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**16 OCTOBER 1979**

**THE FINAL DEFEAT OF FASCIST GERMANY  
(FOUO 30/79)**

**1 OF 2**

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JPRS L/8713

16 October 1979

# USSR Report

MILITARY AFFAIRS

(FOUO 30/79)

The Final Defeat of Fascist Germany

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USSR REPORT

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(FOUO 30/79)

THE FINAL DEFEAT OF FASCIST GERMANY

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Note: State borders on maps contained in "History of World War II 1939-1945" are those in existence at the time of the events under discussion.

#### INTRODUCTION

[pp 5-8]

[Excerpts] The year 1944 drew to a close. It entered the history of World War II as one of decisive victories for the Soviet Armed Forces. The great successes enjoyed by the Soviet Union in its military efforts and production were the admiration of the entire world. The Wehrmacht suffered a number of shattering defeats on the Soviet-German front. In the second half of 1944 the Soviet Army cleared the invaders out of its country and continued its liberation of countries in Central and Southeast Europe. The success of the USSR's offensive operations and the significant growth of its military power tilted the balance of forces more in favor of the anti-Hitler coalition. Soviet art of war climbed to a new, higher level.

In 1944 the Allied armies undertook military actions of greater vigor. A second front was opened in Europe in June. Germany found itself pressed in a vice--by the Soviet Armed Forces from the east and by American, British, and French troops from the west. The fascist bloc disintegrated in response to their combined blows. World War II was nearing its end. The peoples of the world came to see that the final defeat of fascist Germany was unavoidable.

Volume 10 is devoted to the concluding stage of World War II in Europe (January-May 1945). In terms of the number of military-political events occurring, the intensity of the struggle, and the results, this stage had tremendous significance not only to the victorious conclusion of the war in Europe but also to its outcome as a whole as well as to the postwar peace. The principal result of events with which this volume deals was the total defeat of the Wehrmacht and the victory over fascist Germany. Despite the objective conditions the road to final victory was not easy: The strength of the Fascist German Army was still impressive. The constantly shrinking Soviet-German front permitted the German Command to concentrate large troop groupings on the most important axes, and through fear, repression, and chauvinistic propaganda it forced them to resist with the desperation of the doomed. Maintaining a stubborn defense in the east and carrying on secret negotiations with Anglo-American representatives, Germany's fascist leadership tried to make a separate deal and achieve, in the end, a war outcome acceptable to itself.

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As before, in the final stage of the war in Europe the Soviet-German front continued to be the decisive front of World War II. Beginning in January 1945 it was here, from the Baltic Sea to the Drawa, that the Vistula-Oder, eastern Prussian, Vienna, Berlin, Prague, and other major offensive operations were conducted. The Soviet Armed Forces had to surmount the enemy's strong, deeply disposed defenses in Poland and eastern Prussia, and to operate in the forested mountains of Czechoslovakia and western Hungary and Austria. In its savage engagements the Soviet Army forced large water obstacles and maintained its offensive in complex weather conditions. As a result the enemy's main strategic groupings were crushed and the conditions were created for a final blow at fascist Germany. The Soviet Armed Forces' Berlin and Prague operations meant a victorious end to military actions in Europe. On 2 May Soviet troops captured Berlin by storm. Having survived the deprivations and trials of 4 years of war, Soviet soldiers unfurled the Great Victory Banner above the Reichstag. The outcome of the 1945 operations demonstrated the power of the Soviet Armed Forces and growth in the sophistication of their art of war.

The defeat of fascist Germany was completed through the combined efforts of armies belonging to countries in the anti-Hitler coalition, in which the USSR Armed Forces played the decisive role. The war in Europe ended where it started. The unconditional surrender document put an end to the aggressor's criminal policy and war strategy. Fascism in Germany ceased to exist as a state political system and a military power.

Simultaneous blows by armies of the anti-Hitler coalition at fascist Germany were a typical feature of military activities in 1945. They were made in accordance with decisions adopted by the heads of state of the USSR, the USA, and Great Britain. In them, the times and directions of the blows were specified, interaction among air forces was coordinated upon, and the line at which Soviet and Anglo-American troops were to meet each other were spelled out.

Events on the Soviet-German front facilitated the actions of the Western Allies. Capitalizing on the successfulness of the January offensive by the Soviet Armed Forces and on fascist Germany's necessary reaction to it of transferring formations to the east, Anglo-American troops regained lost ground in the Ardennes, broke through to the river Rhine and, on crossing it, annihilated a large enemy grouping in the Ruhr industrial region. Because reserves were lacking and the Wehrmacht command was afraid to remove even a few divisions from the Soviet Army's axes of attack, the German strategic front on the west disintegrated in the face of strikes by superior Allied forces, and the Anglo-American armies rushed toward the Elba, encountering hardly any resistance.

This volume demonstrates that the final victory was aided to a great extent by the national liberation struggle of peoples of Europe enslaved by German fascism, and by the actions of foreign formations, created with the help of the Soviet Union, and of the armies of countries which turned their weapons against the invaders and took an active part in the concluding engagements.

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As in the entire course of the war, the outstanding victories the Soviet Armed Forces enjoyed in the operations of 1945 were achieved owing to the organizational activities of the Leninist Communist Party. Special chapters in this volume devoted to the organizational and ideological work of the CPSU and to growth of the country's economy reveal the multifaceted activities of the party aimed at mobilizing all material and spiritual forces of the Soviet people at defeating the enemy. Considering the unique features of conducting military activities outside the USSR, the party took steps to heighten the alertness of the troops and elevate their philosophical awareness, and it inspired the soldiers to fulfill their mission of international liberation. Active work was done to indoctrinate all the people in the spirit of Soviet patriotism and proletarian internationalism. The party Central Committee directed the activities of military councils and political agencies of the army and navy at organizing party-political work in accordance with the new situations and the missions at hand.

The military successes concerned with the Wermacht's defeat had a good logistical foundation. As before, the Communist Party devoted its main attention to mobilizing the country's entire potential for the needs of the war. At the same time the growth rate of the principal sectors of the economy increased, and the national economies of liberated regions were rehabilitated. The war economy attained tremendous successes. Owing to the selfless labor and truly heroic efforts of laborers, kolkhoz farmers, and the intelligentsia, by the beginning of 1945 production of the principal types of military equipment and armament attained its highest level in the entire war. The Soviet Armed Forces possessed significantly more combat equipment and weapons of better quality than the enemy. This was one of the most important factors making it possible to conduct major offensive operations simultaneously along the entire Soviet-German front without significant pauses. The victory of the USSR economy over the economy of fascist Germany is persuasive evidence of the advantages of socialist production over capitalist production. The unity of the front and the rear and of the army and the people, which is in keeping with the very nature of socialism, was a guarantee of success in the struggle against the aggressor. At the same time, foreseeing a swift victory, while the war was still going on the party took steps to restructure the national economy for peacetime needs.

This volume extensively examines the foreign political activities of the warring countries. The victories of the Soviet Armed Forces had a certain influence on the situation in the world, tilting the balance in favor of the anti-Hitler coalition, and they raised the authority of the Soviet Union even higher. Conferences attended by government leaders of the USSR, USA, and Great Britain in the Crimea and in Potsdam in 1945, during which plans for coordinating war operations and for resolving the problems of postwar peace were adopted, had special significance in 1945. The entire course of the war, the results of these conferences, and defeat of the fascist bloc in Europe were a practical demonstration of the fact that countries with

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different social structures could cooperate in a struggle against aggression. The Soviet government's principled and consistent policy of uniting all progressive forces, and the decisive role played by the USSR, its army, and its navy in the struggle against fascist Germany helped to maintain the unity of the anti-Hitler coalition and to conduct the war in Europe to a complete victory. The hope for disintegration of this alliance harbored by Germany's leaders suffered failure. At the same time, as the end of the war came nearer differences in the courses taken by the leading powers of the anti-Hitler coalition in relation to countries being liberated from the invaders became more and more distinct. However, the brilliant victories of the Soviet Armed Forces and the USSR's world authority were so great that the governments of the USA and Great Britain could not resolve international problems without the Soviet Union's participation.

In the savage struggle, the Soviet Army not only defended the achievements of Great October but also liberated a number of countries in Europe from the invaders. "Under the guidance of the Communist Party, the Soviet people and their valorous armed forces inflicted a shattering defeat upon Hitler's Germany and its satellites, defended the liberty and independence of the socialist fatherland, completed their great mission of liberation, and fulfilled their international duty honorably."\*

The USSR's all-out assistance to countries fighting for liberation from the fascist yoke was a manifestation of the Soviet government's Leninist foreign policy. Favorable conditions were created outside these countries to permit their laborers to fight for revolutionary transformations. Liberation of countries in Central and Southeast Europe facilitated the actions of internal revolutionary forces, which led finally to confirmation of a new social structure. In the class struggle, the working class, united with working strata of the peasantry under the guidance of communist and workers parties, was a true expression of the national interests of the given country and the people.

After the war in Europe ended, fascist military criminals had to be punished severely. A special part of this volume is devoted to the international trials of Hitler's ringleaders who had unleashed the Second World War. The Nuremberg trials entered history not only as an act of condemnation of fascism, aggression, and compulsion in international relations but also as a warning against repetition of similar malicious acts.

The military-political events in Europe in the concluding stage of World War II attract the attention of researchers in many countries. This is natural, since the most important problems of postwar reconstruction of Europe, the nature of development of international relations, and change in the balance of world power in favor of socialism are closely associated with these events.

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\* "Tridtsatiletiye Pobedy sovetskogo naroda v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne. Dokumenty i materialy" (The 30th Anniversary of the Soviet People's Victory in the Great Patriotic War. Documents and Materials), Moscow, 1975, p 3.

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Works by reactionary bourgeois historians contain unconcealed or masked falsifications of the events of 1945. Western falsifiers try to distort the nature of the decisions of the Crimean and Potsdam conferences, to belittle the significance of operations conducted by the USSR Armed Forces in the concluding stage of the war in Europe, to prove that their successes depended on development of military activities on the Western Front, and to find fault with the Soviet Army's mission of liberation. The volume demonstrates the groundlessness of such assertions.

The defeat of Hitler's Germany put an end to the war in Europe. Peace ruled once again after almost 6 years of armed conflict on the European continent. Now countries of the anti-Hitler coalition had the possibility for concentrating all of their efforts against the aggressor in the Far East--militarist Japan. Thus conclusion of military actions in Europe predetermined the outcome of World War II as a whole.

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PART 1

THE FINAL VICTORIES IN EUROPE

CHAPTER ONE

THE MILITARY-POLITICAL SITUATION IN EUROPE  
AND THE PLANS OF THE WARRING SIDES

[p 51] Thus as of the beginning of 1945 the military-political situation in Europe was generally favorable to countries of the antifascist coalition and, on the other hand, extremely disadvantageous to Hitler's Germany. The USSR possessed powerful armed forces which firmly held the strategic initiative on all fronts. The USA and Great Britain possessed significant forces.

The defeat of fascist Germany was coming closer. It was the objective of the plans of countries in the anti-Hitler coalition. Decisive actions by the Soviet Armed Forces were to have the main influence.

Continuing to control the territory of Norway, Denmark, Holland, and Austria, large parts of Poland and Czechoslovakia, and parts of Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Italy, and still possessing a significant army that was still battle-worthy, the Nazi leadership intended to offer stubborn resistance on all fronts with the objective of protracting the war until such time that the situation would change in favor of Germany. The fascist leadership continued to view the Soviet-German front as the main and most decisive front, and it was to it that all of its attention was welded. It understood quite well that the fate of the Third Reich and subsequent development of events on the Western and Italian fronts would be decided precisely here in the final engagements.

All of this required new efforts on the part of the Communist Party, the Soviet people, and the armed forces, and an intense struggle to attain final victory over fascist Germany and to establish peace in Europe.

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CHAPTER TWO  
THE LIBERATION OF POLAND

[pp 85-87] The Vistula-Oder operation, one of the greatest operations of World War II, came to its conclusion when Soviet troops reached the Oder and seized bridgeheads on its left bank. Its results had great political and military significance. With the participation of the Polish 1st Army and partisans, Soviet troops liberated a significant part of Poland and crossed into German territory.

The Fascist German Command tried to halt the advance of the Soviet Army. It was with this objective that the Nazi command rejected all subsequent plans for offensive actions against Anglo-American troops on the Western Front and transferred 29 divisions and four brigades into the zones of advance of the 1st Belorussian and 1st Ukrainian fronts from other sectors of the Soviet-German front, from Germany's internal regions, and from the Western Front.<sup>1</sup> However, this did not rescue the enemy from a shattering defeat. Thirty-five enemy divisions were annihilated, and 25 lost from 50 to 70 percent of their manning.<sup>2</sup> As many as 147,400 fascist enlisted men and officers were taken prisoner, and about 14,000 guns and mortars, up to 1,400 tanks and assault guns, and much other armament and military property were captured.<sup>3</sup> The loss of tremendous amounts of territory, of major industrial regions, and of a great quantity of troops and armaments severely weakened Nazi Germany and brought it closer to its final defeat. The successful actions of the Soviet troops set the stage for subsequent blows against the enemy in Pomerania, Silesia, and then on the Berlin axis.

The grandiose offensive between the Vistula and the Oder elicited the admiration of laborers in many countries. It also received considerable praise from some bourgeois officials and the press. The prime minister of Great Britain wrote the following in a message to I. V. Stalin on 27 January 1945: "We are delighted with your glorious victories over the common enemy, and with the powerful forces with which you opposed him. Please accept our warmest thanks and congratulations on the event of these historic deeds."<sup>4</sup> The American newspaper THE LOS ANGELES TIMES noted: "...the advance in southern Poland offers the greatest hope of a swift end to the war."<sup>5</sup> THE LONDON TIMES wrote: "Movement of such a powerful army over frozen ground on

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a front of hundreds of miles distinguishes it especially from former battles, and it represents a masterful achievement in the art of war."<sup>6</sup> Although its greatest wish is to bury the significance of the Vistula-Oder operation in silence, bourgeois historiography has not been able to do so in the postwar years. Thus H. Guderian, former chief of general staff of the Fascist German Army's ground troops, recollected: "The terrible month of January confirmed all of our apprehensions concerning a major offensive by the Russians.... In the first days of February our position became critical on both the Eastern and Western fronts."<sup>7</sup>

The defeat of fascist German troops in the Vistula-Oder operation was an indication of the power of the socialist state. The successful combat activities of the troops were dependably supported in logistical respects. Laborers in the Soviet rear supplied enough armament and equipment to the front to permit successful execution of the sizable missions.

In the course of the Vistula-Oder operation the Soviet Command demonstrated a higher level in its art of war. The strategy selected by the Hq SHC [Supreme High Command Headquarters] for defeating the enemy--using powerful, deep, divisive strikes--fit perfectly with the present situation. This strategy foiled the German Command's plans for successive defense at lines prepared between the Vistula and the Oder and for wearing down the Soviet troops. The Vistula-Oder operation is a brilliant example of preparation for and conduct of a major strategic operation. Its results demonstrated that decisive objectives may be reached not only by encirclement but also by deep and powerful frontal strikes. One of the most important prerequisites for penetrating a hostile defense and for exploiting a breakthrough in depth was correct organization of command and control and maintenance of continuous interaction among all arms and services. The Vistula-Oder operation attained tremendous scope: It embraced a zone of more than 500 km; it took the Soviet troops only 23 days to penetrate up to 500 km at an average pace of almost 25 km per day. Even in these conditions control of the troops remained firm until the end of the operation.

The decisive prerequisite insuring success of the operation was swift penetration of the tactical defenses and defeat of the first echelon and the enemy's immediate operational reserves. Despite their greater depth, the tactical defenses were broken by the middle of the second day and, from the Pulawi bridgehead, on the first day of the operation. Swift penetration was insured by correct selection of the axis of the main strike, and by creation of powerful groupings. Decisive massing of men and equipment in the breakthrough sectors made it possible to achieve an overwhelming superiority over the enemy. Tactical defenses were broken mainly by combined-arms armies. Separate tank corps and, within the zone of the 1st Ukrainian Front, tank armies participated in the final stages of the breakthrough.

Tank armies and corps advancing with the support of the main forces of the air armies played the main role in pursuit. Bypassing enemy centers of resistance, the tank formations surmounted intermediate lines of defense

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and water obstacles on the move. Operating apart from combined-arms formations, the tank armies insured swift advance by the rest of the forces of the fronts. Swift pursuit deprived the enemy of a possibility for organizing defense in depth. His reserves did not have a significant influence on the operation prior to the time that the Soviet troops reached the Oder.

Aviation played a major role in the operation. In the period from 12 January to 3 February the 16th and 2d air armies flew 25,400 sorties and fought in 214 air battles, in which the enemy lost 209 airplanes.<sup>8</sup> In unfavorable weather, Soviet airmen demonstrated greater combat proficiency, the undebatable superiority of their aviation equipment, and its competent use.

The victory in the Vistula-Oder operation was attained owing to competent leadership of the troops, mass heroism, and active and continuous party-political work. Thousands of enlisted men and officers were awarded orders and medals for their heroism, their great military proficiency, and for successful completion of their missions; many were awarded the Hero of the Soviet Union title, and army commanders generals S. I. Bogdanov, P. S. Rybalko, and V. I. Chikov, corps commander General V. A. Glazunov, and officers A. Ye. Borovykh, N. I. Goryushkin, I. I. Gusakovskiy, S. V. Khokhryakov, A. P. Shilin, and P. I. Shurukhin were awarded this title a second time. For exemplary fulfillment of their combat assignments in the advance from the Vistula to the Oder, 1,192 formations and units of the 1st Belorussian and 1st Ukrainian fronts were awarded orders. Many regiments, brigades, divisions, and corps were given honorary titles in honor of the cities in the capture of which they had distinguished themselves. Moscow gave a 25-gun salute to the troops in honor of the victories in the Vistula-Oder operation.

Footnotes

- 1 "Sbornik materialov po sostavu, gruppirovke i peregruppirovke sukhoputnykh voysk fashistskoy Germanii" (Collection of Materials on the Composition, Grouping and Regrouping of Fascist Germany's Ground Troops), Issue 5, pp 16-20, 36-42.
- 2 "Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna Sovetskogo Soyuzo 1941-1945. Kratkaya istoriya" (The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union 1941-1945. A Short History), Moscow, 1970, p 466.
- 3 Arkhiv MO [USSR Ministry of Defense Archives], f. 233, op. 2356, d. 572, ll. 252-253; f. 236, op. 2673, d. 2747, l. 15.
- 4 "Perepiska Predsedatelya Soveta Ministrov SSSR" (Correspondence of the Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers), Vol 1, p 358.
- 5 Cited in PRAVDA, 23 January 1945.

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- <sup>6</sup> Cited in PRAVDA, 27 January 1945.
- <sup>7</sup> Guderian, H., "Erinnerungen eines Soldaten," p 392.
- <sup>8</sup> Calculated from data in: Arkhiv MO, f. 368, op. 6476, d. 494-495, ll. 13-66; d. 496, ll. 4-12; f. 302, op. 4196, d. 132, ll.14-60.

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CHAPTER THREE

DEFEAT OF HITLER'S TROOPS IN EASTERN PRUSSIA

[pp 123-126] The victory of the Soviet Armed Forces in eastern Prussia and northern Poland had great military-political significance. It led to the defeat of a major strategic grouping of fascist German troops. In all during the combat activities, the Soviet Army completely destroyed more than 25 enemy divisions, while 12 divisions suffered from 50 to 75 percent losses. Annihilation of the eastern Prussian grouping significantly weakened the Wehrmacht's forces. The German Navy was deprived of a number of important naval bases, maritime ports, and harbors.

Fulfilling its noble mission, the Soviet Army liberated the northern regions of Poland that had been seized by the fascist invaders. A historic decision to liquidate the eastern Prussian cradle of German militarism was reached at the Potsdam conference of the heads of three Allied powers--the USSR, the USA, and Great Britain, held in July-August 1945. Königsberg and its contiguous regions were ceded to the Soviet Union. The RSFSR's Kaliningradskaya Oblast was formed out of this territory in 1946. The remaining territory of eastern Prussia was placed within the composition of the Polish Peoples Republic.

The eastern Prussian operation was coordinated in the overall intent of the Hq SHC with operations on other strategic axes. Separation and subsequent annihilation of German armies in eastern Prussia supported, from the north, the military actions of the Soviet Army on the Berlin axis. After forces of the 2d Belorussian Front reached the Vistula in the vicinity of Torun and north of the city at the end of January, favorable conditions were created for destroying the eastern Pomeranian grouping. In terms of the scale of the missions which had to be executed by the fronts, the diversity of forms and methods of combat activities employed, and the end results, this was one of the instructive operations of the Soviet Armed Forces, one conducted with decisive goals. The eastern Prussian operation was conducted by troops of three fronts, strategic aviation (the 18th Army), and the Red Banner Baltic Fleet. It was an example of the Hq SHC's correct determination of the axes of the main strikes by the fronts, which were selected following deep analysis of the situation, allocation of the appropriate manpower and materiel, and

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organization of clear interaction among the fronts, which struck on independent axes separated far from one another. Not only did the fronts have to create powerful strike groupings; the necessary forces also had to be allocated both to widen the offensive at the flanks and to provide protection against probable counterstrikes from the north and south.

The plans of the Fascist German Command for disposing its reserves in such a way as to counterattack the flanks of the advancing fronts, as had been done by the Kaiser's troops in 1914, turned out to be unrealistic.

Bold massing of the manpower and materiel of the fronts in narrow sectors and deep operational disposition of the fronts and armies corresponded to the plan of making deep strikes with the fronts and with the need for successively increasing the power of these strikes with the goal of surmounting the reinforced, deeply disposed enemy defenses.

Soviet troops successfully completed their mission of penetrating highly fortified defenses and exploiting the offensive in eastern Prussia. Because of stubborn enemy resistance and poor weather, penetration of the tactical defenses required a longer time: They were penetrated on the second and third days of the operation by the 2d Belorussian Front and on the fifth and sixth days by the 3rd Belorussian Front. To complete the breakthrough, not only the reserves and mobile groups of the armies but also the front's mobile group (in the 3rd Belorussian Front) had to be committed to battle. However, the enemy did have to commit all of his reserves to the battle in the tactical zone as well. This is what made it possible for the fronts to advance even faster later (more than 15 km per day for rifle divisions and 22-36 km per day for tank formations); by the 13th-18th days they not only encircled but also divided the entire eastern Prussian grouping and completed their mission. Prompt exploitation of the offensive by the command of the 3rd Belorussian Front on a new axis and commitment of two tank corps and armies in front's second echelon changed the situation and made it possible to increase the rate of advance.

A faster rate of advance was also insured by the continuity of combat activities, which was achieved through special preparation of the subunits and units for offensive action at night. Thus after being committed to the engagement, the 11th Guards Army advanced in battle 110 km to Konigsberg, traveling the greater half of this distance (60 km) at night.

The eastern Prussian grouping was defeated in lengthy and hard battles. The operation lasted 103 days; an especially great deal of time was required to annihilate isolated groupings. The reason for this lay in the fact that isolated German troops defended themselves in fortified regions, on terrain and in weather conditions unfavorable to the offensive, and in a situation in which the enemy was not completely blockaded from the sea.

During the eastern Prussian operation the troops had to repel strong counterattacks by the enemy as he tried to restore his ground lines of communication between

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separated groupings and the main forces of the Wehrmacht. But swift maneuvering of manpower and materiel by the fronts foiled the plans of the Fascist German Command. It was only able to create a small corridor along the gulf west of Konigsberg.

Soviet aviation, which had unshared supremacy in the air, committed major forces to the operation. Interaction between several air armies and naval aviation was successful. Capitalizing on even the slightest improvements in weather, the air force flew about 146,000 sorties during the operation.\* It performed reconnaissance, struck enemy troops and defenses, and played a tremendous role in annihilation of enemy fortifications, especially during the assault on Konigsberg.

The Red Banner Baltic Fleet provided considerable assistance to the troops. Facing complex basing conditions and considerable enemy mining, naval aviation, submarines, and torpedo boats operated against the enemy's marine lines of communication in the Baltic Sea, disrupting his shipments; they assisted the advance of ground troops on the maritime axis with strikes by bombers and ground-attack airplanes, with artillery fire from motor gunboats and railroad batteries, and with the landing of tactical assault forces. But the Baltic Fleet was unable to completely blockade the enemy troop groupings pressed against the sea because of a lack of the ships necessary for this purpose.

Frontal troops accumulated valuable experience in fighting for major population centers in cities, which were usually captured on the move or following short preparations. Wherever the enemy did manage to organize defense of such cities, the garrisons were encircled and annihilated in the course of a planned raid. Assault detachments and groups, in which the actions of sappers were especially effective, played a significant role.

Political work systematically conducted by the military councils of the fronts and armies, by political agencies, and by party and Komsomol organizations kept the offensive spirit high in the troops, and it maintained their desire to surmount all difficulties and complete their missions. This operation was evidence of the maturity of Soviet troop commanders, and of the great artfulness of their troop management. During the operation soldiers and commanders displayed the highest degree of bravery and steadfastness in hard fighting. The Soviet Armed Forces did all of this in behalf of the liberation of mankind from fascist tyranny.

The motherland gave a high assessment to the wartime deeds of its sons. Hundreds of thousands of Soviet soldiers were awarded orders and medals, and those distinguishing themselves especially were awarded the Hero of the Soviet Union title. Front commander Marshal of the Soviet Union A. M.

\* "Sovetskiye Voenno-Vozdushnyye Sily v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945 gg." (The Soviet Air Force in the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945), p 364.

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Vasilevskiy was awarded a second Order of Victory for competent leadership of the troops. Soviet Army Air Force commander Chief Marshal of Aviation A. A. Novikov became a Hero of the Soviet Union, and generals A. P. Beloborodov, P. K. Koshevoy, and T. T. Khryukin, pilots V. A. Aleksenko, Amet-Khan Sultan, L. I. Beda, A. Ya. Brandys, I. A. Vorob'yev, M. G. Gareyev, P. Ya. Golovachev, Ye. M. Kungurtsev, G. M. Myl'nikov, V. I. Mykhlik, A. K. Nedbaylo, G. M. Parshin, A. N. Prokhorov, N. I. Semeyko, A. S. Smirnov, and M. T. Stepanishchev were awarded the Hero of the Soviet Union title a second time.

The Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet made mention of the bravery displayed by pilots of the Normandy-Neman Air Regiment, which finished its battle road in eastern Prussia. During the war valorous French patriots flew more than 5,000 combat sorties, participated in 869 air battles, and knocked down 273 enemy airplanes. The regiment was awarded the orders of the Red Banner and Aleksandr Nevskiy. Orders of the Soviet Union were awarded to 83 persons, 24 of them in eastern Prussia; in addition the Hero of the Soviet Union title was awarded to four valorous pilots--M. Alber, R. de la Puap, Zh. Andre, and M. Lefevr (posthumously). After the war the 41 Yak-3 warplanes in which the French pilots had fought were given to them as a gift from the Soviet people. Pilots of this regiment returned to their homeland aboard these airplanes.

The glorious victory in this operation entered military history as the pinnacle of valor, bravery, and heroism of Soviet enlisted men, officers, and generals. Orders were awarded to more than 1,000 formations and units for exemplary fulfillment of their combat assignments, and 217 of them received honorary titles--Insterburg, Mlawa, Konigsberg, and others. Moscow gave a 29-gun salute to the valorous soldiers in honor of their victories in eastern Prussia.

Thus as a result of the victorious conclusion of the offensive of the Soviet Armed Forces in eastern Prussia and northern Poland fascist Germany suffered irretrievable losses. Loss of a region of the highest importance to the war economy had an unfavorable effect on the general status of the country's war economy and significantly worsened the strategic position of the Wehrmacht on the Soviet-German front.

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CHAPTER FOUR  
THE CRIMEAN CONFERENCE

[pp 127-138] 1. Prelude to the Crimean Conference

The offensive proceeded successfully along the entire Soviet-German front at the beginning of February 1945. The Nazi leadership's plans for delaying the forward progress of the Soviet Armed Forces at fortified lines fell through. German defenses were broken, and Soviet troops advanced with battle up to 500 km on the Berlin axis, seized a number of bridgeheads on the Oder, and were at the approaches to Germany's capital. Eastern Prussia was cut off from the country's center. The liberation of Poland was basically completed, parts of Czechoslovakia were liberated, and the fall of Budapest was but a few days to come. Fascist Germany lost almost all of its hold on the Silesian industrial region, an important raw material base for many war industry enterprises.

The offensive of the Soviet troops brought the end of the war in Europe closer with every day. Nevertheless, continuing to increase its resistance the Nazi leadership still hoped to aggravate the conflicts in the anti-Hitler coalition, and it tried to drive a wedge between the Allies with all of its strength in order to achieve its goals.

On 27 January the fascist heads of government convened to discuss the situation. Hitler turned to his closest assistants with the following question: "What do you think, are the English enthusiastic about Russia's forward progress?" He went on to report that by his order, invented documents were "left" for the Western Allies leading them to believe that "a German army of 200,000 troops (communists and former prisoners of war-- *Editor*) who were fully convinced by the ideas of communism" was entering German territory together with the Soviet troops. "On receiving this report, the Western Allies will feel that they have been stabbed in the back."<sup>1</sup> The conference participants agreed that entry of the Soviet troops into Central and Southeast Europe would be in conflict with the interests of Great Britain, and they came to the unanimous opinion that the chances for a change in the West's position would increase with every kilometer that Soviet soldiers come closer to Berlin. The designs of the Nazis depended on the anticommunist mood present in influential circles of the USA and England. According to

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C. Moran, a close friend of Churchill, the latter "no longer speaks of Hitler, he talks only of the danger of communism. He sees the Red Army as a cancerous tumor spreading from one country to another. This has become an obsessive idea to him, and apparently he can think of nothing else."<sup>2</sup>

Remembering the prewar policy of the West in its relations with the USSR, the possibility that the anti-Hitler coalition would fall apart was believed in Berlin. However, they forgot that the successes of the Soviet Union on the fronts of the armed conflict and, equally so, the new balance of power in the international arena had a decisive influence on the strength of the coalition. Because of the clearly greater efforts being made by the Nazis to undermine the unity of the West, Roosevelt felt it necessary to declare the following to the American people in a radio message given in January 1945: "I would like to caution you most seriously against the harmful consequences of enemy propaganda. The wedge which the Germans tried to drive into the Western Front (in the Ardennes--*Editor*) was less dangerous from the standpoint of ending the war than is the wedge which they are constantly trying to drive between us and our allies. Every rumor, even the most innocuous, having the purpose of undermining our trust in our allies, is identical to a real enemy agent in our ranks: An attempt is being made to undermine our war effort. Malicious and groundless rumors are being spread here and there--against the Russians, against the English, and against our battle commanders. If you study these rumors carefully, you will find that each of them bears the stamp 'Made in Germany'."<sup>3</sup>

The tasks of ending the war in Europe and problems of postwar reconstruction urgently required discussion and coordination of the policies of the "Big Three"--USSR, USA, and England. At the beginning of 1945 final agreement was reached to convene a new conference to be attended by the heads of state. Yalta was chosen as the site of the conference on proposal of the Soviet side.

This conference was unusually important to the Western Allies not only for political but also for military considerations. At the end of 1944 the Anglo-American troops suffered a serious failure on the Western Front. While prior to the breakthrough by German troops in the Ardennes the English government believed that the war in Europe would end by 30 June 1945, as early as in mid-January 1945 the War Office discussed the possibility that it would end not earlier than 31 December.<sup>4</sup> The situation on the Western Front was believed to be rather serious in Washington and London. Fears concerning the consequences of a protracted war in Europe were intensified by intelligence reports indicating successful progress by the Germans in creation of an atomic bomb. U.S. Assistant Secretary of State C. Bohlen was witness to the fear of the army's defeat in the West expressed for some time by General D. Eisenhower, shaken by the December counteroffensive of the Germans.<sup>5</sup> The counteroffensive of fascist German troops in the Ardennes forced the USA and England to focus their attention mainly on what the Soviet Army would do and on the plans of its command.

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They were also forced to reckon with the situation in Asia. At the end of 1944 Japanese troops seriously defeated the Chinese and advanced successfully on the continent, preparing a base from which to continue the war (in the event the last island defenses were lost in the Pacific).

By this time only some of the ground forces of the Japanese army had participated in major operations. They were fully ready for combat in the event that Anglo-American troops invaded Asia and the main islands of Japan. Until this time, the Japanese Navy carried on the bulk of the war. In the opinion of prominent American diplomats A. Harriman and C. Bohlen and the American Committee of the Chiefs of Staff, 18 months would be needed to defeat Japan (after the defeat of Germany). Owing to this, they believed, the Yalta negotiations would have to be focused on getting the Soviet Union to promise to enter the war in the Far East.<sup>6</sup> In the estimation of American chiefs of staff, were the USA to invade the Japanese islands without help from the USSR, its losses would be at least 1 million men. They felt that protracting the war in Europe would have serious consequences to operations against Japan. On 22 January 1945 the committee warned the president that orders had already been issued to study and prepare plans for a campaign against Japan in the event that continued war in Europe would necessitate postponement of invasion of the Japanese mainland until the end of 1946.<sup>7</sup>

Both Roosevelt and Churchill placed great hopes on the Soviet Union for a swift end to the war in Europe, and they tried to enlist its assistance in the final defeat of Japan. "We must have the support of the Soviet Union to defeat Germany. We desperately need the Soviet Union for the war with Japan as soon as the war in Europe ends," read the "Memorandum" prepared by U.S. government departments for the President and the American delegation in Yalta.<sup>8</sup> Roosevelt was "fully resolved to obtain, in Yalta, a written promise" from the USSR to enter the war in the Far East.<sup>9</sup>

The British Prime Minister exerted a great deal of effort to oppose the Soviet delegation at the Crimean Conference with a unified Anglo-American bloc. He still continued to entertain the notion of Anglo-American occupation of not only Western but also the largest possible part of Central and South-east Europe.<sup>10</sup> Churchill even tried to scare the President. His message to Roosevelt on 8 January 1945 was intentionally written in an alarming tone: "The conference (in Yalta--*Editor*) may be decisive, since it will occur at the moment when there are such great disagreements among the Big Powers and when the shadow of war is becoming increasingly longer before our eyes. It now appears to me that the end of this war may be more disappointing than the end of the last."<sup>11</sup>

On the way to the Crimea the executives of the USA and England decided to stop on the island of Malta and hold a conference to prepare agreed-upon answers to questions concerning the end of the war against Germany and Japan. Churchill's proposals quite obviously reflected the desire to impose England's political course in relation to the Soviet Union upon the government of the USA. Meanwhile the American government, which had a clear idea of the balance of power

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in the anti-Hitler coalition, gave England not more than a modest role. Churchill's position, which threatened a crisis in relations with the USSR, failed to alarm the U.S. The British Prime Minister's "suggestions" were not successful. Washington did not want to commit itself with some sort of promises to the English beforehand, and most importantly it did not want to be led on a leash by the British Prime Minister.

Recommendations suggested on 16 May 1944 by the Committee of the Chiefs of Staff were confirmed in the "Memorandum" cited above. In particular it stated: "We must apply all effort to relieve friction between Great Britain and Russia, encouraging three-sided cooperation, upon which a strong peace depends." American troop commanders declared this intention not at all due to an abstract devotion to peace but rather on the basis of the real authority the USSR held in the coalition.

The military circles of Great Britain were also apprehensive of aggravations in Anglo-Soviet relations. General H. Ismay, England's chief of staff and minister of defense, noted the following in his assessment of the capabilities Washington and London had for dictating their conditions at the Crimean conference: "Were the English and American governments to take matters to the extreme and threaten the Soviet Union with force, what would be done with the 200-300 German divisions still fighting in the war? Should the English and Americans continue to fight the Wehrmacht with one hand and the Red Army with the other? Or should they forget everything they had said earlier about their resolve to annihilate Nazism, to win the Germans over to their side, and to turn on their recent ally with their assistance? We would have to come to the conclusion that this turn in policy...would be absolutely impossible."<sup>12</sup> British Field-Marshal B. Montgomery later wrote in all frankness on the same question, recognizing that the English people "would never allow themselves to be sent into battle against the Russians in 1945," and he explained this simply: "The Russians were heroic during the German war, and if the British government were to express the desire to fight them in 1945, it would have found itself in a difficult position at home."<sup>13</sup>

It was recognized in Washington that there can be no more postponements of discussion of political problems with the Soviet Union, which previously had been the avowed tactic of the USA, a tactic stated by former Secretary of State C. Hull as "no discussions...at this stage."<sup>14</sup> This is why Roosevelt rejected separate examination of political problems at Malta behind the USSR's back. He agreed with Harriman that the Russians must not be confronted with ready-made decisions. This opinion was shared by prominent American diplomats, to include U.S. Ambassador (D. Vaynant).<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless Roosevelt sanctioned the Malta conference of the Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee, which went on from 30 January to 2 February 1945.

Roosevelt arrived on Malta on 2 February. In a brief meeting with Churchill he gave general approval to the decisions reached by the Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee. However, the President rejected tying down the USA with England on political questions, preferring to resolve the corresponding problems at the conference of the "Big Three" in the Crimea.

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News of the Soviet Army's new victories had a significant influence on American and English executives discussing the current problems. Evaluating the results of the most recent Soviet offensive, H. Baldwin, a reviewer for the NEW YORK TIMES, was forced to recognize: "It relieved the burden of our strategists.... In terms of strategic significance, the Russian winter offensive is greater than both the battle in Western Europe and the invasion of the Phillipines.... Apparently both Russian and German officials agree that this general offensive is being conducted not to attain tactical gains or for territorial conquest, but rather to end the war.... The battle of the titans--this fight between the world's two strongest armies--has resumed, and it instantaneously altered the strategic countenance of the entire war." Pointing out the fact that the Soviet-German front is the main front of the world war, the place where the Soviet Army was opposing the Wehrmacht's main forces, Baldwin went on to note that as in the past, the Western Allies were placing the main burden of the war on the USSR. "The present offensive," he noted, "began at a time when the Allies were not in a position to offer immediate support by making a powerful strike from the West."<sup>16</sup> While the Soviet troops were fighting savage battles on German territory the Allies stood at the country's western borders, placing their troops back in order following the December failure.

As the time of the Crimean conference came closer, it was said more and more frequently in Washington and London that Germany would soon fall in the face of Soviet arms, and that Roosevelt and Churchill would have little left to talk about. As E. Roosevelt, the U.S. President's son validly wrote after the war, "The Red Army ground up the Nazi troops with unprecedented speed." Representatives of military circles in the USA and England even suggested that the Russians had made their last breakthrough of the German front in the East and that the fascist state may fall before the end of the conference.<sup>17</sup> These estimates are evidence that the West could not but see that the Soviet Union was capable of ending the war in Europe on its own.

## 2. Coordination of Plans for the Final Defeat of German and Japanese Aggressors

The Crimean conference was held from 4 to 11 February 1945 in Livadiya, near Yalta. The discussion was started with an examination of the situation at the fronts. The actions of the Soviet Armed Forces were reported by General A. I. Antonov, first deputy chief of General Staff. He briefly summarized the results of the January offensive of the Soviet troops in Poland, eastern Prussia, and Hungary. General Antonov relayed the wishes of the USSR government to accelerate the offensive of the Allied troops, which was very much favored by the situation, and to prevent transfer of troops by the enemy to the Soviet-German front from Norway, Italy, and the Western Front by striking his lines of communication with airpower.<sup>18</sup>

U.S. Army Chief of Staff General D. Marshall reported that the Allies were hoping to go over to the offensive in the northern sector of the front on 8 February, and to follow that with a strike in the southern sector a week

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later. He devoted considerable attention to the actions of Anglo-American bombers, laying special emphasis on the fact that the Reich's fuel production had decreased by 60 percent as a result of air raids.<sup>19</sup>

After exchanging their opinions concerning the situation at the fronts, the conference participants began to coordinate upon the joint military actions against Germany. I. V. Stalin asked his allies to state their wishes in relation to actions of the Soviet troops. Churchill expressed sincere delight in the power which the Soviet Army had demonstrated, and he wished "that the offensive of the Soviet Army would continue just as successfully." Stalin answered that the Soviet Army's winter offensive was conducted as a gentlemen's agreement, since the decisions made at the Tehran conference had not obligated the USSR government to undertake it.<sup>20</sup> Churchill and Roosevelt expressed their common wish that operations of the Allied troops would be coordinated more carefully in the future.

The Allies confirmed in meetings on military questions that the offensive would begin on the Western Front on 8 February. However, citing a shortage of forces, they did not promise to engage in active operations on the Italian front. In the same way, American and English military experts denied the requests of the Soviet side to prevent transfer of German troops from Norway and Italy to the Soviet-German front. Interaction among strategic air forces was planned in general terms. The Soviet Army General Staff and the heads of the Allied military missions in Moscow were given the job of coordinating the corresponding operations.

A conference communique noted: "We have examined and determined the military plans of the three Allied powers for final defeat of the common enemy.... Our joint military plans will be made public only after we have completed them, but we are confident that the very close working cooperation achieved at the present conference between our three staffs will bring a faster end to the war."<sup>21</sup>

The concrete approach taken by Soviet representatives to discussing the problems promoted the success of the talks on military cooperation in the concluding stage of the war. British Field Marshal Montgomery subsequently wrote: "...Stalin made almost no errors.... He had an astounding grasp of strategy, and I do not recall even one false step by him in our talks on questions of strategy."<sup>22</sup>

Draft resolutions written by the European Consultative Commission "On the German Occupation Zones and On Administration of 'Greater Berlin'" and "On the Control Mechanism in Germany" were approved at the Crimean conference. After undergoing some changes associated with recognition of France's right to an occupation zone, these resolutions served as the basis for subsequent agreements on postwar Germany.

The communique on the conference results stated: "It is our firm goal to annihilate German militarism and Nazism, and to create the guarantee that

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Germany would never again be in a position to violate the peace of the whole world. We are fully resolved to disarm and disband all German Armed Forces, to once and forever annihilate the German General Staff, which has many times promoted resurrection of German militarism, to confiscate or destroy all German military equipment, to liquidate or assume control over all German industry that might be utilized for war production; to subject all war criminals to a just and swift punishment, and to extract compensation in kind for all of the destruction caused by the Germans; to wipe the Nazi Party and Nazi laws, organizations, and institutions from the face of the earth; to eliminate all Nazi and militarist influence from public institutions and from the cultural and economic life of the German people, and to implement other joint measures in relation to Germany which might be found necessary for the future peace and security of the entire world. Our goals do not include annihilation of the German people."<sup>23</sup>

For the general purposes of achieving unconditional surrender of Germany, the Allies decided to view it as a single country subdivided into occupation zones. Supreme power over each zone during the period of occupation was to be entrusted to the commander in chief of the troops of the appropriate powers. When general problems came up, the commanders in chief were to act jointly within the framework of the Central Control Commission, which was later renamed the Allied Control Council for Germany, the activity of which was to be based on the principle of unanimity of all members.<sup>24</sup> It was suggested that this organ was to work out joint policy on general German problems.

All of "Greater Berlin" left within the Soviet Zone was to be occupied by troops of the three powers (to which the French contingent was later added) in the appropriate sectors. The plan for joint occupation of Berlin was based on the idea that this city was to become the location of the Allied Control Council. "Greater Berlin" was to be administered by a combined Allied commandant's staff, which was to operate on the basis of the principle of unanimity.

During the conference the heads of the American and English governments once again argued in favor of dividing Germany into several independent states. They insisted on creating a commission to study postwar reconstruction of Germany and the possibilities for its subdivision.<sup>25</sup> However, acceptance of this decision did not mean that the Soviet government was agreeing to subdivide Germany. Later, owing to the principled position of the Soviet Union and on its initiative, this question was removed from the agenda of the Allied negotiations.

Examination of reparation requirements occupied a large place in the conference meetings. The Soviet Union had suffered the greatest material loss in the war. The Soviet government's demand for at least partial compensation of material losses was just. But at the same time the USSR did not insist upon imposing a sum of reparations upon Germany which would ruin its economy. Developing its reparation plan, the Soviet government always

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intended to create conditions under which the German people would be able to exist at an average European standard of living in the postwar years.<sup>26</sup> In relation to the total sum of reparations, the Soviet and American delegations agreed that it would be \$20 billion, 50 percent of which was to go to the USSR. The losses inflicted by Germany were to be compensated mainly in kind. It was agreed during the conference that reparations were to be exacted in three forms: in the first 2 years after Germany's surrender, a one-time exaction from its national wealth (mainly with the goal of annihilating its military potential); annual deliveries of goods from current production; utilization of German manpower. A Combined Allied Commission for Reparations staffed by representatives of the USSR, USA, and Great Britain was instituted in Moscow to work out the details of the reparation plan.<sup>27</sup> The English government did not lend its support to the total sum of reparations specified by the USSR and the USA, pointing out that it would return to this issue as the work of the reparation commission proceeded. Later even the USA withdrew its support from the just sum of reparations for the Soviet Union agreed upon earlier.

The Allies discussed the position of the French among the Great Powers. The USA and England opposed France's participation in the work of the European Consultative Commission until November 1944. The Soviet government had to fight hard to achieve equitable recognition of France's position in international problems. Speaking with De Gaulle in Moscow as long ago as on 8 December 1944, I. V. Stalin said that the general "must know that I have had my differences with England and America concerning the French National Committee in relation to the question as to whether it is to be treated as the government or not." De Gaulle noted that in his opinion, Stalin had won the game. I. V. Stalin agreed with him: "We play to win. But France will win even more."<sup>28</sup> A new step forward was made during the Crimean conference in relation to recognizing France's rights of German occupation and control of that country. Though Roosevelt did say that "this is only a matter of courtesy in relation to the French,"<sup>29</sup> the heads of the three Allied governments decided to apportion an occupation zone in Germany for France, and they ask its Provisionary Government to send a representative to the Central Control Commission.

The American government was extremely interested in gaining the USSR's agreement to enter the war with Japan. The Soviet Union wanted to end World War II as quickly as possible, and to relieve the peoples of the world from more sacrifices and destruction. Justice in relation to peoples of Russia, violated in the past by Japan, had to be restored as well. This is why Stalin confirmed that 2 months after termination of military actions in Europe the Soviet Union would fulfill its promise. On 11 February 1945 the heads of the three Great Powers signed a secret agreement on the Far East. Three conditions for the USSR's declaration of war against Japan were agreed upon in this connection: 1) maintenance of the *status quo* of the Mongolian Peoples Republic; 2) restoration of Russian rights in the Far East treacherously violated by Japan in 1904, namely: return of southern Sakhalin and all islands contiguous with it to the Soviet Union; internationalization of Dairen (Talien) and resumption of tenancy of Port Arthur as a naval base

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of the USSR; resumption of Soviet operation, jointly with China (though insuring the preferential interests of the Soviet Union), of the Eastern Chinese and Southern Manchurian railways; 3) transfer of the Kuril Islands to the USSR.<sup>30</sup> This agreement gave concrete form to the general principles followed in Allied policy spelled out in the Cairo declaration signed by the USA, England, and China and published on 1 December 1943.

The USSR's promise to enter the war in the Far East guaranteed defeat of militarist Japan in the near future. In the eyes of the American government, this agreement had special value also because it defined the borders of possible advance of the Soviet Armed Forces. In other words the American side was motivated by the same notions that led it to agree on the occupation zones in Germany.

### 3. Definition of the General Principles of Establishment of the Postwar Peace

The Crimean conference was held at a time when the war in Europe was nearing its conclusion. It was vitally important to determine the postwar peace arrangements. The problems of foreign policy in general and questions of postwar establishment of peace in particular were always in the center of attention of the Politburo of the party's Central Committee. The Soviet foreign policy line was defined for this instance as well. Problems associated with freeing the peoples from fascist occupation had to be discussed on priority during the Crimean conference. The peoples of Europe, mainly those liberated by the Soviet Army, wished to prevent resumption of power by those who were directly responsible for the misfortunes they had suffered.

The "Declaration on Free Europe" was adopted at the Crimean conference. It stated that the three governments had agreed to coordinate, during the time of temporary instability in liberated Europe, all of their policy aimed at helping liberated peoples as well as peoples of former satellite countries in their resolution of pressing political and economic problems by democratic methods. "Establishment of order in Europe," the declaration read, "and reestablishment of national economic life must be achieved in such a way that would permit the liberated peoples to annihilate the last vestiges of Nazism and fascism and create democratic institutions of their choice."<sup>31</sup> The principles of the declaration were in line with the goals of the anti-fascist war of liberation. The meaning the Western Allies gave to this document is another matter. Influential circles in the USA and England thought it possible to use it as an excuse for interfering in the internal affairs of the countries of Central and Southeast Europe with the purposes of restoring the notorious "sanitary cordon" along the USSR's western border. "These circles," Harriman wrote, "were troubled by the idea that the Red Army would occupy Eastern Europe (Central and Southeast Europe--*Editor*). Nothing could prevent this. The Red Army would push the Nazi forces back into Germany and, in the process of the war, occupy these countries. Therefore we must use all of our strength to give the peoples of these countries the possibility to create their own governments after their liberation."<sup>32</sup>

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What Washington and London meant by "their own governments" was revealed in the debate on the Polish question, which took up a great deal of time in the conference. There were two Polish governments in existence at the time of the meeting of the "Big Three": the provisional national government, which exercised real power in the country, and the emigrant government in London, which had long lost its ties with the people. The governments of the USA and England continued to ignore existence of the Polish provisional government. This raised the objections of the Soviet side, which desired to help the Polish people select a democratic way for the country's development. In the end, Roosevelt and Churchill agreed to recognize the provisional government, but they suggested adding some officials of the London government to its composition. Accepting this proposal, the Soviet side agreed upon a compromise which in the end turned out to be an advantage to the Polish people, since creation of the reorganized Provisional Government of National Unity meant liquidation of the London government.

A decision was made in the Crimea concerning the eastern border of Poland and enlargement of its territory. A conference communique stated: "The heads of the three governments feel that the eastern border of Poland must follow the (Kerzon) line, deviating in some regions 5 to 8 kilometers from it to Poland's advantage. The heads of the three governments recognize that Poland must enjoy significant territorial gains in the north and in the west."<sup>33</sup>

The decision of the Crimean conference on the Polish question was a victory of Soviet policy, which was aimed at creating a strong, democratic Poland tied by knots of friendship to the USSR.

The conference also examined the problem of uniting the democratic forces of Yugoslavia. The heads of the three Great Powers recommended that Marshal J. Broz Tito and (I. Shubashich) form a provisional combined government. They proposed expanding the Antifascist Assembly of National Liberation to include three members of the last prewar Yugoslavian (Skupshchina), which had not compromised itself by collaboration with the invaders. Thus reorganized, the antifascist assembly was to become the country's provisional parliament.

The discussion begun at the conference in Dumbarton Oaks on the problem of creating an international organization to maintain peace and to insure national security was continued at the Crimean conference. Later, this organization came to be called the United Nations (UN). The greatest difficulties in writing its Charter were encountered during discussion of the order of voting in the Security Council. In the Dumbarton Oaks conference (21 August-7 October 1944) the representative from the United States of America proposed the so-called right of veto. What it meant essentially was that decisions of the Security Council would be effective only if all permanent members (USSR, USA, England, China, and France) agreed to it, though in this case the vote of the council member involved in the given dispute would not be counted. The Soviet Union rejected this order of voting, since rather than conducting a patient search for mutually acceptable decisions, powers holding the majority in the Security Council could resort to force and begin a war.

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Back in December 1944 Roosevelt made the proposal that the principle of unanimity of the permanent members should hold in relation to all questions with the exception of those having to do with procedure, and "in relation to disputes in which a member of the council (including permanent members) is a participant, on the condition that a decision is made to employ peaceful means for resolving the dispute."<sup>34</sup> Roosevelt's wording, which later came to be called the Yalta formulation, was adopted at the Crimean conference.

The Soviet delegation suggested inviting the Ukrainian and Belorussian SSR as charter members of the United Nations. Roosevelt and Churchill agreed with this. It was decided to convene a conference to establish the UN on 25 April 1945. Countries invited to it included the United Nations members as of 8 February 1945 and those "joining nations" which would declare war against the common enemy prior to 1 March 1945.

The Crimean conference of the leaders of the USSR, USA and Great Britain had great historic significance. It was one of the greatest international conferences during the war, and it was the high point of cooperation among the three Allied Powers in the struggle against the common enemy. In the presence of good will, even when the most acute disagreements were present the Allied Powers could arrive at agreements permeated by a spirit of unity and common interests.

A communique on the results of the Crimean conference asserted that the three Great Powers confirmed their unity both in the conduct of war and in organization of peace. "It is only through the continuing and growing cooperation and mutual understanding among our three countries and among all peace-loving peoples that we can realize the highest goal of mankind--a sound and lasting peace...."<sup>35</sup> This cooperation was also displayed in practical measures. A permanent mechanism for consultation among the ministers of foreign affairs of the three powers was created at the conference. It was foreseen that they would meet once every 3 or 4 months as necessary. These conferences were to be held successively in Moscow, Washington, and London.

All of the work of the Crimean conference was influenced by the immeasurably greater international authority of the Soviet Union and its peace-loving policy. The results of the work done by the heads of the three Allied governments were met with great enthusiasm by all of the world's progressive society. They served as the basis for the democratic, peace-loving principles of postwar reconstruction of Europe developed at the Potsdam conference soon after the victory over fascist Germany.

Fantastic versions of the Yalta conference, in which the USA and England had supposedly made unjustifiable concessions to the Soviet Union, were forwarded in bourgeois historiography after the war. The right-leaning American historian A. Ulam noted that the Crimean conference "acquired an ominous reputation" for some people in the West.<sup>36</sup> The starting point for this line of reasoning was the speculative suggestion that the USA and England could have imposed their points of view on the USSR but that for some incomprehensible

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reasons they did not do so. Such "condolences" have nothing to do with historic reality.

In connection with the forthcoming Crimean conference (Dzh. Kennan), advisor to the U.S. ambassador in Moscow, presented a memorandum asserting: "I fully recognize the realities of the war, and I understand that we are too weak to win it without Russia's cooperation. I recognize that Russia's military efforts are competent and effective, and that they must be rewarded to a certain extent in the negotiations for peace."<sup>37</sup> On this basis Kennan believed that the USA and England would be unable to implement their plans in Central and Southeast Europe independently.

The American researcher A. Rapoport notes that in the USA, "the opinion exists that East Europe was 'sold out' at Yalta," meaning that the USSR's influence in this area could have been avoided by a combination of decisive diplomatic and military actions after and even during the war. "To attempt to have done so would have meant continuing the war in Europe after the fall of Germany. Although one or two American senators may have argued such an approach on occasion, this plan of action could not be treated seriously in the political climate which evolved at the end of World War II."<sup>38</sup> Such were the "possibilities" of the USA which, in the opinion of modern reactionaries, Washington had supposedly allowed to slip away.

Such an approach is alien to the Soviet Union. To it, the Crimean conference is a clear example of the possibilities for cooperation among states with different socioeconomic structures. It was testimony to the unity of the anti-Hitler coalition in its efforts to defeat fascist Germany and it persuaded the peoples of the world that the war would end victoriously in the very near future. Suffering mankind saw a guarantee of imminent victory in the cooperation between the USSR, the USA, and England. As the war came to an end, the USSR desired mostly to establish a strong peace, and equitable cooperation with other countries. The road to this goal was paved by the policy of peaceful coexistence followed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Soviet government since the first days of the October Revolution.

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CHAPTER FIVE

ADVANCE OF THE SOVIET ARMY IN  
EASTERN POMERANIA AND SILESIA

[p 159] Thus by the end of March the Soviet Army completed the liberation of Poland in interaction with the Polish Army and reached the coast of the Baltic Sea and the Oder and Neisse rivers. As a result of the operations fascist Germany was deprived of important regions of war industry and agriculture, and its armed forces suffered further irreplaceable losses. The successful advance by Soviet troops in eastern Pomerania and Silesia forever ruined the Wehrmacht Command's plans for flanking strikes. Retention and expansion of the bridgehead near Kustrin by troops of the 1st Belorussian Front had important operational significance.

All of this created the necessary conditions for subsequent strikes against the enemy on the Berlin, Dresden, and Prague axes.

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CHAPTER SIX

LIBERATION OF HUNGARY, AUSTRIA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, AND YUGOSLAVIA

[pp 218-219] The military and political results of the final strikes by the Soviet Army against the southern wing of the Soviet-German front were as follows: The three Ukrainian fronts successfully completed their mission of destroying the enemy and liberating the peoples of Hungary and the greater part of Czechoslovakia and Austria from German fascism. During battles on Hungarian territory, in eastern Austria, and the battle of Vienna, the 3rd and 2d Ukrainian fronts defeated 27 enemy divisions. The Fascist German Command was forced to transfer major forces to this region from other sectors of the Soviet-German front and the Western Front. Arrival of Soviet troops in Austrian territory hastened surrender of fascist German troops in north Italy and created the threat of isolating fascist German troops present in Yugoslavia.

The successful actions of the 4th, 2d, and 3rd Ukrainian fronts in winter and spring 1945 helped the Soviet troops to complete their mission of defeating the enemy on the Berlin axis. Liberation of the peoples of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Austria, and Albania from fascism became possible owing to the selfless, victorious struggle of the Soviet people and its armed forces, led by the Leninist Communist Party.

The people of Yugoslavia and their armed forces, which fought a war of liberation for 4 years, made a great contribution to the victory over German fascism. Bulgarian, Romanian, and Czechoslovakian troops operated actively on the side of the Soviet Army in the last stage of the war. The reactionary intentions of the Hungarian, Czechoslovakian, and Yugoslavian bourgeoisie of retaining the regimes present in their countries prior to World War II fell through.

In addition to having great political significance, the defeat of large fascist German troop groupings in the south by the Soviet Armed Forces demonstrated the superiority of Soviet strategy, operational art, and tactics over the art of war of the Fascist German Army. The operations of the Soviet troops were conducted in a complex military-political situation

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and with insignificant overall superiority in forces over the enemy. Each of the operations was typified by uniqueness of intent based on strict estimation of the real situation and correct assessment of the forces and possibilities of the sides, flexible maneuvering, and purposefulness in attainment of goals. Organization and maintenance, by the Hq SHC, of strategic interaction among three Ukrainian fronts during their advance in the Carpathians and Hungary was instructive and interesting in these operations. The problem of preparing and conducting successive strategic operations mutually coordinated in depth and in front was successfully solved in the south.

The major political and strategic results attained by the Soviet Army in its offensive on Hungarian, Czechoslovakian, and Austrian territory, as well as in other engagements and battles of World War II, were mainly the result of the tremendous organizational activity of the Communist Party which provided daily inspiration to the Soviet people and encouraged them to acts of heroism in combat and labor with the goal of achieving a complete and final victory over Hitler's Germany. These results are clear evidence of the high moral-combat qualities of the Soviet troops, and of the burning patriotism and faithfulness to international duty displayed by these soldiers of liberation.

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CHAPTER SEVEN  
THE SOVIET NAVY'S COMBAT ACTIVITIES

[pp 232-233] The Red Banner Baltic and Northern fleets took an active part in the 1945 operations against the Fascist German Armed Forces. Starting in September 1944 the Black Sea Fleet began clearing mines from the waters and coasts of the Black and Azov seas. The Danube Naval Flotilla, which was taken out of the composition of the Black Sea Fleet, was subordinated directly to the commander in chief of the navy. During times of combat it interacted with troops of the 2d and 3rd Ukrainian fronts, being operationally subordinated to them. The Dniepr River Flotilla interacted with troops of the 1st Belorussian Front. The main efforts of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet were directed at interdicting the enemy's marine lines of communication and defending friendly lines. Moreover it interacted with advancing ground troops to annihilate the enemy's maritime groupings, and it fought enemy surface shipping, preventing it from providing regular direct support to the flanks of ground troops from the sea.

Fascist German Navy units operating in the Baltic Sea did not have a significant influence on the progress enjoyed by Soviet troops on the maritime axis. The superiority of Soviet aviation and its active offensive actions in eastern Prussia and Pomerania prevented the Fascist German Command from maintaining superiority over the Baltic Sea, despite the fact that almost the entire surface fleet, which was superior in quantity and composition to ships of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet, was concentrated here. Occupying the ports, the Soviet Army deprived the enemy fleet of its naval bases, which effectively reduced its combat capabilities.

Attempts by the Fascist German Naval Command to interdict northern lines of communication by submarines alone suffered failure. The Northern Fleet, which had accumulated a rich amount of experience in submarine warfare by this time, repelled all attacks together with Allied ships. In 1945 the Fascist German Navy lost a large quantity of ships and well-trained personnel. The struggle on the Baltic and Barents seas ended with total defeat of the Fascist German Navy.

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CHAPTER EIGHT  
ADVANCE OF SOVIET TROOPS IN  
WESTERN GERMANY AND NORTHERN ITALY

[pp 264-266] Allied expeditionary forces conducted a number of major operations in Western Europe and Italy in 1945. On the Western Front, they cleared the enemy from all territory west of the River Rhine, and then they crossed this water obstacle, and encircled and liquidated the fascist German troop grouping in the Ruhr industrial region. Subsequently exploiting the offensive deep into Germany, the Allied armies reached the River Elba, advanced eastward to an area south of Berlin, and joined the troops of the Soviet Army. Allied troops advancing in Italy together with Italian liberation forces compelled the enemy to surrender.

Planning and conducting operations on the Western Front and in Italy, the Allied Command based itself on the notion that the enemy would render resistance with all available forces and resources. This is why much attention was devoted to concealment of intentions during the operations. The Allies created significant groupings supported by large quantities of aviation on the axes of the main strikes. The troops were concentrated at night as a rule, with all camouflage and deception measures being implemented.

Major formations and formations intended for the offensive were disposed in depth. The assault echelons of the armies usually contained two corps each, and the second echelons contained one corps each. The combat formations of these corps were organized into two and three echelons. Armored divisions and brigades were usually placed in the second or third echelons of the corps. The infantry and tank attack was preceded by powerful air and artillery preparation. Thus for example preliminary air preparation in the operation to encircle fascist German troops in the Ruhr industrial region lasted for a month, and its objective was to isolate the enemy from the rest of Germany. The time of air preparation varied from 40 minutes prior to an attack by infantry and tanks (on the Italian front) to some 10 hours to 3 days (on the Western Front), and it entailed massed strikes against enemy defenses, mainly in the breakthrough sectors. The time of artillery preparation was from 45 minutes to 8 hours.

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The enemy's tactical defenses were penetrated by infantry formations supported by tanks, artillery, and aviation. Whenever troops were operating at strategic depth aviation was usually employed to supply the quickly advancing armored and mechanized formations. Airplanes landed at airstrips located near the front line. Thus for example cargo airplanes and warplanes with their armament removed flew 20,000 sorties and carried about 60,000 tons of cargo in April on the Western Front.

A typical feature of offensive operations conducted by the Allied troops in Western Europe and Italy in 1945 was that in most cases they crossed significant water obstacles, as a rule following planned preparations. Sometimes it happened that the troops seized bridgeheads on the move, capitalizing upon the situation. This was the case on the right bank of the Rhine, in the vicinities of Remagen and Oppenheim. Much attention was devoted to all-out operational and logistical support during the crossing of water obstacles. Extensive steps were taken to insure surprise when troops of the 21st Army Group crossed the River Rhine. Dummy sectors were simulated and the concentration of troops and combat equipment on the planned axes of attack was carefully camouflaged with this purpose. Special assault landing barges and launches were brought in beforehand, as was a large quantity of equipment to be used in erecting bridges and crossings. The troops underwent training in conditions close to those of real battle. Prior to crossing a river, intense air and artillery preparation was conducted. Owing to this the enemy defenses on the opposite bank were basically suppressed, and Allied formations successfully completed their missions, as a rule encountering weak enemy resistance.

Also deserving of attention is the experience the Allies gained in using airborne troops, which played a significant role in the crossing of the River Rhine by troops of the 21st Army Group. Airborne troops were landed (dropped) in the enemy rear 8-12 km from the forward edge. Airborne units were landed 13 hours after infantry and tanks crossed the river. The airborne troops operated energetically, in accordance with the plan.

On the whole, the armed forces of the Western Allies made a significant contribution to the victory over fascist Germany in the concluding stage of the war in Europe. However, it should be kept in mind that military actions on the Western and Italian fronts were conducted at a time when the German Supreme High Command no longer possessed the manpower and materiel it needed, since almost all replacements that could still be mustered were sent to the east to block the road of the Soviet Armed Forces.

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CHAPTER NINE  
MILITARY ACTIONS IN THE ATLANTIC AND  
ON THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

[p 278] Military actions in the Atlantic and on the Mediterranean Sea ended with defeat of the Fascist German Navy. Its surface fleet had been almost completely knocked out of action back in 1944, and it did not play a significant role in the combat activities of January-May 1945. Despite their large number, surface vessels could not achieve effective results in the Atlantic basin without the support of other naval and air forces. Quantitative and qualitative growth of the manpower and equipment of Allied antisubmarine defenses surpassed quantitative and qualitative growth of the German submarine fleet. In the concluding stage of the war, there were more than two antisubmarine ships and 8-10 antisubmarine airplanes for every combat ready German submarine. This ratio was even more disadvantageous to Germany if we compare the quantity of operating Allied antisubmarine forces with the quantity of submarines actually present at sea in the areas of combat activities.

The mission of interdicting enemy marine lines of communication, assigned to German submarines, turned out to be unrealistic due to the overwhelming superiority of the Allies at sea and in the air, and owing to the tremendous defeats suffered by the fascist army on the Soviet-German and then on the Western Front. The Allies managed to keep their Atlantic and maritime lines of communication operating regularly. Fascist Germany concentrated its main efforts on the Soviet-German front, and it could not allocate significant manpower and resources to the war at sea. Moreover the best trained naval personnel had been transferred to the ground troops on the Eastern Front.

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CHAPTER TEN

THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT OF THE PEOPLES OF EUROPE.  
FURTHER REVOLUTIONARY TRANSFORMATIONS

[pp 279-281] The resistance, which assumed broad scope in occupied countries, played an important role in the struggle against fascism. Partisan actions and armed uprisings, and the heroism of soldiers of the national forces of liberation will be entered into the chronicle of this struggle forever.\* The most important factor in creating favorable conditions for activation of the resistance movement on territory still occupied by the Germans in 1944 was the successes of the Soviet Armed Forces, as well as of troops from countries belonging to the anti-Hitler coalition. Feeling the defeat of fascist Germany to be near, the peoples of the occupied countries intensified the struggle for their independence. The working class marched in the advance guard, headed by the communist and workers parties. As always, communists proved themselves to be true patriots and internationalists, and consistent champions of the liberty and independence of peoples.

However, the resistance movement in Europe would never have attained such broad scope, had it not been for the heroic, selfless struggle of the Soviet people and their armed forces, a struggle having no equals in history, and without the great battles against Hitler's army and troops allied to it. "The successes of Soviet arms," wrote Italian Communist Party Chairman (L. Longo), "were a powerful stimulus for the peoples of Europe, who rose in the struggle against fascism. They also provided tremendous help to us when after the Nazi troops invaded Italy the moment came for transition to partisan actions, and when all democratic and antifascist forces in the country united themselves about the banner of the armed conflict."\*\*

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\* "Tridtsatiletiye Pobedy sovetskogo naroda v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne. Dokumenty i materialy" (The 30th Anniversary of the Victory of the Soviet People in the Great Patriotic War. Documents and Materials), p 5.

\*\* Cited in: IZVESTIYA, 26 April 1975

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The nature and scope of the movement of liberation in different countries varied in 1945 as well. In Yugoslavia, combat activities were conducted in the enemy rear by formations of the Peoples Liberation Army and by partisan formations subordinated to it, and for practical purposes it was part and parcel of the combat activities of Yugoslavian armed forces fighting to liberate their country.\* National uprisings were the culmination of the resistance movement in Czechoslovakia and Italy. On still-occupied territory of Poland, Hungary, and other European countries, the resistance movement also developed depending on internal and external conditions.

The antifascist struggle of this period was typified by intensification of the influence of communist and workers parties, significant improvement of the armament possessed by partisan forces, better experience, and higher organization of the partisan struggle.

As the Soviet Army advanced westward the possibilities the USSR had for rendering assistance to resistance fighters increased. The Soviet Army could now interact on a greater scale with forces of the resistance movement, and the training of commanders for partisan detachments was continued. Many thousands of Soviet people operated actively in the resistance movement of peoples in occupied countries. For the most part these were officers and enlisted men who had escaped from fascist camps. Finding themselves far from the motherland, they felt it their sacred duty to fight against the common enemy. Some detachments consisted entirely of Soviet citizens.

Workers, peasants, intelligentsia, and in a number of cases patriotically predisposed bourgeoisie took part in the resistance movement. The union of the working class and peasantry under the guiding role of the proletariat was the backbone of the all-peoples antifascist fronts in occupied countries of Europe. The urban middle class--craftsmen and petty merchants strangled by the taxes and plunder of governments of occupation that brought small-scale production to ruin--also aligned itself with progressive forces fighting against the invaders.

Participation of some middle bourgeoisie of Czechoslovakia, Italy, and other countries in the resistance movement was dependent on class interests, which were contrary to the social requirements of the working class and the working peasantry. Fearing the growth of awareness and organization of the laborers, the bourgeoisie attempted to take sole charge of the liberation movement, to displace the communist-led leftist parties, and to defeat them in the end.

Betraying the national interests of the peoples, the major bourgeoisie in most European countries collaborated openly or covertly with the fascist German invaders, thus completely discrediting itself in the eyes of the

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\* These actions are examined in detail in Chapter Six.

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masses. Anticommunism and anti-Sovietism were the principal motives of its policy. In certain cases the major bourgeoisie aligned itself with national fronts at the end of the war in order to keep from isolating itself and to maintain the possibility for influencing postwar reconstruction of its countries.

As the defeat of fascist Germany came nearer the struggle concerning the path to be taken in social development of the given country increased more and more in the resistance movement. The communist-led peoples-democratic direction fought not only for national liberation but also for deep socioeconomic transformations. On the other hand leaders of the bourgeois direction did everything to limit the fight to one of national liberation and to preserve the foundations of the capitalist structure.

Despite the fact that the resistance movement had its unique traits in each country, on the whole it was international in nature. Its participants were united by a common goal--liberty and independence of peoples oppressed by the invaders.

The communist and workers parties were the most active organizing force behind the national antifascist fronts. Through their selfless, consistent struggle against fascism and for national independence and democratic freedoms, they won high authority in the eyes of the laborers, who became persuaded first-hand in the difficult trials of the war that communists were true patriots.

The following national fronts were fighting at the beginning of 1945: In Yugoslavia--the Unified National Liberation Front, in Poland--the National Democratic Front, in Czechoslovakia--the National Front of Czechs and Slovaks, in Hungary--the Hungarian National Front of Independence, and in Italy--the National Antifascist Front. Creation and reinforcement of the national fronts was an event of tremendous political importance, mobilizing the broad masses in the struggle against the common enemy. This struggle continued to be the most pressing task of all progressive forces interested in the fastest possible achievement of liberty and independence of countries oppressed by German fascism.

The Soviet Union continued to render all-out assistance to the resistance movement, as well as to armies and formations of peoples-democratic countries fighting against the Germans on the Soviet-German front. The ruling circles of the USA and Great Britain followed a different line; from the very beginning they tried to subordinate the resistance movement to their class interests. They applied effort to see that this movement would not transform into a mass struggle having deep socioeconomic transformations as its objective. The policies of the USA and Great Britain were based on the desire to insure maintenance of capitalist orders in countries liberated by their armies, for which reason they provided full support to bourgeois circles. An example of a case where these goals were achieved can be found in Greece where, as we know, reactionary bourgeoisie came into power as a result of armed English intervention.

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Development of the resistance movement followed an ascending curve in most countries, from the lowest to higher forms of warfare--from sabotage and minor diversions to broad partisan actions and armed uprisings. Tremendous losses on the Soviet-German front forced the German Command to transfer occupation troops to that front from European countries. All of this created better conditions for the struggle against the invaders.

Thus the victories of the Soviet Armed Forces helped the peoples of Europe in their struggle for liberation and had a decisive influence upon it, increasing its scope and activity. The Soviet victories also had a significant influence in that they broadened the front of anticolonial, national liberation movements in countries of Asia and Africa.

[p 294] The resistance movement was a natural response by the broad masses to the predatory actions of fascist Germany. It was also simultaneously directed against internal reactionary forces, which collaborated with the invaders in behalf of their own class goals, betraying the interests of the laborers.

Greater organization and unity of resistance fighters was typical of the resistance movement in 1945, as was the fact that members of the resistance fought in the enemy rear in close association with troops advancing from the front. The influence of communist parties, the principal organizing force of the resistance movement, increased significantly. The culminating events were the antifascist uprisings, which clearly demonstrated the will of the people in the struggle for liberty and independence.

Aid given by the Soviet Union to patriotic forces of countries in Central and Southeast Europe oppressed by Nazi Germany and the direct participation of Soviet people in the antifascist armed conflict outside their motherland promoted expansion of the resistance movement. One of the most important features of this movement in a number of countries was its subsequent transformation into peoples democratic and socialist revolutions, which began and reached their victorious conclusion during the struggle for liberation; the basic problems of creating new organs of state rule were solved, land was redistributed, and other social transformations were brought about.

The working class and its forward units--the communist parties--played the leading role in the antifascist struggle. The victories of the Soviet Armed Forces, which soundly defeated the fascist German troops, created favorable conditions for development of the resistance movement in European countries occupied by fascist Germany.

[pp 308-309] The resistance movement of peoples in occupied countries of Europe was typified in the concluding stage of the war against fascist Germany by greater organization, broader application of the methods of armed conflict, and closer interaction with troops of the anti-Hitler

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coalition, especially with the Soviet Army, on the territory of countries of Central and Southeast Europe.

By their heroic struggle, peoples of European countries under the yoke of German fascism made an honorable contribution to their liberation.

The Soviet Armed Forces, which soundly defeated the Wehrmacht, played the decisive role in liberation of Central and Southeast Europe. This also created conditions favoring the struggle of democratic forces against internal reaction and for progressive social transformations. The liberation movement transformed into an unprecedented class struggle against the structure of exploitation as a whole. Upsetting the supremacy of reaction, the peoples of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, and Albania assumed a road of revolutionary transformations, which opened the way for a transition to socialism. The influence of communists--the most heroic and consistent fighters against fascism--grew everywhere. The international communist movement became the most unified and organized force, one bringing lasting peace and social progress to all people.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE TAKING OF BERLIN.  
THE FINAL LIBERATION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

[p 355] The Berlin and Prague operations were the final operations of the Soviet Armed Forces in Europe. Having correctly assessed the military-political situation, the Supreme High Command Headquarters selected the Berlin axis as the main axis of military activities. Troops of the 1st and 2d Belorussian and the 1st Ukrainian fronts participated in the defeat of the Berlin grouping. Concurrently executing their own missions, troops of the 4th and 2d Ukrainian fronts conducted an offensive, as a result of which they liberated part of Czechoslovakia and contained significant forces of army groups Center and South. The Berlin operation is an instructive example of swift liquidation of encircled enemy groupings. During it, two major groupings totaling almost 500,000 men were simultaneously eliminated in 10 days. The fact that the course of combat activities in terms of both the times of their occurrence and the directions of advance of the front basically corresponded to what was planned is clear evidence of the high proficiency of command personnel and staffs at all levels.

The taking of Berlin--the capital of the fascist state and its most important military-political and economic center--by Soviet troops foiled all of the designs of the Nazi leadership to protract the war and cause division in the ranks of the antifascist coalition, and it accelerated unconditional surrender. The victory of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Berlin operation created favorable conditions for liquidating the last major grouping of fascist German troops in Czechoslovakia.

The Prague offensive operation was the concluding operation in the war against fascist Germany. Prepared and conducted in extremely short time and in a complex military-political and strategic situation, it entered the history of war and the art of war as a model of flexible and mobile troop command and control, of close interaction among the troops of three fronts striking on convergent axes, and of highly maneuverable actions making use of the most decisive forms and methods of armed conflict.

The Berlin and Prague operations were the crowning glory of Soviet art of war; they embodied the tremendous experience of the Soviet Armed Forces, accumulated in the previous years of the war.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER OF FASCIST GERMANY

[pp 373-374] The demand for unconditional surrender of fascist Germany in 1945 was necessitated by the need for final liquidation of fascism. A regime of occupation was established as a result of fascism's responsibility for aggression, and as a means for insuring satisfaction of the requirements of unconditional surrender. Germany's unconditional surrender did not infringe upon the national merit of the German people, nor did it undermine the foundations of the country's national existence. On the contrary the defeat of German empirialism--this most evil and mortal enemy of the laborers--marked the liberation of the German people, the leading forces of which had always fought a selfless struggle for social and national liberation of their compatriots, for their vital interests, and for maintenance and assurance of peace. This is precisely why the Soviet government, which insisted upon total demilitarization and democratization of Germany, saw its main goal to be that of helping the German people assume the broad avenue of peace and social progress, and to promote national resurrection of the country and reinforcement of its independence.

This approach to unconditional surrender and to the goals of Germany's occupation was a manifestation of the internationalism and democracy of foreign policy based on Lenin's principles of peace, equal rights, and national self-determination. The honest, humane diplomatic methods of the Soviet state, which performed the function of an occupying power for the first time in its history, were such that the concept itself of "occupation" acquired entirely new meaning in comparison to its former meaning. The policy of occupation followed by the governments of the USA, England, and France in the Western part of Germany differed fundamentally. It was least of all aimed at imparting democratic attributes to the life of the German people. Following their imperialist interests, these countries did everything to preserve the supremacy of capitalist monopolies and create a springboard for war against the USSR. They saw the future of Germany not as a rival but as a kindred class ally.

The Soviet Union followed a policy of all-out assistance and support to democratic forces, a policy based on consideration of the national interests of the German people. Giving a high assessment to the contribution made by

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the Soviet Union to the struggle for satisfying the agreements made at the Crimean and Potsdam conferences, the Governing Board of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany noted the following in October 1949: "This noble and magnanimous struggle by the Soviet Union in behalf of the interests of the German people deserves the greatest thanks from all honest Germans."\*

In their congratulations addressed to the Soviet people in connection with the 30th anniversary of the victory of the Great Patriotic War and Liberation of the German people from fascism, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany E. Honecker, Chairman of the GDR State Council W. Stoph, and Chairman of the GDR Council of Ministers (Kh. Zinderman) wrote: "The people of the German Democratic Republic will never forget that the people of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, upon the shoulders of whom the main burden of the war had lain, brought us liberty at the price of uncountable sacrifices, constantly offered disinterested assistance, and paved the way for a bright socialist future."\*\*

Finally the requirements of Germany's unconditional surrender laid the foundation for security in Europe and foresaw development of neighborly relations among all countries on the basis of the principles of independence and national sovereignty, equal rights, noninterference in internal affairs, mutual advantage, and peaceful coexistence between states with different social structures.

That these principles are realistic can be seen in the results of the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe held in August 1975. It initiated a new stage in relaxation of tension, and it was an important step in reinforcing the principles of peaceful coexistence and achieving the relations of equitable and mutually advantageous cooperation between states with different social structures. "The results were worth the effort," L. I. Brezhnev noted in his Accountability Report to the 25th CPSU Congress. "The conference collectively confirmed the inviolability of the presently existing borders. The principles of international mutual relationships, ones that completely--in letter and in spirit--satisfy the requirements of peaceful coexistence, have been summarized. Thus favorable conditions have been created for maintaining and strengthening peace on the entire continent."\*\*\*

Further relaxation of international tension, for which the USSR and other socialist countries are untiringly fighting, is leading to greater stability of international ties, to reinforcement of international legal rules, to the triumph of justice, and to creation of favorable possibilities for insuring economic and social progress of all peoples.

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\* Cited in: "Za antifashistskuyu demokraticeskuyu Germaniyu. Sbornik dokumentov 1945-1949 gg." (For an Antifascist Democratic Germany. Collection of Documents 1945-1949), p 650.

\*\* Cited in: PRAVDA, 9 May 1975.

\*\*\* Brezhnev, L. I., "Leninskim Kursom" (Following Lenin's Course), Vol 5, p 468.

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PART TWO

POLITICS, ECONOMICS, AND ART OF WAR

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

ORGANIZATIONAL AND IDEOLOGICAL WORK  
BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY

[pp 395-396] In the concluding stage of the war in Europe the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which now had almost 4 years of experience in leading the country during the most bloody and savage of all wars, continued to concentrate the state's main efforts in the decisive sector-- mobilization of all manpower and resources in behalf of a swift and total victory. With this purpose the party did everything possible to raise the effectiveness of all of its party organizations, and it directed their activities at achieving more efficient and effective fulfillment of the Central Committee's decisions and the State Defense Committee's assignments. It distributed its forces with a consideration for the new tasks facing the country at the end of the war, and it did a tremendous amount of work to select, train, place, and indoctrinate party, soviet, and administrative personnel.

The Communist Party devoted special attention to management of the Soviet Armed Forces, and of troops fighting outside the Soviet Union. Relying on the military councils, commanders, political agencies, and party organizations, it firmly and consistently implemented its policy in the army and navy. Under party guidance the Soviet soldiers honorably completed their great mission of liberation and defended the interests of the Soviet people. In the numerous engagements of the concluding stage of the war in Europe the personnel of the Soviet Armed Forces once again demonstrated bravery, heroism, and high combat proficiency. Responsible for this was the great effectiveness of party-political work conducted right during the course of all operations. The party Central Committee armed the army and navy party organizations with a clear program of action. Military councils and political agencies competently completed the tasks posed to them. Nurtured in the ideals of patriotism and proletarian internationalism, Soviet soldiers successfully completed their international duty.

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The party devoted considerable attention to managing state and social organizations. Intensifying its influence on the masses, through them it directed the growing enthusiasm of the Soviet people at solving the priority problems--achieving final defeat of fascism and rehabilitating the national economy.

The activity and creative initiative of the working class, the kolkhoz peasantry, and the Soviet intelligentsia grew significantly as a result of the party's tremendous organizational activity. Through all of its work it insured further reinforcement of the military-economic and political power of the Soviet Union, and strengthening of its rear. Owing to this the front received new combat equipment, armament, and gear continuously and in adequate quantities.

The party organizations were the spirit of production collectives, constantly replenishing them with new, fresh forces, from among the best representatives of the working class, kolkhoz peasantry, and Soviet intelligentsia.

Ideological-political work among the people played an important role in solving the tremendous problems facing the Soviet Union in the concluding stage of the war in Europe. The party organized and conducted this work with a consideration for the national economic tasks and the military-political situation. Raising the political awareness of the people, the Communist Party indoctrinated the Soviet people in the spirit of socialist patriotism and proletarian internationalism.

The leading and guiding activity of the Communist Party and its organizational and ideological work were the main factor in total defeat of fascist Germany and in the victorious conclusion to the war in Europe.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

CONTINUED GROWTH OF THE SOVIET UNION'S NATIONAL  
ECONOMY. TRANSITION TO PEACEFUL CONSTRUCTION

[p 420] The first half of 1945 was typified by further reinforcement of the Soviet Union's domestic and international position. Relying on the advantages of the socialist structure and Marxist-Leninist ideology, the Communist Party promoted a new rise in the creative activity of the people. Firm economic foundations and the spiritual strength of the Soviet society made swift conclusion of the war in Europe and transition of the economy to peacetime operation possible.

In addition to the continuation of war production, an extensive amount of work was done to rehabilitate the national economy; more and more industrial enterprises were switched to production of peacetime goods. While the country was at war, it concurrently took confident steps on the road to peaceful construction. The strength and inviolability of its domestic position were especially evident on the background of the acute antagonistic contradictions typical of the economies of capitalist countries.

The titanic activity of the Communist Party insured reinforcement and development of the USSR's war economy in the concluding stage of the war in Europe. Its activity was the most important source of the historic victory enjoyed by socialist society over fascism.

The better economic and political organization of the socialist state made it possible to mobilize materiel and manpower much more completely and quickly, and to utilize it more effectively. The Soviet people's military, economic, ideological, and political victory in the war against fascist Germany was attained under the leadership of the Communist Party, as a result of its tremendous political and organizational activity.

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE WAR ECONOMIES OF THE PRINCIPAL CAPITALIST COUNTRIES

[p 438] The principal capitalist countries met the end of the war with their economies exhibiting different levels of development.

The United States of America, which was oceans away from the region of combat activities and which suffered no losses of any sort on its own territory, grew richer from the war. Transformation of monopolistic capitalism into state-monopolistic capitalism was accelerated, and capital became dramatically more centralized. The largest monopolies enjoyed tremendous profits. The most important international trade markets were in their hands. All of this presaged an even more active offensive against its weakened competitors in different regions of the world. At the same time the country's social conflicts associated with transition of the economy to a peactetime status, which was accompanied by mass layoffs of workers, became more acute. Concurrently the state paid the industrial companies tremendous monetary compensation at the expense of the taxpayers for uncompleted military production and unutilized production capacities.

The English economy was weakened. The possibilities this largest of the capitalist countries had for influencing international relations were limited. However, the sphere of British dominance continued to be quite vast even after the war. As before, England was the financial and economic center of countries dependent upon it. Its monopolies continued to exploit the colonies. The social essence of the country's domestic policy was the same as in the USA--further reinforcement of monopolies. This policy had a class antagonistic nature in relation to the laborers, and it aggravated the social conflicts.

Having suffered an annihilatory defeat, fascist Germany completely lost its markets, and its own territory was occupied. The economy was severely undermined and disorganized.

The influence of the USA on the economies of countries in Western Europe intensified during the time of the world's postwar reconstruction. As a result many of these countries obediently followed the foreign policy course of the American government.

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE ART OF WAR OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE WARRING COUNTRIES

[pp 439-459] 1. Typical Traits of the Art of War of the Soviet Armed Forces

As in previous years, in the concluding stage of the war in Europe the Communist Party Central Committee and the Soviet government made maximum use of all of the state's material, military, and moral possibilities to attain a final victory over the enemy. The tremendous scope of the struggle on the Soviet-German front necessitated further reinforcement of the armed forces and provision of modern combat equipment to them.

Despite the difficulties of wartime, the inestimable havoc caused on territory temporarily occupied by the enemy and the sacrifices suffered in the previous years of the war, the Soviet Union produced a sufficient quantity of combat equipment and armament, and it had more manpower than did fascist Germany. The standing army was outfitted with armament and combat equipment of superior quantity and sophisticated quality. The process of creating new models of armament continued on into 1945. The Il-10 ground-attack airplane, which possessed improved armament and armor, was used for the first time in February. Quantitative and qualitative growth of ground attack aviation made it possible to increase the amount of air support given to ground troops. The quantity of tanks and especially of medium and heavy self-propelled guns increased. The troops enjoyed growth in the quantity of medium and large caliber guns, automatic weapons, military engineering equipment, and communication resources.

In comparison with 1944 the organizational structure of the Soviet Armed Forces did not experience significant changes in 1945. During the combat activities the 2d and 1st Baltic fronts were disbanded, and their armies were transferred into the composition of the Leningrad and 3rd Belorussian fronts. Of the 22d, 5th, and 39th armies, which were placed into the Headquarters Reserve, the last two began regrouping in the Far East. The 9th Guards Army was formed once again. Units and formations of the Supreme High Command's artillery reserve continued to grow larger.

Now that the Soviet Armed Forces were outfitted with modern weapons their fighting power increased significantly, the possibilities the units, formations,

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and major formations enjoyed for fighting and maneuvering grew greater, and they became more independent in operations. Fronts participating in the eastern Prussian, Vistula-Oder, and Berlin operations had from five to ten combined arms armies, one or two tank armies, and one air army, as well as a large quantity of reinforcements. Each of these fronts contained 54-82 rifle divisions, 2-4 separate tank and mechanized corps, 1-2 cavalry corps, 9,000-12,000 guns and mortars (76 mm and higher), and 1,000-3,600 tanks and self-propelled guns. The fighting strength of combined arms armies increased, and tank armies possessed from 600 to 925 tanks and self-propelled guns; the quantity of airplanes in frontal air armies was 1,500-3,200 units. The enlargement of the fighting strength of fronts and armies due to the decrease in length of the Soviet-German front permitted the Supreme High Command to create, in 1945, more-powerful troop groupings in sectors of the front about twice smaller than in 1944, using a greater density of personnel and equipment per kilometer of front.

Soviet strategy, which was distinguished by purposefulness and decisiveness, was based in operational planning on the greater military and economic possibilities of the country, further growth of the power of the armed forces, the tremendous amount of experience accumulated in preceding years, and the exceptionally high moral-combat spirit of all personnel.

The Communist Party initiated even greater organizational and indoctrination work in the armed forces. After military actions moved outside the USSR the military councils of the fronts, fleets, and armies and the political agencies and party organizations of the army and navy restructured all of their work in application to the new conditions. Utilizing the accumulated experience, commanders of all ranks artfully employed the available manpower and equipment to complete their missions.

Defeat of the largest enemy groupings, liberation of the countries of Central and Southeast Europe from the fascist invaders and, finally, the final victory over Nazi Germany were the military-political goals of the concluding stage of the war on the European continent. They were attained through major offensive operations on the maritime, Berlin, Vienna, and Prague axes, in which the total depth of advance was over 800 km, and which had the objective of total defeat of fascist Germany.

Simultaneous initiation of major offensive operations and continuity of their conduct throughout the entire campaign were distinguishing features of the Soviet Army's strategic offensive in 1945. This became possible owing to dramatic reduction of the length of the Soviet-German front and further changes in the balance of power in favor of the Soviet troops. This method for conducting the strategic offensive was extremely effective, since it prevented the enemy from maneuvering his reserves.

The eastern Pomeranian, lower and upper Silesian, and then the Berlin and Prague operations were conducted in the wake of the Vistula-Oder operation and in the course of the eastern Prussian operation, without interruption or after short pauses. The conduct of strategic operations that were successive in depth within the framework of a single campaign was clear evidence of

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the greater power of the Soviet Armed Forces, and of the maturity and proficiency of the Soviet Supreme High Command, which insured prompt development of plans for subsequent operations, prompt assignment of new missions to the fronts, creation of strike groupings on new axes within the shortest time possible, and provision of appropriate materiel to these groupings. This was the most decisive and effective method of combat activities, and it led to deep separation of the enemy's strategic front on some axes, and in the end it hastened the enemy's defeat.

As before, correct selection of the axis of the main strike as well as sensible distribution of men and equipment on different strategic axes played an important role in fulfillment of the missions of the troops. Thus artful selection of the axis of the main strike in the eastern Prussian operation made it possible for Soviet troops to quickly cut off the entire enemy grouping from the central regions of fascist Germany, to divide it, and then to destroy it in parts. The axis of the main strike in the Vistula-Oder and Berlin operations coincided with the planned main strike axis for the campaign. This strike was made by Soviet troops in the central sector of the front against a large strategic enemy grouping, the defeat of the latter opening up possibilities for capturing Germany's capital--Berlin. Creation of superior forces and resources on this axis within extremely short time insured attainment of the planned military-political goals. At the same time the strike on the Vienna axis resulted in the defeat of major forces on the southern wing of the Soviet-German front, while the strike on the Prague axis led to encirclement of a significant enemy grouping in Czechoslovakia and its subsequent capture.

The purposeful and decisive nature of Soviet strategy corresponded fully with the operational principles of fractionating the enemy's strategic front followed by encirclement and annihilation of his isolated groupings, to include reserves transferred from other sectors. Thus not only the enemy's main forces but also a significant proportion of his reserves were destroyed in the eastern Prussian, Vistula-Oder, Berlin, and other operations.

The total duration of strategic operations also decreased in 1945. Thus while in 1944 most operations took from 45 (L'vov-Sandomierz) to 85 days (defeat of the enemy in the Right-Bank Ukraine), in 1945 the duration of the larger operations, with the exception of the eastern Prussian operation, did not exceed 25-30 days; moreover the Prague operation was only 6 days long.

There were several reasons for the length of the eastern Prussian operation (103 days). First, the main forces of Army Group Center managed to withdraw to Zemlandskiy Peninsula to the environs of Konigsberg, and to the Heilsberg fortified positions. Second, being isolated only on land, the enemy continued to receive ammunition, fuel, and other materiel, which undoubtedly increased his possibilities for resistance. Moreover the Soviet troops, which had suffered serious losses in previous battles, had to successively annihilate enemy groupings defending themselves in fortified regions.

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The depth of strategic operations varied from 120 to 500 km. A distinguishing trait is that the depth of operations was often dependent not only on the combat capabilities of the advancing troops but also on the distance to the line that had to be attained. Thus the depth of the Vienna and Prague operations was the product of the distance of the Austrian and Czechoslovakian capitals from the Soviet-German front line, while the depth of the eastern Prussian and eastern Pomeranian operations was governed by the distance to the coast of the Baltic Sea. In the Berlin operation the Soviet troops were limited in their advance by the River Elba, where they were to meet up with the Allies.

The strategic operations of 1945 generally surpassed the operations of 1944 in terms of the rate of advance. The average rate of advance in the concluding stage of the war was up to 25 km (the average daily rate of advance of tank armies varied from 20 to 40 km, while in the Vistula-Oder operation they achieved the maximum rate--50-70 km). The tank armies were utilized uniquely in that following their commitment to the engagement, as a rule they operated significant distances away from major combined-arms formations (often 50-80 km).

Massed use of tank major formations and formations played a positive role in attainment of operational and strategic goals. Several tank armies and separate tank and mechanized corps were used in each of a number of frontal operations. Thus in the Vistula-Oder and Berlin operations the 1st Belorussian and 1st Ukrainian fronts each possessed two tank armies and two to four separate tank and mechanized corps. Supported by aviation, these units were precisely the decisive force in attainment of the high rates of advance. Having great striking power and mobility, they penetrated enemy defenses swiftly to strategic depths, reaching the flanks and the rear of the enemy groupings. Bold and artful actions by tank major formations and formations made it difficult for the enemy to maneuver his reserves, and it created advantageous conditions for their defeat in parts.

Operations conducted in 1945, such as the eastern Prussian, Berlin, and Prague, are models of combat actions aimed at encircling large enemy groupings. No less interesting from the standpoint of the art of war were the actions aimed at encircling the enemy in the cities of Schneidemuhl, Poznan, Oppeln, and Breslau, in lower and upper Silesia, and in other regions.

The means of encirclement employed in 1945 were the most diverse. In the eastern Prussian operation the entire enemy grouping was cut off by performing an enveloping strike from the lower reaches of the Narew River toward Elbing. During the offensive, two fronts pressed significant German forces to the sea, and their division and annihilation was in fact performed by armies of just one front.

What was new in the defeat of fascist German troops in eastern Prussia was that the grouping, which was separated and then divided into three parts,

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was annihilated successively, beginning with the largest part based at Heilsberg. Soviet forces that were subsequently freed were regrouped on another axis-- in the vicinity Konigsberg and Zemlandskiy Peninsula. The reason it took a long time to annihilate the encircled enemy at Poznan, Breslau, Budapest, and other cities can be explained by the fact that the Soviet command left insignificant forces to complete destruction of the enemy troops, and by difficulties in conducting combat activities. For these reasons as well as because the enemy received reinforcements by sea, his encircled divisions on the Baltic coast (in eastern Prussia and Kurlyandiya) were able to offer prolonged resistance.

Two to three fronts worked simultaneously at strategic depth to encircle strategic enemy groupings, subdivide them, and subsequently annihilate them in the Berlin and Prague operations. In this case enemy encirclement was planned to occur as a rule in conjunction with the enemy's subdivision, which made it possible to defeat him within short time.

The nature of the terrain, which made it possible to perform deep strikes in the Vistula-Oder operation, and the inclination for a high rate of advance served as the grounds for the Soviet command to make powerful divisive strikes in the directions of Poznan, Breslau, and Cracow with the goal of fractionating the enemy's strategic front. In the eastern Pomeranian operation the enemy defenses were subdivided by deep strikes conducted by two fronts reaching to the sea.

The combination of strategies listed above was typical of most strategic operations of 1945. As a rule they began by penetration of enemy defenses simultaneously on several axes by powerful strike groupings. Subsequent deep wedging-in by Soviet troops fractionated and subdivided the enemy front into a number of isolated sectors. This created the conditions for exploiting the offensive by strike groupings on converging axes with the goal of encircling both strategic (in the eastern Prussian, Berlin, and Prague operations) and operational (in the Vistula-Oder, eastern Pomeranian, and other operations) groupings of German troops.

Presence of strategic reserves and their competent concentration on the most important axes at the decisive moment had tremendous significance to preparations for the operations and to attainment of the final victory. Large reserves of personnel, armament, ammunition, transportation, and communication resources were accumulated beforehand under the supervision of the Supreme High Command Headquarters. They were basically created by placing combined-arms and tank armies and separate formations belonging to different arms and services into the Headquarters Reserve. During preparation for and conduct of the campaign, 23 combined-arms and four tank armies were taken out of the composition of the operating fronts, and only two of the armies placed into the Headquarters Reserve were new (9th Guards Army and Polish 2d Army).

One unique feature of operations conducted in 1945 was simultaneous deployment of strike groupings on all strategic axes. This is why most armies present in the Headquarters Reserve were transferred to the fronts back in

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the time of preparations for an offensive. Newly created strategic reserves were used basically to exploit the offensive on the main axis--the Berlin axis. Thus the 3rd, 28th, and 31st armies, placed into the Headquarters Reserve out of the 3rd Belorussian Front, significantly reinforced the 1st Belorussian and 1st Ukrainian fronts in the Berlin operation. In all, 15 of the 18 combined arms armies transferred from the Headquarters Reserve into the standing army were moved to the axis of the main strike. This made it possible to maintain significant superiority in men and equipment over the enemy, and to achieve major results, which in turn had a decisive influence on the course of the armed conflict on other strategic axes of not only the Soviet-German but also the Western Front. Strategic reserves were also maneuvered when the fronts needed additional forces to complete new missions. Thus the 19th Army was transferred to the 2d Belorussian Front in connection with its mission of defeating the enemy in eastern Pomerania, and the 9th Guards Army was transferred to the 3rd Ukrainian Front to create a strike grouping in the Vienna operation.

Reinforcement of the front with reserves and creation of strike groupings on new axes made significant troop transfers necessary. They attained especially great scale during preparations for the January offensive, when many formations and major formations had to be transferred hundreds and even thousands of kilometers. Significant regroupings were performed in the course of combat activities as well. Troops of the 19th Army were advanced from the vicinity of Vologda to eastern Pomerania, troops of the 3rd, 28th, and 31st armies were transferred from eastern Prussia to the Berlin axis, and troops of the Polish 2d Army were transferred from Warsaw to the vicinity of Schneidemuhl and then to lower Silesia. In addition to this, an entire front underwent regrouping: After the eastern Pomeranian operation the 2d Belorussian Front was transferred from the vicinity of Danzig to the lower reaches of the Oder. The Prague operation began after the main forces of the 1st Ukrainian Front were turned from the Berlin Axis to the Prague axis and the main forces of the 2d Ukrainian Front were concentrated in an area north of Vienna.

Performing major regroupings, the Supreme High Command Headquarters achieved a superiority in men and equipment over the enemy on the axes of the main strikes. Typical traits in the organization and conduct of the regroupings included transfer of troops and equipment in limited time over great distances, flexible maneuver of reserves, and competent concentration of forces at the decisive moment on the most important axis. This was made possible due to the supremacy of Soviet aviation in the air.

In 1945 the Soviet command achieved effective strategic interaction among armed forces groupings operating in different sectors of the front. It was organized by the Headquarters, during preparations for the concluding campaign in Europe, and it was constantly maintained throughout it. The efforts of the troops on all axes were efficiently coordinated, the moment of going over to the offensive was clearly determined, the axes of the main and auxiliary strikes were spelled out, and the deadlines for reaching planned lines were planned. Organizing interaction, the Headquarters devoted special

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attention to coordinating the actions of the fronts in behalf of insuring the success of the troops on the main axis.

Interaction during the offensive in January and February took the form of simultaneous frontal strikes between the Baltic Sea and the Danube. Thus the enemy in Poland was defeated simultaneously with active operations by Soviet troops in eastern Prussia and in the Carpathians. Successful combat activities in the vicinity of Budapest and Lake Balaton as well as containment of major enemy forces in Kurlyandiya had important significance to achieving the planned objectives in the central sector. From the standpoint of organizing interaction, the concluding strategic operation--the Berlin operation--is instructive; it was planned and conducted by troops of the 2d and 1st Belorussian and 1st Ukrainian fronts. A concurrent offensive by troops of the 4th, 2d, and 3rd Ukrainian fronts in Czechoslovakia and Austria contained enemy forces on the territory of these countries and prevented the enemy from rendering assistance to the Berlin grouping.

Strategic interaction among different branches of the armed forces was organized as a rule in the interests of the ground troops. Interaction of strategic aviation with ground troops involved utilization of the former against the enemy's airfields, communication centers, and major rear objectives, and usually to amplify the strikes made by frontal air armies. Several air armies were often brought in to support the actions of a single front, as was the case in the assault on Konigsberg and in the Balaton and Vienna operations. Interaction of ground troops with the navy and air force could be seen in the eastern Prussian, eastern Pomeranian, and Berlin operations, as well as in blockade of the Kurlyandiya grouping. Interaction with the air defense forces was achieved by broad use of the air force to cover objectives in the frontal rear. This made it possible to use frontal air defense resources to provide direct cover to the troops.

The experience of coalition strategy enjoyed further development in the concluding stage of the war in Europe. It experienced significant alterations at its foundation. As before, the most important questions were resolved by the heads of state employing personal correspondence, and conferences attended by the leaders of the powers were conducted in critical periods of military events with the participation of representatives from the Soviet Armed Forces General Staff, and the Allied committees of the chiefs of staff. Bilateral and multilateral meetings of chiefs of staff or their authorized representatives and of permanent military and economic missions of these countries were held.

Interaction between the armed forces of states in the anti-Hitler coalition took the form of coordination of combat activities in time, as a rule when this was extremely necessary for the Allies (as with the events in the Ardennes), or it took the form of providing orientation in a particular situation (as before the Berlin operation). Operational interaction of the armed forces was more concrete, taking the form of establishing lines at which Allied troops were to encounter each other and separation lines

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governing the activities of aviation, and coordination of measures concerning administrative problems. On the whole despite absence of a single agency to coordinate the overall effort, this system was sufficiently flexible, and it played a positive role.

Interaction of the Soviet Army with Allied troops operating on the Soviet-German front (Bulgarian, Polish, Romanian, and Czechoslovakian units and formations) was different. It was distinguished by great mutual understanding, military efficiency, and combat effectiveness. Efforts were coordinated with the help of permanent representatives, personal encounters between executives and correspondence between them, and direct contact between commanders of interacting troops. This insured unity of understanding of the operational missions, and purposeful command and control in joint operations.

Use of Soviet military specialists in the armed forces of Poland and Czechoslovakia to help organize training with a consideration for the experience level had great significance. Representatives of the Soviet Military Command and the General Staff, advisors, and instructors were assigned to the operational and troop staffs of Allied troops. Taking part in joint combat actions as components of the fronts and armies of the Soviet Armed Forces and performing concrete missions in the operations, Allied units and formations liberated major centers and areas in their countries (Warsaw, Prague). The Main Command of the Polish Army and the commander of the Czechoslovakian I Army Corps executed missions assigned to them under the guidance of the USSR Supreme High Command Headquarters, and under the political guidance of their national governments. Problems concerning operational use of troops were resolved as a rule by the Soviet Command.

Interaction with the troops of Romania and Bulgaria, the armies of which were distinguished from Soviet troops by their organization, armament, equipment, their training and indoctrination system, and their training level, had somewhat different characteristics. In general, interaction of the troops of these countries with the Soviet Armed Forces entailed their subordination to the Soviet Command. Thus the Romanian 1st and 4th armies fought as part of the 2d Ukrainian Front, while the Bulgarian 1st Army was operationally subordinated to the commander of the 3rd Ukrainian Front. Romanian and Bulgarian formations contained Soviet operational groupings that rendered assistance in organizing the combat activities and controlling the troops; these groupings were commanded by Soviet advisors and signal officers. The staffs of these fronts also contained Romanian and Bulgarian operational groups essentially performing the functions of intermediate links between their troops and Soviet troops. Interaction with the army of Yugoslavia was unique in that joint combat actions were coordinated upon in meetings between Soviet and Yugoslav troop commanders at different levels.

A system of strategic management was developed and tested in the field, and the functions and work methods of the uppermost agencies of the Soviet Military Command were clearly spelled out by 1945. As before, the Supreme

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High Command Headquarters managed the armed conflict through the General Staff and the directorates of the Peoples Commissariat of Defense and the Peoples Commissariat of the Navy. Greater centralization was one of the typical features of Soviet strategy. Because the length of the Soviet-German front decreased, the quantity of frontal major formations declined, the proficiency of the frontal command improved, and it became necessary to organize closer interaction, the Headquarters recognized it suitable to abolish its representatives in those fronts which were operating on the most important strategic axes, leaving them only on the flanks, in Kurlyandiya and in Hungary. The evolved system of supreme command agencies insured successful planning of strategic operations and flexible management of the armed conflict. Frontal troop commanders began to suggest proposals more frequently to the Headquarters and the General Staff, which in turn helped the latter to estimate the situation on strategic axes more deeply and correctly, and to determine the combat capabilities of the fronts better.

The Soviet fronts waged their offensive almost simultaneously on all strategic axes and over a huge area. Despite this, the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command reacted quickly to the current situation, promptly reached new decisions, and implemented them firmly.

As in preceding years, the Supreme High Command Headquarters carried full responsibility before the party Central Committee and the State Defense Committee for the course of the armed conflict on the fronts, for the battleworthiness of the troops, and for the activities of all military executives.

In comparison with the second half of 1944 the total number of fronts decreased in 1945. They were headed by famous troop commanders such as marshals of the Soviet Union A. M. Vasilevskiy, L. A. Govorov, G. K. Zhukov, I. S. Konev, R. Ya. Malinovskiy, K. K. Rokossovskiy, and F. I. Tolbukhin, and generals I. Kh. Bagramyan, A. I. Yerenenko, I. Ye. Petrov, and I. D. Chernyakhovskiy (until 18 February). The frontal staffs were led by generals A. N. Bogolyubov, M. V. Zakharov, S. P. Ivanov, F. K. Korzhenevich, V. V. Kurasov, M. S. Malinin, A. P. Pokrovskiy, M. M. Popov, L. M. Sandalov, and V. D. Sokolovskiy.

The significant rise in the fighting and numerical strength of the fronts and armies, the greater quantity of more-sophisticated types of infantry weapons, artillery, tanks, and airplanes, and the tremendous amount of combat experience accumulated by the command all had a significant influence on development and improvement of operational art and tactics of the Soviet Army.

Frontal and army offensive operations were typified by a reduction of their duration, decisiveness of objectives, utilization of different forms of operational maneuvering, and greater results. As a rule the fronts concentrated their efforts on a single operational axis, making their penetration in from one to three sectors. The fronts allocated 50-70 percent of their rifle formations, 70-80 percent of their artillery, 80-100 percent of

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their tanks and self-propelled guns and usually almost all of their aviation to the breakthrough sector, which occupied 10-15 percent of the total length of the front's zone of advance. This insured creation of a high density of men and equipment and significant superiority over the enemy, and it made it possible to penetrate the enemy's tactical defenses within 1 or 2 days. Creation of powerful strike groupings by the fronts and armies in short time was a distinguishing trait of strategy in 1945. This can be explained by the greater possibilities all arms and services had for maneuvering, and by rapid regrouping of operational and strategic reserves.

After the enemy's tactical defenses were penetrated Soviet troops exploited the success at operational depth. All arms of the ground troops and aviation were employed extensively for this purpose, though tank formations and major formations played a special role. They, as well as the second echelons and reserves, had the decisive role in conducting an uninterrupted offensive, in conducting pursuit, in penetrating enemy lines of defense on the move, and in destroying his withdrawing formations and incoming reserves.

A unique feature of many operations in 1945 was pursuit, which was conducted at a high rate and to a great depth. As a result the enemy was deprived of the possibility for utilizing previously prepared lines, and his reserves were annihilated in parts by Soviet mobile troops and aviation before they could even get to the front line. Pursuit of the enemy was the most effective during the Vistula-Oder operation; it began in the 2d or 3rd day of the offensive and continued without a halt until the Oder was reached. Frontal and army mobile groups and aviation as well as the strong forward detachments of advancing major formations and formations played the main role in this pursuit.

Soviet troops successfully surmounted many water obstacles during their offensive operations, and usually on the move, as was the case when troops of the 1st Belorussian and 1st Ukrainian fronts surmounted the rivers Pilica, Warta, Notec, Obra, Bobr, Oder, Spree, and others. The crossing was usually started by mobile troops and the forward detachments of rifle formations. Their success was insured by a swift crossing to captured bridgeheads by the main forces of the combined-arms armies together with their reinforcements. Soviet troops also improved their proficiency in crossing rivers following planned preparations. The crossing of the Oder by troops of the 2d Belorussian Front and of the Neisse by troops of the 1st Ukrainian Front is of special interest. Artillery and engineering troops as well as specially prepared assault echelons of the rifle troops played an especially important role in planned preparations for the crossing of large rivers. Success depended to a significant extent on suppressing the enemy's defensive firepower on the opposite bank, on timely preparation of crossing resources and crossing equipment, on swift accumulation of men and equipment on bridgeheads captured by the assault echelons, on competent utilization of the possibilities offered by naval river flotillas by the combined-arms commanders, on effective support to troops fighting to widen the bridgeheads, on their air cover, and on powerful artillery fire.

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Making extensive use of the accumulated experience, Soviet troops significantly enriched the theory and practice of organizing and conducting combat actions against large cities, most of which were taken as a result of bold bypass maneuvers by mobile troops, surprise approach of the city by large forces, and their swift attack from several directions. Such actions made it possible to destroy enemy garrisons in swift battles without causing any considerable damage to the cities. This was the strategy followed in liberating Marienburg, Bydgoszcz, Lodz, Cracow, Radom, Czestochowa, Bratislava, Brno, and others. Meanwhile cities such as Budapest, Vienna, Poznan, Elbing, Schneidemuhl, Kostrzyn, Danzig, Konigsberg, Breslau, Berlin, and others that had been carefully prepared by the fascists for a lengthy defense had to be liberated by Soviet troops in savage battles. Rifle subunits reinforced by tanks, artillery, and sappers supported by artillery and aviation played the decisive role in their assault.

Defensive operations by the fronts and armies were insignificant in number in 1945. Soviet troops usually went over to defense in the concluding stage of an operation, basically to secure captured lines, make preparations for the next offensive operation, and repel enemy counterattacks. Thus when troops of the 3rd Ukrainian Front were conducting a defensive operation in the vicinity of Lake Balaton, the Soviet Army, which had a complete grasp on the strategic initiative at that time, conducted major offensives on the other axes of the Soviet-German front. The unique features of actions by the Soviet troops included: steadfastness, high artfulness in organizing antitank defense, greater activity and stability of antitank defense owing to rapid creation of new defensive lines in depth, prompt occupation of these lines by the troops, and swift regrouping of units and formations, especially antitank resources, in threatened sectors. The supremacy of Soviet aviation and its powerful strikes against advancing enemy groupings went a long way to increase stability of defense and created favorable conditions for maneuver.

The Soviet Army's tactics developed under the influence of the growing level of the latest combat equipment possessed by the units and formations, further growth in the proficiency of the enlisted men and officers, and improvement of their moral-combat qualities. This made it possible to conduct the offensive at a high pace, to make large-scale maneuvers on the battlefield, and to achieve decisive defeat of enemy groupings. The greater combat capabilities of the Soviet troops meant that the objectives of rifle divisions and corps penetrating prepared enemy defenses could be increased to 20-25 km. At the same time the breadth of the zone of advance on axes of the main strike decreased somewhat, and it usually did not exceed 1.5-3 km for divisions and 3-5 km for corps. Growth in the density of men and equipment to 6-8 rifle battalions, 230-300 guns and mortars, 25-40 tanks and self-propelled guns providing direct infantry support, and 2-3 engineering-sapper battalions per kilometer of breakthrough front promoted a reduction in the time required for artillery preparation, an increase in the depth to which enemy defenses were simultaneously suppressed, and penetration of tactical defenses within 1 or 2 days.

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The breakthrough was the most complex and difficult stage of the operation, since the advancing troops had to surmount outfitted tactical defense positions, suppress a powerful system of fire, and destroy dense combat formations of enemy troops. As a rule the success of the breakthrough defined the progress of the entire operation. Defenses were penetrated by the coordinated efforts of units and formations in all branches of troops. Creation of high densities of men and equipment in the breakthrough sectors made it possible to decisively strike the enemy throughout the entire depth of his combat formation. Careful preparations made by units and formations for the offensive right in the area of combat activities made it possible to assign missions to the troops more concretely and to organize efficient interaction of infantry, tanks, artillery, engineering troops, and aviation throughout the entire planned depth.

The tactics of penetrating fortified regions underwent further improvement. The method employed was successive annihilation of permanent gun positions coupled with simultaneous destruction of the enemy's covering troops in the field. Special assault groups and detachments consisting of rifle, artillery, tank, sapper, and flamethrower subunits were created to blockade and annihilate permanent gun positions. A preliminary softening period during which aviation and artillery concentrated their strikes against permanent installations was conducted prior to penetration of the enemy's especially strong fortifications (for example in the vicinity of Konigsberg).

Armored formations as well as specially created reinforced forward detachments of rifle divisions, corps, and armies played the decisive role in uninterrupted pursuit of the enemy to great depth. Breaking deeply into enemy territory they broke down withdrawing enemy units into isolated groups, encircled and annihilated them, and blocked access of enemy reserves to defensive lines prepared in the rear. Swift, bold actions by Soviet Units and formations during pursuit and close interaction of armored troops with rifle troops and aviation promoted attainment of high rates of advance.

The defensive actions of the Soviet troops were typified by a high degree of organization and firepower, decisive maneuvering of units and formations from unthreatened sections of the front to threatened axes, and bold counterattacks. In this case the troops capitalized on advantageous terrain, and creation of a deep system of trenches, communication trenches, and obstacles raised the stability of the defenses, facilitated the maneuvering of men and equipment, and afforded protection to troops and combat equipment from artillery fire and strikes by enemy aviation. Artillery played the decisive role in repelling enemy attacks. Massive strikes by German tank formations were successfully repelled by the forces and resources of deeply disposed Soviet antitank defenses. Antitank strongpoints and artillery-antitank reserves acquired important significance; their extensive use, particularly in the Balaton operation, significantly promoted failure of the enemy's counteroffensive.

On the whole the tactics of the offensive and defensive actions of the Soviet Army were distinguished in 1945 by improvements in the organization

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of breakthrough tactics, pursuit of withdrawing units, assault of cities, maintenance of stable interaction between infantry, tanks, artillery, and aviation throughout the entire depth of the battle, creation of a powerful, insurmountable defense in short time, development of the artfulness of maneuvers performed in offense and defense; and flexible control of units and formations on the battlefield.

As in 1944, the principal missions of the Soviet Air Force were to maintain air supremacy and conduct joint actions with ground troops. Improvements in combat use of aviation followed the lines of decisive massing of air power on the axes of the main strikes of the campaigns and operations, raising the effectiveness of actions against objectives deep in the enemy's strategic rear and against his reserves in the course of penetration of enemy defenses, maintenance of close interaction with mobile troops, and their escort at strategic depth. This necessitated concentration of large air forces within narrow sectors for penetration of enemy defenses. Thus formations of five air armies and aviation of the Baltic Fleet were called in to defeat the Konigsberg grouping in short time. Because Soviet aviation enjoyed air superiority, bombers of division and corps strength could make massed strikes on a greater scale (strikes by bomber corps against Konigsberg, against accumulations of the enemy northwest of Warsaw, and in the vicinity of crossings over the Vistula). Air support to actions by mobile troops improved. Maintenance of close interaction was promoted by operational subordination of ground attack and fighter formations to tank army commanders and to tank and mechanized corps commanders.

Active operations by the navy played an important role in 1945. Its forces participated in the blockade and liquidation of fascist German groupings pressed to the coastline, in providing cover to the maritime flanks of friendly ground forces, in the landing of assault troops, in supporting the crossings of water obstacles, and in interdicting enemy marine lines of communication and protecting friendly lines. Extensive maneuver of mobile coastal artillery in short time from one operational axis to another, and massing of naval aviation against enemy convoys and warships at sea and against naval bases and ports with the goal of preventing evacuation of enemy troops pressed against the sea were new tactics of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet. The following were typical of the actions of this fleet: swift regrouping of its forces westward in the course of the offensive of the ground troops, transfer of a significant number of torpedo and patrol boats, gunboats, and minesweepers by rail, organization of maneuverable basing of fleet forces at previously unimproved or knocked-out points along the sea-coast protected by sizable minefields, and preparation and landing of tactical marine assault landing groups in short time. However, the shortage of ships and the extremely limited possibilities for basing the Red Banner Baltic Fleet kept it from completing its mission of blockading enemy groupings. In January-March 1945 the Germans managed to evacuate 13 divisions and a brigade by sea from Kurlyandiya and Memel.

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Naval forces continued to improve the tactics of protecting their marine lines of communication. In antisubmarine defense, creation of special hunter-killer groups consisting of surface ships and aviation and having the mission of detecting and annihilating enemy submarines at sea became a more widespread practice. Losses of ships at sea were reduced mainly by employing covering tactics such as ring defense of transporters sailing in convoys and reinforcement of forward defenses by setting up a second screen of security ships, and by making broad use of fighter aviation for air defense purposes.

The National Air Defense Forces played a great role in operations of the Soviet Army. In addition to defending the country's most important economic regions and administrative centers, a significant part of their men and equipment were assigned to cover rail and water lines of communication and other objectives in the frontal rear (crossings over the Vistula, Danube, and Oder, providing cover to regroupings of strategic reserves, and defense of industrial objectives in Ploesti, Silesia, the Dombrow coal basin, and other regions). Antiaircraft artillery and fighter formations of the air defense forces participated in aerial blockade of surrounded enemy troops in Budapest, Poznan, Breslau, and other cities. The IV, V, and X air defense corps, which possessed 1,740 antiaircraft guns, 1,300 antiaircraft machineguns, 323 searchlights, and 235 fighters, took part in just the Berlin operation alone. Improvements in the combat applications of National Air Defense Forces and resources went along the lines of their greater massing for dependable cover of principal objectives in the rear, establishment of close interaction with frontal air defense forces, and decisive maneuvering of antiaircraft artillery and fighters with the goal of creating high densities on the most important axes.

The work of rear services agencies in 1945 was typified by bold advancement of all rear units and services as well as materiel to the troops, prompt movement of rear units and services behind the advancing fronts, flexible maneuvering of reserve rear personnel and equipment during operations, and broad utilization of Western European railroads to bring materiel to the troops and perform operational shipments during the regroupings of frontal and strategic reserves.

Thus Soviet art of war, which assimilated and generalized the tremendous experience of preceding years, attained an even higher level of development in 1945 and demonstrated its superiority over the art of war of the Fascist German Army. Important problems were successfully solved, to include preparing and conducting a strategic offensive along the entire front and to great depth, planning and conducting a number of successive strategic operations in depth, organizing interaction among arms and services, and regrouping fronts and armies over great distances.

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## 2. The Art of War of Armed Forces of the USA and Great Britain

The politics and strategy of the USA and Great Britain were governed in 1945 in many ways by the goals and conditions of the war in Europe, which evolved mainly as a result of the victorious offensive of the Soviet Armed Forces. In this stage of the struggle the Western Allies required their troops to act more decisively on the Western Front. England and the United States attempted to create advantageous political and strategic positions in Europe before the end of the war on this continent. Thus beginning in February 1945 the strategic offensive became the principal form of action of Anglo-American armed forces on the Western Front.

The general structure of the armed forces of the USA and England remained the same in the concluding stage of the war in Europe. They consisted of two basic branches--armies and navies. As before, the air forces were within the composition of the army and navy. Despite swift development of aviation and its greater role, it was never separated out as an independent branch. Development of the armed forces proceeded mainly along the lines of outfitting them with new, more sophisticated models of armament and combat equipment.

A distinguishing feature of the ground forces of the USA and England in Europe was presence of a large number of tank divisions, brigades, and battalions. Thus by the beginning of April there were 25 tank divisions on the Western and Italian fronts. Anglo-American divisions were almost completely motorized. The typical infantry division possessed 1,440 motor vehicles, while the armored division had 1,141. There was one motor vehicle for every 10 men in the infantry division, and one for every nine men in the armored division. Despite the high availability of motor transportation, however, the operations showed that the maneuverability of the Allied armies was low. One of the reasons for this was the cumbersomeness of the divisions. Thus the length of a column of march formed by a reinforced infantry division was 250-300 km.

Numerous American and English rear services were created to provide logistical support to Allied expeditionary forces in Europe. While during the operations of northwestern France (in the second half of 1944) their strength was about 526,000 men, by 30 April 1945 it was about 980,000-- that is, about 20 percent of the total strength of expeditionary forces in Europe.

The organization of units and formations in the U.S. Army did not experience significant changes, with the exception of armored troops. Reorganization of the armored division was finished by the beginning of 1945. Now that tank regiments were abolished, the division consisted of battalions. The quantity of tanks was decreased by 25 percent, and the division became less cumbersome and more maneuverable. Moreover separate tank battalions were formed and attached to infantry divisions (one or two battalions to a division); they were also used as a tank reserve in the corps, army, and army group. In this case the battalions were brought together into tank groups (two to four battalions in each).

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The air forces of the Allied expeditionary troops in Europe had absolute superiority over the enemy. As before, the air armies continued to be the largest major formations of the American air forces. They were subdivided into strategic and tactical depending on their purpose and the nature of their mission. The strategic air army consisted of two or three air divisions and other units, and it had a strength from 1,600 to 3,000 airplanes. The tactical army included two fighter air commands and a bomber air command, as well as other units, and it possessed from 600 to 2,000 airplanes.

The air force began to receive massive quantities of B-29 strategic bombers, Lockheed P-80, Northrop P-61, and Bell P-63 jet fighters, and the Douglas A-26 light bomber. From the moment the expeditionary forces landed in Western Europe until the day of victory over fascist Germany, 274 new and old airfields were built and restored just for American tactical aviation alone. Such a large volume of construction was possible only owing to extensive utilization of prefabricated parts and structures (pierced steel planking, airfield equipment), and owing to a high level of job mechanization.

The U.S. Navy continued to develop, and strike and escort carriers were built at a high rate. Aircraft carriers assumed a firm foothold as the main strike force of the navy. The program for 1945 foresaw construction of two carriers with a displacement of 45,000 tons each and two with a displacement of 27,000 tons, 12 escort carriers, and cruisers, destroyers, and submarines. During this period marine aviation was complemented by several new types of airplanes, but they did not participate in the combat actions, though some of the craft did undergo field trials.

The strength of the British Armed Forces did not change significantly by the end of the war with fascist Germany. In this case more than 50 percent of the total number of combat formations and of the strength of the ground troops consisted of troops from British dominions. The USA made the principal contribution to growth in the number of divisions operating in Europe in 1945. At the end of April, 61 of the 88 Allied divisions were American. Significant growth in the number of American divisions could not but have an effect on the weight carried by each particular Ally in determination of the coalition's strategy. The organizational structure of the British Armed Forces, including the organization of the division, remained as before. The British Royal Navy attained its maximum strength in January 1945, and it did not experience significant changes until the end of the war in Europe.

The mission of Anglo-American troops in the last stage of the war in Europe, in 1945, was to defeat enemy troops in Western Germany and then gain its central regions. The strikes aimed at attaining these end goals were to be performed in three stages, each of which represented a strategic operation.

As in the previous years of the war, the plans for actions by the armed forces of the USA and England were drawn up by the Combined Allied Command. There were great difficulties in coordinating upon plans for the coalition's strategy in the Combined Committee of the Chiefs of Staff and in the staffs

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of the Allied expeditionary forces. These difficulties were surmounted either through mutual compromises or through pressure exerted by one member of the coalition upon the others; they were surmounted quickly as a rule when the situation necessitated an immediate decision. Thus disagreements arose in 1945 concerning selection of the axis of the main strike. Each of the countries tried to maintain its political interests uppermost, all of which boiled down to one thing--increasing their influence in Europe. The conflicts generated mistrust and openly unfriendly relations between American and English generals and officers, which had a ruinous effect on the course of the operation. There were often cases in which English troops were conducting an offensive while Americans stood in place and vice versa. The German Command was able to transfer its troops from one axis to another, and to parry the blows of the Allied armies with smaller forces. This was precisely one of the main reasons that Anglo-American troops bogged down at the Siegfried Line.

Selection of the axis of the main strike was based primarily on the significance of that axis which would lead by the shortest route to the most important economic and political centers, and, in addition, which was characterized by terrain permitting the use of all arms and services and created convenient conditions for organizing logistical support to the main grouping. For this purpose the Allied Command concentrated large strategic groupings of ground troops and air forces on the axis of the main strike, insuring an overwhelming superiority over the enemy, especially in technical combat resources.

The strategic offensive on the Western Front was conducted by three army groups (6th, 12th, and 21st) as well as by significant tactical and strategic air forces. An army group contained 20-40 divisions, 8,000-16,000 guns and mortars, and 2,000-4,000 tanks. The tactical air army interacted with it; moreover strategic bomber aviation (up to 2,000 airplanes and more) was called in for its support. The Fascist German Command did not have a possibility for allocating a sufficient quantity of ground troops and aviation for stubborn actions on the Western Front. This is why all offensive operations by Anglo-American troops in Europe in 1945 were conducted as a rule with an overwhelming general superiority in men and equipment, especially aviation and tanks. Preparations took less time than in previous years, and the operations themselves were conducted with more-decisive goals and to a greater depth than in 1944. The reason for this lay mainly in political considerations, in the desire to occupy Germany's central regions before the Soviet Army could.

The goal of the offensive operation was to defeat opposing enemy groupings, capture important operational or strategic objectives and lines, and create the conditions for conducting subsequent operations. Thus the goal of the offensive by the 21st Army Group in the Ruhr operation (23 March-19 April) was to cross the River Rhine, defeat the forces of the enemy's 1st Parachute and 5th Tank armies, and to encircle and annihilate the main forces of the Ruhr grouping in interaction with the 12th Army Group. The main strike was usually made against the weakest area of the defenses--the flanks of the operational groupings. Up to two-thirds of all manpower and equipment

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(especially in armored divisions) and almost all aviation were concentrated on the axis of the main strike. Airborne assault parties were employed to increase the depth of operations and the rate of advance and to permit crossing of water obstacles on the move (for example during the crossing of the Rhine).

The operational structure of the army groups usually consisted of a single echelon. This was explained by the desire to attain maximum power in the initial strike. Forces and resources were massed in narrow breakthrough sectors on the axes of the main strikes. Thus the 21st Army Group created the following densities on the axis of main strike in the operation to cross the Rhine (February-March): one division for every 3.2 km, and 100-130 guns per kilometer of front line. As a rule the operations were conducted by forces 2-2.5 times superior over the enemy in infantry, 4-6 times in tanks, and 10-20 times in aviation.

An offensive operation conducted by army groups began with penetration of enemy defenses by frontal strikes in one or two sectors, and only after the defenses had been reliably suppressed. Large tactical and, in a number of cases, strategic air forces played the priority role in fire suppression of defenses. An offensive operation conducted by army groups and field armies was usually preceded by air preparation, which was subdivided into preliminary and immediate (the former occurring several days before going over to the offensive). Preliminary air preparation was undertaken with the goal of weakening the defending enemy, disturbing control and the work of the rear, and preventing approach of enemy reserves. Immediate air support was conducted prior to the attack by the main forces of the assault echelon of the field armies (it lasted from an hour to around 5 hours). During it, bomb strikes were made in the breakthrough sectors with a great density of suppression, attaining up to 300 tons of bombs and more per square kilometer.

Although aviation played the main role in fire suppression of the enemy, artillery was also given a significant place. Artillery preparation for an offensive lasted from 30 minutes to several hours. Sometimes it was substituted by a 10-15 minute artillery strike with the goal of achieving surprise. Support was provided to the attack of infantry and tanks by successive concentration of fire or by a moving barrage to a depth of 2-4 km.

As a rule the offensive entailed advance from line to line, without deep penetrations by the troops into the enemy rear. Whenever the troops encountered strong resistance, they halted. The advance was resumed only after aviation and supporting artillery dependably suppressed the centers of resistance. The excessively methodical and extremely cautious actions typical of offensives undertaken by Anglo-American troops slowed down their rate of advance, which often permitted the Germans to slip away from attacks and withdraw their troops to lines in the rear.

The command of the expeditionary forces twice attempted to penetrate the defenses of the fascist German troops in several sectors and then to exploit

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the offensive along convergent axes. (the operation of the 21st Army Group in February-March, and crossing of the River Rhine and encirclement of the Ruhr grouping in March-April). However, it was successful in encircling and capturing German troops only in the Ruhr industrial region. The success of this operation was promoted by absence of reserves at the disposal of the Wehrmacht Command, as well as by the dramatic decline in morale of the German troops elicited by major defeats on the Soviet-German front and in the west. American troops managed to quickly gain the rear of enemy troops operating in the Ruhr, and to create a sufficiently dense inner front of encirclement. The German Command had neither the manpower nor the equipment to render assistance to its armies. During the crossing of the Rhine and encirclement of the enemy's Ruhr grouping, the depth of the operations was 120-160 km, with the average rate of advance being 12-15 km per day.

The U.S. and Great Britain made broad use of their air forces both in independent operations having the goal of undermining the potential of Germany's war economy, and in joint actions with ground troops and naval forces. Operations conducted by strategic aviation were not decisive to victory in the war; however its concentrated strikes against enterprises of some industrial sectors were effective. Aviation did significant damage to plants producing synthetic fuel, and certain results were achieved in disorganizing the work of transportation in the enemy rear. Strategic air formations were also used for direct support of ground troops, to assist in the landing of naval and airborne assault parties, to lay mines across the enemy's marine lines of communication, and to annihilate his ships and destroy his naval bases. In this stage of the war in Europe the principal missions of the air forces were placed in their final form, to be written into American and British postwar manuals and regulations concerning the use of air forces: air surveillance of the region of combat activities, direct air support to ground troops, air reconnaissance, and military air-lift support.

Operations conducted by the strategic air forces of the USA and Great Britain offered little to be learned in relation to attaining air supremacy, since it was being maintained constantly by the Anglo-American air forces. Nevertheless every operation was mandatorily preceded by raids against enemy airfields by Anglo-American aviation with the objective of maintaining unshared supremacy in the air, without which it would have been impossible for either the ground troops or the naval forces to conduct their operations successfully.

The ground troops were provided immediate support throughout the entire depth of operations by continuous strikes by major air forces. Massing on the main axis was the fundamental principle of the use of tactical aviation. It was broadly employed to isolate the region of combat activities from enemy reserves and to prevent the enemy from bringing in materiel. With this purpose it struck road junctions, bridges, crossings, columns of troops, and enemy equipment.

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American and English navies gained more experience in preparing and conducting special antisubmarine operations in the Atlantic, convoy escort operations, and combat activities aimed at annihilated enemy naval forces at bases and interdicting marine lines of communication. These operations led to development of new naval strategy.

Thus the art of war of the armed forces of the USA and England enjoyed further development in the concluding stage of the war Europe, which had a significant influence on its postwar level.

### 3. Unique Features of Fascist German Art of War

Powerful strikes by the Soviet Armed Forces and troops of the Western Allies deprived fascist Germany's war machine of the possibility for utilizing the economies of previously occupied countries, and they elicited a dramatic reduction of the industrial base and loss of strategic raw material sources, which predetermined the rapid fall in production of armament and combat equipment. Thus the Nazi leadership became directly persuaded of the fallaciousness of the motto "war feeds on itself," which prior to the attack on the Soviet Union was one of the leading principles of the German general staff in its planning of the "lightning" wars.

A tendency toward organizing production of defensive resources not requiring considerable expenditures of manpower and materiel became typical of fascist Germany's war industry. Production of hand-held antitank grenade throwers increased significantly, attempts were undertaken to create remote-control high-explosive antitank rockets, and production of surface-to-air missiles was organized. Nazi Germany's war industry was unable to satisfy the needs of the troops for aviation and armored equipment; it was forced to completely halt construction of surface vessels, and to concentrate its basic attention on new series of submarines.

Defense was the principal form of the Wehrmacht's combat activities. The German Command tried to win time to reach political objectives by maintaining a stubborn strategic defense in the East. This is why the most battle-worthy forces were transferred to the Soviet-German front. Posing its objective as fighting "to the last soldier," the fascist leadership undertook the most barbarian methods of warfare. However, extreme cruelty and inhumanity never became the means for either achieving the goals or compensating for strength.

The Wehrmacht's defense of the Eastern Front was typified by high activity of troops holding onto important regions and lines. Their actions were accompanied by broad use of counterattacks, which sometimes mushroomed into a counteroffensive (in the Ardennes and at Lake Balaton). By maneuvering its troops, the German Command managed to create powerful strike groupings on the main axes. As an example up to 70 tanks and assault guns were concentrated per kilometer in the breakthrough sector near Lake Balaton. But

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despite the persistence of the military leadership in attaining its posed goals, all attempts to attain at least strategic gains were reduced to nought on this front. As a rule the Soviet Command was able to deduce the enemy's plans and simultaneously organize repulsion of his strikes. The superiority of Soviet strategic thought revealed itself graphically and persuasively in the course of the eastern Pomeranian operation, when the efforts of a major enemy grouping at cutting off, by a flanking strike, and annihilating Soviet troops that had reached the Oder were foiled.

One of the most vulnerable places in the defense of the fascist troops in 1945 was the lack of reserves. The reserve army consisted of newly formed units and formations and those withdrawn to the rear for recuperation and replenishment. The German Supreme High Command tried to resolve the reserve problem by taking large numbers of personnel out of aviation and the navy and placing them into the ground troops. Losses in the units and formations were compensated by formation of local detachments, and large number of militia subunits were created. Transferring troops from the Western Front to the Soviet-German front was an especially broad practice (the 6th SS Tank Army, the 12th Army). The main mission of the reserves was to plug holes punched into the strategic front, to make counterattacks and, much more rarely, to occupy important deep defensive lines and to conduct counter-offensives (Ardennes, Balaton). The strategic defense was conducted by ground troops in close interaction with the air force and, on the maritime axis, the navy.

The main mission of fascist Germany's air forces during the period of strategic defense was to support ground troops. The fascist leadership was forced to abandon its practice of striking strategic objectives in the Soviet Army rear. Some of the aviation was used to cover industrial and administrative centers as well as important objectives.

The navy continued to support ground troops operating on maritime axes. Reserves and materiel were transferred and some groupings blockaded from land were transferred by sea. It should be noted that by as early as the beginning of 1945 the Fascist German Navy experienced limited basing possibilities. This hindered its actions, and especially its fight against the marine lines of communication of the anti-Hitler coalition.

No special changes of any sort occurred in the structure of strategic management of fascist Germany toward the end of the war in Europe, though attempts were made to find new organizational forms. An order merging the operational staff of the armed forces with the general staff of the ground troops was issued on 24 April. The purpose of this decision was to create a single organ of strategic direction. Operational Staff B--a unique branch of the Supreme Command--was formed to manage defense of Germany's southern regions together with the "Headquarters of the Western Troop Commander." The "Western German Defense Headquarters" was organized in the north and commanded by Grand Admiral Donitz. But none of these measures was able to influence the development of events.

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The Fascist German Army acquired a great deal of experience in conducting defensive operations in the last three and a half years. The Wehrmacht's defensive actions mainly involved maximum application of all forces and resources in the first operational echelon. The actions of troops in the main defense zone were distinguished by stubbornness and stability, and rather high activity expressed as a large quantity of counterattacks and counterstrikes. Because of the Fascist German Command's repressive measures the troops fought savagely even in completely hopeless conditions (Budapest, Konigsberg, Breslau, Berlin).

One unique feature of defenses in 1945 was the high degree of engineering preparation of the terrain to a great depth (200 km in eastern Prussia and 500 km between the Vistula and the Oder).

Army group defenses consisted of a tactical and an operational zone. The tactical zone contained two areas--the main area (the "main battlefield") and the second area (the "corps reserve position"), and by the end of the war it attained a depth of 10-20 km. The operational zone consisted of a third area (the "army reserve position"), which was 20-25 km from the forward edge of the main area, and the "army group reserve position," which was 50-80 km from the forward edge. The defense system of the army group included previously prepared fortified regions, which increased the overall depth of defenses from 60-100 km to 120-150 km. An example of this can be found in the structure of defenses on the Kostrzyn-Berlin axis, where the field defenses were for practical purposes part of the Berlin Defensive Region.

Static ("stable") and maneuverable ("holding") defenses were the principal types. The latter type was employed when there were not enough forces to organize "stable" defenses, or when troops had to withdraw to strategic depth. Sometimes the combat activities followed the principle of "elastic defense"--a combination of stubborn, prepared defense on the main axes and lines, and maneuver on secondary axes and intermediate lines. It should be noted that the German leadership showed preference for static defenses in the concluding stage of the war in Europe.

The operational structure of defending armies and army groups usually consisted of a single echelon and reserves allocated from it, consisting of tank corps or tank and motorized divisions. The enemy fought hardest in the tactical zone, especially in the main area, to which he committed not only corps but also army reserves. The main burden fell on infantry divisions reinforced by artillery and tanks. Tank and motorized divisions were in the reserve of the army or army group, and they were used in counterstrikes. As a rule they were employed in battles for the tactical zone. Thus the XXIV and XL tank corps (the army group reserve in the Vistula-Oder operation) were committed to the battle for the second area of defense. In the Berlin operation the army reserves were committed to the battle for the (Zelovskiy) Heights in the second area.

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Counterstrikes were made from one or several directions from the base created by troop groupings wedging themselves into enemy lines. Such was the strategy of the counterstrikes made by the eastern Pomeranian, Gorlitz, and other groupings. The enemy made counterstrikes on the shortest axis with the goal of breaking the blockade of encircled troops. This was what the 12th Army and the encircled Frankfurt-Guben grouping did during the Berlin operation. However, even with numerous counterstrikes the Fascist German Command was unable to restore the torn front of its defenses. A lack of reserves and the tendency to hold occupied lines without a consideration for the evolved situation led to unnecessary losses. An attempt to create stable defenses along large water obstacles (Narew, Vistula, Oder, Rhine, and others) failed to justify itself as well. Thus as in previous years, in 1945 the Fascist German Command failed to solve the problem of creating stable operational defenses.

Tactics was the strongest aspect of the Wehrmacht's art of war. Typical traits of tactical defense by German troops was stubborn retention of the "main battlefield," meticulously planned combat activities for it, and swift, decisive, and competent maneuvering of tank units and subunits in the event that defenses were penetrated.

Due to large losses on the Eastern Front the fascist command was forced to constantly change the organizational structure of its units and formations. Most divisions had a reduced manning. Although the number of regiments remained as before, they were reorganized with a two-battalion composition, while field air divisions and light infantry divisions had a two-regiment composition. The number of armored units in tank divisions decreased for practical purposes to 110-120.\* The number of personnel in the units and formations constantly changed as well. This forced reorganization continued until practically the last days of the war.

Fascist German troops acquired experience in maintaining tactical defenses back in 1943-1944. Significant reduction of the front line in 1945 permitted the German Command to create powerful, deeply disposed defenses on the most important axes, making use of diverse engineering resources. The defenses became continuous, and they were structured according to the principle of combining trenches with strongpoints and centers of resistance. The defense system made broad use of rivers, canals, population centers, the dense network of highways and railroads, and manmade obstacles (trenches, slides, traps, and so on); permanent (reinforced concrete) gun positions, hardened command and observation posts, antitank ditches, various wire entanglements, concrete and wooden dragons' teeth, and metal hedgehogs were erected. Minefields were created especially frequently.

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\* Bagreyev, A., "Voyennoye iskusstvo kapitalisticheskikh gosudarstv (1939-1945 gg.)" (The Art of War of Capitalist States (1939-1945)), Moscow, 1960, p 88.

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Much attention was devoted in organizing the defenses to selection and utilization of the terrain. Preference was given to that terrain which favored organization of strongpoints and antitank defenses, which permitted deep disposition, which offered good approaches for friendly troops, and which was concealed from observation by advancing troops.

The defensive tactics of fascist German troops pursued the goal of defeating the main forces of the advancing troops ahead of the forward edge of the "main battlefield," or at least within it. Whenever Soviet troops wedged themselves into the main defense area, persistent, numerous counterattacks were made with artillery support. German troop commanders adhered fully in their use of tanks to the troop command manual, which stated: "Tanks should be used in an offensive manner. They are the decisive reserve in the hands of a combined-arms commander, and they are especially useful in counterattacks as well as against enemy tanks."\* Very frequently, especially in the Berlin operation, tanks were used as small subunits (platoons, companies) for action in ambushes. Antitank defense was provided by artillery (including antiaircraft), tanks, and assault guns, and minefields and other antitank obstacles were created.

Thus in its defensive battles, the Fascist German Command relied on strong, well organized mortar and artillery fire, a broad network of engineering obstacles and manmade and natural barriers, and on the stability and active nature of the actions of friendly troops. However, despite all of the strong aspects of German defensive tactics, the German defenses could not compete with the great artfulness of the Soviet Command, and they did not play the role for which they were intended. On the whole, inconsistency between goals and real potentials was typical of the art of war of Nazi Germany throughout the entire war, and especially in 1945.

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The art of war of countries in the anti-Hitler coalition developed in 1945 in a close relationship with growth in their military-economic potential and with the combat experience acquired in previous years. In the concluding stage of the war in Europe the Soviet Armed Forces as well as the armies of the USA and Great Britain basically conducted strategic offensive operations having the objective of the Wehrmacht's total defeat. All of these operations were conducted by allied armies maintaining a superiority in men and equipment. The major strategic operations of the Soviet Armed Forces had a decisive influence on the combat activities of the Anglo-American troops. The Soviet Army's January offensive, which developed over a tremendous front, caused failure of the counteroffensive of fascist German troops on the Western Front and created favorable conditions for the Allies for switching to active operations.

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\* "Polevyye ustavy inostrannykh armiy" (Foreign Army Field Manuals), Moscow, 1936, pp 163-164.

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As in the previous years of the war, the decisive events of 1945 occurred on the land front. Defeat of the armies of fascist Germany was precisely what led it to unconditional surrender. Actions of the navies of the USA and England were basically aimed at protecting Allied marine lines of communication. Fascist Germany's surface fleet and aviation, which had been significantly weakened, and the still rather strong submarine fleet could no longer do tangible harm to the warships and transporters of the Allied powers. Their powerful navies supported shipping without serious losses.

The adventurism of the ruling circles of Fascist Germany revealed itself especially clearly in 1945. It made its impression on the entire military system of the country and, in turn, on its strategy. Faulty at its foundation, and structured on the basis of an exaggeration of the role played by subjective factors, its war strategy turned out to be incapable of fulfilling the social needs of the German monopolies, and it ended in total bankruptcy. Attempts by the Nazi leadership to gain time for resolving political problems by maintaining a stubborn strategic defense failed: It was unable to achieve any of its objectives.

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.  
THE USSR'S STRUGGLE FOR A DEMOCRATIC PEACE

[pp 475-499] 4. The Potsdam Conference

The end of the war in Europe and defeat and surrender of fascist Germany posed a number of complex foreign policy problems in all of their acuity before the great powers--the USSR, the USA, and England. Their positions in relation to defeated Germany's politics and economy had to be quickly coordinated, and questions concerning the German-Polish border had to be resolved. Coordination also had to be achieved in the policies of the three powers in relation to the former allies and satellites of Nazi Germany, as well as in relation to a number of other problems.

Having endured improbable suffering during World War II, the peoples of Europe impatiently awaited decisions on the questions which would eradicate fascism and militarism in Germany, avert the danger that it might start another war, and insure solution of all unresolved problems on the basis of the principles of democracy and justice. Another conference by the executives of the three powers--the USSR, the USA, and Great Britain--was needed for this purpose.

Preparations for the conference began immediately after Germany's surrender. The English government was especially anxious, believing that the sooner the conference would be convened, the stronger would be the positions of England and the USA in it. Churchill was also anxious because Parliamentary elections were to be held in the beginning of June. Not being certain how the English voters would vote, he wished to take part in a meeting of the leaders of the three powers before the elections. However, the American government suggested scheduling the conference for mid-July 1945. This is precisely the time at which the United States planned to test its first atomic bomb. The USA apparently believed that this event would serve as its main trump card at the conference.

In the forthcoming conference the English government intended to take the most unbending position in regard to all issues and to try to impose its conditions upon the Soviet Union. Churchill wanted to "make battle" with

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the Soviet delegation, especially in the concluding stage. He even tried to conceal the fact that he hoped more for "an open split" than for agreement with the USSR's proposal concerning the western border of Poland.<sup>1</sup>

The U.S. President also suggested taking a hard line at the conference, but under the present conditions he did not feel it possible to go as far as Churchill wanted to. This was explained to certain extent by the fact that the United States was still fighting a war with Japan. Therefore the U.S. government did not feel it possible to aggravate relations with the USSR, since it required its participation in the defeat of Japanese aggressors.

The governments of the three powers expressed the unanimous opinion that Berlin would be the most appropriate place for the conference. However, because the city was severely damaged, a decision was made to hold the conference near Berlin, in Potsdam.

The Potsdam conference was opened on 17 July. The Soviet Union's delegation was headed by I. V. Stalin, that of the United States was headed by H. Truman, and that of England was headed first by W. Churchill and, as of 28 July, the new Prime Minister, C. Attlee. The conference was also attended by the ministers of foreign affairs of the three powers--V. M. Molotov, J. Byrnes, and A. Eden (who was subsequently replaced by A. Bevan), as well as by other diplomatic and military officials.

The German question was the principal one discussed in Potsdam. Following its defeat and unconditional surrender, Germany was occupied by Allied troops, which exercised supreme power in the country. The country's subsequent course of development had to be determined without delay, the policies of the occupying powers had to be coordinated, the goals of the occupation had to be spelled out, and a number of other important political and economic problems had to be solved. The borders of Germany had not been established, and it had neither a government nor any sort of organs of national rule. The country's economy was in a state of shambles. Total war waged by the Nazis led the country to complete ruin. In a discussion of the question as to precisely what Germany was then, Stalin noted that it was difficult to give any definition other than that of a "broken country."<sup>2</sup>

Basing themselves on decisions on Germany made by the three powers in the Crimean conference, in the European Consultative Commission, and in the first meetings of the Control Council in Germany,<sup>3</sup> representatives of the USSR, USA, and England examined measures concerning demilitarization, denazification, and democratization of Germany, as well as many other important issues associated with determining the subsequent state of the German people.

The "Political and Economic Principles To Be Followed in Dealing With Germany in the Initial Period of Control" were adopted in Potsdam. The goal of this agreement was to develop Germany as a democratic and peaceful state. "German militarism and Nazism will be eradicated," read the concluding communique of the conference, "and the Allies, on agreement with one another, will also implement other measures now and in the future so that Germany would never

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again threaten its neighbors or peace in all the world."<sup>4</sup> At the same time the three powers declared that they had no intention of annihilating the German people or placing them in slavery. They declared their intention to give the people of Germany the possibility for reconstructing their life on a democratic and peaceful basis, such that with time they would be able to assume their place among the free and peaceful peoples of the world.

As an elaboration upon decisions made at the Crimean conference, agreement was reached in Potsdam that the goals of Germany's occupation were to completely disarm and demilitarize it, as well as to liquidate all German industry that might be used in war production, or to place it under surveillance. In order to forestall the rebirth of German militarism and fascism forever, a decision was made to disband all of Germany's ground, naval, and air forces, the SS, the SA, the SD, and the Gestapo together with all their organizations, including the General Staff, as well as other military and paramilitary organizations serving the interests of maintaining military traditions. All arms were to be transferred to the Allies or destroyed, and production of weapons, military gear, and implements of war as well as all types of airplanes and sea-going vessels was prohibited.

The decisions of the Potsdam conference foresaw abolition of the National Socialist Party and organizations under its control, forestallment of their rebirth in any form, and prevention of all fascist activity or propaganda. All fascist laws were repealed. Active members of the National Socialist Party were removed from important posts in public organizations and in major enterprises. At the same time all democratic parties and free trade unions were permitted and encouraged, and the population of Germany was given the freedom of speech and press within the framework of the occupation.

It was established that during the occupation Germany was to be viewed as a single economic whole. This pertained to industry and agriculture, wages and prices, import and export, the monetary system and taxes, and transportation and communication. Creation of central administrative departments was foreseen in the areas of finances, transportation, communication, foreign trade, and industry.<sup>5</sup>

It was confirmed in Potsdam that during the initial control period supreme power would be exercised in Germany by the commanders in chief of the armed forces of the USSR, the USA, England, and France, in their occupation zones respectively. In relation to problems common to all of Germany they were to act jointly as members of the Control Council.

The Soviet delegation made the proposal that the main arsenal of German militarism--the Ruhr industrial region--should be placed under the joint surveillance of the USA, Great Britain, USSR, and France in administrative respects, and that it should be administered by an Allied council composed of representatives of these countries.<sup>6</sup> However, the United States of America and England would not agree to establishing surveillance over the

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Ruhr with the participation of the USSR. Their ruling circles had begun considering the question as to how to transform Germany into an outpost against the Soviet Union and to utilize its military economic potential, which was concentrated mainly in the Western occupation zones, in their own interests.

One of the questions that graphically revealed the imperialist nature of U.S. and English policy and elicited acute debate was reparations. An agreed-upon decision on it was not obtained until the very end of the conference. Reparations were to be a means of economic disarmament of Germany, and concurrently a means of partial compensation for the damage inflicted upon states sacrificed to the aggression. It had been agreed upon back in Yalta that Germany was obligated to compensate for damage inflicted by it upon other countries during the war; the USA had agreed with the Soviet Union's proposal of adopting \$20 billion in reparations as the basis for discussion in the reparation commission. Now, at the Potsdam conference, the U.S. reneged on its former position on this question.

The territory of the United States of America had not been occupied by Hitler's troops; on the contrary, as in World War I American monopolies grew rich from military shipments. Naturally the USA could not make any special reparation claims against Germany, and the fact that the USSR was interested in compensating by reparations for at least some of the damage inflicted upon it by the invasion of the fascist barbarians was of little concern to American ruling circles. More likely they wished the reverse. They even hoped to capitalize on the difficulties the Soviet Union was experiencing in order to impose, upon the Soviet Union, decisions concerning a number of questions that would be advantageous to them. Moreover they did not want exaction of reparations to cause the position of the German bourgeoisie to weaken, fearing that this would have an effect on the ratio of class forces in Germany.

The American delegation voted against establishing a particular sum of reparations. At the same time it made the following proposal: Each of the occupying powers would exact reparations within its own zone. This meant for practical purposes that the USSR would have the least advantageous conditions for obtaining reparations. The most important industrial regions and military economic centers of Germany, which could support reparations, were in the Western zones. Nor can we fail to consider the fact that American troops, which had occupied part of the Soviet zone during the time of combat activities, removed a significant quantity of industrial equipment and other property from there, to include 20,000 rail cars.

The fascist German aggressors did tremendous harm to the national economy of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless the Soviet Union imposed highly modest reparation requirements. "We lost very much equipment in this war, terribly much," noted I. V. Stalin at the conference. "We need to compensate for at least one-twentieth of it."<sup>7</sup> Even bourgeoisie researchers recognized the Soviet government's demands to be valid. Thus the West German author W.

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Marienfeld described the sum of Soviet reparation claims, \$10 billion, as fully understandable, legal, and undebatable if it is measured against the scale of devastation caused by the war in the USSR.<sup>8</sup>

The American representatives and the British delegation aligned with them took a position of obstruction in regard to the issue of reparations for the Soviet Union from the Western zone. Thus on 30 July U.S. Secretary of State Byrnes submitted a proposal in which the problem of reparations for the USSR was made contingent on a solution to the problem of Poland's western border and establishment of diplomatic relations with Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Finland by the Big Three.<sup>9</sup> On the following day, when this question was once again raised at the conference, Stalin noted the impropriety of establishing such an artificial relationship between problems that were essentially different and he declared that the Soviet delegation would vote on each of them separately. It was decided in the end that the reparation claims of the USA, England, and other countries having a right to reparations would be satisfied through the resources of the Western zones and German investments abroad. The USSR reparation claims were to be satisfied through the resources of the Soviet occupation zone in Germany. Moreover the Soviet Union was to receive 25 percent of all industrial equipment exacted for reparation purposes from the three Western German occupation zones (10 percent without compensation, and 15 percent in exchange for food, coal, lumber, petroleum products, and other goods). The USSR agreed to pay Poland's reparation claims out of its own share.<sup>10</sup>

The fate of the German navy and merchant marine elicited a sharp debate. Churchill essentially tried to separate this problem from the question of overall compensation for harm done by Germany to other countries. He wanted to subdivide the German fleet in correspondence with the number of ships each of the three powers had lost during the war. This attempt was unsuccessful: It was decided to share the navy and merchant marine of Germany equally between the USSR, England, and the USA. On proposal by Great Britain, most of the German submarines were to be destroyed. Creation of triumvirates to prepare concrete proposals on distribution of warships and merchant vessels was foreseen. It was decided to transfer German warships to the corresponding powers until 15 February 1946, and merchant vessels after the end of the war with Japan.<sup>11</sup>

The question of eastern Prussia, which had served many times as a springboard for eastward expansion by German aggressors, was raised once again at the conference. The head of the Soviet government proposed giving the Konigsberg region to the USSR, and he recalled that "President Roosevelt and Mr Churchill had given their consent on this regard during the Teheran conference and that this question had been resolved among us. We would like," he continued "to have this agreement confirmed at the present conference."<sup>12</sup> Representatives of the USA and England agreed with the Soviet proposal to transfer Konigsberg and adjacent regions to the USSR, and the agreement was documented in the resolutions of the conference.

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The question of punishing fascist war criminals was also discussed. The conference resolutions declared that war criminals and those who had participated in the planning or implementation of measures leading to, or having as their result, atrocities or war crimes, were to be arrested and brought to trial. The governments of the three powers confirmed their intentions of bringing the principal war criminals to a speedy and just trial. This decision was in line with the valid demands of peoples who had suffered terrible sacrifices and improbable deprivations as a result of the criminal actions of the German fascists who, having unleashed the war, wiped out and enslaved millions of people and committed uncountable crimes against mankind.

It took a great deal of time and effort to achieve agreement in relation to Poland. The question of the Polish emigrant government in London was examined first. On 5 July the USA and England recognized the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity, created in accordance with resolutions of the Crimean conference. However, the emigrant government in London headed by T. Artsishevskiy was in no hurry to end its activities. A resolution adopted on proposal by the Soviet delegation expressed satisfaction in connection with formation of the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity, recognized by the three powers. The resolution asserted that as a consequence England and the USA had ceased to recognize the former Polish government, which "no longer exists."<sup>13</sup> Thus the fate of Artsishevskiy's government was conclusively decided.

An acute struggle developed in conjunction with determining the postwar Polish-German border. Basing itself on resolutions of the Crimean conference, the Soviet delegation submitted, to the American and English delegations, a draft treaty establishing the western border of Poland along a line passing from the Baltic Sea through Swinemunde to the Oder, placing the city of Stettin in Poland, then up the Oder to the mouth of the Neisse, and from here along the Western Neisse to the Czechoslovakian border.<sup>14</sup> This proposal corresponded to the actual situation, inasmuch as the overwhelming majority of the German population had abandoned this territory, and it was already under Polish administration. Giving various excuses, American and English representatives argued against the Soviet proposal. The British delegation could agree to transfer only part of eastern Prussia, Danzig, and parts of Pomerania (but not as far as the Oder) and upper Silesia to Poland.<sup>15</sup> On 22 July Churchill announced that although his government allowed the notion that Poland should be allowed to increase its territory, he did not want to go as far as the Soviet government would have wished.

In accordance with the decision made at the Crimean conference that the Polish government was to be consulted on this issue, the Soviet delegation insisted upon invitation of Polish representatives to Potsdam. The delegations of the Western powers tried to reject inviting representatives from Poland, but the Soviet delegation managed to achieve compliance with resolutions arrived at in the Crimean conference. On arriving in Potsdam, the Polish representatives, led by (Berut), were met by the heads of

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government and the foreign affairs ministers of the three powers, and they made a detailed presentation of their point of view concerning establishment of Poland's western border along the Oder and the Western Neisse. The Soviet delegation gave complete support to the demands of the Polish government. But American and English representatives tried to postpone resolving this issue. Churchill's acknowledgement that in the event of his reelection he was going to "take on" the Soviet government on this issue was typical. "Neither I nor Mr Eden," he wrote subsequently, "would ever have agreed to a border along the Western Neisse."<sup>16</sup>

As long as England was represented at the conference by Churchill and Eden, the Polish question and a number of others had to be carried over from one meeting to the next, since it was impossible to reach agreement among the three powers. This is recognized by some English historians, who write that Churchill was not at all sorry that the talks were proceeding so slowly. The situation finally changed somewhat after 26 July, when the results of the elections in Great Britain were announced; the Conservatives were completely defeated, for which reason Churchill and Eden were replaced in Potsdam by Labor Party leaders Attlee and Bevan. Of course, the position of this government in Potsdam was essentially a continuation of the policies of the Conservatives. But at the same time the Labor Party leaders apparently did not feel it possible to begin their foreign political activities with failure of the conference, and this opened the way for agreement on the issues under discussion.

The Potsdam agreement established a new Polish-German border along the Oder and the Western Neisse, beginning at the Baltic Sea just west of Swinemunde (placing Stettin in Poland). This border was confirmed by a decision of the conference to repatriate Germans remaining in Poland, as well as in Czechoslovakia and Hungary.<sup>18</sup>

Of course the conference resolutions did state that the final determination of Poland's western border must await a world conference. However, the very fact that expulsion of Germans from territory to be transferred to Poland was foreseen at Potsdam meant only one thing: This decision was final. Later the border decisions were documented in treaties signed by the Polish Peoples Republic on 6 July 1950 with the German Democratic Republic and on 21 December 1972 with the Federated Republic of Germany.

The need for accelerating preparations for a peace settlement with former allies of fascist Germany became pressing in connection with the end of the war in Europe. The delegations decided to institute a council of the foreign affairs ministers of five powers (USSR, USA, England, France, and China), and to have it write up peace treaties for Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Finland as a priority task. Moreover the council was ordered to make preparations "for a peace settlement for Germany, one which would be acceptable to the German government, whenever such a government is formed."<sup>19</sup>

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The conference emphasized that the council must be represented by the countries that had signed the surrender conditions in all matters having to do with writing the texts of peace treaties with particular countries. In regard to the peace settlement with Italy, France was interpreted as the country which had signed Italy's surrender conditions. Other council members were to participate in the discussion of issues pertaining directly to them. Despite institution of the council, it was believed necessary to continue periodic consultations among the foreign affairs ministers of the USSR, USA, and England, as had been agreed upon back during the Crimean conference. After the Council of Foreign Affairs Ministers was instituted the European Consultative Commission terminated its activities.

Coordination upon the policies of the three powers in relation to European countries that had fought on Germany's side but then broke ties with it had an important place in the work of the conference. This issue was posed by the American delegation in the very first meeting of the conference. Truman suggested supporting the petition of Italy--one of the main allies of German fascism--to join the United Nations. He also felt it desirable to cancel Italy's surrender conditions such that they could be substituted by certain obligations imposed upon Italy's government, as followed from the new situation in the country. At the same time the President demanded immediate reorganization of the governments of Romania and Bulgaria and emphasized that diplomatic recognition of these countries and the signing of peace treaties with them could occur only after their governments were reorganized.

The English representatives opposed the American proposal concerning Italy, feeling that repealing the surrender conditions would be premature. As far as countries of Central and Southeast Europe were concerned, it has been noted even in works published in the USA that Churchill and Truman had suggested a program insuring organization of Romania and Bulgaria according to the Western model, and maintenance of these countries under Western influence.<sup>20</sup>

Naturally the Soviet government could not agree with such demands. Stalin stated directly that if Italy's position was to be made easier, similar problems concerning Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Finland would have to be resolved concurrently; namely, the effort would have to begin with restoring diplomatic relations with them. On 20 July the Soviet delegation submitted the corresponding draft resolution for examination at the conference.<sup>21</sup>

This was one of the problems that initiated a sharp struggle in the conference. The approach taken by the ruling circles of England and the USA to its solution was predicated by their desire to keep the outposts of capitalism in Europe from weakening in any way, and to prevent progressive social changes in European countries. Despite the considerable pressure exerted by the USA and England the Soviet delegation averted the attempts by the Western powers to interfere in the internal affairs of countries in Central and Southeast Europe. At the same time the Soviet government was able to

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make certain that the decisions reached would insure favorable conditions for further development of peoples democratic countries and reinforcement of their international position.

The resolutions of the Potsdam conference stated that the three governments felt it desirable to remedy the present abnormal situation of Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Finland by signing peace treaties. They went on to state that signing of such treaties and recognition of the democratic governments of these countries would open up the possibility for supporting their request for membership in the UN. "The three governments, each speaking for itself, are in agreement to study, in the near future and in light of the conditions existing at the time, the question of establishing, to the extent possible, diplomatic relations with Finland, Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary prior to signing peace treaties with these countries."<sup>22</sup>

The U.S. put its "heavy artillery" in motion during discussion of debatable issues. Blackmail with the atomic bomb was given a special role in this regard. On 16 July, the day that the American delegation arrived in Berlin, it was briefly reported that an atomic explosion had been successfully performed early in the morning.<sup>23</sup> The Americans informed Churchill of this. On 21 July a special courier delivered detailed information on the explosion to Potsdam. This immediately influenced the position of the U.S. delegation. When on the following day U.S. Secretary of War H. Stimson acquainted Churchill with it, the latter noted that he now understood why Truman had changed his behavior so, taking a hard line. The British Prime Minister felt it useful to inform the Soviet delegation about the bomb, such that it could be used as an argument in the West's favor in the negotiations.<sup>24</sup> Describing Churchill's mood, A. Brook, the chief of the British Imperial General Staff, noted in his diary that the Prime Minister felt himself capable of annihilating all industrial centers and people of Russia.<sup>25</sup>

On 23 July the U.S. reported that the first atomic bomb would be ready for use in the beginning of August.<sup>26</sup> Although this bomb was to be dropped on Japan, it was decided to also use it as a means of political pressure on the USSR. U.S. Secretary of State Byrnes believed that presence of such a weapon would make Russia more compliant.<sup>27</sup> This was the beginning of America's notorious "atomic diplomacy."

Following the 24 July meeting of the conference President Truman, putting on an and emphatically pompous appearance, went to the head of the Soviet delegation, Stalin, and told him that the Americans had created a new bomb of extremely destructive power. He was forced to confess with irritation, however, that this did not make any special impression on his interlocutor. "The Russian Premier," Truman later wrote, "showed no interest at all."<sup>28</sup> The calculated move by the Americans clearly failed. The "bomb" mechanism did not work against the USSR. This meant that the USA could not hope to dictate its will at the conference. Some of the English and Americans hastened to the

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conclusion that Stalin was supposedly unable to understand what discovery the discussion was about.

But they were wrong. Marshal of the Soviet Union G. K. Zhukov recalled how I. V. Stalin related his talk with Truman to V. M. Molotov in his presence after returning from the meeting:

"V. M. Molotov immediately said:

'They are trying to jack up the price.'

"I. V. Stalin laughed:

'Let them try. We will have to talk with Kurchatov about speeding up our work today.'

"I understood that he was talking about creating the atom bomb."<sup>29</sup>

The question of ending the war in the Far East--that is, defeating the Japanese aggressors--as quickly as possible was also discussed at the conference. The USA showed great interest in having the USSR take part in the fight against Japan, fearing that otherwise the war would drag on and require considerable sacrifices and efforts on the part of the USA. The Soviet delegation confirmed that the USSR would keep to its pledge and join in the defeat of the Far Eastern aggressor at the time agreed upon. Coordination was also achieved on the response the Soviet government was to make to an appeal to it by the Japanese government, which was trying to avoid unconditional surrender at any price. On 26 July the governments of the USA, England, and China published a declaration in which they demanded immediate unconditional surrender by Japan.<sup>30</sup>

All decisions reached at the Potsdam conference were documented in the minutes, which were signed by the heads of the governments of the three countries. Most of them were included in the Report on the Potsdam Conference of the Big Three, which was approved by the three sides and published immediately after the conference.

As decisions were made on particular issues at the conference, the governments of the USSR, USA, and England brought them to the awareness of the French government, asking the latter to state its approval of these decisions. On 7 August French Foreign Minister G. Bidault gave the diplomatic representatives of the three powers in Paris six notes stating the position of France on the decisions reached in Potsdam. In principle the French government expressed its approval of them, but citing absence of its own representative at the conference as well as the need for obtaining additional information and for discussing some of the issues jointly, it qualified or made reservations concerning its position in relation to certain concrete issues. Thus the French government approved of the main goal of Germany's occupation, but it stated reservations concerning the suitability

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of creating the German political parties and central administrative departments. Bidault interpreted these issues mainly from an anti-communist standpoint. Discussing the issue with (Dzh. Kefferi), the American ambassador in Paris, he stated the notion that these measures could lead to "Bolshevization" of all of Germany. The French government declared that it had no objections against the agreement on Poland's western border. It expressed its consent to take part in the work of the Council of Foreign Affairs Ministers and the Allied Reparation Commission.<sup>31</sup>

Despite the differences in the approaches taken by the participants of the Potsdam conference to the questions examined at it, it ended its work successfully with adoption of agreed-upon decisions that put an end to the many years of the bloody war started by Hitler's Germany and laid the basis for postwar reconstruction in Europe. The Potsdam conference marked a victory of democratic principles in determining the paths to solution of the German problem.<sup>32</sup> It was a severe but valid verdict against the forces of fascism and war. At the same time the decisions made in relation to Germany were permeated not by a spirit of vengeance but rather by concern for the future of its people, for creating conditions favoring its democratic development. Denazification and democratization of Germany were viewed in the conference decisions as the best means for keeping it from once again becoming a seat of war in Europe.

As a result of the Soviet delegation's efforts the principles of democracy and progress triumphed also in relation to problems associated with the fate of countries in Central and Southeast Europe. Owing to the hard line taken by the USSR the attempts made by the USA and England to impose decisions that would make it possible for imperialist powers to intervene in the internal affairs of these countries with the goal of restoring capitalist regimes were unsuccessful.

The democratic and just decisions made in Potsdam were predetermined by the role played by the Soviet Union at the conference. Despite all of the hopes the ruling circles of the Western powers had for weakening the USSR in the course of the war, the latter emerged from it as a mighty power. The authority of the Soviet Union grew immeasurably in the entire world. The governments of the USA and England could not ignore its position, and they were forced to seek mutually acceptable solutions at the conference.

The status of military actions in the Pacific theater of war was examined at the conference. Three powers--the USA, England, and China--adopted a declaration proposing unconditional surrender and an immediate end to the war to the government of Japan. The Potsdam declaration also presented the fundamental principles of Japan's postwar development, and it contained references to the need for liquidating Japanese militarism and creating the conditions for reviving and reinforcing democratic traditions in the country. Concurrently the conditions of the Cairo declaration concerning expulsion of Japanese invaders from occupied territories and limiting the sovereignty of Japan to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku,

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and other smaller islands were reconfirmed. After the Soviet Armed Forces entered the war against Japan, the Soviet Union also signed the Potsdam declaration.

Successful conclusion of the Potsdam conference was graphical evidence that despite existing differences in their positions, at their desire the three powers that had cooperated in the war against the common enemy could find the grounds for cooperation in peacetime as well. At the conference, the Soviet government graphically demonstrated its good will toward such cooperation.

The Potsdam conference entered history as an event of tremendous international significance. The historic decisions adopted at the conference corresponded to the liberating, antifascist nature of the war fought by the peoples of the three powers and countries allied with them. Contrary to the assertions of bourgeois historiography that the Potsdam conference was supposedly "the most unsuccessful of all Allied military conferences,"<sup>33</sup> and that the Potsdam conference was in the best case "an agreement to disagree,"<sup>34</sup> it was the most important turning point from war to peace in Europe.

Decisions made in Potsdam have withstood the test of time. Even today they continue to be the foundation of postwar peaceful reconstruction in Europe. Implementation of the principles of Potsdam, USSR Council of Ministers Chairman A. N. Kosygin noted in a message to the U.S. President, the French President, and the Prime Minister of Great Britain in connection with the 25th anniversary of the Potsdam agreement, still "means recognition of the stability of Europe's present boundaries and of the political realities resulting from World War II and postwar development, and assurance of reliable security on the European continent."<sup>35</sup>

##### 5. The Nuremberg Trials

History contains many examples of cruelty and inhumanity, and of bloody crimes by imperialism, but never had atrocities and crimes been of the scale achieved by the Germans. "German fascism," noted G. Dimitrov, "is not simply bourgeois nationalism. It is brutal chauvinism. It is a system of government based on political banditry, a system of provocations and torture in relation to the working class and revolutionary elements of the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie, and the intelligentsia. It is Middle Age barbarianism and cruelty. It is bare aggression against other peoples and countries."<sup>36</sup> The fascists tortured, shot, and gassed more than 12 million women, elderly, and children, and they cold-bloodedly and ruthlessly exterminated prisoners of war. They leveled thousands of cities and towns to the ground, and they exiled millions of people from European countries occupied by them into labor camps in Germany.

Typical of German fascism was the fact that concurrently with its military, economic, and propaganda preparations for their next act of aggression, monstrous plans were also prepared for mass extermination of prisoners of war and peaceful citizens. Extermination, torture, and plunder were elevated

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to the rank of state policy. "We," Hitler said, "must develop our technique of depopulation. Were you to ask me what I meant by depopulation, I would say that I imply elimination of entire racial units..., elimination of millions in the lower races..."<sup>37</sup>

SS Reichsfuhrer Himmler's department, the supreme high command of the armed forces, and the main command of the ground troops took a direct part in the development and enactment of the plan for mass extermination of peaceful citizens. They created the sinister "industry of human extermination," which made German monopolies rich. In order to enslave those remaining alive, the Germans barbarically destroyed historical monuments and national relics, and they annihilated the material and spiritual culture of the people.

Crimes became normal behavior, the common practice of the rulers, officials and servicemen of Nazi Germany. The entire system of fascist institutions, organizations, and camps was aimed against the vital interests of entire nations.

This is why just compensation was demanded by all honorable people, becoming one of the prerequisites for maintaining firm peace on Earth. Soviet soldiers and soldiers of countries in the anti-Hitler coalition paved the way for international justice, organizing the Nuremberg trials of the principal Nazi war criminals. Of course, under various excuses reactionary circles of the USA and Great Britain began a campaign to keep the fascist conspirators from coming to trial. Even during the war American reactionary sociologists tried to persuade their readers that the war criminals were nothing more than mental patients who needed treatment. A proposal to deal with Hitler in the same way that Napoleon had been dealt with in his time was discussed in the press; as we know, Napoleon was exiled for life to the Island of St. Helena without trial by decision of the victorious countries.<sup>38</sup> The precise words used varied, but the goal was always the same--to punish the principal war criminals without investigation and trial. The main argument suggested was that their guilt in the crimes was undebatable and that it would supposedly take too much time and effort to collect the legal evidence.<sup>39</sup> According to Truman, as early as in October 1943 Churchill tried to persuade the head of the Soviet government that the principal war criminals should be shot without trial.<sup>40</sup>

The true reason for such proposals was the fear that the unseamy side of the activities of the governments of Great Britain, the USA, and other Western countries--their assistance to Hitler in creating his powerful war machine and their encouragement of fascist Germany to attack the Soviet Union--might surface in an open trial. The ruling circles of the Western powers became apprehensive that public court examination of the crimes of German fascism might mushroom into condemnation of the imperialist system, which fostered it and placed it in power.

Bourgeois falsifiers of history tried to distort the position of the USSR concerning the question of trying the principal war criminals. Thus for

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example West German journalists Heydecker and Leeb assert that supposedly "the Soviet Union was also for lining the Nazis up against the wall."<sup>41</sup> This assertion has nothing in common with reality. It was precisely the USSR that suggested and defended the idea of trying the fascist criminals. All freedom-loving peoples of the world supported the Soviet Union's position.

The Soviet Union consistently and unswervingly fought to see that the Nazi ringleaders would be brought to international trial, and that the declarations and international agreements on punishing all war criminals would be complied with strictly, since nothing can encourage crime more than the absence of certain punishment. Moreover the program of the United Nations for destroying fascism also contained the demand for severe and just punishment of all who had committed the most grievous crimes against mankind.

That the entire responsibility for the crimes committed by the Nazis lay with the fascist rulers and their henchmen was stated quite early in memoranda published by the Soviet government: "The Disturbing Cruelties of German Authorities in Relation to Soviet Prisoners of war" dated 25 November 1941, "The Universal Plunder and Destruction of the Population and the Monstrous Cruelties Committed by German Authorities on Soviet territories They Captured" dated 1 January 1942, and "The Monstrous Crimes, Atrocities, and Violence of the Fascist German Invaders in Occupied Zones and Responsibility of the German Government and Command for These Crimes" dated 27 April 1942.<sup>42</sup> These documents were sent to all countries with which the Soviet Union maintained diplomatic relations, and they were broadly publicized.

The inevitability of criminal responsibility of the Germans for their atrocities was expressed in a declaration of friendship and mutual assistance signed on 4 December 1941 by representatives of the USSR and Poland. This declaration also established an inseparable relationship between punishment of fascist criminals and achievement of a lasting and just peace.

On 14 October 1942 the Soviet government once again declared most resolutely and steadfastly that the criminal German government and all of its henchmen must suffer and will suffer deserved punishment for atrocities they committed against the Soviet people and all freedom-loving peoples. The government of the USSR emphasized the need for immediate trial and punishment by a special international tribunal, with all the strictness of criminal law, of all ringleaders of fascist Germany who had been captured during the war by countries fighting against Germany.<sup>43</sup> The task of just and severe punishment of the fascist elite became an important element of the USSR's foreign policy.

The Soviet government's declaration was met by world society with great interest and understanding; this was especially true of the governments of countries that had fallen sacrifice to Nazi aggression. Thus the government of Czechoslovakia stated that it interpreted this document as an extremely

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important step on the road to achieving unity in the United Nations in resolving the problems of punishing the atrocities committed during the war.<sup>44</sup>

The governments of the USA and Great Britain also issued declarations back in October 1941 stating that the Germans were responsible for their monstrous crimes. Roosevelt noted in this case that the atrocities committed by the Nazis awaited their severe retribution, and Churchill emphasized that "retribution for these crimes will from this day forward become one of the main goals of the war."<sup>45</sup>

References to strict punishment of fascist criminals were also made in the Moscow declaration signed by the leaders of the USSR, USA, and Great Britain on 30 October 1943 and in other international agreements. In turn, the following was entered into the minutes of the Potsdam conference: "German militarism and Nazism will be eradicated...."<sup>46</sup>

Attempts by international reaction to block a public trial of the ringleaders of the Reich failed. The nations that won a great battle against Nazi Germany perceived trial of its rulers as a just act of retribution, and a natural culmination to World War II.

The idea of an international criminal court was brought to life by organization of the trials of the principal fascist war criminals, which lasted for almost a year--from 20 November 1945 to 1 October 1946, and by the activities of the international military tribunal created on the basis of the London agreement, signed on 8 August 1945 by the governments of the USSR, USA, Great Britain and France and approved by 19 other countries. It was at this time that the charter of the tribunal was adopted. One of the fundamental premises of this charter was that the international military tribunal was instituted for just and speedy trial and punishment of the principal war criminals of European Axis countries.<sup>47</sup>

The tribunal was international not only because it was organized on the basis of an agreement approved by 23 states, but also, as was indicated in the introduction of this agreement, because it was instituted in behalf of all the United Nations. The struggle against German fascism had to become, and did become, a worldwide concern, uniting nations in both hemispheres, since fascism and its misanthropic ideology and policies have always been and are a direct threat to world peace and social progress. Countries of the anti-Hitler coalition managed to achieve agreement on a policy which included the task of military destruction of German fascism and assurance of the conditions for a just peace. "Cooperation in completion of this great military task facing us," Roosevelt stated, "must become the starting point for cooperation in the even greater tasks of establishing peace in all the world."<sup>48</sup>

The USSR finished preparing for the court trials of the principal war criminals in relatively short time, since back in 1942 a ukase of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet had formed the Extraordinary State Commission for the

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Determination and Investigation of Crimes Committed by the German Fascist Aggressors. Its composition included AUCCTU Secretary N. M. Shvernik, All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) Central Committee Secretary A. A. Zhdanov, writer A. N. Tolstoy, academicians Ye. V. Tarle, N. N. Burdenko, B. Ye. Vedeneyev, I. P. Traynin, and T. D. Lysenko, pilot V. S. Grizodubova, and Nikolay, Metropolitan of Kiev and Galicia.<sup>49</sup> Over 7 million workers and kolkhoz farmers, engineers and technicians, scientists, and public officials contributed to the case materials.<sup>50</sup> The commission established cases of monstrous crimes by the Germans with the help of documents and by questioning many thousands of eye witnesses.

Soon after the London agreement was signed the international military tribunal was formed on a one man, one vote basis with the following representatives: from the USSR--USSR Supreme Court Assistant Chairman Major General of Justice I. T. Nikitchenko; from the USA--Federal Supreme Court Member F. Biddle; from Great Britain--Lord Justice Sir G. Lawrence; from France--Professor of Criminal Law D. de Vabres. Alternates of the tribunal's members were appointed: from the USSR--Lieutenant Colonel of Justice A. F. Volchkov; from the USA--North Carolina State Judge J. Parker; from Great Britain--one of the country's leading lawyers, (N. Birkett); from France-- (R. Fla'ko), a member of the Supreme Court of Appeal. Lawrence was chosen chairman of the first trial.

The prosecution was organized in similar fashion. The main prosecutors were: from the USSR--Ukrainian SSR Procurator R. A. Rudenko; from the USA--R. Jackson, a member of the U.S. Supreme Court (and a former assistant to President Roosevelt); from Great Britain--Procurator General and House of Commons Member H. Shawcross; from France--Minister of Justice F. de Menthon, subsequently replaced by C. de Ribes. In addition to the chief prosecutors, the case for the prosecution was supported (evidence was presented and witnesses and defendants were questioned) by their alternates and assistants: from the USSR--Assistant Chief Prosecutor Yu. V. Pokrovskiy, and assistant chief prosecutors N. D. Zorya, M. Yu. Radinskiy, L. N. Smirnov, and L. R. Sheynin.

Documentary and investigatory units were organized under the Chief Prosecutor from the USSR for preliminary questioning of defendants and witnesses as well as for proper formulation of documents to be submitted to the tribunal. The documentary unit was directed by Assistant Chief Prosecutor D. S. Kadev, while the investigatory unit, which was staffed by N. A. Orlov, S. K. Piradov, and S. Ya. Rozenblit, was headed by G. N. Aleksandrov.<sup>52</sup> USSR Academy of Sciences Corresponding Member A. N. Traynin served as the scientific consultant to the Soviet delegation.

It was decided to hold the first trial of the principal war criminals in Nuremberg--the city which was the citadel of fascism for many years. It was the site of congresses of the Nazi Party, and parades of stormtrooper detachments were held there.

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The list of defendants to be tried by the International Military Tribunal included: H. Goering, Reichsmarschall, Commander in Chief of the Luftwaffe, commissioner of the so-called Four-Year Plan, and since 1922, Hitler's closest confederate; R. Hess, Hitler's deputy as leader of the Nazi Party, and member of the Council of Ministers for Defense of the Empire; J. Ribbentrop, minister of foreign affairs, and Nazi Party representative for foreign policy; R. Ley, head of the so-called German Labor Front, and one of the leaders of the Nazi Party; W. Keitel, field marshal and chief of staff of the Supreme High Command; (E. Kal'tenbrunner), SS (obergruppenfuhrer), chief of the Imperial Administration of Security and the Security Police, and the closest confederate of Himmler; A. Rosenberg, Hitler's assistant for ideological training of members of the Nazi Party, and Reichsminister for the occupied eastern territories; (G. Frank), Nazi Party (reikhsleyter), president of the Academy of German Law, and governor-general of occupied Polish territories; W. Frick, minister of the interior and imperial commissioner for military administration; J. Streicher, gauleiter of Franconia, ideologist of racism and anti-Semitism, and organizer of the Jewish purges; (V. Funk), minister of economics, president of the Reichsbank, and member of the Council of Ministers for Defense of the Empire; H. Schacht, organizer of the Wehrmacht's rearmament, and one of Hitler's closest advisors on economic and financial issues; G. Krupp, head of the largest concern of war industry, who took an active part in preparing and implementing the aggressive plans of German militarism, and responsible for the death of many thousands of people herded into labor camps in Nazi Germany; K. Donitz, grand admiral, commander of the submarine fleet and, as of 1943, the navy, Hitler's successor as chief of state; E. Raeder, grand admiral, and commander in chief of the navy until 1943; (B. Shirakh), organizer and director of Germany's fascist youth organization, Hitler's vicegerent in Vienna; (F. Zaukel'), SS (obergruppenfuhrer), general commissioner for utilization of manpower; A. Jodl, colonel general, chief of operations for the Armed Forces Supreme High Command; F. Papen, one of the organizers of the seizure of power in Germany by the Fascists, and Hitler's closest supporter of Austria's "annexation"; (A. Zeyss-Inkvart), leader of the fascist party in Austria, deputy governor general of Poland, and Hitler's vicegerent in the Netherlands; A. Speer, Hitler's closest advisor and friend, Reichminister of arms and munitions, and one of the leaders of the central planning committee; (K. Neyrat), former minister of foreign affairs, member of the imperial defense council and, following seizure of Czechoslovakia, protector of Bohemia and Moravia; (G. Frich), closest assistant to Goebbels, propaganda ministry's chief of the internal press division, and director of the radio broadcasting division; M. Bormann, Hitler's assistant for the fascist party heading the party office since 1941, Hitler's closest confederate.

They were accused of beginning an aggressive war with the goal of establishing world dominance by German imperialism--that is, of crimes against peace, of the murder and torture of prisoners of war and peaceful residents in occupied countries, of driving civilians into Germany for forced labor, murdering hostages, plundering public and private property, purposelessly

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destroying cities and towns, inestimable destruction unjustified by military necessity--that is, war crimes, and of extermination, enslavement, deportation, and other cruelties committed in relation to the civilian public for political, racial, or religious motives--that is, of crimes against humanity.

On 18 October 1945 the International Military Tribunal accepted the indictment signed by the chief prosecutors representing the USSR, USA, Great Britain, and France; on that same day--that is, more than a month before court proceedings began, copies of this indictment were given to all defendants to allow them time to prepare their defense. Thus to insure a fair trial the rights of the defendants were scrupulously observed from the very beginning. Commenting on the indictment, the world press noted that this document spoke in the name of mankind's outraged conscience, that this was not an act of vengeance but of the triumph of justice, and that not only the ringleaders of Nazi Germany but also the entire fascist system was to be tried.<sup>53</sup>

Almost the entire fascist leadership was on the defendants' bench, with the exception of Hitler, Goebbels, and Himmler, who had committed suicide, paralysis-stricken Krupp, whose case was singled out for individual examination and suspended, Bormann, who had disappeared (he was tried in absentia), and Ley, who hanged himself in his cell at the Nuremberg prison on learning of his indictment.

The defendants were given extensive possibilities for defending themselves against the accusations, they all had German lawyers, (some even had two), and they enjoyed rights of defense of which defendants had been deprived not only in the courts of fascist Germany but also many Western countries. The prosecutors furnished copies of all documentary evidence in German, and they helped lawyers to seek and obtain documents and summon witnesses requested by counsels for the defense.<sup>54</sup>

The trials at Nuremberg attracted the attention of millions of people in all the world. As the tribunal's chairman Lawrence emphasized in its behalf, "the trials, which now must begin, are unique in the history of world jurisprudence, and they have the highest social significance to millions of people over the entire globe."<sup>55</sup> The proponents of peace and democracy saw in them a continuation of postwar international cooperation in the struggle against fascism and aggression. It was clear to all honorable people of the world that a condescending attitude towards those who had criminally scorned universally recognized rules of international law and committed crimes against peace and mankind would have been a great danger. Never before had a trial united all progressive elements of the world in such a unanimous desire to put an end to aggression, racism, and obscurantism. The Nuremberg trials reflected the anger and perturbation mankind expressed for the crimes for which the guilty had to be punished, such that such things would never happen again. The fascist organizations and institutions, misanthropic "theories" and "ideas," and criminals who had assumed dominion

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over an entire country and made the country itself a weapon of monstrous atrocities were on trial.

The Nazi regime in Germany was incompatible with the elementary concept of law; terror became this regime's law. An unheard-of provocation organized by Hitler and his closest confederates--burning of the Reichstag--was the signal to begin the most savage repressions against progressive forces in Germany. Works by German and foreign writers of whom all mankind was rightfully proud were burned in bonfires on the streets and squares. The fascists created the first concentration camps in Germany. Many thousands of patriots were killed and tortured by stormtroopers and SS butchers. As a state structure, German fascism was a system of organized banditry. The country possessed a broad network of organizations endowed with tremendous power, which made a practice of terror, compulsion, and crimes.

The tribunal examined the question of recognizing the organizations of German fascism--the SS, SA, the Gestapo, the SD, the government, the general staff, and the supreme command of the German Armed Forces--as well as the leaders of the National Socialist Party to be criminal. The criminal nature of these organizations had to be recognized so that national courts would obtain the right to try individuals belonging to organizations recognized to be criminal. Consequently the principal "concrete physical persons are subject to criminal liability" was preserved. The question of the guilt of individuals belonging to criminal organizations and the question of their liability for such membership was left to the national courts, which had to resolve the issue of making the punishment fit the crime. There was only one restriction imposed: The criminal nature of organizations recognized to be criminal by the tribunal was not subject to review by the courts of individual countries.

The Nuremberg trials were public trials in the widest sense. Of the 403 court sessions, not one of them was a closed session.<sup>56</sup> More than 60,000 passes were given out for the courtroom, some of them being given to Germans. All that transpired in court was entered into the records. The stenographic notes for the trials filled almost 40 volumes containing more than 20,000 pages. The trials were conducted simultaneously in four languages, including German. The press and radio were represented by about 250 reporters, who transmitted reports on the trials to all corners of the globe.

An atmosphere of the strictest adherence to law reigned in the trials. Never were the rights of the defendants infringed upon in any way. In addition to analyzing the facts, the prosecutors analyzed the legal problems of the trials, defined the jurisdiction of the tribunal, gave a legal interpretation of the crimes, and rejected the groundless arguments of the counsels for the defense.<sup>57</sup> Thus the chief prosecutor from the USSR demonstrated in his introductory remarks that the legal regime of international relations, including those applicable to a coordinated fight against crime, rests on other legal foundations. A treaty signed between states is a source of law and the sole possible law-forming document in the international sphere.<sup>58</sup>

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The London agreement and one of its parts--the Charter of the International Tribunal--were based on the principles and rules of international law that had long been established and confirmed by the 1907 Hague convention, the 1929 Geneva convention, and a number of other conventions and pacts. The tribunal's charter embodied, in legal forms, those international principles and ideas which had been forwarded over a period of many years in defense of legality and justice in international relations. Over a long period of time, peoples interested in strengthening peace forwarded and supported the idea that aggression was criminal, and this found its official recognition in a number of international treaties and documents.

As far as the USSR is concerned, it is known that the first foreign policy act of the Soviet government was the Decree of Peace signed by V. I. Lenin and adopted the day following the victory of the October Revolution--8 November 1917; this decree declared aggression to be the greatest crime against mankind and forwarded the premise of peaceful coexistence among states with different social structures. The Soviet Union is doing everything to make this highly important principle of its foreign policy a law in international relations. A special article of the 1977 USSR Constitution documents the peace-loving nature of the Soviet Union's foreign policy. The entire historic road of the USSR is one of a purposeful struggle for peace and the security of nations. "Not a single nation," F. Castro noted at the First Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, "has ever desired peace and defended it, as the Soviet nation has.... History also shows that in distinction from capitalism, socialism does not need to impose its will over other countries by means of wars and aggression."<sup>59</sup>

The fascist aggressors who found themselves on the defendants' bench knew that when they made their treacherous attacks against other countries they were committing the most severe crimes against peace, they were aware of their criminal acts, and therefore they attempted to cover them up by falsely forwarding them as defensive acts. Their hope, USSR Chief Prosecutor R. A. Rudenko emphasized, was "that by insuring victory, total war would mean evasion of punishment. But victory did not follow in the footsteps of the crimes. What followed was the total unconditional surrender of Germany. What came was the hour of stern punishment for all crimes committed."<sup>60</sup>

The Nuremberg trials were exceptional in terms of the irreproachability and strength of evidence of the indictment. The evidence included testimony by numerous witnesses, including former prisoners from Auschwitz, Dachau, and other Nazi concentration camps that had been eye-witnesses of fascist atrocities, and material evidence and documentary films. But official documents signed by the defendants had the decisive role. Testimony from a total of 116 witnesses was heard in court, to include 33 summoned by prosecutors and 61 summoned by the defense in regard to individual cases; moreover, more than 4,000 pieces of documentary evidence were presented. "The indictment against the defendants," read the tribunal's verdict, "is based for the most part on documents written by the defendants themselves,

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the authenticity of which was never debated, with the exception of one or two cases."<sup>61</sup>

Thousands of documents from the archives of Hitler's general staff and the ministry of foreign affairs, from the personal archives of Ribbentrop, Rosenberg, Goering, and (Frank), correspondence written by banker (K. Shreder), and so on, which revealed the preparations for and initiation of the aggressive wars, were laid on the table of the International Military Tribunal and spoke in such persuasive language that the defendants were unable to oppose them with even a single serious argument. They had been certain that documents with the "Top Secret" stamp would never come to light, but history decided otherwise. Extensive publicity and irreproachable legal foundations were the most important traits of the Nuremberg trials. On 3 January 1946 (O. Olendorf), the head of one of the operational groups responsible for mass extermination of the peaceful population, testified: Just his group alone annihilated 90,000 men, women, and children in the southern Ukraine in a single year. Peaceful residents were exterminated on the basis of an agreement between the supreme command of the armed forces, the general staff of the ground forces, and Himmler's department. The chief prosecutor from the USSR noted that orders signed by Keitel, Goering, Donitz, Jodl, Reichenow, and Manstein, as well as by many other Nazi generals left a trail of blood to numerous crimes committed on occupied territories.<sup>63</sup> On 7 January testimony was given at the trial by (E. Bakh-Zelevski), SS commander and a member of the National Socialist Party since 1930. He described the events of a conference held at the beginning of 1941 in which Himmler declared that one of the goals of the campaign against the USSR "was to exterminate up to 30 million individuals of Slavonic origin...." Being asked by lawyer (A. Tom) how this goal was explained, the SS commander replied: "...it was the logical consequence of our entire Nazi philosophy.... If one promotes for several decades the idea that Slavs are an inferior race and that Jews are not even human at all, precisely this result is unavoidable...."<sup>64</sup> Wanting to have nothing to do with this Bakh-Zelevski helped to reveal the misanthropic essence of fascism.

The National Socialist Party and its leaders were nurtured by monopolistic capital and militarist circles, and fascism was brought to life by the greedy goals of German imperialism. It is no accident Prussian militarist E. Ludendorff marched side by side with Hitler and his closest confederate, R. Hess, at the time of the Putsch in Munich in 1923. Nor was it a coincidence that influential representatives of financial capital such as H. Schacht, (E. Shtaus), and F. Papen joined the fascist party. Papen wrote in his book "The Road to Power" that in the struggle for power in the Reichswehr, the decisive factor was "not only a certain group of generals responsible for the events culminating with 30 January 1933, but also the entire officer corps as a whole."<sup>65</sup>

Having insured establishment of the fascist regime, monopolies and militarists began preparing the country for aggressive war. As early as in his first

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conference with his generals, on 3 February 1933, Hitler posed the goals of future aggression--to gain new markets, to seize new living space in the east, and to ruthlessly Germanize it.<sup>66</sup>

The trials revealed the criminal methods by which Germany's economy was switched to a war footing, the way the ominous motto of "guns over butter" was implemented, the way the entire country was militarized, and the decisive role played in this by monopolistic bosses who occupied key positions in the war economy. German monopolies avidly financed not only the general piratic plans of the fascists but also Himmler's "extraordinary measures."

The defendants tried to persuade the tribunal that only Himmler and professional assassins from the SS subordinated to him were guilty of all atrocities. It was demonstrated irrefutably, however, that the mass murders and other atrocities had been conceived and planned not only by Himmler's department but also by the supreme high command, and that extermination of peaceful citizens and prisoners of war was conducted by SS and Gestapo butchers in close cooperation with the general staff. Thus former concentration camp commandant R. Hess declared under oath that Soviet prisoners of war brought to Auschwitz by officers and enlisted men of the regular German army were among those who died in the gas chambers and incinerators,<sup>67</sup> and (Bakh-Zelevski) reported that he had kept H. Kluge, (G. Krebs), (M. Veykhs), (E. Bush), and others regularly informed about extermination of the peaceful population (under the guise of fighting partisans).<sup>68</sup> Speaking in 1943 to students of the military academy in Berlin, Field Marshal G. von Rundstedt taught: "Annihilation of neighboring nations and their wealth is entirely necessary to our victory. One of the serious errors made in 1918 was that we spared the lives of civilians in enemy countries.... We are obligated to annihilate at least a third of their residents...."<sup>69</sup> Assistant Chief Prosecutor T. Taylor concluded from evidence submitted to him of the criminal nature of the Nazi general staff and the supreme high command that they had emerged from the war soiled by crimes. Expressing the opinion of all prosecutors, he spoke persuasively about the danger of militarism in general and German militarism in particular. German militarism, Taylor noted, "were it to return, would not necessarily do so under the Nazi label. German militarists will tie their fate to that of any person or any party that would desire to restore German military power."<sup>70</sup> This is why militarism had to be completely uprooted.

The International Military Tribunal entered the following in its verdict in relation to the German generals: They were responsible for much of the misfortune and suffering of millions of men, women, and children; they had disgraced the honorable profession of a soldier; without their military leadership, the aggressive longings of Hitler and his confederates would have been abstract and fruitless. "Modern German militarism," the verdict emphasized, "came into flower for a short while with the help of its most recent ally--national socialism--with the same success and with even greater success than in past generations."<sup>71</sup>

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An especially great deal of revenge-seeking literature attempting to white-wash the Nazi criminals and to prove the unprovable --the blamelessness of the Nazi generals--has appeared in recent years in West Germany. The proceedings of the Nuremberg trial completely refute such falsification. The trials revealed the true role of the general staff and monopolies in the crimes of German fascism, and it is in this that its unfading historic significance lies.

The Nuremberg trials helped to tear the screen away from the secrets of World War II's beginnings. They persuasively demonstrated that militarism was the nutrient medium in which fascism had developed so swiftly. Assistant American prosecutor (R. Kempner) emphasized in his speech that one of the causes of the world catastrophe was the fabrication of a "communist danger." This danger, he declared, "was a fabrication which together with other things led in the end to World War II."<sup>72</sup>

Trying to camouflage its goals, Hitler's clique regularly howled about the supposed danger on the part of the USSR, declaring its predatory war against the Soviet Union to be "preventive." However, the "defensive" masquerade of the defendants and their defenders was quite clearly uncovered during the trials; the falseness of the "preventive" nature of the attack upon the Soviet Union, asserted by Hitler's propaganda, was revealed to all the world.

Basing itself on numerous documents submitted as evidence, testimony by witnesses including Field Marshal F. Paulus, and confessions by the defendants themselves, the tribunal wrote in its sentence that the attack upon the Soviet was made "without a shadow of legal justification. It was out-and-out aggression."<sup>73</sup> This decision still continues to be significant today. It is an important argument in the struggle of progressive forces against falsifiers of the history of the Second World War's arisal who try to justify Hitler's aggression against the USSR with the goal of revenge against the socialist countries.

The Nuremberg trials entered history as antifascist trials. The misanthropic essence of fascism, its ideology, and especially its racism, which was the ideological foundation for the preparations and initiation of aggressive wars and for mass extermination of people, was revealed to all the world. The Nuremberg trials showed fascism for what it really is--a conspiracy by bandits against liberty and mankind. Fascism is war; it is the violence of terror and tyranny, it is negation of the human worth of non-Arian races. And this is inherent to all successors of German fascism, no matter what forms it takes. The trials graphically and persuasively demonstrated the entire danger of the resurrection of fascism to the fate of the world. The last words of defendant Ribbentrop once again confirmed the close relationship that had existed between the rulers of Germany and the circles of political reaction which began provoking new wars before the bloodiest war of mankind's history had barely ended, with the goal of establishing their dominance over the world. The trial proceedings appeal to us: We must not permit understatement of the crimes of fascism; the young generation must not

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be taught the entirely false and by essence blasphemous version that there had never been an Auschwitz or a Majdanek, a Buchenwald or a Ravensbryuk, and that there never were gas chambers and murder-busses. The trials were also especially significant because the fact of condemnation of the aggressors is a very serious warning for the future.

The chief prosecutors concluded their presentation on 30 July 1946. In his concluding statement made on 29-30 July, USSR Chief Prosecutor R. A. Rudenko summarized the court proceedings against the main war criminals, noting that they were being "judged by a court created by peace-loving and freedom-loving countries expressing the will of all progressive mankind and defending its interests, a mankind which does not want a repetition of the disaster and which would not allow a gang of criminals to enslave nations and exterminate people unpunished.... Mankind cries out to bring the criminals to justice, and it is in its behalf that we, the prosecutors, state the accusation in this trial. And how piteous are the attempts at disputing the right of mankind to judge the enemies of mankind, how groundless are the attempts being made to deprive peoples of their right to punish those who made it their goal to enslave and exterminate nations and to pursue this goal for many years in succession by criminal means."<sup>74</sup>

Sentence was pronounced on 30 September and 1 October 1946. The tribunal sentenced Goering, Ribbentrop, Keitel, (Kal'tenbrunner), Rosenberg, (Frank), Frick, Streicher, (Zaukel'), Jodl, (Zeyss-Inkvart), and Bormann (in absentia) to death by hanging, Hess, (Funk), and Raeder to life imprisonment, (Shirakh), and Speer to 20 years, (Neyrat) to 15 years, and Donitz to 10 years imprisonment. (Frich), Papen, and Schacht were acquitted. The tribunal declared the governing board of the National Socialist Party, the SS, the SD, and the Gestapo to be criminal organizations. In a Special Opinion the USSR representative to the tribunal declared his disagreement with the decision to acquit (Frich), Papen, and Schacht and to not recognize the general staff and members of the governing cabinet to be criminal organizations, since the tribunal did have sufficient evidence at its disposal proving their guilt. Following the Control Council's denial of the appeals of the condemned for a reduction of sentence, the executions were carried out on the night of 16 October 1946.

"...we share the opinions of the Soviet judge," read the lead article in PRAVDA. "But despite publication of a 'special opinion' by the Soviet judge we cannot fail to emphasize that the verdict of Nuremberg over the Nazi murderers will be evaluated positively by all honest people in the entire world, since it is a valid and deserved punishment for the gravest criminals against peace and the good of all nations. A historic trial has ended..."<sup>75</sup>

The reaction of the German public to the trials was typical. On 15 August 1946 the American Information Bureau published questionnaire results in its regular review: The overwhelming majority of the Germans (about 80 percent) felt the Nuremberg trials to be just and that the guilt of the

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convicts was indisputable; about half of the respondents replied that all convicts should have been sentenced to death; only 4 percent had negative feelings about the trials. In accordance with the Charter of the International Military Tribunal subsequent trials were to be held "in places specified by the Tribunal" (Article 22). For a number of reasons--for example deviation of Western powers from the Potsdam and other agreements made during the war and immediately after its conclusion--the activities of the tribunal were limited to the Nuremberg trials. Nevertheless the activities of the International Military Tribunal and the significance of its verdict have everlasting significance. The historic role of the Nuremberg trials lies in the fact that for the first time in the history of international relations it made aggression and aggressors punishable in the eyes of criminal law.

The International Military Tribunal recognized aggression to be the gravest international crime. For the first time in history state executives guilty of preparing for, initiating, and conducting an aggressive war were punished as criminals, and the principle that "being the head of state or an official of a government department and, equally so, acting in response to instructions from the government in the execution of criminal orders are not grounds for absolution from responsibility." The verdict noted: "It has been asserted that international law can examine only the actions of sovereign states, and that it cannot set punishment for individuals," and that if a state commits an unjust act, "persons actually performing this act are not personally responsible but are protected by the doctrine of state sovereignty."<sup>76</sup> In the tribunal's opinion both of these premises had to be rejected. It had already long been recognized that international law imposes certain responsibilities on individuals as well as on states.

Moreover the tribunal noted: "Crimes against international law are committed by people, and not by abstract categories, and it is only through punishment of individuals committing such crime that the provisions of international law can be observed.... The principle of international law which under certain circumstances protects the government of a state cannot be applied to actions that are judged to be criminal according to international law."<sup>77</sup>

The principles of the tribunal's charter and verdict, confirmed by resolutions of the U.N. General Assembly, were a significant contribution to existing international law, and they became its universally recognized rules. Concepts such as international conspiracy, planning, preparation, and conduct of an aggressive war, and incitement to war were introduced into the lexicon of international law and modern national jurisprudence, and they were recognized to be criminal and, consequently, criminally punishable acts.

The trial proceedings and verdict of the tribunal serve the cause of peace on Earth, being simultaneously a stiff warning to aggressive forces that have not yet abandoned their adventurist plans. The results of the Nuremberg trials encourage alertness on the part of all who do not wish

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a repetition of the bloody tragedy of the past war, all who are fighting to maintain peace.

The situation today is entirely different from that in which Hitler's fascism arose. But even in today's conditions we must maintain constant and high alertness, and we must fight fascism actively in all of its manifestations. It is in this as well that the lessons of the Nuremberg trials have great significance.

It is widely known that in order to rehabilitate fascist military criminals, for a number of years people in the West have argued for their mass amnesty, citing the rules of general criminal prescription, and that petitions for early release of the convicts have been submitted. But the Nuremberg trials persuasively revealed the fact that fascist war criminals and their crimes against the world are by nature international crimes, and therefore such arguments cannot be used; the trials revealed that these political adventurers had not stopped at any atrocities to achieve their criminal goals, atrocities which filled the land with moaning and wrath. Can any sort of "prescriptions" erase from the memories of nations (Oradour sur Glan) and Lidice, the ruins of Coventry and Smolensk, (Khatyn) and (Pirchypis), and much, much else that had become an expression of fascist cruelty and vandalism? Can we really forget the basement of the Reichsbank, in which (V. Funk) and (E. Pul') stored chests filled with gold crowns, dentures, and eyeglass frames obtained from the death camps, later to be cast into ingots and sent to Basel and deposited in international accounts?

We know that civilization and humanitarianism are indivisible, as are peace and humanitarianism. But we must effectively reject humanitarianism which shows mercy to butchers and is indifferent to their sacrifices. And when we say that "no one is to be forgotten and nothing is to be forgotten," we base ourselves not on a sense of vengeance but rather on a feeling of justice and a concern for the future of nations. The peoples of the world were freed from Nazi oppression at too high a price to permit neofascists to cancel out the results of World War II. "The purpose of our appeal to surmount the bloody past of Europe," L. I. Brezhnev declared, "is not to forget it but to see that it never recurs."<sup>78</sup>

Being a document of international law, the tribunal's verdict is a constant warning to all in different corners of our planet who attempt to implement a misanthropic policy, a policy of imperialist predation and aggression, of inflammation of war hysteria, and of creation of a threat to peace and the security of nations.

The lessons of the Nuremberg trials attest to the fact that despite disagreements on certain points, the tribunal's verdict expresses the unanimous opinion of the representatives of four countries in their condemnation of the ringleaders of Hitler's band and of criminal organizations of German fascism such as the governing board of the National Socialist Party, the SS, the SD, and the Gestapo. The hope held by world reaction

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that dissent among the judges would be inevitable and that the trials would never come to their conclusion were never justified.

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The power of the Soviet Union and the leading role it played in the defeat of Nazi Germany caused unprecedented growth in its international authority. It was no longer possible to resolve international problems without the USSR's participation. The Soviet Union fought to see that peace would be established in Europe on the basis of the principles of democracy and progress, which correspond to the interests of the masses on the entire continent. This was graphically revealed in decisions of the Potsdam conference aimed at eradicating fascism and militarism in Germany and at creating the conditions for postwar resurrection of Germany as a democratic and peaceful state.

The Soviet Union is also greatly credited with the fact that it prevented exportation of counterrevolution in countries of Central and Southeast Europe that had assumed the road of free and democratic development.

One of the most important problems connected with the transition from war to peace was that of creating an international organization to maintain peace and security. Soviet diplomacy did much to make the United Nations adhere to these goals.

The lessons of World War II attest to the great significance the joint actions of the great powers had in the struggle against their common enemy--fascist Germany. The lessons of the Nuremberg trials persuade us of this as well. The tribunal's verdict expressed the common opinion of representatives of the four countries in its condemnation of the war criminals and the criminal organizations of German fascism. The Nuremberg trials proved that a will to cooperate can insure unity in actions aimed at attaining a noble goal--excluding unjustified wars from the experience of mankind.

True to Lenin's principles of peace and peaceful coexistence among states irrespective of their social structure, the Soviet government manifests deep interest in seeing that cooperation achieved during the war between states of the anti-Hitler coalition would continue even after the war.

Footnotes

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11. "Sbornik deystvuyushchikh dogovorov, soglasheniy i konventsiy, zaklyuchennykh SSSR s inostrannymi gosudarstvami" (Collection of Effective Treaties, Agreements, and Conventions Signed Between the USSR and Foreign States), Issue XI, pp 128-129.
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CONCLUSION

[pp 500-506] The thunder of the last artillery salvos of the war in Europe faded away in May 1945. The long and hard struggle of countries in the anti-Hitler coalition was graced with a brilliant victory. Germany suffered total military, economic, and moral-political defeat and unconditional surrender. Nurtured by imperialist monopolies, German fascism, one of the main aggressors of the world, was vanquished. Peace won in the most savage struggle settled over the European continent.

The day of 9 May will forever remain in the memory of all mankind. It opened a new page to history, marking the triumph of the forces of peace and progress over the sinister forces of reaction. All people of the planet received this grandiose victory with delight.

In the last stage of the war in Europe the military actions were such that the armed forces of fascist Germany found themselves facing the armies of Allied powers advancing from the east and west. Its military-economic potential had been dramatically reduced, while in countries of the anti-fascist coalition it attained its highest level in the war. Moreover the Nazi leadership found itself almost totally alone in the sphere of international relations, which attested to the complete bankruptcy of its foreign policy.

Typical of the armed conflict in 1945 was the fact that the dueling sides placed the greatest number of men and equipment on the battlefields of Europe in the entire war--18 million men, about 260,000 guns and mortars, up to 40,000 tanks and self-propelled guns (assault guns), and over 38,000 airplanes.

Presence of a second front in Western Europe beginning in mid-1944 caused some changes to occur in the ratio of fascist German divisions on the fronts of World War II. The German Command was forced to transfer a part of the forces from the occupied countries and its reserve to the Western Front. Nevertheless the main events of 1945 occurred, as in previous years, on the Soviet-German front, which continued to be the principal one. Its decisive role stemmed not only from the fact that a larger quantity of

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enemy divisions was concentrated here but also from the fact that the Soviet Army had to be opposed by the Wehrmacht's best, select formations.

The political and military leaders of fascist Germany understood quite well the uncompromising nature of the armed collision between socially different states--imperialist and socialist. They felt it entirely possible to conclude a separate peace with the USA and Great Britain, a notion which was entirely excluded from the relations with the Soviet Union. This is why engagements on the Soviet-German front were extremely savage in nature in the concluding stage of the war in Europe. In terms of their scope and intensity they could in no way be compared with combat activities of the Anglo-American troops. Between 1 January 1945 and the end of the war the Wehrmacht Command transferred 42 infantry, 6 tank, 4 motorized and cavalry divisions, and 5 brigades of various sorts from the west to the Eastern Front. During the offensives of the Soviet troops, the fascist leadership redeployed the most battleworthy divisions from the west. The German Command denuded the Western Front more and more, transferring more and more troops into the Wehrmacht reserves to hold the defenses on the Oder; the majority of combat equipment coming from the plants and repair shops was also sent to the east.\* This permitted the Anglo-American troops to undertake offensive operations on the Western Front in the beginning of February and, on the Italian Front, in the beginning of April.

The results of the combat activities of 1945 attest to the significantly greater theoretical and practical level of Soviet art of war. All strategic operations conducted by the Armed Forces of the USSR were characterized by decisiveness of goals and high effectiveness. The largest enemy groupings were defeated on the Berlin, eastern Prussian, Vienna, and Prague axes, and territories containing the most important economic and political centers were occupied (eastern Prussia, the Silesia industrial region, the oilfields of Hungary and Austria), which dramatically weakened the economic and military potential of fascist Germany. The main blow of the concluding stage of the war in Europe was directed on the Berlin axis. It was the shortest road for Soviet troops to Berlin, capture of which had the most important military and political significance. The greatest strategic operations were conducted on this axis. During them, fulfilling their international mission, Soviet troops quickly liberated Allied Poland, and, invading enemy territory, they quickly defeated a major enemy grouping at Berlin. The objective posed by the Supreme High Command Headquarters--completely defeating the armed forces of fascist Germany and forcing it to surrender unconditionally, and completely liberating the peoples of Central and Southeast Europe from Nazi oppression--were attained.

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\* Liddel Gart, B., "Vtoraya mirovaya voyna" (The Second World War), p 629.

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The victory over this experienced, strong, and cunning enemy was the result of simultaneous conduct of strategic operations on a front stretching from the Baltic Sea to the Drawa River. Soviet troops conducted the offensive without interruption until the enemy's final defeat. In the end, the Soviet Army annihilated 98 enemy divisions and captured 56, and 93 divisions laid down their arms in connection with unconditional surrender. The enemy lost more than 1 million men on the Soviet-German front just killed alone, and the trophies gathered by the Soviet troops included about 30,000 field guns, more than 12,000 tanks and assault guns, and 6,000 warplanes.

From 12 January to 8 May the Soviet troops advanced westward in battle over 800 km--from the Vistula to the Elba. They captured eastern Prussia, eastern and western Pomerania, half of central Germany, and Berlin. As a result of the Soviet Army's operations Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and part of Austria were liberated. The German people were relieved of the fascist yoke. The Yugoslav Army completely expelled the invaders from its country. The successes of Soviet arms were a decisive factor in liberation of the Albanian people.

The Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet instituted the following medals to commemorate the historic victories of the Soviet Armed Forces: "For Liberation of Belgrade," "For Liberation of Warsaw," "For the Taking of Budapest," "For the Taking of Konigsberg," "For the Taking of Vienna," "For the Taking of Berlin," and "For the Liberation of Prague." These medals are testimony to the victorious procession of the Soviet Army and of its mission of liberation. Nurtured by the Communist Party, the soldiers displayed their best qualities--combat proficiency, perfect mastery of their equipment, and the capability to make the greatest self-sacrifices for the glory of the motherland.

The Soviet people attained their long-awaited victory at high price. More than 1 million enlisted men and officers died in battles to liberate countries of Central and Southeast Europe. In the concluding operations the Soviet Armed Forces lost 11,550 guns and mortars, 12,500 tanks and self-propelled guns, and about 11,800 airplanes, and they expended over 60,000 rail cars of ammunition and 1,480,000 tons of fuel. Laborers in the liberated countries hold their memory of the Soviet soldiers sacred. Memorials and monuments were erected in honor of the army of liberation in Warsaw, Prague, Belgrade, Bucharest, Sofia, Budapest, Vienna, Berlin, and other cities. The mission of liberation of the Soviet Armed Forces was reflected in literature and art.

In the concluding stage of military actions in Europe the Soviet Army transformed into a top-class army of that time, and the country achieved its maximum in development of its productive capacities during the war, which made it possible to considerably improve the equipment availability of the armed forces. In comparison with the same month in 1944, in January 1945 the quantity of airplanes in the standing army and reserve of the Supreme High Command Headquarters increased by 1.4 times, the number of tanks increased by 2.2 times, and the manning remained the same. Thus the

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operating fronts possessed significantly more armament, combat equipment, and ammunition than in previous years.

The artfulness of strategic leadership of the Soviet Armed Forces displayed itself with unusual clarity in 1945. The State Defense Committee and the Supreme High Command Headquarters worked out their plans clearly and efficiently, their designs were calculated and far-sighted, the methods of achieving their objectives were mobile and decisive, and materiel was consumed economically. They held the upper edge over the strategists of fascist Germany in the competition of will, knowledge, and artfulness of troop command and control.

As in previous years of the war, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union continued to be the headquarters responsible for supreme political and strategic direction. It painstakingly nurtured its military personnel, raising a large family of troop commanders who artfully led the troops of the Soviet Army. In April-May 1945 the highest order that can be earned by a troop commander--the Order of Victory--was awarded to marshals of the Soviet Union A. M. Vasilevskiy, G. K. Zhukov, I. S. Konev, R. Ya. Malinovskiy, K. K. Rokossovskiy, and F. I. Tolobukhin. In June this order was awarded to A. I. Antonov, L. A. Govorov, I. V. Stalin, and S. K. Timoshenko.

The victory over Nazi Germany and its allies in Europe was attained owing to the efforts of all countries of the anti-Hitler coalition. The valor and bravery displayed by soldiers of the USA, Great Britain, and France cannot be debated. In 1945 the military actions of Anglo-American troops in Europe were better coordinated with operations of the Soviet Armed Forces. Cooperation between parties of the coalition expressed itself as mutual information on the plans and course of operations, and as exchange of experience. Inflicting serious blows on the enemy, the Anglo-American troops entered the western regions of Germany and Austria and the northern part of Italy. During the offensive the Americans liberated part of Czechoslovakia--about 20,000 square kilometers with a population of 3 million. In addition, in May the command of the Allied expeditionary forces accepted the surrender of fascist German troops in Denmark, the Netherlands, and Norway, and more than 16 million persons were relieved of the fascist yoke.

In the concluding stage of the war in Europe the Polish 1st and 2d armies, a Czechoslovakian army corps, the Romanian 1st and 4th armies, the Bulgarian 1st Army, and Hungarian units fought courageously within the composition of major frontal formations of the Soviet Army. Pilots of the French Normandy-Neman Regiment ended the war shoulder to shoulder with Soviet soldiers. The joint struggle against fascist Germany strengthened the friendship of the peoples of the Soviet Union and those of Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia.

The resistance movement, which developed broadly in occupied countries, played an important role in the struggle against fascism.

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The events of 1945 occurred in the conditions of complete political isolation of fascist Germany. In February-March the number of countries in a state of war with Germany increased to 56. Its sole ally was militarist Japan, which continued military actions in the Far East and on the Pacific. The loss of important industrial and agricultural regions dramatically intensified economic disorganization in Germany and led to the collapse of war production. But even in this hopeless position its rulers undertook desperate attempts to delay impending punishment. The inhumanity of the fascist state system revealed itself in its most monstrous form in the last months of the war. The fascist leaders concerned themselves not with the people and the German state but rather with how to retain their power. This led to rampant military reaction. The final defeat and capture of fascist German troops occurred on the territory of Germany itself, which was an important political factor. The outcome of the Second World War to Germany is evaluated in the diary of the headquarters of the Wehrmacht Supreme High Command as follows: "...as a result of the operations in the east, west, and south, the German Reich, which had once terrorized the entire world, transformed into a caricature of its presumptuous claims..."\* These and other conclusions similar to them, reached by fascist officials, were woeful testimony to the bankruptcy of the adventurist state policy assumed in response to military defeat.

In May the fascist state and the fascist party were liquidated, the Wehrmacht's general staff and administration were disbanded, and the principal instigators of the war, who were subsequently handed over to the court of the international tribunal, received their deserved punishment for the crimes they had committed. They were held responsible in the Nuremberg trials to the entire world for aggression and barbarianism, for enslaving and cruelly murdering millions of totally blameless people, and for crimes against peace and mankind. The annihilatory defeat suffered by Germany, moral-political condemnation of fascism, and punishment of war criminals all created the foundation for doing away with fascism.

International treaties written by the governments of the USSR, USA, and Great Britain had tremendous significance to the fates of the peoples of Europe in the chain of events of the concluding stage of the war with fascist Germany. The extremely swift development of international events caused more and more new political problems. The greatest credit belongs to the Big Three for the fact that coordinated decisions were reached in relation to almost all of the most important international issues directly associated with ending the war in Europe. This meant that states with different social structures could fruitfully cooperate in a struggle against aggressive forces threatening mankind. This conclusion has great significance today.

In 1945, decisions were made on the boundary line between Soviet and Anglo-American troops, the policies to be followed in relation to countries

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\* KTB/OKW, Vol IV, p 5.

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liberated from fascism were clarified, the mechanism of activity of the United Nations was worked out, and the principles of dealing with the conquered enemy and practical recommendations on organizing the postwar peace and international security were determined.

The Declaration on Liberated Europe adopted by the Allied powers confirmed in particular that the three great powers would continue to work together to solve the most important problems pertaining to the liberated countries. The three governments declared the need for annihilating the final vestiges of fascism in these countries and creating democratic institutions as desired by their peoples.

Political and economic principles to be followed in dealing with subjugated Germany were worked out, and decisions were made concerning reorganization of its political life on a peaceful and democratic foundation, disarmament of the war economy, partial compensation for damage done to other countries during the war, and punishment of fascist criminals who had heaped uncountable sufferings and woes upon the peoples of Europe. Problems were also solved in relation to establishing peaceful relationships with countries that had fought on Germany's side--Italy, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Finland. All decisions on international problems were the culmination of political, economic, and military cooperation among states that had stood in opposition to German and Italian fascism and its allies in Europe and the Far East. These decisions were adopted owing to the principled and purposeful nature of Soviet foreign policy. In its international relations the USSR government tried to correct the consequences of the war as quickly as possible and allow the peoples of countries liberated from fascism to determine their own fate. While military actions were still going on the Soviet Command immediately transferred all administrative authority to local national powers as soon as the situation permitted. Moreover the Soviet Union and its armed forces provided disinterested assistance to the public of liberated countries: They supplied food, rendered medical care, and helped to rehabilitate and readjust the devastated economy.

As a result of the historic victory over fascism the peoples of the world were persuaded that the policy of the USSR was the most progressive and just foreign policy. The foreign political activity of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union played an outstanding role in insuring national independence for the peoples of Central and Southeast Europe, and it earned their respect and widespread recognition.

An anti-Soviet tendency in the most reactionary circles of Great Britain and the USA, represented by Churchill and Truman, began to reveal itself distinctly in the highly complex international relations of the first half of 1945. The ruling circles of the Western powers were seriously concerned by the growth of the USSR's influence as well as by the failure of their own plans and hopes that they had tied in with the defeat of fascist Germany. Attempts at altering the democratic regimes of countries in the Central and Southeast Europe were undertaken both in the Crimean and

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the Potsdam conference. But these attempts were unsuccessful, being warded off by the Soviet Union. In the concluding stage of the war the ruling circles of the USA and England exhibited a tendency of transition to "cold war" policy and negotiation "from a position of strength." Immediately after the Potsdam conference the governments of the USA and England began grouping reactionary forces about them in violation of the treaties they themselves had signed; they did not even ignore their enemy of yesterday in this--German imperialism. Thus in the first months after the end of the war in Europe the forces of the world began to undergo intense polarization, with the forces of progress and democracy adhering to a policy of peaceful coexistence on one pole and the forces of reaction on the other.

The victory won by the Soviet people and their armed forces persuasively demonstrated the decisive advantages of their social and state structure, and the superiority of socialism over capitalism. The socialist country proved its viability and indestructibility. The USSR transformed into a mighty world power, the international authority of which no one could ignore any more. The war between the Soviet Union and fascist Germany was not only an armed conflict but also a collision between communist and fascist ideologies. The victory of the Soviet people was a triumph of the policies of the Communist Party related to repelling another imperialist invasion of the world's first socialist state, a triumph of Marxism-Leninism, Soviet patriotism, and proletarian internationalism, a triumph of the indivisible friendship of the peoples of the USSR.

There are many various conceptions in the West concerning the causes of fascist Germany's defeat in the past war. The course of the war for German imperialism is pictured to be a fatal coming together of random events and mistakes. It is persistently argued that under more-favorable circumstances, the outcome of the war may have been different. Reactionary bourgeois historiography is pursuing the goal of diminishing the role of the Soviet Union in the defeat of Nazi Germany, and of whitewashing the defeat suffered by the Wehrmacht and the German General Staff. However, the peoples of the world have been afforded the possibility for persuading themselves that the outcome of the armed conflict was directly associated with the political goals of the war and the economies of the warring states. This objective dependence was precisely what exhibited itself with special force in the duel between the USSR and Nazi Germany. The victory of the Soviet people was chiefly a victory of socialism over fascism.

The Soviet people defended their socialist fatherland. Entering into mortal battle with fascism, they also brought freedom to other peoples enslaved by Nazi Germany, who under the influence of the victories of the Soviet Armed Forces initiated a broad struggle of liberation against the invaders.

The war against fascist Germany has left a feeling of pride and a feeling of sorrow in the memories of the peoples of the world. Pride because reactionary forces that brought slavery to the people were vanquished.

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Sorrow because this victory was won at an immeasurably high price. It cost the lives of tens of millions of men, women, and children, and it was accompanied by colossal devastation. The sacrifices were inestimable. But they were not wasted. Fascism's defeat rescued mankind from enslavement. Dozens of countries liberated from fascism recovered their independence. Years will pass, but the memory of the great victory of freedom-loving peoples over fascism will remain sacred in the memories of new generations of people.

The victory over fascist Germany brought peace to the peoples of Europe. But World War II had not yet ended; it was still going on in the Far East and on islands of the Pacific Ocean. However, the fall of fascist Germany predetermined the swift end to the war against militarist Japan.  
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