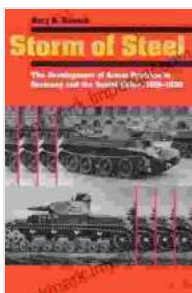


# Unveiling the Evolution of Armor Doctrine: A Historical Exploration from Germany to the Soviet Union

In the annals of warfare, the development of armor doctrine holds immense significance, shaping the strategies and tactics that have defined modern combat. This article embarks on a historical journey, tracing the evolution of armor doctrine in Germany and the Soviet Union from 1919 to 1939. By examining the innovative ideas, strategic shifts, and pivotal battles that shaped the doctrines of these two military powers, we gain a deeper understanding of how armor doctrine influenced the course of World War II and continues to impact modern warfare.



## Storm of Steel: The Development of Armor Doctrine in Germany and the Soviet Union, 1919–1939 (Cornell Studies in Security Affairs) by Mary R. Habeck

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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**The Birth of Armored Warfare: Lessons from the Great War**

The horrors of World War I exposed the devastating effects of trench warfare and the need for a new approach to combat. Both Germany and the Soviet Union emerged from the conflict with a profound understanding of the potential of armored vehicles.

In Germany, Colonel Heinz Guderian emerged as a visionary advocate for armored warfare. Influenced by his experiences in the war, Guderian argued that tanks should not be used merely as infantry support but as the spearhead of a new, highly mobile force. He emphasized the importance of speed, surprise, and combined arms operations.

Meanwhile, in the Soviet Union, Mikhail Tukhachevsky, a brilliant military theorist, espoused similar views. He recognized the potential of mechanized warfare and called for the creation of a dedicated armored force. Tukhachevsky's ideas laid the foundation for the development of the Soviet Union's formidable armored doctrine.

### **Blitzkrieg: The German Doctrine of Lightning Warfare**

Under Guderian's leadership, the German Army developed the concept of Blitzkrieg, or "lightning warfare." This doctrine emphasized the use of tanks, infantry, and air power in a rapid and coordinated manner. Tanks were to spearhead the attack, breaking through enemy lines and creating chaos behind them. Infantry would follow closely behind, consolidating the gains and securing objectives.

Blitzkrieg proved its devastating effectiveness in the opening stages of World War II. The German Army's swift and decisive campaigns in Poland, France, and the Balkans showcased the power of armor doctrine. However,

the doctrine had its limitations. It was highly dependent on air superiority and a well-developed logistical system.

## **Deep Battle: The Soviet Doctrine of Mass and Maneuver**

In contrast to the German emphasis on speed and surprise, the Soviet Union developed a doctrine known as "Deep Battle." This doctrine emphasized mass, maneuver, and the close coordination of all arms. Soviet armored forces were organized into large, self-sufficient units that could operate independently for extended periods.

Deep Battle aimed to overwhelm the enemy with a relentless onslaught by multiple waves of tanks, infantry, and artillery. It also placed great importance on reconnaissance and intelligence gathering to identify enemy weaknesses and exploit opportunities for deep penetrations.

## **The Clash of Doctrines at Kursk**

The Battle of Kursk in 1943 marked a pivotal clash between the German Blitzkrieg doctrine and the Soviet Deep Battle doctrine. The German Army launched a massive offensive, hoping to encircle and destroy the Soviet forces in the Kursk salient. However, the Soviets were prepared for the attack and had created a formidable defense in depth.

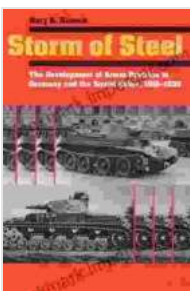
The battle raged for weeks, with both sides suffering heavy losses. The Soviet Red Army ultimately prevailed, thanks to its superior numbers, the effectiveness of its anti-tank defenses, and the resilience of its troops. The Battle of Kursk demonstrated the limitations of Blitzkrieg against a well-prepared and determined enemy.

## **The Legacy of Armor Doctrine**

The development of armor doctrine in Germany and the Soviet Union had a profound impact on the course of World War II. The German Blitzkrieg doctrine, while initially successful, proved to be vulnerable to a determined and well-equipped enemy. The Soviet Deep Battle doctrine, with its emphasis on mass and maneuver, proved to be more flexible and effective in the face of a protracted conflict.

After the war, armor doctrine continued to evolve, incorporating new technologies and lessons learned from the conflict. Today, armored forces remain an essential component of modern armies, providing mobility, firepower, and protection on the battlefield.

The development of armor doctrine in Germany and the Soviet Union from 1919 to 1939 is a fascinating and complex story. It is a story of visionary thinkers, strategic shifts, and pivotal battles that shaped the course of modern warfare. By examining the innovative ideas and strategic choices that shaped these doctrines, we gain a deeper understanding of the evolution of armor doctrine and its lasting impact on the art of war.



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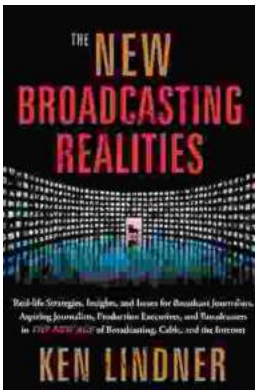
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