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## **THE WORLD WAR II SOVIET NAVY REVISITED: A 1966 EVALUATION AND A LOOK AT THE FUTURE**

by

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This article provides the first English translation of selected portions of the sixth and final volume of the official Russian history of World War II. As such, these excerpts furnish the readers of the *Naval War College Review* with the Russian perspective on the value and use of naval forces during World War II. Professor C. Jay Smith is presently engaged in translating this final volume for publication.

In 1965, the Soviet Russian historical community, both civilian and military, finally produced the sixth and concluding volume of its monumental *History of the Great Fatherland War of the Soviet Union, 1941-1945*, (*Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny Sovetskogo Soyuz, 1941-1945*), the first volume having appeared in 1960. This ponderous literary work, whose authors and editors were numbered in the dozens, has had a chequered career, and its present text, running to well over a million and a half words, is not necessarily definitive.<sup>1</sup>

The original conception of the *History of the Great Fatherland War of the Soviet Union, 1941-1945*, provided for the following chronological allocation of space to the subject matter:

Volume I: The Pre-War Years, 1929-1941  
Volume II: June 22, 1941 - November 1942

Volume III: November 19, 1942 - December 1943

Volume IV: 1944

Volume V: 1945

Volume VI: The Results and the Lessons of the War

So far it has apparently been possible to achieve a satisfactory text of only Volumes I, V, and VI. After its initial appearance in 1961, Volume II had to be reissued in a new edition in 1963. By that year, the series was complete, with the exception of the recently published Volume VI. However, following the resignation of Nikita S. Khrushchev as First Party Secretary and Chairman of the Council of Ministers in October 1964, it was decided to rewrite Volumes III and IV.

It almost goes without saying that this inability to agree on the text of a major historical venture, whose broad outlines were sketched out in Khrushchev's two attacks of 1956 and 1961 on the memory of Joseph V. Stalin, reflects the bitter struggles of Khrushchev himself with the Soviet marshals during the years 1960-64.<sup>2</sup> These struggles sprang from Khrushchev's publicly announced decision in 1960 to elevate a newly created service of the Soviet Armed Forces—the Strategic Missile-Nuclear Troops—above the other four services (the Ground Forces, the Navy, the Air Forces, and the Anti-Air Defense Troops), and to cut down sharply on the numerical strength of the Ground Forces. Although Khrushchev wavered in the implementation of this policy during the Berlin Crisis of 1961, he successfully asserted his authority over the Armed Forces by increasing the power of their political officers during 1962-63, and rode out veiled military criticism of his policy during the Cuban missile crisis. During 1963 and 1964 his military policies were implemented, and his successors obviously intend to continue them. But as a sop to the military, Brezhnev and Kosygin have been willing to permit the rewriting of those portions of the World War II history which overly magnify Khrushchev's role in the winning of the war.

Since parts of the *History of the Great Fatherland War of the Soviet Union* are now alleged to suffer from Khrushchevian distortions, Volume VI, the only one published since Khrushchev's fall, is worthy of more than passing interest from those who have sought to follow the revolution in Soviet military affairs since 1955, and more especially since 1960. Far more than is the case in other countries, Soviet Russian historians seek to discover, in their study of the past, proofs to support the approved position in current controversies. Subtitled *The Lessons of the Great*

*Fatherland War (Itogi Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny)*, Volume VI of the *History of the Great Fatherland War of the Soviet Union* is actually an attempt to discern those "lessons" of the 1941-45 conflict which lend support to the Soviet military theory and Soviet military posture of 1965.

The purpose of this article is to discuss the "lessons" which the authors of Volume VI claim to have learned from their contemplation of the World War II Soviet Navy, and the manner in which they claim that these "lessons" have affected the development of Soviet seapower of the 1960's. To round out the picture of the 1941-45 Soviet naval performance, material bearing on the development of the Soviet Navy during the prewar years, 1929-41, has been introduced.

The authors of *The Lessons of the Great Fatherland War* scarcely bothered to conceal their didactic purpose from their readers. At one point they wrote:

Very serious tasks confront military science. The chief of them is the working out of the forms and weapons of the armed struggle that correspond to the demands of contemporary war, which will be waged with a massive exchange of missile-nuclear weapons.

Soviet military thought, guiding itself by Marxist-Leninist methodology, must draw from accumulated combat experience everything which may be used fruitfully for the further development of military theory, of the military buildup, of the education and training of the Armed Forces of the USSR, and the guaranteeing of their combat readiness.<sup>3</sup>

It appears, however, that it has been impossible, until at least a decade ago, to draw from the accumulated combat experience of 1941-45 "everything which may be used fruitfully." Most of the blame for the alleged failure to learn the "lessons" of World War II during the 1945-55 decade is of course laid upon Joseph V. Stalin, but an additional villain, Nikolay A. Bulganin, has now been found. Bulganin served as Minister of Defense under Stalin between 1947 and 1949, and subsequently, under Malenkov, between 1953 and 1955. As Premier between 1955 and 1958, he at first supported Khrushchev and then turned against him during the "antiparty group" crisis of June 1957. He is therefore linked with Stalin in the following indictment:

The serious deficiency characteristic of the majority of [Soviet] military-theoretical works of the period of the war, and especially of several postwar years, was the inflated evaluation of the role and significance of Stalin's activity as a military leader and of his effusions in the area of military affairs. All the best creations of our military-scientific thought, all the most brilliant achievements of advanced Soviet military art, which were the fruit of collective efforts, were presented as the result of the creativity of the Stalinist 'genius.' The extraordinary eulogy of the services of Stalin in the development of the military art minimized and belittled the role of our military cadres in the organization of the majestic victories of the Soviet Armed Forces. Under the conditions of the cult of personality, important problems of military science did not receive the necessary working out, since the authors of military-theoretical works more often than not limited themselves to the popularization of the ideas expressed by Stalin.

The negative influence of the cult of personality on Soviet military theory was not just exerted through the artificial circumscribing of its development. The creative efforts of military-scientific cadres, especially in the first postwar years, were directed towards the study of the sort of problems which distracted military-theoretical thought from the solution of real problems. The speech of N.A. Bulganin in 1948, which celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Soviet Armed Forces, and in which was contained the Stalinist definition of the scope of Soviet military science, in general disoriented our military cadres in understanding the very essence of military science, and its interlocking connection with the military art. It is well known that military science always was, and still is, the theory of military affairs. Stalin, with no basis in fact, extended the content of Soviet military science. In his hands it was turned into a science encompassing not only questions of military affairs, but also the economic and moral potentials of our country and of the countries of the imperialist camp.<sup>4</sup>

It is alleged, however, that in the late 1950's this unhappy state of affairs finally came to an end:

The cult of personality inflicted not inconsiderable damage upon our military theory. It could not, however, halt its development. The 20th [February, 1956] and 22nd [October-November, 1961] Congresses of the Communist Party, and also the succeeding decisions of its Central Committee, which unmasked the cult of Stalin's personality and opened a wide scope for creative work in all areas of the social sciences, created the conditions also for the rapid development of Soviet military science. Freed from the shackling influence of the cult of personality, dogmatism, and the spirit of miscalculation, our military thought made great strides in the creation of the scientific fundamentals of the further buildup and training of the Armed Forces of the USSR. It began to approach differently the study of, and generalization from the experience of the Great Fatherland War. Blind obedience before this experience, characteristic of the the first postwar years, was changed into critical analysis of it, in an effort to reconcile correctly the lessons and conclusions drawn from it with those demands which were presented to the buildup and training of the Armed Forces, and to the military art, by the new weapons, and by the changed character of the armed struggle.<sup>5</sup>

It would appear that the 1955-65 reassessment of the "lessons" of the "Great Fatherland War" embraced many aspects of World War II in which the Soviets played, at the most, a negligible role, and indeed, the entire range of military experience in the 20th century. At any rate, the authors of *The Lessons of the Great Fatherland War* confront us with the following sweeping conclusion:

In the wars of the 20th century, including the Second World War, the Ground Forces have been the basic service of the Armed Forces. Fleets and Air Forces, although they have also undertaken independent operations of strategic significance, have nevertheless devoted their principal attention to cooperation with the Ground Forces. It follows, therefore, that the largest battles have taken place in the land theaters of a war.

The strike resources which the combatant armies had at their disposal, despite their significant improvement in the Second World War, did not possess a killing

and destructive power sufficient to deliver a decisive blow at the enemy in a short period of time. The employment of various means of fixed defenses gave the defending troops the chance, to one degree or another, to save themselves from the fire of the advancing enemy. Troops in motion preserved their combat capability because the deep rear of a belligerent country was not exposed to a destructive action. This enabled states which were at war to use their material and human resources which were in the rear for the replacement of losses. The long-range bomber aviation of the USA and Britain delivered an enormous number of strikes at the military-economic and other targets of the German rear. But it did not have a weapon of such destructive force that it could exert a decisive influence on the course of the armed struggle against Fascist Germany.

The Second World War took on the character of a prolonged struggle, principally between Ground Force armies in-being, which was waged on continuous fronts. Decisive strategic goals could be achieved only by the successive destruction of the basic concentrations of Ground Forces. To overcome their resistance and to smash the strongly fortified defense created by them, one had to concentrate enormous masses of troops, artillery, tanks, and aircraft on small sectors of the front. The massed employment of tanks and aircraft, supported by the concentrated fire of the artillery, made it possible to effect a breakthrough of the enemy's defense and gave to the war the characteristic of maneuver.

Combat operations took place also in the maritime theaters, but they were limited in their scope and had only an auxiliary significance for the achievement of the ultimate aims of the war. Naval forces played a most serious role in the war between the USA and Japan in the Pacific Ocean. Here the firepower of large surface ships was used for the destruction of the enemy's fleet. However, the extensive employment of airpower and submarines sharply increased the vulnerability of surface ships, and changed the character of naval battles.<sup>6</sup>

It would thus appear that if Stalin and Bulganin misread the "lessons" of World War II, it may have been that they attributed to seapower and airpower a greater importance than is attributed to them by the 1965 Soviet military historians. They may in fact,

have been close, in their thinking, to those Western Defenders of seapower and airpower who would tend to reason as follows. During both World War I and World War II, in the cases of Great Britain and the United States, the failure of German Ground Forces, submarines and bombers to break through into the "deep rear" of either country was clearly attributable to seapower and airpower. If it be true that Germany and her allies were not knocked out from the air, it is equally true that without both seapower and airpower, Anglo-American Ground Forces could scarcely ever have penetrated the African and European continents, and adjacent islands, and reached a point at which their massed troops, artillery, tanks, and aircraft could begin a final assault on Germany's fixed defenses in the West.

Many Western students of 20th century war would agree with the Soviet authors' judgment that large surface ships were eclipsed during the Pacific War by carrier task forces, submarines, and amphibious forces. But these same authors fail to point out that Japan was brought to surrender unconditionally solely through seapower, airpower, and relatively small Marine and Army landing forces—unless one chooses to regard the Philippine Campaign of 1944-45, and the two-weeks unopposed Soviet invasion of Manchuria and North Korea in August 1945, as examples of great Ground Force campaigns. Moreover, large surface ships did play a significant role in amphibious operations in both the Pacific and the European-Mediterranean theaters.

On the other hand, the case of the 1965 Soviet military historians is supported by some Western experience and by almost all Russian experience in the 20th century. Neither the Allied naval blockades of 1914-18 and 1939-45, nor the Anglo-American strategic bombing of 1943-45, were enough in themselves to break the German will to resist in the West. During 1918, after four years of bloody trench warfare, this was finally accomplished only through a great land offensive, on the heels of the failure of a great German land offensive. During 1944-45, Germany succumbed only to a Ground Force "war on two fronts," the nightmare which had haunted her military men for half a century. As for the Russian experience, the worst defeat suffered by any Russian Government in the 20th century was that inflicted by Japan in 1904-05, and the failures of Russian seapower were largely responsible. On the other hand, the Russians were always able to improvise a defense against German land power—in 1915, in 1918, in 1941, and in 1942.

One can argue very plausibly, indeed, that precisely because Western military leaders believe that great wars against great



continental powers are won only by great land battles with great casualty lists, these leaders have deliberately refrained for two decades from setting themselves military goals which require the fighting of such wars. The Russians have not been able to afford such a choice, and it is in this light that we must approach the evaluation of the performance of the World War II Soviet Navy which presumably helped the 1965 Soviet military historians to arrive at their position on the role of pre-1945 seapower and airpower.

That evaluation begins by claiming that at the time of Nazi Germany's attack on Soviet Russia in 1941, both Soviet Russian strategy and the enemy's strategy made it inevitable that the Red Fleet should play second fiddle to the Red Army:

The Naval Fleet . . . actively participated in the destruction of the Armed Forces of Fascist Germany and imperialist Japan. Over the course of the entire war, it conducted strenuous combat operations in our principal maritime theaters and on lakes and in river basins near the front.

The strategic and tactical activity of the fleets and flotillas was determined by the general strategic missions which the Soviet Armed Forces performed, and by the circumstances in which they had to fight in various phases of the war. The character of the operations of the Naval Fleet also depended very much on the fact that the principal missions of the armed struggle in the Great Fatherland War were carried out in the land theaters . . .

Fascist Germany had quite enormous naval forces. But for the waging of the war against the USSR, she employed only part of these forces. The Hitlerite High Command reckoned that its Ground Forces, independently, without the help of a naval fleet, would seize the naval bases of the USSR in the Arctic, the Baltic, and the Black Sea, and deprive the Soviet fleets of the opportunity to conduct combat operations.<sup>7</sup>

The authors of *The Lessons of the Great Fatherland War* go on to suggest that with the exception of naval aircraft, the Soviet Navy might have been almost overprepared for the sort of attack made by Hitler in June 1941, if the naval construction programs in progress at the time of the attack had been carried through to completion:

Despite the fact that the war which began did not make it possible to complete the program of the complete reconstruction of our Naval Fleet which had been planned by the Communist Party and the Soviet Government, it had at its disposal the forces and equipment necessary for the performance of the missions assigned to it. The surface ships and the submarines which had been constructed in the pre-war years corresponded fully to the requirements of that time, and in terms of their combat and technical characteristics were not inferior to ships of foreign fleets of the same types. The Fleet Air Force counted around 2,000 aircraft. But at the beginning of the war these were combat machines, principally, of obsolete types.<sup>8</sup>

The impression of a feverish naval buildup during the immediate prewar years—one designed for a war quite different from that actually initiated by Hitler in June 1941—is heightened by a reference to Stalin's seizure during 1939-40 of the three Baltic states, in the wake of the Nazi-Soviet pact which precipitated World War II:

The total adhesion to the USSR of the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian Republics significantly broadened the operational zone of our fleet. This made necessary a most extensive development of Coastal Defense, the construction of naval bases and airfields, and the carrying out of many other measures for guaranteeing the security of the new system of basing the fleet in the Baltic Sea. The enemy's surprise attack disrupted these labors, initiated before the war proper.<sup>9</sup>

Since the authors of *The Lessons of the Great Fatherland War* tacitly concede that in 1941 their country was building a navy for a war it did not actually have to fight, it would be well at this point to digress from the subject of the war itself in order to examine some of the new evidence of the past five years on the Soviet naval buildup of 1929-41. In doing so we must keep constantly in mind the fact that while the Soviet military historians of 1960-65 usually mention the name of Joseph V. Stalin in connection with World War II only to denounce him, Western historians are coming to feel that if anything, his personal role in Soviet affairs for thirty years prior to his death was even greater than was once supposed. According to some recent interpretations, he dominated the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet Government as early as 1923, even before the death of

Lenin, and he definitely did so after his intra-Party victories over Trotsky, Kamenev, Zinov'ev, and Bukharin during 1928-29.<sup>10</sup> Although he sometimes preferred to operate through such subordinates as Molotov, Voroshilov, Mikoyan, Andreyev, Kaganovich, Kirov, Ordzhonikidze, and Kuybyshev, and subsequently, through Zhdanov, Beriia, Malenkov, Bulganin, and Khrushchev, he was clearly responsible for the buildup of Soviet naval power which began during the First Five Year Plan of 1928-33.

In Volume I of the *History of the Great Fatherland War of the Soviet Union*, which is subtitled *The Preparation and Unleashing of War by the Imperialist Powers*, we read the following about naval developments of 1928-34:

Towards the end of 1928, all the most valuable ships, from a combat viewpoint, which remained from Tsarist Russia, and which were preserved after the Civil War and the foreign intervention, were refitted. Into the arsenal of the fleet began to come new ships—torpedo boats and submarines created by Soviet designers. By decision of the Government, there was begun in 1932 the buildup of a Pacific Ocean Fleet, and in 1933, of a Northern Fleet. However, construction of a Naval Fleet fell behind the levels and the tempo of growth of other services of the Armed Forces. Speaking at the 17th Congress of the Great Communist Party (bolshevik) [held in 1934], the People's Commissar of Defense, K. Ye. Voroshilov, pointed out that the Fleet still did not answer all the requirements of the security of the USSR, and proposed the task of speeding up its development. For this it was necessary to develop a native shipbuilding industry. The shipyards which were available in Leningrad and Nikolayev could not fill all military orders. In the North and in the Far East a shipbuilding industry had to be created from scratch.<sup>11</sup>

More details as to the above developments are added by another 1960 Soviet venture in military history, *The Baltic Fleet: a Historical Sketch (Baltiyskiy Flot—Istoricheskiy Ocherk)*:

Already in the years of the First Five-Year Plan the Red Banner Baltic Fleet received many new warships. In 1929-30 submarines of the *Leninets* and *Shchuka* classes, which joined the fleet in 1933, were laid down. In 1931 the fleet was supplemented with three submarines

of the *Dekabrist* class. New patrol craft and strong naval aviation appeared in the ranks of the Baltic Fleet. Coastal Defense was reorganized and strengthened.

In 1931 the former British submarine *L-55*, sunk in 1919 by the destroyer *Azard* and raised in 1928, was introduced into the ranks of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet  
. . . .

The Red Banner Baltic Fleet not only grew and was strengthened; it also served as the basic nucleus for the strengthening of Soviet naval forces in other seas. In 1929, in accordance with a decision of the Party and Government, Baltic Fleet men prepared for long-distance cruising the battleship *Parizhskaya Kommuna* and the cruiser *Profintern*, which then, under the command of L.M. Galler, completed a cruise around Europe to the Black Sea, where they entered the ranks of the Black Sea Fleet.

In 1932, with the great assistance of Baltic seamen in personnel and warships, the Soviet Pacific Fleet was created.

In 1933 the Communist Party and the Soviet Government reached a decision on the creation of a naval fleet in the Far North. The Red Banner Baltic Fleet was ordered to transfer its best ships for this purpose. On August 5, 1933, Murmansk triumphantly received the first ships of the new Northern Fleet.<sup>12</sup>

In connection with the above, one of the most highly publicized public appearances ever made by Joseph V. Stalin during his thirty-year reign over the Soviet Union was the trip he took in 1933 from Leningrad to Murmansk along the recently completed White Sea-Baltic Canal aboard the flagship of the new Northern Fleet. He was accompanied by Defense Commissar Voroshilov, Premier Molotov, and Sergey Kirov. The last of these, as the Party boss of Leningrad from 1926 to 1934, seems to have had considerable power and responsibility in naval affairs. Not too long after Voroshilov's 1934 complaints regarding naval construction, Kirov was murdered, probably at Stalin's instigation. His murder set off the Great Purge of 1934-39.<sup>13</sup>

It may be that Kirov's murder was connected in some way with a decision on Stalin's part, reached during the period 1933-35, to alter the pattern of new naval construction which had prevailed during 1928-33. That pattern, inspired most probably by ideas acquired in Berlin during the 1922-32 decade of surreptitious Soviet-German military collaboration, was based on the theory that the naval battles of the future would involve principally submarines, aircraft, and torpedo boats. It is doubtful, therefore, that inadequate shipbuilding facilities alone account for the fact that before 1934-35, the Soviets added only submarines, naval aircraft, and torpedo boats to their Navy. What really happened was that Stalin altered the theoretical basis on which the naval construction programs of 1928-33 had rested. After 1934-35, he wanted naval vessels of all types added to his fleet, since, from its new bases on the Arctic and the Pacific, it might be used offensively as well as defensively against the great maritime Powers: the United States, Britain, Japan, France, and Italy. At the end of 1937, Stalin established for the first time since 1925 a Navy Commissariat independent of the Defense Commissariat. Simultaneously, he was trying to have aircraft carriers built in the United States. By 1938, new cruisers, destroyers, and other surface ships were coming off the ways of Soviet shipyards almost faster than the Navy could absorb them; the tempo of naval construction was to continue at a feverish pace up to June 1941.

Early in 1939, Nikolay G. Kuznetsov, subsequently Admiral of the Fleet, had emerged as Stalin's Navy Commissar, and he was to hold the post until 1946. After an eclipse of five years following World War II, Kuznetsov surfaced again in 1951 as Navy Minister. In 1946, Stalin had reabsorbed the Navy into the Defense Ministry, headed by himself between 1941 and 1947, but he restored the Navy to independent ministerial status during 1950-53.<sup>14</sup>

Only a muted version of these dramatic developments is offered in the 1960-65 official version of Soviet naval history:

In the Second Five-Year Plan, the shipbuilding industry achieved significant successes. New ships of various classes were under construction. In 1938 the shipyards of the USSR gave the fleet five times more ships (by displacement) than in the middle year of the Second Five-Year Plan [1935]. Already towards 1939, thanks to the efforts of workers, technicians, engineers, designers, and scholars, our country could solve successfully the task of contemporary shipbuilding. The reinforcement of the

**Naval Fleet with both surface ships and submarines raised its fighting power, and strengthened the defense of the maritime frontiers of the Soviet Union . . .**

For purposes of the further strengthening of the maritime frontiers of the Soviet Union, the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, on December 30, 1937, reached a decision on the creation of the People's Commissariat of the Naval Fleet, which was to work out plans for the construction, armament, and recruitment of the Naval Forces, to guide the military and political training of ships and units, to organize the Anti-Air Defense in maritime theaters of the country, to prepare cadres, and to work out Naval Regulations.

. . . In 1938 the Main Military Councils of the Red Army and of the Naval Fleet were created. Forming part of the Main Military Council of the Red Army were V.K. Blyukher, S.M. Budyonny, K. Ye. Voroshilov, L.Z. Mekhlis, J.V. Stalin, B.M. Shaposhnikov, and Ye. A. Shchadenko, and of the Main Military Council of the Naval Fleet—L.M. Galler, A.A. Zhdanov, I.S. Isakov, N.G. Kuznetsov, G.I. Levchenko, P.A. Smirnov, and others. The Military Councils reviewed basic questions of the buildup of the Army and Fleet and the strengthening of the politico-moral state of the personnel. The reconstruction of the highest organs of military administration, carried out by the Central Committee of the Party and the Soviet Government, was effective in strengthening the defense capabilities of our state.<sup>15</sup>

Of the individuals named above, General Blyukher and P.A. Smirnov (who served briefly as Navy Commissar during 1937-38) were executed during the Great Purge. Mekhlis, a sometime private secretary of Stalin, was executed by the aged Soviet dictator in 1953, just before the latter's death. Marshal Shaposhnikov, who had once served on the Tsar's General Staff, saved Stalin during 1939-41 from some of the consequences of Voroshilov's and Budyonny's inept military leadership. Zhdanov was the sinister henchman of Stalin appointed to take Kirov's place in Leningrad after 1934, and served there until his death in 1948 under mysterious circumstances; he was probably murdered by G.M. Malenkov. Galler and Isakov were aging Admirals who had

been officers in the Tsar's Navy during World War I, and who apparently reveled in Stalin's desire to build a great surface Navy. Levchenko, like Kuznetsov, had achieved officer rank in the Navy under the Soviets, and was to become Deputy Commander in Chief of the Navy after Stalin's death. Since the above passage fails to name all the members of the 1938 Main Council of the Naval Fleet, the latter probably included that currently discredited member of the 1957 "anti-Party group," V.M. Molotov, who, after serving as Premier from 1930 to 1941, went on to become Foreign Commissar and Minister during 1939-49 and 1953-55.

*The Baltic Fleet—a Historical Sketch* offers us the following details on the Soviet Navy of 1933-39:

In 1935, submarines of the *Pravda* class began to join the fleet. At the end of the Second Five-Year Plan, the Red Banner Baltic Fleet already had ten new submarines constructed in the Fatherland.

During the first two Five-Year Plans our shipbuilding industry gave the Naval Fleet over 500 new ships. This exceeded by four times the number of ships built in Tsarist Russia during the decade which preceded the First World War.

The tempestuous growth of our socialist economy created the conditions for the solution of the problem of the construction of a great closed-sea and high-seas fleet. The number of ships joining the fleet increased from year to year. Ship construction became one of the advanced branches of socialist industry. The cruisers *Kirov* and *Maxim Gorkiy*, destroyer leaders of the *Leningrad* class, and destroyers of the *Gnevnyy* class joined the Red Banner Baltic Fleet.<sup>16</sup>

The Soviet military historians of 1960-65 offer us a somewhat confused account of the development of Soviet military strategy, including naval strategy, during the 1930's. First we are told that this strategy coincided with the general estimate of the role of seapower and airpower which is quoted at the beginning of this article:

. . . it was emphasized that for the Soviet Union, the leading role in contemporary war will belong to the Ground Forces, with which the Air Forces and the Naval Fleet

must cooperate, although the possibility of their operating independently was not denied . . .

The theoretical positions which regulated the missions and capabilities of employment of the Naval Fleet of the USSR prior to the beginning of the Great Fatherland War were based on the leading principles of Soviet military science, and proceeded above all from the fact that in contemporary war, victory is achieved by the coordinated operations of all services of the Armed Forces, employed in accordance with a united plan, and under united leadership. In accordance with this, the combat activity of fleets and flotillas had to be carried out in close cooperation with the Ground Forces and Air Forces in the interests of the achievement of the general purposes of the war. Our fleets could perform independent missions at sea only in the interests of the achievement of the common purposes of all the Armed Forces. <sup>17</sup>

Naming Admiral Ivan S. Isakov as the principal Soviet naval theoretician of the 1930's, the Soviet military historians of 1960-65 go on to make the following general statements regarding naval operational planning during the decade preceding the German attack:

On the basis of regulations and instructions of the Naval Fleet, offensive operations were posited. The role of strike forces was assigned to submarines and aviation, and to light forces of the surface ships, especially torpedo boats.

Within the limits of the operational zones of the fleets, the organization and conduct of reconnaissance were projected, and within the limits of naval bases—the patrol service, antisubmarine, antimine, antiair, antitorpedo-boat defense, and the antichemical defense, for the purpose of guaranteeing the undisturbed basing of the fleet in the maritime theater.

Against the enemy's ships, coastal objectives, and maritime communications, there was recommended the waging of systematic combat operations with the light forces of the fleet by the method of short and unexpected attacks, which, in conjunction with the massive laying of minefields, furthered the goal of delivering destruction to the enemy fleet.



For the destruction and disruption of the maritime commerce of the enemy, it was proposed to conduct, on his maritime lines of communication, independent operations with submarine forces, aviation, and surface ships, and at the same time to be in a state of readiness for operations for the defense of our own national economic and military commerce at sea under conditions of the enemy's active opposition. Great attention was devoted to training in amphibious and counteramphibious operations, the conduct of systematic and episodic combat operations for the direct support and screening of the flanks of the Ground Forces operating in coastal areas and in lake and river regions.

Great significance was attributed to the constant readiness of the basic forces of the Fleet to maneuver in the maritime theater for the purpose of exerting maximum efforts in good time in a decisive direction for the destruction of the enemy, and also maneuvering the forces and resources of the fleet from one maritime theater to another.

The theory of the naval art recognized the growing role of aviation in combat operations at sea. However, the qualitative condition of the aviation of the Naval Forces did not correspond to the assigned missions. The seaplanes which constituted a significant part of the Fleet Air Forces did not correspond, in their tactical-technical characteristics, to the demands of the time. In the ranks of the Fleet Air Forces there was little strike aviation, *i. e.*, mine-torpedo and bomber.

In 1940-41 there was worked out and put into operation a system of operational readiness of fleets and flotillas which was capable of improving the combat readiness of all forces of the fleets.<sup>18</sup>

The above statements on operational planning during the 1930's hardly square with the shift in naval construction during the middle of the decade which is described above. It is not surprising, therefore, that the military historians felt obliged to offer some explanation. They did so in the following passage, which makes it clear that between the establishment of the Navy Commissariat and the Main Military Council of the Naval Fleet during 1937-38, and the

last year before the German attack, 1940-41, important changes did in fact take place in naval operational planning:

At the beginning of the Great Fatherland War the basic theoretical positions of the operational art and tactics of the Naval Fleet of the USSR were laid forth in the Combat Regulations of the Naval Forces (1937), and in the Provisional Instruction for the Conduct of Naval Operations (1940). Here were defined the general bases of the preparation and conduct of independent and joint operations.

In the Combat Regulations of the Naval Forces, in accordance with the basic spirit of the direction of fleet construction in the course of the Second Five-Year Plan, much attention was devoted to the various means of the employment of submarine aviation, and torpedo boats, depending on the type of combat operations.

The Provisional Instruction for the Conduct of Naval Operations was the first document of such a type, and essentially, it generalized the operational views of that time. It foresaw the following types of fleet missions: the struggle with the enemy on the maritime lines of communication, operations against his bases and coastal objectives for the seizure of insular regions and support points of the enemy, and also the securing of favorable operating circumstances in the maritime theater. To the types of missions requiring joint operations with the Army were related operations for the support of the flank of the Army amphibious and counteramphibious operations, and missions against coastal points of the enemy.

The Provisional Instruction was oriented on independent operations of units of surface ships with the cooperation of submarines and aviation. In those circumstances in which the principal mission of the Fleet was operations against maritime lines of communication, the submarines were evaluated as the fundamental form of Naval Forces.

At the beginning of the Great Fatherland War, Soviet naval art received a significant development. The role, the place, and the assignment of the fleets

and flotillas of the Armed Forces of our state were defined, and their organization and system of basing in maritime theaters and large frontier rivers were worked out, and also the basic theoretical positions of their combat activity.

However, the Soviet Naval Fleet was lacking in its own contemporary combat experience, in view of which its naval art did not in every respect correspond to the concrete demands of the time.<sup>19</sup>

What we have above, then, is a guarded admission that by 1940, the 1930 concept of a defensive Navy based upon submarines, torpedo boats, and naval aircraft had given way to "high seas fleet" thinking, based upon the anticipated construction of considerable large surface units. However, the Soviet military historians of 1960-65 do not exhaust all the possible implications of the shift in naval strategy between 1937 and 1940. In 1937, Stalin still hoped for collaboration with Britain and France against Germany and Italy, and with the United States against Japan. By 1940 he was collaborating with Hitler against Britain in Europe, and on the point of signing a nonaggression pact with Japan. During 1939-40 he had had some reason to fear an Anglo-French effort to come to the aid of Finland via Norway, Sweden, and the Soviet Arctic coast, or to strike against his Caucasian flank from the Middle East. Once one accepts the idea that during 1938-41 Stalin was not necessarily preparing to engage Germany in battle, his naval strategy makes more sense.

It would appear, in fact, that during the time when the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939-41 appeared to offer Stalin security on his western land frontier, his prewar naval construction reached great new levels. The historians of 1960-65 tell us the following:

In 1939 the long-range DB-3F bomber built by S.V. Il'yushin began to enter the long-range aviation units and the bomber aviation of the Naval Fleet. It had a maximum speed of 440 km. per hour, a range of 2,700 km., and a bomb load of 1,000-2,500 kg. . . .

The successes of socialist industry, including ship construction, served as a firm basis for the development of the Soviet Naval Fleet and the strengthening of its technological and combat power. In the years preceding the war much work was

accomplished on the creation of the newest warships. Talented scholar-shipbuilders, who developed creatively naval technological thought—academicians A.N. Krylov, V.L. Pozdyunin, N. Ye. Kochin, Yu. A. Shimanskiy, Corresponding Member of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR P.F. Papkovich, and others—made an enormous contribution to the buildup of the fleet.

The overall tonnage of the Naval Fleet increased from the beginning of 1939 up to 1941 on account of the accretion of ships of contemporary classes: in the surface fleet—by 108,718 tons, and in the submarine fleet, by 50, 385 tons. During 11 months of 1940 alone, the Fleet acquired 100 different warships, principally destroyers, submarines, trawlers, torpedo boats, and others. Many of them were blueprinted and constructed according to the latest word of technology, and possessed high combat qualities. At the end of 1940 there were under construction already 269 ships of all types, part of which were finished in the first half of 1941 and took part in the war. The completed ships were equipped with the new models of guns, fire control platforms, and radio-navigational and other special equipment. The submarines and shipboard guns were on a high technological level.

But in mine warfare, in which Russian seamen had excelled in the past, a lag was to be found. Trawling and the acoustics and radio-direction-finder service were insufficiently developed.

The artillery of Coastal Defense, equipped with new gunnery technology, formed part of the Fleet. In the course of 1940 alone the total number of batteries of Coastal Defense were increased by 43 per cent, and the batteries of Anti-Air Defense, by 90 per cent. However, in connection with the system of basing, the stations and bases of the Fleet were not sufficiently protected from the air. Thus, for example, the Anti-Air Defense of the main base of the Black Sea Fleet, Sevastopol, disposed of 60 antiaircraft guns in all. The average density of antiaircraft artillery at the beginning of combat operations in the region of Sevastopol was equivalent to two guns on a kilometer of a land front.

The Fleet Air Force was increased by 39 per cent (in 1940 alone), but principally due to already obsolete models. It almost did not receive new aircraft, with the exception of the long-range DB-3F bombers. The absence of a reliable air cover made difficult fleet operations in case of war.

Despite these deficiencies the Naval Fleet of the Soviet Union took, in its technological and combat development on the eve of the war, an enormous step forward, and was ready for the defense of the maritime frontiers of our Motherland . . . .

Organizational measures were carried out . . . in the prewar years in the Fleet. Before the Great Fatherland War the extent of the maritime frontiers of the USSR was growing; in the Baltic, by 1,740 kilometers; in the Black Sea, by 135; in the Arctic, by 90; and on the Danube River, by 169 kilometers, which naturally required the strengthening of the fleets. It was necessary to create a system of basing the Naval Fleet in all maritime theaters. Construction of naval bases, which it was planned to finish in 1943-45, was begun. In all the fleets were formed task units of destroyers, submarines, and torpedo boats; the basic task forces were strengthened with new ships and task units. The task force of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet and the task group of light forces of the Fleet were strengthened, and also the basic task units of the Black Sea and Pacific Fleets. Destroyers and submarines, on the basis of the orders of the Party and Government, were sent to the Northern Fleet in 1939-40. In 1940 the Danube and Pinsk Naval River Flotillas were formed. In the Baltic Sea new naval bases were created and an effort was made to become familiar with the waterways. The basic task units of the Fleet were dispersed at the new bases.

Thanks to the development of naval bases on the territory of the Estonian and Latvian Soviet Socialist Republics, the Baltic Fleet came out of the eastern part of the Gulf of Finland into the main body of the Baltic Sea. The strategic situation in the Baltic was sharply altered in our favor.

As a result of the conclusion of the peace treaty with Finland, the islands of Gogland, Bolshoy and

Malyy Tyuters, Lavansari, Seyskari, Nerva, the B'yorke Archipelago, and the islands in the Gulf of Vyborg came to the USSR. On them was begun the construction of Coastal Defense. On Hanko Peninsula, leased to the Soviet Union by Finland, was created a naval base. Now the Red Banner Baltic Fleet could organize a permanent defense of the mouth of the Gulf of Finland and strengthen significantly the defense of Leningrad from the sea. However, at the beginning of the war the construction of the system of defense on the coast and in the islands was still not finished.

The Air Force of the Naval Fleet entered the Air Forces of the Baltic, Black Sea, Pacific, and Northern Fleets, and consisted of mixed fighter-bomber brigades composed of two or three regiments. New units of the Fleet Air Forces were created. At the beginning of 1941 the units and subunits of the Fleet Air Forces were composed of fighter aviation (45.3%), bombers (14%), torpedo planes (9.7%), and reconnaissance planes (25%); 6% consisted of special mission aviation. New formations also arose in the units of Coastal Defense and of Anti-Air Defense of the Fleet . . .<sup>20</sup>

There was, then, no lack of effort on the part of the Soviet Navy to be prepared for any of the many contingencies which arose as a result of the general situation and of Stalin's slippery foreign policy during 1938-41. For this reason, we need not accept at face value the following analysis by the authors of the 1965 work, *The Lessons of the Great Fatherland War*, of the causes of the heavy losses sustained by the Baltic and Black Sea Fleets during the first six months after Hitler started Operation Barbarossa:

The geographical peculiarities of our maritime theaters created significant difficulties for the operations of the Naval Fleet. Their dispersed condition deprived the Soviet High Command of the possibility of strategic maneuver with naval forces. Not one of our fleets could count in wartime on significant reinforcement of its forces with warships drawn from another maritime theater. The forces of the fleet were augmented, thanks to the completion of ships laid down in the prewar years, and to new construction, gotten underway in the course of the war. These were principally light forces of the surface fleet and

various auxiliary ships. The State Defense Committee, soon after the attack of Germany on our country, stopped the construction of large surface ships, and switched the efforts of the shipbuilding industry to the creation of light forces of the surface fleet, the need for which was sharply increasing.

The combat training of the Naval Fleet in the prewar years was conducted in accordance with the requirement to be in a constant state of readiness for operations in the open sea, in the air, and at the enemy's coastline and bases. The greatest attention was devoted to offensive operations of all types of naval forces. In the documents of those years which laid down official doctrines on the strategic and tactical activity of the Fleet, joint defensive operations of the Fleet with the Ground Forces were not appropriately reflected. Surface ships were considered the basic type of naval forces. Submarines were assigned principally to conduct a struggle against the enemy's maritime lines of communication, Air power was viewed as an important means of securing the operations and the day-to-day activity of the Fleet.

Combat experience, while confirming many justified positions of our military doctrine in the area of the employment of naval forces, quickly unmasked and helped to eradicate other positions which did not correspond to the real conditions of the war. The massive heroism of the personnel of the Naval Fleet, and the wisdom of its command and political cadres in using combat experience creatively, made possible an uninterrupted improvement of the methods of employment of all types of naval forces.<sup>21</sup>

Actually, the 1941 internal waterway system of Soviet Russia left only the Black Sea Fleet isolated from other maritime areas, and its difficulties after the war started might have been less had Stalin's 1940 aggressions against Rumania not made that country a willing ally of Hitler. Communications between the Baltic and Northern Fleets were severed, not for lack of a White Sea-Baltic Canal, but because Finland cut that canal early in the war, thus cancelling out whatever naval advantages had accrued from the 1939-40 Soviet aggression against Finland.

It is certainly true, as stated above, that construction of *Kirov*-class cruisers and destroyers in the Baltic and Black Sea theaters ceased during the war, mainly because the Germans captured Nikolayev and all but surrounded Leningrad until early 1944. However, the Soviets were glad enough to have their Northern Fleet reinforced with ex-American and ex-British cruisers, destroyers, and other surface ship types, while prewar construction plans were continued in the Pacific theater.

The Soviet military historians are undoubtedly right in making a point of the lack of a sufficient air umbrella for the Red Navy in 1941. However, it is by no means certain that a larger force of submarines and torpedo boats would have made much difference in 1941, and subsequently; such a force would have been useful mainly against Japan, Britain, or the United States.

Despite their strictures on the subject of prewar naval operational planning, the 1965 Soviet military historians admit that Stalin's Navy was able to make a rapid shift to defensive operations during the first critical six months of the war:

In the first period of the war, the basic efforts of the Naval Fleet were directed towards covering, in a reliable manner, the coastal flanks of the Ground Forces, and actively cooperating with them in the conduct of defensive operations. The fleets played an especially great role in the prolonged defense of naval bases: Leningrad, Odessa, Sevastopol, Tallinn, Hanko, the islands of the Moon Sound Archipelago, and Murmansk. At the same time the submarines, the naval air forces, and the surface ships operated on the enemy's lines of communication, and performed missions for the defense of their own maritime communications . . . .

The Naval Fleet, carrying on a struggle in exceptionally complex circumstances, coped successfully with the missions assigned to it in joint operations with the Ground Forces. The coastal and shipboard artillery of the Fleet furnished support to the troops, uninterruptedly improving gunnery against coastal and inshore targets. Especially significant was the role of shipboard and coastal artillery in the defense of Leningrad, Sevastopol, and other naval bases. The Naval Fleet supplied naval bases surrounded from the land side (Tallinn, Hanko, Odessa, Sevastopol). Sometimes the warships, including submarines, were used for this . . . .



In the first period of the war the Baltic and Black Sea Fleets conducted several operations for the evacuation of troops from isolated parts of the coast and islands. The largest of these operations was the evacuation of the 10th Infantry Corps from Tallinn, of the naval base of Hanko, and of the Maritime Army from Odessa and Sevastopol. The basic forces of the fleets took part in these operations.

The Naval Infantry also participated in joint operations with the Ground Forces. It gave a good account of itself during the defense of Murmansk, Liepaja, Tallinn, Hauko, the Moon Sound Islands, Odessa, and Sevastopol, and also in the landing operations carried out by the Fleet.<sup>22</sup>

There finally came a time, however, when Hitler or his allies had taken Liepaja, the Moon Sound Islands, Tallinn, Hanko, Odessa, Nikolayev, and Sevastopol, and when the battered remains of the Baltic Fleet had taken refuge in Leningrad, and the no less battered remains of the Black Sea Fleet, in Poti and Batumi, south of the towering Caucasus. Thereafter, a large part of the fleet personnel were simply turned over to the Army:

Naval Infantry units formed from the personnel of the ships and Coastal Defense fought heroically in the outskirts of Leningrad, in the defensive battles around Moscow, and in the battle on the Volga.

During the Great Fatherland War the Naval Fleet sent to the land fronts 42 Naval Infantry brigades and several detached battalions—in all, counting reinforcements en route, over 405,000 naval seamen. Of these around 309,000 men arrived at the fronts during the first period of the war, the most difficult and crucial for the Motherland. The Red Banner Baltic Fleet formed the greatest number of infantry units. The Pacific Fleet also sent many seamen to the land front. As was correct, the best sailors, commanders, and political workers were selected for the naval brigades.<sup>23</sup>

In view of the above, it is not surprising to learn that during the course of the war, the share of the Soviet Navy in the personnel strength of the Soviet Armed Forces suffered a considerable decline;

. . . [In 1941] the general structure of the Armed Forces of the USSR remained basically unchanged. They included the Ground Forces, the Air Forces, and the Naval Fleet—the three services of the Armed Forces. In the course of the war there was formed still another independent service of the Armed Forces—the Troops of the Anti-Air Defense of the Country, which occupied an important spot in the military organization of the socialist state.

In each of the Armed Forces there took place qualitative changes, and their organizational structure was to one degree or another altered. The following table shows the change of the relative weight of the various services of the Armed Forces with respect to the numerical strength of their personnel (in percentages):

SERVICES OF THE ARMED FORCES <sup>24</sup>			
	At the Beginning of the War	July 1, 1943	January 1, 1945
Ground Forces	80.7%	87.0%	83.4%
Air Forces	8.7%	5.7%	7.1%
Naval Fleet	7.3%	3.8%	4.8%
Troops of the Anti-Air Defense of the Country	3.3%	3.5%	4.7%

During 1942 and 1943, the activity of the Soviet Baltic Fleet was limited to the operations of a few submarines which managed to break through the Finno-German defenses of the Gulf of Finland and to joint operations with the Red Army on Lakes Ladoga and Onega. The Black Sea Fleet enjoyed a somewhat wider range of opportunities, particularly after the surrender of the German Sixth Army at Stalingrad on February 2, 1943, and the subsequent Soviet counteroffensive in the Ukraine. However, only the Northern Fleet, owing to the failure of enemy efforts to capture Murmansk, and to the fact that its maritime theater was accessible from the high seas, enjoyed a full range of opportunities for naval activity during the middle years of the war. All these facts should be kept in mind when reading the following passage from *The Lessons of the Great Fatherland War* on the independent operations of the Soviet Navy, since for the years 1942 and 1943 they refer mainly to German shipping along the northern coastline of Norway, and between Bulgaria-Rumania and the captured Black Sea ports of Soviet Russia:

While interdicting the maritime lines of communication of the enemy, our fleets acquired great and many-sided experience, which gave them the opportunity uninterruptedly to improve methods of offensive operations, principally on the coastal maritime lines of communication.

In the struggle on the enemy's maritime lines of communication, the Air Forces, submarines, and surface forces (principally torpedo boats) took part. Coastal artillery was used in isolated regions of Varanger Fjord for the interdiction of coastal maritime lines of communication.

The Fleet Air Force was viewed in prewar years as a means of covering operations carried out by other types of Naval Forces. In actuality it became the basic strike force of the Fleet. To its credit belongs more than half the tonnage of enemy transport and cargo ships which were sunk, and over 60% of the enemy warships and auxiliaries which were destroyed.

During the first period of the war, Naval Aviation did not have at its disposal a sufficient quantity of forces, and moreover, it was used actively in the land regions. Therefore the struggle on the enemy lines of communication was usually conducted by individual airplanes or little tactical groups, consisting of airplanes of various types of aviation (dive bombers, bombers, torpedo planes, and fighters). Subsequently the ranks of the strike groups and of the screening groups increased without interruption. In the third period of the war the Fleet Air Forces delivered massive strikes at the enemy's supply convoys, and also against his ports and naval bases. The operations of mine-torpedo aircraft, which destroyed more transports and warships of the enemy than all other types of aviation put together, acquired especial significance on the maritime lines of communication. In all, during the time of the war, the Air Force of the Naval Fleet flew 384,000 individual sorties, and destroyed around 5,000 enemy planes.

Submarines were second with respect to their effectiveness as a means of conducting a struggle on the maritime lines of communication. Ordinarily they performed their missions independently and only in a few cases cooperated with aviation and surface ships.

In the first period of the war, the basic method of the employment of submarines was positional, which was connected with passive waiting for the enemy. Under the influence of accumulated experience they began later to shift to positional-maneuvering and maneuvering operations. The changing of the method of employing submarines brought about an improvement of the effectiveness of their attacks. This made it possible to aim the submarines at those sectors of the maritime lines of communication where intelligence revealed the most intensive movement of enemy ships. Combat experience confirmed also the necessity of widening the initiative of the commanding officers of submarines which were at sea, of giving them the right to move beyond the limits of the position for the destruction of important objectives. Submarines carried out torpedo attacks principally in daylight hours. The experience of the war, while emphasizing the very important role of submarines in operations on the maritime lines of communication, at the same time made clear the exceptional difficulty of using them in maritime theaters which are limited in size and broken up into segments.

Of the surface forces, principally torpedo boats took part in operations on the maritime lines of communication in all maritime theaters, and only rarely, destroyers, patrol craft, and trawlers.

The basic method of the employment of torpedo boats prior to 1943 was the seeking out of the enemy in conditions of bad visibility by individual boats or by small groups. Then the ranks of these groups began to increase. Torpedo boats, teamed with fighter aircraft, began to operate in daylight hours.

The development of technological means of detection, an increase in the speed of aircraft used for carrying out reconnaissance, and the improvement of radio communications, made it possible to cut down on the 'dead time' (the interval between the detection of the enemy and the delivery of strikes against him). The new technology made easier seeking out targets under any conditions of visibility. The appearance of radar guaranteed the uninterrupted character of detection.<sup>25</sup>

The obvious purpose of the above passage is to show that the Soviet Navy would have been more effective in World War II, if Stalin had not departed, during the late 1930's, from the Soviet naval theories of the early 1930's. Although the factual basis for the conclusions rests mainly on the Arctic-Black Sea experience of 1942-43, and the early part of 1944, it would appear that the experience of the Baltic Fleet during 1944-45 was also considered. In September 1944, the surrender of Finland reopened the Baltic to the Soviets, even though the Germans held out in the ports of the Baltic States and of their own Baltic coast until near the end of the war. It is therefore interesting to note that although the Soviet military historians of 1960-65 are impressed with the operations of Soviet naval aircraft and torpedo boats in the Baltic during the last eight months of the war, they reached the conclusion that the Baltic, which is "limited in size and broken up into segments," was not a good operating area for submarines.

The authors of *The Lessons of the Great Fatherland War* could scarcely afford to ignore the performance of the Soviet river and lake flotillas throughout the war, or the efforts at amphibious warfare in the Black Sea, and, much later, in the Baltic. However, these operations were put under the heading of those joint Army-Navy operations which, allegedly, the Soviet Navy had tended to minimize just prior to the war:

In the later periods of the war, the main attention of the fleet was concentrated above all on cooperation with the Ground Forces. But the character of the missions performed jointly was in a state of flux. The basic forces of the fleet were now used for participation in the offensive operations of the Red Army in maritime regions. The struggle on the enemy's maritime lines of communication became more intense.

The flotillas which formed part of fleets, and the flotillas which operated independently on lakes and in river basins, rendered great help to the Ground Forces. Operating jointly with the advancing troops, they participated actively in the destruction of the river and lake concentrations of the foe . . .

During the carrying out of joint operations with the Ground Forces, over 100 strategic and tactical landings were made on the flanks of enemy concentrations, and in their rear. The fleet carried out the

largest landings during the Kerch-Feodosiya (1941) and Novorossiysk (1943) operations, on the shore of Kerch Peninsula (1943), on the islands of the Moon Sound Archipelago (1944), and on the coast of North Korea and the Kurile Islands (1945). It must be noted, however, at the same time, that the insufficiency of means of transporting landing troops was felt, and also the absence of special landing craft.<sup>26</sup>

To make absolutely certain that they made their point against Stalin's surface fleet of 1935-41, the Soviet military historians of 1960-65 approached the matter from still another angle:

In the ranks of the German Naval Forces in our maritime theaters there was no permanent nucleus of large and medium surface ships. Large surface ships of the German Fleet operated only in the Barents Sea during 1942-43. The enemy's superiority in aviation in the first, and partly in the second, phases of the war created unfavorable conditions for our surface ships in the open sea. Moreover, our fleet was deprived of large naval bases, both in the Baltic and in the Black Sea.

As a result of all these circumstances the employment of large ships was sharply limited. During the time of the war not a single battle took place at sea or in the coastal region between large units of surface forces. Our surface warships were used principally for the performance of missions connected with defensive and offensive operations of maritime concentrations of the Ground Forces, and for guaranteeing the security of their maritime lines of communication which were in the main coastal. In some instances surface ships were employed for carrying on the struggle on the maritime lines of communication, and also for hit-and-run operations against the naval bases and strong points of the enemy. In the course of the entire war, trawlers, patrol craft, and patrol boats operated very actively.<sup>27</sup>

To be sure, the authors of *The Lessons of the Great Fatherland War* concede that their fleet might have been more effective had it possessed, at the start of the war, the advanced naval technology being developed at the time in Britain and the United States—sonar, radar, special amphibious craft, etc. What they still refuse to do, in the following paragraphs, is to acknowledge the considerable assistance of Russia's Western allies in laying the basis for a modern Soviet Navy during the years 1942-45:

The technological and combat power of the Naval Fleet was . . . changed basically in accordance with combat necessities. The very first months of the war revealed enormous deficiencies in the technological equipment and armament of the Naval Fleet. Although on the very eve of the war the Naval Fleet received a certain number of new destroyers, submarines, trawlers, torpedo boats, and other warships, built with account taken of the latest achievements of naval technology, these resources were not sufficient for the successful resolution of those combat missions which the Fleet had to perform. The Fleets did not have sufficiently powerful Air Forces, and airplanes of outdated designs arrived to reinforce them. There was very little anti-aircraft artillery on the naval bases of the fleets at the beginning of the war. Although the Naval Fleet was also prepared to carry out amphibious operations, it was completely lacking in modern amphibious craft.

It was natural that these deficiencies could not be fully eradicated in the first phase of the war, while the country was putting its war economy in order. But in the second phase of the war the Soviet Fleet was already receiving serious reinforcement—new submarines, torpedo boats, and other combat ships and auxiliaries—capable of cooperating successfully with the Ground Forces and operating in the coastal regions. The Naval Air Force received planes of new types. The reinforcement of the fleet with warships and aviation and the equipment of the ships in hand with contemporary technological resources (hydrophones, radars, and others) improved the combat power of the Naval Forces. Only the problem of the creation of amphibious resources was not solved in the course of the entire war.<sup>28</sup>

In concluding their assessment of the World War II Soviet Navy, the authors of *The Lessons of the Great Fatherland War*, possibly because they felt they had made almost too strong a case for that Navy's deficiencies, offered some consolation to defenders of sea-power. Citing figures which are based mainly on the final year of the war, 1944-45, and grandly claiming credit for the safe arrival of Anglo-American convoys at Murmansk, they noted the following:

Although the combat activity of our Naval Fleet in the Great Fatherland War had a relatively small scope,

it coped successfully with the missions which were put before it. In the course of the war, the enemy fleet lost 708 warships and auxiliaries. Moreover, it was deprived of 792 transports and cargo ships with a total displacement of 1,838,000 registered gross tons.

The principal mission which the Soviet Naval Forces performed was summed up in cooperation with the Ground Forces which were fighting in maritime regions and in river and lake regions. Moreover our fleets, especially the Northern, successfully defended their maritime lines of communication. During the time of the war there arrived in the northern ports of the Soviet Union by foreign maritime lines of communication 1,624 convoys including more than 4,400 individual ships. The Red Banner Baltic Fleet guarded the movement of 3,223 cargo ships and transports, and the Black Sea Fleet, the movement of 6,644.<sup>29</sup>

No proper evaluation of the judgments of the 1960-65 Soviet military historians on the 1941-45 Red Fleet is possible without full awareness of the development of that fleet during the first postwar decade. In general, it may be said that Stalin seems to have reached conclusions quite contrary to those which have been presented above.

The end of the war found Stalin's Baltic Fleet back in control of Tallinn, the Moon Sound Islands, and Liepaja; Porkalla had been exchanged for Hanko. In addition, the former German bases at Memel and Pillau (now Klaypeda and Baltiysk) were in its hands, and it hovered over the vastly enlarged Polish coastline, and that of the Soviet Zone in Germany. Finland had been excluded from the Arctic. In the Black Sea, Soviet naval power was back at the mouths of the Danube and had available the ports of Rumania and Bulgaria; it is little wonder that Stalin demanded control of the Turkish Straits during 1945-46. In the Pacific, control of the Kuriles and Southern Sakhalin had made the Sea of Okhotsk a Soviet lake, and for a few years, the Soviet Pacific Fleet would enjoy the use of the Tsar's former naval bases in North Korea and the Liaotung Peninsula.

Stalin was certainly aware of some of the "lessons" of World War II, particularly with respect to airpower and anti-air defense. During 1945-55, there were developed, not only more powerful Naval Air Forces, and conventional Coastal Defenses, but also



an elaborate coastal patrol (Service of Observation and Communications), coastal radar stations (Anti-Air Observation and Warning), and improved anti-air defenses of the coastal regions. Stalin was also busy laying the basis for the creation of the world's powerful submarine force, using captured German models and scientists to that end. But his interest in a great surface fleet remained as strong as ever.

During the first two years after World War II, Stalin received his share of the captured German, Japanese, and Italian Navies, and sometimes showed great reluctance in returning to their owners the British and American fleet units lent him during the war. But by the time of the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, his attention was concentrated on his own new naval construction, which had already produced new cruiser, destroyer, and submarine construction over the preceding half-decade. With the reestablishment of the Navy Ministry in 1950, and the reappointment of Kuznetsov as Minister in 1951, all was ready for a massive forward push, and there is no reason to believe that Stalin's plans were abandoned until two years after his death. The key events in their abandonment were doubtless the reincorporation of the Navy Ministry into the Defense Ministry in 1953, and the substitution of Admiral Sergey I. Gorshkov for Kuznetsov as Navy Commander in Chief in 1955, following the appointment of Marshal G.K. Zhukov as Defense Minister. But before Kuznetsov departed into obscurity, the *Chapayev* and *Sverdlov* class cruisers, and the *Riga*, *Kotlin*, *Skoryy*, and *Tallinn* destroyer types had given the Soviets an impressive surface, as well as subsurface Navy.<sup>30</sup>

What we have, then, in *The Lessons of the Great Fatherland War* is not just an attempt to "unmask" the alleged deficiencies of Stalin's World War II Navy, but also a barely concealed diatribe against the Soviet Navy of 1945-55. The argument is basically that just as Stalin neglected airpower and submarines in the 1930's, so, during the first postwar decade, he neglected the implications of nuclear weapons and missile delivery systems.

However, in their guarded references to the developments of the past decade, the Soviet military historians of 1960-65 make it clear that they feel that landpower of the World War II variety no longer has the edge over seapower and airpower which it once enjoyed. Instead, they point out:

Soviet military doctrine holds that in contrast to past wars, when basic strategic missions were usually entrusted

to the Ground Forces, the decisive role now will belong to a new service of the Armed Forces—the Strategic Missile-Nuclear Troops. They will be used for the performance of strategic missions, and above all, for the delivery of strikes on the regions of the location of the launching sites of the enemy's strategic missiles and the basic concentrations of his Ground, Air, and Naval Forces, and on the vitally important targets of the enemy's rear and the largest centers of communication. Simultaneous massive strikes on these targets will create favorable opportunities for the operations of all other services of the Armed Forces. Along with this they will also guarantee conditions for the defense of our own country from the nuclear strikes of the enemy.<sup>31</sup>

And just in case all enemy missile launching sites should not be destroyed in the initial strike, we are assured that another new service of the Soviet Armed Forces, the Anti-Air Defense of the Country could deal with the situation:

In recent years the Troops of the Anti-Air Defense of the Country have been completely reorganized. The basis of their combat strength now consists of surface-to-air missiles and missile-equipped fighter interceptors. The Anti-Air Defense Troops dispose of sophisticated electronic technology, giving them the opportunity to detect an airborne target at a great distance, to identify it, and to guarantee a timely and accurate target location for bringing into action means of its destruction. They are capable of destroying speedy airborne targets flying on courses of low and high altitudes, and also of destroying any ballistic missiles of the aggressor at an enormous distance from the targets being defended.<sup>32</sup>

It is held, then, that the basic development of 1955-65 has been not so much the subordination of the Navy to the Ground Forces and Air Forces, but the transformation of all three into auxiliaries, useful mainly to follow up the results of initial exchanges of nuclear missiles. To be sure, the three General Purpose services are expected to cooperate with each other. With respect to the Ground Forces, for example, we are told that:

The Ground Forces, taking advantage of the success achieved by the employment of strategic missile-nuclear weapons, will have to complete, in cooperation with the

Air and Naval Forces, the destruction of the enemy's Armed Forces, and seize important regions of his territory.<sup>33</sup>

Moreover, we are assured that:

. . . the Air Forces, equipped with jet aircraft, including long-range supersonic bombers, will find extensive employment especially for the carrying out of joint missions with the Ground Forces and the Naval Forces.<sup>34</sup>

Finally, there are the following paragraphs on the Soviet Navy of the 1960's:

Missile-nuclear armament has significantly strengthened the combat possibilities of the Naval Fleet. Already in the time of the Second World War the decisive role in the destruction of the enemy's naval forces belonged to the submarine fleet and aviation. This determined also the subsequent development of the Naval Forces. At the present time the principal form of Naval Forces are atomic submarines. Atomic submarines with torpedo armament can wage a struggle with the enemy's surface and submarine forces, operating at a great distance from the regions where they are based. Equipped with missile weapons with nuclear warheads, they are capable of delivering effective strikes on naval bases and on important targets located in the territory of the enemy state. Submarine fleets will perform these missions in cooperation with missile-equipped aviation . . .

The Naval Fleet, by receiving into its arsenal atomic submarines and missile-equipped aviation, can perform successfully combat missions far beyond the limits of the coastal waters of the Soviet Union.<sup>35</sup>

In conclusion, it may be said that the 1965 Soviet analysis of the Red Fleet of 1941-45, while it has some merit, leaves out of account the vital fact that Great Powers rarely if ever arm themselves against purely hypothetical enemies, although they sometimes lack the resources to prepare themselves adequately for every conceivable contingency. Undoubtedly the cruelties of

Joseph Stalin amply deserved an even stronger condemnation than that delivered by Nikita Khrushchev in 1956 and 1961. It is less certain that Stalin, given his foreign policy, and the objective world situations which he confronted, was equally deserving of censure on the ground of his military strategy.

With the collapse of the naval disarmament movement in the early 1930's, all of the world's great maritime powers, including Hitler's Germany, began to construct large surface and subsurface fleets, giving varied amounts of attention to carriers, submarines, antisubmarine warfare vessels, mincraft, torpedo boats, shore-based air support of naval operations, naval electronics, and special amphibious craft, as well as to battleships and cruisers. When World War II actually began, no one of the great maritime powers was without its quota of prewar mistakes. The Germans were not ready to begin a massive submarine offensive until 1941. Britain, the United States, and Japan suffered from a lack of attention to antisubmarine warfare prior to the war. The principles of modern amphibious warfare were not worked out until 1942-43, and the Western Powers suffered from a lack of enough amphibious craft until very late in the war.

Stalin's foreign policy required that he oppose Japanese aggression against China between 1931 and 1939. After the 1935 Anglo-German naval agreement, he felt menaced in the Baltic, and after 1936, he was interested in his lines of communication with Spain. Later, as noted above, the British and French seemed a threat to his Arctic and Middle Eastern sea flanks. All these problems suggested considerable attention to seapower, as did the extensions of the Soviet coastlines during 1939-40, and again, during 1944-45.

Although the pattern of Stalin's naval buildup during 1945-55 was basically the same as that of 1935-41, there were considerable differences between the challenges of the earlier period, and those of the later one. Instead of confronting several naval powers, which might decide to fight each other rather than the Soviet Union, Stalin confronted after 1945 an overwhelmingly superior naval power which could deploy its forces in or near every one of the major Soviet maritime regions.

It remains to be proven, as the Soviet military historians of 1960-65 assert, that Stalin was blind to the implications of nuclear weapons and missile delivery systems. The first Soviet atomic explosion took place in 1949, and the most significant developments

thereafter, within four and a half years of Stalin's death. It seems doubtful, therefore, that Soviet military theory suffered as much as the historians claim from Stalin's baleful influence.

What happened, rather, was that between 1953 and 1955, Soviet foreign and domestic policies began to change. The relative weakness of the post-Stalin regime made it necessary to stage a "thaw" in Soviet Russia and East Central Europe, while the world situation made desirable extensive foreign aid programs in the underdeveloped world. Some parts of the military budget had to be sacrificed to meet these new commitments, especially after the space program was fully launched in 1957. In 1955, the surface Navy began to feel the ax of the Soviet budget balancers, and by 1960, it was the turn of the swollen Ground Forces and manned bombers. As is the case with so much else in the Soviet Union, concrete situations demanded certain actions, which were then rationalized in terms of theory.

Ironically, the Soviet version of "massive retaliation" began to appear at precisely the moment when the United States began to abandon it in favor of "balanced forces" and "controlled, flexible response." Moreover, on several occasions during the early 1960's—the Congo airlift, the 1962 naval quarantine of Cuba, and the various stages of the Viet Nam conflict—the United States has offered a practical demonstration of the continuing usefulness of "conventional" forces, including naval forces. Confronted as they have been since 1960 by the defection of Communist China and restlessness in East Central Europe, the Soviets may or may not, in the near future, reexamine the strategic theories so loudly trumpeted by Khrushchev in 1960.

According to the authors of *The Lessons of the Great Fatherland War*, one of the principal "lessons" of that conflict was that seapower meant a powerful team of submarines and shore-based aircraft, equipped with the latest nuclear-missile-electronics military technology. However, it should be noted that the alleged deficiencies of World War II Soviet amphibious warfare were also stressed, with the obvious implication that the Soviet Navy of the 1960's ought to be doing something along this line. Moreover, in the statement that Soviet submarines can now operate at great distances from Soviet coastal waters, and attack targets ashore as well as at sea, there may be more than a hint that an enemy might do the same, and hence that antisubmarine measures are now necessary.

In general, then, the 1965 critique of Stalin's Red Fleet ought not to be cause for the easy assumption that the Soviets have lost faith in all seapower except nuclear-missile submarines. On the contrary, seapower figures prominently in their plans for their general purpose forces, which appear to be far less dominated by landpower viewpoints than was the case during World War II. Although the Soviet experience during that war was vastly different from that of the Western Powers, especially in the case of seapower, Soviet military theoreticians seem about to arrive, by a completely different route at most of the conclusions held by Western military theoreticians of the mid-1960's.

## FOOTNOTES

1. The writing of the official history was preceded and accompanied by the publication of a great number of shorter and less definitive general accounts, and of monographs and source material. For an interesting account of this historiography, which commenced after Khrushchev's 1956 attack on Stalin, see: Matthew P. Gallagher, *The Soviet History of World War II*. Frederick A. Praeger. New York: 1963.

2. The disputes of Khrushchev with the Soviet marshals have been the subject of numerous Rand Corporation studies, and were obviously reflected in the 1962-63 work on Soviet military strategy published under the name of Marshal V.D. Sokolovsky. The indispensable analysis of the disputes and of the contents of the Sokolovsky book is: Thomas W. Wolfe, *Soviet Strategy at the Crossroads*. Harvard University Press. Cambridge, Mass.: 1964.

3. V.A. Vasilenko et al., *Itogi Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny*, Vol. VI in P.N. Pospelov et al., *Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny Sovets-Kozo Soyuz, 1941-1945*, 243. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma pri TsK. KPSS, Otdel Istorii Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny. Voennoye Izdatel'stvo Ministerstva Oborony Soyuz SSR, Moscow: 1965.

4. *Ibid.*, 243-244.

5. *Ibid.*, 244-245.

6. *Ibid.*, 245-246.

7. *Ibid.*, 212.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*

10. The latest major work in what promises to develop into one of the major fields of late twentieth century historiography is: Robert Payne, *The Rise and Fall of Stalin*. Simon and Schuster. New York: 1965. Payne's work is unlikely to satisfy fully many professional historians, who will claim that it has a flimsy documentary base. However, after Khrushchev's 1956 and 1961 revelations, it has been difficult to sustain any interpretation of Stalin

which fails to recognize that he may have been a dangerous psychopath. An interpretation of Stalin which was written by a distinguished diplomat and Sovietologist who knew him well, and which suggests that he was at least mentally unbalanced, is to be found in: George Kennan, *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin*, 245-259. Little, Brown and Company. Boston and Toronto: 1960-61.

11. G.A. Deborin et al., *Podgotovka i Razvyazyvaniye Voyny Imperialisticheskimi Derzhavami*, Vol., I. in P.N. Pospelov et al., *Istoriya Velikoy Voyny Sovetskogo Soyuza, 1941-1945*, 94. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma pri TsK KPSS, Otdel Istorii Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny. Voennoye Izdatel'stvo Ministerstva Oborony Soyuza SSR. Moscow: 1960.

12. N. Grechanyuk et al., *Baltiyskiy Flot-Istoricheskiy Ocherk*, 224-225. Voennoye Izdatel'stvo Ministerstva Oborony Soyuza SSR. Moscow: 1960.

13. M.G. Saunders, ed., *The Soviet Navy*, 95-96. Frederick A. Praeger. New York: 1958.

14. *Ibid.*, *passim*.

15. G.A. Deborin et al., *Podgotovka i Razvyazyvaniye*, 94-98.

16. N. Grechanyuk et al., *Baltiyskiy Flot*, 224-225.

17. G.A. Deborin et al., *Podgotovka i Razvyazyvaniye*, 440, 449.

18. G.A. Deborin et al., *Podgotovka i Razvyazyvaniye*, 449-451.

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Ibid.*, 454-455.

21. V.A. Vasilenko et al., *Itogi*, 212-213.

22. *Ibid.*, 213-214.

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.*, 128.

25. *Ibid.*, 214-215.



26. *Ibid.*, 213.
27. *Ibid.*, 215.
28. *Ibid.*, 58.
29. *Ibid.*, 215.
30. M.G. Saunders, ed., *The Soviet Navy*, 140-167.
31. V.A. Vasilenko et al., *Itoqi*, 245-247.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*

### BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH

Professor C. Jay Smith, born in Georgia, is Professor of History (Russian and 20th Century Military and Diplomatic) and Director of the Honors Program at the University of Georgia. He received the Ph.D. at Harvard University in 1953, and was promoted to his present academic rank in 1962. He has done research in Europe in the Russian materials at Helsinki University, Helsinki, Finland, and at the Bodleian Library, Oxford University, and travelled in Soviet Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. His published works include *The Russian Struggle for Power, 1914-17* (New York: 1956), *Finland and the Russian Revolution, 1917-21* (Athens, Ga.: 1958), and "Paul N. Miljukov and the Russian National Question" in G. Fischer et al., eds., *Russian Thought and Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1957), as well as articles in *The American Slavic and East European Review*, *The Russian Review*, and other periodicals. His most recent publication is an article, "Great Britain and the 1914-15 Straits Agreement with Russia: the British Promises of November, 1914," which appears in the July 1965 issue of the *American Historical Review*.

Professor Smith was commissioned as an Ensign in the U.S. Naval Reserve in December 1942, and was on active duty with the Navy until April 1946. He served aboard the USS *Dallas* (DD-199) in the North Atlantic and Mediterranean during 1942-43, and took part in the invasions of North Africa and Sicily. After a tour of duty as an Instructor at the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School, Bainbridge, Md., he was assigned to the Amphibious Forces, and served as CO of an LCI (Rocket) and later commanded a division of LCI(R)'s in the Pacific, taking part in the invasions of Iwo Jima and Okinawa, and the occupation of Korea and Japan. Recalled to active duty in 1951 during the Korean War, he served for two years on the Eurasian Desk of the Office of Naval Intelligence, and wrote a series of articles on Soviet naval operations during World War II for the *O.N.I. Review*. Since 1953, Professor Smith has been active in the Naval Reserve, and during 1961-63, served as Officer-in-Charge, Naval Reserve Intelligence Unit 6-1-3, Atlanta, Ga. In 1963 he was awarded a plaque by the Commandant, Sixth Naval District, for his service to the Naval Reserve Program. In 1964 he was promoted to the rank of Captain, U.S.N.R.