

CHAPTER XIV

U.S.S.R. 1917-1945

A. HISTORY 1917-1945

1. During the 1914-1918 war the deterioration of the Russian autocracy, as evidenced by the lack of integrity at Court and the scandal caused by the influence of the monk Rasputin, became more and more evident and when on 12 March, 1917, a strike leading to the revolution broke out, two Czarist Guard Regiments deserted and joined the revolutionaries.

2. This outburst had been prefaced by the arrival in Moscow of Lenin, who was transported from Switzerland across Germany and through the battle lines in a sealed coach by the Germans, who foresaw the possibility of detaching Russia from her western allies by fomenting a revolution within her own borders.

3. Out of the revolution of 12 March, which is more generally known as the February Revolution (according to the old calendar used by the Russians) was born the first Provisional Government under Prince Lvov and later under Alexander Kerensky.

4. In October of the same year, the radical Bolsheviks seized power from the more moderate Kerensky, who fled to Finland, and Lenin convened for the first time the National Congress of Soviets. This Congress was responsible for the signature of the peace of Brest-Litovsk under the terms of which Russia was compelled to relinquish the three Baltic States, the Ukraine, Eastern Poland and Georgia.

5. After the death of Lenin in 1924, the dispute between the radical doctrinaires and the more moderate group who, in order to strengthen the new regime, were willing to accept temporary compromise, became an open struggle for power between Trotsky on the one hand and Stalin, at that time a comparatively unknown figure, on the other. Stalin won the dispute and became Secretary of the Party—Trotsky was exiled.

6. From 1924 until 1939 a series of five year plans was introduced which made provision for the agricultural and industrial development of the country. Widespread and at times hysterical purges (*e.g.* reprisals taken after the assassination of Kirov in 1934) of political opponents of the regime similarly ensured for Stalin and his supporters a virtually unassailable position at the head of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which in effect, is a federation of 16 Republics. These 16 member Republics are listed at the end of this section.

7. On August 23, 1939, a non-aggression pact with Germany was signed in Moscow, but having few illusions as to the German aims, the Russian Army advanced westwards at the time of the collapse of the Polish Army, and in September, 1939, re-occupied those parts of White Russia and the Ukraine captured by Poland in 1920-21.

8. In June 1940, Russia extended her frontier further west by the incorporation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina from Rumania and the Baltic States consisting of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. This was the line attacked by Hitler on June 22, 1941. During the next 18 months the Russian Armies were compelled to evacuate the Baltic States and Western Russia as far as the approaches to Moscow, and in the Southern Sector, Stalingrad.

9. The German defeat in January 1943 at Stalingrad was the signal for the long

retreat ending in the final capitulation of the Germans, and Russia again occupied the territories evacuated at the outbreak of the Russo-German war.

B. TRANSFERS OF POPULATION

10. The advance of the Germans from the latter half of 1942 and 1943 was the occasion for the deportation to the west of large numbers of Soviet citizens who were used in the German factories, fields and on manual tasks such as the digging of trenches and building of earthworks. From amongst these deportees and Soviet prisoners of war, the Germans also recruited for Vlassov's Army (see C below).

11. Exact figures of the total number of deportees are not available, but it is known that over two million were repatriated to the Soviet during the two years immediately succeeding the cessation of hostilities.

12. Apart from these deportations by the Germans, however, large sections of the Soviet population were transferred to the east by the Soviet Government. The main transfers under this heading are briefly outlined hereunder:—

(a) In 1941 when the German advance commenced, the Volga colony of approximately 400,000 German ethnics was transferred to the east to eliminate the danger of any demonstrations of pro-German sympathies.

(b) On the invasion of the autonomous Crimean Republic (inhabited by Moslem Tatars) by the German-Rumanian forces, large sections of the local population revolted against the Russians and large-scale massacres were committed. The Russians then expelled over a quarter million of the population to the east.

(c) In 1943, the autonomous republics of Karachaev and Kalmuk were suppressed, the Karachaev population transferred east and the territory of both republics re-distributed to neighbouring republics.

(d) In 1943, the Caucasian Moslem tribes of Chechen-Ingush, which, until that time, had enjoyed the status of an autonomous republic, welcomed the German armies as "liberators". Many volunteered for the Wehrmacht or joined gangs of German saboteurs. When the territory was again occupied by the Soviet Union, the population, which remained, was transferred to Kazakhstan and the territory handed over to other tribes.

(e) Of the groups mentioned above, few reached the sphere of western influence and are therefore not generally to be found in IRO areas of operation. The history of the Kaberdine Balkan Republic, some members of which are to be found in Italy, is however, known in greater detail. In 1917, the Kaberdine population numbered approximately 300,000 but after three risings in 1928, 1929 and 1930 against the Soviet Union, fierce reprisals were taken and in 1939 a population of only 170,000 remained. During the war the territory was occupied for a period of 15 months by the Germans and when the German Army began its retreat in 1943, numbers of Kaberdines loaded their farm carts with as many of their possessions as possible, and moved out, first to Melitopol to a refugee centre run by the "Caucasian Committee" under the Ost Ministerium, Berlin. From here, some were directed to Germany (Reichswald and Auklam) and others to Rumania (Osmanuk and Constanza). With the Russian advance in mid 1944, both groups were directed by the Caucasian Committee to Northern Italy, where they subsequently surrendered to the British troops in April 1945. It is understood that during the war none of this group wore uniform or was engaged in any para-military activity.

C. COLLABORATIONIST ELEMENTS OF VLASSOV'S ARMY

13. On 22nd October 1941 Hitler issued an order providing for the formation of the so-called Cossack units to be attached to the German army. The personnel for those units was recruited from amongst old Russian émigrés in Germany, prisoners of war, and disgruntled Russians and Ukrainians coming from those parts of the Soviet Union which had been overrun by the German war machine. The commander of the first unit formed was Major J. N. Kononow. The Russian émigré members usually volunteered and were made officers in these units. They wore German uniforms with a Cossack escutcheon. Later in the war General P.N. Krassnow was made commander of all the Cossack units which were attached to the German army. These units fought all over Europe including Russia, Yugoslavia, France and Italy. There were for example the First East Regiment at Minsk, the East Bobruisk Regiment, the Beresina, Dnepr, Pripjit, etc. battalions, all of whom fought on the Eastern front as integral parts of German units. The Kaminsky Division, composed largely of Ukrainians is alleged to have put down the Warsaw uprising in August 1944. These units became notorious for their atrocities.

14. Andrei Andrejevitch Vlassov, a General of the Soviet army, was taken as a prisoner of war by the Germans at the beginning of 1942. He turned traitor, and together with General Malyschkin and a journalist by the name of Meletij Zykow discussions were held about the liberation of Russia from the communists. These plans were evolved slowly, the basic idea being that appeals would be made from amongst the prisoners of war and forced labourers for volunteers to help create a new Russia. It was not, however, until 14th November 1944 in Prague that the Germans allowed two divisions to be organised, consisting of about 25,000 men. This was called the Russian Army of Liberation, or the R.O.A. It is not known in what, if any, operations the true Vlassov army took part. It has even been stated that it turned against the Germans soon after its formation in Prague.

15. Because of the fact that the plans for a Russian army for liberation had been made public at a much earlier date, many of the Cossack units claimed to be members of the Vlassov army as early as 1942 and wore the shoulder insignia R.O.A. Vlassov claimed that this was done without his permission, although this point has not been clarified. There existed from the beginning a bad feeling between the old Russian émigrés in Germany and Vlassov, and the leader of the former group General Biskupsky advised all Russian émigrés not to join Vlassov's army. Most of them therefore volunteered for the Cossack units, although some later volunteered for the "real" Vlassov army. The majority of the Vlassov divisions were recruited from amongst Russians and Ukrainians in prisoner-of-war camps where it is alleged that rations were stopped prior to the arrival of Vlassov or one of his lieutenants appealing for the establishment of a new Russia and better living conditions.

16. It should be mentioned that Ukrainians dissatisfied with Soviet rule were a special target for recruiting into Vlassov's army under the promise of establishing a thousand year "Free Ukraine". Some Ukrainians who had already volunteered for the Wehrmacht were transferred into Vlassov's army, and these may be distinguished by the fact that they possessed Kennbücher on which the word "Ukrainer" is inscribed on the top right hand corner. (See Section 4, Chapter XXVII.)

17. As mentioned above, many of the personnel of the so-called Cossack units wore the R.O.A. insignia, even though they were not the *bona fide* Vlassov troops. It is therefore difficult to distinguish between a member of the Cossack units and a member of the Vlassov army which was gathered at Prague in November 1944. The only available criteria for distinguishing between them depend, as it is clear from the above paragraphs, on discovering the date of recruitment and places of service, *bona fide* Vlassov troops being recruited late in 1944 and probably not serving in Western Europe.

D. ELIGIBILITY STATUS OF ABOVE GROUPS

18. Cossack units and Vlassov army. The overwhelming majority of the persons who joined the Cossack units were volunteers. Any individual member would therefore *prima facie* be excluded under paragraph 2 (b) of Part II of Annex I to the Constitution. Persons who appear to have been members of the Vlassov army rather than of the Cossack units must be treated on their merits, particular attention being paid to any allegations of duress in their recruitment.

19. Persons from the Crimean Republic, the Caucasian Moslem tribes of Chechen-Ingush and others who volunteered for the Wehrmacht or otherwise voluntarily assisted the enemy forces in their operations are excluded from the assistance of IRO under the terms of paragraph 2 of Part II of the Definitions.

E. LIST OF MEMBER REPUBLICS OF U.S.S.R.

<i>Republic</i>	<i>Capital</i>
Russia	Moscow
Ukraine	Kiev
Belorussia	Minsk
Uzbekistan	Tashkent
Turkmenia	Ashkhabad
Tajikistan	Stalinabad
Georgia	Tbilisi (Tiflis)
Armenia	Erivan
Azerbaijan	Baku
Kazakhstan	Alma-Ata
Kirghizia	Frunze
Karelo-Finnish	Petrozavodsk
Muldavia	Kishinev
Lithuania	Vilnius (Vilna)
Latvia	Riga
Estonia	Tallinn