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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by John Bligh Conway entitled "Retreating Towards Victory: Tradition, History, and Propaganda in Soviet Russia." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in History.

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Retreating Towards Victory: Tradition, History, and Propaganda in Soviet Russia.

A Thesis

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Degree

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John Bligh Conway

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents

John and Ann Conway

who have pushed when pushing was needed

and

Marina Ivanova

who opened Russia to me.

Благодарю тебя, Я принесу опехи

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ABSTRACT

Throughout the military history of Russia, retreat has been used as a tactic to ensure victory. Due to Russia's expansive territory, its harsh winter weather, and the tendency of its population to employ a "scorched earth" policy and guerrilla warfare, enemies from Charles XII of Sweden to Napoleon have found only terrible defeat by invading Russia. In the Second World War Joseph Stalin employed the history of this tactic as a method of propaganda designed to inspire a Russian population he had terrorized for almost a decade. While "scorched earth" and guerrilla tactics were implemented in the field the true importance of Russia's tradition of retreating to victory in World War II lay in its role as propaganda. Through the study of Soviet propaganda material from the period, such as newspaper reports and poster art, and by studying the effectiveness of these tactics against the Nazi war machine, this thesis will show that the true importance of this tradition lay in its use as a tool of national inspiration for the Russian people, not as a tactic of war.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Never invade Russia; such seems to be a permanent lesson of history. To invade Russia means falling victim to starvation and exposure as the retreating Russians burn their crops and buildings. It means to fall prey to a hostile populace engaging in guerrilla warfare. Next, it means freezing to death in the harsh winter during the long retreat from Russian territory towards home. Finally, victory will fall to the Russian people, who despite their losses and hardship, struggle forward to restore peace in their land.

This is the recurring "myth" of the Russian retreat which ends in Russian victory, experienced by failed invaders of Russia from Napoleon to Hitler. But how truly legitimate is this myth, especially in our modern age? This thesis will argue that, in actuality, the Russian retreat in World War II was ultimately more valuable as a tool of historical inspiration and propaganda for the Stalinist government to ensure stability on the home front than it was as an actual military tactic. Those inspired by its history on the home front did more for the continued existence of the Soviet Union than those dying, fighting,

and scorching the earth behind enemy lines. A central question of this work is whether the "scorched earth" policy, which forced the *Grande Armée* to the point of starvation in 1812, was an effective strategy in the era of mechanized warfare when supply lines were shortened by train, motorized vehicle, and plane. Were small numbers of partisan fighters capable of stopping the onslaught of massed armoured tank divisions; could "scorched earth" vanquish a foe who could transport supplies with trains and cargo planes? This work will focus on several aspects of the Russian retreat during World War II, from its classic model to the actual practice of "scorched earth" and partisan warfare, to the image of this tactic as it was promoted on the home front.

Traditionally, the Russian idea of retreating to victory consisted of three elements: "scorched earth," partisan warfare, and trust in "General Winter." The Russian winter has slowed and killed invaders who are incapable of functioning in weather which Russians are born into. While this mythologized and anthropomorphized aspect of the Russian retreat is perhaps the most famous in the popular historical consciousness, this thesis will focus on the other two facets, involving human agency. Though the tradition of "General Winter" is a myth of

great importance, it is a pattern of meteorology, not history. If the Russian winter has ever defeated an enemy, it has not done so because the Russian people controlled it as a weapon, but because short-sighted invaders, full of hubris, have refused to prepare for it. Napoleon entered Russia with far too rigid a plan to be adapted to the unexpected Russian expedient of long-range retreat, while Hitler refused to acknowledge the possibility that Russia would not capitulate before the first snowfall, as this contradicted his ideological prejudices. Russian success in winter warfare during World War II was based more on their own preparedness for the extremes of cold than any innate invulnerability. The Red Army itself had learned the harsh lessons of winter warfare during the disastrous Soviet invasion of Finland in the winter of 1939-40, where any myth of Russian immunity to cold was discredited. No Russian has ever faced sub-zero temperatures with a smile.

This thesis considers the Russian tactic of retreat in three phases: the roots of the retreat in Russia's distant past, its "classical form" in 1812, and the retreat in the 20th century. The roots of the Russian tactic of retreat to victory were planted in the 13th century with the Mongol invasion and developed from this era to the 17th

century with the period of Russian history known as the "Time of Troubles." The classical period of this tactic covers Napoleon's ill-fated invasion of Russia in 1812. For modern times, the significance of this period is not only that Napoleon's defeat in Russia led to the collapse of his empire, but that it provided a valuable image for propaganda and inspiration in the twentieth century.

World War II and Stalin's use of the history of this tactic as propaganda will be the focus of this thesis. Particularly important to this study will be Stalin's unexpected use of Tsarist history as Soviet propaganda and the glaring disparity between the image of retreat he promoted and the reality of the tactic on the ground. The thesis will consider the impact of this type of nostalgic Tsarist propaganda on the Red Army as well as the Soviet interpretation of the military successes of Russia's Tsarist past, examining both poster and written propaganda from the period. Finally, this thesis will consider the possible future of this tactic in light of the enormous changes which have taken place in Russia over the past ten years.

CHAPTER 2
THE ROOTS OF RETREAT

When one considers the vastness of Russia, it would be easy to simply conclude that the tactic of Russian "retreat to victory" is only a matter of geography. With nearly limitless space to fall back on, retreat to weaken an invader might seem like a logical, easy step. If one were to make such an assumption, it would seem likely that the Russian tactic of retreat would have existed since time immemorial. But in fact this is not the case, as the first roots of this modern Russian tactic of warfare can be traced only to the Middle Ages, with the onslaught of the Mongols in the 13th century.

For all of the terror it seared into Russian history and folk memory, the Mongol invasion of Russia in 1237 was just one installment in a long line of invasions from the East. During their drive into western Europe during the third and fourth centuries, the Huns passed through Russia on their way to the West, leaving in their wake the Bulgar and Khazar tribes to rule Russian lands. These Asiatic invasions had a great, though often indirect, influence on the course of Russian history. When the Asiatic Pechenegs killed Svyatoslav I of

Kievian Rus during the ninth century, for example, this paved the way for his son Vladimir the Saint to come to power in Russia. This led to the official establishment of Christianity, a legacy which survived Communism and continues to this day.[1]

The Mongol invasion in 1237 was of a different character. Earlier, the Huns had only passed through before moving on to the greener pastures of the Roman Empire, the Khazars ruled over a divided people, and even the Pechenegs had only indulged in sporadic raids. The Mongol conquest, however, was on another order of magnitude. They conquered an established Russian state and enforced large tributes for almost two hundred and fifty years. The Mongols first rode into Russian history in 1223 when a small expeditionary force annihilated Russian troops near the river Kalka and then disappeared.[2] Fourteen years later they returned in force under the leadership of Batu Khan and the results were no different. In fact, for the Russians the consequences were much worse. The popular twentieth century image of war in Russia, of the brutal Russian winter freezing and stopping hostile invaders while battle-hardened Russian

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[1] Nicholas V Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 33-34.

[2] Ibid., 67.

troops endure with seeming ease was not the case in 1237. In fact, the Mongols engaged in the only successful winter invasion of Russia in history, their cavalry racing across frozen rivers and steppes with incredible speed and success.[3] It was significant that the Mongols engaged in a "scorched earth" policy against the Russians, a tactic the Russians would later adopt. As the Mongols pushed into Russia, they laid waste to cities and towns, exterminating and enslaving their populations.[4] Military historian John Keegan argues that the Mongol success, compared to later would-be conquerors of Russia, may have lain in their "primitive" nomadism which allowed them to endure the rigors of warfare.[5] In fact, the later "scorched earth" tactics would sometimes be called "Parthian Tactics" in the modern era, referring to another nomadic horsemen tribe. As "irregular" forces, the Mongols shrugged off hardships which sedentary people were unaccustomed to, such as foul weather and lack of shelter.[6] Moreover, in having to defend their herds from fleet-footed predators, nomads such as the Mongols had to rely on speed and archery.[7] Such tactics were very well suited to decimating hosts of slow-moving foot soldiers

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[3] Ibid., 70.

[4] Ibid., 70-71.

[5] John Keegan, *A History of Warfare* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 164.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., 165-166.

unaccustomed to the free moving combat and long range warfare that were the Mongol trademark. It is also likely that nomadism was very well suited for "scorched earth" warfare. Keegan argues that nomadic, pastoral people were also predisposed to enslave defeated opponents, as the leap from herding livestock to herding humans is a small one.[8] Slavery was the ultimate extension of "scorched earth," the removal of people from their homes and homeland. While the Mongol invasion had little direct positive influence on Russian culture and language, their nomadic predisposition for "scorched earth" warfare left an important tradition and precedent for future leaders of Russia to emulate.

Just as important as the actual invasion was the way in which the Mongols ruled Russia afterwards. Despite the immediate devastation of their invasion the Mongols did very little to change the cultural lives of those Russians who lived under the "Tartar Yoke." While the Mongols collected taxes and levied troops from their Russian subjects, sending them as far afield as China, they did little in the way of truly and deliberately altering the underlying Russian culture.[9] While the

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[8] Ibid., 166-167.

[9] Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 71.

Mongols forged the largest land empire in history, they were not cultural colonialists. The Russian people maintained their Christian religion despite rule by shamanistic, and then Muslim overlords.[10]

Mongol rule was not a rule of absolutism. The Mongols were much more interested in simply collecting taxes and sometimes levying troops. Russian rulers who cooperated with the Mongols were left to rule as they saw fit and, in some cases, fend for themselves. On April 5, 1242, just five years after the Mongol invasion, Prince Alexander Nevsky led Russian forces to victory over the invading Teutonic Knights on the frozen waters of Lake Peipus. This victory, known in Russian historiography as the "massacre on the ice," was to become a focal point in Russian legend and eventually in Russian national history as it solidified Russian borders against invasions from the west.

One of the greatest, mostly unintended, consequences of the Mongol invasion was the rise of Moscow as the premier city in Russia. This was due to Moscow's willingness to cooperate with the Mongols, acting as their tax collector for all the of the Russian lands. Moscow gained stature after the Prince of Moscow, Ivan Kalita, was named

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[10] James H. Billington, *The Icon and the Axe* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 14.

Grand Prince by the Mongols in 1328. In the same year, he convinced the head of the Russian church to resettle his headquarters in Moscow. Afterwards, Moscow's place as the center of Russian life was doubly assured as a political and religious focal point.[11] Historian Norman Davies argues that Moscow's role as a religious center played a crucial part in Russia's political future, giving spiritual legitimacy to Muscovite preeminence. After the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453 the Russian Orthodox Church, an autonomous branch of Orthodox Christianity, began considering itself Byzantium's successor, and Moscow as a "Third Rome."[12] Muscovite theology gradually became synonymous with nascent Muscovite nationalism, and the leaders of the nation would be linked with the divine and a growing tradition of Russian Messianism.[13] Lenin and Stalin would continue this messianic tradition, recast in the atheistic mode of the Soviet Union.[14]

Mongol rule in Russia lasted until 1480. The importance of the two hundred and forty years of Mongolian rule lay not so much in the

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[11] Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 98.

[12] Norman Davies, *Europe: a History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 464.

[13] Ibid., 465; John Lawrence, *A History of Russia* (New York: Meridian, 1993), 90.

[14] Lawrence, *A History of Russia*, 90.

stamping of Mongolian language and culture on Russia, for this influence was negligible. Rather, in the judgement of James Billington, the importance of Mongol rule lay in their "indirect role in providing the Orthodox Eastern Slavs with a common enemy against whom they could unite and rediscover a sense of common purpose."[15] The Mongol legacy lies in its inadvertent fostering of Russian solidarity, not any cultural, religious, or linguistic influence.

The casting off of the Mongol yoke heralded a new age for Russia. Just thirty-four years later, Russian forces took the city of Smolensk from Poland, beginning an era of Russian preeminence in Eastern Europe.[16] While Muscovite rulers were unable to follow up on this success, it was still a significant victory which improved Muscovy's status as a growing power. After Ivan IV, known as Ivan the Terrible, was crowned in 1547, he took the historic step of assuming the novel title of Tsar, not Grand Prince [*Velikii Kniaz*]. Naming himself Tsar, Ivan initiated what would be a long tradition in Russia of autocracy. In doing so, he created an archetypal figure which, from 1547 until the death of Nicholas II in 1918, would be a potent symbol

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[15] Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 73-75; Billington, *The Icon and the Axe*, 14.

[16] R. Nisbet Bain, *Slavonic Europe* (New York: Arno Press & the New York Times, 1971), 103.

capable of inspiring either love or revulsion in the Russian people. Naming himself Tsar, Ivan IV continued the legacy of the "Third Rome." The word Tsar, like its German equivalent *Kaiser*, was taken from the Latin Caesar, for Julius Caesar and his imperial successors in ancient Rome. This was the tradition that the Tsars of Russia wished to emulate. Ivan was a devout follower of the ideal of caeseropapism, asserting the sovereign's absolute dominance over both the religious and secular world. While such an ideology had been common among the emperors of Byzantium, Ivan took this doctrine to an even higher pitch.[17] It was asserted that the Tsar and Russian Orthodox faith were one and the same, and thus treachery against the Tsar was seen as heresy against the church. Moreover, the Tsar's role as autocrat supposedly made him the only legitimate ruler in all of Russia.[18]

When Ivan the Terrible died in 1584, he threw Russia into dynastic chaos, leaving two incapable heirs, Feodor and Dimitri, the former was mentally retarded and the latter still a child.[19] While Feodor became a figurehead, his brother-in-law Boris Gudanov, essentially ruled Russia as regent for the next fourteen years. After

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[17] Billington, *The Icon and the Axe*, 67.

[18] Lawrence, *A History of Russia*, 89.

[19] Bain, *Slavonic Europe*, 157.

Feoder's death, Gudanov was elected Tsar as the other son, Dimitri, had died under mysterious circumstances in 1591. Gudanov's reign as Tsar, however, was far less successful than the years of his regency, marked by terrible famine and pestilence.[20] In 1603, in the midst of the disasters of Gudanov's rule, there appeared a shadowy man with Polish backing who claimed to be the long dead Dimitri, asserting that he had escaped Gudanov's assassins and now returned to claim his father's throne. The appearance of this "False Dimitri" began what is called Russia's "Time of Troubles," lasting until 1618. During this period, Polish forces gained control of large portions of Russia and eventually Moscow itself. As Russian aristocrats fought among themselves, vying for the position of Tsar, and Polish forces attempted to put their own king on the Russian throne, the Tsardom in effect ceased to exist.[21] By 1613 order was restored through the efforts of the Orthodox Church and Mikhail Romanov who established himself as Tsar and his family as the new dynasty. For Mikhail Romanov's heirs, the lesson of the "Time of Troubles" centered on the intense feeling of humiliation the people of Russia suffered at the hands of Poland's Catholic leaders, as Polish troops besieged, starved, and occupied the holy city of Moscow.[22] To avoid a repetition of the "Time of Troubles"

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[20] Ibid., 168.

[21] Ibid., 178.

[22] Ruslan G. Skrynnikov, *The Time of Troubles: Russia in Crisis*, trans. by

in future wars the Muscovite political elite would be prepared to make almost any sacrifice to ensure that their land would never be taken by victorious enemies again.

One of the major reasons such chaos erupted in Russia was that large portions of Russia's rural western population turned against Gudanov and supported the first and then even a second "False Dimitri." The first false claimant came during a time of famine and natural disasters, the second in the aftermath of dynastic chaos as Muscovite boyars struggled to claim the throne. In his work *Primitive Rebels*, E. J. Hobsbawm postulated that rebel movements among the peasantry are not really directed against authority or the status-quo, but in fact are <u>for</u> traditional authority and maintenance of an endangered traditional status-quo. These rebellions, Hobsbawm argued, are "not against the fact that peasants are poor and oppressed, but against the fact that they are sometimes excessively poor and oppressed."[23] Hobsbawm further argued that, for peasant populations, the distant ruler represents justice.[24] Peasant actions during the "Time of Troubles," while unified, were spontaneous,

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Hugh F. Graham. (Gulf Breeze, Florida: Academic International Press, 1988), 74.

[23]E. J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels, Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1959), 25.

[24] Ibid., 119.

driven by the desire to have their lives returned to normalcy under the rule of a legitimate Tsar.

Peasant rebellions, or *jacqueries* as the Europe-wide phenomenon was known, continued in Russia after the "Time of Troubles" came to an end in 1618. The importance of such rebellions in the larger scope of Russia's tactic of retreat lies in their individuality. *Jacqueries* did not seek to bring about political change, but, as Hobsbawm argued, were more in the nature of social protest.[25] In Russia, from 1645-76, such social protest was colored by the "scorched earth" legacy. It was during this period that Russian society underwent the *Raskol* or "schism," over an ecumenical initiative of the Patriarch of the Russian Church, who launched a series of ceremonial and liturgical reforms meant to bring the Russian Orthodox Church closer to the Greek Orthodox Church in Constantinople. The chief resistance to the reforms came from among the peasants, becoming extreme as the reforms attacked the peasantry's spiritual life.[26] Peasants who refused to change, dubbed "Old Believers," sought self-immolation within their churches rather than concede.[27] The "Old Believers" were messianic in their

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[25] Ibid., 25.

[26] Geroid Tanquary Robinson, *Rural Russia Under the Old Regime* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 21.

zealousness, another attribute Hobsbawm identifies in peasant movements.[28] In the events of the *Raskol* we see the "scorched earth" policy taught by the Mongols. This was "scorched earth" taken to its ultimate irrational extreme, but proved the capability of the Russian peasantry to make sacrifices in the face of impossible odds when their own agendas and ideals were at stake.

The resolution of the "Time of Troubles" and the easing of the strains of the *Raskol* over time did not fundamentally change peasants' conceptualization of their world. In 1773 Emelyan Pugachēv, a Don Cossack, sparked a peasant rebellion by claiming to be the resurrected Tsar Peter III who had been overthrown by his wife, Catherine II.[29] This rebellion, which began in the Urals and spread as far as the outskirts of Moscow itself, appealed to the peasants' desire for freedom, to live as they wanted. Not only did Pugachev promise the extermination of "officials and landlords [and] freedom from serfdom, taxation, and military service for the people," but he also gave the peasants a utopian pledge, that they could live as free Cossacks, beholden to none and bound by nothing save their love for

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[27] Billington, *The Icon and the Axe*, 25.

[28] Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels*, 57.

[29] Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 260.

the just, idealized Tsar.[30] While the Tsar would one day become a thing of the past, peasant dreams of a world where they could realize goals of total agrarian utopian freedom would remain, firing partisan movements well into the 20th century.

[30] Ibid., 260.

CHAPTER 3
THE CLASSICAL RETREAT

Despite the rebellions thirty-nine years before, peasant partisans sided with Alexander I, the legitimate Tsar during Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812, as it was in their common interest to push Napoleon out of Russia. Alexander sought to keep his country free of Napoleonic influence and the peasantry sought to protect themselves from the French whom they perceived as alien Catholic invaders. Napoleon's 1812 invasion is often seen as the prime example of the classical tactic of Russian retreat. In this invasion we see all the aspects of the myth of the Russian retreat to victory: "scorched earth," partisan warfare, and "General Winter." This was not the first time that an organized "scorched earth" policy was implemented, however; organized use of "scorched earth" had sometimes been utilized by the Russian army before. In 1708, Tsar Peter I had used a "scorched earth" tactic against the Swedes, felling the "whole wood in front of Smolensk to block the way there as completely as possible."[31] This modest episode was to be emulated in 1812.

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[31] Frans G. Bengtsson, *The Life of Charles XII: King of Sweden 1697-1718*, trans. Naomi Walford (London: Macmillian & Co. Ltd., 1960), 297.

Russian response to Napoleon's invasion illustrates the "scorched earth" policy and the individualistic nature of rebel peasantry combining for the first time for the purposes of war. The invading French faced an enemy reluctant to give them the pitched battle they were used to, dragging them deeper into hostile territory and further from home. Beyond this, the French also had to deal with peasant partisans and the difficulties presented by Russian "scorched earth" policy taken to unprecedented extremes. Twenty-four hours after Napoleon's *Grande Armée* entered Moscow on September 14 the city was in flames. The question of how the fires were started is still debated, but there is no doubt that before the Russian evacuation of the city was finished, in the days following the battle of Borodino, Governor Rostopchin of Moscow "had removed or rendered unusable all the fire-engines, and sunk the fire-floats in the river."[32]

As French forces pushed into Russia, every type of rumor concerning the brutality of the French against the Russian people was

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[32] Nigel Nicholson, Napoleon 1812, (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 94; Years after the war Phillipe-Paul de Ségur, Napoleon's aide-de-camp, found himself related to Governor Rostopchin through the marriage of his nephew to Rostopchin's daughter. The two of them became acquaintances and Ségur stated in his memoirs in detail that Rostopchin was responsible for the flames which burnt Moscow to the ground. See Phillipe-Paul de Ségur, Napoleon's Russian Campaign. trans. by J. David Townsend (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958), 93.

circulated: stories of torture, rape, mutilation and the desecration of churches. The result was widespread panic amongst the peasantry, as French depredations, real or imagined, sparked incredible tumult.[33] Soviet historian, Eugene Tarle characterized the Russian reaction to the French invasion in the terms of earlier historical precedent:

> The Russian peasants treated the French as their ancestors treated the Mongols [and this] accurately illustrates the psychology of the Russian peasant, who saw a colossal armed horde invading his homeland, looting, burning, killing, and torturing. For many years after the event, peasants living round Moscow described the Napoleonic invasion as the 'Tartar devastation.'[34]

It is hard to trace the exact reasons for the vehemence of Russian reaction to the invasion. There is no doubt that many of the fears were based on the unprecedented size of Napoleon's army as well as the popular memory of the Polish seizure of Moscow when Roman Catholic Poles gained control over the center of Russian Orthodoxy. The sheer size of Napoleon's army brought the war directly to the peasantry as Napoleon's troops were forced to pillage and forage for their supplies, living off the land. If the Russian peasantry really did

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[33] Nadezhda Durova, *The Cavalry Maiden: Journals of a Russian Officer in the Napoleonic Wars*, trans. Mary Fleming Zirin (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1988), 147; Boris Uxkull, *Arms and the Woman: The Intimate Journal of a Baltic Nobleman in the Napoleonic Wars*, trans. Joel Carmichael (New York: The Macmillian Company, 1966), 75.

[34] Eugene Tarle, *Napoleon's Invasion of Russia: 1812*, trans. G.M. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942), 250.

see the French as a new Mongol horde then the worst aspects of the Mongol invasion and the "Time of Troubles" might have been combined in their minds.

The eventual defeat of Napoleon's forces and the hounding of his army all the way back to Paris, made the Franco-Russian war of 1812 a very important event for both Russian history and nationalism. While most western sources dub this war "Napoleon's Russian campaign," Russian historiography calls it the "Patriotic War of 1812." Key to this war's image as a "Patriotic War" is the idea that the entire nation, soldiers and civilians of all classes, rose up to fight off western invaders. The image of the civilian populace of 1812 rising up in partisan bands is certainly a popular one and would be used extensively by later propagandists, portraying the image of a united Russia: Tsar, soldiers and civilians standing side by side against the common foe. But how true is this image? Baron Berend-Johann Boris Uxkull, a Baltic German noble from Estonia fighting in the Russian army, certainly saw peasant resistance against the French in this light. In his diary he wrote that the invasion caused "a sensation among the peasants, who with the greatest sangfroid in the world set their huts on fire so as not to abandon them to the enemy."[35] Yet, to accept this

patronizing description, assuming that Russian peasants were acting out of some supposedly essential irrationality is to ignore the strong sense of individualism that peasants have always displayed, and to denigrate their capacity for pursuit of their own self-interest, as they understood it.

When the burning of Moscow and the arrival of winter drove the French to retreat, there is very little evidence that the Russian government and its peasant partisans worked hand in hand at all. The individuality and voluntarism which played such an important role in peasant movements in the past refused a "gentleman's" mercy to the French. Peasant spite against the fleeing *Grande Armée* meant that Russian officers and even requests by the Tsar were unable to keep peasant partisans from massacring captured French troops.[36]

Despite such individualism, the stereotype took hold of peasants and army fighting side by side for the sake of shared patriotism and a new modern nationalism. The truth is that peasant motivations have always been centered on the land that they worked and lived on.[37]

1812 became a high point in Russian history. Napoleon's string

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[35] Uxkull, *Arms and the Woman*, 75.

[36] Nicholson, *Napoleon 1812*, 126.

[37] Robinson, *Rural Russia Under the Old Regime*, 128-135.

of victories was broken, and the strategy of retreating for victory became an important part of Russian military theory. The argument may be made, however, that the success of 1812 was impossible to reproduce in the mechanized age. Many aspects of 1812 were imitated by the Russian army in World War I , to dubious effect. The "scorched earth" policy, which had defeated Napoleon, seemed incapable of hindering the *Kaiser*'s forces as they pressed into Russian imperial territory in 1915. Retreat under Nicholas II was vastly different from that under Alexander I. Despite this, the Tsarist propaganda campaign sought to make as many parallels as possible. Posters were printed which depicted peasants happily killing off the invading Germans, while others depicted generals who had fought Napoleon guiding present-day Russian troops into battle.[38]

In fact, in 1914 the Tsarist government proclaimed the war with Germany as a new 1812, but in practice the retreat was bungled.[39] While directives ordered "all movables to be moved, crops to be

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[38] Hubertus F. Jahn, *Patriotic Culture in Russia during World War I* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 16; 25.

[39] Norman Stone, *The Eastern Front, 1914-1917* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975), 183.

burned, and so on," the supervision under which this policy was carried out was disorganized.[40] According to the eyewitness reports, of Sir Richard Knox, a British attaché to the Russian army, Russian soldiers went about destroying property without the supervision of officers and on one occasion set fire to piles of straw but left crops untouched.[41] In Brest-Litovsk, the Russian army evacuated the fortress city's 80,000 inhabitants, thus freeing the Germans from having to take care of them.[42] During Russia's "Great Retreat" from April to September 1915 almost all of Poland's industry once held by the Russians fell into German hands along with millions of rubles worth of supplies and raw materials.[43] Far from saving Russia, retreat crippled the war effort by robbing it of vital raw materials and the factories needed to shape them into the tools of war.[44] The retreat itself only increased the misery of local populations, and the

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[40] Ibid., 184.

[41] Quoted in W. Bruce Lincoln, *Passage Through Armageddon, The Russians in War and Revolution, 1914-1918* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 156.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid., 165.

[44] Ibid.

destructions often became a pretext for anti-semitic persecution by cossacks, troops, and local thugs.[45]

Russian losses in the First World War were devastating, both in terms of men and lands lost to the Germans. Disorganized Russian retreat over 200 miles from April to September of 1915 cost them their territories in Poland, Lithuania, and the Baltic provinces. In the end the debacle cost Russia its empire. German victories and the failure of Tsar Nicholas II as a military commander led to low Russian morale and instability on the home front. In 1917 the Tsar was deposed and eventually shot the next year, along with his wife and children, while peasants and workers looted the halls of the great Winter Palace in Petrograd. A badly handled war and incompetent retreat ended the three hundred year old Romanov dynasty as first the Provincial Government and then the Bolsheviks came to power.

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[45] Ibid., 167.

CHAPTER 4
MODERN RETREAT

Was the Russian tactic of retreat indeed a complete failure during the course of World War I? While a retreat of "scorched earth" and withdrawal failed in securing victory, an analogous diplomatic retreat was used to save the Russian revolution. As the Bolsheviks concluded a separate peace with Germany on March 3, 1918, Soviet Russia ended a humiliating war by means of a humiliating peace at Brest-Litovsk. The treaty cost Russia over five thousand factories, mills, distilleries, and refineries as well as over sixty million people.[46] Russia was forced to cede Courland, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Lithuania, and all rights to Finland and Ukraine. While the Soviet Union under Stalin would eventually re-conquer these lost areas, many of them had been part of imperial Russia since the 17th and 18th centuries and their temporary loss was a tremendous blow.

While such a cost was terrible for the newly empowered Bolsheviks, in the estimate of John W. Wheeler-Bennett, it was "the price which Lenin paid for the salvation of the Russian Revolution."[47]

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[46] Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 478.

In fact, Lenin himself saw the treaty as little more than a stopgap measure allowing for the cessation of hostilities until the revolution in Russia was consolidated. Lenin's personal understanding of the treaty was that while it would have to be ratified, eventually it would also have to be violated.[48] Since in theory the "shifting of territorial frontiers was not so vital" to Bolshevik revolutionaries, in the long run a humiliating peace would not be so terrible if it also saved the revolution.[49] This was a new species in the tradition of the Russian retreat, not consisting of burnt-out buildings and ravaged crops, but a policy of calculated acquiescence and retrenchment in order to save the efforts of revolutionaries.

If the Bolsheviks adapted their policy to create a diplomatic "scorched earth," did they also embrace the partisan warfare so prevalent in the past? Lenin was a firm believer in partisan warfare for the cause of revolution, pragmatically avowing that Marxism could "not reject any form of struggle."[50] Lenin's views concerning what exactly

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[47] John W. Wheeler Bennett, *Brest-Litovsk: The Forgotten Peace, March 1918* (London: Macmillan & co. Ltd, 1956), 275.

[48] Ibid., 276.

[49] Ibid., 277.

[50] V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House,

constituted partisan warfare, however, were far broader than irregular forces fighting behind enemy lines. Since Lenin in fact approached the subject from a revolutionary standpoint and war for him meant civil war, the image of the partisan fighting valiantly behind the enemy, an image which would be most prevalent during the Second World War, was not considered at all. Lenin's definition of partisan warfare included everything from armed insurrection to peaceful strikes against a non-revolutionary government.[51] In considering the more warlike aspects of revolutionary partisan warfare, however, Lenin defined two specific goals of partisan fighters:

> Armed struggle pursues two *different* aims, which must be *strictly* distinguished: in the first place, it aims at assassinating individuals, chiefs and subordinates in the army and police; in the second place it aims at the confiscation of monetary funds both from the government and from private persons.[52]

Despite Lenin's support for the idea of partisan fighters, he still had marked reservations, shared with his successor Stalin. Both distrusted the inherent individuality of the partisan fighter. Lenin called "unorganised, irregular, non-party guerrilla acts" demoralizing to the revolutionary movement and insisted that a party incapable of

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1962), vol. 11, *June 1906-January 1907*, 213.

[51] Ibid., 215.

[52] Ibid., 216.

assuming control over irregular partisans lacks strength.[53] Thus, Lenin denounced partisan warfare as the sole means of revolutionary struggle, stating that partisan actions would force "class-conscious proletarians into close association with degraded, drunken riff-raff."[54] The most important factor in partisan warfare, Lenin asserted, was that the partisans must be "ennobled by the enlightening and organising influence of socialism."[55]

Lenin's very partial views on partisan warfare meant that with the coming of the civil war in 1918 he was not a great proponent of that style of warfare as a military tactic. Both he and Trotsky believed that they needed a well-trained regular army, not enthusiastic amateurs, since their chief goal was to maintain power, clearly not a job for irregular partisans.[56] The Bolshevik power base was also primarily located in the cities and not the countryside where most partisan fighters emerged. The few active Bolshevik partisans were not particularly effective outside their own cities such as Tomsk and Irkutsk.[57]

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[53] Ibid., 219.

[54] Ibid., 221.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Walter Laqueur, *Guerrilla: A Historical and Critical Study* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1976), 161.

[57] Ibid., 161-162.

Soviet sources claim that "some hundred to a hundred and forty thousand guerrillas operated in the White army's rear."[58] In fact, while many partisans did fight the counter-revolutionary White army, many of them fought the Bolsheviks as well.[59] Russian peasants found themselves at odds with both the Red and White factions during the civil war. While the Bolsheviks and the counter-revolutionary Whites fought for control over Russia, the peasantry was forced to form "communes to regulate their economic relations and partisan forces to defend themselves from the depredations of outsiders, be they Red or White recruiters, soldiers, or food detachments."[60]

In the midst of the revolution, the primary concern for the peasants was still their land. While the Bolsheviks won peasant support or, at least toleration, with their slogan "bread, peace and land," peasant support for the Bolsheviks waned after it became apparent the Bolshevik system prized urban workers. above all.[61] Indeed, by the the 1930s, the Soviet plan of collectivization sought to

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58 *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Enciklopediya*, 3d ed., s.v. "Partizanskoe Dvizhenie v 1918-1922," 233.

59 Laqueur, *Guerrilla: A Historical and Critical Study*, 161.

60 Mark von Hagen, *Soldiers in the Proletarian Dictatorship: The Red Army and the Soviet Socialist State, 1917-1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 52.

61 Michael Malet, *Nestor Machno in the Russian Civil War* (London: The MacMillan Press Ltd., 1982), 118.

transform the peasantry into agricultural factory workers who would no longer control the land they lived and fought for.[62] The Russian peasantry was far more inspired by leaders who claimed to fight for their specific interests, such as Nestor Makhno, a Ukrainian peasant and anti-Bolshevik partisan leader. He gained popular peasant support for what has been called his "united village theory," revolving around the redistribution of land so that "no peasant should have more land than he and his family could farm without the use of hired labor."[63] Makhno's utopian ideals of egalitarian land distribution were more suited to the rural community of which he was a member. Makhno enjoyed great popularity among peasants, but at last his partisan army disbanded after he was badly wounded in combat with the Red Army in 1920 and he was forced to flee abroad for medical reasons.[64]

The Bolshevik view of partisans and partisan warfare remained mostly unchanged after victory in the Civil War. In the 1920's and the 1930's Soviet military thought centered on modern technology such as tanks, aircraft, and artillery, not on irregular partisan fighters.[65] The

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[62] Brian Moynahan, *The Russian Century: A History of the Last Hundred Years* (New York: Random House, 1994), 108.

[63] Ibid., 118.

[64] Michael Palij, *The Anarchism of Nestor Makhno: 1918-1921* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976), 241.

new Soviet government had further reason to disdain such fighters, for until the early 1930's the Soviet Union's chief internal military struggle revolved around the *Basmatchi*, nomadic tribesmen from Central Asia.[66]

Only in the early 1930's did the Soviet government consider partisan warfare as a useful military tactic. In 1933, Stalin, who came to power after Lenin by discrediting and then murdering his rivals, initiated "The Partisan Directive."[67] Undoubtedly inspired by Hitler's rise to power in Germany and the possible threat of Nazi aggression, this partisan doctrine laid down the general plan for Soviet partisan warfare in the event of invasion[68] While written to organize partisan units behind enemy lines, it seems more likely that Stalin initiated this directive to control the individualistic guerrillas who might rise up in enemy occupied territory. In this sense, it was a precursor of the brutal purges, which began a year after the directive was issued. Both the directive and the purges were designed to give Stalin complete control over every aspect of Soviet society, eliminating

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[65] Ibid., 165.

[66] Ibid., 164.

[67] John A. Armstrong, *Soviet Partisans in World War II* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), 653-662.

[68] Arthur Campbell, *Guerillas* (New York: The John Day Company, 1968), 67.

anyone who might potentially challenge his authority, be that challenge real or imaginary. While clearly lacking the scope and viciousness of the bloody purges, the partisan directive also aimed to give Stalin total control behind enemy lines, as he had over the Soviet Union itself.

The directive reads like a miniature constitution, with executive and legislative aspects. Partisan groups were divided into five distinctive branches: Organization, Tasks, Supply, Preparation, and Leadership.[69] Partisans were to be drawn from the entire spectrum of society. According to the decree, partisan units were to be formed "at every plant, transport facility, at every government or collective unit." The actual partisan bands themselves would correspond "in organization to the community" with "district, city and rural administrations" retaining their control over the bands. Unit leaders would be chosen by the state according to their military and political experience, and their dedication to the socialist cause.[70]

Partisan units were further divided into five specific groups: platoons, companies, special groups, reconnaissance, and infantry. Platoons would be equipped with rifles to engage the enemy directly,

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69 Brigadier C. Aubrey Dixon and Otto Heilbrunn, *Communist Guerilla Warfare* (New York: Frederick A Praeger, 1962), 59.

70 Ibid.

companies with explosives to destroy tanks and aircraft. Meanwhile, special groups were to engage in sabotage. Finally, reconnaissance would spy behind enemy lines and the infantry would secure connections between them all and the central authorities.[71]

While actual partisan operations were dictated by group type, all partisans had shared responsibilities. Partisans were to aid the regular army at all times and know their area of operation well. Moreover, in the event of being overrun by the enemy, they were to engage in a limited form of "scorched earth" tactics. The decree ordered that partisans "must destroy their stocks, petrol, and communication system in case of enemy attack, so that nothing is left to the enemy."[72] Questions of supply were to be handled by partisans themselves. The directive mentioned rifles and grenades but also, remarkably, such primitive weapons as hatchets, scythes, and pitchforks.[73]

Preparation of partisan units was designed to assure that the partisans were not ready to fight until the moment of invasion itself, thus ensuring that organized and armed civilians would not be capable of mounting any type of organized insurrection against Stalin's

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[71] Ibid., 60.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid.

government. The Decree stated that training would begin only once the partisans had been mobilized with the coming of invasion.[74] The leadership for these partisan units would also be completely up to the local governments which, in turn, were answerable to the centralized state itself.[75]

Despite such organization and Stalin's evident paranoia, it seems that no other country in Europe did less to prepare for invasion than the Soviet Union in 1941. It is certainly one of the great ironies of history that Stalin, who had a deep-seated mistrust of everyone, chose to trust Adolf Hitler. Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, in August of 1939. Far more than a non-aggression treaty, it contained secret protocols allowing the Soviet Union, in the case of war between Poland and Germany, to annex Eastern Poland and the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.[76]

Despite Stalin's faith in the treaty, a mere two years later German forces launched a massive attack on the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. Ironically, it was the Red Army which fell to German

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[74] Ibid. 60-61.

[75] Ibid., 61.

[76] John Keegan, *The Second World War* (New York: Penguin Books, 1989), 43.

guerrilla tactics at the dawn of the invasion. Before the *Luftwaffe* bombing which signaled the beginning of Operation Barbarossa, special operations troops in Soviet army uniforms had parachuted into and infiltrated the Soviet rear, cutting telephone lines and spreading chaos.[77] Before the Soviet Union was able to set up partisan fighters against the Nazis, it first became the victim of Nazi guerrilla warfare. The ruin of the Red Army which Stalin had perpetrated during the purges soon became painfully evident as Soviet tank divisions found themselves defeated more by their "lack of coordination, fuel, and ammunition" than by direct conflict with the enemy. After only one week of the war some ninety percent of Soviet mechanized strength had been smashed by the Nazi *Blitzkrieg*.[78]

The civilian response to the German invasion was initially positive. Many of the Soviet Union's non-Russian nationalities, such as Ukrainians, Lithuanians, and Latvians, saw the Germans as possible liberators from Stalinism. Despite any joy these peoples may have had as the Germans began their occupation, German policy was designed to terrorize these populations as much as Stalin's purges had. On the pretext that Moscow had never signed the Geneva convention or the

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[77] David M. Glantz and Jonathan M. House, *When Titans Clashed: How the Red Army Stopped Hitler* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 49.

[78] Ibid.

Hague accords, German soldiers and SS units were given free rein to indulge themselves in Soviet occupied territory.[79] Soviet political commissars were executed on sight and punishment for offenses against the civilian and prisoner populations was made optional, "at the discretion of the unit commander."[80] Brutal German offenses were conditioned by the Nazi conceptualization of the Russians as *Untermenschen* or sub-humans. Omer Bartov argues that by allowing soldiers to commit atrocities against the Soviet population, the German army gave its soldiers an outlet to cope with the severe discipline they were subject to[81]

In the face of the seemingly unstoppable German advance, the Red Army was forced into retreat. If Stalin had shown in 1933 that he appreciated the Russian tradition of partisan warfare, he now showed in 1941 that he had equal appreciation for the "scorched earth" policy. Stalin's tactic of "scorched earth," however, was of a different brand, for it consisted not only of destruction, but also included the removal

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[79] Alexander Werth, *Russia at War: 1941-1945* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc., 1964), 700-703.

[80] Glantz and House, *When Titans Clashed: How the Red Army Stopped Hitler*, 56.

[81] Omer Bartov, *Hitler's Army: Soldiers, Nazis and War in the Third Reich* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 6.

of supplies beyond the reach of enemy hands. The industrial relocation of over 1,500 factories, 1,360 related to armaments, was essential for the Soviet Union's war effort.[82] The factories were moved far to the east, towards the Volga River, Siberia, and Central Asia.[83] This relocation allowed Soviet industry to operate free from attack and at record potential. By June of 1942 many of the shifted factories had been restarted, new power plants built, and new mines sunk.[84] By July, monthly aircraft, tank, and weapon outputs not only surpassed Soviet output a year before, but current German output as well.[85]

Despite the frantic success of industrial relocation, a more traditional "scorched earth" policy was used as well. The "scorched earth" policy proved exceedingly problematic for the invading Germans. German economic planners hoped to use Soviet resources not only meet Hitler's production goals, but domestic goals as well.[86] Soviet "scorched earth" policies, however, destroyed such hopes. The retreating Red Army sabotaged or destroyed Soviet locomotives and

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[82] Werth, *Russia at War: 1941-1945*, 216.

[83] Ibid., 214.

[84] Moynahan, *The Russian Century: A History of the Last Hundred Years*, 160.

[85] Ibid., 160-161.

[86] Glantz and House, *When Titans Clashed: How the Red Army Stopped Hitler*, 72.

railcars, forcing the Germans not only to supply their own rail vehicles but to convert large portions of the captured rail network to their own narrower gauge, instead of using the existing, broader Russian gauge. Moreover, German locomotives (unlike their Soviet counterparts) proved incapable of working at peak efficiency in the harsh Russian winter weather. At the Dnepr River the hydroelectric dam was breached by the retreating Red Army and throughout the region hydroturbines, steam generators, crops, and buildings were destroyed by troops and civilians alike. On the whole, the Russian retreat in World War II was effective for the Soviet Union, not only in terms of preserving its industrial potential but also by placing an unexpected drain on the German economy by foiling Hitler's plans to utilize Soviet resources to aid in the German war effort.[87]

Stalin's organized and tightly controlled plan to unite civilians into hearty, brave, and dependable partisan cells behind enemy lines fell apart. With the exception of small companies of Red Army troops who had found themselves cut off behind enemy lines, there were very few effective partisan cells fighting at the enemies' rear.[88] The brutality of Nazi policy soon changed this, however. Nazi depredations

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[87] Ibid., 72-73.

[88] Ibid., 57.

and requisitions soon turned initial welcome into hatred and fear in the occupied territories. Conditions such as these did more to inspire partisan resistance against the Nazis than any Stalinist plans of a decade before.

Even though Stalin's partisan directive was eight years old, the idea of partisan warfare now became very much part of Stalin's military strategy against the Nazis. Stalin finally addressed the nation on July 3, 1941, two weeks after the invasion, calling for partisan resistance and "scorched earth."

> All valuable property. . . which cannot be withdrawn, must be destroyed without fail. In areas occupied by the enemy, guerrilla units, mounted and on foot, must be formed, diversionist groups must be organized to combat enemy troops, to foment guerrilla warfare everywhere, to blow up bridges and roads, damage telephone and telegraph lines, set fire to forests, stores, transports.[89]

Soviet authorities attempted to organize some kind of guerrilla resistance in the Nazi rear. In July of 1941 the "Partisan Directive" was republished and sent to the Central Committees of the republics.[90] This new directive followed in the steps of the previous one but was more specific in how partisan activities should be implemented. Directions on how to make "Molotov cocktails,"

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[89] Joseph Stalin, *The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union* (New York: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1945), 15.

[90] Armstrong, *Soviet Partisans in World War II*, 653-662.

sabotage railway lines and advice on tactics were also included.[91] These newly issued directives prompted Nikita Khrushchev, then party secretary of the Ukraine, to order that partisan detachments be formed and sent behind enemy lines.[92] Just as important as forming these groups was ensuring that partisans remained orthodox in communist ideals. While some trained future partisans others were also selecting communist literature to be given to the partisans in the hopes that they would remain ideologically pure.[93]

Despite attempts to retain complete control over partisan groups, inherent individualism remained a factor in partisan organization. A party leader complained of partisan groups formed after the occupation, noting their tendency to elect their own commanders instead of following the government appointed regional commanders as they had been ordered.[94]

"Scorched earth" and partisan organization in the field was one issue, but inspiration on the home front was quite another. To ensure continued cohesion of the Soviet state during the war, Stalin eased

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[91] Ibid.

[92] William J. Pomeroy, *Guerrilla Warfare and Marxism* (New York: International Publishers, 1968), 128-130.

[93] Ibid., 129.

[94] Ibid., 132.

some of his totalitarian policies. Perhaps the most famous of his temporary wartime reforms was his wooing of the Russian Orthodox church.[95] As Stalin made every conceivable attempt to utilize available solidarity against the Nazis, his efforts culminated in an unexpected appeal to both Russian national tradition and even pre-Bolshevik history.

In the years before the war, Old Russia of the Tsars had been disavowed by the Soviet system. The royal family had been executed in 1918, as had many of their aristocratic relatives, the memory of Russia's Tsarist past was also consigned to oblivion by the new regime seeking to disassociate the new Bolshevik system from the Romanov autocracy. Cities all over Russia were renamed in honor of Bolshevik revolutionaries, changed in favor of the new flow of socialist history: Petrograd became Leningrad, Yekaterinburg, where Nicholas and his family had been executed, was renamed Sverdlovsk in honor of their murderer, and Stalin's name was immortalized as old cities were given names such as Stalinabad, Stalino, Stalinsk. Tsaritsyn, founded in 1589, was renamed Stalingrad in 1925.[96] Despite such earlier wholesale renovation, during the war, Stalin was unwilling to ignore any avenue of national inspiration.

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95 Conquest, *Stalin: Breaker of Nations*, 246.

96 Ibid., 130.

On November 7, 1941 then, Stalin resurrected Tsarist Russia while celebrating the twenty-fourth anniversary of the Bolshevik's rise to power. With German forces just outside of Moscow, and Red Army tanks and troops parading in Red Square, marching past the Kremlin and straight on to the front line, Stalin exhorted his army to remember such historical heroes as Alexander Nevsky, who had beaten the Teutonic knights in 1242; Dimitri Donskoi, who routed the Tartars in 1380, and Generals Suvorov and Kutuzov who had fought Napoleon.[97] In the words of Brian Moynahan, "the impact of associating the Communist regime with the old patriotism of Holy Russia was deepened by the nearness of the Panzers."[98]

After this speech, emphasis on the successes of Tsarist military history grew under Stalin's watchful eye. Eight months after the Germans were repelled from Moscow, three new medals recalling Russia's past were issued, the Orders of Suvorov, Kutuzov, and Alexander Nevsky.[99] Over the next week, *Pravda* engaged in a media storm devoting a large section of its third page to biographical sketches of these Russian historical figures.[100] In cartoons and poster

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97 Moynahan, *The Russian Century: A History of the Last Hundred Years*, 155.

98 Ibid.

99 *Pravda*, 30 July 1942, 1.

100 "Aleksandr Nevskii", *Pravda*, 30 July 1942, 3; "Mikhail Kutuzov", *Pravda*,

art, images of Slavic knights leading the Red Army into battle became commonplace. In cinema, Sergei Eisenstein's classic 1938 film "Alexander Nevsky" was widely shown. Eisenstein himself freely compared the period of Teutonic invasions with modern German aggression:

> And so the picture, telling of a completely historical epoch, of completely historical events, was made and is seen, according to audience testimony, as a completely contemporary picture, so close are the feelings that inspired the Russian people in the 13th century in repulsing the enemy to the feelings that inspire the Soviet Russian people now, and doubtless to all feelings that inspire all those towards whom the grasping claw of German aggression is spreading.[101]

The Nazi invasion brought about a complete reversal of Bolshevik attitudes regarding Russia's past, though such a wholesale embrace of Russian history would be revised after the war, as religious persecution was renewed.

Stalin's appeal to national history was not limited to speeches, medals, and propaganda, as several important changes were made in the Red Army itself. Tsarist army regulations and traditions were rekindled and so-called "Suvorov schools" modeled on the old Tsarist cadet corps were founded.[102] Officers were suddenly socially

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31 July 1942, 3; "Aleksandr Suvorov", *Pravda*, 2 August 1942, 3.

[101] Quoted in Richard Taylor, *Film Propaganda: Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany* (Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1979), 117.

separated from their men as in Tsarist times, eating in separate messes, wearing traditional epaulette shoulder boards, and learning waltzes.[103] In the course of this return to Tsarist nationalism, the Stalinist propaganda machine turned next to Russia's partisan past.

Denis Vasilevitch Davydov was the most famous partisan fighter during Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812, renowned as one of the first Russian officers to champion partisan warfare against Napoleon, and after the Russian defeat at Smolensk he was given authorization by the Tsar to take irregular troops deep behind enemy lines to do so.[104] Davydov became a historical celebrity and Tolstoy's War and Peace even cited him as one of the best examples of the "Russian instinct" to change the rules of war in order to achieve victory.[105] After the successful Soviet counteroffensive at Moscow, Davydov was remade as a hero of the new Stalinist age as well. In 1942 his romantic memoirs of his life as a partisan were republished. In 1944 of his poetry was collected and published as a children's book.[106]

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[102] Ibid., 171.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Denis Davydov, *Dnevnik Partizanskikh Deistvii 1812 Goda* (Moscow: Ogiz Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo Khudozestvennoi Literatury, 1942), 9-10.

[105] Leo Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, trans. Ann Dunnigan (New York: Signet Classic, 1980), 1236.

[106] Denis Davydov, *Dnevnik Partizanskikh Deistvii 1812 Goda; Izbrannye Stikhotvorenia.* (Moscow/Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo Detskoi

Soon, Soviet culture was ablaze with partisan imagery. Eugene Tarle's popular history Napoleon's Invasion of Moscow, originally published in 1937 and a personal favorite of Stalin's, was republished in English for Allied consumption. Tarle argued that "it was the hand of the Russian people that inflicted the irreparable, mortal blow" to Napoleon, an image Stalin was most interested in promoting.[107] In popular art and thought, Hitler was associated more and more with Napoleon, offering the rhetorical promise of a repeated eventual victory despite current hardships.

Poster art dealing with Napoleon and Hitler usually fell into two types. The first and most common portrayed both Napoleon and Hitler as completely helpless against Russian forces, Napoleon's defeat in the past pre-ordaining Hitler's defeat in the future. Posters in this vein invariably made reference to the famous partisan war against Napoleon. A poster produced by artists Viktor N. Deni and Nikolai A. Dolgorukov, printed in 1941, shows both Napoleon and Hitler falling victim to Russian forces.[108] At the top of the poster, Napoleon flees

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Literatury Narkomprosa RSFR, 1944).

[107] Tarle, *Napoleon's Invasion of Russia: 1812*, 269.

[108] Dagmar Finkova and Sylvia Petrova, *The Militant Poster: 1936-1985* (Prague: International Organization of Journalists, 1986), 48.

from a peasant's pitchfork. At the bottom an angry, screaming Hitler is impaled by a bayonet. Written below the two war mongers are the words, "As it was, so shall it be" [*tak bylo, tak budet*]. Another example from this school is a poster also published in 1941, with an almost identical theme. [Figure 1] The top half of the poster shows Napoleon being impaled on the lance of a cossack. The desperate and flailing Napoleon cries out: "Oh! This is not as Germany was for me!" referring to Napoleon's successful conquest of Germany from 1803 to 1807. On the bottom half, Hitler, shaped like a swastika, flees a strafing Soviet plane as he is chased away from a Russian factory and forest. As he does so he cries "Oh! This is not as France was for me!"[109] The imagery in both of these posters implies that because Napoleon, legendary general that he was, was no match for the Russian people, then certainly Hitler, who was no Napoleon, could not be a match either.

An even more instance can be seen in the other type of "Hitler meets Napoleon" art produced during the war. This type portrayed Napoleon as the better of the two. In a 1941 caricature drawn by Soviet cartoonists Mikhail V. Kuptianov, Porfirii N. Krylov, and Nikolai

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[109] Hoover Institution Archives, Poster Collection, RU/SU 2112. "Вражьи оравы в смятенье великом биты бывали в лесу, на реке. . ."



Figure 1

The Hostile horde in great disarray

In the forests, on the rivers...

A. Sokolov, (all of whom went under the pen name Kukryniksy), entitled the "Lion and the Kitten" [*Lev i Kotenok*], we see a painting in which Napoleon is represented as a rather pudgy lion who looks disdainfully at the scrawny, ragged, and potbellied Hitler portrayed as a domestic cat.[110] The same theme was used later in a poster, only this time Napoleon's lion was a much more noble and ferocious figure and Hitler's cat perhaps an even more pathetic one.[111] [Figure 2] The Soviet propagandists were intent on making an unmistakable connection in the minds of the Russian people between victory in 1812 and the fight against Hitler. Stalin's support for the partisan ideal of 1812 was illustrated by his patronage of Tarle's work, so explicit in its argument that 1812 was a people's partisan war against the *Grande Armée*. Soviet propaganda, in its many forms, sought to transform 1812 into World War II. Soviet propaganda exhorted the Russian people to remain loyal, not just to Stalin and to the state, but to their ancestors and glorious military past. This did not mean that

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110 Mikhail V. Kuptianov, Porfirii N. Krylov and Nikolai A. Sokolov, *Kukryniksy* (Moscow/Leningrad: N.P., 1950), 57.

111 Hoover Institution Archives, Poster Collection, RU/SU 2129. "Лев и котенок."



Figure 2

The Lion and the Kitten

the USSR completely abandoned its anti-Tsarist stance. Posters dealing with 1812 never made any allusions to Tsar Alexander I, and indeed, much poster art ignored the Russian imperial army all together, focusing instead on peasant and partisan resistance. The "partisanization" of Russian history did not stop with 1812, however. Thanks to Eisenstein's classic film "Alexander Nevsky," the partisan movement and "scorched earth" tactics could also be equated with thirteenth century Russia. In the film, Nevsky gathers a peasant army to fight the Germans. It is the masses then, who fight the Teutonic Knights, not the nobility, just as it was the masses who won the war of 1812, in Soviet historiography. Nevsky's noble lineage is pushed aside during his first appearance in the film when he is portrayed as living the life of a fisherman instead of a Grand Prince. While the few nobles we do see in the film are eager to appease the Teutonic Knights, Nevsky is an idealized figure who enjoys the unconditional love of the masses he leads into battle, an image Stalin certainly would have liked to appropriate for himself. In the tradition of "Alexander Nevsky," poster art with medieval themes became commonplace. Posters with

the image of Red Army soldiers rushing into battle alongside Russian knights or Nevsky-like figures were printed. In 1942, 10,000 copies of such a poster were made, citing a quote from Stalin where he called for the soldiers of Russia to look for inspiration in the manliness of their ancestors.[112] [Figure 3] Eisenstein's "Alexander Nevsky" also contains oblique references to "scorched earth" tactics during the battle sequence on Lake Peipus. As the battle concludes, the knights' heavy armour cracks the ice and the Teutonic army drowns. Nevsky's victory is achieved through the destruction of the environment, albeit in a temporary fashion.

With the use of Russian history as Soviet propaganda established, the need for illustrating communist ideals in pre-Soviet times was lessened. In 1945, with the war all but over, a poster was released which drew comparisons between the Soviet capture of Kunersdorf and the Russian victory there over Frederick the Great in 1759.[113] [Figure 4] The use of history as precedent for contemporary partisan warfare or for the rising of the masses to defend Russia paved the way

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[112] Hoover Institution Archives, Poster Collection, RU/SU 2198. "Нет такой силы, Катора пороботила бы нас."

[113] Hoover Institution Archives, Poster Collection, RU/SU 2521. "Кунерсдорф."



Figure 3

No such force has worked for us...



Figure 4

Kunersdorf

for the use of any past victory over German peoples as wartime propaganda.

But was all of this celebrated partisan warfare truly an effective weapon against the Nazis? While Soviet news reports repeated that partisans were essential to the war effort, guerrilla performance on the "ground" may have done more harm than good. More often than not it was the civilian populace who suffered from the Nazi reprisals. Hitler's instructions concerning partisans were simply to exterminate them in any way possible, and this usually meant the wholesale massacre of civilians.[114] Military historian John Keegan argues that partisan actions in countries under German occupation as a whole actually did more harm than good, as the Nazi response usually led to the extermination of civilian populations.[115] Orders were given to the German army to shoot any suspected partisan and the definition of partisan was expanded to include "'racially undesirable elements' such as Jews."[116]

SS anti-partisan units dealt with guerrillas by simply moving through areas of partisan activity, burning all property, and killing

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[114] Laqueur, *Guerrilla: A Historical and Critical Study*, 209.

[115] Keegan, *The Second World War*, 487-488.

[116] Bartov, *Hitler's Army*, 84-85.

everything in sight. In such attacks as many as 2000 men, women, and children would be slaughtered in retaliation for partisan activity. In light of these figures the overall effectiveness of the Russian partisan must be questioned. In the Orel region, for example, Soviet estimates claimed that some 150,000 German soldiers were killed by partisans. Western scholars, with access to Nazi archival material, put the count much lower, at about "35,000 killed and wounded."[117] It seems that while the Russian partisans had a central role in Soviet historiography and propaganda, their actual effectiveness is quite disputable.

Stalin's own support and public acknowledgement of the Soviet partisans must be questioned as well. Stalin's purges ravaged his nation, eliminating the best and the brightest, to remove any possible threat to his own position. As the Second World War was wound down, who posed more of an internal threat than the partisans, a group known for their individualism? Despite his large pro-partisan propaganda campaign, Stalin went about culling partisan groups with the same mercilessness as during the purges of the 1930's. Stalin's treatment of partisan groups was filled with criminal neglect and

[117] Ibid., 491-492.

mismanagement. In 1944, in the Vitebsk region, for example, the Red Army organized and gathered the majority of Belorussia's partisan groups "to await reinforcements from the regular army."[118] These reinforcements never came and thousands of these partisans fell victim to German tanks.[119]

While news reports, speeches, and posters hailed the partisans as collective heroes of the Soviet Union, relatively few were named or honored as individuals. Perhaps the most famous was Zoya Kosmodemskaya, an 18 year old member of the Communist youth who was captured by the Germans while engaging in "scorched earth" tactics in 1941. Though she was tortured, mutilated, and finally hung by her German captors, Zoya refused to reveal any information to her tormentors. Zoya was posthumously named a "Hero [*sic*] of the Soviet Union" for her steadfastness and unflinching resistance.[120] Zoya was not a unique martyr, however, but she was the one who was remembered. Why Zoya herself was chosen is unclear, most likely because her body was recovered by the Red Army not long after her death.

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[118] Richard Stites, *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1995), 203.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Ibid., 183.

Soon, articles appeared about her in *Pravda*, her mother made radio addresses and appeared in schools to inspire the youth of Russia. There was even a film made about her in 1943.[121] The result was that Zoya became one of the greatest partisan heroes of World War II. But, as mentioned before, Zoya's deed was not particularly unique. The Soviet propaganda machine found a heroine and needed no others. Hundreds of other partisan heroes and heroines were forgotten, so that instead of a multitude of partisan heroes for the people of the Soviet Union to turn to after the war, there was only one. Stalin could safely praise the dead Zoya Kosmodemskaya for her sacrifice because she was not enough for people to rally about, and certainly not enough to threaten Stalin's role as *vozhd*, the leader and primary hero of the war. This is especially evident in the myth of Zoya in which her last words were reported as "Stalin is with us!"[122] On the whole, despite the accolades Stalin intoned for the partisans in public, he thought little of them in private.

Was partisan warfare a useless tactic? Considering the civilian losses one might think so, but the real importance of partisan warfare in Russia was not in how many Germans were killed or how much

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[121] Ibid., 183-186.

[122] Ibid., 185.

Soviet territory was liberated. In fact, its true importance lay in its instrumentality as propaganda. Stalin, after the nightmare of his purges, needed some tool to convince those in regions not yet conquered by the Nazis that there was a reason to defend the Soviet Union. With the propaganda example of patriotic partisans risking life and limb to fight the invaders behind enemy lines, Stalin could prove to people on the home front that the Stalinist-Soviet government was worth fighting for. The partisans real importance lay in the fact that he or she represented the "omnipotence and omnipresence of the Soviet state" in the minds of the Russian people.[123] The use of "scorched earth" and partisan warfare in the war addressed dual agendas. In the field, these tactics were designed to slow and hamper the Nazi advance; back home, Stalin's propagandists turned them into role models essential to fostering hope for victory on the home front.

In propaganda, "scorched earth" was a relatively rare subject, and if handled incorrectly could even be demoralizing. While art and news reports concerning valiant citizens and soldiers fighting a partisan war behind enemy lines could be seen as a way to inspire morale, depictions of ruined villages and ravaged crops falling to Russia's own "scorched earth" policy were rare. When "scorched

[123] Laqueur, *Guerrilla: A Historical and Critical Study*, 214.

earth" did appear in poster art it was represented in a very peculiar and telling fashion. While the destruction of property was explicitly shown, bodies never were. The process, then, had been sanitized for the viewer. Moreover, the impact of the destruction caused by "scorched earth" was lessened by some added positive imagery as well. One poster concerning the "scorched earth" stated, "A few lines of inquiry for Hitler: What does he have for today's total? What trophies do their divisions take? Empty fields and burnt warehouses!"[124] [Figure 5] The reference to "scorched earth" in the text is only directed to the warehouses. The fields, however, are only described as "empty" [*pustie*]. The verbal imagery suggests some type of relocation. The poster itself only illustrates burnt materiel, buildings, and what might possibly be sea vessels. Crops mentioned in the text are not shown in the silhouette outlined by the flames of destruction. The more negative aspect of the "scorched earth" policy, destruction of valuable food supplies, has been glossed over. The iconography of the poster is explicitly positive as well. While its chief feature is one of hellish devastation, the flames achieve a raptor-like quality. Close inspection of the poster reveals a giant bird of prey rising over burnt

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[124] Hoover Institution Archives, Poster Collection, RU/SU 2348.1. "Справка для Гитлера в несколько строк: Каков у него на сегодня итог."



Figure 5

A few lines of inquiry for Hitler: What does he have for today's total...

landscape, not only suggesting a phoenix-like Russian rebirth from the destruction, but anticipating the gathering counterattack as well.

"Scorched earth" policy in propaganda was also linked to partisan warfare and sabotage. In a poster drawn by P. Gorelyi entitled "Hail to the Heroic Partisans, Destroying the Fascist Rear Area," a partisan soldier cuts phone lines.[125] [Figure 6] In the background is the image of a ruined bridge and a burning city. The "scorched earth" theme is indirect in that the destruction is of a Nazi controlled area but the city is Russian, nonetheless.

Partisan resistance certainly had more romantic appeal than did "scorched earth," evidenced by the republication of Davydov's works as well as a large poster and news campaign. For the first part of the war, while the Soviet Union was either still on the defensive or still suffering large-scale occupation, reports on partisans were a regular feature in *Pravda*. Articles published concerning the partisan war against the Nazis were of three specific types: informational, romantic, or international. Informational reports consisted of stories concerning successful partisan activities, though sometimes information was released concerning captured partisans so that the extent of Nazi

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[125] Hoover Institution Archives, Poster Collection, RU/SU 1922. "Слава героям партизанам, разрушающим фашистский тыл."



Figure 6

Hail to the heroic partisans, destroying the fascist rear area.

brutality could be illustrated. Primarily, however, the reports were informational in nature. Heroic partisan deeds, mostly from Russia and Belorussia, were the focus. Primarily these articles were to describe, in exact figures, the numbers of enemy personnel and materiel destroyed by the partisans, yet it was also important that the articles described both men and women engaging in partisan activity, emphasizing that it was a people's war, a patriotic war.[126] On November 14, 1942, Pravda's headline article, "For an All People's Partisan Movement," described the deeds expected of the civilian fighter. Recalling the partisan glories of Napoleon's invasion and the Civil War of 1918-1920, it called for the people of Russia to support and admire their partisan brothers and sisters. This important article exemplifies all the ideals common to the informational partisan article, with details given on the successes of partisans, mentioning both men and women. The overall suggestion of this article, and others like it, is that the German forces are not patently victorious, but are in fact surrounded, fighting against the Red Army in their front and partisans at their rear.

The romantic type of partisan report was less common. On the

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126 "Partisany Vypolnyaut slovo, Dannoe Tovarishu Stalinu", Pravda, 15 July 1942, 2.

seventeenth of August, 1942 a poem by M. Iskovskii, simply entitled "The Partisan" was published.[127] The poem follows a partisan fighter by the name of Ivan as he goes about his guerrilla activities and considers his hate for the enemy. Like Davydov's work, the poem is inherently romantic: "If the enemy is anxious,/It means once again Ivan has come,/Famous Russian warrior,/Partisan from Dnieper."[128] The partisan, Ivan, is an almost mythical figure who steals silently from the forests and kills unsuspecting German soldiers. For each soldier Ivan kills he places a white pebble in his pocket. [129] As the poem begins he has collected two hundred and ten such pebbles. Poetry was not the only style of romantic writing used during the war. In October of 1942, a short story was published in *Pravda* entitled "The Female Partisan," following in the footsteps of "The Partisan."[130]

Details of partisan activities in foreign countries were more common than romantic depictions of partisan deeds in Pravda, but they were relegated to the back page and given less space than the others. Their chief role was to suggest to readers on the Russian home front that they were not alone in their struggle against the

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127 "Partizan", *Pravda*, 17 August 1942, 2.

128 Ibid.

129 Ibid.

130 "Partizanka", *Pravda*, 28 October 1942, 2.

German invaders, but seconded in partisan actions in Albania, France, and Yugoslavia.[131]

Poster art on the partisan subject mostly followed romantic and international lines. The historical partisan poster was inherently romantic, appealing to the ideal of the victorious underdog with the presentation of Russian peasants throwing Napoleon out of Russia. Poster representations of modern partisans were equally idealized. A poster hailing the deeds of Belorussian partisans, drawn by A. Przhetslavskii, reads,

> "Hail to the Belorussian Partisans! Red Army regiments stride the way to victory, and partisan blades hail the gleaming heroes. War will end in our victory. The people will again return to a happy life and Belorussia will never forget our courageous sons' names."[132]

The image on the poster shows sword-wielding partisans charging fleeing Nazi soldiers. The peasant fighters from 1812 and their hand-held weapons are still echoed, only now the Napoleonic image has been replaced by a Nazi one. [Figure 7] Posters adhering to the international school of propaganda were relatively rare.

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131 "Partizanskoe Dvizheniyeh v Albanii", *Pravda*, 30 June, 1942, 4;"Partizanskoe Dvizheniyeh Vo Frantsii", *Pravda*, 21 July, 1942, 4; "Partizanskaya Voina V Yugoslavii", *Pravda*, 22 July, 1942, 4.; "Belgradskaya Partizanka Vera", *Pravda*, 9 August, 1942, 4.

132 Hoover Institution Archives, Poster Collection, RU/SU 2590. "Слава Белорусским Партизанам!"



Figure 7

Hail the Belorussian Partisans!

The Soviet Union won the war against Nazi aggression, and if it was not won by loyal and fearless partisans or "scorched earth," then the populace at least believed so. Decades after the war, partisans were still hailed as heroes, instrumental in the German defeat. This concept remains prevalent today. An educated Russian Professor, interviewed by the author, stated that she learned while growing up in the Soviet school system that partisan fighters were the deciding factor in the war as they had confounded the Nazi advance.[133]

Despite the teachings of Soviet history which lionized partisan heroes of the "Great Patriotic War," as World War II is called in Russian historiography, the Soviet Union seemed reluctant to take the lessons of the Nazi occupation to heart. After the war, the Soviet Union became very willing to use force in other nations whenever its interests were endangered such as in Hungary in 1956. In Afghanistan elite KGB forces assassinated the Afghani president in 1979 and government forces occupied Kabul.[134] After lionizing partisan heroes

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[133] Marina Ivanova, interview by author, notes in possession of the author, Urbana, IL., 23 March 1997.

[134] Moynahan, *The Russian Century*, 221.

of World War II, the Soviet Union itself faced the ordeal of fighting guerrillas, as over the next decade thousands of Russian soldiers died fighting the Afghani *mujahidin.*[135]

Even in the midst of Gorbachev's policies of *Glastnost* and *Perestroika*, the Soviet Union continued to enforce its will with force in other countries such as Lithuania. It was this very policy, however, which helped to bring about the fall of the Soviet Union. As the incompatibility of Gorbachev's liberal policies and the USSR's autocratic rule came into conflict, the solidity of the Soviet Union and its European allies began to crumble. The Communist Governments of first Poland and then Hungary were subverted. By November 9, the Berlin Wall collapsed, and a month after that a bloody revolt in Rumania ended Ceaucescu's Stalinist reign.[136] These revolts marked the end of Soviet influence in Europe, as the final Russian retreat in the Soviet age began.

This political retreat more resembled the Tsarist chaos which marked the First World War than the storied glory of World War II. On August 24, 1991, after Gorbachev's reforms provoked a botched coup by communist hard-liners, the Soviet Union dissolved. The Baltic states, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, and eventually Ukraine found

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[135] Ibid., 222.

[136] Ibid., 242.

independence. Russia, which once controlled its republics with an iron fist, was now itself a smaller federation with a president who needed to remind far off citizens that their borders were not Tadzhikistan's or Kazakhstan's, but Russia's.[137]

In the wake of the Russian retreat of 1991, the new Russian army found itself fighting guerrillas once again. In 1994, in the republic of Chechnya, the Russian army discovered that the civilian casualties which made partisan actions so problematic against the Nazis, garnered sympathies abroad for the beleaguered Chechens thanks to satellite communications and CNN, as well as liberal voices of protest at home. In 1995 Russia was forced into another retreat, this time from an unpopular war in the Chechen republic. These recent retreats not only demoralized the Russian army but the Russian people as well. Russian opinion polls indicated there was no ardent desire to "regain" former republics and only 16% of those polled favored military action even to defend Russians living in former republics.[138]

The future of the Russian strategy of retreat to victory will have

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137 Ibid., 260.

138 Richard Rose, "Do Russians Want to Fight?," *Analysis of Current Events* 9, no. 7 (1997) : 1, 4-5.

little to do with the organization of partisan resistance behind enemy lines. The retreat of the future may well be the retreat from democracy towards another Russian tradition, that of absolutism. In the dire economic hardships of today's Russia, the popularity of political "strong men" such as Vladimir Zhirinovsky and Aleksandr Lebed, both unabashedly anti-democratic, may turn Russia away from its new freedom. In the 1991 election, Zhirinovsky won close to 8% of the vote, despite (or because of) promises to lead Russia to war, execute dissidents, and to rule with the "stick, not the carrot."[139]

Such political "strong men" might also link Russia's future with its tradition of "scorched earth." Zhirinovsky, in a speech in June of 1991, stated that he favored using nuclear weapons against "enemies" such as the Baltic States and the U.S.[140] According to David Remnik, Aleksandr Lebed, who came in third in the 1996 presidential run-off election and was courted by both Yeltsin and the Communist party, was involved in the aborted attempt to storm the Russian White House and kill Boris Yeltsin in August of 1991.[141] The ideals of such men as well as the continued nuclear disarray of all of the former Soviet

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[139] David Remnik, *Lenin's Tomb: The Last Days of the Soviet Empire* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 524-525.

[140] Ibid. 524.

[141] Ibid., 482-483.

republics may indeed inadvertently add a new and terrible chapter to Russia's tradition of "scorched earth." Where this tactic was once limited to fields, supplies, and buildings, the "scorched earth" of the Nuclear Age could include entire populations, regions and neighboring lands.

In conclusion, the Russian tactic of retreat for victory has been both a tradition, and a tool of national pride and inspiration for the Russian people. Russian retreat in World War II may not have been a model of perfection on the ground, but as a tool of solidarity against the enemy it was pivotal. In the end, the unity and survival of the Soviet Union during the Nazi invasion depended as much on the tradition of retreat portrayed in history and propaganda, as it did on the brutality of the German aggressors. While conventional invasions of Russia are quite unlikely in the future, Stalin's precedent of utilizing this tradition as inspirational propaganda may well have a role. As extremists like Vladimir Zhirinovsky and hard-liners like Aleksandr Lebed promise to make Russia a great power once again, the military glories of the past, again remythologized and recast, may well become the propaganda of the present.

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