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**PARTISAN DETACHMENTS ACTIVITY OF REPUBLICS OF
NORTH CAUCASUS FROM 1942 TO 1943**

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Abstract

From the first days of the Great Patriotic War, the partisan movement developed in the Soviet territories temporarily occupied by the Wehrmacht. This partisan movement became an important part of the resistance to the German invaders. The formation of the partisan detachments in the North Caucasus took place by decision of party committees. The highest governing body for the management of partisan activities operating in the region was the Southern Headquarter of Partisan Movement (SHPM). It was formed in accordance with the decree of the State Defense Committee of August 3, 1942 and was a part of the Military Council of the North Caucasus Front. Initially, Kh. D. Mamsurov headed the Headquarter, and in September 1942, P.I. Seleznev became a new head (Documentation Centre of Contemporary History of Krasnodar Region of Contemporary History of Krasnodar Region, 1974-2008). Since that time, the headquarters began to implement the first measures to control the actions of partisan detachments. Then, at the end of December 1942, just a few days before the beginning of the Red Army attack, SHPM took the next decision to establish four headquarters of task forces to manage the activities of partisan detachments. The secretary of the Chechen-Ingush Regional Committee of CPSU (b) V. Ivanov, who from Grozny coordinated the activities of partisan detachments of Chechen-Ingushetia, North Ossetia and Kabardino-Balkaria was approved as one of the responsible leaders of these headquarters. This decision was successful in its design and content, but belated. Literally a few days later, German troops left the territories of Chechen-Ingushetia.

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1. Introduction

By the middle of September 1942, partisan detachments with a total number of 2,079 people were operating in the republics of the North Caucasus, the part of territories of which were occupied by German troops. The partisan detachments included: 11 units (1002 people) in Kabardino-Balkaria¹; 7 units (704 people) in North Ossetia. Initially in Checheno-Ingushetia 4 partisan detachments were created, in which there were 373 people (Documentation Centre of Contemporary History of Krasnodar Region of Contemporary History of Krasnodar Region, 1974-2008). In Dagestan, in case of the attack of the German troops, 10 partisan detachments of a total number of 513 were formed. However, they never had to take part in military actions.

The preparation for underground and partisan struggle was conducted by the leadership of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in case of occupation of the territory of the Republic. An underground regional Komsomol committee (All-Union Leninist Young Communist League) headed by V. Danilov was also created. On the territory of the Republic, 16 underground district committees of CPSU (b) were established, covering all administrative districts (Ibragimov & Ibragimov, 2017).

2. Problem Statement

According to the authors, the role of partisan detachments of the republics of the North Caucasus in the fight against the German invaders in the war years (1942-1943) is of great scientific and practical importance, and contributes to a deeper understanding of the historical processes that took place during World War II.

3. Research Questions

The subject of research is the contribution of partisan detachments of the republics of the North Caucasus to the defeat of the German fascist aggressors.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the research is to analyze the organization and military actions of the partisan detachments of the republics of the North Caucasus in the fight against the German invaders in 1942-1943.

5. Research Methods

The main methods used in the course of the research of designated topic are systemic and problem-chronological.

6. Findings

It is necessary to note that the formation of partisan forces in the republics of the North Caucasus was difficult. For example, on September 4, 1942, the Bureau of the Chechen-Ingush Regional CPSU (b) at its meeting considered the issue "On the recruitment of partisan units in the Chechen-Ingush

Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic” (Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History, 1986-2008). During the discussion of this issue, it was found that the commanders were still not fully selected, the bases of the partisan detachments were not created. In addition, the weapons for the majority of partisan units were lacking or absent. Therefore, the party leadership of the Republic raised the question of obtaining it from the 9th and 44th armies.

Only by the middle of November 1942 the process of formation of partisan detachments in Chechen-Ingushetia, completed. By this time, 28 detachments with a total number of 1081 people were created in the Republic. At the same time, a headquarters for partisan movement was established in the territory of Chechen-Ingushetia (Ibragimov & Khatuev, 2015). Their lists of personnel included 292 Chechens and 107 Ingush, i.e. about 36% of the total number of partisans. The material resources for the partisan movement were also created, and for this purpose, food stocks (so called special supplies) were secretly accumulated in the mountainous regions for a total of 5,500,000 rubles (Osmaev, 2018).

At the same time, facts clearly demonstrate the lack of weapons in the partisan detachments created in Kabardino-Balkaria and North Ossetia. Thus, in 11 detachments of Kabardino-Balkaria, there were only 550 rifles, 39 sub-machine guns, 15 machine guns, 19 antitank rifles and 5 mortars, or 628 weapons per 1002 persons. This accounted for only 62% of the need. In North Ossetia, 7 partisan detachments were created, in which initially there were 704 people. They were armed with 350 rifles, 30 sub-machine guns, 25 machine guns, 15 antitank rifles and 6 mortars or 426 weapons. Accordingly, this was only 65% of the need (Documentation Centre of Contemporary History of Krasnodar Region of Contemporary History of Krasnodar Region, 1974-2008).

In addition, the rifles of partisan squads were outmoded and, most importantly, of different types. For example, there were 331 Russian, 27 Polish, 52 German and 140 French rifles out of 550 listed in partisan detachments of Kabardino-Balkaria (Documentation Centre of Contemporary History of Krasnodar Region of Contemporary History of Krasnodar Region, 1974-2008). However, there were exceptions on the general background of the unfavorable situation of weapons of partisans. For example, in the partisan detachment of the Prigorodnii district of Checheno-Ingushetia, there were 60 rifles, 3 assault rifles, 2 machine guns, 1 antitank rifle, 1 mortar for 56 persons (Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History, 1986-2008).

As a rule, the process of providing troops with ammunition and weapons initially went through the city and district Departments of Internal Affairs. For example, in the report of the regional committee of CPSU (b) and the commissariat of internal affairs of the Kabardino-Balkaria Republic, K.E. Voroshilov, the commander-in-chief of partisan movement noted: “The personnel of the partisan detachments were fully armed at the expense of the weapons of People Commissariat for Internal Affairs of Kabardino-Balkar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (rifles, grenades, bullets)”.

In the partisan detachments of Chechen-Ingushetia, 791 people were members or candidate members of CPSU (b), which accounted for 72.7%, of the total personnel (Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History, 1986-2008). The number of communists in the partisan detachments of Kabardino-Balkaria was even more significant. By the beginning of September 1942, there were 9 detachments with a total number of 596 people operating in the Republic. 485 people or 81.4% of the total number of partisans were members and candidate members of the CPSU (b). A number of detachments can even be conditionally called

“communist partisan detachments”: Balkarski, in which all 86 partisans were communists; Elbruskii - all 60 partisans were members of the CPSU (b); Nagornii - 68 communists from the 74th partisan detachment (Documentation Centre of Contemporary History of Krasnodar Region, 1974-2008).

The partisan detachments of Kabardino-Balkaria began to plan and conduct military operations against the occupiers only in the middle of September 1942. In order to successfully resist a numerous and well-armed enemy, the detachments united and jointly carried out attacks on large German stations and other military facilities. As a rule, such actions were carried out after prior coordination of all actions with the Soviet military command. A classic example of this kind of partisan interaction with army units was the night raid of the Baksanski and Kislovodski partisan detachments and reconnaissance troops of the 2nd Guards Rifle Division on the German station in the village of Kamennomostskii, carried out on September 21, 1942.

At the end of October 1942, four partisan detachments — Prokhladnenskii, Kislovodskii, Baksanski and Nagorno-Zolski formed a Kabardino-Balkarian united partisan detachment. In just five days, on November 1, the detachment successfully attacked German units stationed in the village of Khabaz and inflicted heavy losses on the enemy. Such tactics of actions by the combined forces, which showed their success in the struggle against the enemy, were also used in the following weeks, up to the driving out the occupants from the territory of Kabardino-Balkaria. However, the initial stage in the activity of the partisan detachments was not always safely. The confusion that still occurred in determining the locations of partisan detachments, and the first difficulties had a negative impact on their combat activities. First, it affected those units in which the commanding staff showed indecision and allowed uncertainty in their actions during the first battles with the enemy. On September 20, 1942, the Bureau of the Stavropol Regional Committee of CPSU (b) considered the issue “On the disintegration of the Kursk, Novoselitskii, Soldato-Aleksandrovskii, Naurskii and Stepnovskii partisan detachments” (State Archive of Contemporary History of Stavropol Region, 1983-2000).

The study of the history of the partisan movement in the North Caucasus during the period from 1942 to 1943 made it possible to reveal the existence of various types of partisan units that fought with the invaders. The main and most common of them was a partisan detachment. The number of its personnel could range from 13-15 to 100-120 people and more. As an example of such a variation in the number of partisans in one unit, it is possible to take detachments from different regions of the North Caucasus. Thus, in the Prokhladnenskii partisan detachment of Kabardino-Balkaria there were 124 people, in the partisan detachment of the Chernorovskii district of the Krasnodar Territory - 50 people, and in the partisan “Terek” detachment of the Mozdokskii District of the Stavropol Territory - 13 people (Documentation Centre of Contemporary History of Krasnodar Region, 1974-2008; State Archive of Contemporary History of Stavropol Region, 1983-2000).

As a rule, the detachments of more than 30 partisans were divided into troop headed by commanders. In Kabardino-Balkaria, 11 detachments operating in the 37th Army defense zone were divided into 34 troops. In North Ossetia, 7 units were in the area of responsibility of the 9th Army and were divided into 24 troops. In Checheno-Ingushetia, 4 detachments were located in the zone of responsibility of the 44th Army and had 11 partisan troops in their ranks. On average, there were 30-40 partisans in each troop of partisan detachments of the republics of the North Caucasus.

The partisan detachments of North Ossetia were also divided into troops and units - infantry and cavalry divisions (Khudalov, 1992). Consequently, the tactical organization of the partisan forces of the North Caucasus was similar to army sample. When conducting joint combat operations against the invaders, partisan detachments easily fit into the structure of active army.

Moreover, there were attempts to create even larger partisan units. Thus, in North Ossetia, on December 4, 1942, by the order of the Ordzhonikidze Defense Committee, all partisan detachments were included in the formation of a partisan brigade. It had all the previously established bases of partisan detachments of the republic. Major D. Gusov was the commander of the brigade, captain A. Kadiev (Khudalov, 1992) was the chief of headquarters. Thus, an attempt was made to create a large military unit from individual partisan detachments under the leadership of the officers of the Red Army.

However, the organization of a partisan brigade was delayed until the start of the attack of the Transcaucasian Front against the German troops, and it almost did not have time to take part in actions against the occupiers. SHPM when assessing this fact, even came to the opinion that "... in North Ossetia they were hiding behind the formation of the so-called partisan brigade and were inactive" (Documentation Centre of Contemporary History of Krasnodar Region, 1974-2008).

A similar assessment was given to the attempts of the leadership of the Chechen-Ingushetia to combine two or three partisan detachments of the districts of the Republic into one larger unit. SHPM recognized this practice of concentrating partisan forces as incorrect and corrected it in a timely manner (Documentation Centre of Contemporary History of Krasnodar Region, 1974-2008). The actions behind enemy lines of individual detachments with a maximum strength of up to 100 people were considered more expedient.

Expertly, the German military command prepared and conducted punitive actions against partisan forces. Equally, it succeeded in another action: it managed to create for a part of the partisan detachments, in fact, unbearable conditions for the conduct of military actions. Including, setting a significant part of the rural population of the region against the partisans. As it was mentioned above, the result of such anti-partisan policies of the German occupation authorities was the death or collapse of dozens of partisans and a reduction in the number of personnel of all partisan formations of the North Caucasus.

For illustrative purposes, the authors present the most characteristic excerpts and provisions of the documents of the German military command on this issue. Soviet reconnaissance group captured some of them in November 1942 in the area of Gizel in the occupied territory of North Ossetia (Documentation Centre of Contemporary History of Krasnodar Region, 1974-2008). In particular, the order of the command of the 17th German army "On the fight against partisans" stated: "The partisans are organizations specially created by the Soviet government that, in close contact with the Red Army and People Commissariat for Internal Affairs. Together they have the task to fight the German army and destroy its rear organizations through the contradiction to international law" (Documentation Centre of Contemporary History of Krasnodar Region, 1974-2008). If we exclude in these words the accusations of partisans in deceit and actions contrary to international law (as it is well known, it was the Nazis who did not follow the law in these actions during the Second World War), then everything else was generally true, especially with reference to the North Caucasus. In addition to conducting military operations against the invaders, partisan detachments and groups of the North Caucasus were engaged in other, no less important, activities.

In North Ossetia, Chechen-Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Adygea, the Stalingrad region, in the Kuban the partisans revealed the Goebbels propaganda and spread the reports of Soviet informational bureau, the media essays about the courage and resilience of Soviet soldiers and partisans, the appeals to disrupt the activities of the invaders. (Malysheva, 2011, p. 9)

Serious changes in the partisan movement in the North Caucasus occurred in January 1943, when the attack of the Transcaucasian Front began. First, the interaction of the partisan detachments with the units of the active army intensified. The Soviet command set for the partisan detachments specific combat missions to disorganize the rear of the enemy. Thus, in early January 1943, the headquarters of the Northern Group of Forces of the Transcaucasian Front ordered all partisan detachments of the Kabardino-Balkaria and the Stavropol Territory to blow up railway and highway bridges on the Nalchik-Pyatigorsk road, along which the 1st tank army of General Makenzen departed to the West (Documentation Centre of Contemporary History of Krasnodar Region, 1974-2008).

Partisan and army reconnaissance group accurately determined its location in advance. The headquarters of the 1st Tank Army at the beginning of January 1943 was in Pyatigorsk, the headquarters of the 3rd Tank Corps was in Baksan, the 52nd Army Corps was in Prokhladnyii, the “Viking” motorized division was in Malka, etc. (DCCHKR).

However, there are no facts confirming the attacks of the partisans on these headquarters of German troops. Probably, the front command overestimated the combat capabilities of the partisan forces and their ability to carry out such responsible operations. In addition, the fascist troops, quickly retreating through the territory of the North Caucasus, often changed the locations of their headquarters, and our reconnaissance groups did not always keep track of their movement.

Thus, for the period from the 1st to the 1st December, 1942, the partisan detachments of Kabardino-Balkaria destroyed 520 German soldiers and officers (Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History, 1986-2008).

Similar inconsistencies were found on the results of the military work of the partisans of North Ossetia. SHPM determined the results of the activities of 11 partisan detachments of the republic in 166 killed and wounded soldiers of Wehrmacht (Documentation Centre of Contemporary History of Krasnodar Region, 1974-2008). However, in the monograph of Khudalov (1992), these results are different: “... 255 Nazi soldiers and officers were killed and 56 wounded” (p. 119). Total amount was 311 disabled invaders. The difference was also significant as it was almost twice.

The incomplete information on the losses of the partisans of Kabardino-Balkaria remained. According to SHPM, for the period of August-December 1942, 10 people were killed in operations against the enemy, 11 were missing (Documentation Centre of Contemporary History of Krasnodar Region, 1974-2008). As already it was emphasized, the largest partisan unit in the territory of Kabardino-Balkaria was a united partisan detachment with more than 120 people. During its existence from the end of October 1942 to January 1943, the loss of detachment was 18 people. In 1965, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR awarded posthumously medals to 88 partisans and underground fighters who fell in 1942-1943 in battles with the enemy.

7. Conclusion

Thus, the partisan detachments of the republics of the North Caucasus were recruited by the decision of the USSR Defense Committee under the regional leadership.

These detachments were created in case of a breakthrough battle. The creation of partisan forces in the republics of the North Caucasus was complicated. Moreover, the leadership poorly controlled their actions. Therefore, the number of units and losses significantly vary. At the same time, the partisan detachments played a certain positive role in the protection of the territories of the North Caucasus.

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