

DOCUMENTS ON THE SOVIET MILITARY OCCUPATION OF ESTONIA IN 1940

Tõnu Tannberg¹, Enn Tarvel²

¹*University of Tartu*, ²*Kistler-Ritso Estonian Foundation, Tallinn*

Abstract. The documents being published obtained from Russian State Archives and Russian State Navy Archives once more confirm the opinion already firmly established in the literature on history that in 1940 the Red Army braced for a full-scale military action against Estonia and other Baltic states, like it did in autumn 1939.

Keywords: the Soviet occupation, annexation, sovietisation, Estonia, the Baltic states

1. Foreword

One of the most significant results of the 1917 October Revolution and the ensuing civil war was the cardinal transformation of geopolitical position of Russia, having taken shape during centuries. The gaining of independence by borderlands of the former Russian Empire – Finland and the Baltic provinces – was something towards which the leadership of the Soviet Russia felt special enmity and aversion. According to the opinion of the bolshevist leadership, the establishment of independent border states brought about strategic imbalance in north-west Russia, directly jeopardising one of the most important industrial centres of the state and the “cradle of revolution” – St. Petersburg, blocking the earlier operative trade relations with Western Europe. Therefore the main objective of the Soviet power in the Baltic region was, from its very inception, restoration of the pre-WWI *status quo* or in other words – destruction of the independence of small bordering states emerging on the ruins of the Empire, which was also in elegant harmony with attempts to realise the utopian dream of bolshevists – the world revolution.

The independence of the bordering states was anyway considered in Moscow to be a temporary phenomenon. It was taken as granted that in the nearest future the former situation in the Baltic area would be restored. This was the stance the major part of the then power elite of the Kremlin embraced, pinning their hopes on the impending revolution in Germany in the first place. The peace treaties con-

cluded with Estonia, Finland and Latvia in 1920, were viewed as compromise, imposed on bolshevists by complicated domestic and foreign policy situation. The refusal to accept the new independence of the bordering states determined the economic and foreign policy of Moscow and the elaboration of military-strategic plans in the direction of the Baltic states (cf. in greater detail *Sõja ja rahu vahel* 2004:293–333).

The military and political Soviet leadership regarded, in the interim period between wars, the Western war theatre as stretching from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. Considered as the main enemy of the Soviet state was first and foremost Poland, who could start war against the Soviet Russia, together with its allies Rumania, Estonia and Latvia, actively supported by two great powers: England and France. Moscow was supposed to avert the presumed attack by a powerful counterattack, which would, in its turn have triggered massive workers' revolts in the "invading states". This principled approach persisted until mid-1930s and met with approval on the highest echelon of power – in the Politburo of Central Committee of the All-Union Communist (Bolshevik) Party.

In 1928, a secret report "The Future War" was drafted in the 4th Authority of General Staff of Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, which clearly manifested the attitude of Moscow to the bordering states. The said report ascertained the fact that among the western neighbours, the Soviet Union had the least antagonism with Finland, who had ethnographically, economically and also historically "the right to independent existence, which the Soviet Union does not challenge". Underlying that opinion was the acknowledgement by the military of the fact that there was no economic strife between both states. The then analysts of the General Staff of the Red Army however had a dramatically different view of the Baltic states, who mounted an obstacle on the path of the Soviet Union to the Baltic Sea, by the "fact of their independent existence", to its key ports and "would generate significant obstructions to economic development of the Soviet Union". Further on the report made an unequivocal statement: "From the economical point of view, the independent existence of those dwarf states is not justified".¹

2. The beginning of abolishing independence of the Baltic states in 1939

The implementation of the plans to abolish the independence of the Baltic States started step by step in 1939, after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was concluded. WWII starting on 1 September added impetus to the military planning directed against Finland and the Baltic states and the concentration of troops against those states. At the beginning of 1939, the Leningrad Military District numbered altogether 17 divisions, constituting ca. 10% of the overall number of Red Army divisions (Manninen 1992:113). In early September, there was mobilisation of

¹ Russian State Military Archives (RGVA), f. 33988, op. 2, d. 682, l. 42–50.

reservists carried out in the Soviet Union, resulting in the completion of new divisions.²

The direct military preparations directed against the Baltic states were started at the same time when the Red Army prepared for an attack against Poland and for “liberating” West Ukraine and West Belarus. For preparing an attack against Estonia and Latvia, concentration of troops in Pskov was started. On 14 September, the 8th Army, formed on the basis of the Novgorod Army Group, was dispatched there. Placed under the command of Leningrad Military District was the 7th Army, completed by mobilisation in the Kalinin Military District. The Soviet Union assumed control over Estonia’s sea connection with the outside world and its air space. Under the pretext of an attempted escape of the Polish submarine “Orzel” the Soviet submarines and navy warships carried out, from 19–30 September, in the Gulf of Finland and Bay of Riga the search raids of the “enemy’s” submarines, penetrating also into Estonia’s territorial waters. On 25 September, the Soviet aircraft launched massive intelligence flights over Estonian and Latvian territories, taking photographs of airfields, defence facilities, batteries and other objects.

Coincidentally with carrying out sea and air blockade, there was an ongoing concentration of troops on the borders. On 26 September 1939, the People’s Commissar for Defence K. Voroshilov issued a command, whereby the Chief of Leningrad Military District was ordered to forthwith “start concentrating the troops on Estonian-Latvian border and to finish that operation on 29 September” (Meltjuxov 2002:147). Voroshilov wanted the plan of operation ready by 27 September and emphasised that “for the time of starting the attack a separate directive will be issued”. On the following day – 28 September – he approved the plan of operation directed against Estonia, also giving an order that in the course of military activity railway bridges should not be destroyed.

Concentrated between the Gulf of Finland and Lake Peipsi was the Separate Rifle Corps of Kingisepp, to the South of Lake Pihkva the troops of the 8th Army and in the district of Sebezh, Juhnevitsh, Kljastitsy the units of the 7th Army, in the composition whereof were incorporated part of the 3rd Army of the Belarus front, concentrated from 26–29 September on the left bank of River Daugava. Concentrated against Estonia and Latvia were, out of the troops of three military districts, altogether 20 Rifle Divisions, 4 Cavalry Divisions, 10 Armoured Brigades and 2 Rifle-Machine Gun Brigades. Concentrated on Estonian border were 7 Rifle Divisions, a Cavalry Division, 5 Armoured Brigades, a Rifle-Machine Gun Brigade, 6 Artillery Regiments of the Corps and High Command reserves and a number of other support units. Concentrated against Latvia were 8 Rifle Divisions, a Cavalry Division and 2 Armoured Brigades. Located on Lithuanian border at the same time was the 3rd Army of Belarus front in the composition of 3 Rifle Divisions, a Cavalry Corps and an Armoured Corps. The troops of the 3rd Army could be used when carrying out an attack in the direction of Kaunas or Riga. The 4th Rifle

² About the Soviet strategic preparations in autumn 1939 see more particularly Meltjuxov (2002, 144–153).

Corps concentrated at the end September on the southern border of Latvia on the left bank of Daugava and was incorporated, up to 7 October in the composition of the 7th Army. Altogether concentrated against Estonia and Latvia in late September – early October 1939 was a huge group of troops: 437 235 men, 3635 artillery pieces, 3052 tanks, 421 armoured vehicles and 21 919 cars (Meltjuxov 2002:148–149).

The task of the troops concentrated on Estonian and Latvian border was “to deliver a powerful and decisive blow at Estonian troops, for which a) the Kingisepp Group must rapidly advance on Rakvere, Tapa and Tallinn, b) the 8th Army must destroy the enemy troops and advance on Tartu and further on, jointly with the Kingisepp Group at Tallinn and Pärnu, allocating for protection of its wing, at the Valga direction one Armoured Brigade and the 25th Cavalry Division. In case the Latvian troops should come to assist the Estonian troops in the Riga-Valga direction, c) the 7th Army must secure the operations of the Leningrad Military District from the Latvian border. In case of onslaught by Latvian troops or in case of assistance to the Estonian troops, the 7th Army shall advance, by a rapid and decisive strike along both banks of River Daugava in the general direction at Riga” (Meltjuxov 2002:147).

The task of the Baltic fleet was to “support the advance by land troops of the Leningrad Military District”. The Baltic fleet was to transfer to the operative subordination of the Military Council of Leningrad Military District, in case the war broke out, according to the decision of Defence Committee of 1938. In September 1939, at the time when the negotiations between the Republic of Estonia and the Soviet Union were put on the agenda – the staff of the Baltic Fleet started elaborating the military operation, which was supposed to support the advance of land troops in the direction of Narva. The Military Council of the Leningrad Military District issued an order on 28th September, by which the Baltic Fleet was supposed to be put into full combat readiness on the following day. The concrete tasks of activity of the Fleet were laid down in order of Chief of the Fleet V. Tributs on 29 September 1939, providing that in case the negotiations prove abortive, the Baltic Fleet should start an onslaught with the task to “destroy the Estonian fleet, raze to the ground the Tallinn and Kunda naval bases, obstruct the access of naval vessels to the Gulf of Finland /.../ and prepare capture of the Tallinn fortified area (Kaup 1999:24). The 4000-men landing unit was also supposed to be ready for military action, in order to land, in the area of River Narva and the Bay of Kunda. The troops were to impede the eventual escape of Estonian vessels to Sweden or Finland.

The contemplated military operation against Estonia under the code name “Vulcan” was not implemented, because Estonia submitted to Moscow’s pressure and signed the treaty of the bases. The same was done by Latvia and Lithuania and in autumn 1939, Soviet military contingents were placed in the territory of the three Baltic states (cf. in greater detail Ilmjärv 2004:678–685). The Kremlin wished to use the same scenario in respect of Finland too, but Helsinki did not submit to demands of Moscow. At the end of November 1939, the Winter War broke out.

3. The conquest plans of the Kremlin in 1940

The bases' treaties concluded with the Baltic states were visualised by Joseph Stalin, but with a much wider implication in terms of an action plan. On 25 October 1939 Stalin sent a message to Dimitrov: "We are of an opinion that by pacts of mutual assistance (with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) we found a form enabling us to involve several countries in the orbit of interest of the Soviet Union. But for that we must be patient and abide strictly by their domestic regime and independence. We will not attempt to sovietise them. Time will come when they will do it themselves!" (Narinskij 1999:39–40). That time dawned as early as in 1940, and the decisive role was again acted by the Red Army. At the beginning of 1940 Stalin issued a statement: "The activity of the Red Army is of relevance also to the world revolution" (Pjatnitski 1998:400). The Red Army had by that time indeed become the most effective instrument in realising the subjugation plans of the Kremlin, which were meant to carry out the next phase – sovietisation of the Baltic states.

In summer 1940, the base troops located in the three Baltic states numbered altogether 66 946 men, 1630 artillery pieces and trench mortars, 1065 tanks, 150 armoured vehicles, 5579 cars and 526 aircraft (Meltjuxov 2002:158). In April 1940, the People's Commissar for Defence of the Soviet Union issued a directive, envisioning replacement of troops located in the Baltic states from 1939. According to the initial plans, this was to happen in June, later the deadline was fixed in the first half of July. The replacement of the bases' troops never occurred due to the changed military-political situation. In April 1940 Germany invaded Denmark and Norway by means of blitzkrieg and on May 10 launched a major attack against Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands, in order to subjugate France thereafter. The rapid military success of Germany in Europe was a surprise to Moscow and cardinally changed also the current policy of the Kremlin with respect to the Baltic states. In the opinion of the Kremlin, time was ripe to bring about a final solution of the Baltic issue to Russia's benefit, employing diplomatic pressure and using military attack, if needed. Relying on the experience of the Winter War the Kremlin feared lest the Baltic states put up armed resistance.

In 1939, Estonia was the first to be pressured to get the bases treaty closed, but in May 1940 it was Lithuania who was chosen as the first target. The pretext for a diplomatic attack was the fact that some Red Army soldiers went missing in Lithuania. Russia alleged the Lithuanian Government was in collusion with "kidnappers" of the soldiers. In parallel with the diplomatic pressure, the military preparations were started. On 3 June, the troops located in the Baltic states were withdrawn from the composition of the Leningrad Military District, the Kalinin Military District and the Belarus Special Military District and they were placed directly under the command of the People's Commissar for Defence of the Soviet Union. On the same day, an edict of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union was issued, whereby the period of service of the conscripts was prolonged to January 1941. On 4–7 June, the troops of the Leningrad Military

District, the Kalinin Military District and the Belarus Special Military District were put into combat readiness. The Command gradually drew them close to the borders of the Baltic states, allegedly for training. Some days later, the bases' troops stationed in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were also put into combat readiness (Meltjuxov 2002:162).

Proof to the assertion that Russia was preparing for a large-scale military action is also the fact that prisoner-of-war camps were built for accommodating Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians. A document of 9 June 1940 in Moscow stated that 8 camps were ready to accept the total of 48 000 POWs, some days later the department in charge of POWs of People's Commissariat of the Interior of the Soviet Union announced readiness to accept 65 500 POWs from the Baltic states. For receiving the expected new contingent, Poles were to be dispatched elsewhere from some of the camps. There was also a camp signified for those in "special isolation" and 2 camps for "identified" officers, policemen, gendarmes, agents and those equal to them" (*Katyn'* 2001:175–176, 180–181). At the same time the Commands of the Leningrad Military District, the Kalinin Military District and the Belarus Special Military District were assigned the task to organise the network of hospitals, military units and institutions of the rear, which would be necessary for a full-scale military action (Meltjuxov 2002:163).

On 8 June the Command of the Belarus Special Military District in Lida discussed the "potential actions" against Lithuania. On 11 June the command over Belarus Special Military District was assigned to Colonel General Dmitri Pavlov. It was under his guidance that the plans of the campaign against Lithuania were finalised. Preparation for the operation was expected to be complete by 15 June. Concentrated on the south-east border of Lithuania and Latvia was the 3rd Army, branching out along the southern border of Lithuania was the 11th Army. The troops of the Leningrad and Kalinin Military Districts were stationed on the eastern border of Estonia and Latvia. Concentrated between the Gulf of Finland and Lake Peipsi were units of the 11th Rifle Division. Stationed south of Lake Pihkva (Pskov) were the units of the 8th Army. The units against the Baltic states were complemented, starting from 8 June, in a rapid succession by troops of the Moscow, Archangel and Orjol Military Districts. To conquer the Baltic states, altogether 3 Armies, 7 Rifle and 2 Cavalry Corps, 20 Rifle, 2 Motorised Rifle, 4 Cavalry Divisions, 9 Armoured Brigades and 1 Paratroopers' Brigade were prepared. Against Lithuania, the troops of the Red Army were supposed to complete concentration and branch out by 15 June, against Estonia and Latvia by 16 June. The approximate size of the group of troops concentrated against the three Baltic states was 435 000 men, 8000 artillery pieces and mortars, over 3000 tanks, over 500 armoured vehicles (Meltjuxov 2002:162–163).

The attack of the land troops was to be supported by the Baltic Fleet. According to the order of the People's Commissar for Defence of the Soviet Union of 9 June, as from 10 June, the Baltic Fleet was assigned to operative subordination of Leningrad Military District. The Baltic Fleet was also to be ready to fulfil the combat tasks starting from 12 June and to capture the Estonian and Latvian

warships, commercial ships and other floats. If proved necessary, the landing operation was to be performed in Paldiski and Tallinn (cf. in greater detail the document 1). Chief of the Baltic Fleet Admiral V. Tributs issued, on the basis of said order, his own order, where the task of the Fleet was also to “support the attack of the troops of the Leningrad Military District in the direction of Rakvere” and “by fighter aircraft to discourage Estonian and Latvian planes flying over to Finland and Sweden.”³ Altogether 120 vessels were involved in operation, including: 1 battleship, 1 cruiser, 2 flotilla leaders, 1 gunboat, 7 destroyers, 5 escort vessels, 7 base mine-sweepers, 18 slow mine-sweepers, 17 submarines, 10 motor torpedo boats; additionally the aircraft of the Baltic Fleet.⁴

There is therefore no doubt that the command of the Red Army was preparing in dead earnest for a powerful military operation against Estonia and Latvia. On 16 June 1940 at 2 p.m., Molotov, People’s Commissar of the Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union presented to Ambassador of Latvia an ultimatum, in which the Soviet Union accused Latvia of violation of the mutual assistance pact made in 1939 and demanded the permission to bring additional contingents of Red Army troops to the country. Half an hour later he presented a similar ultimatum to the Ambassador of Estonia. He added verbally that refusing to be submissive and any resistance would be crushed by the power of arms. The answers were to be given by 11 p.m. that night. The document made public here reveals (cf. document 2) that three days earlier, on 13 June at 11.30 p.m., the combat order for the 8th Army to attack Estonia and Latvia had been drafted. This was one day before the Lithuanian Ambassador received his ultimatum, on 14 June ten minutes to midnight in the Kremlin, proof of the nocturnal working habits at the Kremlin.⁵

Such prudence was quite an acknowledgment regarding those small countries and nations: the huge aggressor presumed that they might put up an armed resistance. In 1940, the governments of those countries opted for silent submission: they did not undertake any protest actions, to say nothing of organising resistance (cf. in greater detail Ilmjärvi 2004:762–829). The majority of people, however, and the military, especially the younger officers and also the rank and file, were prepared to fight, ready to defend the independence.

4. Occupation of 1940

In the first days of occupation there were a few slight signs suggesting the possibility of sporadic resistance. On 17 June, on the day the occupying troops marched in, the police in Riga dispersed the demonstration organised by the Communists. In the following days, the Red demonstrations in places where some Red troops were stationed were carried out supported by tanks. These, however,

³ Russian State Navy Archives (RGAVMF), f. R-92, op. 2c, d. 672, l. 171.

⁴ RGVA, f. R-92, op. 2c, d. 672, l. 172.

⁵ All time indications are fixed by Moscow Time, three hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time.

had to be kept out the lens of the camera. In Tallinn, too, on the morning of 21 June, the police planned to disband by force the procession of Communists wanting to reach Toompea, the seat of the Government. It was not done, by order of the Government. However, there was an armed conflict in Tallinn in the night of 21 June. It was initiated by a communication battalion, promptly ousted from its barracks on 17 June and situated in a school building. The rioters together with the Red Army men disarmed the men in the daytime. Later however, the soldiers found some weapons and ammunition. In the night when a new gang of riflemen with red armbands appeared, shooting started, a real battle, only to be terminated by the arrival of the Minister of War of the puppet government of the occupation power and armoured cars of the Red Army.

The town of Tartu, which had since 21 June been the place of dislocation of staff of the 8th Army, witnessed no armed conflicts, but young people still organised their own protest action. During the rally on 21 June, organised by the occupation powers the young people distributed to onlookers the blue-black-white ribbons to be pinned on the jacket. The Estonian police having switched their loyalty to serve the new power apprehended the main organiser of the event. In the atmosphere of fear caused by such events a larger manifestation could be expected and measures were taken to resolutely stamp it out. The order for the day of the 8th Army to the troops published on 22 June prescribed organising circular defence where the troops were located and working out a plan of defence of Tartu. The order was justified by an alleged development of revolutionary movement of the Estonian working class in Tallinn and other towns, and "by increasing activity of all hostile forces antagonistic to that movement and even against the units of the Red Army".⁶

Actually, by that time the military occupation of Estonia had been finalised, followed by the consolidation of the new power. On 5 July 1940 the puppet government proclaimed in Estonia, upon the order of the representative of the occupation force, the elections of the second chamber of the Parliament (state assembly) for 15 July, materially violating the election law at that time effective in Estonia. The territory of the state was fully occupied, and the political arrests had started. Nevertheless, the national opposition dared, quite unexpectedly to the occupants, to put up in all election precincts various candidates challenging the occupation-supporting Communist coalition. All the names of the candidates (with one exception) were deleted in election precincts under various pretexts or by direct force.

5. The concept of occupation

In international law, occupation means the temporary conquest of a certain country or part of it by military force of a hostile country.⁷ First (when the concept

⁶ RGVA, f. 32578, op. 1, d. 24, l. 55-56.

⁷ See more particularly the legal analysis of the occupation in 1940 Mälksoo (2003).

of occupation was created and specified in 1899–1907) the occupation was related only to military conquest (*occupatio bellica*), when the territory of another country was seized in the process of aggression by military power. After WWII, a concept of a quasi-military occupation (*occupatio quasi bellica*) was introduced, where invasion does not occur in conditions of war. This can also be called peaceful occupation (*occupatio pacifica*). A significant feature in the definition is that occupation takes place violently, through use of military power or by threatening with it. Threatening with military power was an unlawful act also in 1939 and 1940, although it was not at that time stipulated in international law in quite unequivocal terms. Russia, the legal successor of the Soviet Union has been denying, up to the present day the aggression against the Baltic states and the existence of occupation. The fact how blatantly the Soviet Union displayed its aggressive foreign policy in 1940, and how little it bothered to mask or conceal it, is manifested by every detail in the undertaking and realising of the events. The ultimatums presented to the Baltic states in June 1940 were similar, the revolutionary overthrowing of the governments on 17–21 June was identical in the three Baltic states, and so were the travesties of parliamentary elections held on the same day, 21 July.

By its persistent activity in aggression and occupation the Soviet Union violated quite a few principles of international law and international agreements. The charter of the League of Nations (the member of which the Soviet Union was in 1934–1939) prohibited any aggression and threatening with it. The Briand-Kellogg Pact of 1928 (to which the Soviet Union acceded) prohibited war as means of state policy and demanded peaceful solution to all issues of contention. In 1933, a Convention of Definition of Aggression was concluded on the initiative of the Soviet Union, with the participation of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. This Convention stipulated that aggression could not be justified by any political, military, economical or other considerations or by the shortcomings of the domestic state of the country attacked, or by international conduct. A state who invaded the territory of another state, proclaiming war or not proclaiming it, attacked its vessels or aircraft or started blockade of the coast or ports of another country or started supporting the armed bands acting against another state, was condemned as an aggressor.

The Soviet Union violated three treaties concluded with Estonia. By Tartu Peace Treaty signed in 1920 Soviet Russia recognised the independence of the Republic of Estonia and waived forever all sovereign rights of Russia with respect to the people and the land of Estonia. The Soviet Union concluded a non-aggression pact with Lithuania in 1926, with Latvia and Estonia in 1932. By those treaties the parties undertook to refrain from any acts of attack or violent means against the territorial integrity or political independence of the other party by proclamation of war or without the same. In September – October 1939 the Soviet Union signed a mutual assistance treaty with every Baltic state. Those treaties emphasised recognition of state independence and non-interference in domestic affairs, the continuing validity of agreements of 1920 and 1932 (1926), while the

Pact of 1939 was not supposed to affect to any extent the sovereign rights of parties to agreement, especially their economic system and regime of state.

The Soviet Union started direct aggression against Estonia by occupying the Island Naissaar and closing the Bay of Tallinn on 12 June and by military sea blockade and air blockade on 14 June 1940. Linked to it are all military preparations, reflected in the documents of this publication. All those measures can be very clearly defined as aggression, on the basis of the Convention of 1933.

6. Documents

Document 1

Directive no. 02622 of 9 June 1940 by People's Commissar for Defence of the Soviet Union about putting the Baltic Fleet into the state of combat readiness.

DIRECTIVE OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSAR FOR DEFENCE OF THE USSR

no 02622

09 June 1940

Moscow

To the Commander of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet Vice-Admiral V. Tributs
Cc.: To People's Commissar of the Navy Admiral N. Kuznetsov; To Commander of the Leningrad Military District Commander of the Army K. Meretskoy

I SHALL HEREBY ORDER:

1. As from 05.00 a.m. on 10 June this year, the Red Banner Baltic Fleet shall transfer to the operative subordination of the Commander of Leningrad Military District, and by 12 June it shall be ready to carry out combat missions, as directed by the latter.
 - a. To provide for constant readiness of the Navy bases and vessels of the Navy situated in the ports of Tallinn, Paldiski, and Liepaja.
 - b. Upon order by Commander of the Leningrad Military District, to seize the vessels of Estonian and Latvian navies located in the bases.
 - c. To seize the merchant marine ships and the floats.
 - d. To prepare for and to organise landing of troops in Paldiski and Tallinn, to seize the harbours of Tallinn and the batteries.
 - e. To seal the Bay of Riga.
 - f. To organise constant and reliable patrolling service in the Gulf of Finland on the side of Finland, and in the Baltic Sea on the side of Sweden, as well as from the south.
 - g. In close co-operation with ground forces, to contribute to the offensive of the units of Leningrad Military District, spearheaded at Rakvere.

- h. By activity of Fighter Command, not to allow Estonian and Latvian aircraft to fly over to Finland and Sweden.
2. The exact time of the beginning of military action will be specified by Commander of the Leningrad Military District.
3. Subject to this Directive, to develop the plan of combat actions of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet and to present it for approval by 11 June this year.

*People's Commissar for Defence of the USSR
Marshal of the Soviet Union S. Timoshenko*

*Chief of General Staff of the Red Army
Marshal of the Soviet Union B. Shaposhnikov*

Source: Russian State Navy Archives (RGAVMF), f. R-92, op. 2c, d. 671, l. 1-2.

Document 2

The Combat Order of the 8th Army of Red Army for subjugating Estonia on 13 June 1940

Stamp of the Operative Section of 8th Army

Resolution: To file no 9
Captain Maksimov
14.06.40

Top secret
Of special importance

COMBAT ORDER no. ____ Headquarters, the town of Pskov 13.04.40 at 23.30
Map 1:100.000 1:200:000

1. On the day assigned by a special order, the 8th Army shall cross the state border of Estonia and move in combat formation in the direction of Võru and Valga, with the main objective to isolate the Estonian Army from the Latvian Army and to annihilate it.
2. On the right – 11th Rifle Division in co-ordination with Red Banner Baltic Fleet shall move in combat formation at Rakvere: the border with it – Lake Samro, Northern shore of Lake Peipsi.
On the left – the Special Corps shall move in combat formation in the general direction at Rezekne, Daugavpils. The border with it – Saltanovo, (excl.) Jaunlatgale, (excl.) Zahody, the Lake Lazdoga, (excl.) Lake Ushuri.
3. The movable group of troops:
 - a) Mechanised Corps – the composition of 1st Armoured Brigade, 13th Armoured Brigade, 35th Armoured Brigade and 15th Rifle-Machine

Gun Brigade, 128th Rifle Division (on trucks). The assault position – Stanky, Zarechje, Ljubjat, Vasilevo.

The task – by the end of the first day the group of troops in the composition 35th Armoured Brigade and 15th Rifle-Machine Gun Brigade shall seize the area and town of Tartu and all crossings over River Emajõgi, holding in view further activities of that group at the direction of Tapa.

By the end of the first day, the main forces (all other units of the Corps and 128th Rifle Division) shall seize the area of Tõrva, Valga, holding in view further advance at Viljandi, Paide, Tallinn, and shall seize Pärnu by part of the forces.

The Corps shall cross the frontier at the section of railway Pskov, Petseri, Mihalova.

Attached to the Corps shall be 55th Air Brigade (44th and 58th Regiment of High-Speed Bombers).

- b) 25th Cavalry Division – attack position in the area of Lake Mogilnoe, Lysaja Muha, Simonova.

The task – by the end of the first day it shall seize the area of Manor Vshitina, Kellomäe, Manor Lutsniku. Further on it shall advance at Valga. The frontier shall be crossed at the section of Lake Mogilnoe, River Kudeb.

For movement to the area of Manor Laura, the roads Raja, Babina (3 km North West of the Lake Mogilnoe), Lokno, Shilova, Luga; Babina, Kõrgesilla may be used.

4. Troops of the first echelon:

- a) 1st Rifle Corps – in the composition 24th Rifle Division, 56th Rifle Division, 311th Gun Artillery Regiment of the Reserve of the High Command. The attack position Korly Murzino, Shahnicy; headquarters of the Corps – Dubjagi.

The task – the Corps shall rout the enemy in the area of River Piusa, Petseri, Irboska and by the end of the first day it shall move with main forces to the line Väraska, the station Orava, Tahna, Ignase, Joksi and with its front line units, to River Võhandu. Further on, it shall hold in view the advance at Tartu.

The border on the right with 8th Border Guard Detachment, the South and West shore of Lake Pihkva (Pskov), Lake Peipsi.

The border of the left – Solovji, Babjakova, Vjazmova, (excl.) Alaotsa, Kapera, the station Võru.

- b) 19th Rifle Corps – in the composition of 90th and 49th Rifle Divisions, 40th Armoured Brigade, 301 Howitzer Artillery Regiment of the Reserve of the High Command; attack position – Mylovo, Kuvakino, (excl. Lake Mogilnoe). The headquarters of the Corps – Zaprude.

The task – to smash the enemy in the forests south-west of Irboska and by the end of the first day, to move with the main forces to line Möldri, Lake Kirkomäe, Lake Hinojärv and with the front units to the line of Manor Uue-Saaluse, the Lutsniku Manor; further on, the advance at Valga shall be planned further.

The border on the left – Estonian-Latvian frontier.

- c) 28th Rifle Corps – in the composition of 75th and 42nd Rifle Divisions, the attack position of 75th Rifle Division on state border from River Kudeb to River Kuhva; 42nd Rifle Division – along the state border from River Kuhva to Gilevo (2868). Headquarters of the Corps – Gribuli.

The task – to secure the actions of the crash troops of the Army from the side of Latvia.

Border on the left – the border with the Special Corps.

- d) The Gdov landing unit – 284th Rifle Regiment (minus one battalion) on floats of 8th and 9th Border Detachments shall cross Lake Peipsi from the area of Gdov, to carry out landing in the area of Krundiküla and to seize that area. Further on, it shall advance at Tartu, to divert part of the garrison of Tartu, thereby securing capture of the town of Tartu by the mechanised group.
5. Aviation – in the composition of 15th Air Brigade (2nd, 24th Regiment of High-Speed Bombers), 55th Air Brigade (44th, 58th Regiment of High-Speed Bombers), 14th Air Brigade (49th Fighter Air Regiment, 9th Attack Air Regiment) with the task:
- a) co-action with the land troops (including the Gdov landing unit) on the battleground, with the aim of routing the enemy in the area Irboska, Petseri, Tartu, Valga.
 - b) to destroy the aviation of the enemy on aerodromes of Tartu, Võru, Petseri, Irboska and the fleet of Lake Peipsi and Lake Pihkva (Pskov).
 - c) to rout the garrison of the enemy in Irboska, Petseri, Võru, Tartu and the camps Vorobevka, Trostjanka and its columns and also the headquarters, communication centres and concentrations of troops.
 - d) to cover from the air the actions of land troops of the Pskov direction, and also the mounting and debarkation of the Gdov landing unit.
6. Troops of the second echelon:
- a) 163rd Rifle Division – to concentrate by the end of the day 14.06 in the area of Alaboshevo, Snigirevo, Sorokino, Borovichi in readiness to start advance in the zone of the 1st Rifle Corps in the general direction of Senno, Petseri, Võru.
 - b) 17th Rifle Division – to concentrate by the end of the day 14.06.40 in the area Baranovo, Shcherbova, Rychkovo, Palkino in readiness to start advance in the general direction of Lake Mogilnoe, the Laura Manor, Lake Pulli.

7. The frontier troops:
 - a) 8th Frontier Detachment – to secure the Eastern shore of Lake Peipsi and not to allow the landing of the enemy and penetration of small groups into our territory. To move the Gdov landing unit to the territory of the enemy on vessels of the Peipsi and the Pihkva (Pskov) fleets and to secure the communication of the landing unit with Headquarters of the Army through Gdov and delivery of articles of food, munitions, fuel for the landing unit and for the Mechanised Corps heading in the direction of Tartu.
 - b) 9th frontier detachment – to secure the south-eastern and eastern shore of Lake Pihkva (Pskov) against penetration of small enemy groups to our territory. The units dislocated in the section from Lake Pihkva (Pskov) to Latvian border shall receive the tasks from the commanders of 1st and 19th Rifle Corps.
 - c) 10th frontier detachment – to receive the tasks from the commander of 28th Rifle Corps.
8. Time of crossing the frontier - at a special order.
9. The command point of the Army Staff at the beginning of the attack – the mountain Arestova.

Commander of the 8th Army, Lieutenant General Pjadyshv (signature)
Member of the Military Council, Brigade Commissar Shabalov (signature)
Chief of Staff Major General Ponedelin (signature)

Source: Russian State Military Archives (RGVA), f. 32578, op. 1, d. 24, l. 9-11.

Acknowledgements

The authors express their gratitude to Pavel Stroilov, thanks to whom it was possible to use the documents of the Russian State Military Archives, and to Dr Ants Pihlak for translating our manuscript into English. We are also grateful to the Estonian Science Foundation as the project was partially realised within the framework of grant no 5715.

Address:

Dr Tõnu Tannberg
Department of History
Faculty of Philosophy
University of Tartu
Lossi 3, Room 416, Tartu 50090
Estonia

Tel.: + 372 7375 650

E-mail: Tonu-Andrus.Tannberg@ut.ee

References

- Ilmjärv, Magnus (2004) *Häälētu alistumine. Eesti, Läti ja Leedu välispoliitilise orientatsiooni kujunemine ja iseseisvuse kaotus 1920. aastate keskpaigast anneksioonini*. [Silent submission. Formation of foreign policy orientation and loss of independence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania from mid-1920s until annexation.] Tallinn: Argo.
- Katyn': Mart 1940 g. – sentjabr' 2000 g. Rasstrel. Sud'ba živyx. Exo Katyni. Dokumenty*. [Katyn': March 1940 – September 2000. Execution by shooting. The destiny of the living. Echo of Katyn'. Documents] Moscow: Ves' mir, 2001.
- Kaup, Erich (1999) "Punalipulise armaada sõjakäigud Eesti vastu. September 1939 – juuni 1940". [The campaigns of the Red Banner armada against Estonia. September 1939 – June 1940.] *Tuna* 4, 17–39.
- Manninen, Ohto (1992) "Neuvostoliiton operatiiviset suunnitelmat Suomen suunnalla 1939–1941". [The operative plans of the Soviet Union in the direction of Finland in 1939–1941] *Sota-historiallinen aikauskirja* 11, 77–176.
- Meltjuxov, Mixail (2002) *Upušennyj šans Stalina. Sovetskij Sojuz i bor'ba za Evropu: 1939–1941 (dokumenty, fakty, suždenija)*. [The missed opportunity of Stalin. The Soviet Union and the fight for Europe: 1939–1941 (documents, facts, judgements).] Moscow: Veče.
- Mälksoo, Lauri (2003) *Illegal annexation and state continuity: the case of the incorporation of the Baltic States by the USSR*. Leiden, Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- Narinskij, M. (1999) *Sovetskaja vnešnaja politika i Komintern. 1939-1941, Voina i politika*, [The Soviet foreign policy and Comintern. 1939–1941, War and politics.] Moscow: Nauka.
- Pjatnitski, V. (1998) *Zagovor protiv Stalina*. [Conspiracy against Stalin.] Moscow.
- Sõja ja rahu vahel. I kd.: Eesti julgeolekupoliitika 1940. aastani*, 293–333. [Between war and peace. Vol. I: Estonian security policy up to 1940.] Tallinn: S-Keskus, 2004.