

Origin of the Term and Concept of a ‘Meat-Grinder’

1. *Blitzkrieg* shares a fate much like the word ‘meat-grinder.’¹ Conceived during the Second World War, Guderian never uses the term in his book on the subject.² Often thought to encapsulate the German approach to war in the Nazi dictatorship, the term actually seems not have been used at all before the Second World War in Germany where journalists in the country quickly picked the term up from foreign correspondents. In relation to the initiation of the Polish campaign, the first known use of the terms occurs in September, 1939 in the American magazine *Time*.³
2. The term ‘meat-grinder’ shares a similar historical trajectory. Printed in more than 148 newspapers’ headlines, bylines, or articles as a term for the famous battle, the term ‘meat-grinder’ enjoys a unique history none of these

¹ The Russian equivalent is lexicalized into a single word: *мясорубка*. Russians often employ the term to describe Zhukov’s attack on the river Oder and Elbe in the final battle for Berlin.

² See (Keegan, 1989: pg. 54) for a discussion of the word’s first usage for the advance on Poland in September, 1939 in *Time* magazine. Not surprisingly an article entitled, “‘Blitzkrieg’ Strategy No New German Idea,” from the *New York Times* in September 1939 is none other than a discussion of the word’s origin. Germans, however, appear to have used the term inconsistently. In his book *Achtung - Panzer!*, Hanz Guderian, for instance, appears to be without a specific term for the type of warfare he proscribes to the deployment of organized formations of mechanized armor with closed air support. This has led many to claim, as Gross, Citino, and Zebecki do, that the term did not originate from *Time* magazine. In *The Myth and Reality of German Warfare: Operational Thinking from Moltke the Elder to Heusinger* (2016), they claim early German military publications coined the term, writing, for instance, that it “was not coined in the Anglo-Saxon world, as often claimed, but actually appeared in German military publications as early as the mid 1930s.” While this may be true, the term’s usage, as they describe, could not have been the same as meant in *Time* magazine, since the theoretical basis for the concept came only much later, as, for example, in Guderian’s book. Another aspect of the term’s inconsistency is that the fact that the official terminology of the *Wehrmacht* registers no instance of its usage. (Gross : 1996; Frieser: 2005, pp. 4—5) Nonetheless, the term remains controversial and is a continual centerpiece of dispute. (Naveh: 1997, pp. 107—108; Paret, Craig, & Gilbert: 1986, p. 587; Frieser: 2005, pp. 28—32; Overly: 1995, pp. 233—235; Melvin: 2011, pp. 137; Mercatante: 2021, pp. 4—5) Since Kerr is fairly straightforward about the term, especially in regards to Gregory Zhukov and his knowledge of the battlefield strategy, the author defers to his usage, should there be any ambiguity.

³ See M. Cooper, *The German Army*, 1978, pp. 115-117.

newspapers discuss, a history rooted in the saga of Russia, Russian warfare, and English and anglophone reporting on those subjects, dating all the way back to World War II and to an American war correspondent reporting on the famous battles of Moscow and Stalingrad during the Second World War, even though Marshall Gregory Zhukov, like Guderian, never uses the term.

3. Walter Broadman Kerr, whom the *New York Herald Tribune* stationed in Moscow during the war, reported on the first few years of the Nazi's *Operation Barbarossa* and it is through his reporting that he first applied the term 'meat-grinder' to modern Russian warfare. In 1944 he published a book called *The Russian Army, its Men, its Leaders and its Battles* that summarized his reporting on those battles and the Nazi's operation. In his book, Kerr depicts Zhukov's military strategy against the Nazis in WWII as a 'meat-grinder.'
4. Dispatched as a war correspondent, Walter Broadman Kerr spent years in Russia during one of its most significant periods of development. This period of time—from November 1941 until April 1943—corresponded with the major battles of Russia during Nazi Germany's invasion and its execution of *Operation Barbarossa*. During this time, Kerr, who would later join the Office of Strategic Services (i.e., the precursor to the Central Intelligence Agency) before eventually joining the CIA, covered these major battles and their most significant developments in Russia at the time.
5. Passing through 21 editions, Kerr's book is a classic. Its title, *The Russian Army*, is extremely modest, as his explanation of the army, men, or leaders actually provides readers with far more than merely a description of their performance in the battles of Moscow or Stalingrad but also an extremely deep, penetrating, almost comprehensive exegesis of Zhukov's war strategy that is hardly paralleled by anyone of his biographers, let alone well known historians.⁴ None of Gregory Zhukov's biographers appear to have dedicated careful analysis to Kerr's observations on Zhukov's war strategy as a 'meat-

⁴ To attribute Zhukov's strategy merely to an emphasis on attrition and 'attritional warfare' and the Nazi's collapse to having become attrited is insufficient. These claims are similar to those advanced by defeated Nazis who sought to blame the weather for their failures on the battlefield. "Nazi generals have tried to convince the public that the million picked German troops were beat at Moscow not by the iron steadfastness, courage and heroism of Soviet soldiers but by mud, cold, and deep snow. The author of these apologetics seem to forget that the Soviet forces had to oeprate under the same conditions." (Zhukov: 1969, pg. 75)

grinder' strategy, while few, if any, have seriously considered, as Kerr does in his book, the degree to which Zhukov mastered *Blitzkrieg*.⁵

⁵ Kerr writes: "But trouble was brewing with the Japanese in the Far East, Zhukov was sent to Siberia, and in August 1939 he led the Soviet forces that surrounded and destroyed the Japanese Sixth Army at the Khalkin-Gol on the frontier of Outer Mongolia and Manchukuo. This was only a few weeks before Germany invaded Poland, so starting the second world war. The world therefore paid little attention to Zhukov, and little more to the campaign he had won, though out there in the Far East he had become the first officer to command large tank forces and use them the way they should be used. I think he was the first man to wage "lightning war," or *Blitzkrieg*." (Kerr, 1944: pg. 22) Whereas one would most certainly expect Chaney to cover Zhukov's understanding of "lightning war," especially after mentioning the presence of J. C. F. Fuller, B. H. Liddell Hart's works in Zhukov's library, Chaney neither makes any mention of Kerr's thoughts on Zhukov's understanding of lightening nor any of Zhukov's own. (Chaney, 1971; pg. 29) Neither of the other two biographies from the anglophone world make any mention of either. Theses declassified for public access at the Defense Technical Information Center appear to make reference to neither Kerr nor Zhukov's knowledge Blitzkrieg. The Central Intelligence Agency's declassified database of reports apparently contains little, if anything, about Zhukov, let alone his knowledge of Blitzkrieg. In the Information Reports on Zhukov from the CIA dated February 23rd, 1953, August 10th, 1953, and July 28th, 1955. , there is no mention of Kerr, his analysis of Zhukov or Blitzkrieg, even though the August 10th, 1953 Information Report mentions Zhukov's role in the war against Japan where the classified author explains how "Zhukov was rated as one of the best and his star began to ascend during the conflict with Japan in Outer Mongolia in 1938. He really carried out a most astounding operation there and was able to bring the "undeclared war" to a speedy conclusion." The absence of a thoroughly deep study into the Zhukov's knowledge of Blitzkrieg is a major lacuna in the literature on Zhukov. It is further compounded by the attention Zhukov's watchful eye attributed to Guderian. While he mentions Bock no more than once throughout his collection of essays in *Marshal Zhukov's Greatest Battles* (i.e., for Moscow, Stalingrad, Kursk, and Berlin), Zhukov mentions Guderian more than ten times. Published in 1969, the fact is a reminder that even several years after WWII Guderian's tank army in Army Group Center continued to haunt Zhukov for many years after the war. The August 10th, 1953 Information Report claims Zhukov underwent general staff training in Germany from 1924 to 1925. Zhukov's attendance predates the publication of H. Dv. 487, *Führung und Gefecht Der verbundenen Waffen*, which is known in the German military vernacular as *Das Fug* (1921—1923); it contained standard procedures for combined arms warfare. If Zhukov knew German, he would have had more than two years to read *Achtung-Panzer!* before the battle of Khalkin-Gol. Chaney (1971) writes without any mention of combined arms warfare: "The Soviets sent their officers to the War Academy in Berlin, where the Germans trained them in modern tactics and in the use of new weapons." (pg. 22). There appears to be no indication of a file maintained by the Kaiser or *Abwehr* on Zhukov or, at least, none referenced in the literature regarding his pre-war stay at the War Academy in Berlin or later.

Term

6. The term 'meat-grinder' appears for first time in Chapter X. Kerr first employs the term in regards to the Red Army's gradual evisceration of the Nazi's armed forces over an extended period of time with a serial, layered, escalating war of attrition. The context of Kerr's first employment occurs in reference to the phased degradation of the "blade of [Adolf Hitler's] sword," the twenty-five armored divisions Hitler sent across the Russian frontier. He compares these twenty-five armored divisions as they were before from June 22, 1941 and as they became after December 6th, 1941,⁶ the period of time during which the Nazi juggernaut sought to encircle Moscow. Kerr writes: "Some day a great story of the war in the Soviet Union can be built around a simple account of what happened to the twenty-five armored divisions that Adolf Hitler sent

⁶ Kerr's selection of December 6th, 1941 reflects with startling proximity the thought processes of Zhukov himself. In his description of the fallout from the battle for Moscow in his book, *Marshal Zhukov's Greatest Battles*, Zhukov believes the successful Soviet counteroffensive launched on that date culminated in the Nazi's most decisive defeat. What is fascinating is that Zhukov believes that Moscow is the most decisive battle of World War II. He is way ahead of Stalingrad, Kursk or Berlin. It could be a sense of false bravado that motivates his claim. In his description of the battle of Moscow, he produces a persuasive, albeit not comparative, argument to advance the claim. His claim rests on three points: 1) he defeated Guderian's Second Tank Army before the December 6th counteroffensive; 2) he caused collapse not only within Germany's panzer divisions but within the German general staff by way of his Hitler's decision to scapegoat "Field Marshal Walther von Brauchitsch as commander of German ground forces, Field Marshal von Bock as commander of Army Group Center, General Guderian as commander of the Second Tank Army, General Erich Höppner as commander of the 3rd Tank Group "whom he had generously decorated with Knight's Crosses" less than two months earlier; 3) none of the German forces accomplished anything, as Zhukov details how a) "[the] enemy had been unable to break through our defensive lines," "could not surround a single division nor fire a single artillery salvo at Moscow." (Zhukov, 1969 : pg. 79) Although these points are persuasive as to his argument, the fact that the Nazi's continued to launch *Blitzkrieg* both well after the battle of Stalingrad and to great effect (i.e., Soviet 3rd Army) even after Stalingrad supplants Zhukov's enthymeme. Nonetheless, Guderian, whom Zhukov mentions more than any other general by name, wrote in his journal: "The offensive on Moscow has ended. All the sacrifices and efforts of our brilliant troops have failed. We have suffered a serious defeat." (Guderian, 1956 : pg. 259) In his assessment of the outcome at the battle of Moscow, Turney states: "Most significantly, [the German failure at Moscow] resulted in Hitler's assumption of operational command of the German Army, an event that sounded the death knell for German professional militarism." (1970 : pp. xv—xvi) The political nature of the outcome from the battle of Moscow underscores Zhukov's and Russia's emphasis on the pursuit of a Clausewitzian principle in war.

across the Russian frontier. They were the blade of his sword, the machines that carved the way for his infantry and artillery.”

7. By the time the Germans reached Moscow after three great sweeps, the first beginning on the opening day of war, June 22nd, 1941, and the second beginning on October 3rd, 1941 after the capture of Smolensk, until finally on November 16th, Hitler committed the entirety of his forces to the seizure of Moscow, Hitler’s reduced military forces became but a shadow of their former prowess. Although coming within a distance of less than sixty-five miles from Moscow at the fourth month of the war, “German armored columns were far weaker than they were when they had crossed the frontier almost five months before.” (pg. 70) Kerr writes: “[The German armored divisions] suffered terribly in the final assault, as they had in the early months. They covered territory all right but at a frightful cost. They attacked, been defeated, attacked and gained ground. But every day they were hurled into a *meat-grinder*.” The December 6 counteroffensive Zhukov unleashed on the Nazis initiated a gradual process. “That counter-offensive, though the world may not have realized it at the time, was the beginning of the end⁷ for the German Army, for the Nazi party and for Adolf Hitler. The Germans were rolled back.” (Kerr, 1944; pg. 14) During the breakdown of the Nazi war machine, Kerr is careful to observe its most salient highlights.
8. The phased degradation affected not only the overall state of the *Wehrmacht* but in particular its armor and its personnel. “It was not so much the loss of machines that counted but the loss of skilled men, and once again the reserves were not as experienced as the tank troops they replaced.” (pg. 70) Kerr continues: “Their best tank-drivers, best gunners, some of their finest officers, men of much battle experience, died on the way. Reserves came up, but the reserves were never quite as good as first line troops. At the end of the Battle for Moscow thirteen of Hitler’s twenty-five tank divisions were bruised and bleeding.” (pg. 70) Kerr’s use of the term ‘bruised and bleeding’ is perhaps far more sympathetic to the Nazis than the actual reduction of the Nazi’s manpower and armor portray. In particular, Hitler recalled back to Germany no less than the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 10th, 11th, 17th, 18th, 19th, and

⁷ Kerr’s conclusion is nearly equivalent to Zhukov’s, whilst Zhukov believes that the battle of Moscow became a decisive battle. See footnote [CITATION].

20th tank divisions for 'reorganization' and 'reformation' in the rear.⁸ But these armored division never returned, as they had appeared on June 22nd, 1941. Although Hitler managed to replace these losses, the new military force could not match its prior state of professionalism. The result in the loss of personnel and armor at first appeared in the form of a vast reduction in the *Wehrmacht's* combat effectiveness. Replacements being no substitute for experienced combat and professional soldiers, their appearance led to clear changes in behavior and mentality.

9. Consequently, the reduced combat effectiveness also produced a dramatic shift in consciousness among Hitler's generals and in their application of strategic doctrine. By the time Hitler's forces emerged from the 'meat-grinder,' as Kerr called Zhukov's strategy, Hitler's twenty-five armored divisions, who were initially "conscious of original tank superiority" at the start of the Nazi's "lightning war," suddenly experienced a change of heart. "The old all-out warfare of the summer before was gone. German orders no longer read, "Advance as long as fuel lasts."⁹ He continues: "In the summer of 1942, a more cautious German army" appeared before the Red Army, one that still used tank divisions "as the spearhead of attack" but "more carefully and with more respect for Russian anti-tank defenses." (pg. 71) In the summer of 1942,

⁸ Prior to the disaster at Moscow but in response Directive № 34 Adolf Hitler transferred the 10th, 17th, and 18th Panzer divisions from Army Group Center to Army Group South. Part of the havoc the Red Army wreaked on Hitler's Panzer divisions arose from the failure to pursue a singularized military objective. Turney's account of Bock establishes how Hitler's refusal to allow Bock to follow the road to Moscow directly contributed to the Nazi's defeat in *Operation Typhoon*. (1970 : pp. 27, 38, 41, 40, 52, 53, 28, 54—58, 62, 64—65, 70—71, 73, 78) Halder's comment summarizes the situation: "It would be far better to determine once and for all what objectives the political leadership [Hitler] intends to attain. If for economic reasons we are to conquer the Ukraine and the Caucasus, then let it be made clear that the major objective cannot be the destruction of the enemy's military forces. If the major objective is Moscow [and the Volga], then it cannot be Ukraine. Above all, let us have clarity and freedom of operation." (Turney, 1970 : pg., 78; Halder KTB, III, 5—6 August 1941, pp. 155—57) F. W. von Mellenthin in his book *Panzer Battles* writes: "The drive against Moscow, which was favored by Guderian and which we abandoned temporarily in August to seize first the Ukraine, might have been successful if we had always regarded it as the principle offensive that would decide the outcome of the war. Russia would have been wounded at the very heart." (1956, pg. ???)

⁹ "Bock's staff officers had estimated that Army Group Center would required daily thirty trainloads of supplies and 1500 tons of fuel, once the attack was underway." (Turney, 1970: pg. 94)

well after the deadly first winter,¹⁰ the divisions not involved in the second German offensive in the east received replacements not exceeding 55 percent of authorized personnel. In addition, spearhead units, like the ones Kerr mentions, fared less furtively but nonetheless at a rate of replacement less than 85 percent of its authorized equipment.¹¹ German commanders, who became aware of the mounting body counts, began to fill the ranks as the best they could by reducing the amount of time required to train replacements, deploying newly incorporated reserves in direct combat literally midstream and during Soviet breakthroughs.

10. Kerr is careful to note the countermeasures Zhukov designed against the Nazis to exacerbate and augment the deadly and internally stifling aftereffects his strategy had on the Nazi's loss of manpower. Zhukov, for instance, deployed light, anti-tank artillery battalions equipped with 45 millimeter and 76 millimeter guns, two the most equipped, if not most versatile types of weapons the Soviets prepared and perfected for the Nazis. As Kerr says, "Sometimes it was successful. Sometimes it failed. But the Germans always lost some equipment, and so the wearing-down process continued." (pg.73)
11. After the degradation of its forces, "the Germans entered into their second year in Russia" but with important changes in equipment and tactics. The German army, for instance, reorganized its tank divisions. The new, ground down division "no longer included two tank regiments and one motorized regiment

¹⁰ Although Kerr offers only sparse details on weather, "General Winter" miscarried Hitler's plans well before the onset of severe inclement weather. So confident in his ability to achieve a thunderous victory on the front, he did not even prepare for the advent of 'winter warfare' in Russia. During the first five months of the war, Hitler suffered tremendous casualties at the hands of Mother Russia alone. By the time he had advanced into Russia, he lost no less than 23 percent of his fighting force, a loss of 734,000 casualties from an original number of 3, 200, 000. On November 27th, 1941, General Eduard Wagner, the Quartermaster General of the German Army, briefed a report, stating: "We are at the end of our resources in both personnel and material. We are about to be confronted with the dangers of deep winter." In the face of "General Winter," the *Blitzkrieg* began to be called the *Sitzkrieg*. [CITATION]

¹¹ See Wray.

but only one tank regiment and two motorized regiments.” (pg. 74).¹² After losing so many machines in the first year, the Nazis could no longer maintain the previous Nazi division for lack of armor. The Nazi’s loss of its divisional architecture continued to undermine and further facilitated the collapse of its prior capacity for Blitzkrieg, albeit gradually.¹³

12. Furthermore, the 25 tank divisions faced a further degradation in the second year of operation. “As near as we could determine in Moscow,” Kerr states, “twenty of Hitler’s twenty-five tank divisions had been pushed around in the second year of the war. Of the remaining five, four had suffered in the first year but later had been reorganized, and only one, the 25th, had escaped serious loss.” (pg. 71) He continues: “During the year the old tank divisions were hammered as they had been hammered the year before. The 1st, 2nd, and 5th were routed west of Moscow in fighting near Rzhev and Gzhatsk. The 3rd was clipped near Mozdok in the Caucasus; the 4th got it before Voronezh and later farther south along the Don. The 12th, which had been beaten near Leningrad, suffered terribly down in the North Caucasus. The 17th had some bad days in the drive towards Voronezh. And the 18th and 19th were pushed around on the central front. Of the thirteen tank divisions which had been defeated in the winter battle near Moscow, only three escaped defeat in the second summer. They were the 7th, 10th, and 20th. The 8th Armored Division, which had lost before Leningrad, kept out of the 1942 fighting.” The grinding continued. Alongside these hammered divisions, many of Hitler’s old 25 tank divisions faced defeat all over again. “The year 1942 also saw the defeat of new divisions which had not been used near Moscow. They were the 13th,

¹² In addition to changes in terms of the Nazi’s divisions, there were changes to weaponry and armor. “When the Germans went into their second year in Russia, their losses of the first year had forced them to make three important changes in equipment and tactics. The first, already mentioned, was the order that tank divisions should operate in close co-operation with infantry and artillery, instead of operating in the clear. The second, just referred to, was the introduction of the 28-millimeter anti-tank rifle. And the third involved a reorganization of the tank divisions themselves. Now the divisions no longer included two tank regiments and one motorized regiment, but only one tank regiment and two motorized regiments. They knew they had lost too many machines in the first year of the war. Russian anti-tank defense had begun to tell on them. Still another change, but one that was followed by all armies, increased the armor plate on light tanks from 1/2 inch to a full inch and on T-3 medium tanks from 1 inch to 2 inches. The T-4 model of medium tanks (introduced in 1942) carried 2.34 inches of armor plate.” (pg. 74)

¹³ See footnote number ???

14th, 16th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd and 24th, an SS or Death's-head armored division and the 1st Rumanian Armored Division.” (pg. 71)

13. Kerr envisions Zhukov's gradual process resulting from continuous changes within the German military and its losses in battle after battle. “As the year wore on, as the Germans reached and were stopped at Stalingrad and down in the Caucasus, and as the Russian counteroffensive that began in November and continued through January progressed—the armored divisions won and lost, won and lost, but whenever they entered an engagement they suffered, and whenever they suffered, the replacements were found to be less experienced than the many they replaced. Germany's armored might was being worn down.” (Kerr : 1944 ; pg. 71) The net effect on the German military began to accumulate in the form of numerous deficits such as increasingly lacking experience or less than complete training. These severe deficits continued to accumulate quantitatively.
14. In reality, the German armed forces declined not merely by number but by the declining quantity of its forces. As a result of its demand for newer recruits sooner than the military could reasonably be expected to complete training, many arrived only to find a quick death. The declining quantity of soldiers resulted not only in a loss of control, command, or communication on the battlefield but continued to cause the structure of the Nazi division to crack. Even within the first year of the war, many German infantry divisions operated with increasingly fewer infantry battalions than required to fulfill the edicts of its divisional architecture. With poorly trained German soldiers surviving for only short periods of time on the frontlines, the opportunity to guarantee successful integration of these fewer and fewer infantry battalions into divisions for the deployment in a *Blitzkrieg* began to disintegrate until finally the divisions underwent major change.
15. It is clear that Zhukov envisioned the collapse of Nazi's as a primary military result from the pursuit of a Clausewitzian approach to military warfare against the Nazis. The ensuing downwardly accelerating spiral of death followed by an excellent rate of replacement meant that the poorly trained, newly introduced German soldiers survived for less time on the frontlines before being replaced with even greater haste. The process is, indeed, one of the objectives of a 'meat-grinder' strategy and the one that Zhukov practices and Kerr presents. Consequently, the process led to a qualitative change, causing German infantry divisions to undergo a noticeably significant reduction in force structure. It went from holding fewer and fewer infantry battalions until the Nazi's

Wehrmacht completely reorganized its infantry divisions, resulting in fewer than six of the required nine infantry battalions for its infantry divisions from 1942 onward. This indicated the degree to which the shortages of personnel, manpower, or German blood, quickened the collapse and death of the Nazi war machine at the level of a division.¹⁴

16. The effect became almost immediate. The Soviets curtailed not only the circumference but the radii of Nazi Germany's attacks. Kerr states how "[never] again would this German army be strong enough to attack in more than one large sector at a time. The following summer it was not all Russia they were attacking, but only southern Russia." The Red Army, absorbing German offensives, stole the thunder from Hitler's *Blitzkrieg*, dulled its "famous tank daggers," stalled "tank groups and tank armies," dousing, extinguishing but not yet fully putting out the "tremendous forces of iron and steel and flame" the Nazi's *Wehrmacht* continued to wield. The German Army that Hitler built, the army that had never been beat in the field, "the army that smashed into Norway, grabbed Holland and Belgium, drove the British out at

¹⁴ One of the negative side effects of reorganization became lopsidedness and the Nazi's compensatory reactions furthered collapse of its divisional architecture in much the same way avoiding a sore foot causes the hobbling one to develop its own illness. Primarily through an increase in the form of assault guns, anti-tank rockets, automatic weapons or artillery, the Nazis believed the increased firepower could offset the loss in manpower. The result became quite the opposite. The increased emphasis on weaponry amplified existing challenges in the Nazi lines of communications, supplies, or overall logistics, adding additional strains on top of the continuously apparent lack of raw manpower. The disastrous consequence of its attempt to offset lacking manpower with increased firepower contributed to the collapse of Nazi's force structure both on the battlefield as well as in terms of the increased challenges of its divisional architecture.

Dunkirk, smashed France, and moved into the Balkans,” suffered its “first great defeat” at Moscow. (pg.43)¹⁵

17. The defeat at Moscow, Kerr writes, resulted in the “flower of the German armored forces” having been cut down. “How great a defeat they suffered would not be realized until the following autumn when the Germans showed they did not have the strength to take Stalingrad. Not only could they not take Stalingrad but they were to lose the Sixth Army that they sent to do the job.” (pg.43) Accordingly, the defeat created a ripple effect, touching upon nearly all aspects of German military might from manpower to armor, psychology, to its actual divisions and divisional architecture and all of these dulled Nazi *Blitzkrieg*. However, Kerr is careful to note that despite the crippling effect the May defeat achieved, “the German Army, though it had suffered humiliating and bitter defeat before the Russian capital,” nonetheless, continued to be the superior military force. (pg. 103)
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18. The battle for Stalingrad begins and ends with the first and second attacks on the city of Kharkov-Kharkiv. The beginning of the battle for Stalingrad starts on May 12th with the Soviet pincer movement on the city. on May 12th. The

¹⁵ In his own description of decisive battles, Zhukov described the impending threat of the Nazis before the battle of Moscow in the following way: “[The Nazis] seized Belorussia, Moldova, a large part of Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia; they blockaded Leningrad and, by the end of September, had moved large forces up to the distant approaches of Moscow with a view to seizing the capital.” (Zhukov, pg. 30) Although the various forms of contractions severely diminished the Nazi’s power, Zhukov’s ‘meat-grinder’ strategy became successful primarily due to the organic nature of his role in World War II. He designed a strategy for Russia at war with the Nazis. The question immediately arises: Would a ‘meat-grinder’ strategy have worked within the countries territorially peripheral to Russia such as Belorussia, Moldova, Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia? Would a ‘meat-grinder’ strategy have worked against Norway, Holland, Belgium, France or the Balkans? Could there have been a strategy other than a ‘meat-grinder’ for the complete destruction of the Nazi war machine? The idea that a type of divisional organization may conform to a specific type of arises in relation Israel and Palestine in a way to that of Russia. In response to the problem of ‘mechanization’ in the Israeli Defense Forces, “Tal insisted that the tank-mechanized infantry team was a European tactic that was less important in the Middle East. In the open spaces of Sinai, Israeli tanks needed less infantry security against short-range enemy anti-tank weapons. To Tal, the infantry was useful for reducing bypassed centers of resistance and mopping up after the battle.” (House, pg. 174) House mentions but does not explore in depth the degree to which geography may shape a military (an offensive or defensive) military strategy or vice versa.

German counter-attack is the step towards shifting the *Schwerpunkt* towards Stalingrad in the south. Bock's counter-attack on Timoshenko's forces in Kharkov-Kharkiv on May 19th, 1942 succeeded on May 23, pushing the Russians back, while laying siege to Barvenkovo. Bock's counter-attack on Zhukov's forces well after the German Sixth Army's encirclement at Stalingrad and his successful capture of the city drew to a close the attacks, counter-attacks, maneuvers, operations, battles and signified the end of the German's *Schwerpunkt*, the centralization of the mortal threat the Nazi war machine pointed at the neck of the Soviet Union and the strategic defeat of Zhukov's overall strategy the Nazi war machine sought. The continuum Kerr envisioned for the battle of Stalingrad began with Kharkov-Kharkiv 350 miles away but as "Zhukov won with the great counter-offensive that began at Stalingrad" but he put an end to the battle with "the battle at Kharkov more than 350 miles away." (pg. 23)¹⁶

19. Unsurprisingly, Kerr employs the second instance of the term 'meat-grinder' precisely in regards to this battle. Kerr writes: "It was clear that the Germans could not be stopped until they got to the Don at least, possibly until they reached Stalingrad on the Volga. But Chuikov's army was there to act as a 'meat-grinder,' while Timoshenko was going to swing his entire forces not east towards Stalingrad, but north-east between Stalingrad and Moscow." (Kerr, 1944 : pp. 104 — 105) It is in regards to Lieutenant-General Vasili Chuikov's decision to stall Bock's advance onto Stalingrad that Kerr makes his reference. With Bock beginning his 'summer' offensive at Kharkov-Kharkiv, the Soviets sought to obstruct his descent into the Russian hinterland through a preemptive absorption. Well after the battle, Kerr reveals how he spoke with Lieutenant-General Vasili Chuikov about fighting on the Don steppes. "[Chuikov] described it as a battle of exhaustion. He did check the Germans," giving "the people of Stalingrad time to be evacuated or to help build fortifications, but he could not stop them."
20. Shortly after Bock seized the heights are Kurgan Mamai, Paulus, the general of the German Sixth Army, entered Stalingrad. On October 14th, Paulus planned an offensive, the target of which Kerr describes as the tractor factory (i.e., Paulus' "fifth great objective" in Stalingrad). Kerr explains how in response Zhukov ordered a Chuikov-style assault, an assault not designed to succeed in

¹⁶ The full circle of an epic battle is a profoundly distinct feature of Russian warfare, especially with its emphasis on withdrawal, the absorption of counterattacks, or the exploitation of its landmass, water ways, weather, or strategic depth.

the Sixth Army's complete subordination to his will but "to ruin [Paulus'] timetable." After Chuikov's assault, Paulus launched an abysmal attack, resulting in "fighting for possession of a strip of land 100 yards wide." The Chuikov-style assault succeeded, resulting not only in the disruption of his timetable but the loss of his strategic objective. "[The enemy suffered so much for that one mile that the following day there was no gain." Zhukov's deployment of Chuikov style assaults thus ground down not only Bock's but Paulus' assault.

21. In a third Chuikov-style assault, again designed to induce the enemy's "exhaustion," Zhukov ordered Chuikov "to activate the defense" with the idea being "to force the German high command to bring up more divisions to support the 6th Army." Kerr, who is careful to explain Zhukov's thought processes, states: "Zhukov wanted more enemy divisions in the trap he was preparing." Surprisingly, Zhukov's third Chuikov-style assault induced Paulus to draw two infantry divisions from the rear, providing Zhukov with the conditions he desired for his November 19th counteroffensive. Shortly after the Paulus' failure, Zhukov ordered the encirclement of Paulus' army, resulting in a classic ring protected on the inside as well as on the outside. A defensive *Blitzkrieg* arising out of a trap like the one in Stalingrad exemplifies the 'meat-grinder' strategy Zhukov cultivated in the battles of Moscow and Stalingrad. While the German army began to deteriorate internally, the seizure of Paulus' Sixth Army represented the highest point yet in his deployment of a 'meat-grinder' strategy.
22. Despite Rokossovsky's successful seizure of Paulus' Sixth Army after Paulus' rejection of his proposal for surrender on January 8th, 1943, the Nazis continued to menace the Soviets. On February 20th, for instance, Bock launched his response to Paulus' surrender. After reorganizing his forces, Bock's panzer spearheads trapped before completely annihilating the Soviet 3rd army, indicating the degree to which the *Schwerpunkt* shifted from Stalingrad to Kharkov-Kharkiv. On March 3rd, Bock routed the Soviets, recapturing Belgorod only three days later. Having been driven back to the east bank of the Donets, the Soviets failed to prevent Bock from successfully occupying Kharkov-Kharkiv on March 15th. The spring thaw thwarted Bock's further exploitation of his penetration into Soviet lines, thereby laying the

groundwork for the battle of Kursk, a huge salient, bulging through the German lines stretching from Orel to Kharkov-Kharkiv.¹⁷

Concept

23. The concept of a ‘meat-grinder’ strategy in Kerr’s book is cursory. Throughout the course of his book, however, Kerr does not attempt to systematize his

¹⁷ “At this time—it was early in January—two great battles were being fought. In one of them the bulk of the Russian forces was chasing the German reserves back to and beyond the Kharkov-Kursk line, from which von Bock had launched his great offensive six months before. In the other battle the Russians were engaged in the extermination of the surrounded 6th Army. To wage these two battles Supreme General Headquarters in Moscow reorganized its line.” (pg. 119) It would not be until the battle of Kursk that Zhukov finally managed to bring the German *Schwerpunkt* to a definitive and final end, terminating Nazi Germany’s strategic initiative. Within the continuum of a shifting *Schwerpunkt*, the battle of Stalingrad is a subordinate *moment* vis-a-vis Kharkov-Kharkiv. The fact that Bock won both battles of Kharkov-Kharkiv, the beginning and the end of the continuum, necessarily entails the conclusion that the Nazi war machine successfully defeated the Russians from start to finish with the exception of Stalingrad. However, the *Schwerpunkt*’s strategic objective, the establishment of a great German empire from Murmansk to Tiflis along the Ural mountains, evaporated after the middlemost internal moment of the continuum terminated in the evisceration of Paulus’ Sixth Army. Although Bock, whose successful operations throughout the continuum culminated in victory after victory, retaliated successfully with the destruction of the Soviet 3rd Army, the fleeting victories were peripheral to the centre of action. Nonetheless, Bock’s destruction of the Soviet 3rd Army equalized the evisceration of Paulus’ Sixth Army, demonstrating just how fleeting Zhukov’s success at Stalingrad became. Bock’s destruction of the Soviet 3rd Army returned Kharkov-Kharkiv but failed to compensate for the protrusion of Stalingrad into the German lines from Orel to Kharkov-Kharkiv (i.e., the Kursk salient). The outcome at the battle of Kursk compelled the strategic initiative of the *Schwerpunkt* to pass from the Nazis to the Soviets, providing a final determination to the operations throughout the *Schwerpunkt*’s continuum (i.e., the protrusion of Stalingrad), eliminating not only the centre of action but the *Schwerpunkt*’s periphery. The battle of Kursk is therefore the most decisive battle. The idea of a *Schwerpunkt* is equivalent to Clausewitz’s understanding of the culmination point of victory. See ADA207383 on pg. 48 where the author evokes the ‘counterstroke’ by Manstein to explain the ‘culmination point of victory’ from Clausewitz’s work. The author, however, ultimately refuses to extend the idea of a continuum contained in Clausewitz’s explanation of war to battles, defeats, or victories, choosing instead to impose the handy yardsticks of “strategy, operation, or tactics” for good, discrete, finite measure but the historic struggle for power throughout the areas of eastern Europe, the Black Sea region, Asia Minor and Africa take the form of a political **continuum**, not least of all for Clausewitz’s own conception. See Chapter “On the Origin of the Term and Concept of a ‘Meat-Grinder’” § Endnotes : “Machiavelli’s *Prince*”

observations, even though they appear with such regularity in his descriptions of the battles of Moscow and Stalingrad that one cannot help but group these descriptions into a summary of Zhukov's strategy of a 'meat-grinder'. These are as follows:

1. **Clausewitz** : Although Kerr makes no mention of Clausewitz, the influence of *Vom Kriege* permeates Soviet military thought.¹⁸ Derived from Clausewitz's understanding of war as **a continuation of policy** by

¹⁸ The degree to which Clausewitz permeated Soviet military thought appears to be without a comprehensive examination from 1917 to 1991, if not from the Napoleonic wars to the present day. Trotsky, who built the Red Army, led the way in military thought after his successful defeat of the Allied Powers, debating to his favor many fellow colleagues in a display of his leadership as well as his intellect. Clausewitz' influence on Trotsky is profound. Clausewitz, for instance, is the most frequently cited of all authorities in Trotsky's writings on war. In terms of the influence Clausewitz exerted upon the leaders of the Russian revolution, Clausewitz appears to be foremost in Trotsky's works. Well after the establishment of the Soviets in 1905, Trotsky's invocation of Clausewitz likely predates Lenin's own in his attempt to explain the phenomena of war, especially during the time Trotsky contributed to *Kievskaya Mysl'*. (See Trotsky, *My Life*, pg. 232.) An example of Trotsky's complete identification with Clausewitz's axiom (i.e., "War is a mere continuation of policy by other means") appears in his article 'Новая книга Ф. Энгельса,' in *Pravda*, no 17, March 28th, 1924. Written as a review of Engels' *Notes on the War, 1870-71*, published in Vienna in 1923, Trotsky's article reviews the Franco-Prussian war from the perspective of Clausewitz. In terms of primary texts, Alexander A Svechin is one of the only participants from the Russian civil war to write a full length biography of Clausewitz. Appointed to the military academy Leon Trotsky established, Svechin wrote the biography three years before his murder. Published in 1935, Svechin's biography appears to be the only work dedicated exclusively to the subject. Svechin's treatment of Clausewitz represented one of the highest points not only in the study of Napoleonic military thought but of Clausewitz in the Soviet Union before the outbreak of World War II. On June 12th, 1937 Joseph Stalin ordered the Soviet government to execute Tukhachevsky and eight of his high-ranking assistants, as Stalin shifted his political genocide of the October intelligentsia from a primarily social, political, or economic to a purely military focus. (Erickson: 1975; pg. 6, 19-20) In the years following Tukhachevsky's execution the Stalinist bureaucracy imprisoned or executed at least 20 percent of the officer corps, including a majority of all commanders of units or regimental size or larger. Shortly after Tukhachevsky's execution, Stalin ordered Svechin to be murdered on July 18th, 1938 as part of the continuation of his political genocide against the Bolshevik intelligentsia. The campaign continued well after World War II such as with the murder A. A. Zhdanov on August 31, 1948. Stalin's murder of Svechin is an extension of the political genocide against the Bolshevik intelligentsia, especially as to those who openly embraced the interpretative light from Clausewitz that Trotsky's writings further illuminated in his application of the most developed military theories of mankind to present day phenomena.

other means, the Russians interpret the application of Clausewitz's understanding of war to the Russian mainland primarily through an emphasis on a) the destruction of the enemy as the highest goal attainable on the battlefield with b) Clausewitz's belief in the superiority of defense over offensive, while c) "Der Krieg ist also ein Akt der Gewalt, um den Gegner zur Erfüllung unseres Willens zu zwingen."¹⁹ Zhukov, implicitly or explicitly, combines these elements of Clausewitz's *Vom Kriege* as a 'meat-grinder' strategy. In terms of Kerr's understanding, the emphasis on the destruction of Germany's manpower as the highest priority of a 'meat-grinder' strategy is undoubtedly Clausewitzian. The first element is unequivocally clear from Kerr's descriptions. It is clear from Kerr's summary of the Soviet understanding of the battle. "[The Russians] adopted, therefore, a system of warfare which consisted of organized retreat in summer and counter-offensive in winter. Their method was to pull back from June to the end of October, when conditions best suited the Germans, **to grind down German manpower**, as they retreated and to organize their reserves so that when winter came they could bring more fire-power to bear on the vital sector than the enemy could. It was a costly process, for it meant the abandonment of large fertile areas that the country could not readily afford to lose, and more often than not the Russians found the villages destroyed by the time they were able to recapture them in November, December, January, and February. But it was a great strategy directed by necessity, since the Germans had tank and plane superiority. And it worked." (pg. 87)

2. **Manpower** : Based on a careful reading of Clausewitz, who believes defense is superior to offense, an objective for the architecture of a strategy is to develop tactics for inducing an enemy to expend "manpower," "the best, most well-trained, experienced, equipped soldiers on offense." (Kerr : 1944; pg. 69) The Nazi's expenditure of its "best tank-drivers, best gunners, some of their finest officers, men of much battle experience," resulted in various forms of contractions, leading from internal collapse to paralysis. The ideal expenditure of "manpower" is through the imposition of a pocket as in the pocket Paulus found the German Sixth Army after Zhukov's successful counter-attack, as noted above.

¹⁹ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Book 1, Chapter 1.

3. **Withdraw to counterattack** : An emphasis on continuous withdrawal²⁰ for the exploitation of a better position by way of “the terrain, the weather, the difficulties of supply, night operations, and when [there is] time to assemble guns, fire power on the defense, and a heavy artillery barrage” (Kerr : 1944; pp. 57, 127), or, what is essentially, by way of or through an exploitation of the features inherent in **Russia's strategic depth**. In his description of Zhukov’s December 6 counteroffensive, Kerr’s emphasis is on delaying, obstructing or impeding the Nazi’s advances. Words such as fall back, pull back, retreat are constantly associated with counterattack. Kerr states, for instance, how Generals Kuznetsov, Govorov, and Vlasov “all agreed that in those days the Soviet plan was to pull back, to keep Soviet forces intact, to inflict losses on the enemy when possible, but always to pull back towards Moscow. They could, they said, have stood fast and exchanged blows with the Germans at any time, but the price would have been terrific and the outcome doubtful. And so they fought as best they could without risking the bulk of their forces, relying on the plan of the high command, which was to strike back when the right time came.” (pg. 30) Often times the need to fall back, pull back, retreat or withdraw is associated with fortification, an extremely importance component associated with Russia's strategic depth. Kerr states, for instance, how “the Russians

²⁰ Although Kerr mentions little about maneuverability in his observations on the battle of Moscow, Guderian’s failure to by-pass Tula, he does so without sufficient detail. In his memoirs, however, Zhukov mentions how he repulsed an attack Guderian launched against Tula in an effort to by-pass Moscow on October 30th, 1941. “Tula tied down the entire right flank of the German forces. When the enemy ultimately decided to by-pass Tula, Guderian’s army was forced to split its forces, losing operational effectiveness provided by tactical concentration.” One of the aspects of a ‘meat-grinder’ strategy is to ensure that upon an attempt to by-pass an outlining point of contact, an attempt must be made to tie down an enemy at the by-passing flank so as to split its forces. The split is successful, if the enemy's tactical concentration is diminished to a point where its operational effectiveness becomes strategically trivial.

retreated in the direction of Stalingrad [after which they] tried to fortify themselves on the banks of the Mishkov River.” (pg. 105)²¹

4. **Russia's strategic depth**, as in comparison to countries such as Finland, Norway, Holland, Belgium, France, the Balkans, or those territorially peripheral to Russia such as Belorussia, Moldova, Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, or Estonia, is exemplary for both the number and kind of challenges a Russian military commander may exploit. These can be anything or everything the Russians may find suitable but these relate primarily to the incommunicable distances the ancient Medieval fortresses at Petrograd, Moscow, or Stalingrad subtend. These challenges comprise the natural saliences prominent throughout the expanse of the Russian hinterland. Although perhaps innumerable, these may be waterways, as stated above, or other things. Winter is one of the most popular. In his analysis of one of the challenges of Russia's

²¹ Waterways are an often overlooked aspect of military warfare, especially in Russia. The Russians, however, were keen to take advantage of the waterways throughout the city of Stalingrad region for retreat. Kerr writes, for instance, how “[the] Russians retreated in the direction of Stalingrad and tried to fortify themselves on the banks of the Mishkov River” (pg. 105), while the Soviets also “withdrew all along the line to the east bank of the Don” (pg. 105) Later he states: “The Russian lines formed a semi-circle around Stalingrad that roughly followed the east banks of the Mishkov and Don Rivers.” (pg. 106) After these waterways were no longer capable of fortification, “[it] became clear to the Russian command that it would be impossible to stand and fight along its positions on the east bank of the Don and the east bank of the Mishkov rivers. So on August 31st it ordered a retreat to a new line which went along the east banks of the narrow Rossoshka and Chervlianoi Rivers.” (pg. 107) The insistent reliance upon waterways is one of the least explored themes of Russia's strategic depth. Adding to the interests in waterways is Zhukov's remark on the tactical advantages of rivers along the Mozhaishk line. “The Mozhaishk line had a number of obvious tactical advantages. It was covered by the Lama, Moskva, Kolocha, Luzha, and Sukhodrev rivers, whose steep banks constituted effective antitank obstacles.” (Zhukov: 1969, pg. 47) In addition to antitank defense, Zhukov exploits the waterways for “the first phase of our counteroffensive ended with Soviet forces holding a line running through Oreshki, Straits, the Lama, and Ruza rivers.” (Zhukov: 1969, pg. 90)

strategic depth, Kerr lays claim to “Two Russias” (Chapter XIII).²² Kerr explains how “In Russia the Nazis found two countries, a Russia of summer and a Russia of winter. The former led only to tactical success, the latter to strategic disaster.” (pg. 90). In addition, Kerr writes how “snow [laid] deep” (pg. 13), while “[winter] was chaining Germany’s mechanized army to the roads” (pg. 26) In particular, the Soviets sought to exploit Mother Russia’s winter “to chain” down the two pillars of Blitzkrieg. “But winter prevented the widespread use of tank divisions and chained aircraft to the fields.” (pg. 57) By extension, the chains may be “a terrible snowstorm.” (pg. 38) The exploitation of the temperature such as “1 degree below zero” (Kerr : 1944 ; pg. 37), “ranging from 20 degrees below zero to 40 degrees below” (pg. 44), “the time of January frosts, too cold to snow, too cold for anyone but the man trained for winter warfare” (pg. 45), or “January frosts” (pg. 48)²³ are littered throughout his book, invoking a description exemplified by the term

²² “[The Russians] adopted, therefore, a system of warfare which consisted of organized retreat in summer and counter-offensive in winter. Their method was to pull back from June to the end of October, when conditions best suited the Germans, **to grind down German manpower**, as they retreated and to organize their reserves so that when winter came they could bring more fire-power to bear on the vital sector than the enemy could. It was a costly process, for it meant the abandonment of large fertile areas that the country could not readily afford to lose, and more often than not the Russians found the villages destroyed by the time they were able to recapture them in November, December, January, and February. But it was a great strategy directed by necessity, since the Germans had tank and plane superiority. And it worked.” (pg. 87) “In Russia the Nazis found two countries, a Russia of summer and a Russia of winter. The former led only to tactical success, the latter to strategic disaster.” (pg. 90)

²³ The weather hastens death. “[General Govorov’s best tank commander, Colonel Semeon] told me that in weather such as this a wounded man will die in ten or fifteen minutes unless stretcher-bearers can get to him with heavy blankets and a drink of vodka containing morphine. The wound freezes up.” (pg. 45) “If it was winter-time and the temperature was far below freezing, [the Russian soldier] knew he would be lucky to survive a serious wound, for a wounded man cannot expect to live long unless the stretcher-bearers get to him quickly, wrap him in a heavy blanket and give him a shot of vodka doped with a little morphine. The vodka and morphine were administered to ease the shock.” (pg. 62)

“General Winter,”²⁴ as classic a term as the *rasputitsa*. Although Kerr apparently operates without the term, his description of the thaw right

²⁴ Eastern Europe’s prohibitive weather within the pivot area is historic. It is so pervasive that even English writers deploy language specific to the landmass. In his description of Sweden’s Charles XII, Creasy, the author of *The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World*, remarks how after leaving “10,000 men at Warsaw to guard King Stanislaus, and in January 1708, arrived at Grodno, where he *wintered*.” (pg. 153) The idea that one may have *to winter* is distinctive to the Slavic landmass, especially “Russia proper,” as Creasy calls the Muscovite empire. Called *Le Grand Hiver* in French, The winter of 1709, however, represented one of the coldest in the history of the Eurasian land mass for the past 500 years. (Derham, 1708—1709; Massie, 1981; Lachiver, 1991; Monahan, 1993; Luterbacher, 2004; Pain, 2009) After “wintering,” Charles XII appeared before Borisov where he “forced the Russian army, which occupied the left bank of the Beresina,” [defeating] “20,000 Russians who were strongly entrenched behind the marshes.” Beresina’s marshes, yet another example of rugged terrain in the Kievian Rus landmass, exemplifies the challenges of the pivot area. Not only this but the “Beresina,” as Creasy spells the word, follows a legacy of legend. It is the site of not only of this battle but one of the more famous battles during Napoleon’s War of 1812. Napoleon’s *aide d’camp*, General Philippe de Ségur, who wrote a noted (if not entirely unbiased) history of the campaign, described with horror in the ninth chapter of his book, *Campagne de Russie, Mémoires d’un Aide de Camp de Napoleon*, how the fleeing *Grande Armée* all but perished crossing the Berezina’s freezing cold rapids on a dilapidating, sinking, makeshift rampart. The battle’s tale is often cited by military educators to teach the importance of combat engineers. It is likely that the term “General Winter,” as it has come into use in the Napoleonic literature, stems in large part from *Le Grand Hiver* whose decisive effect undermined Charles XII. Based on the horrendous effect of Russia’s landmass on Napoleon’s *grand armée* during the War of 1812, the Arabs have also deployed the term “General Winter” in literature on Russia. Of *rasputitsa* Major General F. W. von Mellenthin, Chief of Staff, 4th Panzer Army, wrote the following: “At the end of March, 1943, the thaw started on the Eastern front; “Marshal Winter” gave way to the still more masterful “Marshal Mud,” and active operations came automatically to an end.” (Mellenthin, 1956 : pg. 212) Turney discusses Beresina, Charles XII, and Napoleon within the context of F. M. F. von Bock’s campaigns in 1941—1942. (1970 ; pp. 27, 35, 58, 62, 63, 65, 109) Whereas in the Arabic standard for media the term is “جنرال البرد,” in Lebanon, for instance, the term is “جنرال الشيتا.” The Lebanese daily, Al Mayadeen (i.e., الميادين), for instance, caricatures the term within the context of the 2022 Russian winter in its coverage on the Ukrainian war.

after winter corresponds to *rasputitsa*²⁵. In opposition to the *rasputitsa*, “after the winter with its unusually heavy snowfall, an inevitable period of thaw, with its mud, slush, rain, and impassable roads” (pg. 103) arises. Kerr’s “two Russias” are not the full extent of Russia's strategic depth. There are others, often deployed in combination. “The Russians were in a better position to profit by the terrain, the weather, the difficulties of supply in so large a country, night operations and, when they had time to assemble their guns, fire-power on the defense and heavy artillery barrage on the offense.” (pg. 57) The combination of these challenges may be described roundly as ‘holy’ “Mother Russia,”²⁶ where the natural saliences of her bosom coddles Russians, as a mother bear guards her cubs. The effect is almost always negative in more ways than one. Mother Russia is used to upset the “German time-table” (pg. 104). In some cases “the line in street-fighting, battles in the woods, on snow-covered fields” further obstructs a straightforward advance “for every height, for every ravine.” (pg. 58) Occasionally, the fight becomes complicated in “the plains of central Russia” (pg. 50), on the “rolling farm country north of Moscow” (pg. 67), “along country roads” (pg. 48), or “the many points along the country lanes that curved back and forth over rolling country that was partly covered with forest.” (Kerr : 1944; pg. 36) There happens to be “forest warfare” (pg.31) such as in “the woods near the city” (pg. 26), involving “a ravine that leads into the centre of the town,” (pg. 38), a “deep gully through which the Nara River runs” (pg. 32) or within the confines of “the Moscow-Volga Canal” (pg. 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39). Additionally, “fighting in the

²⁵ The *rasputitsa* is present even Creasy’s explanation, albeit unconsciously. His description of the marshes about Peter the Great's redoubts are a physical manifestation of the *rasputitsa* with an English term. Zhukov is at length to explain how the *rasputitsa* played no significant role in the defeat of the Nazis, as he openly admits he would sooner attribute success to his strategy than to nothing more than the environment. Zhukov, who did not have extensive contact with Kerr, discusses the *rasputitsa* at length.

²⁶ One of the journalist in Russia whose stay is contemporaneous with that of Walter Broadman Kerr, is Maurice Hindus. Maurice Hindus’ reporting, which the *New York Herald Tribune* published, covered Hitler’s *Operation Barbarossa* until 1943. In his book, *Mother Russia*, Hindus describes how Russian generals utilized Russia for the sake of its war against the German war machine. (pg. 6)

steppes,”²⁷ or “through the steppes straight to Stalingrad” (pg. 105) occurs. Ever since the great, epic defining battle at Pultowa in 1709, the infamous destruction of Charles XII’s military forces by Peter the Great on his Russian “redoubts”²⁸ constitutes the habitual embodiment of an automatic and enduring reflex for the continued exploitation of fortifications.²⁹ A recurrent theme, the “Great Redoubt” at Borodin, for instance mimicked Pultowa’s. The “bluff” at Stalingrad, which Kerr described as “an astonishing sight,” is a Pultowa redoubt. As Kerr describes, “It was pitted with deep dugouts, some of which went 100 feet into its side,” (pg. 108) while being situated on “the high west bank of the river.” (pg. 110) The Soviets augment the strategic depth of the Russian hinterland with defenses; “Russians were improving their defenses outside the capital, laying barbed wire, mobilizing to dig trenches, tank traps and artillery positions.” (pg. 30) The Soviets exploit the strategic depth of the Russian hinterland’s weather for counterattack. “Then, early on the morning of December 6, when the snow lay deep on the ground, and the exhausted Russians in the line began to wonder if

²⁷ Even when not used in combat, the features of Russia’s landscape are, nonetheless, associated with military figures such as the Cossacks. Considered the finest fighting men Russia had, “down in their own Cossack country along the banks of the River Don, in the valley of the Kuban and on other outposts of the old empire their women and children looked on them with pride.” (pg. 50)

²⁸ *The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World*, Creasy explains how the Czar “arranged his forces in two lines, stretching from one river towards the other; so that if the Swedes attacked him and were repulsed, they would be driven backwards into the acute angle, formed by the two streams at their junction. He fortified these lines with several redoubts lined with heavy artillery; and his troops, both horse and foot, were in the best possible condition, and amply provided with stores and ammunition.” (pg. 153) The Swedes, who charged these fortifications, “recoiled from the blood-stained redoubts.” (Pg. 154) The Russian desire to fortify is a long established tradition dating all the way back to the construction of the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia.

²⁹ The theme of fortifications is almost everlasting for Russia. Surovikin’s lines, as discussed in Chapter, are a response to the more than 20 fortifications the Soviets built in the newly annexed territories such as western Poland, the Baltic states, and former Romania, the lands acquired after the treaty Russia signed with Germany on August 23rd, 1939, a political event for which Leon Trotsky spared no few words to explain in his book, *The Revolution Betrayed*. Chaney describes at least two of these defenses consisting of “belts to a depth of about nine to twelve miles that were to be manned by machine gun battalions.” (Chaney : 1971, pp. 83—4) (David M. Glantz, “The Bases of Future Soviet Military Theory,” pg 80. ; M. V. Zakharov, Генеральный Штаб в Предвоенные годы, pp. 175—6)

help was ever coming, the order came for the reserve divisions to begin the great counter-offensive.” (Kerr, 1944 ; pg. 13). These withdrawals are based on a defense in depth, a term one would not normally find in a reporter's writings.³⁰ Designed for retreat or counterattacks³¹ (Kerr : 1944 ; pg.89), the defenses represent an aspect derived ultimately from Russia's strategic depth.

5. The **art of artillery**³² : is not merely designed “to concentrate more fire-power than the enemy on the vital sector at the right time” (pg. 10), to unleash a “hurricane of firepower” (Kerr : 1944; pg. 63), the focus of which is not “dispersed” but employed “to destroy enemy guns or other definite objects such as pill boxes, troop concentrations, tanks, command posts, and railroad stations.” (Kerr : 1944 ; pg. 67) It is a comprehensive, continuously updated, thoroughly researched, fully intentional policy based upon the Nazi’s deficiencies, weaknesses, or shortcomings. The Soviets targeting strategy for artillery is derived from its application of Clausewitz’s emphasis on the destruction of manpower, as stated above. The objective of continued defensive withdrawal together with artillery sought “to whittle down” any enemy advantage, especially through specialization in weaponry such as anti-tank weapons, in the formation of anti-tank teams, the deployment of anti-tank defense (Kerr : 1944, pg. 71, 76) or against identifiable weaknesses (Kerr : 1944 ; pg. 65) such as

³⁰ “Throughout the early part and middle of the month the Russians had fallen back, but their resistance stiffened as they neared the capital, with the Nazis struggling to divide and encircle the defending divisions, and the Russians relying on defence in depth, coupled with sharp counter-attacks, to keep their lines intact.” (Pg. 39)

³¹ The entirety of these entities is encapsulated later into a single term. The term is revealed in a yet unpublished chapter. When that chapter is published, a reference to this footnote will be introduced at the single term’s first appearance the chapter.

³² See “Expositions” in this book, which contains a more detailed explanation of the Zhukov’s art of artillery in a ‘meat-grinder’ strategy, as applied to NATO’s strategy for what Bolton describes well after Bakhmut-Artemovsk as a “non-strategic supply of military assistance,” where Bolton is one of the few remaining relics of the American pre-Iraq war hawks. Bolton’s COMMENTS ARE from an article published in the *Wall Street Journal* as “Blame Biden’s Hesitancy for Stalling Ukraine's Offensive” on Monday, August 14th, 2023.

against the Nazi's belief in mortars³³ as a substitute or replacement for light artillery (which succeeds for short but not long range fire). (Kerr : 1944 ; pg. 30) In addition, Kerr operates at length to extol the virtues of the Russian art of artillery.³⁴

6. **Schwerpunkt** : Kerr is unconsciously aware of the fact that the Russians operate according to a *Schwerpunkt*. During the battle of Stalingrad, Chuikov, for instance, "knew that he had barely enough forces to hold out, but he said it is written in military law that one sector has to take the suffering so that offensives can be planned" in a primary sector. In terms of the vectorization of the offensive, Kerr observes how Chuikov's "sector was the one picked for the suffering." The shifting of secondary sectors, for instance, to ensure the concentration of forces in the primary sector is a reflection of the Russian incorporation of a *Schwerpunkt* into Zhukov's 'meat-grinder' strategy where a culmination of battles culminates in a victory.
7. **Springboard** : Continued defensive withdrawal provides time in the rear for reserves to be prepared for a springboard to a defensive *Blitzkrieg*. (Kerr : 1944, pp. 34, 127) In his description of Zhukov's springboard against Bock's 7th army and Kluge's 4th army at the battle of Moscow, for instance, Kerr describes how Zhukov withheld trained reserves before a counteroffensive: "Zhukov was tightening his front, creating a giant spring that would snap back when he felt the time was at hand. This is the way he distributed his forces." (Kerr : 1944 ; pg. 25) As he states latter, "[in] the meantime the regular reserve divisions moved up from the east, not to the firing line but to the woods near the city, to be used when Zhukov was ready to use them." (Kerr : 1944 ; pg. 26) "That is how it came about that the spring gradually tightened. On the night of December 5th all Zhukov's reserves were in position. Early in the morning of the 6th, some hours before dawn, his seven armies and

³³ "During this period, they said, the Germans had great superiority in tanks and planes, although their artillery was deficient in one important respect. They had little light artillery, Nazi military experts having decided that mortars can replace light guns. As General Govorov explained later, mortars can replace light artillery for short-range fire, but when the range is up to four, five and six miles they cannot do the job." (pg. 30)

³⁴ See below the Chapter entitled "Expositions," § "The Great Mistake" for an elaboration of Kerr's astute observation on the extreme importance Zhukov and his fellow Russian commanders laid on the perpetual development of a *Russian* art of artillery.

two cavalry corps, all reinforced, were attacking all along the line.” (Kerr : 1944 ; pg. 28) Zhukov dispatched the seven divisions he held in reserve after ‘whittling’ down Germany's 7th army and 4th army, on December 6th, 1941, the Germans immediately raised the call for a retreat, seeking to avert a complete disaster, an event Bock never managed to avoid, as the Turney³⁵ explains in his classic exposition of the Field Marshal’s own memoirs in his book, *Disaster at Moscow: Von Bock’s Campaigns 1941—1942*. The springboard is likely a non-military term Kerr employs for an echelon for which timing is key. Kerr explains “how [Hitler] did not know, any more than the volunteers knew, that the Kremlin was tightening its spring and that one day soon the reserve divisions would be thrown into battle.” (pg. 26) The springboard relies upon the exploitation of Russia’s strategic depth to establish superiority on the front. The exploitation of Russia’s strategic depth along “a wide battle line” (pg.45), for instance, inspires Russians “to entrench, immediately entrench.”³⁶ The enemy “must run into fortified lines that have a well-planned and powerful fire system” (pg. 47). “[To] operate on a wide front” (pg.47) is to establish “superiority on a wide front.” (pg. 75) “But Zhukov was tightening his front, creating a giant spring that would snap back when he felt the time was at hand. This is the way he distributed his forces. He had seven huge armies and two cavalry corps. His front was 200 miles wide, 80 miles north of Moscow and 120 miles to the south.” (pg. 25) The ‘meat-grinder’ strategy tempers the wide front with strategic reserves. “And so it was that up and down the Moscow front in those days towards the end of November Headquarters began throwing its strategic reserves into the battle.” (pg. 25) Generally, the springboard releases its sledgehammer right before “General Winter” lays the thickets snow. “Slowly Zhukov pulled his armies in towards the capital, all the time bringing up reserves from the deep rear and hiding

³⁵ Even Bock, who took inspiration from Charles XII and Napoleon, could sense in the earliest phase of the battle the Russians’ plans. Late in the evening at his headquarters, he wrote in his journal on October 2nd, 1941 the following: “The attack [against Moscow called Operation *Typhoon*] is going according to plan all along the army group’s front. In fact, my troops are advancing so rapidly that I wonder if the Russians are up to their old tricks and are withdrawing *en masse*.” (Turney, 1970: pg. 99)

³⁶ أوكرانيا: الروس يفشلون في التقدم لكنهم متحصنون جيداً، «عربية». ٣ أغسطس ٢٠٢٣ م، أوكرانيا: الروس يفشلون في التقدم لكنهم متحصنون جيداً، «العربية». ٣ أغسطس ٢٠٢٣ م. In both articles, the first by Sky News, the second by Al-Arabiya, the authors discuss the comment made by a Ukrainian official about how the Russians entrench well but fail to advance.

them in the woods near the city. He played them out gradually after November 25 but he was not prepared to launch his great counter offensive until December 6.” (pg. 25)³⁷ The end of the springboard is a sledgehammer; “The time was approaching when Russia would strike back with the force of a sledgehammer.” (pg. 26)

8. A **war economy** is last but not least the continuous transformation of the country’s economy to a war-footing for the purposes of achieving a production advantage or ensuring foundries, factories, plants, or production facilities continue to operate in service of the war effort. The transplantation of Kirov plant to Leningrad (pg. 72, 98), for instance, exemplifies the advanced efforts the Soviets sought to cultivate for the preservation of heavy metal industry. Moreover, the war-footing requires subordination of the civil population to the war; “If the Red Army was going to be able to withstand the Nazi war machine, everything had to be subordinated to the needs of the army. The manufacture of all consumer goods to the needs of the army.” (Kerr, 1944; pg. 15) These interrelated components of Zhukov’s military strategy for the war against the Nazis forms a coherent whole. The war-footing promoted the development of the Soviet military. The Soviet Information Bureau, for instance, focused on studying simultaneously both the engaging and engaged armed forces in action by keeping a close eye on developments on all the fronts. (pg. 106) The SIB sought to generate responsively information to rapidly and actively form resolutions to ensuing challenges in the battlefield. The ‘meat-grinder’ strategy arose in response as a solution to the major deficiencies the Soviets identified. Through its interactions with the German *Wehrmacht*, the Soviet military responded to revelations of weakness with a compensatory response, seeking to find a counterweight to enemy strengths. Withdrawal facilitated the revelation of weakness. “But as many months passed,” Kerr wrote, “the Red Army, because it did not have enough tanks for tank counter counter-attack, learned a great deal about anti-tank defense.” Although Kerr does not mention the SIB specifically, the agency was responsible for military intelligence during the war. In

³⁷ The emphasis on training in the rear or for reserves or what may be generally described as an application of the Suvorov principle to the formation of units for a divisions. (pg. 57, 67) Kerr believed Timoshenko’s decision to train “morning, noon, and night for the specific tasks that faced them” brought about the decisive victory the Soviet government sought against Finland, indicating how the “Red Army of 1941 was not the Red Army of 1939.” (pg. 90)

response to the observation, the Soviets compensated with the manufacturer of weapons. “Its crude, 20-millimeter single-shot anti-tank rifle was not the best anti-tank weapon in the world, but it did a lot of damage, and it had two great advantages over other weapons: it was easy to manufacture and it was easy to operate.” Accordingly, the Soviets implemented compensatory measures to accommodate an exploitation of the revelation of German *Wehrmacht*. “In the spring of 1942 the Inspector-General’s office issued new instructions. The number of anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns was doubled in every regiment and the squadrons were reorganized. One afternoon I saw the new formations on battle maneuvers. Now to every squadron was assigned one 45-millimeter gun or one 76 millimeter gun (1.8 or 3 inch guns), so that at all times the squadron of perhaps 100 horsemen had field artillery for anti-tank fire.” (pg. 55) The ability to integrate these readily produced weapons hinged almost entirely on the Soviet war economy.

24. Gregory Zhukov’s strategy of a ‘meat-grinder’ focused on a few key components such as Clausewitz, manpower, withdrawing to counterattack, Russia’s strategic depth, the art of artillery, a *Schwerpunkt*, a springboard, and a war economy. These components, as is clear from Kerr’s empirical observations surrounding his two usages of the term ‘meat-grinder,’ suggest that the aim is unequivocally the desire to induce collapse gradually in a highly organized combined arms force through a successive reduction of its cadres of professional soldiers, combat effective fighters, trained men, or reserves, the destruction of its manpower, armor, or guns through the use of defense over offensive, as according to those priorities in Clausewitz’s works. The “meat-grinder” strategy focuses almost exclusively on the destruction of the enemy (i.e., manpower).
25. There is sufficient information in Kerr’s accounts on the Nazi’s collapse for it to be summarized. Although Kerr himself believed future research into Hitler’s 25 tank divisions would later provide a deeper insight into the effects of Zhukov’s ‘meat-grinder’ during World War II, Kerr is, nonetheless, well aware of its results on the internal force structure of the Nazi war machine. While at the battle of Moscow, Hitler’s armies suffered; the suffering at the battle of Stalingrad is qualitatively different. The organization of a division designed for the implementation of Blitzkrieg steadily began to erode. The erosion, however, undermined the Nazi’s ability to attack until resulting finally in the annihilation of the German Sixth Army. The gradual, slight, slow destruction of the Nazi war machine over a long period of time eroded the foundations

underlying the Nazi's satisfaction of prerequisites for deploying lightning war, effectively stealing Hitler's thunder. No more pointedly than in the destruction of Paulus' sixth army is the effect of the meat-grinder at Stalingrad clearer than the fact that Zhukov's victory there derived from his steadfast, continual application of the strategy well beyond Moscow. The gradual cumulative, quantitative effects transform at a certain point into qualitative effects.

26. The 'meat-grinder' strategy combines the gradual evisceration of armed forces over an extended period of time with a serial, layered, escalating war of attrition, the objective of which is to annihilate completely not only the structure of the armed forces' divisions (i.e., through the unrelenting destruction of its manpower) at the front but to ensure the State's ability in the rear may continue to field continuously reserves, resupply, renew armor, or produce arms locally in an exploitation of Mother Russia, "General Winter" or Russia's strategic depth, protecting the underlying prerequisites for its means of production (i.e., utilities such as gas, coal, electricity, or water).
27. It is not so much that the Nazi war machine became 'bruised and bleeding,' it became incapable of returning to combat effectiveness its divisions, regiments, battalions, companies, or squads. It could not return itself to its former self. By the time the Red Army perfected the seizure of the German Sixth Army, the Nazi war machine's first loss of an army, Germany's divisional architecture began to crack at the seem. However, the gradual disintegration of its internal force structure began much earlier than the end of the siege of Stalingrad.
28. By the beginning of 1942 Germans sought to disguise their increasing weaknesses through disparaging exaggerations of Russian manpower. On the defensive, Germans often referred to soldiers from the Red Army as "hordes," ascribing Soviet successes to overwhelming numerical superiority. The truth is that quality of German armed forces steadily diminished as a result of a Germany bleeding to death, thereby reducing the quantity of manpower from which Hitler's war machine could extract successively to replace ever greater waves of frontline companies, battalions, regiments, divisions, or, in the case of Stalingrad, entire armies such as the German Sixth Army.

Conclusion

29. One of the things that most perplexed Kerr throughout the entirety of his career is the wonder of Russia. Stalingrad, as a source of perpetual wonder about

Russia, became a fascination for Kerr in the latter years of his career.³⁸ Kerr, for instance, dedicated one of his major works on Russia to *The Secret of Stalingrad*, where Kerr attributes a mystique to Gregory Zhukov's execution of strategy against Germany's *Wehrmacht* at the battle of Stalingrad.

³⁸ In his book Kerr stated: "I have never been able to get a clear picture in my own mind of exactly what happened throughout the sixty-six days of the siege, from September 14th to November 19th. The Russians and the Germans so far have withheld many of the details." (pg. 111) As a result, Kerr developed a life-long fascination with the battle of Stalingrad. There are primarily two causes for this fascination. The first is the secrecy around von Bock's major breakthrough prior to the beginning of the battle of Stalingrad. On August 17th, 1942 von Bock achieved a major tactical victory. Bock's northern column, heavily supported by aviation "broke through Russian defenses near Vertyachi and came out on August 23rd on the west bank of the Volga, only a few miles north of Stalingrad, near the villages of Rink and Erzovka." The resulting breakthrough cut off Stalingrad from the north, eliminating but one line of communication with the rest of the Soviet Union, and that was from the east, across the wide waters of the Volga. The Soviet Information Bureau, however, prevented members of the press from becoming aware of von Bock's achievement until many months later—"not, in fact, until the siege of Stalingrad had been raised." (Kerr, 1944: pg. 106) The fact that the SIB released the details of von Bock's stunning tactical victory only after the Soviet triumph left Kerr outside of the course of current events and leaving the embedded war correspondent in the dark. This only fuels Kerr's deepening curiosity in the actual developments of the battle. The second motivation, which is likely as burning as the first, is the fact that the Soviet Union refused, as a matter of principle and for the sake of maintaining the secrecy of its military operations, to allow war correspondents from America or Great Britain to report from within the city for the entire duration of the battle, heightening the battle's secrecy likely to an unimaginable degree. Kerr relates how he sought in vain for access to the "Volga city" during the next six months. He writes: "No American or any non-Russian can attempt to describe what happened in the next few weeks, nor indeed what happened in the next six months around this Volga city, for the simple reason that only Russians were there." The restrictions on journalists nagged at Kerr. He described how the Soviet bureaucracies stonewalled journalists seeking to witness the battle at the frontlines. "The correspondents asked many times for permission to go down there, and they seldom even got an answer that could be called as much as a refusal. Almost every day from now on a British or American correspondent would visit the Press department in the Foreign Office and ask the department chief, Nikolai Palgunov, for permission to make the trip. And always the correspondent was told that the request would be considered. But not one of them was ever allowed into Stalingrad until the last German had been killed or taken prisoner. Similarly, no military attaché saw the battle." At one point Kerr says, "I have never been able to get a clear picture in my own mind of exactly what happened throughout the sixty-six days of the siege, from September 14 to November 19. The Russians and the Germans so have withheld many of the details." (pg. 110) Kerr relates, however, that he saw three out of the five objectives General von Paulus sought to attain. He was only able to see the Red October Factory, the Mamai Kurgan, and the business center. He saw neither the Stalingrad Tractor Plant nor the Red October

30. Kerr's fascination with the battle of Stalingrad arose from the secrecy with which the Soviets protected its site, soldiers, commanders, history and legacy. During his reporting for the *New York Herald Tribune*, Kerr never received permission to directly access the site of the battlefield, its outskirts, or its center, preventing him from being able to develop an internal image of the fight, as he had in regards to the battle of Moscow.
31. In his book, *The Russian Army, its Men, its Leaders and its Battles*, Kerr went to great lengths to lament his restricted access to Stalingrad, describing with longing his desire to see first hand what had transpired there. "As we neared Stalingrad," Kerr stated, "we began to hope we would be allowed to visit the city near which the surrounded German Army was being ground to pieces. But there was not a chance."
32. In his description of the Germany army as being "ground to pieces," Kerr's expression of his desire to witness the successive destruction of the Germany army clearly reverberates with his identification of Zhukov's 'meat-grinder' strategy. The fact that Kerr never reached the city to examine its ruins stuck with him for the rest of life, spurning him to uncover *The Secret of Stalingrad*. His book is dedicated to dispelling the essence of this mystique in a famous reminiscent of many who have become smitten by the wonder of Russia. Described as a 'miracle,' the victory at Staling, argued Kerr, arose from a masterful deception.