

NATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY  
HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

*As a manuscript*

Medvedev Timofey Dmitrievich

**Fighter battalions of the NKVD of the USSR during the Great Patriotic War**

Dissertation Summary

for the purpose of obtaining academic degree

Doctor of Philosophy in History

Academic supervisor:

Budnitsky Oleg Vitalievich

Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor

Moscow 2023

The work was carried out at the Doctoral School of Historical Sciences of the School of Historical Sciences of the Faculty of Humanities of the National Research University Higher School of Economics

**Academic supervisor:**

**Budnitsky Oleg Vitalievich,**  
Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor

### **Relevance of the research topic**

The Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) occupies a special place in the Russian and world public consciousness, as well as in the scientific community. In Russia, the events of 1941-1945 are seen by the authorities as a convenient ideological platform for constructing a common “useful past”<sup>1</sup> for the citizens of the country. However, despite the available array of studies, the demand for the study of various aspects of the history of the USSR during the war remains. At the same time, the topic associated with the NKVD fighter battalions, the creation of which began immediately after the outbreak of hostilities, still remains on the periphery of historians' attention. This is greatly facilitated by the research focus on the divisions of the people's militia, against which the fighter battalions are often not identified. The available works are largely in line with Soviet historiographical installations, in which fighter battalions are considered as highly effective formations that are successfully used primarily for the formation of partisan detachments. At the present stage of development of historiography, in the presence of a large number of sources that have not been introduced into scientific circulation, this narrative needs serious adjustment.

In addition, the dissertation, using the example of fighter battalions, examines topical issues in the modern historiography of war related to mobilization practices

---

<sup>1</sup> Nikolai Kuposov, *Pamyat' strogogo rezhima: istoriya i politika v Rossii* (Moscow: NLO, 2011), 162-168.

used by the Soviet state during the war period, methods of management and distribution of resources.

Also, the analysis of the methods of using fighter battalions on the territory of Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltic republics allows us to study the debatable problem of the reestablishment of Soviet power in the above-mentioned regions from the point of view of the formation and use of military units open to the entry of volunteers from among local residents.

### **The degree of scientific development of the topic**

The historiography of the topic considered in the dissertation can be divided into the following groups.

First of all, these are works devoted directly to the NKVD fighter battalions, their activities, functionality, and methods of use. Their body is currently quite seriously limited. In particular, in both Soviet and more modern historiography, the number of generalizing studies on the units under study is extremely small. These include monographs by S.V. Bilenko<sup>2</sup> published in the Soviet period, a textbook by F.G. Bannikov<sup>3</sup> and a number of other publications.<sup>4</sup> S.V. Bilenko, due to the lack of access to a large number of archival funds, made wartime periodicals and memoirs the basis of the source base of his research. Despite the presence of judgments generally accepted for Soviet (and partly for modern) historiography about a purely volunteer basis of the recruitment of fighter battalions, their high efficiency and the most important role in the formation of partisan detachments in these texts, the

---

<sup>2</sup> Semyon Bilenko, *Istrebitel'nye batal'onny v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyne* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1969); Semyon Bilenko, *Na okhrane tyla strany. Istrebitel'nye batal'onny i polki v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyne 1941-1945 gg.* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1988).

<sup>3</sup> Fyodor Bannikov, *Istrebitel'nye batal'onny NKVD SSSR v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyne 1941-1945 gg. Uchebnoe posobie* (Moscow: Vysshaya shkola MVD, 1968).

<sup>4</sup> Eduard Minasyan, *Istrebitel'nye batal'onny Abkhazii v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyne* (Sukhumi: Alashara, 1980); Shato Nachkebia, "Kratkie svedeniya ob istrebitel'nykh batal'onakh Abkhazii," in *Proceedings of the Abkhaz Institute of Language, Literature and History*, ed. Kh. Bgazhba [in Russian] (Sukhumi: Izd-vo Akademii nauk Gruzinskoi SSR, 1959), 63-73; Aleksandr Sinitsyn, "Istrebitel'nye i rabochie batal'onny na zashchite Moskvy," in *Materials of the scientific conference dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the defeat of the Nazi troops near Moscow*, ed. P. Zhilin [in Russian] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1968), 382-395.

historian was able to raise a number of little-studied issues in modern historiography on the pages of the monographs of his.

The authors of more modern generalizing studies have partially departed from the Soviet paradigm, paying attention in particular to the methods of managing fighter battalions and their activities in the Soviet rear.<sup>5</sup> However, their limited volume and a small number of generalizations do not allow us to consider the topics related to the activities of fighter battalions sufficiently provided with research of a complex nature.

A characteristic feature of the historiography of the issue is its regionalization, expressed in the presence of a sufficiently large number of publications, the basis for which were the documents of regional archives.<sup>6</sup> They study the fighter battalions of the respective regions, explore a fairly wide range of issues related to the formation, recruitment and use of these units. From this group of works, G. D. Pilishvili's monograph on the fighter units of the Central Black Earth region, as well as a number of dissertations,<sup>7</sup> stand out. At the same time, in virtually all studies, the main focus of cases is on the use of fighter battalions as a base for the formation of partisan detachments or on their participation in hostilities, while the institutional

---

<sup>5</sup> Mixail Petrov, "Istrebitel'nye batal'onny NKVD," *Novgorod Archival Bulletin*, no. 1 (1999): 93-108; Elena Nikulina, "Istrebitel'nye batal'onny v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyne: formirovanie i deyatel'nost'," in *Russian history: problems, opinions, assessments. Scholar notes*, ed. A. Gorbunov, vol. 3 [in Russian] (Pyatigorsk: PGLU, 2004), 181-188.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example: Konstantin Yatsenko, "Istrebitel'nye batal'onny nakanune i v period bitvy na Kurskoi duge," in *Origins: historical and local history collection of articles about the Belgorod region*, ed. F. Troyno [in Russian] (Belgorod: Krest'yanskoe delo, 1994), 95-102; Yuriy Protasov, *Deyatel'nost' istrebitel'nykh batal'onov v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny* (Voronezh: Izd-vo Voronezhskogo instituta MVD, 2010); Anatolii Bereznev, *Istrebitel'nye batal'onny Lipetskogo kraia v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny* (Lipetsk: Tsentri dokumentatsii noveyshei istorii Lipetskoi oblasti, 2005); Igor' Potemkin and Vladimir Sinichenko, "Deyatel'nost' UNKVD Moskvyy i Moskovskoi oblasti po organizatsii partizanskikh otryadov, istrebitel'nykh batal'onov idiversionnykh grupp v 1941 godu," in *Political history of Russia: past and present*, ed. E. Artemov [in Russian] (St. Petersburg: without publisher, 2022), 67-83.

<sup>7</sup> Georgii Pilishvili, *Boevaya deyatel'nost' istrebitel'nykh batal'onov v Tsentral'no-Chernozemnykh regionakh RSFSR (1941-1945 gg.)* (Kursk: Kursk state university, 2007); Viacheslav Sholin, "Istrebitel'nye batal'onny NKVD v period bitvy za Leningrad i Kareliyu" (PhD diss., St. Petersburg state university, 2006); Konstantin Yatsenko, "Voенно-organizatorskaya deyatel'nost' gosudarstvennykh i politicheskikh struktur oblastei Tsentral'nogo Chernozem'ya v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny" (PhD diss., Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, 2003).

and social side of the issue fades into the background. The battalion management system remains poorly understood, both at the central and regional levels. In addition, the problems concerning the participation of fighter units in the processes of re-Sovietization of the liberated territories, including the western republics of the USSR, are seen as practically not covered by historians.

It is important to indicate the need to introduce appropriate differences between fighter units and militia formations, justified due to the different institutional subordination of these formations, the difference in their tasks, methods of recruitment and numbers. Unfortunately, in the works of domestic historians, divisions of the people's militia and fighter battalions often stand “in the same row”, which, of course, is not quite the right view of the problem.

Accordingly, the second group of works involved in this dissertation are publications about the divisions of the people's militia (Divizii Narodnogo Opolcheniya, DNO) formed in the cities of the Soviet Union after the beginning of the war. Their study makes it possible to draw a parallel between the divisions of the people's militia and the fighter battalions, to distinguish them from the point of view of institutions and tasks to be solved.

In the historiography of the Soviet period, a fairly extensive cluster of works on the divisions of the people's militia was formed.<sup>8</sup> To a greater extent, the activities of the largest militia formations, namely the Moscow and Leningrad DNOs, were analyzed. The main theses put forward by the authors of the research were the provisions on the high efficiency of the militia divisions and the crucial role they played in the battle for Moscow. At the same time, the problems with the provision

---

<sup>8</sup> Nikolai Kirsanov, *Partiynye mobilizatsii na front v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny* (Moscow: izd-vo MGU, 1972); Nikolai Kirsanov, *Po zovu Rodiny (Dobrovol'cheskie voennizirovannye formirovaniya Krasnoi Armii v period Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny)* (Moscow: Mysl', 1974); Viktor Gorov, *I podnyalsya narod* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1977); Aleksandr Kolesnik, *Opolchencheskie formirovaniya Rossiyskoi Federatsii v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny* (Moscow: Nauka, 1988); Aleksandr Kolesnik, *Narodnoe opolchenie gorodov-geroev* (Moscow: Nauka, 1974); Nikolai Aleshchenko et al., *Moskovskoe opolchenie: kratkii istoricheskii ocherk* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1969).

and staffing of qualified personnel inherent in the divisions of the people's militia are practically not mentioned in the works of the Soviet period.

After the “archival revolution” of the 90s, the topics related to the divisions of the people's militia became seriously actualized because of the opening of access to previously secret documents. In the works published in recent decades, they are introduced into scientific circulation, the experience of previous studies is updated and rethought. However, as in the case of the NKVD fighter battalions, the number of generalizing works on the history of the people's militia is limited, most often historians focus on the divisions of the people's militia of Moscow and Leningrad.<sup>9</sup> The authors of the most relevant studies on this topic analyze the combat path of individual militia units based on the materials of the central archives and with the involvement of sources of personal origin. In some publications, questions are raised regarding the reasons for the formation of divisions.<sup>10</sup>

In foreign historiography, the divisions of the people's militia were practically not subjected to special research. They were studied in the framework of works of a general nature, often referred to “separated by commas”. There is only one specialized article, the authors of which assess the effectiveness of the divisions of the people's militia as low.<sup>11</sup>

Another historiographical group consists of works devoted to the activities of the Soviet internal affairs bodies of the war period. To understand the principles of

---

<sup>9</sup> Pyotr Dobrov, *Narodnoe opolchenie v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny* (Donetsk: Yugo-Vostok, 1996); Yurii Protasov, “*Dobrovolcheskie formirovaniya v strukture NKVD v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny (na materialakh Tsentral’no-Chernozemnogo regiona)*” (PhD diss., Voronezh state university, 1999); Aleksandr Kirillov, *Diviziya geroev: ot Moskvyy do El’by: boevoy put’ 21-i divizii narodnogo opolcheniya Moskvyy* (Petrozavodsk: IP Markov N.A., 2016); Ivan Slukhay, *Moskovskoe narodnoe opolchenie v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny* (Moscow: Patriot, 2013); Sergei Razin, “*Moskovskoe narodnoe opolchenie v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny: na primere 13-i Rostokinskoi divizii*” (PhD diss., Moscow State Regional University, 2017); Aleksandr Shevchenko, *Diviziya LANO: istoriya 2-i divizii Leningradskoi armii narodnogo opolcheniya* (St. Petersburg: Vesti, 2015).

<sup>10</sup> Oleg Budnitskii, “Moskovskoe narodnoe opolchenie: prichiny i osobennosti sozdaniya,” *Russian History*, no. 3 (2020): 3-21; Oleg Budnitskii, “Pisatel’skaia rota:” k istorii stalinizma voennogo vremeni,” *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 60, no 1 (2021): 179-206.

<sup>11</sup> Jean Levesque, “Moscow 1941: The rise and fall of the Soviet People’s Militia (Narodnoe Opolchenie),” in *The Civilianization of War: The Changing Civil-Military Divide, 1914-2014*, ed. J. Ferris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 64-80.

the NKVD structures during the war, the monograph by O.B. Mozokhin is important, in which the author examines the functionality and powers of the state security agencies of the war period in conjunction with the pre- and post-war years.<sup>12</sup> The historian, in particular, analyzes wartime legislation, showing how the functionality of state security agencies and their repressive practices have expanded. Topics related to the problems of mobilization and the Soviet state and the role of in these processes of the state security agencies is also raised in the monographs of A.V. Danilov and V.S. Khristoforov.<sup>13</sup> Researchers mention fighter battalions in their works as one of the manifestations of total mobilization of resources, but do not study these units in detail. In addition, it is worth highlighting a number of generalizing monographs devoted to various aspects of the history of state security agencies and the activities of the NKVD internal troops during the war.<sup>14</sup> They are characterized by a wide source base, including documents from departmental archives. At the same time, these publications mainly describe the successful operations of the NKVD bodies, as well as hostilities with the participation of internal troops.

Separately, in the context of the tasks facing the study, it is necessary to highlight publications on the processes of resovietization of the liberated territories of the Soviet Union.<sup>15</sup> The central research direction in these works is topics related

---

<sup>12</sup> Oleg Mozokhin, *Pravo na repressii. Vnesudebnye polnomochiya organov gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti (1918-1953)* (Moscow: Kulikovo pole, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> Viktor Danilov, *Chrezvychainye organy vlasti regionov Rossii v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny* (Saratov: Izd-vo Povolzhskogo uchebnogo tsentra, 1996); Viktor Danilov, *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyne: fenomen chrezvychainykh organov vlasti. 1941-1945* (Saratov: Izd-vo Saratovskogo universiteta, 2002).

<sup>13</sup> Vasilii Khristoforov, *Organy gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti SSSR v 1941-1945 gg.* (Moscow: Izd-vo Glavnogo arkhivnogo upravleniya Moskvy, 2011).

<sup>14</sup> Vasilii Soyma, *Sovetskaya kontrrazvedka v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny: opyt informatsionnogo obespecheniya gorodskikh komitetov oborony (na materialakh Nizhnego Povolzh'ya)* (Moscow: ROSPEN, 2004); Viktor Sal'nikov, *Organy vnutrennikh del Severo-Zapada Rossii v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny* (St. Petersburg: izd-vo S.-Peterb. akad. MVD Rossii, 1999); Alexei Berkutov et. al., *Voyska NKVD v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyne. Voennistoricheskii trud* (Moscow: Redaktsia zhurnala "Na boevom postu" MVD Rossii, 2015); Aleksandr Panfilets, *Organy i voyska NKVD na Severo-Zapade SSSR v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny* (St. Petersburg: Izd-vo un-ta MVD Rossii, 2016).

<sup>15</sup> Ivan Uporov, *Gosudarstvennaya politika SSSR po bor'be s banditizmom na byvshikh v okkupatsii sovetskikh territoriyakh* (Moscow: Yurlitinform, 2015); Christoph Mick, *Lemberg-*

to the punishment of collaborators for their crimes, methods of combating the insurgency, the activities of state security agencies and party structures in the liberated regions. A number of monographs also raise issues related to the fighter battalions recreated in these regions.

Thus, the historiography of the problem is characterized by its diversity. However, the processes of creating, recruiting and using directly fighter battalions on the territory of the entire Soviet Union during the war have not been sufficiently studied. In publications on the topic, the description of hostilities prevails, with much less attention to the institutions of management, the social composition of the fighter units. In a number of works, the battalions are not separated from the divisions of the people's militia. The regionalization of research and their binding to individual local archives are clearly manifested.

### **The novelty of the research**

At the moment, in historiography there is no generalizing study based on relevant sources on fighter units, the available publications on the topic are in most cases localized within the framework of individual regions and problems. In a significant number of works, the NKVD fighter units are mentioned sporadically, often without being separated from the divisions of the people's militia or partisan detachments. Accordingly, in this dissertation research, for the first time in historiographical practice, an attempt is made to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the processes of formation, recruitment and activities of fighter battalions during the Great Patriotic War.

A large number of new archival documents are being introduced into scientific circulation, which make it possible to study topics that are not actually touched upon

---

*Lwów-L'viv, 1914-1947: Violence and Ethnicity in a Contested City* (New York: West Lafayette, 2006); Alexander Statiev, *The Soviet Counterinsurgency in the Western Borderlands* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Jeffrey Jones, *Everyday Life and the "Reconstruction" of Soviet Russia during and after the Great Patriotic War, 1943-1948* (Bloomington: Slavica Publishers, 2008).



in historiography, related to the mechanisms of control of fighter battalions, their social and gender composition, level of supply, features of use in various regions and conditions. In addition, the dissertation examines previously unconsidered in the research literature, there are issues related to the degree of voluntariness of persons joining the battalions, their motivation, interaction between the NKVD and other state structures in order to gain control over the resources of fighter units. That is, the work raises current questions, that have been little studied in historiography, concerning the ways in which the Soviet Union mobilizes human and material resources with the help of fighter battalions.

**The subject of the** study is the NKVD fighter battalions, their functioning within the framework of the mobilization of the Soviet state during the war.

**The object of the** study is a set of written sources that contain information about the NKVD fighter battalions. Among them are the office documentation of the fighter battalions, statutory documents and staffing tables, statistics, sources of personal origin.

**The purpose of** this study is to comprehensively study the activities of the NKVD fighter battalions as units that occupy a special place in the structure of the Soviet military and party-state bodies.

To achieve the above goal, the following **objectives** have been set:

1. To identify the features of the functioning of fighter battalions on the territory of the USSR as a whole, the dynamics of the movement of battalion personnel throughout the country, to characterize the unit management system and its evolution.

2. To reconstruct the process of creating fighter battalions, paying special attention to its institutional aspect.

3. To study the areas of application and methods of use of fighter battalions.

4. Analyze the social, gender and age composition of fighter units. To make a portrait of a typical soldier of a fighter battalion, to identify the main motivational attitudes of people joining the ranks of these units.

5. To compare the conditions for the functioning and use of fighter units in various regions of the RSFSR, with special emphasis on the largest cities of the country (Moscow and Leningrad). To study the distinctive features characteristic of the fighter battalions of a number of regions/territories, to draw a conclusion about the influence of local factors on the activities of units.

6. To consider the activities of the studied units in the western republics of the USSR,<sup>16</sup> to identify their role and features of use in the conditions of confrontation between Soviet power and the rebels, to analyze the main models of behavior of military personnel of fighter battalions in the situation of the fight against the organized armed underground.

### **Methodological basis of the study**

As a basic methodological basis of the study, an institutional approach is used, which makes it possible to present the NKVD fighter battalions as a complex structure that has its own institutional and functional dimensions in the form of regulatory attitudes and regulators. Based on the objectives of the study, it is based on a comprehensive analysis of the formal rules of the fighter units functioning, as well as regulators of their activities, in the form of which they act as employees of various law enforcement agencies and party structures and as the system of military and legal norms, which in one way or another guided the studied units in the implementation of their own activities. In addition, the application of the institutional approach makes it possible to actualize the ideas about the practices used by the state security agencies and the Soviet state apparatus as a whole, including those related to ensuring the stable functioning of institutions in wartime and pursuing a repressive policy towards real or imaginary opponents of the regime.

---

<sup>16</sup> This name refers to the Belarusian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Ukrainian and Estonian SSR. At the same time, in the dissertation, the research focus is on the western regions of the Ukrainian SSR. These are the territories of Drohobych, Volyn, Lviv, Vinnytsia, Rivne, Kamenets-Podolsk, Ternopil, Stanislav regions. Such a geographical name of the above-mentioned regions is due to the active use of the term “western regions of the Ukrainian SSR” in the sources under study, as well as research.

Particular attention in the dissertation (especially in the third chapter) is paid to the relationship between socio-legal and discursive practice. Discourse is understood as a set of utterances transmitted through various practices. In this regard, I refer to the critical analysis of discourse proposed by Norman Fairclough in the study of institutional and social orders and attitudes.<sup>17</sup> Accordingly, several models of behavior of military personnel are highlighted, as well as circumstances and motivational attitudes which become a trigger for making a decision to join the battalion. It is important to understand that the available sources act as a limiter in this case.

On the other hand, work has been carried out to find a certain social demand for service in battalions or the reverse process of using the status of a soldier to help rebel groups or other interested persons. A correlation is established between a particular framework document (instruction, order) and the reaction to it from the system operating on the ground, the refinement and adaptation of the initial installations, taking into account the vision of the situation by the managers in the regions. An attempt is made to move from the formal language of reports and orders to a more dynamic model of understanding the text, built on a comparison and view of the ongoing socio-institutional changes in the context of the emergence of or another source.

The issues raised in the work are considered within the framework of an integrated approach with reference both to the specific institutional and social problems of the fighter battalions, and to the geography and methods of their application.

In the same regard, fighter units are studied, on the one hand, as institutions for maintaining the existing order, and on the other, as an element of conflict escalation, which was most clearly manifested in the western regions of the USSR in 1944-1945 and in the post-war period. From a methodological point of view, the work of Stathis Kalyvas is important for studying the problems of confrontation between fighter

---

<sup>17</sup> Norman Fairclough, *Analyzing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research* (London: Psychology Press, 2003).

units and local rebels, dedicated to the genesis of civil wars and their features from the point of view of perception by opponents of each other.<sup>18</sup> In the study, the author in particular examines issues related to the ways of involving the population in a civil conflict, including with the help of its weapons and the creation of special formations. Within the framework of this approach, battalions are considered as units that create a special system of institutions in territories with different environments by building certain social ties and developing specific models of recruitment and application.

Moreover, for the study of the NKVD fighter battalions as special institutional formations, a model of hybrid organization is used, developed within the framework of the neo-institutional approach of J.S. March and J. Olsen.<sup>19</sup> In this regard, the practices of interaction between various departments that make up the system of ensuring state security that developed in the period 1941-1945 are analyzed. It is important to note that at the center of the neo-institutional concept developed by the authors are just the following questions interactions of various actors operating within the framework of a changing institutional structure. The process of interaction between various state and law enforcement institutions (civilian structures, the NKVD, the Red Army) is studied through the prism of the creation and use of fighter battalions, which were parts of not entirely clear subordination.

At the same time, the processes of expanding the scope of the study of the social history of totalitarian states observed in modern historiography are taken into account, which occur in connection with the great attention of researchers to grassroots structures and intermediate forms of existence of institutions, which, being under strict control, nevertheless enjoyed a certain autonomy due to the need to use all available resources. These tasks were solved not only through widespread centralization, but also through reverse processes, most often originating from grassroots initiatives.

---

<sup>18</sup> Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of violence in civil war* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2006).

<sup>19</sup> James March and Johan Olsen, "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life," *The American Political Science Review* 78, no. 3 (1984): 734-749.

**The source base of the study** is represented by documents of Soviet state security agencies, party structures, sources of personal origin. *The first group* consists of documents of the highest authorities, a significant part of which is published in various collections, and also deposited in the funds of the Russian State Archive of Social and Political History (RGASPI).<sup>20</sup>

*The second and main group of sources* is the office documentation of the NKVD. Its array was deposited both in federal (State Archives of the Russian Federation, GA RF)<sup>21</sup> and in regional archives — the Central State Archives of the Moscow Region (TsGA MO),<sup>22</sup> the Central State Archives Archive of Historical and Political Documents of St. Petersburg (TsGA IPD SPB).<sup>23</sup> Some documents have been published.<sup>24</sup> A large number of reporting documents of various levels are involved in the study — from summarizing reports of the leadership of the Central Headquarters of the fighter battalions to L.P. Beria deputy, general I.A. Serov to memorandums of commanders of formations and political reports of their political instructors. The involvement of this complex allows to trace the evolution of fighter battalions, studying their history both at the local (individual units) and at the regional, republican or all-Union level. It is these documents that contain the most complete information about the problems that occur in the battalions, their numerical and social composition, the operations carried out and the daily service. Separately, it is worth highlighting the recently declassified array of political reports and special

---

<sup>20</sup> RGASPI. F. 600. Op. 1; F. 17. Op. 1; Grigorii Krivosheev et al., ed., *Velikaya Otechestvennaya bez grifa sekretnosti. Kniga poter'* (Moscow: Veche, 2010); A. Sokolov, ed., *Russkii arkhiv: Velikaya Otechestvennaya. Stavka V GK: Dokumenty i materialy: 1941 g.* (Moscow: izd-vo Terra, 1996); A. Emelin, ed., *Russkii arkhiv: Velikaya Otechestvennaya. Prikazy narodnogo komissara oborony SSSR* (Moscow: izd-vo Terra, 1994).

<sup>21</sup> GA RF. F. R-9415. Op. 2; F. R-9478. Op. 1.

<sup>22</sup> TsGAMO. F. 4611. Op. 1, 2.

<sup>23</sup> TsGA IPD SPB. F. 8671. Op. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Vladimir Yampolskii, ed., *Organy gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny*, 6 vols (Moscow: Kuchkovo pole, 1995-2014); Mikhail Gorinov, Mikhail Morukov and Irina Ryzhova, ed., *Partizany v bitve za Moskvu: arkhivnye dokumenty i materialy* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Glavarkhiva Moskvyy, Patriot, 2008); Nikolai Vladimirtsev and N. Kokurin, ed., *NKVD-MVD SSSR v bor'be s banditizmom i vooruzhennym natsionalisticheskim podpol'em na Zapadnoi Ukraine, v Zapadnoi Belorussii i Pribaltike (1939-1956)* (Moscow: Ob'edinennaya redaktsiya MVD Rossii, 2008).

reports of the Moscow and Leningrad fighter battalions, the use of which makes it possible to saturate the work with important information about the situation in individual fighter battalions' subdivisions.<sup>25</sup>

*The third group of sources* is the materials of party control, deposited in the funds of the Russian State Archive of Social and Political History.<sup>26</sup> The use of reports of party functionaries conducting regular inspections of fighter battalions makes it possible to analyze the processes that took place in the structure of fighter battalions from the point of view of inspectors who are not related to the structures of the NKVD.

In addition to the statistics contained in the reports of the management of the structures under study at various levels, specially compiled statistical calculations containing information on the number and movement of personnel, weapons, the results of the combat work of battalions, as well as on a wide range of other issues are involved in the study.<sup>27</sup> They make up *the fourth group of sources*. The use of these documents makes it possible to supplement the study with important data that make allows us to assess, among other things, the level of effectiveness of the battalions under study.

*The fifth group of sources* are the statutory documents of the fighter battalions, represented by the actual charters and staffing schedules.<sup>28</sup> Their use makes it possible to analyze the structure of the studied units, to study the changes that occurred in it during the war, to get an idea of the order of service in battalions of various regions of the country. Also, statutes and staffs are important for making a comparison between staff and actual the number of fighter battalions, the level of their supply. These data are presented in large quantities in the reports mentioned above, which makes it possible to compare them with regular indicators.

---

<sup>25</sup> TsGA MO. F. 4611. Op. 1. D. 2, 4, 8, 12, 14, 21, 47, 50, 74, 77, 204, 248, 254, 348; TsGA IPD SPB. F. 8671. Op. 1, D. 132, 139-140.

<sup>26</sup> RGASPI. F. 597. Op. 1; F. 600. Op. 1.

<sup>27</sup> GA RF. F. R-9478. Op. 1. D. 130, 319; TsGA MO. F. 4611. Op. 1. D. 3a, 7, 50.

<sup>28</sup> GA RF. F. R-9478. Op. 1. D. 277, 59; TsGA MO. F. 4611. Op. 1. D. 253-254.

*The sixth group* consists of sources of personal origin, represented by memoirs, diaries and interviews. From among the rather numerous memoirs written by the NKVD and SMERSH officers, several publications were selected<sup>29</sup> containing information useful for this study concerning the fighter battalions. Mentions of these units were episodic. In the preparation of the study, materials from diary entries posted on the website of the project “Prozhito”<sup>30</sup> were also used. A search was conducted for the queries “fighter battalions”, “fighter units”. As a result, 47 diaries were revealed, in the text of which the studied units were mentioned, from which the necessary information was selected, primarily related to the daily life of the battalion fighters. The authors of the diaries were mainly ordinary soldiers, in some cases - NKVD officers and party officials. In the vast majority of entries fighter battalions were mentioned “in one line”, less often the service of the author of the diary in the ranks of the fighter unit was given several paragraphs.

In addition, interviews taken by members of the commission of I.I. Mints from the fighters and commanders of the Moscow fighter battalions are involved.<sup>31</sup> These documents were deposited in the Scientific Archive of the Institute of Russian History of the Russian Academy of Sciences. A total of 19 relevant interviews were identified, in which interviewees tell, among other things, about their motivation when joining a fighter battalion, some episodes from the service. Also, the materials of the Internet project “Yapomnyu” were involved in the study, within the framework of which work is being carried out on interviewing war veterans and placing relevant interviews in the public domain.<sup>32</sup> A search was carried out for matches on the queries “fighter battalion”, “fighter battalions”, about two hundred interviews were identified, in the text of which these units are mentioned in one way

---

<sup>29</sup> Dmitrii Smirnov, *Zapiski chekista*, (Minsk: Belarus', 1972); “*Neskol'ko slov ob istrebitel'nom batal'one. Vospominaniya komandira rot'y 85-go istrebitel'nogo batal'ona Firsova Pavla Ivanovicha*,” Tsentral'nii sektor Krasnogvardeyskogo ukreplennogo raiona Gatchiny, accessed April 24, 2023, <http://centralsector.narod.ru/ib/85ib.htm>.

<sup>30</sup> The project “Prozhito,” accessed April 24, 2023, <https://prozhito.org/>.

<sup>31</sup> NA IRI RAN. F. 2. Op. 3, 9-10, 22, 32, 39, 255.

<sup>32</sup> The project “Ya pomnyu,” accessed April 24, 2023, <https://iremember.ru/memoirs/>.

or another. Of these, those were selected that contain information about the social composition of the fighter units, the daily life of their fighters and commanders.

Thus, the source base involved in the study is characterized by its diversity, with the obvious prevalence of accounting and management documentation of the NKVD.

### **The main provisions to be defended**

1. Fighter battalions were formed at the very beginning of the war to combat enemy landings and sabotage groups. At the same time, the principles of their recruitment were based on the idea of consolidating and arming the most loyal part of the population to the Soviet state — workers, Soviet employees, members of the party and the komsomol.

2. However, fears about possible landings turned out to be groundless—they simply did not happen- and, since its inception, the units performed a variety of functions due to the situation - from fighting the Germans on the front line to performing household work. The presence of such tasks that were inconsistent with each other and with the necessary preparation significantly reduced combat capability of battalions.

3. The key and most difficult for the fighter battalions was the issue of recruitment. The initial instructions of the Council of People's Commissars and the leadership of the NKVD on the principles of recruitment to battalions turned out to be impracticable. During the war, a variety of persons served in fighter units, most often without military experience. Important motivational attitudes when joining the battalion were the need to protect the country from outside attack, the desire to build a career in the internal affairs bodies, improve their social status, and the possibility of obtaining material benefits.

4. The methods of formation, recruitment and use of battalions depended on the local situation, the competencies of the leadership of the regional Headquarters, the general interest of their employees in fighter units, and the availability of resources.



5. An effective control system for fighter battalions initially failed to build. A clear structure of subordination of subdivisions was not created, the NKVD bodies were not ready to provide them. This led to serious problems and the emergence of a certain managerial freedom on the ground. At the same time, the leadership of the state security agencies showed flexibility, having managed in 1944-1945 to partially restructure the processes of functioning of the units, which increased their level of combat readiness.

6. The fighter units operating in the Moscow region were the most numerous and better manned. It was here that some management practices were first introduced later scaled to other regions. At the same time, they also had common shortcomings of the studied parts associated with poor controllability, involvement in performing a wide range of tasks, and a low level of supply.

7. In besieged Leningrad, the fighter battalions found themselves in an extremely difficult situation. In this regard, the units were partially disbanded, partially reorganized into larger structures (fighter regiments). Units operating outside the blockade ring experienced typical difficulties with recruitment and supply, but by attracting local resources, they managed to avoid starvation.

8. Recreated in 1943-1944 in Western Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltic republics, fighter battalions proved to be a fairly successful tool in the fight against the rebels. Their main (and successfully solved) task and feature was the widespread involvement of local residents in the service, with the help of which the state security agencies tried to deprive the enemy of resources, as well as escalate the conflict, transferring it to the stage of civil confrontation between loyalists and rebels. Thus, during the war, fighter units turned from a tool for confronting an external enemy into an additional power structure, designed to fight opponents of Soviet power.

### **Theoretical and practical significance of the research**

The theoretical value of the thesis lies in the fact that in its text the fighter battalions are considered as a gradually evolving system built into the Soviet state and party apparatus, which has its own characteristics, problems and methods of use.

The paper attempts to comprehensively study the institutional and social history of fighter units both at the Union and regional levels.

The materials and results of the study can be further used to prepare training courses and manuals on the Great Patriotic War, namely the institutional and social history of the Soviet state of this period.

### **Structure and summary of the thesis**

The thesis consists of an introduction, three chapters, each of which is divided into three paragraphs, and a conclusion, a list of tables, a list of sources and references.

*The first chapter* “Fighter battalions of the NKVD in the period of the Great Patriotic War- principles of formation, methods of application, range of tasks” deals with the problems associated with the general issues of the formation of fighter battalions, their provision and use at the all-Union level, without regionalization.

*The first paragraph* “*Creation of fighter battalions*” is devoted to the formation of fighter battalions on the territory of the USSR, it also analyzes the dynamics of their numbers. The studied units were formed under the influence of successful German amphibious operations of the initial period of the Second World War, they were based on the idea of creating subdivisions of the most loyal social groups to the Soviet government. The main tasks of the battalions, according to the installation documents, were the fight against landings, sabotage groups of the enemy, as well as maintaining order in the rear. A network of operational groups (later Headquarters) was created to lead the units. In the initial period of the war, the formation of units proceeded at a rapid pace due to the fear of the Soviet leadership of the landings, but from the beginning of 1942, the disbandment of a number of battalions began, the process of transferring military personnel to the Red Army and the NKVD troops was launched due to their inapplicability for their intended purpose and the need to replenish military units. At the same time, at the end of 1943-1944, there was a “revival” of fighter battalions in connection with their active

use for the resovietization of the liberated territories. Initially, most of the units were formed on the job, but military reality made serious adjustments to this system.

The *second paragraph*, “The Use of Fighter Battalions”, describes the methods of using fighter units throughout the war in all regions of the USSR in which they operated. It has been established that due to the irrelevance of the main task of combating landings (they simply did not exist), as well as due to the ill-conceived subordination structure, the battalions could be used to actually perform any tasks - from purely combat to economic. The main ones were the protection of rear areas, the detention of persons violating the laws of war, and the maintenance of order in settlements. At the same time, the concepts of “suspicious element”, “bandit”, “criminal element” were interpreted by the Soviet security agencies quite broadly, often no distinction was made between “bandits” and, for example, “gangs of deserters”.

Most of those detained by the battalions in the period 1941-1944 were undocumented persons and violators of the wartime regime, in second place were deserters and draft dodgers.<sup>33</sup> Another important task of the unit was to participate in the resovietization of the territories liberated during offensive operations. Also, the battalions were actively used to prepare young people for service in the Red Army, to carry out economic and sanitary measures, in 1941, partisan detachments and sabotage groups were formed from fighters and commanders of fighter units (however, this experience was unsuccessful).

*In the third paragraph*, “Methods and Problems of Recruitment, Combat Training and Supply of Fighter Units”, the issues raised in its title are investigated at the all-Union level. It has been clarified that the initial plans for military training turned out to be of little use to fighter battalions, and new programs with an emphasis on police service were developed only by April 1943. The level of readiness of the units was also affected by the constant transfer of fighters and officers to the Red Army and the NKVD, their ill-conceived structure of subordination, as a result of

---

<sup>33</sup> GA RF. F. R-9478. Op. 1. D. 277. L. 65.

which serious problems arose with the supply. First of all, they concerned uniforms, various property, and vehicles.

The lack of a clear vertical of control led to the fact that the command of the battalions on the ground had to find additional funds for their supply and training, including in cooperation with party and state structures. The key and most difficult issue was the personnel issue. The personnel of the battalions at the time of their formation in 1941 mainly consisted of workers and Soviet employees with a noticeable number of persons unfit for military service. In the future, in connection with the transfer of the most trained personnel to the troops, the units were mainly staffed by older people, as well as pre-conscription youth. Women also served in the battalions. Obviously, the initial instructions on the formation of fighter units exclusively with the help of workers and soviet activists were not feasible.

Similar problems occurred with the command staff - in 1941-1942, in a number of battalions, persons without military education and experience were in the positions of commanders, and regular officers of the NKVD/militsia always combined service with work in their full-time position. In 1943-1944, the situation with commanders was improved, including through the transfer of officers from the internal and border troops, the emergence of separate staff positions in fighter battalions, and a general improvement in the situation on the fronts.

***In the second chapter*** “Fighter battalions in various regions of the RSFSR: features of use. 1941-1943” studies the processes of formation, recruitment and activities of fighter battalions in a number of regions of the RSFSR, including the key ones, Moscow and Leningrad.

*The first paragraph* “*Fighter battalions of Moscow and the Moscow region in 1941-1943*” analyzes the fighter battalions of Moscow and the Moscow region in the period 1941-1943. The fighter units created in the metropolitan region were distinguished by a fairly large number of fighters from among the workers and Soviet employees, as well as their numbers. However, due to managerial difficulties, they were not ready for quick action during the “Moscow Panic” of 15-16 October. Subsequently, personnel were actively involved in the formation of partisan

detachments and sabotage groups, and the battalions themselves were used to form the so-called “Communist divisions” of the Moscow people’s militia.

After the liberation of the occupied areas of the region, the process of recreating fighter units was launched, including the use of new principles of formation (consisting in the creation of so-called permanent readiness groups from military personnel who were moved to a barracks situation). The battalions were used to carry out activities to search for and detain collaborators, protect important facilities, and carry out guard duty on roads and in settlements. The main problem of the Moscow and Moscow region fighter battalions was the highest staff turnover, even by all-Union standards, associated with the presence of a large number of young people in their composition. At the same time, the level of supply of the units was relatively good, and local initiatives, including those related to the creation of the above-mentioned groups, made it possible to amortize some of the typical difficulties at the regional level.

*The second paragraph, “Fighter Units in Besieged Leningrad and the Leningrad Region”, examines the functioning and use of fighter battalions in extreme conditions of besieged Leningrad and unoccupied areas of the Leningrad Region. It has been established that the fighter battalions created in the city and region were not viable in the conditions of the rapid advance of the Germans and the subsequent blockade. In this regard, they were partially reorganized into larger formations (fighter regiments), and partially disbanded in the winter and spring of 1942. The units remaining in Leningrad were entrusted with the functions of maintaining order. However, due to the famine of the winter of 1941-1942, the personnel of the studied units suffered serious losses, there were difficulties in maintaining discipline. The battalions operating in the eastern regions of the region managed to avoid mass starvation, but the small amount of human resources and the focus on fighting the missing landings also seriously reduced their combat capability.*

*The third paragraph “Fighter battalions of various regions and territories of the RSFSR in the conditions of hostilities, liberated regions and rear” is enlightened*

by the activities of fighter battalions in the territory of the Yaroslavl, Rostov, Stalingrad regions of the RSFSR, as well as the Stavropol Territory in the period of 1941-1944. Such a sample is associated with the possibility of studying the position of the studied units in regions with different situations. In the course of the analysis, it was found that the fighter units, operating in different regions, had similar problems associated with the recruitment and lack of operational control by the Central Headquarters of the fighter battalions. The leadership in the field received certain independence in decision-making, primarily concerning the recruitment, provision and use of fighter units. Some of them can be described as successful (for example, the massive involvement of women in the service in rear of the Yaroslavl region), others were called upon to situationally solve the difficulties that arise.

The actions of civil authorities and party bodies played an important role in resolving these issues. In the case of large enterprises in the region, the former tried with all their might to preserve the workers' collectives, freeing them from service in battalions, but when the front approached the borders of the city or region, the workers became the basis of fighter units, as was the case in Stalingrad.

An analysis of the methods of using fighter units showed that in the rear regions and in the liberated territories of the RSFSR, they were primarily used as auxiliary units designed to alert and control the terrain and population, to combat deserters and bandits. Despite serious shortcomings, the battalions played a rather important role in the implementation of these tasks.

*In the third chapter* “Fighter battalions of the NKVD in the western republics of the USSR. Autumn 1943 - Summer 1945” issues related to the creation (in some cases of recreation) are examined, as well as the recruitment and use of fighter battalions on the territory of Western Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltic republics. The situation in these territories, primarily associated with the activity of the rebels, imposed certain specificity on the position of the fighter battalions and the tasks facing them.

*In the first paragraph*, “Extermination units in the western republics of the USSR: general and excellent. Their activities on the territory of the Ukrainian SSR”,

compares the situation in the fighter battalions of the above-mentioned republics, and also analyzes their activities in the western regions of the Ukrainian SSR. It has been established that the functionality of the fighter units operating in the western republics of the USSR has been significantly expanded. In addition to participating in counter-insurgency operations and performing traditional security functions, they were actively used to create information network of local residents loyal to the Soviet government. It is in connection with this fact that the recruitment of personnel in the battalions was carried out as quickly as possible, often without carrying out filtration measures. This led to a large number of deserters.

This problem was especially acute in the western regions of the Ukrainian SSR, where a significant part of the population had a negative attitude towards the Soviet regime. In the same republic, clashes with nationalists were the most acute, and the losses of fighter units were the largest compared to neighboring Belarus and the Baltic republics. At the same time, the recruitment of battalions, for the most part, by the local population allowed the state security agencies to more effectively identify supporters of the rebels, form a negative attitude towards the latter, and counteract their provision.

*The second paragraph of this chapter “The Byelorussian SSR: Methods of Formation and Use of Fighter Battalions”* is devoted to the fighter units operating in the Byelorussian SSR. Due to the absence of numerous rebel groups on the territory of the republic, the units were used to solve an unlimited range of tasks - from participating in battles with German troops surrounded in the Minsk region to performing sanitary functions in the liberated Areas. The idea of recruiting battalions solely at the expense of former partisans turned out to be irrelevant- their number in the units was significant, but at the same time, persons with limited fitness for military service, as well as women, served in the battalions. There were also serious deficiencies in provision, in particular, a constant centralized supply of weapons and other material resources were established only at the end of 1944, which forced the local leadership of the battalions to act with their own means, in particular using captured weapons and food to supply subordinates.

*The third paragraph*, “Extermination Battalions in the Baltic Republics as an Element of the Fight against the Insurgency”, examines the situation in the fighter battalions of the Baltic republics in 1944-1945. In particular, their agitation, propaganda and consolidating functions are investigated, models of recruitment and use of units are compared. It was revealed that the battalions operating in the difficult situation taking place in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were primarily involved. The latter joined the battalions both for reasons of profit and the desire to build a career in the internal affairs bodies, and for reasons of personal revenge on the rebels, who carried out acts of terror not only against military personnel, but also against members of their families. The leadership of the state security agencies also actively stimulated the local population to join the battalions through various material incentives. As in the units operating in the western regions of the Ukrainian SSR, there were quite frequent cases of desertion of military personnel, often specially introduced by opponents of Soviet power into fighter battalions. In direct clashes with the rebels, fighter units were not always effective, but were often used for counter-guerrilla operations conducted jointly with the NKVD.

A change in the Soviet propaganda narrative aimed at the inhabitants of the liberated republics was also revealed. The fighters of the fighter units were presented as defenders of the people from Hitler's henchmen, and plots related to the class struggle gave way in propaganda materials to slogans about the struggle against nationalists and allies of Germany.

**In conclusion**, the results are summed up and conclusions are drawn. The study showed that the creation of fighter battalions in the early days of the Great Patriotic War was not an “impromptu” of the Soviet leadership, but was due to the desire of the latter to strengthen the protection of the rear regions by creating additional power structures to combat the expected enemy landings. However, the units were not applicable for their intended purpose - the Germans did not use parachute units for their intended purpose, and sabotage groups were most often neutralized by other NKVD structures. In this regard, the leadership of the state security agencies faced the question of the further use of fighter units.



The centralized battalion control system turned out to be not fully effective. Due to the serious problems experienced by the units, which could not be solved based on a rigid management vertical, the NKVD and civilian structures were forced to make decisions that were uncharacteristic of the command-administrative economy, use additional resources, and reform the command-and-control structure of the battalions.

Since its formation, fighter units have found themselves in a situation of complex problems associated with recruitment. Young people from among the fighters were permanently transferred to the Red Army, the main backbone of the units were persons with no service experience, including women, instructions on the formation of units from the party-Soviet activists were partially fulfilled only in the Moscow battalions in 1941. There were also difficulties with the provision and training of personnel. The idea of combining service with work by fighters turned out to be not realizable. All these problems were most often solved at the regional level, and the methods and effectiveness of their relief depended on the general state of affairs in a particular republic, region, territory.

The social composition of fighter battalions is characterized by diversity and direct dependence on the situation in the territory of a particular region during different periods of the war. Young people of pre-conscription age, workers of enterprises, party and Soviet employees, and older people served in the studied units. At the same time, the motives for their entry into the battalion were extremely heterogeneous. In particular, they were influenced by the measures of material incentives taken by the leadership of the NKVD to replenish the units.

The most important feature of the studied units was their multitasking, generated by the absence of the main enemy in the form of enemy landings. The battalions were involved primarily to protect law and order, detain bandits, deserters, as well as everyone who was considered a “suspicious person”, and perform information and control functions in the western republics of the USSR. In the initial period of the war, they often took part in hostilities. The process of transferring the

personnel of the units to the Red Army, the NKVD troops and partisan detachments was also launched.

During the war, fighter battalions underwent a significant evolution both in terms of management institutions and social composition, and in terms of the tasks they faced. In fact, since 1942, they have been focused not on fighting an external enemy (landings, saboteurs), but on confronting the rebels, bandits, that is, first of all, being an additional power element of control over the rear and liberated regions of the country. The original intention of creating this type of unit was considered irrelevant. By 1944, the ineffective system of command and supply of battalions was partially reformed, it introduced relevant practices that appeared at the local level. A number of problems could not be solved, but a change in the approach to the recruitment of fighter units, the emergence of a clear system of incentives for service made them quite important and relatively effective a tool for solving problems, primarily related to the creation of a network of armed loyalist units in the liberated territories, discrediting opponents of Soviet power and escalating the conflict.

In the end, the fighter battalions personified the Soviet model of management - after the rapid creation and in the face of systemic problems, the leadership of the state security agencies was forced to trial and error to look for the most suitable option for their use, largely abandoning the original plans.

### **The degree of reliability and approbation of the results of the study**

The degree of reliability of the thesis is based on an extensive set of analyzed historical sources, relevant goals and objectives, as well as the methods used in the work.

The main points of this study have been tested at six international conferences, including four international conferences;

- 1) X International Conference of Young Scientists and Specialists “CLIO-2020. Wars in history. Historical documents and current problems of archaeography, archival and source studies, Russian and general history of modern and

contemporary times” (2020, Moscow, Russian state archive of socio-political history). Report: “Extermination battalions of the NKVD of the USSR as one of the elements of mobilization practices of the Soviet Union in the initial period of the Great Patriotic War (July 1941 - March 1942)”.

2) November historical and archival readings in the Perm Partarchiv (2020, Perm, Perm state archive of socio-political history). Report: “Volunteer formations of the Soviet Union during the Second World War: historiography of the issue”.

3) International conference “War and Soviet everyday life: new sources and interpretations” (2021, Moscow, Institute of Soviet and Post-Soviet History). Report: “NKVD extermination battalions in the western republics of the USSR in 1944–1945”.

4) Second International St. Petersburg Historical Forum. (2022, St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg state university). Report: “Fighter battalions of Leningrad and the Leningrad region defending the city”.

5) XIII International Conference of Young Scientists and Specialists “CLIO-2023. 1943: the year of a radical turning point in the Second World War” (2023, Moscow, Russian state archive of socio-political history). Report: “NKVD extermination battalions in the liberated territories of the RSFSR - recruitment methods, methods of creation, models of use. 1943-1944”.

6) Conference “Liquidation: institutional, discursive and practical forms of cessation of activity, destruction and final settlement in the USSR” (2023, Moscow, Institute of Soviet and Post-Soviet History). Report: “Elimination of destruction battalions (in the Moscow region): institutional and social aspects”.

**The author's main publications in journals included in the list of high-level journals prepared at the Higher School of Economics, as well as indexed in the Scopus and Web of Science data bases:**

1. Medvedev, Timofei D. “Istrebitel’nye batal’ony Leningradskoi oblasti na zashchite goroda v period leta 1941 – vesny 1942 gg.” [Fighter battalions of the

Leningrad region on the defense of the city in the Summer of 1941 – Spring of 1942] *Contemporary history of Russia*, no. 3 (2021): P. 589-605.

2. Medvedev, Timofei D. “Sovetskie dobrovol’cheskie formirovaniya v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyne: istoriografiya voprosa” [Soviet volunteer formations in the Great Patriotic War: historiography of the issue] *Russian history*, no. 3 (2022): P. 146-153.

3. Medvedev, Timofei D. “Istrebitel’nye batal’ony NKVD v zapadnykh respublikakh SSSR: protsessy sozdaniya, sposoby komplektovaniya, osobennosti primeneniya (osen’ 1943 – vesna 1945 goda)” [Fighter battalions of the NKVD in the western republics of the USSR: creation processes, methods of recruitment, features of application (Autumn 1943 – Spring 1945)] *Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* 49, no. 3 (2022): P. 274-303.

### **Other publications of the author**

1. “Narkomat finansov SSSR v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny. 4-ya diviziya narodnogo opolcheniya g. Moskvy: boevoi put’ v vospominaniyakh, dnevnikakh, interv’yu. 1941-1945” [People's Commissariat of Finance of the USSR during the Great Patriotic War. The 4th Division of the People's Militia of Moscow: Combat Path in Memoirs, Diaries, Interviews. 1941-1945] edited by O. Budnitsky, K. Drozdov, Yu. Kamardina, N. Kolesnikova, E. Kushch, D. Lotareva, T. Medvedev, L. Muromtseva, V. Rybakov, A. Starkov. Moscow: EastLit Publishing House, 2020.

2. “Narkomat finansov SSSR v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny. 4-ya diviziya narodnogo opolcheniya g. Moskvy: boevoi put’ v vospominaniyakh, dnevnikakh, interv’yu. 1941-1945” [People's Commissariat of Finance of the USSR during the Great Patriotic War. The 4th Division of the People's Militia of Moscow: the combat path in the documents. 1941-1945] edited by O. Budnitsky, K. Drozdov, Yu. Kamardina, N. Kolesnikova, E. Kushch, D. Lotareva, T. Medvedev, L. Muromtseva, V. Rybakov, A. Starkov. Moscow: EastLit Publishing House, 2020.