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# SOVIET ARMED FORCES



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## Introduction

The year 1978 marks the 60th anniversary of the formation of the Soviet Armed Forces.

Having overthrown the rule of the landlords and capitalists in Russia, the Great October Socialist Revolution (1917) gave birth to an essentially new military organization of the working people—the Red Army of the Workers and Peasants.<sup>1</sup> This army defended the Revolution against the forces of the old world.

Creation of such an army was caused by historical necessity. Historical experience had amply demonstrated that exploiter classes overthrown in the course of a popular revolution never surrender without a fight; they stop at nothing and resort to any means in furious attempts to regain their positions. This is precisely why Lenin, the founder of the Soviet state, pointed out: "No revolution is worth anything unless it can defend itself," unless it can supplement its political and economic organization with a military organization.

Sixty years have passed since then. The Soviet Armed Forces have been devotedly serving their country, their people, and communist ideals. They have

<sup>1</sup> This was the official name of the Soviet Armed Forces between 1918 and 1946; they have been called "the Soviet Army" since 1946.

carried out their tasks with credit. During the Civil War (1918-20) the Red Army and Navy of the young republic of workers and peasants covered themselves with glory routing the combined forces of foreign intervention and internal counter-revolution, armed to the teeth. In the grim years of the Great Patriotic War (1941-45), when the mortal danger of Nazi enslavement overhung the Soviet Union and indeed the whole world, the Soviet Armed Forces upheld and defended the honour, freedom and independence of their country and played a decisive role in the liberation of many European and Asian nations from Nazi bondage. The chronicle of the Soviet Armed Forces is a record of exceptional fortitude, courage, mass heroism and high combat efficiency shown by Soviet soldiers.

The 60-year-long history of the Soviet state has demonstrated that armed defence of the revolution, the strengthening of the country's defences and of the combat capability of its army are an objective necessity stemming from the peculiarities of the class struggle between socialism and capitalism. "Defence of the Socialist Motherland," the Constitution of the USSR proclaims, "is one of the most important functions of the state, and is the concern of the whole people."

The historical experience of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries shows that a people that has taken power into its hands and created the armed forces which are truly of the people, infinitely devoted to the people, is invincible. In this respect the experience gained in the building, organization and training of the Soviet Armed Forces will always be of interest to all nations that have decided upon the non-capitalist path of development.

## BORN OF THE REVOLUTION

One of the first decrees of the Soviet government was the Decree on Peace passed on November 8, 1917. It contained an address to the governments of all the belligerent countries, proposing to end the war and make universal and just peace. But world imperialism and the overthrown exploiter classes within the country joined forces against the young republic of the workers and peasants in an all-out attempt to deprive the workers and peasants of the revolutionary gains and restore the capitalist system in Russia by force of arms.

The imperialists could not tolerate the existence of Soviet Russia. They stood to lose too much if Russia broke away from the capitalist system and, most of all, they were afraid that the victorious socialist revolution might spread to engulf their countries. So, the governments of Germany, Britain, France, the USA and Japan and other capitalist countries conspired to overthrow the Soviet state. The old world was up in arms ready to pounce upon the young Soviet republic. What kind of armed forces could the Soviet state muster and put in the field in order to counter the joint assault by the armies of internal counter-revolu-

tion and of the imperialist states? The old Russian army, battle-worn and demoralized by defeats in the First World War was incapable of fighting. It was disintegrating. Its officers and generals were, for the most part, openly hostile to the Soviet government. The armed workers' detachments—the Red Guard—were weak numerically, poorly equipped and lacked combat experience. The units of insurgent soldiers and sailors who sided with the new government could not constitute a tangible military force capable of standing up to the onslaught of the regular imperialist armies.

It was necessary to establish a fundamentally new military organization. But how? On what foundations was it to be built?

The Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets<sup>1</sup> adopted a Declaration which said:

"To ensure the sovereign power of the working people, and to eliminate all possibility of the restoration of the power of the exploiters, the arming of the working people, the creation of a socialist Red Army of workers and peasants and the complete disarming of the propertied classes are hereby decreed."

On January 28, 1918, Lenin, head of the first Soviet government, signed the Decree on the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army; on February 11, the Decree on the Workers' and Peasants' Red Navy was promulgated. It was to be a popular, regular, well-organized and trained army capable of defending Soviet power and successfully opposing the large armed forces of imperialist states.

For the first time in history a military organization was instituted, not to oppress the working people, but to uphold their interests, their freedom and independence. The predictions of Marx and Engels, the foun-

<sup>1</sup> Soviets are elected bodies of people's power. The All-Russia Congress of Soviets was the country's highest legislative body in the first years of Soviet government.

ders of scientific communism, that the victorious proletariat would create an essentially new military organization, an army of unprecedented might, and a new military science, were coming true.

Initially, the Red Army was formed of volunteers, and the commanders were elected by the men, not appointed by higher authority. The new army was joined only by politically conscious workers and peasants who realized the need to defend their socialist homeland. The army was small, and thus far had no stable, uniform organization.

The country's situation was going from bad to worse. On February 18, 1918, the German army of Wilhelm II resumed its offensive along the entire front. It gained considerable ground at crucial sectors in the Baltic area, Byelorussia and the Ukraine. Petrograd and other country's centres were directly threatened. On February 21, 1918, the Soviet government addressed the nation: "The Socialist Motherland Is in Danger!" Its appeal to the workers and peasants to rally to the defence of the young Soviet republic found a countrywide response. Thousands upon thousands of people volunteered for the Red Army. On February 23, "The Day of the Defence of the Socialist Motherland," thousands took part in building fortifications in response to an appeal by the government. Armed detachments were being raised and immediately sent to the front to fight the invaders. February 23 is celebrated in the USSR as a national holiday—Soviet Army Day.

In March, 1918, British troops landed in the area of Murmansk, in the north. They were soon followed by French, US and Canadian contingents. A British-American force occupied the city of Archangel. In April the Japanese made a landing in Vladivostok. In August, British forces invaded the south of Russia—Transcaucasia and Turkestan. Somewhat later the

Anglo-French interventionists seized the city of Odessa.

Also at that time the German troops flagrantly violated the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty concluded in March, 1918 and overran the Ukraine, Byelorussia, the Baltic area and the Crimea, and seized Rostov-on-Don. Jointly with the Turkish forces they invaded Transcaucasia. Under the protection of interventionist bayonets internal counter-revolution intensified its activities; White Guard<sup>1</sup> units were being raised in many parts of the country.

So, in the spring of 1918, foreign military intervention posed the main threat to the Land of Soviets. It was then that the Civil War took most acute forms. But for the aid of the foreign invaders and their direct participation in the combat actions against the Soviet republic, internal counter-revolution would not have held out for long.

Towards the summer of 1918 three-quarters of the country's territory was occupied by the foreign invaders and the White Guard forces. The Soviet republic found itself surrounded by a ring of fire, cut off from the areas which had formerly supplied it with grain, fuel and raw materials. The combined length of the frontlines was almost 12,000 kilometres. The foreign invaders and the White Guards under their protection greatly outnumbered and outgunned the Soviet forces. They were better organized and supplied, and battle-tested.

In 1918, 150,000 interventionists were occupying Siberia and the Far East of Russia. Almost 130,000 troops of the Entente had invaded the south of the Ukraine and Transcaucasia. In the Northern regions the White Guard forces were supported by 31,000 foreign troops.

Enemies of the Soviet republic and the capitalist

<sup>1</sup> Russia's capitalist-landlordist counter-revolutionary forces.

press prophesied the doom of the Soviets. But days, weeks and months went by, and the Soviet republic continued to fight, mustering fresh forces to repel its enemies.

By the summer of 1918 the Red Army was nearly 500,000 strong. The Communist Party and the Soviet government did their utmost to strengthen the army and supply it with weapons and ammunition in conditions of a total blockade.

The people could now see that the rule of foreign invaders and White Guard spelled misery and ruin for them. Their resolve to defend the socialist Motherland was growing stronger and stronger. Military command agencies—the military commissariats—were set up across the country to supervise universal military training.

This enabled the government, already in May, 1918, to replace the volunteer army with the one built on the principle of universal military duty. Only working people were trusted with weapons. People that had formerly lived off the labour of others were charged with other duties—supply, engineering, etc.

The new principle of building up the army sharply increased its numerical strength. The training of command personnel from among the workers and peasants, in newly-established military schools, was begun. The experience of military experts and commanders of the old, tsarist, army was extensively utilized.

Explaining the need for enlisting the services of old-time military experts Lenin said: "...we had to select a corps of commanders from among the former officers, so that the workers and peasants might learn from them..." Officers of the old army were being drawn into the new army: some of them volunteered for service, others were mobilized. Through commissars and commanders, members of the Communist Party,

the Soviet government established close control over them.

Correctness of this policy was borne out by life itself. By August, 1920, towards the end of the Civil War, the Red Army had in its ranks: 48,400 officers (35 per cent of its command personnel), 10,300 logistical personnel and almost 14,000 medical officers, all of whom had served in the old army.

The Red Army, enjoying wide popular support, gathered strength. Tempered in battle, it was gaining experience, and its soldiers displayed mass heroism. In the autumn of 1918 the Soviet forces stopped the enemy on the Eastern front, the main theatre at the time, and passed over to counter-offensive.

The victories on the Eastern front gave the working people new energy and inspired them with fresh revolutionary enthusiasm. They were confident now of the strength of their army and of the ultimate victory of socialism.<sup>1</sup> More and more people were drawn to the side of the Revolution, especially the peasants. The policy of close alliance between the working class and the middle peasants, in which the working class relied mainly on the poor peasants and played the leading role, was decisive in mobilizing the republic's forces and strengthening Soviet power.

Political education work was all-important. It was carried on by the political education bodies and commissars, relying on army Communists. They also fostered discipline, and by personal example inspired the soldiers to feats of valour.

The Communists earned the reputation of being the most dedicated fighters for the Revolution. In December, 1918, the Serdobsky regiment distinguished

<sup>1</sup> A social system, which replaces capitalism, and which is characterized by public ownership of the means of production, by abolition of the exploitation of labour, and by planned production.

itself in action on the Southern front. For several days it had been beating off the attacks of the White Guard troops, though outnumbered five to one. The wire sent to Lenin by the front Command said: "The commanders and commissars are unanimous that the valorous actions of the Serdobsky regiment were made possible largely due to the staunchness, courage and fortitude of the Communists."

The oath of allegiance to the socialist Motherland, which men joining the Red Army took, said:

"A son of the working people, a citizen of the Soviet republic, I am assuming the title of soldier of the workers' and peasants' army.

"Before the working classes of Russia and the whole world, I pledge to bear this title with honour. . .

"I pledge, whenever called upon by the workers' and peasants' government, to rise to the defence of the Soviet republic, to defend it against any perils and against all encroachments by its enemies, and to spare neither my energies nor life itself in defending the Russian Soviet Republic, the cause of socialism and fraternity of the peoples. . ."

And the soldiers of the revolution were true to this solemn oath no matter what the cost. Thousands of heroes were born in the flames of the Civil War battles. Many of them became famous military leaders, able and efficient commanders; Mikhail Frunze, Klim Voroshilov, Semyon Budenny, Vasily Chapayev, Grigory Kotovsky, Vasily Blyukher, Nikolai Shchors, Oleko Dundic are the names forever cherished by the Soviet people.

The flames of the Civil War raged for three years. The waves of interventionist and White Guard troops rolled over the Soviet country from all sides. It was only towards the end of 1922 that peace finally came to Soviet land.

The young armed forces, supported by the entire

working people, emerged victorious against heavy odds. Displaying unexampled heroism they routed the joint counter-revolutionary forces and expelled them from Soviet territory. The invasion was a complete fiasco. Socialism had won its first crucial battle against world imperialism.

What enabled the Red Army to defeat the joint forces of the interventionists and the White Guard? What were the sources of its victory which still arouses the admiration of its friends and causes bewilderment of its enemies?

The victory was primarily due to the strength of the new social and state system brought about by the Great October Socialist Revolution. Soviet power liberated the boundless energies of the people. They knew that they were waging a just struggle, and this awareness multiplied their strength and engendered mass heroism at the front.

Victory was achieved because the Communist Party and Lenin, its leader, directed the efforts of the armed forces, and worked out the best ways of achieving military objectives. The Party sent its best sons to the front. Over 300,000 Party members, half the entire membership, fought in army ranks which comprised five million combatants in 1920.

Victory was also due to the Leninist nationalities policy which served to unite into a single family the peoples of a multinational country. The sons of all the nationalities of the Soviet Land were fighting the enemy shoulder to shoulder with their Russian brothers.

Our army is an army of the people, a multinational army, for it is inseparably linked with the people. This unity of the army and the people which is constantly being strengthened is another inexhaustible source of the might and invincibility of the Armed Forces. Unity of the army and the people is manifest above all in the fact that the servicemen and the civi-

lians share common interests and are imbued with common aspirations: they seek to assure the safety of the Soviet state, and to secure peace on earth.

Victory in the Civil War was due to the alliance between the working class and the peasantry, the unity of the army and the people, and their ideological conviction.

The power of the international solidarity of the working people of the whole world was much in evidence during the Civil War and intervention. Their struggle against the capitalist class of their own countries under the slogan "Hands Off Soviet Russia" frustrated the schemes to expand the intervention and send more troops and weapons against Soviet Russia. Besides, revolutionary-minded men—Bulgarians and Poles, Serbians and Croats, Czechs and Slovaks, Hungarians and Romanians, Koreans, Mongols and Chinese, Austrians, Germans and members of other nationalities—fought in the ranks of the Red Army in those grim days. "There is every justification for stating," Leonid Brezhnev has said, "that the victory of the October Revolution was also the triumph of the internationalist fraternity of working people, a triumph of proletarian internationalism."

In the course of the war, Soviet military art was developed, and excellent commanders completely devoted to the Revolution were raised from among the people. They routed both the foreign and White Guard generals.

The military traditions of the Red Army and Navy originated in the flames of the Civil War. They included unbounded patriotism, proletarian internationalism, mass heroism, discipline of a high order, and comradeship-in-arms. These traditions were cherished and carried on.

After the Civil War and intervention the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union were built in accordance



with the Leninist principles evolved in the incipient years of the Soviet state. The more important of these principles are: supervision of the Armed Forces by the Communist Party; the building of the Army and Navy based on class positions; the oneness of the army and the people; proletarian internationalism; centralized control over the Armed Forces; no overlap of authority; conscious discipline of a high order; constant readiness to repulse aggression.

The impressive victory in the Civil War, the total rout of foreign invaders and the forces of internal counter-revolution, showed the world the strength of the young Red Army, an army of a new type, fundamentally different from the old capitalist armies. The Red Army was a people's army as regards its composition, purpose and place in the political structure of society. It serves the working people, protects their interests and mirrors the character of the socialist social and state system.

## **ON GUARD OVER PEACEFUL LABOUR**

After their victory in the Civil War, the Soviet people, guided by the Communist Party, tackled the main task, the building of a socialist society. It was necessary to overcome the country's economic, technological and cultural backwardness, and above all rehabilitate the economy which had been ruined by the First World War and the Civil War. The situation was made even worse by the fact that the Soviet people had to build their new society being constantly ready for war. Lenin warned that to overestimate the durability of peaceful relations with capitalist countries would be a grave error.

This is precisely why, while implementing plans for the country's industrialization, establishing the collec-

tive-farm system and carrying out reforms in the cultural field, the Soviet government gave its unremitting attention to the strengthening of the Armed Forces. A scientifically-substantiated programme of military development in peace-time was elaborated with due account taken of the international situation, the possible character of a future war, and the state and prospects of the country's economic development.

By the end of 1924, the strength of the army had been reduced from 5.5 million to 562,000 officers and men. This process of reduction was accompanied with measures to heighten the combat preparedness of the Army and Navy. Special emphasis was laid on the development of specialized technical forces including armoured, artillery, aviation and engineer troops. New tables of organization and equipment were introduced, and new combat equipment began to enter service. New warships were being brought into service on the Black, Caspian, Baltic and White Seas. The Air Force was growing numerically and qualitatively.

In the course of the military reform started in 1924-25 the control agencies of the Armed Forces were modernized. The regular army system was supplemented by a system of territorial reservist units. This mixed system was not without its drawbacks but also had an essential advantage: it enabled the country to maintain a small regular army in peace-time, cutting the war budget to a minimum. Besides, the reservists received military training at regular intervals without leaving their jobs in the national economy for long.

Regular units and formations were stationed in the border military areas; technical troops and the Navy were also built on a cadre principle. Territorial troops were stationed in the military areas situated deeper in the country. As a rule, they comprised infantry and cavalry units consisting of cadre personnel (16 to 20 per cent of the total strength) and enlisted personnel con-

sisting of local residents. The latter were drafted annually for a period of one to three months in the span of five years, whereupon they were assigned to the reserve.

The Red Army and Navy were progressing together with the entire country. Industrial development was given a considerable boost in the first five-year period (1928-32), when many key industries unknown in tsarist Russia—tractor and aircraft manufacture, for instance—appeared in the country for the first time.

As a result, the Army and Navy were provided with fighting equipment conforming to the requirements of the day. Armoured, air force and specialized engineer units were built practically from scratch. The Navy was gaining strength; modern ships were launched, coastal batteries were installed and naval aviation was developed.

In the course of socialist reforms in the USSR profound changes took place in the moral makeup of the Soviet servicemen, in the social composition of army and naval personnel. These changes, this progress, enhanced the fighting efficiency of the Armed Forces.

And yet, the Soviet people could not rest content. The capitalist powers were militarily and economically superior to the USSR. World reaction persisted in its conspiracy against the Soviet Union. The forces that had failed to strangle the October Revolution in 1918-20 were still hell-bent upon destroying the Soviet state by force of arms.

The enemies of socialism intent on frustrating the building of the new society and undermining the growing prestige of the USSR staged repeated provocations against the Soviet Union and triggered military conflicts to test the strength of the Red Army. This was, figuratively speaking, a reconnaissance in force.

In the summer of 1929, Chinese militarists aided and abetted by the Western powers, seized in Man-

churia the railway which belonged to the USSR. The attempts of the Soviet government to settle the conflict peacefully were unsuccessful. Moreover, the Chinese militarists increased their provocations and invaded Soviet territory. The Soviet Union's Special Far Eastern Army and the Amur Flotilla delivered a crippling blow to the aggressors and routed them.

In July and August, 1938, the Japanese imperialists attempted to seize part of the Soviet territory in the vicinity of Lake Khasan but were rebuffed. A year later Japanese troops invaded the fraternal Mongolian People's Republic in the area of Khalkhin Gol (Khal-kha River) as part of a far-reaching plan. The Japanese imperialists intended to cut through to the Soviet border, isolate the Soviet Far East from the country's central regions and occupy it. Together with the Mongolian forces our army defeated the invaders.

The menace of imperialist aggression became very real with the advent of Nazism in Germany. Imperialist powers regarded Nazi Germany as the shock force of anti-communism, they helped rearm it, and went all out to channel Nazi aggression against the USSR. Figuratively speaking, Nazism was a hound which world imperialism intended to set upon the Soviet Union.

In 1938, the heads of government of Britain, France, Italy and Germany concluded the notorious Munich deal under which Czechoslovakia was dismembered and fell prey to the Nazis. True to its allied commitments the Soviet Union offered direct military aid to Czechoslovakia for repelling the aggressor but the country's bourgeois government rejected the offer.

In July, 1939, during the fighting at Khalkhin Gol, an agreement was signed in Tokyo whereby Britain recognized the Japanese territorial seizures in China and undertook not to interfere with Japanese aggres-

sion there. That was indeed a Far Eastern Munich. This time China was sacrificed to the aggressor.

The Soviet Union was the only country which helped China then. After the Japanese forces invaded China the Soviet Union offered that country a credit against which China was supplied with arms sufficient to equip more than twenty divisions. Besides, between October, 1937, and the middle of February, 1939, China received 885 warplanes, 82 tanks, 700 army trucks and much other equipment. By 1940, the Chinese government had used up 173,200,000 US dollars worth of Soviet credits.

The political situation in China was complicated in the extreme. But the Soviet Union was helping China in the belief that aid rendered to the Chinese government was, in the final count, aid to the Chinese people, fighting for independence.

Our volunteer pilots and advisers did much to assist the Chinese people. In February, 1939, 3,665 military experts were in China; more than 400 air force pilots and mechanics came to China in the summer of 1939.

The Soviet victories at Lake Khasan and Khalkhin Gol also greatly helped the Chinese people, for they frustrated the plans of the Japanese military who had to halt their offensive in Northern and Central China.

True to its internationalist duty and class solidarity with all working people, our people rendered comprehensive aid to Republican Spain in its anti-fascist struggle (1936-39). The USSR condemned aggression committed by Italy against Abyssinia and initiated energetic diplomatic measures with a view to organizing a collective rebuff to aggression.

The policy of appeasement pursued by the imperialist powers whetted the annexationist appetites of German Nazism in Europe and of Japanese militarism in the Far East. In consequence, the world was drawn,

in September, 1939, into the Second World War set off chiefly by Nazi Germany.

Although the war began in a way that did not suit the governments of a number of imperialist powers (contrary to their expectations, Hitler first decided to establish his "new order" in Europe) it was evident that the terrible menace of Nazi aggression was overhanging the Soviet Union.

In the obtaining situation the Soviet government did its utmost on the diplomatic front to avert war or, failing that, to stave it off. At the same time, important measures were being taken to augment the defence capability of the USSR and prepare its Armed Forces for repulsing aggression.

The development of the Soviet munitions industries in the thirties laid the groundwork for the technical re-equipment of the Army and the Navy with due allowance for the character of the combat actions of the Second World War. It was then that Soviet aircraft designers completed the development of the "Yak-1", "MIG-3" and "LAGG-3" fighters, the "Il-2" attack plane, and the "Pe-2" bomber. They went into production in early 1941. But the Soviet Union did not have the time to completely re-equip its air force before the outbreak of the war. In the same way the latest tanks, the "KV" heavy tank and the "T-34" medium tank, began to be mass-produced only during the war. The new types of artillery, ammunition, mortars, submarine-guns, the rocket launcher known as "Katyusha" and other equipment developed before the war were also mass-produced after the outbreak of the war.

Other measures to strengthen the Army and Navy were undertaken in the prewar years to bring the country's military organization into line with defence requirements, to counter possible aggression. Much attention was given to personnel training in simulated battle conditions, organization of cooperation, tactical

training and firing practice, as well as to the training of non-commissioned officers and junior commanders. At that time field exercises were conducted more often than formerly. New manuals and regulations were developed and issued. In February, 1941, the government endorsed a mobilization plan for the eventuality of war. In the spring of 1941, the People's Commissariat<sup>1</sup> for Defence drew up a new plan for the defence of the state border.

The mixed (territorial and cadre) system of personnel organization was abolished and an overall cadre system was introduced. This was an important undertaking which strengthened the organization of the Soviet Armed Forces. In September, 1939, a new law on universal military service was passed. It abolished all social or class distinctions in regard to drafting for active military service. The terms of active military service for privates and sergeants of the ground forces and the Air Force were increased, and the age limit for reservists was extended.

The autumn of 1939 saw the activation of new units in all arms and services and improvement of their structure. Many new infantry and air force divisions and artillery and engineer units were raised.

By June, 1941, the total strength of the Soviet Armed Forces was several times greater than in 1939. But by the outbreak of the war many new units had not been fully equipped and, in particular, they did not have the latest weapons and equipment. A quarter of the total number of land divisions were still in the process of formation.

All military development was based on Soviet military science. It stressed the growing role of the human factor in the war and the need for sustained effort to keep up the morale of the army and the people.

<sup>1</sup> People's Commissariats are now called ministries.

Of primary importance in this regard was the enhancement of the leading and organizing role of the Communist Party in all spheres of state and public life including the Armed Forces. In 1937, military councils were set up in all military areas. Each consisted of a commander and two members. At the same time the collective form of leadership began to be introduced in all units and formations. The institution of military commissars was created. Together with the commanders, the commissars were responsible for the combat training and morale of the troops.

On Central Committee decision thousands of Communists were called up to conduct political education and ideological work in the army. Party organizations in the Army and Navy were fast growing numerically. Party-political work greatly enhanced the combat efficiency of the troops, built up their morale and prepared them for the defence of their Motherland.

Notwithstanding all these measures, some of the problems associated with the defence of the country had not been solved for lack of time. The war broke out before it was expected. However, the undertakings carried out in the prewar years helped our people to quickly reduce to naught the temporary advantages of the Nazi aggressor and ultimately win the war.

## THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

On June 22, 1941, Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union in violation of a non-aggression pact. One hundred and ninety fully mobilized divisions supported by nearly 3,000 tanks, 4,950 planes and over 47,000 guns and mortars were hurled, without declaration of war, against a country engaged in peaceful labour.

The border troops were the first to stand up to the blows of the Nazi aggressor. Their staying power and

courage were truly unprecedented. Everywhere they fought to the last man. The 13th frontier post under Lieutenant Lopatin engaged an enemy force which vastly outnumbered the defenders and was far better armed. For eleven days the Soviet servicemen fought in complete encirclement to the last man. In commemoration of their heroic exploit the frontier post was named after Lopatin.

On the sea borders, the sailors of the Black Sea Fleet stationed in Sevastopol were the first to repulse the enemy air raids. The Nazis failed to knock out the naval base in a surprise attack. In the Baltic area, the invader's attempt to overrun the industrial centre and port of Liepaja was frustrated. For almost ten days its defenders kept beating back the onslaught of superior enemy forces.

Airmen, infantrymen, artillerymen and tankmen—all fought heroically at their posts. But the Nazi forces had an overwhelming superiority both in manpower and equipment. This enabled them to rapidly overrun the advance units of our army at a number of sectors by piercing the line of defence by panzer and motorized formations. Since the defence lines were no longer continuous, the Nazi armoured and motorized formations were able to outflank the centres of resistance and strike at their exposed flanks and rear echelons. As a result, quite often Red Army units were compelled to fight in encirclement or retreat eastwards.

The aggressor paid a high price for its initial success. Even according to their own undoubtedly understated reports, by mid-July the Nazis had already lost half of their tanks, over 1,200 aircraft and almost 100,000 officers and men. These statistics tell the story of unparalleled courage shown by our soldiers fighting against heavy odds. Every stronghold, every village were defended with great tenacity.

The immortal exploit of the garrison of the Brest

fortress is a striking example of this tenacity and heroism. The small garrison of this fortress on the Bug River staunchly defended a tiny patch of Soviet soil for a solid month deep in the enemy rear, a patch now held sacred by the Soviet people. In memory of this exploit the ruins of the fortress have been turned into a memorial museum.

The First Moscow motorized infantry division defending a section of the Minsk-Moscow highway in the vicinity of the town of Borisov delivered a well-calculated counterblow which delayed the enemy drive for two days. Its commander, Colonel Kreizer, was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union for his outstanding leadership. He was one of the first commanders to merit this title. The 100th division under General Russiyanov stood fast along the defence line running parallel to the River Berezina. The defenders caused the enemy heavy casualties and destroyed up to 150 tanks. Later the division distinguished itself in the battles of Smolensk and Yelnya. It was named the First Division of the Guards for its fortitude and courage, in the autumn of 1941.

The Nazi hordes continued their thrust onward unaware that they were heading for their doom.

What were the factors behind the reverses suffered by the Soviet Armed Forces at the outset of the war?

Some of them have already been mentioned. In addition Germany had seized the economic and military resources of nearly the whole of Western Europe and thereby gained temporary superiority over the USSR. In June, 1941, the Nazi army exceeded the forces of our border military areas and fleets as follows: in personnel by 90 per cent, in heavy and medium tanks by 50 per cent, in new warplanes by 130 per cent, in guns and mortars by 20 per cent. Its units and formations

had already been battle-seasoned and thoroughly prepared for wars of aggression.

Errors of calculation concerning the time of the attack on the Soviet Union and the consequent inadequate preparations for countering the initial enemy blows were also responsible. Joseph Stalin, the leader of the country, hoped right up to the last moment that war could be staved off by political and diplomatic measures.

The retreat of our forces from the border areas interfered with the planned mobilization of the material resources and manpower for war. It became necessary to evacuate many people and large amounts of goods and production facilities to the country's eastern regions. This inevitably impaired its military and economic capability.

Any other state would have been doomed in such conditions. That was precisely what the Nazi strategists counted on basing their expectations on the war experience in Western Europe. Many prophets of the capitalist world also predicted an early downfall of the Soviet Union. On June 27, 1941, *The New York Post* expressed the opinion that only a miracle, like the miracles of the Bible, could save the "Reds" from the debacle which was imminent.

A miracle did come but not from heaven! The Soviet people guided by the Leninist Communist Party did not flinch in the face of the mortal danger; the initial military reverses did not, and could not, daunt them. On the very first day of the war the Party and the government addressed a patriotic appeal to the people. The Party exposed the criminal objectives of the Nazi aggressor; it did not conceal the extent of the menace threatening the country; it pointed out the just character of the struggle against the enemy.

Filled with indignation and wrath, the people were determined to smash the Nazi invaders. And once

again, just as in the grim year 1918, Lenin's ideas about what must be done to protect the socialist Motherland seized the minds and hearts of the millions of Soviet people and soldiers. The front and the rear rallied into a single force, and once again the whole country became one military camp.

Rallying the people to war the Communist Party did not conceal the immense difficulties that lay ahead before such a strong and unscrupulous enemy could be defeated. Great importance was attached to the development of the guerrilla movement in territory occupied by the Nazis.

The people and its armed forces unanimously supported the action programme advanced by the Party and the government. More and more people volunteered for the front; thousands of people from all walks of life, and of all nationalities, old and young alike, joined the people's volunteer force. Factories, offices, collective farms and state farms formed detachments to fight enemy spies, saboteurs and paratroopers. The workers sent to the front were replaced by women, old people and teenagers. Partisan detachments were active behind the enemy lines.

Nazi Germany which had sown the wind on Soviet soil was to reap the whirlwind.

It should be noted that the entry of the Soviet Union into the Second World War became an important factor for its development into an anti-Nazi, just war of liberation on the part of the states opposing the Axis. Progressively-minded people the world over realized that in the great country of socialism the immense forces of its revolutionary people were being impelled into the battle; the Soviet people were defending their own life, freedom and independence and those of all nations that had fallen victim to the Nazis. Millions of people enslaved by Nazism in Czechoslovakia,

Poland, France and other countries were now inspired with the hope of eventual liberation.

The tremendous organizational and educational efforts of the Communist Party were increasingly affecting the situation on the fronts. More units were sent to the front. The industry was increasing the output of military equipment and materials.

The fighting at the central sector of the Soviet-German front was exceedingly stubborn in the summer of 1941. The bulk of the Nazi forces were concentrated there for a drive on Moscow. By mid-July the German forces had managed to pierce the front and reach the environs of Smolensk. The Soviet Command was taking most energetic measures to remedy the situation and block the approaches to Moscow. The Soviet forces engaged in the fighting were well aware that the enemy must be stopped at all costs. The Soviet Guard, picked units of the Soviet Army, came into being in the flames of the battle of Smolensk. And it was here too that the "Katyusha" rocket launchers, a weapon without a parallel in military history, was first tested in battle.

Our forces upset the plans of the Nazi army. The striking groupings of the Wehrmacht were exhausted, and on July 30 the German Command ordered its troops to pass over to the defensive. For the first time in the Second World War the German Army was forced onto the defensive at a crucial sector. Hitler's Blitzkrieg strategy had suffered its first serious setback. The Nazi strategists planned to win the war within two months at the latest. The battles fought in the summer of 1941 demonstrated the adventurist character of the Nazi strategy. The Soviet Union gained an opportunity for building up and moving to the battle area the reserves which were to play an essential role in the subsequent events. Delaying the enemy offensive in the decisive sector was the first strategic success of our

forces. The Nazi plans in other sectors were not fully carried out either.

The unexampled struggle of besieged Leningrad against the enemy lasted for 900 days and nights. The forces of the Leningrad and the Volkhov fronts and the sailors of the Baltic Fleet, selflessly assisted by the city's population and the entire people, halted the Nazi hordes through heroic effort. Neither the ferocious attacks of the enemy land forces, nor the air-raids, nor the barbarous artillery bombardment, nor the severe famine and cold could break the spirit of the defenders of Leningrad.

The spirited defence of Kiev, the capital of the Ukraine, also foiled the German plans. The city became a major battle area in the south of the country. Here, in the middle reaches of the Dnieper, our forces formed a centre of resistance. They successfully defended the city for more than two months and thereby delayed the seizure of some critical areas, and facilitated the evacuation of thousands of people, of industrial enterprises and art treasures eastwards. Large forces of the aggressor were pinned down in the region, and this served to consolidate the position of the Soviet troops in the main, central sector.

Bitter fighting developed around the port of Odessa on the Black Sea. The Nazi Command hurled 18 divisions against the city. A state of siege was proclaimed on August 8, and for over two months Odessa held out against the enemy. A change in the overall strategic situation, the Nazi thrust for the Crimea which was now directly threatened, compelled the Soviet Command to order the evacuation of Odessa and the transfer of its garrison to the Crimea.

Sevastopol became a symbol of great fortitude. This port on the Black Sea, the main naval base of the Black Sea Fleet, held out for 250 days. Almost all the Communists of Sevastopol had joined the army, navy and

partisan detachments. People's volunteer units were formed to aid the defenders. Cut off on land from the rest of the country the people of Sevastopol built two underground factories for the manufacture of arms, ammunition and combat equipment. Continuously bombed and shelled, the city continued to work. Heroic deeds were daily events. The defenders beat off all the enemy attacks and held down large enemy forces at the approaches to the city.

The historic battle of Moscow was the decisive event in the first year of the war.

In their drive on Moscow the Nazis concentrated immense forces—over 40 per cent of their total strength on the Soviet-German front, 75 per cent of their armour, almost half of their artillery and machine-guns, and nearly a third of their air force. The plan of their offensive on Moscow they code-named Operation Typhoon to emphasize the sweeping power of their intended onslaught. Hitler boasted: "A vast sea will be created to inundate Moscow, and it will forever conceal the capital of the Russian people from the civilized world."

On September 30, the Nazi army launched its offensive. Its panzer wedges pierced the front and isolated part of the large forces in the area of Bryansk and west of Vyazma. An extremely dangerous situation developed for our forces. They fought with iron determination and tenacity, but the odds were too overwhelming. Soon Nazi troops burst into Kalinin, seized the towns of Maloyaroslavets and Mozhaisk, and approached Tula on the south. Moscow was within grasp, it seemed.

On October 20, a state of siege was declared both in Moscow and its environs. General G. Zhukov, Commander of the Western front, was ordered to hold the forward defence lines situated 100 to 120 kilometres from Moscow; General P. Artemyev, Commander

of the Moscow garrison, took charge of the defence positions at the immediate approaches to the capital. Units from Siberia, the Far East and Central Asia were being transferred for the defence of Moscow. Inside the city itself 25 independent worker and communist battalions and companies were formed. These were later reorganized into four divisions. The Soviet capital fought the enemy both on the ground and in the skies. The air defence units of Moscow successfully beat off incessant Nazi air attacks. Of the numerous Nazi bombers sent against Moscow only a very small number managed to break through to the city.

The first onslaught of the enemy in October was foiled as a result of the all-out mobilization of forces for the defence of Moscow, the determined resistance of the troops and the fortitude of the population. The offensive was halted on the threshold of the Soviet capital. But the threat was not entirely eliminated. The enemy was still very strong, he still had the initiative. The Nazis still counted on victory and even issued complimentary tickets for a military parade they intended to hold in Moscow after its capture.

A parade indeed was held in Red Square on November 7. It was a parade of the Soviet troops sent to the front. That was an event of immense political importance. The world over the parade was regarded as an expression of the country's inflexible determination to defend its capital, and as a token of its strength and confidence in ultimate victory.

Having regrouped their forces, the Nazis launched their second all-out offensive on November 15-16, 1941. By simultaneous panzer thrusts from the north and the south they hoped to split our forces and clamp pincers around Moscow. The battle immediately assumed an unprecedentedly ferocious character, particularly at the north-western approaches to Moscow. The Soviet troops stood fast, courageously absorbed a tremendous armour



thrust and countered it. An anti-tank group commanded by Commissar V. Klochkov of the division under General Panfilov performed an immortal feat. For four hours 28 soldiers fought to the last man against dozens of Nazi tanks, turning back all of their attacks. At other sectors the troops fought with equal tenacity.

The Nazis pressed forward in an attempt to apply the pincers at the cost of staggering losses. At some sectors they were within 25-30 kilometres of the city. The Soviet capital would fall, they believed, if they made just one more effort. But the crisis in the battle of Moscow had already come. The striking power of the Nazi troops which encountered the stubborn resistance of the defenders of Moscow had been spent. The Soviet Army routed the best enemy divisions, knocked out the bulk of the armour and forced the Nazis to commit the reserves. The giant battle at the approaches to Moscow was won by the Soviet forces.

During the strenuous defence of Moscow the Supreme Command of the Red Army was steadily building up reserves for a counter-offensive. Trainloads of equipment and ammunition were arriving from hinterland. On the order of the Supreme Command offensive operations were then carried out in the area of Tikhvin in the north and Rostov in the south. These operations prevented the Germans from transferring reinforcements to the Moscow sector and raised the morale of our troops.

Towards the end of November, 1941, the balance of forces began to change in favour of the Soviet side. The Nazis still had more manpower and materiel, including tanks and artillery, but the Soviet Command managed to build up striking groupings for delivering counterblows.

On December 5-6, our forces launched a counter-offensive. The enemy was taken by surprise. Both of the enemy's striking forces were smashed and began to

retreat quickly, suffering heavy losses and abandoning equipment. In late December, 1941 and early January, 1942, the Soviet Army continued its advance and liberated more than 11,000 inhabited localities, including the towns of Kalinin and Kaluga; they put Tula out of danger, and generally rolled the enemy back to distances ranging from 100 to 250 kilometres from Moscow.

The battle of Moscow had a decisive influence on the entire course of the Great Patriotic War and the Second World War in general. The victory at Moscow meant that our people had managed to overcome the tragic consequences of the initial surprise attack by Germany and, despite the initial reverses, the war would ultimately be won by the Soviet Union. The victory demonstrated the failure of the Blitzkrieg strategy and exploded the myth of the invincibility of the Nazi army.

The Nazi debacle at Moscow marked a turning point in the war. But the Nazi leadership doggedly stuck to their plans of defeating the Soviet Union on the battlefield. They still hoped for a victorious conclusion of the war in the summer of 1942. The armed forces of Germany and her satellites were still very strong, and their munitions factories were increasing production. The Nazis contemplated, after defeating the Soviet Union, wars of aggression in other parts of the world.

The main effort was now spearheaded against Stalingrad and the Caucasus with the objective of destroying the Soviet armies there and depriving the country of critically important military-economic areas.

In the summer of 1942, the Soviet Union continued fighting Nazi Germany practically unaided. The other members of the anti-Hitler coalition, Great Britain and the United States, did not honour their commitment to open a second front against Germany in 1942. Taking

advantage of this circumstance the Nazi Command concentrated immense forces—226 divisions—on the Eastern front. Numerically, a Nazi division was twice as strong as a Soviet division. The Nazi striking force comprised 900,000 troops (more than 90 divisions), supported by 1,260 tanks, over 17,000 guns and mortars, and 1,640 planes.

The battle of Stalingrad, one of the most important battles in human history, began in July, 1942. It raged for more than half a year and ranged over an area of nearly 100,000 square kilometres. At times, up to two million combatants, 26,000 guns and mortars, over 2,000 tanks and 2,000 planes were involved in the fighting.

Stalingrad became a scene of fierce battles whose flames consumed more and more of the Wehrmacht's strength. The Nazi Command was compelled to send to the Stalingrad sectors almost all the replacements that arrived at the Eastern front—nearly 250,000 combatants every month. At great sacrifice the Germans managed to break through to the city which stretched along the right bank of the Volga for almost fifty kilometres. But that was all they managed to achieve. The 62nd army under General V. Chuikov and the 64th army under General M. Shumilov beat back the enemy attacks which followed one another. The 13th Guards division under General A. Rodimtsev had to beat back 12 to 15 attacks a day. The 308th Siberian division under Colonel L. Gurtyev stood up to 117 attacks in a single month.

The city was in flames, buildings collapsed all around, but the Soviet soldier did not give an inch. Countless deeds were performed every day. A house which was converted by a handful of guardsmen led by Sergeant Pavlov into an impregnable fortress is now a national memorial.

In the first, defensive stage of the battle of Stalin-



Lenin, reviewing a military parade in Moscow's Red Square in 1919.



The Soviet troops courageously defended their Homeland against Nazi invaders.



Dive bombers in attack.

Soviet infantry in attack, supported by armour.



People cheer Soviet soldiers, their liberators from Nazi bondage.



The monument to the Soviet soldier-liberator in Treptow park in Berlin, the capital of the GDR.



Listening to a war veteran.



Political education classes. Servicemen study Marxist-Leninist theory.

An interval between exercises.

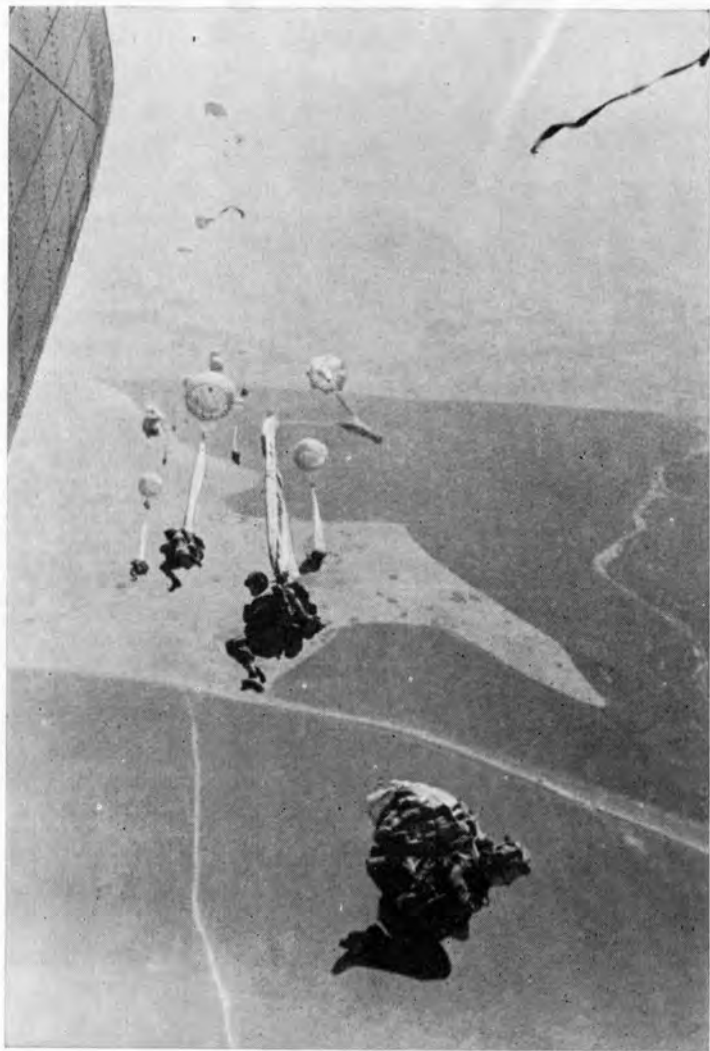


Field exercises.



Naval exercises.





An air-drop.

Fighters taking off.

Mission accomplished.





Farewell to the Flag before transfer to the reserve.



A friendly meeting of servicemen of the Warsaw Treaty member-states.



The people and the Army are one.

grad, which lasted from July to November, 1942, the Nazis lost a total of 700,000 men, more than 1,000 tanks, over 2,000 guns and mortars, and 1,400 planes.

The endurance and heroism of the defenders amazed the world. President Roosevelt wrote the following message to Stalin at the critical period of the battle on the Volga: "The fact that the Soviet Union is bearing the brunt of the fighting and losses during the year 1942 is well understood by the United States and I may state that we greatly admire the magnificent resistance which your country has exhibited."

While the Red Army forces within the city fought tough defensive battles engaging the bulk of the Nazi armies, the Soviet Command was secretly concentrating large reserves on the flanks of the Nazi grouping. On November 19, a new period began in the battle of Stalingrad: our troops under the famous Generals Vattutin, Rokossovsky and Yeremenko commenced an offensive operation.

Piercing the front and crushing enemy resistance the Red Army forces (somewhat superior numerically to the enemy) took five days to encircle the key Nazi grouping under Field-Marshal Paulus. All attempts to break the ring and relieve the encircled troops failed. Since they refused to surrender, the entire grouping—330,000 strong—was totally routed.

The operation came as a triumph of the military skill and a striking demonstration of the growing maturity of the Soviet Armed Forces. The offensive at Stalingrad had strategically important results. In the space of two and a half months the Red Army routed almost 50 enemy divisions of which 33 were completely wiped out. The enemy lost 800,000 officers and men between November, 1942, and February, 1943. General Siegfried Westphal writes in his memoirs: "The disaster at Stalingrad profoundly shocked the German people and armed forces alike: indeed, it may be said

to have horrified them. Never before in Germany's history had so large a body of troops come to so dreadful an end."

The Stalingrad victory was of immense importance both militarily and politically. Nazi Germany was badly shaken. Her satellites lost faith in her military superiority over the Soviet Union. The position of neutral countries was improved. The defeat of the best Nazi divisions enhanced the prestige of the Soviet Union in the international arena. The Soviet Union's victory gave a powerful impetus to the national-liberation movement of the nations enslaved by Nazism and Japanese militarism.

The victory at Stalingrad turned the tide of the Second World War.

Following the battle of Stalingrad the Red Army launched offensive operations along the entire Soviet-German front—from Leningrad to the Caucasian foothills. In the course of the winter offensive our forces advanced 600 to 700 kilometres westwards. In the spring of 1943, the troops of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts under Generals Govorov and Meretskov broke the blockade of the city of Leningrad. There began a mass expulsion of the invader from Soviet territory.

In the summer of 1943, Nazi Germany made a desperate attempt to regain the strategic initiative. There was still no second front. The Nazi Command transferred whole formations from the West to the Eastern front, concentrating over 230 divisions against the Soviet Union. It intended to take revenge for the defeat at Stalingrad, staging a comeback in the area of Kursk. Our forces there had advanced far ahead, and the frontline formed a bulge (the so-called Kursk Bulge). The Nazi strategists intended to eliminate this bulge by simultaneously converging armoured thrusts from the north and from the south.

The Nazi Command was thoroughly preparing this operation (code-named Citadel), in deep secrecy—so it believed. Fifty German divisions, 900,000 strong, supported by nearly 2,700 tanks and self-propelled guns, and up to 10,000 guns and mortars, and more than 2,000 planes were poised for attack. The Nazis pinned their hopes on their new "secret" weapons—the "Tiger" and "Panther" heavy tanks, the "Ferdinand" self-propelled guns and the "Focke-Wulf 190A" aircraft.

The Soviet Command found out about the planned operation, including the direction of the main efforts and even the time the operation was scheduled to begin, and elaborated its own strategic plan to counter the Nazi scheme. Well-organized and planned defensive action was to be followed by a decisive counter-offensive.

On July 5, 1943, the Nazi forces north and south of Kursk mounted an offensive. The blow was stupendous, for the German units were literally saturated with tanks. In some sectors they had up to 100 tanks per kilometre of the front. Savage battles developed. V. Rukosuyev, commander of the 3rd anti-tank brigade, sent the following report to his superiors on July 6: "The men do not have a moment's respite, . . . hitting enemy tanks point-blank. We have just beaten back an attack, and are awaiting yet another. But as long as we are alive, the enemy tanks will not pass in this sector." Nor did they. The brigade repelled 20 attacks within four days and destroyed 146 panzers.

The greatest tank engagement of the Second World War took place near the village of Prokhorovka, and involved 1,200 tanks and self-propelled guns. The Nazis lost 350 tanks and 10,000 officers and men in one day.

The Nazis failed to penetrate our defences; all they managed was to dent them in some sectors to a depth ranging from 9 to 35 kilometres. On July 12, the Red Army troops passed over to the offensive. The

German defence lines were overrun, and the enemy's counter-attacks and attempts to halt the offensive were frustrated. In the battle which lasted for 50 days, 30 Nazi divisions were wiped out and over 3,700 planes destroyed.

The battle of Kursk irreversibly turned the tide of war, the ground for which had been prepared at Moscow and Stalingrad. With the battle of Kursk the strategic initiative was finally wrested from the Nazis, and the offensive of the Soviet Army continued virtually until the capitulation of Nazi Germany.

The defeat in the summer of 1943 forced the Nazi Command to transfer to the Eastern front another 14 divisions and a large air force. This facilitated the landing of Anglo-American forces in Italy and ensured their success.

Besides, the battle of Kursk demonstrated to the world that the Soviet Union was capable of defeating Germany and her satellites unaided. In the summer of 1943, the Allies had to consider seriously the question of landing in the northern France, for as President Roosevelt observed "by next spring, the way things are going in Russia now, maybe a second front won't be necessary!"

In the course of the successive offensive operations in the summer and autumn of 1943, the Red Army liberated the Donbas area, the Ukraine east of the Dnieper, and the Smolensk region. On November 6 it liberated Kiev. On the south flank the Nazis lost their last footholds in the areas of Novorossiisk and Taman. The invaders were being driven out of Byelorussia. Millions of Soviet people were released from Nazi bondage.

In 1944, the Soviet Armed Forces increased the rates and scope of their offensive and delivered a series of devastating blows to the Nazis. The enemy sought to drag out the war by stubborn defence, cling-

ing desperately to his positions in the hope of a split in the anti-Nazi coalition which would enable Germany to make separate peace with the USA and Great Britain. But this hope failed to materialize.

In January and February, 1944, the Soviet land forces and air force units, in conjunction with the Baltic Fleet, delivered a shattering blow in the Leningrad and Novgorod areas. The blockade around Leningrad was finally broken, and the invaders were cleared from the whole of Leningrad region. On the south, our forces drove the enemy from the Ukraine west of the Dnieper, fought their way to the state border with Czechoslovakia and Romania. They also expelled the enemy from the Crimea and Odessa. In the summer and the autumn the Nazi forces were routed in a series of operations in Byelorussia and Moldavia, in the Baltic area and in the north. The war was rolling to the German border and even crossing it at some points.

In the summer of 1944, when our victories had already decided the outcome of the Second World War, when it had become obvious that the Soviet Union could alone defeat Germany and liberate occupied Europe, the Allies landed their forces in Normandy thereby opening the second front.

The Soviet-German front, however, remained the decisive theatre of operations even after that. The Nazis still kept the bulk of their forces in the East: 235 divisions, i.e. 70 per cent more than in the West.

Besides, it should be noted that by the time of the opening of the second front Germany had lost in the East, even according to understated reports issued by the Nazi Command, over 5.5 million officers and men, and tens of thousands of guns, tanks and planes. The Germans had transferred to the Eastern front over 200 divisions from the West. According to Bodo Zimmerman, former Chief Operations Officer to the Com-

mander-in-Chief of German Army Group D, "it would be no exaggeration to say that the Western Army was steadily drained of all its able-bodied manpower and of all its supplies for the Eastern front."

Thus, the second front which the Allies opened with a great lag in time could not influence the course of the Second World War as much as it could have done in 1942.

In 1944, having driven the invaders from Soviet territory, our army started liberating the European nations from Nazi domination. At the beginning of the war, Joseph Stalin, Head of the Soviet government, declared that in waging the war the Soviet Union pursued the objective of not only eliminating the menace threatening our country but also of helping all European nations suffering under the Nazi yoke.

The European nations were looking forward to the coming of the Red Army, and it came as a liberator, as an army of true internationalists. Therefore, members of other nations and peoples fought shoulder to shoulder with our soldiers.

In 1942-43, Polish and Czechoslovak patriot-anti-fascists raised national units and formations on Soviet territory. Later they grew into the First Polish Army and the Czechoslovak Corps.

In early October, 1943, the First Romanian Volunteer division named after Tudor Vladimirescu was formed on Soviet territory. A Yugoslav independent brigade was formed at the request of the Yugoslav citizens residing in the USSR. Later a tank brigade and two air force regiments were formed in the Soviet Union to join the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia, which was fighting hard against the Nazi invaders.

In April, 1943, an air squadron made up of French volunteers, named "Normandie", first went into action. In August, joined by more volunteer pilots, it was

made into an independent fighter regiment, later named the "Normandie-Niemen" regiment. Such military units raised with Soviet assistance had an overall strength of 550,000.

None of these units and formations were organic to the Soviet Armed Forces. In the course of combat actions they were under the operational control of the Soviet command but in routine matters were completely independent; the personnel wore national uniforms and insignias. At the request of the commanders of the foreign units the Soviet General Staff sent to them experienced Soviet officers as instructors. They helped our allies to master the use of the weapons and other combat equipment, and gave them the benefit of their experience.

In July, 1944, our forces together with the First Polish Army entered Poland and liberated it. The defeat of the Nazis by the Red Army in northern Romania helped the Romanian people to overthrow the fascist dictatorship. The Romanian Army turned its weapons against the Nazis. The entry of the Red Army into Bulgaria hastened a popular uprising against the fascist-monarchic dictatorship. On the directives of the newly-formed people's government of Bulgaria the Bulgarian Army opened hostilities against the Nazi forces. In October, 1944, the Soviet Army, assisted by the Czechoslovak Corps under General Svoboda, began a sweeping offensive in Czechoslovakia. On October 20, 1944, our units, together with the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia, liberated Belgrade.

The continued inexorable offensive of the Soviet Armed Forces led to the liberation of Hungary, Austria and northern Norway and prepared the ground for the liberation of Greece, Denmark and other European nations from the Nazi yoke. The liberating mission of the Red Army was merging with the liberation

struggle of the European nations against the Nazi invaders.

The year 1945 saw the war in Europe drawing to a close. The Nazi empire was falling apart under the blows of the Red Army and the Allied Forces. But even on the eve of its collapse Nazi Germany remained a strong and dangerous enemy. Its forces in the Berlin sector alone, just before April, 1945, were more than one million strong and had at their disposal over 10,000 guns and mortars, 1,500 tanks and assault guns, and 3,300 planes. The German Command still hoped to gain time for separate negotiations with the USA and Great Britain.

However, the Soviet Command planned the operation so as to deny the enemy a respite and to rout him within the shortest possible time. Large forces under Marshals Zhukov, Rokossovsky and Konev were concentrated for the drive on Berlin. The 1st and the 2nd Polish armies operated in close cooperation with them.

The offensive was commenced on April 16. It was preceded by an artillery bombardment by 40,000 guns and mortars. Then hundreds of thousands of soldiers went into the attack supported by 6,000 tanks. Everybody realized that it was the last and decisive battle. Neither the powerful defences on the Seelow Hills, the numerous field fortifications at the approaches to the city and within Berlin itself, nor an all-out mobilization could save the Nazis. The Soviet soldiers, battle-wise, equipped with first-class weapons, convinced of the righteousness of their cause, were swiftly advancing upon the den of the Nazi beast.

On April 24, 1945, a 200,000-strong Nazi grouping was sealed off south-west of Berlin. The next day the Berlin garrison was also encircled. The battle, unprecedented in military history, was drawing to a close.

While Berlin was being stormed, part of the Soviet forces was driving westwards to link up with the Al-

lies. The linkup took place on April 25, 1945, on the Elbe, in the vicinity of the town of Torgau. The Nazi forces fighting in Northern Germany were thus cut off from those operating in the south.

On the early morning of May 1, the Soviet Banner of Victory was raised over the Reichstag in the centre of Berlin. It was hoisted by the Sergeants Yegorov and Kantaria. On May 8, an act of unconditional surrender was signed in Karlshorst, near Berlin, by Field-Marshal Keitel, Admiral Friedeburg and General Stumpf in the presence of representatives of the Commands of the Allied Armies—Marshal G. K. Zhukov of the Soviet Union; Air Chief Marshal Arthur W. Tedder of Great Britain; Commander of the US Strategic Air Force General Carl Spaatz, and the Commander-in-Chief of the French Army Jean de Lattre de Tassigny.

However, for the Soviet Army the war in Europe continued for a time: a large Nazi force, one million strong, stationed in Czechoslovakia, refused to capitulate. On May 6, two Soviet tank armies were rushed to the rescue of the people's uprising in Prague across the Sudetes. On the morning of May 9, our tanks entered Prague. The Prague operation which ranged over a front of 750 kilometres and lasted six days brought liberation to the people of Czechoslovakia and saved Prague from destruction.

May 9, 1945, Victory Day, is a great holiday for the Soviet people and for progressive people all over the world. Nazism which had been nurtured by imperialist monopolies was defeated. The Soviet Armed Forces defended the freedom, honour and independence of their country and helped the nations of Europe to cast off the chains of fascist slavery. World civilization was saved from the brown plague. The main hotbed of the Second World War was liquidated.

But the flames of war were still raging in Asia

and on the Pacific. Fulfilling its commitments to the Allies (the Yalta conference held in February, 1945, resolved that the USSR would take part in the war against Japan two or three months after Germany's capitulation), the Soviet Union declared war on imperialist Japan on August 8, 1945, and the next day started hostilities against it.

In cooperation with the units of the Mongolian People's Republic, the Soviet Union's land forces and its Pacific Fleet delivered a crippling blow to the Kwangtung Army, the main striking force of Japanese militarism. They utterly defeated it and liberated North-Eastern China, North Korea, South Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands. This precipitated the defeat of militarist Japan, which signed an act of unconditional surrender on September 2.

The Soviet victory in the Far East blasted the Japanese militarists' scheme to drag out the war for another two or three years. This fact was acknowledged not only by historians but also by military leaders of Japan, the USA and Great Britain. In an interview to *The New York Times* (August 15, 1945) Major General Chennault, US Air Commander in China, said: "Russia's entry into the Japanese war was the decisive factor in speeding its end and would have been so even if no atomic bombs had been dropped." He added that the Russians' "swift stroke completed the circle around Japan that brought the nation to its knees".

Our successes in the war against Japan created favourable conditions for the operations of the People's Army of China. On August 11, its Commander-in-Chief General Chu Teh signed an order whereby the 8th People's Revolutionary Army was to launch a counter-offensive. However, our advance was so swift that the Japanese were defeated before that army could move into action. Moreover, the Red Army relieved

some units of the Chinese Army which had been encircled by the Japanese forces in the area of Pingchuan (Manchuria). The commander of those units General Chao Wen-chin sent a message to the commander of the 17th Soviet Army which said in part: "We were in an exceedingly difficult situation. We were up against a greatly superior enemy force which had encircled us and cut off all withdrawal routes... On the eve of August 9, we were thinking of a way out of this predicament. The entry of the Soviet Army into Manchuria on August 9 drastically changed the correlation of forces... The Soviet Army saved us from destruction and we are very grateful to it."

Towards the end of August, 1945, the entire territory of North-Eastern China, with an area of 1.3 million square kilometres and a population exceeding 40 million, had been completely liberated from the Japanese invaders. The residents of the Chinese towns and villages expressed deep gratitude to the Soviet soldiers for the liberation and for the aid they rendered to the local population in bringing the situation back to normal. In particular, the Soviet Command saw that the normal functioning of the most of the Chinese elementary and secondary schools was restored. Measures were taken to resume long-overdue payment for work to the workers and employees of the factories and organizations of Mukden, Harbin, Changchun and many other cities. Funds were provided for the issuance of lump-sums to 70,000 unemployed workers in the city of Dairen.

The presence of our troops in North-Eastern China created favourable conditions for democratization of social life in the country, the strengthening of the People's Liberation Army of China and the completion of the Chinese people's revolution.

In August, 1945, the Soviet Army gave fraternal help to the Korean people who had been under the

sway of Japanese imperialism for almost forty years.

Addressing a rally attended by 100,000 people on October 14, 1945, in Pyongyang to celebrate the country's liberation and the emergence of a new, democratic Korea in the northern part of the country, Kim Il Sung, the founder and General Secretary of the Worker's Party of Korea, the organizer of the guerrilla struggle of the Korean people, said: "In the darkest years of Japanese rule we looked to the country of socialism with hope and our hopes have come true. In August, 1945, the mighty Soviet Army routed the Kwangtung army of the Japanese and liberated Korea. We shall forever be grateful to the Soviet Union—our liberator."

The powerful blows of the Red Army forces in North-Eastern China were in effect a signal for resolute action by the Vietnamese patriots led by the Communist Party of Indochina. The decision to begin an all-out uprising against the invaders was adopted on August 13. On August 19, the people took power in Hanoi, on August 23—in Hue, and on August 25—in Saigon. Within 11 days the uprising had won in all the provinces of Vietnam.

The rout of the Japanese armies greatly stimulated the development of the revolutionary-liberation movements in Indonesia, Malaya, Burma, Cambodia and Laos.

The Great Patriotic War was a severe trial for the Soviet Union. It took an enormous toll of human life and wrought immense destruction. Over 20 million Soviet people were killed in action, perished under the ruins of bombed-out cities, towns and villages, or were executed by the Nazis, or tortured to death in Nazi concentration camps. The US and Britain's losses were 400,000 and 370,000 respectively. The Nazis reduced to rubble more than 70,000 Soviet cities, towns and villages, and the country lost nearly 30 per cent of

its national wealth. And yet, the Soviet Union held out and emerged victorious, and exerted the decisive influence on the entire course and outcome of the Second World War.

The Soviet victory in the Great Patriotic War spelled the complete failure of the second military onslaught prepared by world imperialism and carried out by Nazi Germany. The Soviet victory was inevitable, for it was determined by the entire progress of human society, by the objective possibilities of socialism.

The victory of the USSR was a triumph of its state and social system, of the socialist economy, and of the Marxist-Leninist ideology. This victory convincingly demonstrated the great moral and political strength and ideological unity of Soviet society. The rout of the most powerful military machine in the capitalist world demonstrated the superiority of the Soviet Armed Forces, of their organization and armaments, the Soviet system of command personnel training, and Soviet military science and generalship.

The victory of our people was due to the nationalities policy of the Communist Party: the efforts of all peoples of the Land of Soviets merged into a single stream. The cohesion in battle and the friendship of the multinational Soviet military personnel were in evidence all through the war, in all its battles.

A countrywide, truly people's, guerrilla movement was organized on occupied Soviet territory. Thousands of partisan detachments and groups operated in the enemy rear, and inflicted great losses and heavy damage upon the enemy. The incessant blows of the guerrilla fighters kept the invaders in suspense and disrupted the functioning of their rear.

The Soviet Motherland paid tribute to the heroism of her sons. A total of 11,603 servicemen were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. Among them



are 8,160 Russians, 2,069 Ukrainians, 309 Byelorussians, 96 Kazakhs, 90 Georgians, 90 Armenians, and other representatives of the 100 nations and nationalities of the Soviet Union. The units and formations of the Soviet Armed Forces whose performance was truly outstanding were decorated with 10,900 orders. Over seven million Soviet servicemen were awarded government decorations. Heroes of the Soviet Union include 86 women who fought in the ranks of the Army and Navy.

Facts show that the brunt of the Second World War was borne by the Soviet Union and its Armed Forces, which routed 607 divisions of the Axis (compared to 176 routed by the Allies) and made the decisive contribution to the victory over Nazi Germany.

The leaders of the anti-Nazi coalition acknowledged that the outcome of the war was determined on the Soviet-German front. President Roosevelt wrote to General MacArthur:

"In the matter of grand strategy I find it difficult . . . to get away from the simple fact that the Russian armies are killing more Axis personnel and destroying more Axis material than all the other twenty-five United Nations put together."

All told, Nazi Germany lost 13.6 million—killed, wounded and taken prisoner; 10 million of them were lost on the Soviet-German front. Seventy-five per cent of the Nazi air force, the bulk of the artillery and armour, over 1,600 warships and transports were also destroyed in the East. Churchill wrote in September, 1944: "... It is the Russian army that tore the guts out of the German military machine..." And General de Gaulle observed in December, 1944: "The French people know what Soviet Russia did for them, they know that it was Soviet Russia that played the main role in their liberation."

In the Far East the Soviet Armed Forces routed and took prisoner 49 divisions and 27 brigades of the land forces and large air force and naval units of Japan.

The Red Army liberated, completely or partially, the territory of 10 European countries with a combined area of one million square kilometres and a population of 113 million and parts of the territory of two Asian countries with an area of more than 1.5 million square kilometres and a population of about 70 million. More than one million Soviet servicemen laid down their lives for the freedom and independence they brought to the peoples of foreign countries. The USSR's casualties in those battles exceeded three million of killed, wounded and missing in action.

## THE RELIABLE SHIELD OF SOCIALISM

After the victorious outcome of the war the Soviet Armed Forces entered a new stage of their development. Between 1945 and 1947 large-scale demobilization was carried out: almost nine million servicemen were demobilized from the Army and Navy, and the armed forces strength was reduced to the 1939 level. International tension was building up, however; the imperialists had opened a cold war against the USSR. This compelled us to take effective measures to protect the gains of socialism and maintain our Armed Forces in constant combat readiness.

The combat equipment of the Soviet Armed Forces had been excellent at the time, but it had to be modernized and replaced with the latest types. This task was being implemented. The Soviet Army was adopting supersonic jet planes, ground-to-air missiles and

radar stations, and other types of modern combat equipment. Missile weaponry, target-seeking torpedoes and new submarine detection equipment were entering service with the Navy. Soviet scientists, designers, engineers and workers made an atomic bomb and tested it in 1949 thus putting an end to US nuclear monopoly. The fact that the Soviet Union developed nuclear weapons served to drastically change the military-political situation in the world. Any aggressive designs against the Soviet Union were now quite futile.

Seeking to distort the meaning and substance of the policy aimed at strengthening the Soviet Union's defence capability, and to justify the arms buildup in imperialist states, anti-communist propagandamakers resuscitated the "Soviet menace" scare. Whence does the threat of war really emanate?

In the years that followed the Second World War imperialists triggered more than thirty wars and military conflicts, including the "dirty war" in Indochina. They have built up and maintain tensions in the Middle East. Under pressure from munitions monopolies the war budgets of the NATO member-states have been increasing by two or three thousand million dollars annually. The war spending of the European states, NATO members, has doubled over the last five years. The US military budget reached last year 113,000 million dollars, and this year (the fiscal year starting in October, 1977) it is planned at 118,000 million dollars.

Despite widely publicized assurances of their peaceful aims, the US ruling circles are stepping up the arms race and encouraging the development and production of new types of weaponry, including the neutron bomb and cruise missiles.

Imperialist reaction opposes international political

detente, let alone supplementing it with a military detente.

"The USSR steadfastly pursues a Leninist policy of peace and stands for strengthening of the security of nations and broad international cooperation," says the Constitution of the USSR.

It was stressed at the Party Congresses that the Soviet Union covets no territory, threatens no one and does not intend to attack anyone; it stands for the free and independent development of all nations. The entire history of the USSR and its Armed Forces shows that measures to strengthen the country's defence capability were invariably necessitated by military preparations carried out by the aggressive forces of imperialist states.

The Soviet Union displays unremitting concern for its Armed Forces because its defence capability completely depends on their combat preparedness and the numerical and technical strength. Everything created by the people must be reliably defended!

The CPSU Central Committee report to the 25th Party Congress, delivered by Leonid Brezhnev, said: "... Nor should there be any doubt in anyone's mind that our Party will do everything to have the splendid Armed Forces of the Soviet Union provided, in the future as well, with all the necessary means for fulfilling their responsible task of standing guard over the Soviet people's peaceful labour and acting as the bulwark of world peace."

The Soviet Armed Forces today comprise the Strategic Rocket Troops, the Land Forces, the Air Defence Troops, the Air Force and the Navy. These are the main services which in turn comprise various fighting arms.

The Strategic Rocket Troops are the mainstay of

Soviet combat power. They most fully embody the advances of the scientific and technological revolution. Equipped with intercontinental and medium-range missiles, and the latest automatic guidance and control facilities, they are always on the alert, always ready to deliver a retaliatory blow.

The Land Forces are numerically the strongest service with a wide range of armaments, weapons and equipment. Their development proceeds along the lines of increasing their fire-power, striking power, manoeuvrability and mobility. They operate both in conjunction with other arms and services, and independently. The Land Forces have medium-range and tactical missiles, air defence units, motorized and armoured units and multipurpose artillery units, and are supported by special troops—combat engineers, signal troops, etc.

The Signal Troops, the Engineer Troops and other services including the Airborne Troops have been further developed.

The airborne units intended for action behind enemy lines are equipped with advanced weapons—air-transportable, self-propelled guns, armoured personnel carriers, effective anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons, conventional and rocket artillery systems, automatic firearms, etc.

The Air Defence Troops are always on the alert. They protect armed forces groupings, towns, cities and other populated centres, communications, and administrative and industrial centres from aerial attack. They maintain early warning posts and are equipped with powerful anti-aircraft rocket systems, aircraft and radar stations.

The Soviet Air Force has become an all-weather service; it is equipped with missile-carrying planes

capable of delivering strikes by nuclear and conventional weapons at any target both on the ground or at sea, without having to enter enemy air defence zones. The Soviet Air Force is equipped with supersonic jets armed with cannons and carrying missiles, and packed with radio-electronic devices. These all-weather planes can operate at night, both at very low and very high altitudes, and cover great distances.

Nuclear-powered submarines equipped with underwater-firing missiles and homing torpedoes are the mainstays of the Navy. They can hit both sea targets and inland installations at great distances. The Navy also has surface ships of different types and purposes, long-range missile-carrying aviation, coastal missile and conventional artillery units and naval infantry. Naval aviation can strike with missiles armed with nuclear and conventional warheads at surface ships no matter how far out at sea, at major ports and naval bases.

The logistical system of the Army and Navy is being continuously developed. Organizationally and technically, it is fully equipped to perform the tasks it is charged with.

Every Service of the Armed Forces is headed by its Commander-in-Chief who is simultaneously Deputy Minister of Defence. A Commander-in-Chief controls his troops through the chief staff of the Armed Service he is in charge of.

The activities of all the chief staffs, of the logistical and civil defence staffs, of the main and central divisions of the USSR Defence Ministry, are coordinated and dovetailed by the General Staff of the Armed Forces, whose Chief is simultaneously First Deputy Minister of Defence.

The strength of the Soviet Armed Forces lies not so much in the weapons they have as in the people,

the personnel who operate the weapons. Their personnel are steeled ideologically and their morale is high; they are proficient, infinitely devoted to their Homeland and loyal to the communist ideals. Our servicemen carry on the glorious combat traditions of their predecessors, serving under the banners of the units which covered themselves with glory in battles for their Homeland.

The Constitution of the USSR says that "defence of the Socialist Motherland is the sacred duty of every citizen of the USSR", and that "military service in the ranks of the Armed Forces of the USSR is an honourable duty of Soviet citizens".

In the very first days of their service in the Army and Navy young people get down to the task of mastering combat equipment and the science of armed defence of their Homeland. Most of them already have a technical speciality acquired before the call-up.

The significant growth of the standard of general and technical education of youth, their ideological maturity and physical fitness enable them to master a military speciality, weapons and combat equipment very quickly. This fact has found reflection in the new Soviet Law "On Universal Military Duty" endorsed by the USSR Supreme Soviet on October 12, 1967. Under the Law the term of active military service for privates and sergeants was reduced from three to two years; the call-up age of 18 was established for all Soviet citizens.

It is necessary to stress here the immense educational importance of service in the Soviet Army and Navy. Not only does it school the recruits in combat skill but also trains them ideologically and physically, and accustoms them to discipline.

It is therefore quite natural that demobilized soldiers are readily employed in any sector of the na-

tional economy; they are invited to work at new construction projects, and are admitted to higher and secondary educational establishments on easy terms.

Soviet servicemen take an active part in the country's socio-political life. For example, 203 servicemen are deputies to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Supreme Soviets of the Union Republics; thousands of servicemen have been elected to the local government bodies—the Soviets of Working People's Deputies. Military units are regularly visited by actors and other cultural workers, concerts and other performances are held; troops are addressed by writers and scientists. Servicemen, in turn, are welcome guests at factories and offices. This promotes the unity of the Army and the people.

Another source of the strength of the Soviet Armed Forces is the fact that they are developing in fraternal cooperation with the armies of other socialist countries.

The goals and objectives of the Soviet Armed Forces accord with the vital interests of the working people of the USSR; at the same time they do not conflict with the interests of other nations. Moreover, they constitute a reliable bulwark in the national struggle against the export of imperialist counter-revolution and serve to promote world peace and security.

## COMRADESHIP-IN-ARMS

"It is your great privilege to uphold sacred ideas arms in hand, and to make international brotherhood of nations a reality..." These words, which Lenin addressed in August, 1918 to the soldiers of a revolu-

tionary regiment going to the front, still fittingly express the essence of the relations which have developed among the servicemen of the socialist countries, their attitude to the national-liberation struggle of other nations.

The Soviet people have always accepted with gratitude fraternal aid rendered them by the working people of other countries; in turn, they have always fulfilled their internationalist duty with credit no matter how difficult their own situation was. This was so in the years of the Civil War and foreign intervention in 1918-20, and throughout the history of the Soviet Union.

In 1919, notwithstanding a critical situation at the fronts of the Civil War the young Soviet republic did its utmost to help and support the Hungarian socialist revolution. In 1921, our troops helped the fraternal Mongolian people to rout the White Guard bands led by Baron Ungern, a former tsarist general, internal counter-revolution and Chinese militarists. As mentioned earlier, in 1939, Soviet and Mongolian forces jointly repulsed aggression committed by Japanese militarists against the Mongolian People's Republic on the Khalkha River. During the first civil revolutionary war in China (1924-27) a group of noted Soviet commanders was sent to China to aid the command of the People's Revolutionary Army; the army itself was provided with arms, ammunition, foodstuffs and medical supplies. Between 1936 and 1939, Soviet volunteers fought on the side of Republican Spain together with anti-fascists from other countries. The Soviet Union supplied the Republicans with arms, combat equipment, ammunition and provisions.

The mission of liberation carried out by the Soviet troops in Europe and Asia in the course of the Second World War vividly demonstrates their interna-

tionism. All-round support and aid were rendered to nations struggling against the imperialists after the war.

The Soviet Union furnished economic, technical, cultural and military aid to the People's Republic of China from its very inception; helped the Korean People's Democratic Republic repel US aggression in 1950-53; rendered and still renders comprehensive aid to the heroic Vietnamese people.

Between 1955 and 1965, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries provided the Democratic Republic of Vietnam with aid valued at more than 4,200 million dong of which 1,500 million dong was given as a gift. In those years 2,500 Soviet specialists helped their Vietnamese brothers restore and develop the national economy. Our assistance was used in the construction of 108 plants and factories and for the strengthening of the DRV Armed Forces.

In the years of the war against US interventionists and their South-Vietnamese puppets the Vietnamese People's Army received from the Soviet Union modern rockets and aircraft, artillery guns, small arms, ammunition and fuel. Our experts helped the Vietnamese friends in building a strong anti-aircraft defence system, and sailors delivered critically-needed cargoes to Vietnam defying most trying conditions.

The air defence troops of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam shot down 3,243 enemy planes; such losses had never before been suffered by the US Air Force, not even in the years of the Second World War.

Lieutenant Ha Quang Le, commander of an artillery battalion which guarded the Ham Rong Bridge in Thanh Hoa province, told a war correspondent: "We had to fight for more than one thousand days. On some days dozens of planes would swoop down upon our positions. But the Ham Rong Bridge was

not destroyed. Credit for this goes not only to our battalion but also to the neighbouring units which launched Soviet surface-to-air missiles. We are grateful to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to the Soviet government and all Soviet people for their fraternal aid and support."

Speaking about the victory won by the Vietnamese people, Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, pointed out in his report addressed to the 25th Congress of the CPSU: "Imperialism's biggest post-Second World War bid to destroy a socialist state by armed force and crush a national-liberation revolution suffered failure. The heroism and selfless dedication of the Vietnamese people, together with unremitting support from the socialist countries and the world's progressives, proved stronger than the armies of interventionists and their henchmen."

The firm position of the Soviet Union, its resolute support for the national-liberation movements would on many occasions serve to frustrate the vile schemes of imperialist aggressors in different parts of the world.

In 1956, the Soviet Union resolutely condemned aggression committed jointly by Britain, France and Israel against Egypt. The Soviet government unequivocally declared then that it was "determined to resort to force to crush the aggressors and restore peace in the Middle East". This statement had a sobering effect on the aggressors, and on November 7, 1956, hostilities were discontinued. By December 22, the British and French forces had pulled out of Egypt, and the Israeli troops had withdrawn beyond the ceasefire line.

In 1967, timely and determined action by the Soviet Union, other socialist countries and world pro-

gressive forces cut short another very dangerous war of aggression let loose by Israel against Egypt, Syria and Jordan.

In October, 1973, when heavy fighting against the Israeli invaders developed in the Suez Canal zone and on the Golan Heights, the Soviet Union, maintaining close contact with the friendly Arab states, made every effort to put a stop to the hostilities.

The Soviet people have always supported the heroic people of Cuba, and the freedom fighters of Angola, Guinea-Bissau, the Cape Verde Islands, Mozambique, the People's Republic of the Congo and other African countries.

Many peoples duly appreciated the selfless and humane actions of our servicemen: in the immediate postwar years Soviet navy men helped sailors of Romania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia clear the Danube of mines. They also carried out mine-sweeping operations in the Gdansk, Pomeranian and Lübeck Bays in the Baltic, along the coasts of Korea and Northern Norway, and later in the Suez Canal (1974). Our combat engineers cleared of mines a considerable territory of the Algerian People's Republic; and our navy men lent a helping hand in mine-sweeping the port of Chittagong in the Republic of Bangladesh.

Leonid Brezhnev noted at the 25th Congress of the CPSU: "The Soviet Union's attitude to the complicated processes taking place within the developing countries is clear and definite. The Soviet Union does not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries and peoples. It is an immutable principle of our Leninist foreign policy to respect the sacred right of every people, every country, to choose its own way of development. But we do not conceal our views. In the developing countries, as everywhere else, we are on the side of the forces of progress, democracy and national

independence, and regard them as friends and comrades in struggle.

"Our Party supports and will continue to support peoples fighting for their freedom... We act as we are bid by our revolutionary conscience, our communist convictions."

Most vividly the ideas of internationalism and comradeship-in-arms binding the armies of socialist states are expressed in the Warsaw Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance. The Warsaw Treaty Organization is a fundamentally new form of collective defence of the countries of socialism against aggressive imperialist forces. The lessons of the Second World War were lost upon these forces. Soon after the Second World War ended, they began to set up aggressive military blocs directed against the Soviet Union and other countries which had entered upon the path of socialism. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was formed in 1949.

The socialist countries were obliged to take counter-measures in order to ensure their security. On May 14, 1955, they concluded in Warsaw a multilateral Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance. A military alliance for joint defence of the socialist gains thus came into being.

The main purpose of the alliance is to assure the security of the member-states, maintain peace in Europe and prevent a world war. The Warsaw Treaty member-states created the Joint Armed Forces, the Joint Command and the Combined General Staff.

Unlike NATO, the Warsaw Treaty Organization is not a closed military alliance. Other peaceful states are free to accede to the Treaty which fully accords with the principles of the United Nations Charter. The only condition for membership is determination to promote peace and the security of nations. The

years following the conclusion of the Warsaw Treaty have demonstrated that the establishment of that organization was a correct and necessary measure in view of the real threat of imperialist aggression. The Warsaw Treaty Organization has become a major factor for peace and security.

Regarding the Warsaw Treaty Organization as a forced counter-measure, as an instrument designed to check the aggressive forces, the Soviet Union is steadily pursuing its policy of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems and is making every effort to secure detente. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe convened on the initiative of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries in August, 1975 was a success. It inaugurated a new stage in the international detente. It further consolidated the principles of peaceful coexistence and cooperation between states with different social systems.

The Soviet Union sets an example by actively implementing the provisions of the Final Act adopted at the Helsinki Conference. It promotes struggle for an end to the arms drive, for disarmament and conclusion of a treaty which would abolish the use of force in international relations.

The position of the Soviet Union at the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks and at the Vienna Talks on the Question of Troops and Arms Cuts in Central Europe is in full conformity with the documents adopted at the Conference.

Leonid Brezhnev affirmed at the 25th Congress of the CPSU:

"We are firmly against the world's division into opposing military blocs and the arms race. Our attitude on this score is well known. But we must make it clear that as long as the NATO bloc continues to exist and as long as militarist elements continue their

arms drive, our country and the other signatories of the Warsaw Treaty will continue to strengthen this political-military alliance."

The comradeship-in-arms binding the armies of the Warsaw Treaty member-states has its roots in history. It originated and developed in the course of numerous class battles and was sealed with the blood shed in the fight against the common enemy during the Second World War.

This comradeship between the peoples and the armies now constituting the community of socialist countries, a comradeship formed in the past war, was further advanced in the post-war years. It is based on a similarity of the state and social systems of these countries as well as on an identity of their political, economic and ideological interests, and military-strategic principles. All this is reflected in the political education and combat training of the personnel of the armies of the Warsaw Treaty Organization.

\* \* \*

Thus, the Soviet Army, an army of a new type, objectively acts as a force of social progress, a force for peace and the security of nations. This is due to the fact that defence of socialism in itself constitutes a substantial contribution to the cause of promoting peace and international security. The socialist system which is, by its very nature, averse to predatory, unjust wars promotes universal peace, social justice, fraternity of nations. An army defending this system is inevitably an army defending fraternal relations among nations.

In the span of the 60-year-long history of the Soviet Army its troops have never used their weapons for an unjust, anti-popular cause. Our armed forces

do not threaten and never threatened any country. As it is laid down in the Constitution, the USSR maintains armed forces "in order to defend the gains of socialism, the peaceful labour of the Soviet people, and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state . . ."



*Yevgeny Dyachenko*  
Soviet Armed Forces

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