

The end of the Victorian Age introduced a modernization in the technologies used in tactical warfare. However, strategy lagged behind in 19th Century mentality amongst military and political elites. The study of battle focused on the use of a decisive campaign to destroy the enemy often tainted with the competitive egotism of the military commanders. The changing social, political, and economic environments were left unaccounted for in strategic planning for future wars.

In 1926, Aleksandr A. Svechin put forward in his book, *Strategy*, an ideological neutral and scientifically analytical theory as a framework to adapt to the impending changes in modern warfare.¹ Divergent from the historical view that the military front is the most important area of warfare, he introduced the concept wherein the civilian rear should be the primary focus. Future wars will require the strangulation of the enemy's tail instead of the crushing the head to obtain victory. The wide range of subjects covered in his ideology will be reduced to the main topics of the three fronts of war, politics, economics, and military, and his views on operational art, the link between strategy and tactics in the theaters of war. The best 20th century historical backdrop demonstrating operational art and Svechin's style of planning is the Russian front during the Second World War. Unfortunately by using such an example, the initial disregard of his theories and near collapse of the Soviet Union, will demonstrate that which Svechin warned about. Why, how, and by whom this rejection came about and the eventual acceptance of his strategy leading to the Soviet victory will be explored.

Born in 1878, the son of an Imperial Russian Cavalry officer, he was educated in a cadet school, attended artillery college, and graduated from the Nikolayev Academy of the General Staff

¹ 2nd Edition in 1927. 5,000 copies of each edition printed. *Strategy* was developed from lectures as an instructor during 1923-24.

in 1903. Eventually, he rose to the rank of General in the Czar Nicholas II's army in 1916. His military experience included the Manchurian theater in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) ,and during the First World War, he was stationed at the Russo-Finnish Front. In March 1918, he defected to the Bolshevik cause due to the desperate situation in fighting the Germans.² During the Russian Civil War that followed the treaty of Brest-Litvosk, he was appointed as the military leader of the Smolensk region which was at the time the main Red Army stronghold.³ Following the victory of the Red Army in 1920, he became an instructor at Academy of General Staff of the Red Army.

As an educator, Svechin used techniques of scientific analysis rather than a superficial narrative of military history to forge the next generation of officers. His lectures drew upon his combat experience and centuries of military history. He emphasized that the topics of military history worth studying, were those which shaped future wars. Furthermore, Svechin devoted his efforts to reforming the dominant theory of destruction in a decisive battle and put forth the concept of strategic defense by means of attrition. He viewed the First World War as one of hurried mobilization of military fronts set on quick victory that evolved into a war of attrition on political and economic bases.

Yet at the height of his teaching career, Svechin ideologically confronted the younger and older generation of Red Army officers.⁴ To confident, youthful, yet battle hardened field officers

2 Bolsheviks offered an end to the war and the Provisional Government that replaced the Czar attempted to continue fighting due to Western Allies' pressure. Nicholas V. Riasanovsky. *A History of Russia, 2nd ed.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969): 507

3 The region directly west of Moscow and the traditional invasion route from European invaders, it was the center of gravity for the Red Army in the civil war.

4 Officers who received training under Czarist rule were classified as specialist (*voyenspets*) and always viewed with suspicion as former class enemies.

who used “offensiveness” as a means of victory in the revolution and civil war, his theoretical teachings on strategic defense as way of the future were implausible. To the upper echelons of Bolshevik command, the lack of political correctness along Marxian-Leninist lines, basically not painting things red, invoked dissatisfaction. Eventually his past associations with the bourgeois officer class, *Strategy* not supporting revolution principles, and the paranoid assumption of Stalin that the older generation of military experts posed a threat to his political authority, combined for Svechin's downfall. He was arrested in 1931 and sentenced to five years in a gulag. He was released a year later and returned to work in military intelligence and academic sectors. In 1937, he was charged with the training of terrorists (participating in a counter-revolutionary organization) in 1937, and given a sentence of the first order by Stalin and Molotov. One year later he was shot during the purges of the military command structure, he became a non-person in the Soviet Union, his existence and writings removed from society.

Unfortunately his dedication to the creation of a new generation of officers for service in defending the motherland by politically neutral scientific theories became a threat. To properly understand the political environment in the first generation Bolsheviks, one must remember the decades of betrayal and persecution experienced by the revolutionaries in Imperial Russia. Anything not supporting class struggle was viewed as opposing it. Man had now ascended and replaced god with theory. Therefore, those theories created by man based on the eternal struggle between economic classes were to be religiously revered. You either supported the new regime one hundred percent or were eliminated by it. Scientific fact could also be ignored as long as new ideas to replace it followed party lines. The sciences of sociology and genetics were tossed aside, the former due to lack of need as the new communist society would resolve mankind's ills and the

latter because if you changed the environment you will change the man.

With regards to any military concept presented, it needed to acknowledge certain dogmatic truths. The Red Army will be the vanguard of world revolution and the people will rise up and support it.⁵ War Communism, the militarization of society, is politically correct as means to an end. Lastly, the Red Army tactics using masses of infantry supported by machine guns and artillery along with cavalry raids, will take the fight to the enemy. Essentially the spirit of the Red Army's offensiveness will destroy the enemy. This was their continuing vision of warfare, but unwisely, this confidence in Red Army strategy and tactics developed during a civil war which was used as a model for the future.

Svechin's envisioned a future war not by creating new tactics based on developments in military technologies or a strategy based on solely political ideology. The evolution of warfare no longer tested the strength of military force but rather the social structure of a nation.⁶ No longer will just a decisive battle aimed an enemy force result in capitulation, rather it is to obtain the maximum number of strategic pawns (political, economic, and military) for negotiating peace.⁷ The complexities of modern conflicts will will no longer involve maneuvering battle pieces to a specific place and point in time as in the Napoleonic Era. Multiple points over time in different geographical areas will complicate command and logistics. On such a grand scale in multiple theaters of war. quick destruction in a decisive battle will be impossible. Entire states will wage war using every resources available. Destroying and pursuing the enemy forces will no longer suffice as wars of attrition mean weakening an opposing nation. Goals will need cohesiveness,

⁵ Frederick C. Barghoorn, *Soviet foreign propaganda* (Princeton: University Press, 1964), 84

⁶ Svechin, *Strategy*, 165.

⁷ These "pawns" could include critically important geographic areas such as ports, mountain passes, industrial and agricultural centers as well as cities.

leadership, and coordination.

To accomplish this Svechin developed the methodology of operational art (*operativnoe iskusstvo*) to bridge the gap between strategy and tactics. In his words, "totality of maneuvers and battles in a given part of a theater of military action directed toward the achievement of the common goal, set as final in the given period of the campaign." Deciphered in layman' terms: This is what needs to be accomplished now using what we have available. When accomplished, we will see where we stand, and plan the next round. Operational art is equivalent to a boxing match. Intense training, knowing the enemy, being coached between rounds, and most important keeping your mind in the ring not thinking several rounds ahead while throwing punches.

Strategy, according to Svechin, is "the art of combining preparations for war and the grouping of operations for achieving the goal for the armed forces set by the war." The combined preparations are the political, economic, and the military fronts, essentially total war. Believing the questions were easy, the real task was to choose the correct combination of answers in proper order to obtain the overall objective. First, it is necessary to examine the components of each front as they are the structural bases with each complimenting the other. Afterwards, a system of combining all three fronts, the methodology of operational art will be explained. The extensive geographical area, massive armies, and the temporal nature of future wars require a method of efficiently linking tactics to the grand strategy. When examining the three base components of war preparation, it must also be taken into account the nature of the strategy, whether it is initially weighted towards offense or defense. Aleksandr Svechin spoke French and German, translating and editing other military strategists works into Russian.⁸ Note that previous military concepts will

⁸ The four works translated by A.A. Svechin are listed at the end of this report. Additionally, he wrote, edited, or co-authored 27 books and 50 articles.

be assimilated into his ideology, but the intention was to use past knowledge in application for future conflicts.

Beginning with the a general summary of the three fronts of war is important in understanding Svechin's advocating a war based on strategic defense. The political front is the foundation on which everything is directed. A civilian government must have authority over both economic and military policy. The primary of goal of war is peace and it should not be waged for any other reasons. Stating the political purpose of war must be done near the beginning and remain consistent. Future wars will be the people's war, so they must have an absolutely clear understanding of the political goal. Any type of domestic political adjustment should be conducted before hostilities commence, as attempting to cure the ills of a nation during or by waging war will be self-defeating. Objectives stated obviously must be within the capacity to wage war. Furthermore, the formula to calculate objectives will be complicated as the enemy's political situation is to be included. Analyzing the opponent's domestic and international politics, doctrines, and even press statements are necessary to understanding their position. In a politically offensive war you must attack their political weak points. The side that is a unified enemy will be unbeatable.

Since all decisions are made by the political authority of a state, a solid choice between the type of war, level of preparedness on fronts, as well as which geographic theaters, must be expressed without wavering. Without a proper mission, neither the military nor economic fronts can be organized and function without breaking down. The relationship between the civil government and military command has to follow certain guidelines. Top military commanders should be located at the rear close to civilian leadership, as well as civilian officials placed

amongst the field commanders in order to stay in touch with the reality of the situation.

Understanding prevents disagreement. Also, a military supreme commander should not be placed in a leading position due to the tendency for autocracy to develop. The civilian decision making process differs greatly from the military. An organizational culture must be developed in peacetime, because during war, the rear areas are first area to stress and breakdown.

International politics involving alliances, war plans, and preventive strikes require careful consideration. If a military alliance is formed it should be based on clear facts, number of troops, time period, quantities of material support to be delivered, and agreement of war aims. An alliance based on the promise of eventual action is not a commitment. Military leaders should have input but final approval is the responsibility of civil leadership. Treaties should consider the needs of the people in an alliance not the desires of a ruling class. A government cabinet negotiating a treaty favoring a society's elite is not worth the paper it is written upon. The approval of disadvantageous treaties will result in loss of political authority over the domestic populace.

War plans should be created involving all possible scenarios, an ally today could be a foe in a few years. The use of a preventive strike on an enemy is valid if their future strength would be more difficult to overcome. Also policy should also be in place to deal with occupied territories with political managers and military personnel trained for task. Ill treatment of a populace for a day can produce an enemy for years. Most of these decisions for dealing with various international political scenarios must be decided at least five years in advance with attention to reviewing and updating plans every two or three years.

When considering the military front, Svechin divides strategy into separate theories, offensive by destruction and attrition by defense. Each has unique economic needs, which will be

discussed later, but both involve a common operational element essential for success. One might assume the offense is associated with attacking. Svechin states that it is the deployment of forces as the most crucial element for attack and is used in both offense and defense. Any action attempted before forces are properly positioned and lines of communication secured can be labeled adventurism and an ill advised methodology.⁹ Lines of communication include functioning command structure, access to reserves and supplies, and ability to evacuate casualties. The unifying concept of deployment between offense and defense is the ability to react to changing circumstances. Readiness to react in the fog of war is preferred to rushing into uncertainty with the most spectacular of plans.

The enemy, of course, will have its own plans for deploying its forces and herein lies the foundation for Svechin's reasoning for the primacy of being set first. Vulnerability of forces is highest during deployment ,so it must be done carefully. The forces deployed first will often be the victor in battle. Victory, however, is not total amount destroyed but rather those eliminated with minimal loss to the attacker. The technique of using deployed forces is to have the capacity to counter-attack when the enemy forces have lost momentum in the battle. He also cautions against the pursuit of routed forces in efforts eliminate more enemy forces as it puts the pursuer at risk. The small amount of forces that escape in each battle are not worth the potential losses if a counter-attack is encountered. Enemy losses are accumulated in a step-by-step process in an effort to weaken them. A chain of smaller victories is preferred over risking a large mass of forces in one confrontation.

In directing the economic front, it is important for civilian leadership to have primary

⁹ Svechin states this as the reasoning behind the army's failures in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05. A general inability of the Imperial Russian general staff to master modern warfare.

control. The military high command should have a staff trained to understand how the state's economy functions. The civilian control of the war, while deciding the objectives of the war, should also be planning the supply of the operations. The military economic staff is designed to communicate needs not make demands. If they had absolute control over economic production, it may focus on stockpiling equipment, thus damaging the domestic economy and furthermore not understanding why the capacity for future demands is not possible. Civil oversight will need to balance between public and military needs in peacetime and the transition to a wartime economy. The outcome of wars in the future will depend on which states can organize its the economic fronts for maximum production capacity with minimal disruption to society.

Civil government has two very important functions in preparing for war. The first is organization of non-military resources that will be needed for war. Transportation and communication systems should have prewar plans in place on how to cooperate to accommodate to military needs. These critical industries will need total discipline to function in wartime. Nothing will limit the capacity to wage war more than lacking the ability to transport supplies. Factories should know in advance if some of its production output will be war material. To demand a truck factory produce one hundred tanks on a week's notice is implausible. War plans must closely parallel the economic build up in gradual stages. The second function is an awareness that the military armament needs of today may not suffice tomorrow. Planning to phase an entire industrial sector into producing artillery once a war begins, and then, unexpectedly in the first days of conflict, the entire air force is destroyed on the ground will disrupt the grandest of plans. Poor economic foresight can unwittingly aid the enemy. Not only should current industrial facilities be prepared for the shifting production but any future economic development should include eventual

use in support of the war effort.

Preparing an economy for warfare is also highly dependent on the population. The importance of initially stating clear war goals must be understood by the people. The mass production of industries with men laboring with new technology needs to be honed for its potential and low moral will diminish its effectiveness.¹⁰ A highly motivated and cooperative workforce is a critical factor in economic success.

The labor pool will also have to be analyzed between who can fight and who can produce. An absolute inflexible line does not have to be drawn, but correct allocation of labor must be calculated. A one million man army is ineffective without ammunition as well as one hundred tanks without spare parts. Svechin also recommends the intermingling of some workers in the army and soldiers at factories to help moral and understanding of their symbiotic relationship. Traditional Russian armies of the past were based on conscripted peasants and had little in common with industrial workers in urban areas. Location of staging centers located near the actual reserves of soldiers will reduce the chaos during rapid mobilization. Potential for new recruits must be calculated and known in advance, for in the age of rapid fire weapons, there will be the need for fast replacements. Soldiers cannot be forged over night but basic military education should be introduced into public schools to increase the size of the conscription pool. Finally, a sufficient officer reserve capable of handling this growth in personnel must also be established.

Common sense would dictate locating industries producing war material near the military units as most efficient. Contrarily, Svechin advises that industries should be dispersed taking into consideration the geography of a state. It is more important to have factories near their required

¹⁰ Svechin refers to this new age of industrial manufacturing as “Fordism.”

raw material than troops near their supplies. Scattered industries will be able to produce and increase output even if the military front is losing territory. War production requires an adaptable blueprint that can gradual adjust to changing military need. New agencies may have to be created in peacetime. Organization started from scratch will be mistake ridden, expensive, and disruptive to society. A reference to American economic and military mobilization for the First World War was an example of unpreparedness in Svechin's *Strategy*. Equally important is the use of intelligence forces to gather enemy data as budgets and parliamentary allocation of funds can be analyzed to learn the enemy's future capabilities and intentions.¹¹

A battle's crucial moment is when an enemy force has expended its momentum, and at this culminating point, initiative from the defender allows a counter-attack. Similarly in Svechin's analysis the economic front also has a culminating point. This is when a state's maximum industrial capacity has gradually been reached, and its economic weight can be thrown at an enemy. The defender now becomes the aggressor. However, until this peak is obtained, all operations planned or battles fought must by design systematically reduce and delay the enemy based on this calculated juncture. Therefore economic planning may be the most complex of all the fronts but it is the base on which future conflicts will be decided. Svechin also notes that an indication that planning was poor, and a war will be lost is when people start profiting due to shortages in domestic consumer markets.

The organization of war plans goes well beyond readying the armies and navies of a state. Militarization, Svechin warns, should not create military state within a state. This societal level

¹¹ For example the 1914 Schlieffen Plan, Germany's invasion of France via Belgium, was an indication of future plans by the growth of the railways and stations leading to Belgium and not France in the years preceding the war. Svechin, *Strategy*, 172.

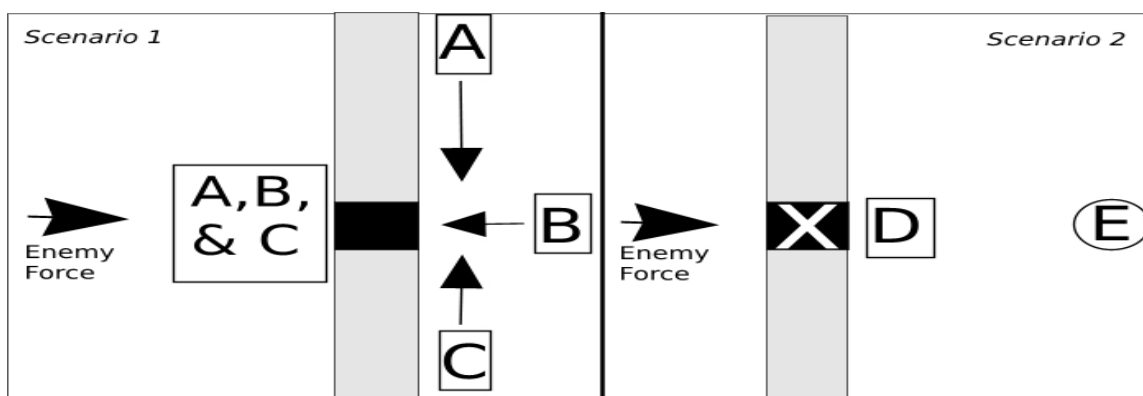
structure for support of the military is not the means to an end that produces a separate class in control of a society.

Svechin discusses a multitude of war's aspects and, by mentioning them as they relate to a few principles of war, gives additional insight into his ideology.¹² He does not alter or attempt to change the basic principles but displays the value in keeping open minded to alternatives.

- *Mass*- Quantity must be balanced with quality. Troop allocation is affected by theater operations not solely tactical needs. Troops can be split into rear guards and reserves to adjust to changing events as needed.
- *Concentration* – While as an offensive tactic is effective, the enormous size of future forces being transported on limited trunk lines of roads and railroads can result in chaos. Splitting forces into manageable and supportable sizes may prove more effective.
- *Unity of command*- Officer selection based on talent, promotion on merit, and unified training with an emphasis on harmony. Characteristics that are important in commanders include the ability to learn, having a vision of the future, and willingness to debate not compete. An officer who is very successful in battle using a narrow range of his favorite tactics may not be the best candidate for promotion.¹³ An officer that has not been outstanding in victories yet has shown creativity in difficult situations is preferred.
- *Economy of force*- Massing troops in one area for a battle will weaken other districts. Using units wisely can be an alternative. Take the following example in defending an important bridge:

12 Principles of War. Dr. Pohl, HIST 5362 lectures- Spring semester 2007.

13 Svechin, Strategy, 318.



Scenario 1 draws forces **A**, **B**, & **C** from all along the front to concentrate in defense of a possible enemy attack. This weakens the sectors from where they withdrew. *Scenario 2* leaves force **D** to defend the bridge with the option to destroy it in the event of a major assault rather than surrender it. Operational planning in the theater can allocate a small engineer unit **E** and materials in reserve to rebuild the bridge when needed. Svechin promoted the merits of analytical thought over passionate impulses. *Scenario 2* has more options and uses less resources in realizing its objective.¹⁴

- *Flexibility*- Objectives in operations should be stated clearly and in the form of directives as opposed to orders. If all unit commanders uniformly comprehend the objective the sum of their actions will focus on the goal. Strict orders can be subject to interpretation. Once tactical combat initiates, planning ends. Officers on the ground will know how to adapt to the situation. Strict orders negate opportunity, introduce a time delay, and can create unnecessary losses.
- *Security*- There should be an emphasis on security during deployment before an attack or defense. Enemy action can easily disrupt an operation during this vulnerable period. Again as, an example, take a boxer in the ring, gloves up to guard as he or she maneuvers into position.
- *Initiative*- On a tactical level, this should be in the hands of the field officers, as this

¹⁴ *Scenario 1* was a tactic used by the Russians in WWI with little success. Svechin, *Strategy*, 215.

supports unity of command. On the operational level, plans must be calculated to act at any given moment and in any situation with the resources available at that time.

- *Maneuver*- Napoleon had the advantage of receiving reports from his commanders on troop status by evening and could issue orders in the morning. Modern warfare adds delays due to the large troop formations and scale of theaters. Positioned troops can report and be directed in a 12-hour time span. Troops that are maneuvering will be harder to communicate with, and a 24- to 36hour delay can be expected. The nature of future wars has the added elements of enlarged time and space which must be accounted for.
- *Surprise*- Modern technologies, airplane and telegraph, diminish the element of surprise. New methods of camouflage and increased secrecy in communications should be found. Not only a tool for the offense, pulling backwards in unexpected leaps before each enemy attack does more than buy time. It complicates the enemy's plans and forces recalculation of each attempted offensive move.
- *Simplicity*- Dependency on the use of strict timetables or complex maneuvers in planning should be avoided. War is a two-sided affair, and complicated plans can be easily derailed by unexpected enemy actions.
- *Morale*- Focus should be on the political education of field officers. Discipline developed during peacetime training takes a very long time to develop. As the war progresses and new recruits are set to the front, they will arrive with less discipline. Veteran field officers must be able to cope with this. Additionally pulling some veteran officers off the line to assist in training new forces would be wise. Rear based general staff must visit the fronts and be able to interact with the troops.

Complex preparations are, as previously stated, dependent on a defined political goal. Once the goal of the war has been stated, operations begins. Operational art is the division of long range aims into segments, each with a limited goal. As each is achieved, the following objective must take into account all new information for war is a two-sided affair. Therefore that which has changed sets the parameters in regards to capabilities in the next operation plan. If the three components listed earlier were executed effectively, then the data used to calculate the next limited objective shall be easier to apply. Any opportunities or difficulties in the next plan will require only minor adjustment. However in connecting these series of battles within an operation and further linking of operations, there should be no deviation that would contradict the main political goal of the war.

Connectivity of small continuous tactical battles should be used for each limited goal.. Variables that will greatly effect the level of details are the initial choices between destruction (offense) or attrition (defense). Offense by its focal nature has more preset orders limiting variables (and initiative). Defense, with its reactionary nature, needs to take into account more factors such as geography, enemy movements, and the requirement of more decisions. Over time, the culminating point of the economy, at its maximum capacity to support the military, will most likely influence the choice to prefer destruction over attrition. However the condition of the enemy's economy, not just military strength, must be accounted for in calculating that decision. Blue-prints for a war plan with estimated limited goals should be sketched out and re-evaluated every few years. Svechin summarizes all of this simply as, “an operational plan is how we must act at any given moment and in any situation with the resources available at that time.”

The choice we have been emphasizing between strategic working hypotheses for the

military always remains in the hands of the state's political authority. In the late 1920's as the Soviet Union, stabilized a new direction was required to meet the needs of future wars. The two competing strategies came from Svechin, who favored attrition (*izmor*) and General Tukhachevsky, another member of the Soviet military staff, who promoted annihilation (*sokrushenie*). The choice made by Joseph Stalin in favor of the offense was based on past recent events and the political ideological climate of revolution exportation. Disregarding the enemy's future potential and the inherent advantages of his nation, the decision would eventually cost close the lives of 20 million Soviet citizens.

The Stalin-Tukhachevsky relationship started during the Russo-Polish war in 1920-21. After the initial Polish invasion pushed into Russia territory, Tukhachevsky commanded a destructive deep penetration counter-attack against the Poles to the northern edge of Warsaw. Simultaneously, Red Army forces supported by the political co-leadership of Stalin in a cavalry-based unit (*konarmia*) were to attack from the south in support.¹⁵ Alternative political motives, Stalin wanting to discredit Red Army leader Leon Trotsky, resulted in Stalin changing the orders from Moscow. The over extended counter-attack by the Red Army forces Tukhachevsky commanded failed due to military, economic and political reasons. One third of the Red Army forces perished in the offensive and the lines of communications were over extended and unprotected.¹⁶ The original goal of destroying the Polish forces had also changed during the campaign to a political objective of liberating the workers of Warsaw. The Poles rallied to defend the motherland, and outflanked the overstretched and weakened forces defeating them in battle named “the Miracle on the Vistula.”

15 J. Stalin's experience in the cavalry units may have influenced his favoritism of mobile units and trusting of cavalry officers.

16 80% of the casualties were hard core veterans from the Russian Civil War. Bruce W. Lincoln. *Red victory : a history of the Russian Civil War*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 416

The lack of unity of command, poor logistics, and changing goals, in Tukhachevsky's viewpoint were not lessons learned in this failure. He pointed the blame at the forces Stalin directed not knowing it would influence his fate.¹⁷

Continuous deep operations (*glubakaya operatsiya*) taking the battle to the enemy would succeed, according to Tukhachevsky's, through a modern mass mechanization of the Red Army.¹⁸ He viewed this as critical in overcoming the difficulties in the long range assault attempted on Warsaw. Modernization, combined with the fighting *elan* of Soviet soldiers on a mission to liberate proletarian classes, would hammer their opponent and create a revolution from without.¹⁹ The political theory was to be sold even after failure in the in Polish campaign. Consequently during the Spanish Civil War, additional faults developed in Tukhachevsky's belief in 20th century mobility as a vision for the Red Army. There the Soviets supplied a few mechanized forces to assist in fighting fascism. The result, armored vehicles that broke down and poor communication with infantry due to failed radios, equated to combat ineffectiveness.²⁰ Converting a peasant nation with few roads and even less experience with modern vehicles, to an elite mechanized fighting machine seems a Communist fantasy. Regardless of reality and experience, the inherent historical strengths of Russian people (nationalism) and continent (vast size) were ignored. Destruction of the enemy was chosen, and the plans necessary were put into place. Stalin's economic policy of

17 Tukhachevsky joined the ranks of 30,000 armed forces' members killed during the military purges of the late 1930's. Stalin nicknamed him, "Napoleonchik." Simon S. Montefiore, *S. Stalin-The Court of the Red Tsar*. (Alfred K. Knopf, New York 2003), 222.

18 After Tukhachevsky execution, teaching his theories of deep battle into enemy's territory were banned from military academies. Condoleeza Rice, "The Party, the Military, and Decision Authority in the Soviet Union" *World Politics* 40, no.1 (1987):58.

19 Combined armed forces refer to developments not only in armored vehicles but artillery and aircraft. Tukhachevsky believed adding revolutionary fervor to the mix guaranteed success. B.J.C. McKercher and Michael A. Hennessy. *The operational art : developments in the theories of war*. (Westport,CT: Praeger, 1996).

20 Jonathan M. House *Combined arms warfare in the twentieth century*. Lawrence(: University Press of Kansas, 2001):115.

industrialization would further support modern mechanization. Unfortunately, one decisive punch that would annihilate the enemy places a premium on tactics over strategy and is a backward looking 19th century methodology.

The mid-1930's saw a build up of Soviet mass mechanized armies along with supplies and production facilities along its western region and concentrated in major cities. The traditional carving up of Poland in September 1939, with Soviet forces occupying the eastern region, further extended massive armies and support units. However, by 1941 this mechanized army was wearing out and no longer a match for the current German mechanized tactics based on blitzkrieg.²¹ The Svechin's theory of strategic defense, labeled passive by his opponents, may have bought time in the first stages of the invasion to improve the situation. The application of blitzkrieg by extremely superior Nazi forces vaporized this supposedly mobile Red Army and air force in a matter of weeks.²² Yet the history of the Soviet Union's survival is well known but not accredited to Svechin's premonition. As the nation crumbled, it seems that Stalin began to draw upon strategic defense as proposed by Svechin.²³ The geographic battlefront was thousands of miles long, and the area to maneuver was just as deep. The economic base came to the forefront as factories were uprooted from vulnerable areas and transplanted eastward to the Ural mountains region. Previously in the 1920s, the Soviet Union, as a pariah in the world arena, allied with Germany. New alliances were based not on diplomatic promises but negotiated exact numbers of material. The United

21 Cynthia A. Roberts. "Planning for War: The Red Army and the Catastrophe of 1941," *Europe-Asia Studies*/ 47, no. 8. (1995):1304.

22 In the first 21 days of the war, Soviet losses were 2,000,000 men, 3,500 tanks, and 6,000 aircraft. Montefiore, *Stalin*, 378.

23 The memoirs of Soviet General N.G. Pavlenko claimed that Svechin's *Strategy* though banned, was openly displayed on the tables of many war department during the conflict. People science: "War and Peace- General Svechin"; available from http://64.233.179.104/translate_c?hl=en&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&langpair=ru%7Cen&u=http://www.znanie-sila.ru/online/issue_182.html&prev=/language_tools, Internet; accessed 13 April 2007.

States war material assistance was a key factor in preventing the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Attrition views that surrendering of territory is less costly than defending it due to losses in men, material, and time. The Nazis demonstrated how expensive that could be. A series of planned battles over time to weaken the enemy through attrition to a culminating point (political, economic, and militarily), followed by swarming mass attacks of men and material might to destroy the Nazis would summarize the Eastern Front during the Second World War. The idea of a culminating point can be expressed in one word, the battle of Stalingrad. The war began as a match between ideologies that evolved into a people's war just as Svechin had predicted.

Svechin stressed an essential element in conducting warfare is a political goal supported by the populace. An example of how the initial goal evolved towards Svechinite theory can be viewed in the following example. Soviet propaganda at the start of the war promoted the destruction (*sokrushenie*) of fascism set as a political goal by Stalin. Eventually, it evolved into the Great Patriotic War based on attrition (*izmor*). This metamorphosis can be illustrated by Soviet posters of the era.



Illustration 1.



Illustration 2.

The 1942 poster represents the original Soviet strategy of destruction (before the Battle of Stalingrad) and shows the enemy soldiers only, minimal quantity of Soviet weaponry demonstrating superiority in battle, and displays identifying marks of each nation (Illustration 1). Illustration 2 shows a shift in ideology, is devoid of an enemy but displays a Caucasian male (presumably of Russian ethnicity, shows a quantity of arms (economic strength), and promotes Russian culture and history as opposed to the international brotherhood of Communism. Although the intentional use of red, symbolizing revolution or nationalism, is open to debate. Additionally in influencing the nation, Stalin allowed the reopening of churches along battle fronts to supply the spiritual needs of the people that Marxism had hollowed out.²⁴

Contemporary Red Army commanders were not the only opponents of Svechinism (strategic defense). Soviet journalists of the day also became negative critics. One review of *Strategy* that appeared in the the Red Army General Staff journal, *War and Revolution*, put it bluntly, “No!” (nyet).²⁵ The review article emphasized that nowhere does Svechin specifically name the Soviet Union, so his theories were not providing support for the revolutionary cause. Furthermore, he proclaims the book offers little help to the military because it lacked specific details.

Another published review says the book is dangerous due to its abstract nature.²⁶ The review continues on to suggest that Svechin may have even committed a crime, when he discussed a solution to the ease in which modern German artillery destroyed Russian forts in the First World War. The recommendation in *Strategy* that the forts should not be built due to ineffectiveness and

24 Edgar Snow. *The Pattern of Soviet Power*. (New York: Random House, 1945):186.

25 V. Novitskii, “Critique of *Strategy*”. (Moscow: Voennyi vestnik, no. 1, 1927): 152-158.

26 A. Vol'pe. “Critique of *Strategy*”. Moscow: Voennyi vestnik (1927).

high costs, in the reviewer's opinion, was disrespectful to the experts of Soviet military engineering. A third review discredits *Strategy* for the mere fact that the author has tried to present new theories and did not provide new terminology to accompany it.²⁷ He adds a “strategic peak” in mobilization was also not possible; there could be no increase in troop strength during a future war as Svechin suggests. The critic stated it was a fact that as the First World War progressed the Russians did not greatly increase the size of their armies so they could not do so in the future. One might deduce they missed the point. Furthermore General Tukhachevsky personally joined the attempt to discredit Svechin having testified at his last trial. It seems that from every angle, the politically incorrect by reason of neutrality combined with that belief open-mindedness should replace narrowly focused dogma, disturbed the Bolshevik's operational doctrine. Svechin put it bluntly, “The normal fate of the prophets - stoning.”

A time capsule analogy would best describe *Strategy* in relation to the eerie prediction of future wars. Many factors have changed since the Second World War. On the political front, the number of states has increased with the dissolving of colonialism, imperialism evolved into four decades of a superpower Cold War, and the advance of invisible enemies influence our times. In regards to applying Svechin today, other changes in technologies in computers, nuclear weaponry, and submarines have affected the military front. The globalization of economies, plus the influence of multi-national corporations, complicate matters. Yet all this has not erased the principle of operational art in military circles.

Both current United States and former Soviet military departments define and teach a form of operational art. The United States version is a narrow definition along military terms without

²⁷ I. Modlin. “Review of A. Svechin's *Strategy*.” (Moscow: Voennyi vestnik, 1927).

inclusion of political or economic bases in its formulation.²⁸ The latter 20th century Soviet era lecture material devotes an entire chapter to operational art and considered modern aspects such as rocket forces, airborne and seaborne assaults to name a few.²⁹ Again, though the term survives, only the military base is covered in academic circles at the Soviet General Staff Academy. One might surmise the advent of nuclear weapons and delivery systems in the later part of the 20th century has help to diminish the validity of strategic defense through attrition.

A leading promoter for the reexamination of Svechin's work is Andrei A. Kokoshin, a civilian official serving as both first deputy minister of defense under Boris Yeltsin and later in the Duma, promoted radical reform of Soviet strategy and forces during the 1980s.³⁰ Kokoshin applied Svechinite strategy in authoring books on on future war and its prevention from a Russian perspective. The 21st century presents challenges that would most definitely benefit from a scientific analysis through Svechin's framework. The conclusion is not only has *Strategy* been an insight to the wars of the 20th century but also is an important guide for those attempting to create foreign policy in the near future.

28 Operational art- The application of creative imagination by commanders and staffs supported by their skill, knowledge, and experience to design strategies, campaigns, and major operations and organize and employ military forces. Operational art integrates ends, ways, and means across the levels of war. US Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms JP 1-02, 2007.

29 Ghulam D. Wardak. *The Voroshilow Lectures- Materials from the Soviet Academy Vol.III Issues of Operational Art.* (National Defense University Press, Washington, D.C. 1992):15-49.

30 For those further interested in Andrei A. Kokoshin work; *Soviet Strategic Thought, 1917-91*, published by BCSIA Studies in International Security. MIT Press.

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