Antonov had served as brigade chief of staff, also was converted to a labor status. In the spring of 1921 he and the personnel of the division participated in conduct of the sowing campaign. Thousands of hectares of fertile Ukrainian land were then being sown.

Simultaneously the 15th Division waged a struggle with banditry. Remnants of the Makhno band, which Red Army detachments had pursued throughout the Ukraine, were scattered.

The country of the Soviets, destroyed and depleted by war, could not allow itself to maintain a large army. By the end of 1924 the manning of the Armed Forces was reduced from 5.5 million to 562,000 men.* Only those who decided in accordance with their own inclinations and abilities to dedicate their whole life to the military service remained in the Red Army. Aleksey Antonov was among them.

Upon conversion to a peaceful status, the Communist Party solved many questions of military organizational development: it defined the system for further development of the Armed Forces and organization of the military apparatus and reorganized the structure of chasti and of large units of the Red Army. The question of which types of military equipment must be developed arose with special severity. Western military theoreticians had asserted that the outcome of a war would be decided only by chemical weapons, or by aviation, or by great mechanized armies.

Disputes and discussions flared up about these and many other questions. They spread also in Nikolayev--a small city in the south of the Ukraine, where the 15th Division had been stationed. Antonov, who by this time had become chief of the operations section of the division staff, participated in them. He was a proponent of the harmonious development of all the arms and services. He put his ideas into practice when organizing exercises with commanders and staff workers. At these exercises he often

*See "50 let Vooruzhennykh Sil SSSR," p 169.

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worked out the mutual relationships among the infantry, cavalry and artillery. A. Antonov successfully carried out his service obligations, showing great talent for operations work. It was noted in efficiency reports for 1922 and 1923: "He is energetic, efficient, disciplined and precise in his work. He is experienced in and knows operational work. He is precise and energetic in the work assigned to him. He knows how to use his experience in staff work, and he solves problems without error."

It stands to reason that not all of this came easily. He had to devote all his efforts and knowledge to the work. Antonov had a general education and at that time it was more than most Red Army commanders had. However, he did not have a special military education, and he sensed this. Therefore, he began to prepare himself gradually for the military academy. He had all the potentiality for this. In 1925 an efficiency report signed by the commander of the 15th Sivashskaya Rifle Division, I. I. Raudemets, and commander of the Ukrainian Military District, I. E. Yakir, it was stated that A. I. Antonov possessed a lively, searching mind and initiative, knew how to look into any situation, and had great practical experience and knowledge of staff work. His especially important qualities as a staff worker were punctuality, precision, efficiency, persistence, conscientiousness in fulfilling the job assigned to him, and exactingness toward himself and toward his subordinates. It was noted that A. Antonov took an active part in military-science work and strove to obtain a higher military education. "Persistent preparation for examinations to the academy," the efficiency report said, "and the good results achieved during the period of probationary work in the artillery will serve as a guarantee that he will pass the academic course excellently and, upon conclusion thereof, will be able to apply the knowledge obtained to the job."

Great events had occurred in the Red Army: military reform, and the introduction of one-man command. Measures taken during military reform were reinforced in the Law of Required Military Service that was adopted on 18 September 1925 by the TsIK [Central Executive Committee] and SNK [Council of People's Commissars] of the USSR. This was the first nationwide law about the required performance of military service by all citizens of the country. Simultaneously it also set the organizational structure of the Armed Forces. All this created favorable conditions for converting to the planned combat readiness of the troops. A. Antonov took an active part in organizing the combat and, especially, the tactical training of personnel, which was being drawn up in accordance with the new manuals that had been worked out to take into account the experience of the Civil War and World War I.

Changes had also occurred in the personal life of Aleksey Antonov. He fell in love with the gay black-eyed Mariya Temok, who returned his love. The young people got married. Mariya Dmitriyevna became the faithful companion of Aleksey Innokent'yevich and shared all joys and difficulties with him.

In 1926 Aleksey Antonov submitted an application to the party organization of the division headquarters, requesting that it accept his candidacy

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for membership in the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bol'shevik)]. And in 2 years he was a member of the Communist Party and a student of the command department of the Military Academy imeni M. V. Frunze.

BETWEEN THE WARS

It is easy to imagine with what emotion A. Antonov crossed the threshold of the academy, at which distinguished military theoreticians and historians taught. The demands on the students were very high. This was dictated by the development of the Red Army. The years of the First Five-Year Plan were years of great change in the organizational development of the USSR's Armed Forces. Already by the end of the 1920's more modern tank equipment, artillery, mortars and small arms began to arrive in the army. The combined-arms commander was required to master to perfection the new military equipment and arms and to raise the art of teaching and educating personnel. In 1927-1929 certain new manuals and regulations were published that laid down the beginning of a single harmonious system for combat training in the Armed Forces.

Of great importance in improving the training of military personnel was the VKP(b) Central Committee decree, "The Command and Political Makeup of the RKKA [Workers' and Peasants' Red Army]," that was adopted in February 1929. The party Central Committee required that a further rise in the military qualification of commanders and staff workers, and also in their politico-ideological level, be achieved. The academy was called upon to prepare to perfection commanders who would know modern equipment and the capabilities of the forces that are equipped with it and who would be able to apply it skillfully in war and to orient themselves quickly to the political situation and the tasks of political work in the army.

In carrying out the orders of the party Central Committee, the academy's council adopted a decision to improve the teaching process. The number of cycles was reduced to five. The cycles of strategy, tactics, social and economic sciences, military history and military organization began to operate. At the same time there were also separate departments--military geography, political work and military linguistics. The independent topics of automotive engineering, physics, chemistry and physical training remained.

Aleksey Innokent'yevich studied with great zeal. But there were among the disciplines those to which he gave preference. He especially liked exercises in staff service. He liked to make calculations for the movement of troops and to guess the enemy's actions. He did map work with pleasure. He loved probationary training with the troops. He studied the operations art earnestly. Not one article or book by Soviet or foreign authors on this subject was left unread by him.

It goes without saying that knowledge about the operations art, as with other disciplines, did not come easy. He had to study much and do research. By this time there had appeared in the Red Army completely new

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large units that were equipped with military equipment and weaponry that were the most modern for those years. It had become extremely complicated to command them. The requirements of the art of leading troops were greatly raised.

Many of Aleksey Innokent'yevich's fellow students envied his purposefulness, persistence and assiduity. He showed these qualities especially during the study of foreign languages. A. Antonov understood that the military man should know not only native equipment and weaponry and constantly follow the development of Soviet military science but should also know in which direction military equipment and military thought are being developed abroad. He successfully mastered the French language and received the qualification of military translator.

In addition to deep military and political knowledge the academy armed A. Antonov with a quality extremely valuable for the military man--skill in rapidly understanding the most complicated situation and in finding correct solutions. At the beginning of service in the Red Army, especially after the end of the Civil War, Antonov displayed outstandingly an inclination toward scientific research. The academy reinforced and developed this talent.

Here is how A. I. Antonov is characterized in the graduation efficiency report: "Volitional qualities are entirely positive. General and military education are good. Prior to the academy he had extensive staff service but little combat service. He has served as an example in the academy. He has developed commander and instructor habits. During practical work in the field he took an active part in the conduct of experimental studies and divisional maneuvers. There is an inclination to service in motorized or mechanized chasti and scientific-research. He is suitable for the post of chief of staff of a mechanized brigade or assistant chief of staff of a corps."

After completion of the academy in March 1931, A. I. Antonov left to serve in the Ukraine, in the city of Korosten', where he was named to the post of chief of staff of the 46th Rifle Division. The division at that time was being rearmed. Chasti were receiving V. A. Degtyarev's modernized rifles and light automatic machinegun and other rifle-type weaponry. Modernized and new artillery systems also were arriving in the armamentarium. In 1930 the tankmaking industry began the mass production of combat vehicles. Already in 1931 the division had received new tanks.

Simultaneously with reequipment, the organizational structure and the principles of manning units were changed and control organs were improved. The international situation having been exacerbated, the interests of the security of the socialist state required the introduction of the cadre principle of manning the army. The mixed territorial-cadre system that existed at that time could not solve the tasks of defending the motherland. In 1931 the USSR Revvoyensovet [Revolutionary Military Council], based upon the instructions of the VKP(b) Central Committee, converted in the

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Ukrainian Military District to the cadre principle for manning several divisions, including the 46th Rifle Division.

The measures associated with the reorganization required strenuous work by commanders and by political workers. A special responsibility lay on the division staff. A. I. Antonov, from the first days of his stay at Korosten', had thrown himself into his work. Fresh knowledge and combat experience enabled him to do it well. Everything was done strictly according to plan, without excessive haste, thoroughly, and with good quality. Antonov knew the new equipment well and more than once conducted exercises with chaste and small-unit commanders and staff workers. Several staff exercises that approached combat conditions to the maximum were held under his direction. He participated also in developing various themes for district exercises.

A. I. Antonov's leaning toward operations work was noted. In the fall of 1932 he was sent to study in the operations department that had been created at the Military Academy imeni M. V. Frunze. Later this department was the base for development of the General Staff Academy of the RKKA. Antonov studied here from November 1932 until May 1933. "An excellent operations staff worker, ready for work in higher staffs," was the conclusion about A. I. Antonov by the chief and commissar of the operations department G. S. Isserson.

After the studies, Aleksey Innokent'yevich again served with troops. For a year and a half he was chief of staff of the 46th Rifle Division, and from October 1934 to August 1935 he was chief of staff of the Mogilev-Yampol' fortified region. Then he was transferred to the staff of the Khar'kov Military District, to the post of chief of the 1st (Operations) Section. Now in his 40th year, with a broad political and military horizon, he was ripe to be a commander. With increasing frequency he was charged with developing plans for large tactical exercises and maneuvers that used various arms and services. They were made up to take into account the new equipment and arms that had arrived in the forces.

Successful fulfillment of the tasks of the Second Five-Year Plan enabled the Soviet Government to equip the Red Army with a large number of new aircraft, tanks and weapons. Supported by the economic and social transformations that were occurring in the country, the VKP(b) Central Committee and the USSR SNK in 1935-1938 executed everywhere conversion from the mixed territorial-cadre system to the unified cadre principle of building up the Soviet Armed Forces that had been started in the border districts in 1931-1932. The new military equipment had changed considerably the methods for waging war, for the combat use of the arms and services, and for the interaction thereof on the field of battle.

An important event in the life of A. I. Antonov, as was true of many other Red Army, were the tactical exercises that were conducted from 12 to 17 September 1935. They have gone into the history of the Soviet Armed Forces under the name of the Grand Kiev Maneuvers. All arms and services took part in them: infantry, cavalry, airborne, artillery, armored and

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aviation chasti and large units. The breakthrough of a fortified defensive zone by a rifle corps, a reinforced tank battalion and RGK [high-command reserve] artillery, the development of the breakthrough of a cavalry corps, the use of a huge airdrop, the maneuvering of a mechanized corps jointly with a cavalry division for the purpose of encircling and destroying an enemy group in its rear area that had broken through were worked out. For the first time, many theoretical principles of Soviet military science were verified, including the theory of combat in depth and operations in depth.*

The troops had tentative designations--the "blues" and the "reds." The "blues" were led by the commander of the Khar'kov Military District, I. N. Dubov. The "reds" were commanded by his deputy, S. A. Turovskiy. The commander of the Kiev Military District, I. E. Yakir, directed the exercises.

Chief of the operations section of the Khar'kov Military District headquarters A. I. Antonov, together with staff workers of the Kiev and Khar'kov military districts, participated in developing the concept and the plan of the exercises and the provisioning of personnel with ammunition, food and everything needed for successful execution of the combat training missions.

The enormous work done by the staffs and, especially, by operations staff personnel to develop the plan for the maneuvers was telling from the very start. The actions of the opponents were played extremely dynamically and took full account of the combat capabilities of the arms and services, especially of large mechanized units and airborne chasti. All the computations proved to be so realistic that the forces operated in a situation that was as close to combat as possible.

During the maneuvers, Aleksey Innokent'yevich became more closely acquainted with I. E. Yakir, who had known Antonov since 1923. The army commander more than once observed the actions of the operations staff personnel. He was especially satisfied with the work of Antonov and his comrades at one of the most important movements of the exercises--the landing of 1,200 airborne troops.

*Toward the end of the 1920's, M. N. Tukhachevskiy, V. K. Triandafillov, I. P. Ubovich and K. B. Kalinovskiy had advanced ideas of the theory of combat in depth and operations in depth. V. K. Triandafillov's work, "The Nature of Operations of Modern Armies," played a substantial role in developing the new theory. However, until that time, this theory had not been widely developed because of the lack of an adequate number of tanks and airplanes. At the beginning of the 1930's this theory was already resting upon an actual equipment base. As a result of the creative efforts of a large collective of professors and instructors of the Academy imeni M. V. Frunze and in close contact with the central administrations of the Narkomat [People's Commissariat] for Defense and with the troops, the basic principles of the theory of combat in depth and of operations were worked out.--Author's note.

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Strenuous "battles" occurred during the 5 days. Participating in them were 65,000 men and 3,000 combat vehicles.* All the chasti and large units showed high combat training. Many soldiers, commanders, political workers and staff workers, including A. I. Antonov, received commendations from the Narkom [People's Commissar] for Defense, K. Ye. Voroshilov.

During these years A. I. Antonov worked especially hard and productive. Theoretical exercises were replaced by practical exercises. On going into the field major attention was paid to perfecting the actions of corps and division staffs under various combat conditions with the massed application of aviation and tanks. Not for one day did Aleksey Innokent'yevich cease to study, and he persistently perfected his knowledge. He recalled the words that M. V. Frunze uttered at the ceremonial meeting of the Military Academy on 1 August 1924, which was dedicated to the graduation of students: "Only those of you who feel constant dissatisfaction with yourselves, dissatisfaction and incompleteness in the background of learning that you take with you from the walls of the academy, who strive to expand your range of interests and to augment your theoretical and practical backgrounds--only those who do not fall behind in military affairs, will go forward and, perhaps, lead tens and hundreds of other people."#

In 1936 the district command sent A. I. Antonov to the RKKA General Staff Academy, which was then being opened for study. The Communist Party and the Soviet Government, considering the complicated international situation and the necessity to have a sufficient number of personnel highly trained in strategic operations and capable of leading such large operational field forces as an army or a front, adopted a decision to create a new Soviet Armed Forces institution for higher military education.

The pick of military-affairs theoreticians then available had been assembled at the General Staff Academy. Among them were V. A. Melikov, D. M. Karbyshev, N. N. Shvarts, A. I. Gotovtsev, G. S. Isserson, A. V. Kirpichnikov, N. A. Levitskiy, N. I. Trubetskoy, F. P. Shafalovich, Ye. A. Shilovskiy, V. K. Mordvinov and P. P. Ionov. Aleksey Innokent'yevich knew many of them from previous years of study at the Academy imeni M. V. Frunze.

He who had come to the academy for study was also the subject of study. I. Kh. Bagramyan, A. M. Vasilevskiy, N. F. Batutin, L. A. Govorov and M. V. Zakharov and other commanders were its first students. They were attracted widely to a discussion of methodological and scientific questions, lectures, group exercises and war games, and to participation in instructional work.

The study process at the General Staff Academy is not shaped like that at other institutions of higher military learning. A large part of the time is allocated to independent preparation. Two or three days per week the

*See "Kievskiy krasnoznamenny" [Kiev Red Banner], Moscow, 1974, p 103.
#Frunze, M. V., "Izbrannyye proizvedeniye," Vol. 2, Moscow, 1957, p 127.

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students are busy in the academy's libraries or laboratories. And only half of the exercises were conducted in study groups, which consisted of 12-15 persons.

This was explained by the special composition of the student body and the students' ages and service status. They were not as well prepared for the forthcoming exercises as for augmenting the reserve of military knowledge for work with troops. Because of the absence of a literature on modern operations art, the students used their own experience in solving study tasks in the conduct of army and front operations. The problems that A. I. Antonov worked out, taking into account his experiences in the Civil War and in troop exercises, were evaluated highly by the instructors.

The students of the first class studied comprehensively army and front operations within the framework of the new theory of the military art. Great attention was paid to operations games on maps. Each student assumed the role of chief of staff of an army or front, and then the role of commander. A. I. Antonov, L. A. Govorov and M. V. Zakharov coped especially well with these responsibilities. This was explained by the fact that in their time they had successfully completed the operations department course of the Academy imeni M. V. Frunze, and their training in the field of the operations art was higher than that of the other students.

The academy's students spent the summer of 1937 in field training with the navy and participated in operations games locally with the use of communications equipment and in troop exercises in the Ukraine.

A. I. Antonov successfully completed the first course of study. He did not actually have to study the second. Once during exercises Aleksey Innokent'yevich was summoned quickly to the Narkomat for Defense. This was not a surprise for him. Several days earlier M. V. Zakharov and N. F. Batutin had been called there. The first entered the post of chief of staff of the Leningrad Military District, and the second became the deputy chief of staff of the Kiev Military District. A. I. Antonov was named chief of staff of the Moscow Military District, which was commanded by Marshal of the Soviet Union (MSU) S. M. Budenny.

Everything new that appeared in military affairs was tested in the capital district. It was here that the first mechanized brigade in the Red Army was created, in 1930, and the world's first mechanized corps, in 1932. Airborne chasti appeared for the first time in the Moscow Military District.

Soon A. I. Antonov had to participate in the organization of district exercises, at which methods were to be worked out for the combat application of armored forces. He experienced enormous satisfaction from the work, because while still on the academic bench he had not been indifferent to this branch of the service.

Of course he paid due attention also to the other arms. The rifle divisions were being reorganized in the district. New chasti appeared within

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them: a second artillery regiment, an antitank artillery division, a tank battalion and an antiaircraft division. Much was being done at this time also to further improve the air defense forces. In Moscow, at the beginning of 1938, Antonov participated in headquarters drills and chasti and general exercises in PVO [air defense] and MPVO [local air defense] troops and equipment, at which questions of mutual actions were worked out. Everyone who knew about brigade commander A. I. Antonov's work in the Moscow Military District noted his exceptional efficiency and creative energy.

In December 1938 Aleksey Innokent'yevich was named senior instructor of the department of general tactics of the Military Academy imeni M. V. Frunze. The threat of world war required acceleration of the creation of large contingents of well-trained commanders of chasti and smaller units, and A. I. Antonov devoted himself utterly to this important matter.

Great experience in practical work and deep theoretical knowledge enabled him to prove himself rapidly in this new field. Along with other instructors, Antonov was included in the development of such topics as, "Evolution of the Tactical Application of Large Tank and Mechanized Units in Accordance with Battle Experience in Spain," and "Tactics of the German Army: the March and the Meeting Engagement." Aleksey Innokent'yevich reported at scientific conferences and helped comrades to prepare dissertations. On 11 February 1940 the Higher Certifying Commission of the All-Union Committee on the Affairs of Higher Schools under the USSR SNK conferred on A. I. Antonov the learned title of assistant professor. On 4 June of that same year, by a decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, the rank of major general was conferred on him.

Beginning in January 1941 Antonov became deputy chief of the department of general tactics and, in addition to instructing and participating in the development of real problems of military science, he did much work in the commission for selecting works that had been nominated by the departments or instructor personnel of the academy for competition for the State Prize. Documents that were related to the work of this commission--the minutes of meetings, reviews of works that had been nominated for a prize, shorthand reports of the educational council that discussed the commission's reports--testified to Aleksey Innokent'yevich's ability to see everything that is new and valuable that is born in military science. He enthusiastically stood up for such works and recommended them for practical use not only during training of the academy's students but also with the troops.

IN CHARGE OF THE STAFFS OF FRONTS

The threat of a military assault on the USSR was growing each day. The Communist Party and the Soviet Government took measures to strengthen the country's defensive capability. Combat equipment and arms arrived for the army. The districts, especially the border districts, were strengthened with well-trained personnel. At the start of 1941 Major General A. I. Antonov was sent to the Kiev Special Military District. In letters to his

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sister, Lyudmila Innokent'yevna, who was working at that time as an instructor of geography at one of Leningrad's middle schools, Antonov wrote: "Timochenko summoned me in the evening. He conversed about half an hour and told me that I should be ready to leave in a week. Kiev was planned. The conversation left a very good impression. So, soon I will be on a trip. A great and serious matter impends."

In another letter, of 16 March 1941, he said: "The question about me has been decided finally: today, in the evening, I will go to Kiev, to the post of deputy chief of staff of the Kiev Special Military District. In Moscow I had to be on the job until midnight, but there, probably, I will have to work until morning."

At the moment of Antonov's arrival at the post, the district's command was developing a plan for protecting the state border. Aleksey Innokent'yevich was included in this work. According to the testimony of MSU I. Kh. Bagramyan, who in 1941 was in charge of the operations section of the Kiev Special Military District, A. I. Antonov was able to quickly take in the situation and evaluate the whole importance of the plan for protecting the border. He was of enormous help to the command in the work.

The Kiev Special Military District should have had the troops of four armies to cover the state border on the Vlodava-Lipkany sector, a distance of about 1,000 km. Prior to making up the plan, Antonov and a small group of officers traveled many hundreds of kilometers. Aleksey Innokent'yevich saw the wire entanglements, the entrenchments, the trenches, the observation points, the antitank ditches and the durable reinforced-concrete emplacements. But there were few troops here. Basically, these were small separate units that were working on the construction of the fortified regions and small groups of soldiers. This worried Antonov most of all.

Aleksey Innokent'yevich reported his thoughts on strengthening protection of the border to the district chief of staff, Lt Gen M. A. Purkayev.

A. I. Antonov paid much attention to the Lutsk-Rovno sector. The 5th Army should have been protecting this 176-km section of the border. Together with the chief of staff of this army, Maj Gen D. S. Pisarevskiy, Aleksey Innokent'yevich worked out papers that defined the tasks of the troops of the first and second echelons. The 4th Rifle Division, which made up the first echelon, was given the task: relying upon prepared structures of the forward defensive positions and the defensive centers of the Kovel'skiy, Vladimir-Volynka and Strumilov fortified regions, to allow no invasion by enemy forces. Measures for the case of a breakthrough of individual troop formations were called for. They came down to a decisive counterblow of the second echelon within the mechanized corps and rifle division.* A plan was carefully worked out for other sectors also.

A plan for protecting the state border was made up within the precisely established period. After thorough study and comprehensive discussion, the district's military council approved it.

*See "Kievskiy krasnoznamenny," p 148.

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Subordinate to A. I. Antonov were organs that were conducting mobilization-organization affairs. Their responsibility included solution of such important and complicated problems as the mobilization, the call-up and the assignment of troops. Aleksey Innokent'yevich was involved daily with these questions. His attention was riveted on them also because on the eve of the war the forces of the Kiev Special Military District were not completely manned. In the district's tank forces, the share of new tanks was 24.4 percent. The problem of transport remained unsolved. The rifle divisions had no more than 15-40 percent of the required number of motor vehicles. Most of the divisions continued to be maintained according to peacetime tables of organization, and their manning did not exceed 65-70 percent.*

With the start of the Great Patriotic War the district was required to mobilize all the combat forces, form and send to the front numerous rear-area units and establishments, and develop the training of specialists in the reserve units in a short time. Aleksey Innokent'yevich took a most active part in solving these questions, as he did many others. With the separation of the field administration of the Southwestern Front from the Kiev Military District, Maj Gen A. I. Antonov was named chief of staff of the district. The timely appearance of inductees and the arrival from the national economy of automotive and horse-drawn transport were ensured by the joint efforts of the military council and the district staff. During the first 4 days, throughout tens of oblasts the plan for call-up of personnel was carried out by 90 percent and for the delivery of motor vehicles by 70-76 percent, of tractors by 81 percent, and of carts by 83 percent.#

The forming of new chasti and establishments was going on full blast. In June and July more than 20 separate engineering (pontoon) battalions and special-purpose companies were sent into the standing army. The war had also brought up several other problems. Thus, it was necessary to evacuate military warehouses and bases from the front zone and to help local party and soviet organs to evacuate enterprises to the east.

The successful solution of these tasks depended to a great extent upon the work of railroad transport. Enemy aviation subjected railroad junctions, yards and open railroad lines to continuous bombardment. But it was impossible, even under these complicated conditions, to allow interruptions in the work of railroad transport. Aleksey Innokent'yevich paid daily attention to the work of organs of military communications and transport. During those days, one could often see chief of the Southwestern Railroad P. M. Nekrasov and his deputy--chief of the railroad's political affairs section, A. V. Smirnov--in his office. Jointly they decided how to improve the work of railroad transport and set a strict and accurate schedule for dispatching replacements, combat equipment, weapons and supply and equipment resources. Thanks to the measures taken by the middle of July, it was possible to evacuate more than 120,000 inductees, 24,000 horses and 10,000 carts across the Dnepr.**

*Ibid, p 151.

#Ibid, p 186.

**Ibid, p 187.

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Very often commander of district forces Lt Gen V. F. Yakovlev, military council member brigade commissar Ye. Ye. Kashcheyev and chief of staff Maj Gen A. I. Antonov met together and solved urgent problems raised by life and the requirements of the front. At such conferences the suggestions of the district's staff workers also were discussed. At one of them Aleksey Innokent'yevich substantiated the necessity for expanding and speeding up the training of junior commanders and Red Army specialists. A decision was adopted to form the 13th and 17th reserve rifle brigades and several chasti of army and district subordination. This enabled 7,350 junior commanders and Red Army specialists for various arms and services to be sent to combat units by 5 July.*

At the end of 1941 Maj Gen A. I. Antonov was named chief of staff of the Southern Front. He replaced Maj Gen F. N. Romanov at this post.

By this time the front's forces had conducted strenuous defensive engagements. The enemy possessed a substantial superiority in combat equipment, especially in airplanes and tanks. The German Fascist forces were able to drive wedges into our defense, to break through it and push to the Dnepr in various areas. The whole steep right bank was covered, as if by a curtain, with clouds of smoke and dust. Everywhere bitter engagements were going on. The General Headquarters (GHQ) of the Supreme High Command required all forces to defend the Dnepr and to firmly protect Dnepropetrovsk, Zaporozh'ye and Kherson.

At this difficult time A. I. Antonov devoted all his strength and organizing talents to the mission assigned to him. Experienced staff workers labored with him. Some he knew from joint service in the Moscow Military District. Among them were chief of the operations sections Col N. I. Lyamin and his senior assistant, Lt Col V. I. Petukhov. The staff workers were in good standing with the front commander and the military council.

Commissar of the operations section battalion commander A. G. Chernyavskiy, deputy chief of the operations section Col P. M. Kotov-Legan'kov, Col A. G. Yermolayev, Lt Col V. I. Petukhov and many others enjoyed distinguished prestige with the troops and the front's staff. On the instructions of the military council, some of them commanded composite forces. At the start of August 1941 one of these forces, under Lt Col V. I. Petukhov, held out for 8 days against superior enemy forces in the Peska region, not far from Odessa, not allowing it to break through to Nikolayev. For a short intermediate period, Petukhov was able to put together a combat-capable collective from disorganized fragmented forces that engaged the enemy heroically, repulsing its numerous attacks.

Other staff workers also conducted themselves bravely and knew how to direct when the situation required them to take charge of a chasti or small unit. Each staff officer strove to carry out his duty as well as possible. Most of them had had good military training. Suffice it to say that half

*Tsentral'nyy arkhiv Ministerstva oborony SSSR [Central Archive of the USSR Ministry of Defense] (hereinafter TsAMO), archive 131, list 113358, document 4, sheets 124 and 126.

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of the workers of the operations section had completed the Military Academy imeni M. V. Frunze. And although many posts remained vacant, this did not particularly affect the job: disregarding everything else, people worked day and night, often without sleep or rest.

The front's field administration in 1941 consisted of the staff and many administrations and independent sections. To organize mutual relationships within the field administration and to arrange for it to work with precision was one of the responsibilities of the front's chief of staff. The front staff subordinate to him was, in missions and structural organization, a complicated organ for collective control of the troops of a strategic operations element. This working apparatus that commanded the troops included several sections and hundreds of specialists.

A. I. Antonov had had experience in managing staffs. However, many questions had to be solved within the Southern Front staff for the first time, in a new way, the combat situation being complex. And while Aleksey Innokent'yevich solved them successfully, having a knowledge of the job, this was possible thanks to his outstanding organizational talents, high sophistication in staff work, and the wisdom to see through the enemy's designs and then to propose methods for disrupting them.

Aleksey Innokent'yevich was distinguished by high exactingness toward himself and subordinates, constant dissatisfaction and tireless study. He took all measures to improve the work of each staff section and the control of the troops in a short time. For this purpose, he put order into the presentation of information to the commander and discussions over the "Bodo" and ST-35 equipment and made the content of operational summaries more precise.

Aleksey Innokent'yevich paid much attention to solving such questions as achieving responsiveness, continuity and secrecy in the control of troops and also stability in control organs and posts.

During his service Aleksey Innokent'yevich had to meet with many commanders. He also ran across those who relied only upon themselves. He tried to correct such comrades, to explain to them what an enormous role staffs play in modern war. From the first day of his stay at the Southern Front, Antonov persistently strove to get commanders of armies and the commanders of corps and divisions to rely upon staffs in their activity. Front commander Lt Gen D. I. Ryabyshev completely supported A. I. Antonov.

As a consequence of serious losses that were sustained by Soviet forces in battles on the Ukraine's Left Bank, the ratio of forces that prevailed on the southern segment of the Soviet-German front was not in our favor.

On 29 September 1941 engagements in the south of the country developed with new force. The enemy's 1st Tank Group renewed its offensive against Southern Front divisions that had not succeeded in being reinforced on the new line. The front was broken through. Lt Gen D. I. Ryabyshev ordered his armies to fall back to the Pavlograd-Bol'shoy Tokmak-Melitopol'-Lake

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Molochnoye line by 5 October. But the front's forces could not stop the enemy even on that line. The 1st German Tank Army,* rapidly pushing forward in a southerly direction, created a threat of deep envelopment on the whole front. Chasti of divisions of the 18th and 9th armies were encircled. Maj Gen A. I. Antonov went out to the area of the 9th Army to help the commander, Maj Gen F. M. Kharitonov, to organize a withdrawal of the forces which, by a stubborn defense, had held up the enemy's offensive for 3 days. The 9th Army, and the 18th Army, which had operated to the north of it, withdrew to the line between the Dneprovsk Flats (south of Zaporozh'ye) and Lake Molochnoye and contained the enemy's offensive there.

The front headquarters was redeployed so that continuous control of the troops would be provided for. When Col Gen Ya. T. Cherevichenko was named commander of the Southern Front on 5 October, A. I. Antonov quickly provided him with all the data about the situation. In the next 2 days decisions were adopted: to withdraw the forces to a prepared defensive line, to ensure the breakout of various large units from encirclement, to introduce reserves into battle, and to inflict a counterblow on the enemy formations that had broken through. All this indicates the enormous tension under which Southern Front staff members and A. I. Antonov personally had to operate.

Aleksey Innokent'yevich ever more frequently pondered on how to better organize generalization of the experience of battling the German-Fascist aggressors and to put this matter on a scientific basis. Uncorrelated information about the action of our chasti and small units and about the enemy's tactics yielded hardly anything.

In September an order was sent to headquarters of the armies that said: "From the operations summaries that have been presented it is impossible to discover completely the peculiarities of the various engagements and to teach to all chasti of the Southern Front the best experience in destroying the treacherous enemy.

"In developing the operational summary, as events transpire, present to the front staff the characteristics of individual combat episodes and of individual operations in descriptive form, noting therein the stubbornness and bravery of various chasti and large units that were displayed in the struggle with the enemy, and in various cases a description of the heroic feats of various small units, Red Army men, commanders and political workers. Note in these descriptions new methods for fighting with the enemy's aviation and ground forces, especially his tanks. Add diagrams of the situation of the sides, various orders and other operations documents that confirm the data of the situation, episode or operation."#

Soon, based upon a deep generalization of the information that was arriving at the Southern Front headquarters, definite conclusions were drawn

*On 6 October 1941 the 1st German Tank Group was reformed into the 1st Tank Army.

#TsAMO, archive 228, list 701, document 5, sheet 53.

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and recommendations made to chasti and large units. A document signed by A. I. Antonov and chief of the operations section N. I. Lyamin that summarized the results of 3 months of engagements with the Fascist German aggressors was sent to the large units.* It spoke in detail about the strong and weak aspects of the enemy's operations. Special attention was devoted to the combat operations experience of the front's best chasti and large units during counterattacks and offensive engagements. The document also contained recommendations on reconnaissance, mutual operations, camouflage and concentration of forces.

The aspiration of the front's staff for a responsive and profound generalization of combat experience, with a view to using it in battles against the strong and treacherous enemy, was supported by the front's political administration.

The first highly detailed report about the combat experience of the 96th Mountain Rifle Division arrived from the 18th Army's military council. A. I. Antonov took care to see to it that everything valuable that this division had gained during combat with the enemy was taken into the armamentarium of the front's chasti and divisions. The personnel of this large unit had traveled 1,238 km in combat. In 3 months of combat 6,877 Hitlerite soldiers and officers had been taken prisoner and 13 pieces, 78 tanks, 36 machineguns, 13 armored vehicles, 238 other vehicles, more than 200 motorcycles, 13 mortars and 2 aircraft had been captured.# For the first time on the Southern Front, a group of tank destroyers had come into being in this division. Mutual cooperation among regiments and battalions was well organized. Thus it is that the 96th Division could serve as an example for many.

A little later, upon A. I. Antonov's instructions, the battle experience of the 2d Cavalry Corps was generalized. Over the signature of corps commander Maj Gen P. A. Belov, the document, "The Use of Large Cavalry Units in the War with Fascist Germany," was distributed. It contained many valuable recommendations. Much that was instructive also was contained in the document about the use of the 1st Division and 8th Guards Artillery Regiment of the 9th Army that had been prepared by the front staff, jointly with artillery specialists.** It analyzed experience in applying rocket artillery in defensive battles and during counterattacks.

The initiative of the front's staff in generalizing and disseminating experience in combat operations was approved by the Southern Front commander Ya. T. Cherevichenko, military council member L. R. Korniyets and the political administration, where likewise everything new that was born on the battlefield was collected in fragments. The generalized experience was introduced to the troops. Deputy chief of the front's political administration L. I. Brezhnev was in charge of this large and important activity.

*Ibid, sheets 107-114.

#TsAMO, archive 228, list 747, document 2, sheet 109.

**Ibid, sheets 371-374.

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Former KOMSOMOL'SKAYA PRAVDA correspondents on the Southern Front M. Kotov and V. Lyaskovskiy write that L. I. Brezhnev, in his multifaceted activity on the supervision of party and political work at the front, never forgot about the generalization of advanced experience and about propagandizing the feats of soldiers and commanders. Once, in the heat of the battle at the approaches to Rostov, upon the advice of Leonid Il'ich, they went to Lt Oganyan's battery, which had distinguished itself in battles. After several days under the front's field conditions, the journalists wrote a small book about the battery's intrepid artillerymen. In the spring of 1942 the Rostovskaya Oblast newspaper published chapters from this book for the first time under the editorial supervision of brigade commissar L. I. Brezhnev. On the advice of Leonid Il'ich, the manuscript of the book, "Bessmertiyе" [Immortality], was sent to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia. Soon the book was published in the Russian and Armenian languages. It was published also at the front with a circulation of 50,000 copies. A. I. Antonov maintained constant communication with the front's political administration and consulted with L. I. Brezhnev on various questions. He repeatedly was a witness when the brigade commissar, in conversations with the commanders of armies, large units and chasti, and with political workers, sustained the initiatives of the front's staff.

Among the numerous responsibilities carried out by the front's staff, one of the most important was the organization of continuous reconnaissance. Secret-agent, surface, air and electronic reconnaissance were used for this purpose. The intelligence section systematically organized reconnaissance in force, nocturnal searches and ambushes.

The front's headquarters assessed highly the reconnoiterers' selfless work. Upon the recommendation of the intelligence section, which A. I. Antonov supported, the front's military council applied to the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium for award of the Order of the Red Banner to the 144th Separate Reconnaissance Battalion of the 164th Rifle Division, which distinguished itself in numerous battles.

The Hitlerites' 1st Tank Army attracted the attention of the front's staff. It was necessary to find out completely its role and the designs of the German Fascist command. Additional data were gathered also about the commander of the army, Von Kleist. This German general's name was known to A. I. Antonov. In the General Staff Academy he had become acquainted in detail with his views on the conduct of war and on the use of the various arms and services.

For a long time after World War I, Kleist had been a proponent of the cavalry, but then gave preference to tanks, assigning them the main role in war. Kleist participated in battles in France and Yugoslavia. The German newspapers enthusiastically wrote that the dust of all the roads of Western Europe had settled on the tracks of Kleist's tanks.

Acquainted with the 1st German Tank Army's operations, A. I. Antonov and other staff workers concluded that it had been given the role of a mailed fist in the south of the USSR.

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In general outline, the enemy's design was clear. But certain data were missing. This was nothing for which to reproach the reconnoiterers. Antonov knew that they were doing everything to carry out a most difficult task. After studying this question in detail, Aleksey Innokent'yevich could not help but note that the intelligence section's structure had some substantial deficiencies, which were reflected in its work. Of the same opinion also was the chief of this section, Col A. F. Vasil'yev. A. I. Antonov directed the front and army intelligence specialists to prepare a document with proposals for changing the structure of the front's intelligence organs. Soon, in accordance with the report of the chief of staff, the Southern Front's military council adopted a decision to bring to the attention of the People's Commissar for Defense the fact that the existing organizational structure of the front's intelligence section, which had been developed in prewar days, had many defects and did not provide for the fulfillment of intelligence tasks under wartime conditions.

The military council's proposals were examined in the USSR People's Commissariat for Defense. The appropriate revisions were introduced into the tables of organization of intelligence sections and the material support of intelligence organs with transport equipment was greatly improved.

The front's staff constantly maintained contact with the troops. Very often its workers went to the armies, corps and divisions to carry out tasks for the military council or chief of staff. A. I. Antonov used every opportunity to meet as frequently as possible with commanders, military council members and chiefs of staff of the armies. He repeatedly went to the decisive sectors. While within the forces' combat formations, Antonov showed an example of calmness and the ability to behave when at the mercy of the most difficult combat situation. His special concern was communications, the breaking of which involved loss of control of troops.

On the Southern Front Aleksey Innokent'yevich displayed fully the qualities of a great staff worker. His deep knowledge was reinforced by great organizing capabilities. He conceived on a grand scale, grasped the essence of matters immediately and was not afraid to take responsibility. He taught this also to his subordinates. This is how, for example, the work of the operations section--the central element of the front's staff--was organized. In each area he found a well-trained officer who took full responsibility upon himself. He studied and analyzed information received from intelligence workers, artillerymen, aviators, communicators and rear-area workers, and therefore always knew the state of affairs in the forces and could at any moment answer questions that were given and give qualified advice. A feeling of high personal responsibility helped the professional growth of the workers of the operations and other sections of the staff, and many of them, as a consequence, were named to higher posts.

In October 1941 stubborn battles were raging on all portions of the Southern Front. The 1st German Tank Army had broken through toward Rostov. It had to be stopped. The GHQ of the Supreme High Command reinforced the 9th Army with large rifle and cavalry field forces. The Taganrog Military Sector was created, the forces of which received an order to engage in defense along the Mius River. In the Northern Caucasus Military

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District. the 56th Separate Army was formed, to include 9 divisions and 1 tank brigade. Thousands of Rostov workers went out to build defensive lines.

The Southern Front staff undertook the development of a new operation. In accordance with a GHQ requirement, the commander determined its general concept. A. I. Antonov, together with the chief of the operations section and other responsible staff workers, prepared the necessary estimated data and specific recommendations, which were reported to the front commander and refined and approved by him. For working out special questions, the chiefs of the arms and services of the field administration were involved.

On the instruction of A. I. Antonov, a large group of workers of the front's staff under Col A. G. Yermolayev went to the area of the 9th Army and the Taganrog Military Sector. They extended assistance in the field to the commander in developing several variants of operations of chasti and in compiling a plan for use of the arms and services and of special chasti.

The group returned on 12 October. On becoming acquainted with the results of its work, Antonov took additional measures to reinforce the combat potential of the 9th Army and the Taganrog Military Sector. Aleksey Inno-kent'yevich proposed that the commander subordinate the Taganrog Military Sector to the commander of the 9th Army. This was concurred with.

Soon, over the signature of the front commander, Ya. T. Cherevichenko, and military council member L. R. Korniyets, a combat order was dispatched: "The 9th Army, consisting of the 150th, 339th and 31st and remnants of the 51st, 30th and 218th cavalry divisions, the 26th Motorcycle Regiment, mortar companies and what is left of the artillery will firmly defend the line Uspenskoye-Matveyev Kurgan-Mius River-Mius estuary and the area of Taganrog, without allowing the enemy's entry to the Rostov Area. The Taganrog Military Sector was transferred to the subordination of the 9th Army commander effective 1400 hours, 13 October."*

Toward the middle of October advancing chasti of the 1st German Tank Army had broken through toward the mouth of the Mius River. They intended to cross it without stopping. However, the enemy was thrown back by 10-15 km to the west by a counterblow of the 9th Army and the Taganrog Military Sector. And although the enemy succeeded, with the approach of the main forces on 17 October, to cross the Mius, the threat to Rostov was weakened. At Taganrog the Hitlerites lost 35,000 soldiers and officers.

The GHQ followed closely the progress of combat actions on the Southern Front. Each evening A. I. Antonov presented to the commander a message for the GHQ that was transmitted to Moscow prior to 2400 hours by telegraph. The summaries contained all the necessary data, which gave a full representation of the situation on the Southern Front. In October A. I. Antonov often had to engage in talks with the General Staff by direct wire.

*TsAMO, archive 228, list 701, document 251, sheet 6.

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The enemy, disregarding losses of any kind, broke through to the south. A threat hung over Rostov--the gate to the North Caucasus, to the control of which the Hitlerite generals attributed great significance. A German order that fell into the hands of the Soviet command stated: "The general situation of the war requires the rapid occupation of Rostov: a) in order to make use of the political importance of the chief city of Rostovskaya Oblast; b) to cut off a railroad center and an air route; c) to tear this economic branch away from the Soviets (Rostov is a receiving and shipping harbor); and d) to have here a jumpoff place for further advances."*

During these days the Southern Front staff worked very vigorously. All the details of the defense of Rostov were being thought out. The troops occupied the sectors assigned to them in accordance with the plan that was developed. A. I. Antonov and other workers of the front's staff went to the 9th Army, which was operating on the left wing of the front and had the mission of holding back the offensive of Kleist's army.

Aleksey Innokent'yevich noted with satisfaction that the 9th Army commander, Maj Gen F. M. Kharitonov, and the army staff had approached creatively the execution of the task that had been set. The defense was built in two echelons and an army reserve had been earmarked. Special attention had been paid to the sectors threatened by tanks. But still the experienced eye of the front's chief of staff observed certain defects in organization of the defense. Soon they were eliminated. Organization of control of the troops was carefully thought out, and additional observation and command posts were equipped.

The skillfully organized defense helped the Soviet forces to hold back the enemy's first onslaught. In these engagements the enemy lost about 9,000 soldiers and officers, 146 tanks and much other military equipment.

The battles for Rostov were resumed with new force on 5 November. Soviet soldiers showed exceptional steadfastness and the highest courage. The 136th Rifle Division, commanded by Col Ye. I. Vasilenko, and also the 2d and 132d tank brigades, especially distinguished themselves. On one day alone, 5 November, the division's soldiers destroyed 29 Fascist tanks. An order of the Southern Front commander of 15 November noted the steadfastness, heroism and skillful actions of the chasti and small units of the field forces.

In 4 days of strenuous battles the enemy managed to constrict the 9th Army, but it could not make successful progress at Shakhty and Novochoerkassk. Kleist was compelled to stop the offensive. The commander of the Army Group South, failing in his original intention to envelop Rostov from the north and the northeast, decided to seize the city by a direct blow from the north.

As a result of combat operations at the Novoshakhtinsk area, the Southern Front forces showed their ability to come to blows with the enemy and

*Ibid, sheet 53.

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that they had become hardened and had acquired rich combat experience. This conclusion, which the front's staff drew, reflected the high moral and combat state of the forces and their readiness to resolve the most complicated combat tasks.

In considering this, the command of the Southwest Sector turned to the GHQ of the Supreme High Command with a request that it be authorized to prepare for and conduct an offensive operation for the purpose of defeating the enemy grouping at Rostov. On 9 November, the GHQ approved this initiative.

Preparation for the first major offensive operation of the Soviet forces began. A. I. Antonov personally prepared or carefully monitored almost every document. The operations plan with the various stages was worked out in detail on maps. The documents reflected such important questions as assessment of the enemy's forces and of our own forces, the purpose and scheme of the operations, the tasks of the front, the armies, the large units and aviation, the organization of mutual actions among the forces and the control thereof, and the organization of the various types of combat logistics.

The operations section of the plan laid down in detail the scheme of the operation, and it contained information about the ratio of the forces and the concentration of the front's main attack forces on the flanks of the enemy's 1st Tank Army. The conclusion was drawn at the end: "With correct organization and skillful leadership of the troops, it is possible to count on the success of the operation." On the document were the signatures: "Chief of Staff of the Southern Front Maj Gen Antonov, battalion commissar Chernyavskiy acting for the staff's military commissar, and chief of the operations section Col Lyamin."*

And other documents were worked out with great thoroughness.

At the start of November 1941, at Kamensk-Shakhtinsk, where the headquarters of the Southern Front was located, the commander of the Southwestern Sector, MSU S. K. Timoshenko visited. He was accompanied by the sector's chief of the operations section, I. Kh. Bagramyan. Front commander Ya. T. Cherevichenko reported the situation. Chief of staff A. I. Antonov took part here.

After listening to the report, the marshal asked:

"How is preparation for the offensive operation going?"

A map was on the table. A glance at it was sufficient to see the scheme of the operation.

"Your work?" asked Timoshenko, turning to Antonov.

*Ibid, sheet 9.

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"Mine and that of officers of the staff," the answer followed.

The next day S. K. Timoshenko went to the large Cossack village of Gundorovskaya, the location of the headquarters of the recently formed 37th Army, which was assigned a chief role in the impending operation. He invited A. I. Antonov to accompany him and to announce the plan for the forthcoming offensive battles.

After a conference, which Timoshenko led, Antonov and the staff workers of the army checked on how concentration of the large units was going and how its secrecy, upon which the success of the forthcoming operation would depend in no small degree, was being observed.

Preparation for the counteroffensive went on during the period of active operations of the enemy, who had broken through to Rostov from the north. A. I. Antonov held conversations each day over a direct wire with General Staff representative Maj Gen P. P. Vechnyy. These were taking place on 14 November, during the heat of battle in the Rostov area. Aleksey Innokent'yevich answered all the questions put to him with exhaustive completeness. In ending the conversations, P. P. Vechnyy said:

"Availing myself of this opportunity, I think I must tell you that the General Staff has had a good opinion of the work of the Southern Front staff, despite the many difficulties in maintaining communications with us and some difficulties in personnel manning."

"Having received this flattering evaluation of the staff's work from you, we shall try to work still better," answered A. I. Antonov.*

Marshal S. K. Timoshenko returned to Southern Front Headquarters on 16 November. The situation up until this time had been very complicated. The Hitlerites had intensified the pressure on the Rostov Sector and in the Donbass. Additional measures had to be taken quickly. In reporting to the marshal on progress in preparing for the operation, Lt Gen Ya. T. Chervichenko said that concentration of the main forces of the front's main attack had not been completed in the jumpoff area for the offensive.

"What measures have been adopted for concentraing them most rapidly?" asked S. K. Timoshenko.

"Staff workers under Gen Antonov are engaged in this right now," answered the front commander, and he added: "But it's not all up to them."

"I know. But I think that for Antonov it is possible to do the impossible," said the marshal.

That day S. K. Timoshenko went to the 37th Army, in order to check on its readiness for the offensive.

*Ibid, sheet 124.

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The Fascist German command was confident that a "lightning blow" at Rostov would open up the gates of the Caucasus to it. Chief of the general staff of the ground forces Halder wrote in his diary on 19 November: "In general, again a favorable day, and Kleist's tank group is successfully assaulting Rostov."

On 21 November the German tank army entered Rostov. But meanwhile, the counterattack of the Soviet forces that began on 17 November was developing successfully. A blow was inflicted in the southwest and western sectors at the rear and flank of the 1st German Tank Army. On 24 November chasti of the Southern Front liberated the large Cossack village of Aksay. On the night of 28 November Soviet troops burst into the southern outskirts of Rostov and the next day completely liberated the city.

Hitler categorically forbade the retreat of the 1st Tank Army, but the Fascist units were forced back to the west under the blows of Soviet troops, abandoning tanks, guns and ammunition. On 30 November commander of the Army Group South Rundstedt reported to the supreme command of the German ground forces that the combat capability of the large mobile formation had dropped sharply because of the physical and mental exhaustion of personnel and the major losses, especially in tanks, and the 1st Tank Army was not in a condition to carry out Hitler's order.*

During the Soviet forces' counteroffensive the Fascist German forces lost 30,000 soldiers and officers killed or wounded, 275 tanks, 359 guns, 4,435 motor vehicles and 80 aircraft. The Hitlerites' main attack force lost its offensive strength in the strategic southern sector for a long time.

Little known is the fact that A. I. Antonov wrote an article about the counteroffensive of the Soviet forces at Rostov. Unfortunately, it remains unpublished. Meanwhile, this article is of great research interest.

The author identifies and examines in detail the three stages of the operation: the preparation for and conduct of the blow in the direction of Bol'shekrepinskiy, at the rear of the motorized corps of Kleist's 1st Tank Army; the organization and conduct of the counterblow at the main grouping of this army by chasti of the 37th, 9th and 56th armies during the 27-29 November period with the mission of liberating Rostov; and, finally, the pursuit of units of Kleist's army, which was retreating from Rostov in a westerly direction, and the battle for the Mius River line.

At the conclusion of the article A. I. Antonov wrote: "The Rostov operation will go into the annals of Red Army victories as the first front offensive operation, laying the start for a new stage of the Patriotic War. Southern Front troops, hardened in the struggle and having obtained experience in 5 months of stubborn defensive battles against superior enemy forces, were able as a result of the offensive battles at Rostov, with smaller forces, thanks to skillful maneuvering, to strike the powerful

*See "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II], Vol 4, Moscow, 1975, p 121.

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army of the Fascist German forces of General Kleist and to liberate Rostov from the Fascist German occupiers who had penetrated there."*

These same thoughts found reflection in the theses of a report about the results of the Rostov operation in the Southern Front's military council. As to the significance of the operation, it has been said that this was the first major defeat of the Germans, it being the defeat of a retreating assault army, and that the victory at Rostov exerted an enormous moral effect on the whole Red Army, having shown brilliantly the strengthening of its forces and its readiness for wide offensive operations.#

In 1972, in a telegram to participants of the unveiling of a memorial to the heroes of the battle for Rostov, CPSU Central Committee General Secretary L. I. Brezhnev wrote: "The battles for Rostov in the fall of 1941 were historic: here our Red Army shifted from the defensive to the offensive. The monument that we are erecting will remind new generations of Soviet people about the wholehearted heroism of their fathers and grandfathers, and the envoys from all the fraternal peoples of our country who, at the call of Lenin's party, rose up to the defense of the motherland from the enemy. Never will their feat, the importance of which was enormous for our country and for all mankind, be erased from the memory of the people."

After the rout of the Fascist German forces at Rostov came shattering blows at Tikhvin and Yel'yets, in the Crimea, and, finally, the rout of the enemy at Moscow.

The Communist Party and the Soviet Government assessed the Rostov operation highly. Many soldiers were awarded orders and medals. A. I. Antonov also was awarded the Order of the Red Banner by an ukase of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium of 13 December 1941. Soon comrades congratulated him also on another great event: on 27 December, by decision of the Soviet Government, the rank of Lt Gen was conferred on A. I. Antonov.

...There are events that leave an unforgettable imprint on a man's life. There were many such events in Aleksey Innokent'yevich Antonov's life. But still, the Rostov operation occupied a special place among them. It became a great step in making him into a great staff worker. To high strategic-operations training were added practical knowledge and the ability to plan the work of a large staff. He shared his joys with the comrades and relatives with whom, prior to that time, he had begun to exchange letters regularly. The fact is that Mariya Dmitriyevna had been evacuated to Chelyabinskaya Oblast, and Lyudmila Innokent'yevich to Kirovskaya Oblast, and for some time A. I. Antonov had not had communication with them. After lengthy searches, he found his wife and his sister.

On 14 October 1941 Aleksey Innokent'yevich wrote his wife: "For a long time I could not obtain information about where you had gone. Just now I have received your address. The last time I spoke with you by telephone

*TsAMO, archive 228, list 701, document 251, sheet 130.

#Ibid, document 870, sheets 3-10.

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was on 21 July; later I rang several times but received the response that no one answered. Write in detail about how you are living. I am now working with people with whom I served...in 1937. There are few of the old comrades left. There is much work and absolutely no free time. I get little sleep. I feel well. Winter is beginning already. Do you have warm clothes? How is the food? How is your health? I cannot write often, but do not worry about me for a minute, everything is all right."

And here are lines from a letter to his sister on 9 April 1942: "You can congratulate me on the Order of the Red Banner; I received it for the Rostov operation and the defeat of General Kleist's tank army. They wrote about it in the newspapers at one time. This was the first major defeat for the Germans."

Aleksey Innokent'yevich always did a lot of work and he worked strenuously. This affected his health. Sometimes, most frequently at night, he felt indisposed and had a bad headache. But no one ever heard a complaint from him.

The new year of 1942 found A. I. Antonov summing up the results of the Rostov offensive operation. Documents on the planning and execution of the operation were prepared and sent to the General Staff and to the People's Commissariat of Defense, and proposals for improving the organizational structure of the forces were introduced. The fall and winter battles indicated that it was difficult for army commanders to control a large number of large units and reinforced chastis. Staff workers and the military council came to the conclusion that it was necessary to restore the corps system. The same suggestions also came from other fronts. Soon the corps system was reestablished.

A suggestion also was introduced about improving the use of PVO resources. "The experience of the war indicates," it was said in a document sent to the People's Commissariat for Defense, "that the organization of PVO brigade regions that are intended for the defense of fixed facilities of the country's interior did not justify itself under the conditions of front operations."* It was proposed to establish separate mobile PVO brigades.

A little later, on 11 April 1942, the front's staff prepared a decision to concentrate the conduct of all organizational measures in one set of hands, and, at the suggestion of A. I. Antonov, it was adopted by the military council. This decision said, in particular, "Ten months of experience of the war with the Fascist Germans has indicated that all the organizational measures conducted in the front should be concentrated in other hands and an assistant commander for organizational matters should be responsible to the military council for timeliness and quality in conducting them. During the process of war it was found necessary not only to establish new units but also to re-create whole large formations, to man them flexibly and rapidly, to supply them with materiel, and, most important, to put them together militarily.

*TsAMO, archive 228, list 747, document 2, sheet 290.

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"However, as a consequence of the dispersion of functions for the various administrations and sections, there is as yet no uniform flexibility in questions of conducting the measures contemplated by the front's military council, which is also telling on the state of the forces and their combat activity."*

With a view to eliminating the shortcomings discovered, the military council subordinated the section for manning the front's staff and the section for combat training to the assistant front commander for organizational matters. After this, organizational measures, despite their vast scope, were conducted completely satisfactorily. The combat training of young soldiers improved greatly, and the large units and chasti were manned rapidly.

The work of the front's staff to generalize combat experience was noted by the General Staff and the Commander of the Southern Front, R. Ya. Malinovskiy, who had relieved Col Gen Ya. T. Cherevichenko at this post at the end of December 1941. Back in December 1941 he approved all the staff's measures that were aimed at equipping the forces and command and political personnel with the war's experience, considering them to be useful and necessary. The commander took steps to introduce this valuable experience into the practice of instructing the troops. For this purpose, exercises with supervisory personnel of front and army staffs were organized. A. I. Antonov conducted many of them. Thus, the requirements of the party Central Committee and the Supreme High Command to master the experience of the war and to teach the art of smashing the enemy and of being prepared for decisive defeats of the Fascist German invaders were carried out.

Along with the generalization of combat experience, the front's staff was preparing for the Barvenkovo offensive operation. Aleksey Innokent'yevich and his closest assistants again sat down at the maps, to prepare operations documents and to determine the forces and resources necessary for conducting it. Reconnaissance of the enemy's formation was conducted more actively. Combat training under winter conditions was being promoted everywhere in the forces. A rigid schedule of training for the operation was made up. Aleksey Innokent'yevich did not allow the slightest departure from it. Proceeding from the general situation, the GHQ of the Supreme High Command planned to promote the offensive for the purpose of defeating the southern troop formations of the enemy and moving Soviet forces to the line of the Dnepr and its lower course.# This design was to be executed by troops of two fronts--the Southwestern and the Southern.

The Soviet forces' offensive in the southwestern area began 18 January and continued until 31 January 1942. In the course of the battles, the Southern Front's staff, and A. I. Antonov in particular, acquired the experience of planning and executing troop operations on two fronts. The value of this experience lay in the fact that it was acquired under complicated

*Ibid, sheets 433-434.

#See "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny, 1939-1945," Vol 4, p 319.

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conditions, when offensive operations were being conducted in an absence of a general superiority in forces over the enemy, especially in the equipping of the forces.

Each operation enriched A. I. Antonov with new knowledge and findings. One of them was not to disperse forces but to concentrate them on the main axis.

The battle for the Caucasus, which started at the end of July 1942, was developing with ever-increasing intensity. Army Group A, using its numerical superiority, pushed in the second half of July to the lower course of the Don. In the Rostov region the Hitlerite command undertook an attempt to encircle Southern Front forces. But the latter managed to escape the enemy's encircling blow and by 24 July had gone beyond the Don.

During these days the front's staff prepared data for the commander about the enemy's groupings of forces and resources, the status of our own forces that were close to the defensive line, and the forming of reserves.

A few large formations of the Southern Front did not withstand the onslaught of the enemy's large tank forces and began to go to the south and southeast. With a view to strengthening leadership over the forces in the North Caucasus, the GHQ of the Supreme High Command on 28 July united the forces of the North Caucasus and the Southern Front into one North Caucasus Front under the command of MSU S. M. Budennyi.* A. I. Antonov was named chief of staff of the front. Almost all the sections and administrations of the former Southern Front made up the new staff. Aleksey Inno-kent'yevich had worked with Marshal S. M. Budennyi in the Moscow Military District, so they knew each other well.

With the formation of the new front, the staff's work was complicated. For convenience of control, two operations groups were created within the front: the Don Group under the command of Lt Gen R. Ya. Malinovsky, and the Primorskaya Group under the command of Col Gen Ya. T. Cherevichenko. The first protected the Stavropol' sector, the second the Krasnodar sector. The front's staff had to provide command data for the decisions to be adopted under the complicated conditions of continuous combat. One can judge the tenseness of the work during this period by A. I. Antonov's letter to his wife. In September 1942 he wrote: "Recently there has been very much work. As a rule, I lie down to sleep no earlier than 0500 hours and by 0900 hours I am already up. During the day you make a mental note to write, but you are no longer in a position to do so. Therefore, do not worry if I am not always punctual."

The battle for the Caucasus occupies a prominent place in the Great Patriotic War. The combat actions between the Black and Caspian seas continued for about 15 months and have gone down into the history of the Soviet military art as a complicated set of defensive and offensive operations. To A. I.

*See "Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941-1945," [History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, 1941-1945], Vol 2, Moscow, 1963, p 457.

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Antonov's lot (he was named chief of staff of the Black Sea Group of Forces) fell an enormous amount of work. He relied upon his closest helpers: chief of the operations section Col P. M. Kotova-Legan'kov, his deputy Lt Col N. N. Smirnov, the chief of the intelligence section, chief of the section for fortified regions Col D. M. Maslyuk, and others. In the Black Sea Group of Forces Aleksey Innokent'yevich followed the custom he had worked out long ago of comprehensively and deeply analyzing the actions of the enemy and his forces, generalizing the experience of battles and, proceeding therefrom, recommending to the commanders of large formations and chasti the most effective methods for fighting the Fascist German invaders. On 20 November 1942 an informational report about certain tactical-operations conclusions taken from the experience of the Black Sea Group of Forces' operations from September to October 1942 was sent out to the troops.* This document gave the characteristics not only of the chasti and large forces but also those of the small units. Examples of the skillful, initiative-filled actions of the Soviet forces were examined in detail. Deficiencies were analyzed thoroughly.

On the basis of the conclusions drawn by the staff, the military council adopted two important decisions: to strengthen dominating heights, and to create a mountain battery of RS's [rockets] on handcars.

During this period A. I. Antonov, like other staff workers of the group, studied the peculiarities of the combat actions of troops in mountain conditions.

The absence of strategic reserves on the part of the Fascist German command at the end of September did not allow it to organize an offensive simultaneously over the whole Caucasus front. By virtue of this it decided to inflict several successive blows, one after another, on Tuapse. In case of success, the Hitlerites planned to push to the shore of the Black Sea, cut the Black Sea Group of the Soviet forces off from the main forces of the Caucasus Front, deprive the Black Sea Fleet of bases and ports, and free part of their own forces for transfer to other parts of the front. In order to execute this scheme, the Hitlerites enlisted the services of their main forces--18 of the 26 divisions that were on the Caucasus Front. "The Fascists," wrote General of the Army I. V. Tyulenov, "concentrated several of his picked mountaineer divisions on a narrow front. Using the smallest mountain passes and disregarding losses, they broke out towards Tuapse. The front's staff faced a difficult task--that of working out within a short time an operation for defeating the enemy. Aleksey Innokent'yevich himself conducted thoroughly all the calculations of combat actions that were impending, planned the necessary regrouping of forces and planned the centers of resistance and the directions of the counterblows."#

The Tuapse defensive operation began 25 September and continued until 20 December 1942. And all this time there were continuous battles. The

*TsAMO, archive 276, list 811, document 98, sheets 8-23.
#KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, 21 June 1962.

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staff of the Black Sea Group of forces worked under maximum tension. Documents necessary for controlling the troops were prepared on time.

During these difficult days Aleksey Innokent'yevich managed to rest only an hour or two in the morning. He stayed beside the telephone, covering himself with a greatcoat--soldier fashion.

During the Tuapse defensive operation, A. I. Antonov displayed new qualities of a military leader who is able to personally analyze deeply and self critically his own actions and those of the staff.

The GHQ of the Supreme High Command directed the main efforts of the Caucasus Front to stop the enemy offensive and to hold the lines occupied at any price. In so doing, the General Staff pointed out in good time the main areas, on the holding of which depended the stability of the whole defense system of the Caucasus. Depending upon the actual threat, the importance of the sectors changed constantly. Thus, while in September the main efforts of the front's forces were concentrated in warding off the enemy's blows in the Grozny sector, in October the Tuapse sector acquired decisive significance. At the end of October and the beginning of November the enemy again made an attempt to break through in the Grozny and Makhachkala areas.

It is characteristic that each time the Hitlerites inflicted two blows in succession--one on the line of the Northern Group of Forces, the other against the Black Sea Group of Forces, striving thereby to deprive the Soviet command of the potential for maneuvering forces.

The advance of the enemy on each of these sectors created a great threat to the whole Caucasus. An underassessment of one of them led to serious errors. This is what happened in the course of the Tuapse defensive operation. After starting the offensive on 25 September, the enemy had by 1 October driven a wedge 10-12 km deep into the Soviet Forces' defense. In order to restore the situation, the GHQ ordered the Caucasus Front commander to create a formation from the reserve and to inflict a blow on the enemy's forces. In implementing this requirement, the commander of the Black Sea Group of Forces adopted a decision to inflict a counterblow by a formation created at the expense of forces that had been drawn directly into the difficult defensive battles; this led to a weakening of the defense in the sector that led directly to Tuapse.

The GHQ did not approve this decision. In an order of 2 October it directed that the enemy not be allowed in any case to break through to the shore of the Black Sea, either at the Tuapse sector or at other sectors. An allocation of forces for an operation to defeat the enemy group that had driven the wedge was to be done without weakening the troops that were defending the Tuapse sector. After this directive, the main attack forces were created through chasti and large formations that were operating in places other than the Tuapse sector.

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The timely interference of the GHQ in directing the operations averted much harm. And although, as the directive emphasized, the main cause for the partial successes of the Hitlerites was an underassessment by the Caucasus Front commander of the role of the Black Sea Group of Forces and the significance of the Black Sea sector, neither the military council, the commander, nor the group's staff could be relieved of responsibility for the error. It is known that the staff obtains and prepares data for the adoption of decisions. Consequently, in this case the staff had not done everything for correct and substantiated conclusions. A. I. Antonov realized that both the staff and he himself were guilty of the error committed. He took measures to eliminate the blunders that had been committed in the work.

Commander of the Black Sea Group of Forces Lt Gen I. Ye. Petrov took measures that enabled conditions to be created for inflicting a counterblow on the enemy. A grouping of forces was created, and, on shifting to the counteroffensive, forced the enemy to retreat.

Because of the difficult situation at the Tuapse sector, staff officers of the Caucasus Front and the Black Sea Group of Forces went out into the field more often than usual to help organize control and mutual operations there. When it was learned that not all the commanders had had experience in battles in the mountains, the group's staff prepared and distributed a manual for commanders and an instruction booklet for soldiers about the peculiarities of combat actions in the mountains. A. I. Antonov edited these documents. On the recommendation of the group's staff, regiments and divisions began to dispatch to the enemy's rear small detachments that destroyed Hitlerite points for supply and control.

Measures taken by the GHQ, the front command, and the group of forces yielded their results. The steadfastness of Soviet troops was intensified. Counterblows followed one after another. The enemy, sustaining enormous losses, was compelled to shift to the defense. The offensive for Tuapse was broken off.

The Hitlerite forces were severely in need of respite. But they did not get any. The group's staff was preparing all the calculations and did the appropriate regrouping of forces for flank blows. On 26 November, overcoming the bitter opposition of the enemy and under the complicated conditions of a wooded-mountain locality, the Soviet forces slowly but surely advanced. By 17 December the wedge that the enemy formation had driven in was completely crushed.

An exceptional stage of the Tuapse operation occurred in the absence of A. I. Antonov: at the beginning of November 1942 he had been named chief of staff of the Caucasus Front. Aleksey Innokent'yevich replaced in this post Lt Gen P. I. Bodin, who had worked on the General Staff for many years and who died 2 November at the Nal'chik sector.

From the first days of his stay at the new post, Lt Gen A. I. Antonov had to decide several problems simultaneously: to complete the transfer of

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chasti and large formations to the Tuapse sector, to reinforce the Northern Group of Forces, which was conducting stubborn battles. Here is what former commander of the Caucasus Front, General of the Army I. V. Tyulen-
ev, wrote about those strenuous days of work of the headquarters and of Antonov personally: "He spent more than one sleepless night at that time on developing the plan for defense of the Caucasus. And here was something to think about. The front stretched from the Caspian to Novoros-
siysk. The mountain passes and ridges and the lack of roads made opera-
tional movements and supply of the groups of forces difficult. The enemy was pressing. In addition to the oil, he was striving to capture Black
Sea ports and to localize the Black Sea Fleet. At that time Aleksey Inno-
kent'yevich was always to be found bent over the map with measuring instru-
ments and pencil in hand. He had a special style of work characteristic
only of him. Aleksey Innokent'yevich knew how to choose, out of all the
questions, the most important ones, to concentrate on them, and to select
exactly that solution that would best answer the interests of the
situation."*

The defensive period of the battle for the Caucasus lasted 5 months. So-
viet soldiers, after displaying exceptional steadfastness, forced the
enemy to shift to the defense and did not allow him to drive to the Cau-
casus or to the Black Sea shore. The Fascist German invaders from Army
Group A lost more than 100,000 soldiers and officers, and the prerequi-
sites were created for the complete expulsion of the occupiers from the
North Caucasus.

Many Soviet soldiers were nominated for government awards for heroism
shown during the defense of the Caucasus. A second Order of the Red Ban-
ner was awarded to A. I. Antonov.

The end of 1942 found Aleksey Innokent'yevich involved in the develop-
ment of offensive operations. As a result of the victory on the Volga,
favorable conditions prevailed for inflicting a blow in the North Caucas-
us. New chasti and large formations were required for the offensive.
All the Caucasian republics readied them. At the call of the communist
parties of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia and of party organizations of
the North Caucasus, many thousands of people took part in the construction
of defensive structures. Everywhere general military training was being
promoted, destroyer battalions were being created, and chasti and large
formations made up of the nationalities were being organized. The Caucas-
ian republics created 19 divisions of the nationalities and 211 destroyer
battalions. #

In the performance of duty, A. I. Antonov often had to appeal to the Cen-
tral committees of the communist parties of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia
and the North Ossetian, Kabardino-Balkar, Dagestan, and Checheno-Ingush
oblast committees of the VKP(b), and everywhere he found support. The

*KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, 21 June 1962.

#See "Istoriya Kommunisticheskoy partii Sovetskogo Soyuz" [History of the
Communist Party of the Soviet Union], Vol 5, Book 1, Moscow, 1970, p 332.

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republics took all steps to increase the output of ammunition and motor vehicles and the delivery of raw materials for industry and foodstuffs for the troops. Questions of military production were kept on the agenda of conferences of the central committee bureaus of the communist parties of the Caucasian republics.

ON THE GENERAL STAFF

Once in December 1942 a regular conversation was being held with the Chief of the General Staff. It was begun, as usual, with A. I. Antonov's report about the operational situation on the Caucasian Front, but now it ended rather unexpectedly. A. M. Vasilevskiy suggested to Antonov that he transfer to work on the General Staff as chief of the Operations Directorate. Aleksey Innokent'yevich did not answer right away, but asked for some days for reflection. He experienced ambiguous feelings. It goes without saying that to work on the General Staff is a great honor. At the same time, Antonov understood well what an enormous responsibility would fall on him. Would he be able to cope with his obligations on the General Staff, and could he justify the faith put in him?

The next day A. M. Vasilevskiy phoned:

"The Supreme Commander has concurred in your nomination," he told Antonov. "Come quickly."

On 11 December 1942 A. I. Antonov was named to the post of chief of the Operations Directorate and Deputy Chief of the General Staff.

...Wartime Moscow met Aleksey Innokent'yevich with abundant snow. He recognized it and he did not recognize it. On many streets defensive structures that had been created in the fall of 1941 were still retained. He felt order and discipline in everything.

A. I. Antonov met the deputy chief of the Operations Directorate, S. M. Shtemenko, at the station. The destiny of these two military leaders had much in common. Joint service on the General Staff continued from the end of 1942 until the end of the war. Their paths came together also in postwar years. They understood each other's meanings at once. Arguments and differences in views on various questions also occurred between them, but they always were businesslike and based upon principles, and they ended with the adoption of a joint decision that met the situation most completely.

The General Staff was a complex military organism with tens of directorates and sections and many hundreds of people working in them. It was a friendly, close-knit collective of knowledgeable and experienced generals and officers. They did an enormous amount of operational and organizational work. Not one significant event of any kind at the front got past the General Staff. Here they gathered the necessary information, processed it and prepared recommendations on the basis of which the GHQ adopted decisions and then issued directives.

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Excellent training in military theory, a clear mind, great self-possession and an outstanding capability for operations work soon enabled A. I. Antonov to practically run the General Staff, since A. M. Vasilevskiy was with the operating armies a major portion of the time as a representative of the GHQ of the V GK [Supreme Command].*

In his first days at his new position, A. I. Antonov got acquainted with the various functions of the Operations directorate and with the business of other directorates and sections. He found out that the people with whom he was to work were in concert.

Aleksey Innokent'yevich knew many of the workers. Among them were Chief of the Main Organizational Directorate, Lt Gen A. G. Karponosov, I. I. Il'ichev and many others. He had become acquainted with some of them during service in the Ukraine or during exercises and maneuvers, he had studied with others at the Academy imeni M. V. Frunze and the General Staff Academy, and he had served with still others in the Moscow Military District.

Aleksey Innokent'yevich wanted very much to meet Chief of the General Staff A. M. Vasilevskiy, to find out about the peculiarities of the work on the General Staff and at the GHQ of the Supreme Command. But at the time he was at the Stalingrad sector. One question worried him most of all: how did mutual relations with the Supreme Commander take shape?

A strict procedure for reports existed within the General Headquarters. The Supreme Commander did not stand for general phrases and discussions but always required clear and constructive conclusions and recommendations. A. I. Antonov found out that I. V. Stalin decided military questions in skilled fashion, listened to specialists and treated the General Staff well.

For a report, the chief of the Operations Directorate or his deputy usually went to the General Headquarters together with the Chief of the General Staff. This circumstance imposed great responsibility upon them. They were required to know not only all the information that was at the disposal of the General Staff about the enemy, the situation at the front, operational movements and the status of the reserves but also to have prepared recommendations on a number of questions. The situation for each front was reported on maps spread out on a table. No previously prepared papers of any kind were used. The person reporting was supposed to know everything by heart.

"Besides the Supreme Commander," wrote S. M. Shtemenko, "the reports, as a rule, were heard by members of the VKP(b) Central Committee Politburo and of the GHQ. When necessary, the commanders of the arms and services of the Armed Forces, the Chief of the Rear of the Red Army, and so on were sent for. They reported and gave information on their own special questions...."

*See "Akademiya General'nogo shtaba" [The General Staff Academy], Moscow, 1976, p 95.

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"The report began with the nature of the actions of one's own forces during the preceding days. Fronts, armies and tank and mechanized corps were designated with the family name of the commanding generals and commanding officers, divisions by numbers. Stalin established it this way."*

Aleksey Innokent'yevich prepared himself in every way for his trip to the General Headquarters. His first meeting with Stalin went formally and stiffly.

At the beginning of January 1943 A. I. Antonov was sent to Bryansk and then to the Voronezh and Central fronts as a representative of the GHQ, where he met the Chief of the General Staff A. M. Vasilevskiy, who had arrived from the Stalingrad vicinity to organize the offensive in the area of Voronezh and Kastornoye.

"Several days before the start of the operation," wrote A. M. Vasilevskiy, "I decided to send Lt Gen A. I. Antonov to lend a hand to the commanders of the 18th Separate Rifle Corps. In December 1942, he, at my request, had been named chief of the Operations Directorate and First Deputy to the Chief of the General Staff. I was then at the Stalingrad sector and could not present Aleksey Innokent'yevich to Stalin. At the start of January, A. I. Antonov reported to me at the Voronezh Front that he had arrived for work at the Operations Directorate. But, apparently, this activity did not give him satisfaction, and he had not gone to the GHQ since all the business of the General Staff was reported there by the Deputy Chief of the General Staff for Political Affairs F. Ye. Bokov. Naturally, A. I. Antonov felt uncertain in such a situation and asked me to do everything possible to return him to the front. I called Stalin and again, after characterizing A. I. Antonov as an exceptionally valuable worker for the General Staff and the General Headquarters, asked that he be allowed to do the work directly connected with servicing the GHQ with respect to operations.

"I. V. Stalin...did not promise me anything and recommended that Antonov be used as my deputy for the Voronezh Front.

"Judging by your characterization,' he remarked, 'Antonov will be far more useful at the front in that period than here, in our office work.'"#

A. I. Antonov went to the area of the 18th Separate Rifle Corps, which was commanded by Maj Gen P. M. Zykov, not long before the offensive. First of all he decided to check the readiness of the troops for the forthcoming battles and to convince himself personally of how well everything had been thought out and studied beforehand. And there was much that had to be considered: the -25 degree cold, as well as the frequent snowfalls, the locality, which was completely open, with gentle hills, and cut up by a

*"Polkovodtsy i voyenachal'niki Velikoy Otechestvennoy" [Troop Commanders and Military Leaders of the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, 1970, pp 21-22.
#Vasilevskiy, A. M., "Delo vsey zhizni" [The Job of an Entire Life], Moscow, 1973, p 282.

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large number of gullies and rivers, the status of the enemy's defense and the availability of his reserves, and, the main thing, the political and morale status of the troops.

In the overall concept of the offensive by troops of the Voronezh Front, the 18th Separate Rifle Corps with attached chasti made up one-third of the main attack forces. The 40th Field Army and the 3d Tank Army made up the other two-thirds. The formations inflicted simultaneous blows in convergent directions.

Preparations went on for the offensive based upon this scheme. The artillery was assigned an important role in breaking through the enemy defense. It was to suppress enemy batteries, destroy the numerous weapon emplacements at the forward line of resistance and in the depths of the defense, blind enemy observations posts and disrupt control. Therefore, A. I. Antonov also brought to the corps commander's attention an intensification of target reconnaissance. Artillery chasti that were intended for counterbattery struggle reconnoitered for a brief time and zeroed in on enemy artillery positions.

Questions of mutual actions among the arms and services were worked out with special thoroughness. Preparations for the offensive were conducted in the strictest secrecy, with the use of modes of camouflage and deception of the enemy. The commander of the 3d Italian Alpine Division later confessed: "We were very poorly informed about the status of the Russian forces, about their fighting strength, about the quality of their defense--more properly, we knew nothing at all. We had not supposed that the Russians were preparing an offensive and therefore did not pay special attention to these important questions."*

The offensive began successfully. Chasti and large units of the 18th Separate Rifle Corps, supported by well-organized fire from artillery and aviation, broke the enemy's resistance and, by the end of the day, on 15 January, after a night battle at -25 degrees, the task had been fulfilled.

Subsequent battles also were of a fast-moving and decisive nature. After 16 January troops of the 40th and 3d Tank Armies continued to develop the offensive, embracing, from north to south, the enemy's whole Ostrogzhsk-Rossosh' formation. The 18th Separate Rifle Corps ground it up into dispersed units. By the end of day on 18 January encirclement of the enemy's large formation had been completed.

The enemy made despairing attempts to break out of the encirclement but was repulsed. In these engagements the 40th Army and the 18th Separate Rifle Corps, whose actions had been coordinated by CHQ representative A. I. Antonov, again distinguished themselves. The large units and chasti of the corps and the army swiftly went out to the path of departure of the enemy and cut off his retreat route.

*A citation from: "Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny Sovietskogo Soyuza 1941-1945" Vol. 3, Moscow, 1964, pp 99-100.

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The Hitlerites were flung from one community to another, but everywhere shattering blows overtook them. The remains of the enemy forces began to capitulate. On 27 January the Fascist formation had ceased to exist. Fifteen divisions were completely crushed, and six suffered large losses.

After starting on 24 January, the Voronezh-Kastornoye operation thus had gone successfully and ended 17 February 1943.

Aleksey Innokent'yevich was at the Voronezh Front until the end of March 1943. His activity was highly evaluated by Chief of the General Staff A. M. Vasilevskiy and Supreme Commander I. V. Stalin.

Soon after returning to Moscow, A. I. Antonov was summoned to the GHQ for a report. I. V. Stalin listened attentively to him. The report contained a correct, comprehensive evaluation of the situation existing at the fronts, which helped the GHQ to plan combat operations in the Orel and Kursk sectors, which were most important at that time, and, later, in April and May, to develop a plan for operations at the Kursk salient.

A. I. Antonov began to go to the GHQ several times per day. His reports did not provoke special questions by the Supreme Commander, members of the VKP(b) Central Committee Politburo, or the State Committee for Defense.

Before leaving for the GHQ A. I. Antonov did an enormous amount of work. He thoroughly analyzed the information that came from the fronts and listened to many generals and officers. The most important questions were coordinated with front commanders. Creative collective work was going on. It was accumulated in oral reports to the GHQ and in those documents that were received there. The GHQ determined the strategic tasks, planned the combat activity of all the arms and services and distributed troops and resources among the fronts. It functioned from the first days of the Great Patriotic War under its Supreme Commander, I. V. Stalin. The GHQ subsequently included the post of Chief of the General Staff, which was occupied successively by B. M. Shaposhnikov and A. M. Vasilevskiy. This provided for close working contact between the GHQ and the General Staff.

G. K. Zhukov, an experienced military leader, who was in charge of the General Staff before the war and in its initial stage, worked for a long time as Deputy Supreme Commander. In his memoirs, he wrote: "After the Stalingrad operation, direction of the combat operations of all command elements of the Soviet Armed Forces, up to the Supreme Commander, reached a high level of perfection."*

By 1943 a definite procedure prevailed for the activity of the GHQ and its working organ--the General Staff. A. I. Antonov often thought about how to improve the General Staff's work. First the precision of the operations personnel had to be made more precise.

*Zhukov, G. K., "Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya" [Reminiscences and Reflections]. Vol 1. Moscow, 1974, p 321.

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The workday at the Operations Directorate began at 0700 hours. At this hour the sector chiefs, each of whom handled the affairs of one front, undertook to gather information about the situation during the preceding night. Lt Gen V. F. Mernov, who had been chief of the western sector of the Operations Directorate during those years, recalls: "We sector workers had a lot of work each day. The situation changed rapidly. The enemy did one regrouping after another. And our chasti also were in motion. On arriving at work we first refined the situation for the preceding night: for each of us there was an intelligence representative, and together we refined the information about the enemy and plotted it on the map. Then we collected and generalized the information about our own forces. Everything was done rapidly and accurately. We well knew the high exactingness of chief of the Operations Directorate A. I. Antonov, his deputies, S. M. Shtemenko, A. A. Gryzlov, and, a little later, N. A. Lomov.

"While we worked on the data with the representatives of other sections, A. I. Antonov conversed with the chiefs of staff and personally refined the situation. After preparing all the data and plotting it on the map, we went with the report to the Operations Directorate chief. The report was brief. Antonov disliked wordiness intensely. With his arrival at the General Staff many lovers of debate quickly began to refrain from this custom. Sometimes we, the sector workers, did not say a word at all--we checked our map with the map of the directorate chief that was laid out on the table. In these cases Aleksey Innokent'yevich sometimes threw a rapid glance in my direction, and I answered with a nod of my head, saying everything was in order, with no disagreements of any kind. And only in case differences were observed, he said, is it necessary to add anything.

"After assimilating all this work procedure, Aleksey Innokent'yevich expressed dissatisfaction with the conduct of the map set-up. It was done differently for each sector, and at times he found it impossible to read the map without the help of the originator. A. I. Antonov suggested the use of unified conventional colors and signs for a definite time and type of combat actions. Now it was possible to read the map for any sector without explanations. This avoided much nonproductive loss of time for the generals and officers, and, the main thing, it guarded against mistakes."

A difficult and rigid but necessary work regulation for the General Staff, which was observed until the end of the war, was established by the Supreme Commander, not without the help of A. I. Antonov. Thus, Deputy Chief of the General Staff A. I. Antonov was supposed to spend 17-18 hours per day carrying out his obligations, with rest time allocated from 0500-0600 to 1200 hours. Reports to the Supreme Commander were made, as a rule, three times per day by personal telephone. At night A. I. Antonov and S. M. Shtemenko went to the GHQ for the summary report for the day. They returned at 0300-0400 and gave the necessary instructions.

General S. M. Shtemenko noted that joint work with Aleksey Innokent'yevich was a good school for staff service. Despite the fact that Antonov

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knew the situation at the front thoroughly, he spent 2-3 hours to prepare each routine report to the GHQ.

All the comrades who knew A. I. Antonov from joint work, detected exceptional exactingness in him, not only in the processing of map work but also of all other documents. Col Gen N. A. Lomov, who worked in responsible positions on the General Staff's Operational Directorate from 1942 until 1952, said that Aleksey Innokent'yevich's exactingness was special. He never raised his voice, never ordered, but simply said what must be done, and, in so doing, often used the expression: "I ask you!" He listened attentively to reports without interrupting. General Antonov almost never wrote it down, but at the same time he remembered it all.

Aleksey Innokent'yevich possessed an even temper and composure that had nothing in common, however, with softness. He combined his composure and cordiality with rare firmness and persistence, and a certain chilliness in official matters. A. I. Antonov never tolerated superficiality, haste, incompleteness or formalisms. Promotions were sparse, and only those people who thought and showed initiative, precision and irreproachableness in their work could earn them. He valued time greatly and planned his own carefully. Obviously, therefore, his speech was marked by laconism and clarity of thought. He held conferences only in exceptional cases and always briefly. Someone even called him a pedant in business and in conduct. But this judgment was superficial. Antonov actually was principled and exacting.

A. I. Antonov did not permit the slightest indulgence toward himself or his subordinates and was a model of self-discipline and maintenance of a high state of discipline. MSU A. M. Vasilevskiy noted this important trait of character of A. I. Antonov: "I spent a large part of the time outside the General Staff, carrying out responsible missions at the fronts for the Supreme Command. But wherever I was, wherever I went, thanks to Aleksey Innokent'yevich and thanks to his irreproachable state of discipline, exemplary tactfulness and modesty, and the most amicable mutual relations that were established between us and were preserved until the last days, I was always informed in good time and completely about all the main events that were occurring at the front and about the activity of the GHQ, the General Staff, and the People's Commissariat for Defense as a whole, not to mention also the fact that not one essential question that was prepared for the General Staff was reported to the GHQ without preliminary examination and approval by me....A. I. Antonov's telephone calls to me at the front and from me to him were made daily."*

Iron military discipline in the full sense always existed in the General Staff. A disorderly and undisciplined person could not work there even a day.

Chiefs of sectors and senior officers came to the chief of the directorate, reported the situation and left. A. I. Antonov inculcated in the generals

*"Osvobozhdeniye Belorussii. 1944." [The Liberation of Belorussia. 1944]. Moscow, 1974, p 51.

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and officers of the Operations Directorate a love for analytic activity and required that they make deep analyses and submit their recommendations. And such recommendations were made increasingly. They were considered in the development of a routine operation, but for those that were of great importance, creative collectives for detailed development were established.

Formerly the operations personnel had been greatly involved in organizational questions. The fact is that at the start of the war the organs that were directing organizational matters were excluded from the composition of the General Staff, with a view to affording it relief. They were transferred to another directorate. However, it soon became clear that the General Staff could not manage without an organizational directorate. Its absence was especially felt in the spring of 1943, in the period of preparation for the Kursk battle, when major organizational measures were executed, and rifle, aviation and artillery divisions were being formed, and much work to improve the organizational structure of the Armed Forces was being performed. A. I. Antonov invited his assistants and those who had made suggestions about regularizing the organization of the staff's work to write out a detailed report. Then he studied it attentively and, together with the draft of an order, reported it to the Supreme Commander. The order was signed. A Main Organizational Directorate was created under the General Staff.

The chief of the Operational Directorate had many obligations. But among them was one, a chief one, upon the solution of which depended the progress and outcome of the war--that of strategic planning and the preparation of documents for the adoption of decisions by the GHQ and the Supreme Command. A large group of military leaders participated in the preparation of these decisions: commanders and members of the fronts' military councils, workers of the central military organs upon which the GHQ relied. And, finally, the General Staff and, in particular, its Operations Directorate. Beginning with the summer-and-fall campaign of 1943, A. I. Antonov took a direct part in planning all the important campaigns and strategic operations of the Armed Forces.

The first great strategic operation in the planning of which A. I. Antonov participated was the Kursk battle. He had been well acquainted since the end of February 1943 with the Kursk area, which the Hitlerite Army had ravaged. He had been there with the offensive forces of the Voronezh Front. In February, upon the order of the Supreme Commander, A. I. Antonov temporarily replaced the GHQ representative in Kursk, A. M. Vasilyevskiy. The Supreme Commander ordered Antonov to extend help in the most rapid restoration of the railroads in the liberated territory of Voronezhskaya, Kurskaya and Khar'kovskaya oblasts and gave him the right to call directly to the GHQ.

In February and March, Aleksey Innokent'yevich, as a representative of the GHQ, was in the combat area when the Soviet forces were repulsing enemy counterattacks. In trying to take revenge for the defeats at Stalingrad, the North Caucasus and the Upper Don, the Fascist German command had organized a rather powerful blow at the Southwestern and Voronezh front

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forces. A. I. Antonov speeded up the movement of the 21st Army to the Northern Don, to make up a strong defense there.

By the end of March the front had been stabilized. Soviet forces temporarily shifted to the defense, preserving the initiative for themselves. A calm set in on the Soviet-German front. On 23 March 1943 A. I. Antonov returned to Moscow.

The GHQ of the Supreme Command and the General Staff were confident that the Fascist German command would undertake a new attempt to seize the strategic initiative from the Soviet forces. It was suggested that, for this purpose, the Hitlerite command would try to conduct a major offensive operation in the summer on the Soviet-German front against the formations of Soviet troops that had been deployed within the Kursk salient.

Subsequent events confirmed this. The enemy set himself the mission of changing the course of the struggle on the Eastern Front, of holding onto the Ukraine, and, especially, the Donbass, and of strengthening the bloc of Fascist states, the cracks in which were making themselves increasingly felt. The missions of the Fascist German troops and the measures for supporting them in the new offensive operation, which had received the provisional designation "Citadel," were laid down by Hitler in an operations order of 15 April 1943. The content of this order indicates what importance was attached to this operation: "Decisive importance is attached to this offensive. It should be completed with rapid and decisive success. The offensive should put the initiative for spring and the summer of this year into our hands....Each commander and each common soldier is obligated to become imbued with a consciousness of the decisive importance of this offensive."*

In accordance with a GHQ task, the General Staff back at the start of April 1943 had issued an instruction to the fronts to use the impassable-roads season in the spring to prepare a defense of the lines being occupied, to create reserves for the main sectors, and to train the troops.

Main concerns of the party Central Committee, the State Committee of Defense and the GHQ of the Supreme Command during this period were the creation of powerful reserves and the accumulation of tanks, aircraft, artillery and ammunition. During these days the chief of staff of the artillery of the Red Army, Col Gen F. A. Samsonov, the chief of staff of the armored and mechanized forces, Maj Gen of Tank forces P. A. Markov, and the chief of staff of the VVS [Air Force], Col Gen of Aviation F. Ya. Falaleyev, often visited Aleksey Innokent'yevich in his office. Certain measures for equipping the forces with new combat equipment and weaponry were discussed. Now A. I. Antonov, in daily reports to the Supreme Commander about the operational situation on the Soviet-German front, told in more detail than usual about the creation of reserves and about the buildup of

*"Sovershenno sekretno! Tol'ko dlya komandovaniya!" [Absolutely Secret! Only for the Command!] Dokumenty i materialy [Documents and Papers], Moscow, 1967, p 502.

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weapons and combat equipment. By 1 April there were up to nine armies in the reserve. The GHQ made a decision to establish the Reserve Steppe Front. The General Staff prepared and the General Headquarters adopted a plan for a Red Army summer offensive that called for infliction of the main blow in the southwestern sector. Soon considerable amendments had to be introduced into this plan. Soviet scouts had managed to discover the Hitlerite Army's preparation for a huge offensive on the Kursk salient, and later, even the time it was to start. It was possible to establish the general intent of the Fascist German command, the most probable axis of the blows, the formations of the forces that were intended for the offensive, the military and numerical composition of the large formations that composed it, and the potential reserves and the dates of their arrival.

"The Soviet Command," wrote A. M. Vasilevskiy, "faced a dilemma: to attack or to defend itself? All the possibilities were analyzed in the most attentive fashion, and all operational options were studied. The collective mind and the creative labor of experienced military leaders and staffs from the front level to the Supreme Command, made wiser by 2 years of war, helped to make the only correct decision."*

Before adopting that decision, the GHQ asked the opinion of the high commanders and military councils of the fronts, and of Deputy Supreme Commander G. K. Zhukov, who, at that time, was at the Kursk salient, with troops on the Voronezh Front. And the General Staff worked hard and responsively. "All day on 12 April," wrote G. K. Zhukov, "Aleksandr Mikhaylovich Vasilevskiy and I and his deputy, Aleksey Innokent'yevich Antonov, prepared new information for the report to the Supreme Commander. From early in the morning all three had sat down to the work assigned to us and, since there was complete mutual understanding among us, everything was ready by the evening. A. I. Antonov, aside from all his other merits, possessed a brilliant mind for formulating papers, and since both A. M. Vasilevskiy and I had sketched out the plan of the report to I. V. Stalin, he quickly prepared the situation map and the plan-map for the operations on the fronts in the Kursk salient."#

G. K. Zhukov, A. M. Vasilevskiy and A. I. Antonov got together several times to work out the details of this plan.

The Supreme Command had decided to oppose the powerful offensive at the Kursk salient that the enemy was preparing with a deeply echeloned, insurmountable defense, to weaken the Fascist German forces in defensive battles, and then to complete his defeat with a counterattack. This task was charged to the Central and Voronezh fronts.

It was planned, after this, to start a counteroffensive with the forces of five fronts, to rout the enemy's formations that held the richest economic regions of the Ukraine's Left Bank and the Donbass. A second blow by the troops of three fronts was to be inflicted on a western axis. It removed the threat to Moscow and to the Central Industrial Region.

*Vasilevskiy, A. M., "Delo vsey zhizni," p 309.
#Zhukov, G. K., "Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya," Vol 2. Moscow, 1974, p 147.

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"It is difficult to describe the whole group of major measures," A. M. Vasilevskiy recalled, "that were conducted by the GKO [State Committee for Defense], the GHQ, the General Staff and directorates of the People's Commissariat for Defense during the preparations for battle at the Kursk salient. Special work was required for this purpose. This was truly titanic state work. It included, in particular, such measures as the creation of a multiple-zone defense at the Kursk sector with a total depth of 250-300 km; the advance of a powerful strategic reserve of the GHQ--the Steppe Front--into a region east of Kursk; a concentration at Kursk of materiel and troops that was the largest for the whole war; the organization of special air operations to destroy enemy communications and to win superiority in the air; a stirring up of partisan activity with a view to executing large-scale diversions in the enemy's rear and obtaining most important intelligence data; and the conduct of a major set of measures for the political support of the Red Army's impending actions."*

Day and night, staff workers laboriously collected and analyzed information about the enemy's forces and their capabilities and intentions. Generalized data were reported to the command for adoption of the main decisions. Not especially lavish in praise, A. I. Antonov repeatedly expressed gratitude towards many workers. At one of the party conferences at which Aleksey Innokent'yevich delivered a report, he called the situation in the Operations Directorate, as well as in the whole General Staff, "exceptionally creative and capable of solving any task that the GHQ of the Supreme Command places before us."

The GHQ and the General Staff paid great attention to the organization of intelligence. The disposition of the enemy's chasti and large units was refined, observation over the regrouping of his forces was conducted, and data about the intentions of the Fascist German command and its near-term and long-range plans were obtained.

Reports from organs of agent and troop reconnaissance and from partisans came to the General Staff. This information had to be processed, deeply analyzed and the proper conclusions drawn, without committing any kind of mistakes. For the enemy, in preparing for the offensive, was conducting a whole system of special measures to screen his intentions: he organized false regroupings and took many other deceptive measures.

But intelligence is only one part, although a very important part, of the work, and there were tens of them in the General Staff, and they all required tireless attention and skilled direction. And Aleksey Innokent'yevich Antonov knew how to direct the collective.

It happened, of course that great difficulties were encountered in processing documents. There were divergencies in views and in the strategic plans for the summer campaign between the General Staff and certain front commanders. The Supreme Commander wavered on a number of questions. For example, on the basis of data received about the enemy, on 20 May the

*Vasilevskiy, A. M., "Delo vsej zhizni," p 311-312.

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General Staff sent to the fronts, with I. V. Stalin's authorization, a warning that the Fascist offensive was expected no later than 26 May. This was now the second warning. The first, to expect an offensive 10-12 May, was not confirmed. In this case the military council of the Voronezh Front observed the enemy's refusal to shift to the offensive and asked the Supreme Commander to resolve the question of inflicting on the enemy an anticipatory blow. "I. V. Stalin was very seriously interested in this proposal, and we--Zhukov, I and Antonov--had to make certain efforts to persuade him not to do this,"* wrote A. M. Vasilevskiy.

Various opinions existed also about the plan for the counteroffensive. And these questions provoked disputes: when and at just what moment should the operation shift to the counteroffensive? It was impossible to allow the enemy to inflict great harm on our defending troops. But it should not be rushed or emerge prematurely, without bleeding the enemy white. No few such problems arose for the fronts and the General Staff.

The direction of the main blow also had not been selected right away. The recommendation of the Voronezh Front command to concentrate the main forces south of Kursk and to attack in the direction of Khar'kov and Dnepropetrovsk, with a later push to the Kremenchug-Krivoy Rog-Kherson line interested many at first. This would enable the Army Group South to be put out of action and would deprive the enemy of a foodstuffs base and many important industrial regions, such as the Donbass and Khar'kov. Moreover, Soviet forces would approach the borders of Romania and Bulgaria and thereby speed up the exit of these countries from the war.

After examining this plan attentively, Operations Directorate workers S. M. Shtemenko, A. A. Gyzlov, and N. A. Lomov, under A. I. Antonov, came to the conclusion that it was impossible to adopt it. This opinion was shared by G. K. Zhukov and A. M. Vasilevskiy. In justifying the conclusions of the General Staff to the GHQ, Aleksey Innokent'yevich said that the Voronezh Front recommendations had many defects. The proposed plan did not touch on the center of the Soviet-German front, did not neutralize the enemy's main formation--the Army Group Center, which, with a blow against the Soviet troops in the southern sector, would threaten the flanks of the large attacking formations. Moreover, the Kiev sector--which was important from the political and military standpoints--had been shunted aside.

"The General Staff," reported A. I. Antonov, "is inclined to the idea of defeating the enemy in the Khar'kov, Poltava and Kiev sectors."

"Why do you prefer that plan?" asked I. V. Stalin.

"In the first place, as with the offensive at Dnepropetrovsk, the Army Group South is eliminated," answered A. I. Antonov, "second, the enemy's front is dispersed, especially if Soviet forces push towards the Carpathians,

*Ibid, p 316.

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and mutual action among his most important formations is made difficult. And third, enormous possibilities are opened up for later operations by Soviet forces."

The GHQ approved the axis of the main blow during the counteroffensive that was proposed and substantiated by the General Staff.

Antonov did especially much work during those days. He did not leave the office even during those hours that had been set aside by order for rest. He grew thin and this made him seem taller. To carry out two functions--acting chief of the General Staff and chief of the Operations Directorate--was becoming increasingly difficult for him. The Supreme Commander did not even want to hear about releasing A. M. Vasilevskiy from his trips to the front as representative of the GHQ. There remained only one thing: to release A. I. Antonov from his obligations as chief of the Operations Directorate, so he could occupy himself only with managing the General Staff, and to make him the First Deputy to the Chief of the General Staff. A. M. Vasilevskiy proposed this option at one of the routine meetings with I. V. Stalin. The Supreme Commander, after listening attentively to all the arguments of the chief of the General Staff, concurred with him and asked:

"Whom do you recommend to be chief of the Operations Directorate?"

"Lt Gen Shtemenko."

"Agreed," the answer followed.

This conversation took place 19 May, and on the 20th Col Gen A. I. Antonov--this was the regular military title that had been conferred on him on 4 April 1943--congratulated his deputy S. M. Shtemenko for his promotion in position.

Now A. I. Antonov was enabled to pay greater attention to the other directorates and sections, on the precise operation of which the General Staff depended.

Meanwhile, at the Kursk salient, both sides finished preparation for a decisive encounter. The decisive events broke out at the start of July. The Soviet command, attentively following all the preparatory actions of the enemy, on 2 July notified the front commanders: the enemy offensive should be expected between 3 and 6 July. Everything was brought to complete combat readiness. And when, on 5 July, the enemy began the offensive, the Soviet forces met him fully armed. The Kursk battle had begun.

The defensive battles of the Voronezh and Central fronts continued until 23 July. One tank army and one combined-arms army from the Steppe Front had been introduced into combat while it was in progress. From the first moment of the engagement, the GHQ and the General Staff followed closely the progress of the combat operations and extended the necessary help to the fronts in time. The GHQ's representatives--Deputy Supreme Commander

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G. K. Zhukov and Chief of the General Staff A. M. Vasilevskiy--were constantly to be found in the battle regions. A. I. Antonov, who was in Moscow, maintained communication with them all the time. All three in their turn communicated from time to time with the Supreme Commander and responsibly solved questions that came to a head.

When, in the Belgorod sector, the enemy, with a force of less than 200 tanks and infantry, moved close to chasti of the 69th Army and, by the end of 11 July had pushed to the Kisilev-Mazikino-Sheyn region, the General Staff prepared a GHQ directive to Steppe Front Commander Col Gen I. S. Konev. It was signed by I. V. Stalin and A. I. Antonov. The front forces were set the combat mission of destroying the enemy's formation that was advancing in the Koricha sector with a joint blow by the 47th Army and the 3d Guards Mechanized Corps from the southeast and by the 1st Mechanized Corps from the north. The directive defined the time and areas for the concentration of these field forces and large units. At the foot of the document was the postscript: "Transmitted personally to Comrade Konev 12.7.43 at 1.45. Antonov."*

Simultaneously the GHQ ordered the forces of the left wing of the Western Front and the forces of the Bryansk Front to shift on the morning of 12 July to the counteroffensive, with a view to defeating the enemy's Orel formation. The offensive operation "Kutuzov" had commenced. The Central Front shifted to the offensive on 15 July. Its right-flank army received the mission of defeating an enemy force that had driven a wedge into the defenses of the Soviet forces. In pursuing this task, in developing the offensive to the northwest, it was to envelop the Fascist German formation from the south and to destroy it in mutual operations with troops of the Bryansk and Western fronts.

In striving to hold on to the Orel bridgehead at all costs, the Fascist command sent new reinforcements to the Orel region. However, the Soviet Supreme Command had introduced large strategic reserves into the engagement and did not allow the enemy to stabilize the front's line.

At this time the General Staff warned the commander of the Central Front's troops about a possible withdrawal of the enemy from the Orel-Kromy salient. On 22 July, an order over the signature of A. I. Antonov was transmitted to the front's staff: "Prepare the 48th and 13th armies for pursuit of the enemy, for which purpose: a) have army reserves with attached tank chasti, self-propelled artillery and combat engineers in each army, in addition to creating mobile detachments in the divisions. Experience has indicated that some mobile detachments from first-line divisions are insufficient, since the main forces of these divisions can organize pursuit only in the second half of the day; b) intensify observation and reconnaissance of the enemy and conduct aviation reconnaissance at night more widely, since the enemy begins withdrawal, as a rule, at night; and v) in case of a withdrawal, call for parallel pursuit of the enemy with the wide use of aviation."

*TsAMO, archive 132a, list 2642, document 13, sheet 190.
#TsAMO, archive 48a, list 2, document 16, sheet 341.

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The Soviet forces' offensive continued successfully. On the first of August Bryansk Front troops approached Bryansk, and the Western and Central fronts created a threat to the communications of the enemy's Orel formation. The same serious danger hung over the enemy's formation that were concentrated on the Belgorod-Khar'kov axis. Having been thrown back by 23 July to the original positions, it received on 3 August from the Voronezh and Steppe fronts, which had commenced offensive operation "Rumyantsev," a blow from which it could not recover for a long time. This operation was a component part of the general strategic plan for the summer campaign of Soviet forces. Its concept and purpose came down to joint actions of troops of the Voronezh, Steppe and, partly, Southwest fronts to defeat the enemy formation in the areas of Belgorod and Khar'kov and, continuing the offensive toward the Dnepr, to cover the fords there and to prevent the withdrawal of the Fascist German forces from the Donbass to the west.

At the time of execution of this operation, in August of 1943, A. I. Antonov observed that the principle of maximum concentration of forces was being violated on selected sectors. On the fourth day of the offensive it was revealed that the 5th Guards Army of A. S. Zhadov and the 1st Tank Army of M. Ye. Katukov were operating in violation of the principle of massing forces. In the situation report for the night of 7 August A. I. Antonov called the Supreme Commander's attention to this. An instruction was quickly sent to the Voronezh Front commander, N. F. Batutin, about the impermissibility of dispersing forces. On the night of 10 August A. I. Antonov, in the name of the GHQ, sent still another telegram, this time addressed to GHQ representative G. K. Zhukov. The subject again was the necessity for concentrating tank army troops on definite axes.

However, the situation received an unexpected development. The enemy introduced reserves into action, mainly tank divisions and struck fairly powerful counterblows. From 11 to 20 August, bitter battles were conducted in the region of Bogodukhov and Akhtyrka. Voronezh Front forces suffered substantial losses.

In the situation report to the Supreme Commander on the night of 22 August, A. I. Antonov drew the conclusion that the potential for pushing to the rear of the enemy's Khar'kov formation had worsened. This occurred because the command of the front had overlooked the impending threat. The advance of the attacking forces had been continued without adequate reinforcements of the lines that had been won and without support of the flanks.

After listening to the report, I. V. Stalin right then dictated a directive to the Voronezh Front commander, N. F. Batutin. The main thought of the directive was that an advance during the course of the offensive should not be transformed into an end in itself. An offensive without a consolidation of a success and firm support for the flanks against assault formations would lead to a dispersal of forces and resources and enable the enemy to inflict blows on the flanks and the rear of the Soviet forces and to defeat them chast by chast.

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An enemy attempt to halt the Soviet forces' offensive had appeared, and a counterblow was warded off. But the lesson it presented was considered for the future.

The operation on the Belgorod-Khar'kov sector also was completed with the full defeat of the enemy and the liberation of Khar'kov.

As a result of the Kursk battle, the Soviet Armed Forces inflicted on the enemy a defeat from which the Fascist army could not recover.

The Fascist German command was compelled in rapid order to undertake to throw ground forces and large aviation forces from the Western Front to the Soviet-German front.

The Red Army's victory in the Kursk battle created a strong basis for promoting an offensive in the Ukraine and for broad offensive operations over the entire front for the purpose of complete expulsion of the enemy from Soviet territory. The GHQ of the Supreme Command had increased the might of blows on the enemy and was increasingly expanding the front of the offensive. A. I. Antonov and S. M. Shtemenko began to visit the Supreme Commander more often than usual. Ever newer and newer instructions went to the troops. They were transmitted by telephone, telegraph and orally. In August 1943 Aleksey Innokent'yevich twice had to fly to combat areas of the Voronezh and Steppe fronts. Here he met with the front commanders and with GHQ representative G. K. Zhukov. A. I. Antonov reported amendments that had been introduced by the Supreme Commander into the plan for completing the offensive operations of 1943 and the General Staff's preliminary outline for the winter campaign. "It was pleasant to hear our General Staff's strategic-operations considerations in his expositions," wrote G. K. Zhukov. "With maximum precision and persuasiveness he analyzed the status of the German forces after their defeat at the Kursk salient."*

The Hitlerite command still had at its disposal substantial forces for continuing the war with the Soviet Union. The fact that Great Britain and the United States of America had not gotten ready to conduct wide offensive operations in Europe helped here to a substantial degree. The landing of Allied forces in South Italy did not introduce essential changes in the deployment of German forces in the strategic sectors.

By virtue of all this, the General Staff considered, and this was concurred in by the Supreme Commander, that Fascist Germany, although no longer in a position to introduce major offensive operations, still had at its disposal enough forces and materiel to conduct active defensive operations. The experience of the defeats in the Akhtyrka and Poltava regions, where the enemy had inflicted strong counterblows on Soviet forces, was especially indicative of this.

A. I. Antonov drew the conclusion from all this that the Fascist German command required a stubborn defense of their forces, with a view to holding

*Zhukov, G. K., "Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya," Vol 2, p 195.

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the Donbass and the Left-Bank Ukraine. Under these circumstances it was necessary to promote an offensive by Soviet forces on all fronts in the western and southwestern sectors, with a view to pushing into the eastern regions of Belorussia and to the Dnepr and to seizing a bridgehead for supporting operations for the liberation of the Right-Bank Ukraine.

Soon the GHQ, based upon a strategic plan previously developed and refined at the scene of battle, set missions for the troops of the Central, Voronezh, Steppe, Southwestern and Southern fronts: to defeat the enemy's main forces on the southern wing of the Soviet-German front, to liberate all of the Left-Bank Ukraine, the Donbass and the Crimea and to push to the Dnepr and to seize bridgeheads on its right bank. Simultaneously, the main forces of the Western Front and the left wing of the Kalinin front were to conduct the Smolensk operation, to push the front back from Moscow and to create conditions for liberating Soviet Belorussia. At this same time, the forces of the North Caucasus Front, in a joint operation with the Black Sea Fleet and the Azov Naval Flotilla, should clear the Taman' Peninsula of the enemy and seize a bridgehead on the Kerch' Peninsula.

The Soviet Armed Forces shifted to the general strategic offensive without pause. In August 1943, participating in it were 11 fronts, long-range aviation, the Black Sea Fleet and the Azov Naval Flotilla. The enemy's front was shaken under the blows of Soviet forces over a vast expanse, from Smolensk to the shores of the Sea of Azov.

The strain under which the General Staff had to work reached its highest limit. Each day hundreds of problems were decided. The armies, with millions of men and thousands of guns, tanks and airplanes in motion, required precise and organized direction.

"A great toiler and brilliant expert on staff service, Aleksey Innokent'yevich held strongly in his hands all the threads of responsive direction over the combat operations of multimillion-man armies," wrote S. M. Shtemenko. "Through his most rich erudition and, at the time, youthful forces, he coped with this beyond reproach...."

"The high general and, especially, military sophistication of Aleksey Innokent'yevich was shown absolutely in the breadth and depth of his approach to all questions of General Staff work...."*

One can judge the nature of the activity of A. I. Antonov and the General Staff at that time by one workday--7 September 1943. He began, as usual, with a study of the changes in the situation on the fronts that had occurred during his absence. Then he met with many of his assistants and talked with front chiefs of staff. The headlong offensive of Soviet forces was developing successfully. But still it was necessary to introduce various changes: to establish new demarcation lines between the fronts, to reassign certain armies, to make a partial regrouping of the forces. Together with chief of the Operations Directorate S. M. Shtemenko, his deputies and chiefs of sectors of the appropriate fronts, Supreme Commander

*Shtemenko, S. M., "General'nyy shtab v gody voyny" [The General Staff in the War Years], Book 1, Moscow, 1975, pp 186-187.

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directives were prepared and approved: at 1540 hours and 1545 hours-- about establishing new demarcation lines between fronts because of the successful offensive of Soviet troops in the Konotop sector and in the Donbass; at 1730--about the transfer of the 3d Guards Tank Army from the GHQ reserve to the Voronezh Front forces and concentrating it by 15 September in the Sumy city area; at 2200 hours--about the transfer of the 61st Army from the GHQ reserve to Central Front forces; and at 2230 hours about the transfer of the 5th Guards Army from the Voronezh Front to the Steppe Front because of change in the demarcation lines between them.*

It is known that any staff, starting with the battalion staff and ending with the General Staff, performs two functions. One is work for the commander, in this case for the Supreme Commander, and the second is work for the troops, the satisfaction of their needs in accordance with the demands of war and taking into account the possibilities. A. I. Antonov knew how to enlist all the central and main directorates of the People's Commissariat for Defense in the fulfillment of these functions, but in so doing he did not restrict their independence. He amalgamated all the efforts of these directors through the General Staff. This brought enormous benefit. Everything operated in one direction, in the interests of those fronts which at a given moment were solving the main tasks or should be solving them in the near future. This greatly facilitated the General Staff's work: the operations personnel always knew what they had and would have at their disposal.

The selfless toil of General Staff workers, which was invested in preparing for and conducting the 1943 operations at the Kursk salient, the liberation of the Left-Bank Ukraine and the Donbass and the crossing of the Dnepr, were highly appraised by the Communist Party and the Soviet Government. Many generals and officers were awarded orders and raised in rank. A. I. Antonov was awarded the Order of Suvorov, 1st Degree, and the Order of the Patriotic War, 1st Degree. On 4 April 1943 the title of General of the Army was conferred on him.

His comrades in service and commanders and chiefs of the front's staffs congratulated him, reflecting deep respect for Aleksey Innokent'yevich.

The summer-and-fall campaign of 1943 was completed with the liberation of the Left-Bank Ukraine, the isolation of enemy troops in the Crimea, and the smashing of his defense at the Dnepr. The vaunted rampart ceased to exist. The prerequisites for the liberation of the Right-Bank Ukraine had been created.

By the end of 1943 General of the Army A. I. Antonov had acquired great experience in work on the General Staff, especially in planning operations in which several fronts participated. The strategic offensive of the Soviet Armed Forces that had been developed at the end of the summer and in the fall of 1943 for a broad front, from Velikiye Luki to Novorossiysk, gave enormous food for thought, particularly with regard to such problems

*TsAMO, archive 132a, list 2642, document 34, sheets 210, 212, 214 and 215.

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as the choice of direction of the main blow and the timely concentration of strategic reserves in the necessary sector. He had come to the conclusion that it was necessary to plan more carefully not only the various strategic operations but also whole campaigns and to generalize the experience of military actions more deeply. The Section on the Use of War Experience that existed on the General Staff had a full workload and did much that was useful. However, it was difficult for the section to cope with the missions assigned to it. A. I. Antonov made a proposal to organize a directorate based upon this section. A. M. Vasilevskiy and I. V. Stalin supported him. At the beginning of 1944, the directorate set about to develop aids for officers and handbooks for soldiers. Collections of theoretical articles on various problems were published that analyzed everything that Soviet soldiers had improved. Special attention was devoted to generalizing experience in directing troops and the most effective use of the rising striking and fire power of chasti and large formations. The aids, handbooks and collections were published in vast quantities, becoming the property of generals and officers. Maj Gen P. P. Vechnyy was in charge of this directorate.

In accordance with experience that was gained, the structures of other directorates and sections of the General Staff also were perfected. A. I. Antonov supported all the recommendations that would help to improve the work and to achieve more rapidity and better quality in the solution of tasks. In the summer of 1943 a group of officers of the General Staff who were in the field was converted into a corps of officers--representatives of the General Staff, with subordination directly to the Operations Directorate. In the course of the battles at Kursk and the Left-Bank Ukraine and during the crossing of the Dnepr, Aleksey Innokent'yevich was interested in how this corps of officers was operating and what assistance it had extended to representatives of the General Headquarters. Officers of the corps were monitoring the precise execution by staffs and troops of the directives and orders of the General Headquarters, its representatives and the General Staff, and they extended assistance to the troops.

By the end of 1943 the question of a third military winter campaign had come onto the agenda. Preparation for it commenced in November and December. The GHQ of the Supreme Command and the General Staff, along with directing offensive operations at the front, were occupied with developing plans for operations for the coming winter. I. V. Stalin conversed repeatedly about this over the telephone (in A. I. Antonov's presence) with G. K. Zhukov, who was with the troops of the 1st and 2d Ukrainian fronts, and with A. M. Vasilevskiy, who was coordinating the actions of the 3d and 4th Ukrainian fronts. He discussed this problem also with the front commanders.

Back during the struggle for the Dnepr an opinion about a forthcoming winter campaign had prevailed in the General Staff, and on the part of Antonov in particular. Aleksey Innokent'yevich had written down its preliminary outlines in a notebook and had plotted it on a map. They rested on a firm, realistic base. These outlines considered both the great victories

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sustained by the Soviet Armed Forces during the summer and fall of 1943, the ever-increasing arrival of combat equipment and weapons from the national economy, and the availability of powerful strategic reserves that were at the disposal of the GHQ. When G. K. Zhukov and A. M. Vasilevskiy, who had been summoned by the Supreme Commander for the adoption of a final decision on the winter campaign, arrived in Moscow by the middle of December, A. I. Antonov presented to them preliminary drafts of a plan that had been developed in the General Staff. All his basic ideas had been discussed here also, in the General Staff.

In making the final decision, as always, members of the VKP(b) Central Committee Politburo and the State Committee for Defense took part. In December 1943, at a joint session of the VKP(b) Central Committee Politburo, the State Committee for Defense and the GHQ, questions of the country's military and political situation were examined comprehensively. A. M. Vasilevskiy and A. I. Antonov delivered reports of progress in the struggle at the fronts and prospects therefor. N. A. Voznesenskiy reported on questions of military economics. Problems of an international nature were analyzed by I. V. Stalin.* The general opinion on the tasks for the nearest future came down to the following: to promote offensive operations over a broad front, from Leningrad to the Black Sea, during the winter of 1943-44. It was proposed that the offensive be conducted not in one or two strategic sectors, as was done in 1943, but in succession, over the whole front, so that each blow would complete the defeat of a large enemy formation. The main attention was paid to the flanks of the Soviet-German front. It was intended to liberate the Right-Bank Ukraine and the Crimea and push out from there in the spring to the state border of the Soviet Union. In the north--to defeat the Army Group North, lift completely the blockade of heroic Leningrad and begin the liberation of the Baltic.

Details of the plan were carefully worked out in the General Staff, where G. K. Zhukov, A. M. Vasilevskiy and A. I. Antonov met daily. They discussed for a long time each problem, each detail. They spent the evening, as a rule, with the Supreme Commander, where all questions of the plan were worked out finally.

As is known, the military and political aims of the Communist Party and the Soviet Government during the Great Patriotic War were achieved successively by the conduct at each stage of the war of a number of simultaneous and successive combat operations. Those operations that were closely interrelated by one strategic plan of the Soviet Supreme Command made up a military campaign.

While in World War I the duration of a military campaign was defined by the framework of the calendar year, in the Civil War it was completed in a few months. During World War II the content of a military campaign had changed essentially. Its scope had increased, and the forms and methods of combat operations had become complicated. A campaign began to include

*See "Istoriya Kommunisticheskoy partii Sovetskogo Soyuza, Vol 5, book 1, p 509.

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a substantially larger number of different operations than had been the case in the past. Its duration was shortened, but the framework of military operations had increased. The content of each military campaign was determined by the missions and nature of the military actions against the Fascist German forces.

In the winter campaign of 1944, the liberation of Soviet territory from the Fascist German aggressors continued. A series of operations associated with a single strategic concept was planned and executed. Their purpose was the defeat of enemy forces on the whole southern wing of the Soviet-German front.

Operations were conducted by several fronts with the acquisition of long-range aviation and, on maritime sectors, of naval forces. A strategic operation by a group of fronts was a new phenomenon in the Soviet military art of the period of the Great Patriotic War. G. K. Zhukov, A. M. Vasilevskiy and A. I. Antonov had a great role in its development.

A strategic operation in which a group of fronts participated did not emerge all at once during the Great Patriotic War but as the extent of the might of the Soviet Armed Forces and the acquisition of combat experience increased. Its birth can be attributed to the counterattack at Moscow and Stalingrad. During the battle at Kursk it had entered firmly into the practice of Soviet forces with the execution by them of a strategic offensive.

The GHQ and the General Staff followed the progress of the winter campaign operations attentively. A. I. Antonov each day deeply analyzed the combat actions on the active portions of the Soviet-German front and reflected the changes in the situation on the map. Since the maps of the Supreme Commander, the Chief of the General Staff and the chief of the Operations Directorate and his deputies were identical, these changes were noted on all of them simultaneously. The identity of the four maps enabled the supervisory workers of the General Staff to report to the Supreme Commander all the changes in the situation by telephone and to react responsively to decisions that had been adopted. Here is what former Col Gen N. A. Lomov, former worker of the General Staff's Operations Directorate, said about this:

"It was 12 January 1944. Routine reports of the staffs of the 1st and 2d Ukrainian fronts arrived in my office. I rapidly plotted the situation. Antonov came in at that time. Spreading out the map before him, I reported the situation. However, he said little. Aleksey Innokent'yevich knew well how to read a map.

"The front's offensive is developing along parallel lines,' he said. 'And it is better to strike like that,' and here he drew two arrows that converged in the area of Zvenigorodka. He asked: 'Your opinion, Nikolay Andreyevich?'

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"I glanced once more at the map and the arrows. The next cauldron for the Fascist German forces had been outlined clearly. He told about it. The telephone rang. A. I. Antonov reported to the Supreme Commander the situation at the 1st and 2d Ukrainian fronts and our ideas. I. V. Stalin ordered a directive to be prepared and shown to him. The directive was signed and sent at 2200 hours, 12 April, to the commanders of the 1st and 2d Ukrainian fronts and to GHQ representative G. K. Zhukov. It said: 'The enemy's grouping, which continues to go on in the regions of Svenigorodka, Mironovka and Smela relates to the operations of the contiguous flanks of the 1st and 2d Ukrainian fronts and is hampering their advance toward the Yuznyy Bug River.

"An offensive of the main formations of both fronts is being developed in parallel directions, but decisive measures for eliminating the enemy's remaining salient are not being taken.'* Concrete tasks were set for the front to envelop and destroy the Fascist German forces."

The winter campaign of 1944 ended with a brilliant victory for the Red Army. Many large enemy units were beaten. During the liberation of the Right-Bank Ukraine, 26 March 1944 became a historic day when Soviet troops drove on an 85-km section of the Prut River to the USSR frontier with Romania. When A. I. Antonov reported this to the Supreme Commander the latter approached the map, looked closely at the portion of the border that the Soviet troops had crossed, and said:

"This has begun the liberating mission of the Red Army in Europe. Think with Shcherbakov about our measures."

Then I. V. Stalin proposed to include a short-term task in the 1st of May order: the liberation of the peoples of Europe from the Hitlerite yoke. A. I. Antonov and S. M. Shtemenko expressed confidence that now, beyond the border, all difficulties would be rapidly overcome. I. V. Stalin did not agree with them. He said that the enemy right now is reminiscent of the wounded beast that has to crawl away to his lair to heal his wounds. But a wounded beast is even more dangerous. It is necessary to pursue and finish him off in his den. The Supreme Commander cautioned the General Staff supervisors against carelessness and said that on the other side of the border we will meet with kind friends and with enemies, especially from among the classes that previously ruled and those strata of the population that supported them. All this had to be considered in the planning and conduct of the new offensive operations.

The Red Army's push beyond the USSR border was the start of a new stage of the war--the stage of the liberation of European states. The Soviet Armed Forces were to solve new and complicated missions, the essence of which Aleksey Innokent'yevich understood especially well after a study of the papers of the conference of the military council members that was convened by the VKP(b) Central Committee Politburo in May 1944. In these papers a deep analysis was made of the new political situation that had

*TsAMO, archive 132a, list 2642, document 36, sheets 8 and 9.

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been added in connection with the arrival of the Red Army on the territory of foreign states.

From that time, the General Staff was occupied not only with military questions but, together with the Main Political Administration, also with preparing the Soviet soldier for his special situation beyond the borders of his native land. In planning offensive operations in more detail, the political forces that were at work in the region of the forthcoming battles were considered.

The successful offensive on the Right-Bank Ukraine and into the Crimea broke the old theoretical notions about the influence of winter and the spring season of impassable roads on military operations. The main forces of the Ukrainian front were aimed at Iasi and Kishinev. The routes to Lyublin, L'vov and Bucharest had been opened. The Red Army occupied an advantageous position that enabled it to bring pressure to bear on the flanks and rear of the enemy's main formations. All this was evaluated positively by the General Staff.

Aleksey Innokent'yevich was occupied with the development of options for the summer campaign operations of 1944. By this time the amount of his work was inordinately great, since he had to carry out the obligations that entered into the functions of the chief of the General Staff. This was explained by the fact that A. M. Vasilevskiy was absent from Moscow increasingly frequently. Like Deputy Supreme Commander G. K. Zhukov, A. M. Vasilevskiy was at the front as a representative of the GHQ. Aleksey Innokent'yevich maintained constant communication with the chief of the General Staff and consulted with him on the most important questions. At the same time, he well understood that he frequently could not divert A. M. Vasilevskiy from the fulfillment of the difficult and responsible obligations of GHQ representative. Through his richest learning and with the help of experienced General Staff workers, Aleksey Innokent'yevich managed to execute all the basic work.

The general operational concept and then also the plan for operations in the summer and fall of 1944 were worked out in the General Staff under the direct supervision of A. I. Antonov. The Decisions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the State Committee for Defense and the proposals of the front commanders, who knew the situation in detail, made up the basis for the plan. At the end of April 1944, at a joint meeting of the session of the Central Committee Politburo and the GHQ, a decision about the conduct of a mighty summer offensive was adopted.* The political aims of this offensive were formulated in the 1st of May order of the Supreme Commander. They were: to clear Soviet territory of the Fascist aggressors, restore the state borders of the USSR over the whole line, from the Black Sea to the Barentz Sea, and rescue the fraternal countries of Poland, Czechoslovakia and other countries of Eastern Europe from Fascist bondage.

*See "Istoriya Kommunisticheskoy partii Sovetskogo Soyuza," Vol 5, Book 1, p 520.

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The campaign was conceived in the form of a system of operations, the largest in the history of war, over a vast expanse, from the Baltic to the Carpathians. Several fronts were to be involved in active operations simultaneously. At the same time it was recognized as desirable to conduct a large independent operation in the L'vov sector, and also an operation at the Vyborg and Svir-Petrozavodsk sectors. The summer-and-fall campaign of 1944 was drawn in detail in this sequence: at the start of June the Leningrad Front attacks at Vyborg, and then the Karelian Front joins in for the purpose of defeating the enemy's Svir'-Petrozavodsk formation. Finland should be put out of the struggle as a result of these operations. During the Karelian Front offensive, the offensive in Belorussia, which is intended for surprise, should start without delay. After that, when the Fascist German command moves his reserves there, the 1st Ukrainian Front conducts an operation in the L'vov sector. It was proposed to conduct active combat operations also with the forces of the 2d Baltic Front, in order to pin down the troops of the enemy North grouping. And finally, when, as a result of all these blows, the enemy will be bled white, the offensive into Romania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, as well as Hungary, Austria and Czechoslovakia, should begin. The defeat of the enemy's Belorussian and L'vov formations comprised the main efforts of the Soviet Armed Forces.

Soviet forces were to inflict the main blow in a westerly direction with a view to defeating the enemy's Center and North Ukraine army groups, the full liberation of Belorussia, part of Lithuania and the Ukraine's western oblasts, and the restoration of the USSR's state borders over the whole Soviet-German front.

Aleksey Innokent'yevich and his closest helpers undertook the difficult work of developing the bases for the plan for the decisive offensive of the summer campaign--the Belorussian operation. The commanders and military councils of the 1st Belorussian and 1st Ukrainian fronts sent their ideas about front operations.

The General Staff saw as one of its first-priority tasks that of convincing the Hitlerite command that the Red Army's main blows in the summer of 1944 would be aimed at the south and the Baltic. On 3 May 1944 the General Staff sent an order to the commander of the 3d Ukrainian Front, Gen R. Ya. Malinovskiy: "For purposes of deceiving the enemy, you are charged with conducting measures for operational deception. It is necessary to show a concentration of eight or nine rifle divisions, reinforced by tanks and artillery, beyond the right flank of the front....The region of false concentration should be lively, after the movement and disposition of various people, vehicles, tanks, guns and equipment of the region has been shown."* A similar directive was sent also to the 3d Baltic Front. Also, the departure of tank armies for the southwest sector was a sort of misinformation.

*TsAMO, archive 132a, list 2642, document 36, sheet 338.

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Measures also were taken to insure secrecy of the Soviet command's intentions. For example, only five people on the General Staff were involved in developing the plan for the summer campaign as a whole and for the Belorussian operation in particular. The operational considerations for the fronts' staffs also were developed by two or three people.

The measures for misinforming the enemy achieved their purpose. Quotations from German reconnaissance reports about the Soviet command's probable plans confirmed this. On 21 May 1944: "The enemy is preparing his future operations for Balkan decisions with special care." On 30 May: "The presumed operation of the enemy in the Balkans is confirmed anew." On 2 June: "Signs of an impending large offensive against the Army Group North Ukraine are being observed."

By the middle of June the Hitlerite reconnaissance had at its disposal certain data about the concentration of Red Army forces in the Belorussian sector, but the Soviet command was able to screen its preparations for the offensive so skillfully that Gelen [transliterated], who was in charge of Hitler intelligence on the Eastern Front, came to the conclusion that only an auxiliary blow would be inflicted against the Center armies.*

By 14 May, development of the plan for the Belorussian operation had been completed. All the concepts and computations occupied but a few pages. Gen A. A. Gryzlov wrote the text by hand. A. I. Antonov had worked on the maps for about a week.

On 20 May a new stage of planning for the operation began. Now, this was with the participation of the Supreme Command GHQ, the military councils of the fronts, and the commanders of the arms and services. "On 20 May," writes G. K. Zhukov, "the Supreme Commander summoned A. M. Vasilevskiy, me and A. I. Antonov to the GHQ in order to refine finally the decision of the Supreme Command on the plan for the summer campaign...."

"After examining the 'Bagration' plan in the GHQ, the Supreme Commander directed that front commanders I. Kh. Bagramyan, I. D. Chernyakhovskiy and K. K. Rokossovskiy be summoned, in order to hear their ideas and to give final instructions about developing plans for the fronts."

"On 22 May the Supreme Commander received A. M. Vasilevskiy, A. I. Antonov, K. K. Rokossovskiy and I. Kh. Bagramyan and, on 25 May, I. D. Chernyakhovskiy, in my presence. The front commanders, informed by the General Staff about the impending operations, arrived at the GHQ with drafts of plans of actions for the forces entrusted to them."#

The GHQ greatly augmented the fronts. The makeup of four fronts--the 1st, 2d and 3d Belorussian and the 1st Baltic fronts were reinforced by 3 combined-arms and 2 tank armies and 8 rifle, mechanized, tank and cavalry

*See "Proektor, D. M., "Agressiya i katastrofa" [Aggression and Catastrophe]. Moscow, 1972, p 639.

#Zhukov, G. K., "Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya," Vol 2, p 245.

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corps. The armies were augmented by 11 corps and 5 aviation divisions.* This whole enormous mass of troops had to be redeployed and concentrated imperceptibly in areas of combat operations. It is not difficult to guess what labor this cost the workers of the Operations and Organization directorates and the chiefs who headed the various arms and services and the Section for Operations Hauling. A. I. Antonov required of them the strictest monitoring over the performance of all organizational measures. Aleksey Innokent'yevich's right hand in solving all organizational matters in the Belorussian operation was Lt Gen N. I. Chetverikov, who was in charge of the Organizational Directorate and knew General Staff work excellently. He had served more than 25 years at various posts there.

In preparation for the Belorussian operation, as for operations that had preceded it and those that followed, the organs that made the plans to supply the troops with arms, ammunition, combat equipment, fuel and lubricants, personal equipment and foodstuffs played an enormous role. At the first request they gave all the necessary information. Aleksey Innokent'yevich always valued their work highly.

Four fronts were aimed at a breakthrough of the German defense from Polotsk on the Zapadnaya Dvina to Mozyr' on the Pripyat'. For this purpose, the Soviet command created a mighty grouping of forces: more than 1.43 million men--166 divisions, more than 31,000 guns and mortars, more than 5,200 tanks and self-propelled guns and more than 6,000 airplanes.#

Operation "Bagration" started early on the morning of 22 June 1944. During 6 days of the offensive, Soviet troops defeated the enemy's flank formations at Vitebsk and Bobruysk. Large tank and mechanized units, on entering into the gap, advanced 110-115 km. The front, which had been fortified by the Hitlerites in the course of 2 years, began to collapse. By 27 June large Fascist troop formations had been encircled in the areas of Vitebsk and Bobruysk.

Soon still another enemy formation, which numbered more than 100,000 soldiers and officers, was encircled. This became possible thanks to the skillful actions of the 3d and 1st Belorussian fronts, which had joined up east of Minsk.

In evaluating the existing situation and the blow of the Soviet forces, as a result of which the main forces of the Army Group Center were encircled and defeated, Gen V. Muller, who at that time commanded the 12th Army Corps, wrote, "But even after the Russians broke through the front unexpectedly rapidly at several wide sections during the offensive, we did not draw the only correct conclusion from the situation that existed. Because of the lack of reserves, it was necessary to break away from the enemy as rapidly as possible. We, on the contrary, received an order to maintain

*See "Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941-1945," Vol 4, Moscow, 1964, pp 160-161.
#Ibid, p 163.

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position, despite the fact that enemy units that had broken through had already enveloped us on the flanks."

However, the decisive factor that occasioned the success of the Soviet troops were not those errors but primarily the advanced Soviet military art and excellent training of the soldiers.

During the Belorussian operation the responsibilities of representatives of the GHQ of the Supreme Command had been changed somewhat. They were granted the right of immediate direction of the operations of the front, which aided in the flexible and responsive control of the forces. Deputy Supreme Commander G. K. Zhukov supervised the operations of the 2d and 1st Belorussian and the 1st Ukrainian fronts, and chief of the General Staff A. M. Vasilevskiy--the 2d and 1st Baltic and 3d Belorussian fronts.

During the offensive battles, defects that prevented execution of the GHQ directive were being revealed. The General Staff and, especially, its workers who were located directly at the operating armies, did everything to insure that the errors would not be repeated. A. I. Antonov applied himself very attentively to the messages that were sent from the front. This is how it was in July 1944, at the height of the Belorussian operation. At the start of the month, messages began to arrive about serious deficiencies in the control of the forces, especially during pursuit of the fleeing enemy. Aleksey Innokent'yevich ordered the Operations Directorate to prepare a GHQ directive, and when it was ready, he and S. M. Shtemenko edited it, introducing essential amendments, particularly about the necessity for the skillful use of radio communications in the offensive and about the intolerability of diverting main forces for the solution of secondary missions. I. V. Stalin read the directive closely and signed it, making only one change. The directive was addressed to the commanders of the 1st Baltic and the 3d, 2d and 1st Belorussian fronts. The Supreme Commander suggested that it be sent to the commanders of all fronts.

By the middle of July Soviet forces had driven to Neman, having liberated part of Lithuania, and was advancing swiftly toward Brest. The offensive's front was expanding. In August it already embraced vast territory, from the Finnish Gulf to the Carpathians. The enemy intensified the transfer of forces to the Soviet-German front. From Germany, Poland, Hungary and Norway ever newer and newer divisions began to arrive. The enemy managed to restore the front at the price of enormous efforts. But now he passed not into Belorussia but along the Narew and Vistula rivers.

"In glancing at the path that was traveled," wrote K. K. Rokossovskiy, "we saw, with a great sense of deep satisfaction that the group of fronts under the supervision of the GHQ had executed the Belorussian operation brilliantly. As a result, the Army Group Center was defeated and a major defeat was inflicted on the Army Group North Ukraine, and Belorussia, the major part of Lithuania and substantial portions of Polish territory east of the Vistula had been liberated. Soviet troops had crossed the

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Neman and Narew and approached the borders of East Prussia. The Fascist German forces had suffered a major defeat."*

The majestic summer offensive of the Red Army, which concentrated all the enormous experience that the Soviet had acquired in the difficult struggle with Fascism, was a brilliant page not only in the Red Army's history but also in the biographies of those who took part in it. It also remained in Aleksey Innokent'yevich's memory. Those were difficult but unforgettable days. He was in a state of creative inspiration the whole time. "Bagration" was developed by the collective forces of the GHQ, the General Staff and the military councils of the fronts. But all these efforts had to be brought together into a unified plan that expressed the scheme with utmost clarity. And A. I. Antonov did this in many cases. During preparation of the final variant of the plan, he again and again checked all the calculations, weighing all the pros and cons. And only after he was convinced that everything was correct did he sign the document.

In developing operation "Bagration," A. I. Antonov showed himself to be a bright representative of the advanced Soviet military art. Joint work with G. K. Zhukov and A. M. Vasilevskiy brought him great benefit. He got much from the daily meetings with Supreme Commander I. V. Stalin, whom Aleksey Innokent'yevich considered a distinguished authority.

During the Belorussian operation Antonov revealed the organizational capability of a military leader. All the directors and sections always knew the deadline and what it was that had to be done. The staffs of the arms and services and the rear acted in close contact with the General Staff. Enormous work was conducted in the General Staff in the preparation of the GHQ's directives and instructions. Beginning with the memorandum that was transmitted to the GHQ on 20 May 1944, in which the scheme of operation "Bagration" was laid down and the grouping of Soviet forces was determined, and ending with the directives about crossing the Narew River on 21 August, more than a hundred GHQ directives and instructions were prepared and dispatched to the fronts that took part in the Belorussian operation. Many General Staff generals and officers were awarded orders. In February 1944 A. I. Antonov was awarded the Order of Kutuzov, 1st Degree, and, in July, the Order of Suvorov, 1st Degree.

The Belorussian operation was an important landmark in the life of A. I. Antonov, in the development of his organizational capabilities and in the recognition given him for outstanding strategic talents. The troop commanders who came to the GHQ went to A. I. Antonov prior to going to the Supreme Commander and consulted with him on their plans and all the questions about preparation for combat operations. GHQ representatives, when sending their reports to the Supreme Commander, unfailingly addressed a copy of them to "Comrade Antonov," knowing that Aleksey Innokent'yevich would take all the necessary measures for these reports and on time.

*Rokossovskiy, K. K. "Soldatskiy dolg" [A Soldier's Duty], Moscow, 1972, p 277.

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It happened that he came into conflict with commanders and chiefs of staff of the fronts, especially when they asked Antonov to allocate them additional forces and resources. Aleksey Innokent'yevich knew how the Supreme Commander would react to such requests. When A. I. Antonov reported a request of some kind from commanders, I. V. Stalin severely asked: "And why doesn't he phone me himself? I want to hear how he substantiates his request." Knowing well the nature of the Supreme Commander, that he did not like to repeat his instructions, Aleksey Innokent'yevich would recommend additional help for a front only in exceptional cases, when the situation actually demanded it.

The Belorussian operation strengthened even more the working relationships of A. I. Antonov with the Supreme Commander. Here is what the well-known aviation designer, A. S. Yakovlev, who repeatedly met with Aleksey Innokent'yevich in the State Committee for Defense, writes about this topic: "Antonov was very close to Stalin, who took his opinion into account and entertained a manifest sympathy toward and faith in him, and he spent long hours with him discussing the situation at the fronts and planning future operations.

"Antonov behaved simply, without haughtiness or conceit. He was always modestly dressed, a khaki soldier's blouse, breeches and boots, and only the general's shoulderboards betrayed his high position in the army."

It was during this period that the Supreme Commander charged A. I. Antonov ever more frequently with responsible missions and listened closely to him, especially on operational questions. Much oftener I. V. Stalin began to turn to him on numerous problems of mutual relationships with the Allies. The Soviet forces were approaching the borders of European states. The war was entering that stage when there was a requirement for closer collaboration with the Allies on the organization of joint military operations. And in this case, the General Staff followed the concept developed by Marxist-Leninist science about war.

Theoretically, Soviet war science permitted armed struggle against blocs of imperialist states, even as a member of a coalition. This emanated from V. I. Lenin's instructions about the possibility of "military agreements with one of the imperialist coalitions against another in those cases where this agreement, not violating the bases of Soviet power, could strengthen its situation and paralyze the onslaught on it by some kind of an imperialist power..."* V. I. Lenin also taught that, in order to win victory over the strongest enemies, it is necessary to use every potential, even the slightest one, to obtain an ally, "even if a temporary, shaky, unstable, unreliable and tentative one."#

These Leninist instructions were made the basis of many rules for the conduct of coalitional war that were developed by Soviet scientists in the 1930's and 1940's. Literally from the first days of the war, many new

*Lenin, V. I., Poln. sobr. soch. [Collected Works], Vol 36, p 323.

#Ibid, Vol 41, p 55.

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tasks on interrelationships with the Allies arose before the General Staff. By the time A. I. Antonov had arrived at the General Staff, definite ties with them had already been developed and an exchange of information arranged. It is true, this communication was somewhat relative. The Allies scarcely conducted active combat operations in Europe, not counting the insignificant operations in Italy. Beginning with 1944, these ties were strengthened, and the General Staff felt that they must be implemented more solidly. The Foreign Relations Section was gasping under the weight of the work that was falling on it. In September 1944 a directorate was created, based upon the section. It carried out many tasks connected with the Allies, and it directed questions of the foreign political activity of the General Staff. No day passed but what A. I. Antonov handled some kind of questions connected with mutual relations with the Allies. And even he himself had to know everything about the actions of the Allies. During a routine report about the operational situation on the Soviet-German Front, the Supreme Commander could always ask: "And what is the General Staff's opinion of the Allies' operation?"

The Soviet Union was extremely desirous that its military partners participate actively in the struggle against the common enemy and extend the Red Army effective help, primarily with operations on the European continent.

In the spring of 1942 an American plan was prepared for landing forces on the French shore between Calais and Le Havre. But even the existence of this plan, which bore the code name "Roundup," and then "Overlord," was intended only for the spring of 1943.

In the summer of 1942 the Soviet Government again posed the question of the necessity for speeding up the invasion of Western Europe. A Soviet-American communique signed 12 June repeated the formulation previously coordinated in Washington, namely, "full agreement was reached in relation to the urgent tasks of creating a second front in Europe in 1942."* But the Western powers did not carry out its commitment. And only in 1943, at the Teheran Conference, was the question about opening up a second front finally decided.

A. I. Antonov especially concerned himself with the decisions of the Teheran Conference, especially the work there of the Soviet military experts. In the second half of 1944 it had become clear that the Supreme Commander would put him in charge of the Soviet military experts at a forthcoming conference of the heads of the three governments. The question may be asked: just why did the Supreme Commander settle on A. I. Antonov's nomination? "Stalin knew whom to choose," wrote S. M. Shtemenko. "Aleksey Innokent'yevich was then, perhaps, the military leader best prepared for this purpose. He had been, in the course of events, at all the fronts and the Soviet command's plans, and, to the extent possible, the Allies' intentions, and all the problems of mutual actions with them, were well known to him. In addition to this, as has already been said, Antonov was

*"Vneshnyaya politika Sovetskogo Soyuza v period Otechestvennoy voyny"
[The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union During the Patriotic War].
Vol 1. Moscow, 1946, p 285.

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a very precise man, he expounded his thoughts well orally or in writing, and he possessed the gift of saying little and of listening more, which is an indubitable virtue in any negotiations. In general, he was suited to this job in the best possible way."*

I. V. Stalin still had not said what had to be prepared for, or what specific papers he had to take with him, and, naturally, at first, all the preparation came down to a study of the situation, and what gone on at the preceding Teheran Conference. Aleksey Innokent'yevich often conversed with S. M. Shtemenko, who at the Teheran Conference had executed the daily communications of the Supreme Commander with the General Staff and the fronts and with K. Ye. Voroshilov--a member of the Soviet delegation. From the accounts and the documents that related to the Teheran Conference it became clear to A. I. Antonov how carefully he would have to prepare himself for the forthcoming trip to Yalta. He should be ready to answer any question of the Soviet delegation, give the necessary information, and, possibly, also advice.

In the summer of 1944, when the Soviet Armed Forces had begun the liberation campaign in Europe, the Allies opened up a second front. They understood--further delay in starting combat operations in Europe would lead to the Red Army's defeating Germany. And this did not enter into their plans.

With the opening of the second front the General Staff's work increased. It had to inform the Allies systematically of the relative positions on the Soviet-German front, coordinate targets for bombing raids by Soviet and Allied aviation, and determine the dates of operations and the directions of the efforts of the troops and fleets. A. I. Antonov and chief of the Directorate of Foreign Relations N. V. Slavin began to meet frequently with the chief of the USA's military mission, General J. Deane, and the chief of Great Britain's military mission, General Burroughs.

The necessity for more precise coordination of strategic plans also was felt. And this could be solved only by the chiefs of the states, and many other problems of enormous political importance, such as, for example, the development of a joint policy on the German question for the members of the anti-Hitler coalition, also required solution.

Preparations for the Yalta Conference, which was held 4-11 February 1945, had been started long before its opening. These went on at all levels, from the Supreme Commander to the manager of the Livadiya Palace.

And A. I. Antonov scrupulously prepared for it. He understood that the Allies would be interested primarily in the progress of military actions on the Soviet-German front, and the Soviet command's plans for the future. Other responsible General Staff workers, who prepared such information, were assigned to help A. N. Antonov.

*"Polkovodtsy i voyenachal'niki Velikoy Otechestvennoy," p 34.

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The Yalta Conference began its work with a discussion of military questions. The chiefs of the governments of the USSR, USA and Great Britain examined the situation on the European fronts. Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, General of the Army A. I. Antonov gave the information about the situation on the Soviet-German front. He reported about the majestic new offensive of the Soviet forces that had started 12 January 1945. It had originally been planned for 20 January but the situation had introduced amendments. A. I. Antonov said this had occurred by virtue of the worrisome situation that had been created on the Western Front by the offensive of the Fascist German forces in the Ardennes. During those days the Prime Minister of England had appealed to the Soviet Government for assistance. True to its duty as an ally, the Soviet Supreme Command, despite incomplete readiness of the forces, decided to accelerate the shift to the offense.

Giving a condensed but comprehensive description of the Soviet forces' offensive, A. I. Antonov indicated both its enormous scope and great effectiveness. For 3 days before the opening of the conference, large Red Army units on the central strategic Berlin axis had pushed to the Oder River in the Kustrina area and occupied the Silesian industrial region. A 500-km path in an environment of bitter battles had been traversed in 18 days. The average pace of the offensive was 25-30 km per day. The main routes that connected the enemy's East Prussian formation with the central regions of Germany had been cut off. Forty-five divisions of Fascist German troops had been defeated.

A. I. Antonov expressed conjectures about the enemy's probable actions. Most likely the enemy would stubbornly protect Berlin, defend Pomerania and protect the Vienna sector. The deployment of troops from Germany's central regions and from the Western Front that had started would be intensified. A. I. Antonov reported where and in what numbers the Fascist German forces could most likely redeploy on the Soviet-German front. "On our front," he said, "35-40 additional divisions can appear."

Soviet desires as follows were expressed to the chiefs of the American and British delegations: to speed up the shift of the Allied forces to the offensive on the Western Front; to prevent the enemy from redeploying forces to the Eastern front from the Western front, by air strikes on his lines of communications, from Norway to Italy; and to prevent the enemy from removing his forces from Italy.

In conclusion, A. I. Antonov answered questions of the chiefs of the delegations, of F. Roosevelt in particular.

In accordance with the desires of the chiefs of governments, the representatives of the military staffs of the USSR, USA and Great Britain met daily during the conference's work, at meeting at which military information was exchanged and joint strikes against the enemy during the concluding stage of the war in Europe were coordinated.

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The military staffs of the three Allied powers agreed on the mutual operations of strategic aviation. Coordination of the operations was charged to the General Staff of the Red Army and the chiefs of the Allied missions in Moscow.

During the course of all these talks, A. I. Antonov displayed enormous tact and exceptional diplomatic talents. I. V. Stalin was satisfied with A. I. Antonov's work in the group of representatives of the staffs of the USSR, USA and Great Britain. He especially liked Antonov's persistently obtaining a stirring up of Allied forces activity from the representatives of the American and British commands.

The military decisions of the Yalta Conference played a major role in the final defeat of Fascist Germany. "Our joint military plans," the communique said, "will become known only when we execute them, but we are assured that the very close working collaboration between our three staffs that was achieved at this conference will lead to an acceleration of the end of the war."*

Still another military question was discussed and was solved during the conference. A secret agreement that was signed 11 February 1945 called for the entry of the Soviet Union into the war with Japan 2-3 months after the capitulation of Fascist Germany.

Before naming the date precisely, General Staff workers and, especially, A. I. Antonov, had to do much work and determine what forces would be required for the defeat of the Kwantung Army, and where and when to redeploy them. The calculations made were so precise that only insignificant changes had to be introduced during preparation for the Far East campaign.

The leaders of the three great powers discussed the questions: of the occupation of Germany and control over it, reparations from Germany, a United Nations conference, and so on. As a result of the consistent position of the USSR, agreements were signed on the German question that were appropriate to the anti-Fascist and liberating nature of the war.

Other decisions of the conference also responded to the just nature of the war. Among them were the important position occupied by the Declaration of a Free Europe--a document about a coordinated policy in the matter of assistance to peoples liberated from the Fascist yoke.

The Polish and Yugoslav questions were discussed at the conference. A. I. Antonov, who had had to be occupied in the General Staff with many problems of the countries of Eastern and Southeastern Europe, took part in the preparation of documents for the Soviet delegation. During the liberation of these countries the local partisans and civil population had extended help to the Soviet forces.

*"Tegeran-Yalta-Potsdam. Sbornik dokumentov" [Teheran-Yalta-Potsdam. A Collection of Documents]. Moscow, 1970, p 186.

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The combat collaboration of the Armed Forces of the USSR with the armies of Poland and Yugoslavia had been born under A. I. Antonov's eyes. Together with the workers of a special staff of a plenipotentiary of the GHQ of the Supreme Command on Foreign Military Formations on the Territory of the USSR that was created in accordance with a GKO decision of 1943, he took an active part in forming and supplying combat equipment and weapons to chasti and large units of these countries' armies. By June 1944 the 1st Polish Army, which had been established in the USSR, numbered about 78,000 soldiers and officers.* Aleksey Innokent'yevich, who had been occupied with strategic planning, more than once had to consider the forces and potential of the fraternal armies and the operations of partisans. In September 1944, when direct communications of Soviet and Yugoslav forces had been established, questions that touched on mutual relations between them had been solved successfully.

In displaying constant concern for the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia and in striving to facilitate to the maximum its struggle for the liberation of its country from the Hitlerite occupiers, the State Committee for Defense adopted on 7 September 1944 a decision to extend substantial military assistance to it. A. I. Antonov took a most active part in preparing this decision. An aviation group of two divisions, which numbered about 350 combat aircraft, piloted by Soviet fliers, were transferred to the temporary operational subordination of the Main Command of the NOAYu [National Liberation Army of Yugoslavia]. Aviation schools on USSR territory and an aviation group of A. N. Vitruk trained more than 4,300 pilots and other aviation specialists from the ranks of NOAYu servicemen, and tank schools and specialist-training institutions trained 500 tank drivers.

Beginning in October 1944, NOAYu began the transfer of enough armament and equipment to supply 12 infantry and 2 aviation divisions. At the request of the NOAYu High Command, a large group of Soviet officer instructors was sent to the Yugoslav forces.

During the Yalta Conference's work, Soviet troops continued the offensive. In February and March of 1945 they waged battles for the Berlin axis and executed operations against the enemy's flanking formation on the land of East Pomerania, Upper and Lower Silesia and East Prussia.

A. I. Antonov's arrival in Moscow coincided with bitter battles in East Prussia, where, for the first time, not everything had gone as intended. This disturbed the Supreme Commander, and he recommended that A. M. Vasilevskiy go to the area of combat operations. "After the recommendation that I be sent to work in East Prussia was adopted," wrote A. M. Vasilevskiy, "I asked that I be released from the post of Chief of the General Staff, being motivated by the fact that since 1943, I was directly at the front a major part of the time, carrying out GHQ tasks, and I was in Moscow only when summoned. I made the suggestion to confirm in this post my

*See "Istoriya Kommunisticheskoy partii Sovetskogo Soyuz, Vol 5, Book 1, p 572.

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first deputy, A. I. Antonov, who had actually been doing the work, leaving me only the post of deputy of the People's Committee for Defense. I recall that Stalin asked with surprise:

"And won't this decision harm you?"

"After hearing my answer, he turned to Antonov, who was there, and wanted to know what he thought of my proposal. Aleksey Innokent'yevich said that he did not share it. Stalin promised to think it over..."*

On 18 February, in the area of the city of Me'l'zak, the commander of the 3d Belorussian Front, I. D. Chernyakovskiy, was wounded mortally. A. M. Vasilevskiy was named commander of this front, and A. I. Antonov was named Chief of the General Staff.

Aleksey Innokent'yevich had actually been carrying out the responsibilities of Chief of the General Staff for a long time. He was not afraid of the responsibility, and he solved many questions independently and successfully. But each time, when some doubts arose, he turned for advice to Aleksandr Mikhaylovich, and, if he was not in Moscow, he phoned him at the front.

The work on the General Staff and the direct links with Soviet state and party activities did much for A. I. Antonov. He saw how party and state organs solved the most important economic and political problems and how supervision of the armed struggle was being executed in the State Committee for Defense and the GHQ, and it taught him to think on a large scale and to examine events against the large plan, from the point of view of the state's interests. Antonov got much that was useful, participating in negotiations with the Allies on certain problems of conducting the war. He obtained invaluable experience in this regard at the Yalta Conference.

But still, doubts overcame him. The same question that arose at the time of the first appointment: "But will I be worthy of the renowned galaxy of General Staff members, mainly of such a Chief of the General Staff as was B. M. Shaposhnikov, of whom A. M. Vasilevskiy had been a pupil?" It was Shaposhnikov who laid the basis, along with other prominent Soviet General Staff members, for all the efforts to put into practice the behest of M. V. Frunze about the creation and development of a "mighty and flexible military-theory staff for the proletarian state." The Great Patriotic War showed that the Soviet state had such a staff. It solved successfully all the problems that the war posed. Characteristic in this regard was the pronouncement of Halder, who in September 1938 to September 1942 was Chief of Staff of the German Ground Forces and was considered one of the greatest German war specialists: "It is not without interest historically to study how the Russian military leadership, which suffered ruin with its principle of a rigid defense in 1941, developed into a flexible operational leadership and conducted, under the command of its marshals, a number

*Vasilevskiy, A. M., "Delo vsej zhizni," p 483.

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of operations which, according to German scales, deserves a high assessment, at a time when the German command, under the influence of the military leader Hitler, dispensed with the operational art and consummated his rigid defense, which was insipid in idea, and which in the final analysis led to complete defeat. This gradual change of German strategy, during the course of which individual capable military leaders successfully conducted in 1943 and later in 1944 a series of partial offensive operations, cannot be examined in detail. A word expressed by the Russian side in a sharp criticism of the German command in that period stands as a sort of verdict on that period: a fallacious strategy. This is impossible to refute."*

It is not easy to continue and to augment a prevailing tradition. In each case he had to toil and, by his own example, inspire the collective to new successes. The General Staff well understood what a heavy burden lay on A. I. Antonov's shoulders, and they did everything to lighten his work.

A decree of the State Committee of Defense of 17 February 1945 included A. I. Antonov in the composition of the GHQ. Because of partial changes in the GHQ's activity, A. I. Antonov had to solve problems that arose during engagements at the fronts. The fact is that in the concluding campaigns of 1945 there was no GHQ representative at some fronts. Direction over the actions of Soviet forces in such operations as the East Prussian, Vistula-Oder, and certain other operations was accomplished directly by the GHQ from Moscow. It is true that Marshal S. K. Timoshenko stayed with the 2d and 4th Ukrainian fronts until the end of the war in Europe, and the commander of the Leningrad Front, Marshal L. A. Govorov, was (in a case of dual assignment) GHQ representative to the 1st and 2d Baltic fronts.

The necessity for GHQ representatives at the front fell off for the following reasons: the strategic front of the conflict had been cut to less than half, and the number of front field forces had been reduced; commanders of the fronts had matured into prominent leaders; and the staffs had acquired experience in the organization and direction of operations.

Because of this, the role of the General Staff and its chief increased in the execution of operations and the preparation of GHQ directives. Aleksey Innokent'yevich and his closest assistants worked out the initial design of the concluding campaign.

During its planning, consideration was given to the country's growing military and economic potential and to growth in the might of the Soviet Armed Forces. By the end of 1944 their logistical support had reached the highest level of all the war years. Soviet strategy during this campaign also was distinguished by exceptional clarity of purpose and decisiveness. The purposes of the campaign were set by the VKP(b) Central

*Citation from: Vasilevskiy, A. M., "Delo vsey zhizni," 538.

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Committee Politburo, the State Committee for Defense and the Supreme Command's GHQ. The task became that of defeating the largest enemy formations, seizing the regions that were economically and politically important, liberating the territory and population of European countries from Fascist occupation and, finally, ending the war in Europe. It was intended, simultaneously, to conduct major strategic offensive operations in the maritime, Berlin, Prague and Budapest-Vienna sectors and, later, to develop them in depth until the final defeat of Hitlerite Germany.

The Soviet Armed forces had at its disposal rich experience in preparing for and conducting operations for the liberation of Poland, Romania, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. In September, Bulgaria had been completely liberated.

The general scheme of the concluding campaign began to take shape back during the summer offensive of Soviet forces in 1944. It was discussed in preliminary fashion by A. I. Antonov. In addition to Aleksey Innokent'yevich himself, chief of the Operations Directorate S. M. Shetemenko, his deputies A. A. Gryzlov and N. A. Lomov, and the chiefs of the appropriate sectors took part in this work. All the considerations expressed during the discussion were then refined in the Operations Directorate. There the forces and resources necessary for conducting the operations were figured out. The plan for the concluding campaign, with all the calculations and justifications, was plotted on the map. It was discussed again before presentation to the GHQ for approval.

It was planned to conduct the East Pomeranian, Berlin and Prague operations after the Vistula-Oder and East Prussian strategic operations, without interruptions or short pauses. This was the most decisive and effective method for conducting military operations. It led to the enemy's strategic front being cut deeply into several sectors, depriving him of the opportunity to maneuver reserves, to take countermeasures, or to restore the situation, and, in the final analysis, it speeded up the enemy's defeat.

It was decided to inflict the main blow on the central sector of the Soviet-German front, on the enemy's major strategic formation, after the defeat of which the prospects for seizing Berlin would be opened up.

The General Staff, and A. I. Antonov in particular, paid special attention to coordinating the operations of the fronts in the interests of supporting the grouping of the forces that were attacking on the main axis. The progress of the campaign and the precision in the interaction among the fronts testified that the General Staff had coped brilliantly with the solution of this complex task. During the January offensive this interaction was expressed not only in the coordination of the efforts of the fronts, which had shifted to the offensive simultaneously, but also in the establishment of special tasks for the 2d Belorussian and 4th Ukrainian fronts to provide support from the north and the south of the forces that were executing the Vistula-Oder operation. In February and March the GHQ linked up the conduct of operations in East Pomerania, Silesia, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Not only were major military and political aims

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achieved by successful solution of the missions of these operations, but favorable conditions also were provided for inflicting a blow on Berlin. In April and May 1945, in the interests of achieving success along the main direction, the GHQ coordinated the efforts of the fronts that were participating in both the Berlin and in the Moravian-Austrian and Bratislava-Brno operations.

A map of Berlin and the regions adjacent to it had appeared on Aleksey In-nokent'yevich's table in the summer of 1944, during the conduct of the Belorussian operation. Having learned to look far ahead, he had made notations in a working notebook about a proposed course of further military operations on the Soviet-German front. These were the first drafts of the operations of the concluding and most important campaign--the Berlin campaign. By November 1944 its scheme had been defined and estimates had been prepared. Refinements were made during the Vistula-Oder, East Prussian and Pomeranian operations.

At the beginning of March 1945 the Plan for the Berlin operations had been confirmed by the High Command's GHQ.

The attention not only of the Soviet Supreme Command but also of the Allies, especially the British, were fixed toward Berlin. Neither the political nor the military leaders of the Allied countries abandoned the desire to be first to enter the German capital during the whole concluding stage of the war. The question of seizing Berlin by Allied forces was withdrawn conclusively only when the powerful strike of artillery, mortars and aviation and a decisive attack by tanks and infantry of Soviet forces on the Oder and Neisse shook the defense of the Fascist German army to its foundation.

But before that the actions of the Allies and their plans had worried the General Staff and the GHQ. The General Staff, from the time of the Allies' landing in France, had regularly received from the chiefs of the American and British military missions in the USSR information about the deployment of enemy forces. Similar data were sent to the Allies by the General Staff. However, as the end of the war approached, the General Staff began to receive information extremely far from the actual state of affairs. On 30 March 1945 the chief of the General Staff, General of the Army A. I. Antonov, handed, over his signature, to the chief of the USA's military mission to the USSR, Maj Gen J. Deane, a letter that said, in particular: "On 20 February of this year I received a communication of General Marshall to the effect that the Germans were creating on the Eastern Front two formations for counterattack: one in Pomerania for a strike at Torun and the other in the Vienna-Moravia-Ostrava area for an offensive in the direction of Lodz. In this case, the southern grouping should have included the 6th SS Tank Army. Similar information was received 12 February from the chief of the army section of the British military mission, Col Brinkman." After thanking them for the information, which was to aid the common victory, A. I. Antonov wrote further: "At the same time, I consider it my duty to report to General Marshall that the combat operations on the Eastern Front during the month of March did not confirm the

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information given by him, for these battles indicated that the main formation of the German forces, including the 6th SS Tank Army, had been concentrated not in Pomerania nor in the Moravia-Ostrava area but in the region of Lake Balaton, from which the Germans were conducting an offensive with a view to pushing to the Duna and crossing it north of Budapest."*

New instances of attempts to save the sinking ship of the Fascist state, particularly the meeting of General K. Wolf, chief plenipotentiary of the SS forces under the "Ts" group, with A. Dulles--chief of American intelligence in Europe--became known to the General Staff.

An analysis of the military situation in the West and the East led the Soviet command to the conclusion: the German front on the West had completely collapsed, and the Hitlerites did not wish to take measures to stop the advancing British-American forces. Meanwhile, they were strengthening their formations against Soviet troops at all the most important sectors. Under these circumstances there could be only one decision--to step up preparations for the Berlin operation.

At the end of March and the beginning of April several conferences were held in the GHQ at which the plan for the Berlin operation was reviewed. On 29 March, in I. V. Stalin's office in the Kremlin, organizational questions were decided. On 30 March G. K. Zhukov and A. I. Antonov once more closely examined the plan for the strategic Berlin operation together. It completely met the strategic-operations situation that prevailed at the time. On 31 March the commander of the 1st Ukrainian Front I. S. Konev, who had arrived at the GHQ, was included in the examination of the plan. On 1 April the Supreme Commander heard A. I. Antonov's report about the general plan for the Berlin operation, and then the report of the commanders of the 1st Belorussian and 1st Ukrainian fronts about the plan for the offensive of these fronts' forces. It was decided to begin the offensive for Berlin 16 April, without waiting for the 2d Belorussian Front to complete the elimination of the enemy's formation in the Danzig and Gdynia regions. According to the calculations, troops of this front could be included in the Berlin operation no earlier than 20 April. On 2 April 1945 the commander of the 1st Belorussian Front was sent to GHQ with a directive that began with the words: "Prepare for and conduct an offensive operation with a view to seizing the capital of Germany, the city of Berlin, and, no later than the 12th to 15th day of the operation, push to the River Elbe." Later, the main blow was defined, which the front's forces should inflict with the forces of four combined-arms and two tank armies.* The forces for two auxiliary blows also were set. The next day a directive was sent to the commander of the 1st Ukrainian Front and on 6 April one was sent to the commander of the 2d Belorussian Front.

And now the morning of 16 April 1945 had arrived. "The Hitlerite forces were literally deluged in a solid sea of fire and metal. An impenetrable wall of dust and smoke hung in the air, and in places even the powerful

*TsAMO, archive 40, list 11549, document 292, sheets 10-11.

#TsAMO, archive 132a, list 2642, document 13, sheets 229-230.

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rays of anti-aircraft searchlights could not pierce it." Thus did the Berlin operation begin, in the words of MSU G. K. Zhukov.

Soviet troops, overcoming the enemy's bitter resistance, broke through the defense on the Oder and Neisse on the 6th day of the offensive and on 21 April entered the outskirts of Berlin. By that time, on the northern section of the front, the enemy's East Prussian formation was defeated and Königsberg was taken. The same fate befell the Hitlerites' East Pomeranian formation. Simultaneously, troops of the 4th Ukrainian Front, jointly with a Czechoslovak corps, conducted an offensive on Czechoslovak territory.

On 25 April troops of the 1st Belorussian and 1st Ukrainian fronts encircled the Berlin formation of enemy forces. On the outer front of the encirclement, Soviet forces advanced relentlessly to the west, from where the Allies had attacked to meet them. The meeting with them occurred 25 April in the center of Germany, on the River Elbe in the area of the city of Torgau.

The offensive against Berlin was still going on, and Prague, which was waiting for its liberation, increasingly attracted the GHQ's attention. The preliminary plan for the Prague operation was worked out by the General Staff back at the start of 1945. Now the time had come to be engaged in its execution in earnest.

Having learned about the Soviets' troops reaching the Elbe, the Supreme Command said that it was time to inflict a blow on Prague. The situation was complicated, since the main strike force should have been troops of the 1st Ukrainian Front. The headquarters of this front had been ordered to present its considerations on the Prague operation, and the General Staff had received the task of preparing its own recommendations on the basis of this report.

And again, under the direction of A. I. Antonov, a major and strenuous task was started. Within a short time the plan for the Prague operation had been perfected in all details. Two tank armies of the 1st Ukrainian Front were turned from the streets of Berlin to Dresden and aimed at Prague.

The last days of the war were going on. Soviet soldiers were approaching the Imperial Chancellery and the Reichstag in earnest. Meanwhile, in the West, an unseemly fuss about the capitulation of Fascist Germany was being intensified. On 7 May in Rheims, a temporary act of capitulation was signed.

In the West the war was considered to have ended. On this basis the Western powers proposed that on 8 May the chiefs of the governments of the USSR, USA and Britain would officially announce the victory over Germany. The Soviet Government rejected this proposal. There were weighty bases for this. In the first place, combat operations were still continuing on the Soviet-German front. In the second place, there was no assurance that

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the Hitlerite forces were surrendering on all portions of our front. Donitz, the new head of the government of Germany, having sanctioned the signing of the Rheims protocol about unconditional surrender on all fronts, at the same time required Kesselring, Sherner, Randulich and Lehr-- the commanders of the German-Fascist forces in various parts of Europe--to draw their troops off from the Eastern Front to the West as soon as possible, wherever possible, and, in case of necessity, to break through the Soviet lines with combat.

The General Staff followed these maneuvers closely and simultaneously informed the Supreme Commander about all the changes on the fronts. On 7 May A. I. Antonov sent the chief of the American and British military missions in Moscow a letter which contained the requirement that a document of unconditional surrender be signed in damaged Berlin on 8 May 1945 instead of the temporary document signed in Rheims. In his answer to this letter, D. Eisenhower on the same day expressed agreement to the arrival of Allied representatives in Berlin on 8 May to sign the final document.

The Soviet Government did not select Berlin as a place for signing the document of the German forces' unconditional surrender by accident. It was here that German militarism should confess its full defeat, the bankruptcy of its doctrines, and its military and political ignominy. This was correct also because the Red Army, which bore the main burden of the war on its shoulders, took Berlin.

On 8 May 1945, representatives of all the Allied armies arrived at the outskirts of Berlin, at Karlshorst: MSU G. K. Zhukov represented the Soviet Supreme Command.

At first D. Eisenhower intended to go to Berlin for the ceremony of signing the document of unconditional surrender of the Fascist German forces. However, because of the objection of W. Churchill and his closest coworkers, he retracted his decision.* This clearly demonstrated the striving of the British Government, and also of the new president of the USA, to deprecate the military and historical importance of the document that recorded the victory over German Fascism and the decisive contribution that the Soviet Union had made. The Supreme Commander of the Expeditionary Forces of the Allies presented Eisenhower's deputy, Chief Marshal of Aviation A. Tedder.

On 8 May 1945 Germany signed the Act of Unconditional Surrender, and in a few days the Soviet forces completed its last operation--it defeated the Fascist German army formation that encircled Prague, the capital of Czechoslovakia, and entered the city, which had already been liberated from its occupiers by the population, which had revolted.

In the middle of May 1945, upon the instruction of the Supreme Commander, A. I. Antonov was included in the military representatives at the forthcoming new conference of leaders of the three powers. With the conclusion

*See Pog'yu, F. S., "Verkhovnoye komandovaniye" [The Supreme Command], Moscow, 1949, p 499.

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of the war in Europe, people were worried about consolidating the peace. Postwar construction of the world was connected with the question of the fate of Germany.

The conference opened 17 July 1945 in Potsdam, close to Berlin. The Soviet delegation firmly defended the correct and democratic principles of relations with defeated Germany, and, thanks to this the plan for dismembering it that the USA advanced faded away. The leaders of three powers ceremonially committed itself to see to it that Germany would threaten peace no more.

Soviet military representatives did much work at the conference during preparations for and during the discussions about the question of the German Navy and German merchant ships. The German surface navy, as well as the merchant fleet, was to be divided equally among the USSR, the USA and Great Britain. At the insistence of the British delegation, the conference agreed to sink a major portion of the German undersea fleet.

The discussion at the conference of many other questions also required the participation of A. I. Antonov in one degree or another.

At Potsdam the Allies again posed the question of the entry of the USSR into the war against Japan in accordance with the agreement concluded by the chiefs of the governments of the three powers at the Crimean Conference. Upon arrival in Potsdam, H. Truman announced that one of his main aims was to achieve the entry of the USSR into the war in the Far East. No special efforts were required for this: the government of the Soviet Union had always carried out its Allied commitments precisely. The Soviet Government announced that it would come out against Japan at the established time.

A. I. Antonov informed the military representatives of the USA and Great Britain in great detail about the progress of preparations for the Far Eastern campaign. Representative of the GHQ of the Supreme Commander A. M. Vasilevskiy was already in the Far East. "On 16 July," he recalled, "I. V. Stalin phoned me, while I was at the headquarters of the Far East forces, which was located in the Chita area. He asked how preparations for the operation were going, and he wanted to know whether it could be speeded up by 10 days. I reported that the concentration of forces and the transport of all the most necessary things did not permit this to be done, and I asked that it remain at the former date. Stalin agreed to this."*

The Potsdam Conference was concluded successfully. This was a serious blow for those reactionary forces in the countries of the anti-Fascist coalition that wanted to wreck the conference.

Devoting its main attention to the Soviet-German front, the GHQ and the General Staff never forgot about the threat of an attack by militaristic

*Vasilevskiy, A. M., "Delo vsej zhizni," p 513.

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Japan, which had more than a million men in the Kwantung Army. The Japanese Government was waiting only for a favorable occasion to attack the USSR and seize its Far Eastern regions.

Back in 1942 the General Headquarters founded the post of Deputy Chief of the General Staff for the Far East. In the Operations Directorate there existed a special Far Eastern Administration, which Maj Gen N. A. Lomov headed in June 1943.

At the end of September 1944, A. I. Antonov, S. M. Shtemenko and N. A. Lomov began to prepare preliminary estimates for the case of war with Japan. I. V. Stalin made use of them in negotiations with W. Churchill and A. Eden, who visited Moscow in October. These negotiations were conducted without the participation of the military, but, when the matter touched on the Far East, they were invited. General of the Army A. I. Antonov and Lt Gen F. I. Shevchenko who, by this time, was occupying the post of Chief of Staff of the Far Eastern Front, participated in the negotiations.

The General Staff undertook the detailed development of a plan for the Far Eastern campaign shortly prior to the Potsdam Conference. The GHQ examined the final draft of the plan in the middle of June 1945, and by the end of the month it had been prepared.

The rich experience accumulated by the party's Central Committee, the State Committee of Defense and the GHQ of the Supreme Command during the armed struggle in the West permitted them, while preparing for and conducting the campaign in the Far East, to interpret creatively and to solve the many problems that arose because of the great distance of the Far Eastern theater of military operations from the center. After a comprehensive examination of this question in the General Staff and then in the State Committee for Defense, a decision was adopted to create a High Command for Soviet Forces in the Far East to execute strategic direction over military operations. A. M. Vasilevskiy was named the commander-in-chief. "The existence of such an organ enabled the instructions of the Supreme High Command to be conducted responsively, all the changes in strategic operations and the military and political situation to be considered and reacted to in timely fashion, and the necessary help to be extended to the fronts in the field."*

Under the difficult conditions of the Far Eastern Theater of War, the Red Army inflicted a shattering blow on the Japanese armed forces. On 17 August the high command of the Kwantung Army appealed to Marshal A. M. Vasilevskiy with a request to cease combat operations. It was proposed to the Japanese Command that it cease every kind of combat operation against the Soviet forces on the front at 1200 hours, 20 August, and that it lay down its weapons and surrender to captivity. On 18 August, on some sections of the front, the Japanese forces undertook to fulfill the surrender requirements. Chief of the General Staff A. I. Antonov

*Vasilevskiy, A. M. "Delo vsey zhizni," pp 509-510.

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prepared and, after concurrence with Marshal A. M. Vasilevskiy, sent a directive to I. V. Stalin for signature. The GHQ of the Supreme Command ordered: "Cease combat actions at those sections where Japanese troops are laying down their weapons and surrendering as prisoners of war."*

By the start of September the tasks set for the Soviet Troops in the Far East had been completely carried out. On 2 September the Soviet representative put his signature on the document about the unconditional surrender of Japan, in the defeat of which the Soviet Armed Forces played a decisive role.

Under the supervision of the Communist Party, our country and its famous Armed Forces gained still another brilliant victory, which ended the Great Patriotic War and the whole second world war.

IN DAYS OF PEACE

The long-expected peace set in. Consciousness of it gladdened and inspired the Soviet people. The soldiers who had won the victory yearned for those who were near and dear to them and for constructive work.

The Soviet people set all their efforts to the restoration and development of the socialist people's economy. It was necessary to eliminate the severe consequences of the war, to provide millions of people with housing, to shift the country's economy to peaceful rails. All these problems were discussed repeatedly in I. V. Stalin's office in the presence of VKP(b) Central Committee Politburo members and certain ministers. When questions of demobilization of the army and the navy were examined, A. I. Antonov was invited to the conference.

Back in May, at one of the meetings in the General Headquarters, I. V. Stalin had asked A. I. Antonov:

"Has the General Staff undertaken to make up a plan for demobilization?"

"We are making the preliminary calculations," the answer followed.

"In demobilizing the Armed Forces, consider the needs of our people's economy, the new political situation in the world and the aggressive policy of imperialism," said I. V. Stalin.

A little later he again returned to the same topic, particularly when the question of the first postwar session of the USSR Supreme Soviet, at which it was intended to adopt a law about demobilization of the army and the fleet, had been decided. The demobilization plan was made up in such a way as to preserve the combat nucleus of the Armed Forces and to provide reliably for the security of the Soviet Union.

All these circumstances were thus considered during preparation of the law about demobilization of older servicemen from the army and the navy that was to be adopted at the 12th Session of the USSR Supreme Soviet. Chief

*TsAMO, archive 210, list 3116, document 308, sheet 115.

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the General Staff General of the Army A. I. Antonov was approved as the person to report the law.

This was the first session of the USSR Supreme Soviet to convene after the victorious completion of the Great Patriotic War. Everyone was excited, A. I. Antonov more than others. He had calmed himself a bit when he went to the tribune and articulated:

"Comrade deputies!"

He spoke slowly, pronouncing each phrase and each word with precision.

Writer Boris Polevoy conveys the atmosphere on that historic day this way: "And although the document itself was written exclusively in official language, although the reporter set it forth in an everyday tone of voice, it sounded like a poem, and his reading now and then was broken by storms of applause."*

On 23 June 1945 the USSR Supreme Soviet adopted a law on the demobilization of soldiers from the active army, primarily those of the 13 older classes. The law reflected outstandingly Lenin's concern for people--it called for measures for material support of former soldiers.

The discharge of millions of persons from the army and the navy was accomplished in short periods, without harm to the troops' combat readiness. A. I. Antonov reported to the government on the progress of demobilization. All this helped the organized discharge of soldiers from the Soviet Armed Forces. About 8.5 million people poured into the national economy.# Manning of the Soviet Armed Forces dropped to 2,874,000 men in 1948.**

General Staff workers under the leadership of A. I. Antonov were occupied by still another problem--the redeployment about the USSR's territory of Soviet forces from some foreign countries, where they had been located at the end of the war. In September 1945 Soviet troops were withdrawn from Norway, in November from Czechoslovakia, in May 1946 from Manchuria and Northern Iran, in December 1947 from Bulgaria, and at the end of 1948 from Korea.

Because of the conversion of the Armed Forces to a peaceful status, changes occurred in organs of higher military supervision that were executed by decision of the party Central Committee. On 4 September 1945 the State Committee for Defense was abolished. The GHQ of the Supreme Command ceased its activity. The Higher Military Council--a collegial organ that existed prior to the war--was established in its stead. In accordance with the USSR SNK decree of 25 February 1946, a reorganization of the people's commissariats for defense and of the navy was conducted, a single People's Commissariat of the Armed Forces was established, and in March it was transformed into the Ministry of the Armed Forces.

*PRAVDA, 24 June 1945.

#See "50 let Vooruzhennykh Sil USSR," p 479.

**Ibid.

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10 AUGUST 1979

BY I. I. GAGLOV
(FOUO) GENERAL A. I. ANTONOV

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A. I. Antonov worked in the post of chief of the General Staff until 25 March 1946, when A. M. Vasilevskiy was restored to this post. He remained as first deputy until November 1948. A. I. Antonov was engaged in mobilization organization questions.

In November 1948 A. I. Antonov was named to acquire command experience as a first deputy commander, and in 1950 as commander, of the troops of the Caucasian Military District.

In the Caucasus Aleksey Innokent'yevich met many friends and comrades with whom he had served in these places in 1942. Party and soviet workers of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia who had known A. I. Antonov well viewed his appointment with satisfaction.

A. N. Antonov got commanders of chasti and large units to use widely the rich combat experience gained in the encounters of the Great Patriotic War to train and educate soldiers. The main attention was paid to teaching troops maneuvering and active combat operations, to training chasti and large units for struggle with large mechanized and tank formations, and to mastery of combat operations at an accelerated pace, at night, and during limited visibility.

In the middle of the 1950's a new era in combat training of the forces set in. Personnel of the Soviet Armed Forces undertook study of atomic weapons and methods of combat operations during their use. Each year new equipment and armament were arriving in increasing quantities in the district's forces. Large rifle units were equipped with more effective weapons and were completely motorized. Their makeup included tanks and self-propelled artillery installations. The other arms and services also were rearmed.

Aleksey Innokent'yevich spent a long time with specialists at proving grounds and in training classes. He studied new combat equipment and weapons and methods of applying them on the field of battle, and he required this study also of all officers. All this bore fruit. From year to year the combat training standard of chasti and large units in the district was raised.

Aleksey Innokent'yevich in his free time studied thoroughly the history, culture and nationality characteristics of the peoples of the Caucasus, and he attended the theater. Letters from Tbilisi to his sister in Leningrad were filled with admiration for Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia.

In the 1950's the anti-Soviet activity of the imperialist forces was greatly stirred up. Clear signs appeared of the imminence of a military hazard and the threat of a new world war. Monopolistic capital of the USA emerged as the advanced detachment of imperialism and inspirer and organizer of the policy of a new "crusade" against socialism. Especially dangerous to the matter of peace was the emergency in 1949 of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). With the creation of this aggressive bloc, direct preparations for war had started. In 1952 Turkey and Greece were drawn into NATO. The militarization of West Germany was intensified.

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Ruling circles of the USA added feverish efforts to create a system of military blocs on other continents also.

The Communist Party and the Soviet Government could not bypass these facts. A series of steps was taken that were aimed at strengthening the defensive capabilities of our state. A. I. Antonov, who was named First Deputy Chief of the General Staff and member of the USSR Ministry of Defense Board in April 1954 took part in developing them.

In May 1955 a Pact of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance among the USSR and the European countries of people's democracy was signed in Warsaw. Warsaw Pact members were obligated, in case of armed attack on any country that signed the pact, to immediately render it all-round assistance.

In its missions and orientation the Warsaw Pact is an organization of a completely new type. It is of an exclusively defensive nature. "We created this collaboration," said L. I. Brezhnev, "primarily in order to oppose the threat of imperialism and the aggressive military blocs created by it, in order, by common efforts, to defend the affairs of socialism in the world."*

The Command of the Joint Armed Forces, which operates on the basis of jointly established principles, became an important military organ of the Warsaw Pact Organization. The composition, functions and authority of this organ were defined in a special charter that was approved at a session of the Political Consultative Committee in January 1956. According to the charter, this Command consisted of a Commander-in-Chief of the United Armed Forces and his deputies from each country that detailed its troops to the United Armed Forces, with the rank of deputy minister of defense, or other military leaders. Under the Commander-in-Chief was created a Joint Armed Forces Headquarters, with station in Moscow. Its composition included standing representatives of the general staffs of the countries belong to the pact. Upon the recommendation of the CPSU Central Committee and the Soviet Government, General of the Army A. I. Antonov was named Chief of Staff of the Joint Armed Forces in 1955.

Aleksey Innokent'yevich managed to create a supervisory staff and to organize its work in a short time. Col I. A. Yeneyev, who has worked in the Joint Armed Forces Headquarters since its first days, has told with what energy A. I. Antonov did all this. He knew many of the workers personally, and he conversed at length with those with whom he was not acquainted about the nature of the impending work. It was recommended that some officers continue their education, particularly to undertake the study of foreign languages.

A new and complicated matter was the organization of training of the troops for joint combat operations in war. It was necessary to go to the countries that belonged to the Warsaw Pact to converse with the ministries and chiefs

*Brezhnev, L. I., "Leninskim kursom. Rechi i statii" [By a Leninist Policy. Speeches and Articles]. Vol 4, Moscow, 1974, p 68.

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of the general staffs and the principal staffs, to organize staff games and to conduct exercises. A. I. Antonov personally participated in the conduct of exercises on combat training, communicating to our fighting friends the priceless experience that the Soviet Armed Forces gained in the battles of the Great Patriotic War.

In January 1955 A. I. Antonov suffered a major sorrow: his wife, Mariya Dmitriyevna, who for 30 years had been his faithful helper and friend and shared with him all joys and misfortunes, passed away.

Aleksey Innokent'yevich devoted himself entirely to work. A letter to his sister that was sent from Warsaw on 3 March 1947 testifies to how difficult and tense it was: "Our work has been very prolonged. We will consummate it this week. Moscow has told me that in the first half of March I will have to go to Berlin, in the second half of March to Bucharest, and in April I will still be in Bucharest. Thus, the trip will be almost 3 months without a break."

Gradually, with the efforts of all pact participants, the principles of military collaboration of the socialist states and the forms and methods of joint operational and combat readiness and personnel training were worked out step by step. They were based upon the same principles that govern the relationships between the socialist states in the political, economic, scientific and technical areas, namely: proletarian internationalism and full equality of rights in the Warsaw Pact Organization; and constant direction by the communist and workers' parties over the matter of defense of the allied nations, the buildup and development of armies and the strengthening of the Joint Armed Forces.

The combat collaboration of the armies of the Warsaw Pact member countries was a practical embodiment of all these principles. It was not aimed against any kind of states or peoples. Its chief purpose was to provide, under the conditions of existence of the capitalist world, full safety for the countries of socialism and a reliable defense of them against encroachments of the imperialist aggressors.

These characteristics of the Warsaw Pact countries' combat collaboration was emphasized with special force in an article by A. I. Antonov that was published in a military journal in 1962.

"In contrast to the imperialist aggressor blocs," he said in it, "of the NATO and SEATO type, the Warsaw Pact was permeated with the spirit of peaceableness. It was based upon the principles of equality of rights, respect for sovereignty, and nonintervention of some states in the internal affairs of the others. This organization is not closed, it is open to entry by other states if they desire it. Along with questions of joint defense, the Warsaw Pact considers the necessity for further strengthening the economic and cultural ties of the countries of socialism."

Fundamental problems of strengthening the defensive capability of the allied countries and developing the Joint Armed Forces were examined by

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the Political Consultative Committee of the states that participate in the Warsaw Pact. Solutions to problems of defense of the Warsaw Pact countries were worked out at its sessions.

In addition to sessions of the highest organ of the Warsaw Pact countries, joint meetings of ministries of defense were held. One such meeting, in the preparation for which A. I. Antonov took a direct part, was held in September 1961. It was devoted to a discussion of questions associated with a sharp intensification of NATO military preparations and the threat of unleashing a new world war. As a consequence, a standing operational organ--the Committee of Defense Ministries--was established.

A. I. Antonov devoted much time and effort to perfecting the operational and combat readiness of Warsaw Pact country forces. Based upon the requirements of military science and the development of military equipment, the headquarters, under his direction, planned long-term and annual joint measures for operational and combat readiness, generalized the experience of instruction of troops and fleets, and worked out recommendations for using this experience. Aleksey Innokent'yevich devoted especially much effort and energy to developing and conducting joint maneuvers, exercises and war games. Many years of multifaceted experience, especially in strategic planning, that was acquired during the Great Patriotic War permitted him to solve the tasks of the operational readiness of troops and fleets that had been defined and were characteristic for that time.

In 1961 the Joint Armed Forces Headquarters, under the direction of A. I. Antonov and with his active participation, developed a plan for operational command-and-staff exercises named "Storm." These exercises had no equals in their missions and tasks. They embraced the territory of several countries: the GDR, the Hungarian People's Republic, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, and western parts of the USSR. The operations staffs of the Army of the German Democratic Republic, the Polish Forces, the Soviet Army and the Czechoslovak People's Army participated in the exercises.

At meetings that were conducted in the Joint Armed Forces Headquarters, A. I. Antonov inevitably stressed the need to generalize and transmit experience in combat readiness as one of the most important prerequisites to raising the combat capability of the army. He himself many times went and helped the general staffs of the fraternal armies to plan for and conduct the operational training of troops.

Each year such a most important field of military collaboration of the allied countries as mutual assistance in training highly skilled personnel for all branches of the arms and services of the armed forces also was expanded. Officers and generals of the fraternal armies were taught at Soviet military academies and schools. The Soviet Union extended assistance also in the establishment of national military educational institutions.

In noting the enormous contribution of A. I. Antonov to the matter of developing the combat collaboration of the Warsaw Pact armies, Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Forces General of Armor Ye. Bordzilovski said:

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"Aleksey Innokent'yevich invested much creative labor and his exceptional organizing capabilities and great military talent in the matter of the buildup, training and technical provisioning of the armed forces of the socialist camp.

"He repeatedly went to the Warsaw Pact countries and personally associating himself with political, state and military actions, and he rendered us much assistance directly on the spot in strengthening the might and combat capability of our Armed Forces.

"By using his rich experience and knowledge, Aleksey Innokent'yevich helped us greatly in solving complicated military problems."*

Deputy Minister of the National Defense of the GDR Maj Gen Z. Reidel also gave a high assessment of A. I. Antonov's activity as the Chief of Staff of the Joint Armed Forces Headquarters. He wrote: "General of the Army A. I. Antonov displayed great concern for the training of the command personnel of our army, understood well our needs, and always reacted sympathetically to our requests.

"Aleksey Innokent'yevich paid great attention to the field training of the troops and the staffs of the National People's Army. With the great tact that was characteristic of him, he knew how to suggest in time the correct solution to a question and to aim at the main thing."#

Military figures of Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania who repeatedly met with him at work have pointed out A. I. Antonov's services in the matter of establishing and developing the Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact countries.

For services to the motherland, Aleksey Innokent'yevich Antonov was awarded three times the Order of Lenin and the Order of Victory, four times the Order of the Red Banner, twice the Order of Suvorov, 1st Degree, and Order of Kutuzov, 1st Degree, once the Order of the Patriotic War, 1st Degree, 14 foreign orders, and many Soviet and foreign medals.

Service matters took up much of his time, but still Aleksey Innokent'yevich never forgot public affairs. He was deputy of the USSR Supreme Soviet and member of the Communist Party of Georgia Central Committee. As a deputy he frequently met with electors and behaved sympathetically toward their recommendations and requests. He never turned down young workers and students' requests to come to clubs and auditoriums to tell about the Civil War, the Great Patriotic War and about encounters with party and state figures.

Aleksey Innokent'yevich was a cheerful person and loved to joke and have a laugh. Everyone who knew him closely and had been in his apartment a few

*KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, 22 June 1962.

#KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, 21 June 1962.

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times said: "At home and at the table it was kind of empty and boring without him." But when when he was at home, laughter did not cease. He loved his family. He had deep respect for the memory of his father and mother and carefully preserved their photographs and letters.

Reading, the theater, chess, photography, skiing, rowing, volleyball, walking in the woods, and travel were his favorite recreation.

Being very punctual and knowing the value of time, he also required punctuality of others. Crudity, lack of integrity, lying and disrespect toward human dignity on the part of people always disturbed him. He liked children very much--he had none of his own. Aleksey Innokent'yevich always was glad to be with children, and despite all his busyness, on days off he could not refuse Pioneers who came to his cottage to ask him to take part in an assembly. He paid much attention to the nephews of Mariya Dmitriyevna, Lyud and Dim Baykalov.

Aleksey Innokent'yevich died in the prime of his creative forces at the age of 66. This happened 18 June 1962. The day before he had returned from a routine trip. Sunday he rested at his cottage. The next day in the morning, as usual, he went to the Headquarters of the Joint Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact countries. He held a conference and at 1100 hours felt so bad that he had to stop work. Unfortunately, all the doctor's efforts proved futile....General of the Army A. I. Antonov was buried in Red Square in Moscow, at the Kremlin wall.

A. I. Antonov lived a comparatively short life. He has remained in the memory of the people as a great and talented military leader who combined in himself a high party spirit with deep competency, a high state of discipline, initiative and a creative approach to the job, and as a man he loved life in his motherland, service to which he considered the highest duty.

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