After the completion in April 1942 of the Battle of Moscow, throughout the extent of the Soviet-German front there was achieved temporary calm. Both sides even earlier, at the end of the winter, got down to the development of the plans for the spring-summer campaign. Besides the supreme political and military leadership both in the USSR and in Germany through their intelligence bodies were trying to obtain any information about possible intentions of the enemy in order to respond to its actions opportunely and adequately.

Simultaneously strenuous work was conducted over the misinformation of the opposing side. In this peculiar ‘competition’ Hitler succeeded in misleading Stalin having convinced him of the ostensible real existence of the “Operation Kremlin”. The very name of this ostensible plan of the Wehrmacht’s offensive unequivocally spoke about the intention of the Nazi leadership to launch in 1942 a second offensive against Moscow with the purpose of its seizure and the subsequent victorious completion of the war. So on Hitler’s instructions the headquarters of the Army Group Center had developed “Operation Kremlin” which later was stated on May 29, 1942 in the order of the commander of this group – general field marshal Kluge.

This plan specifically gave instructions: “To rout the enemy’s troops that are now in the region farther west and farther south of the enemy’s capital, to firmly capture the territory around Moscow by encircling the city...” (DASHICHEV, 2005). In this connection of interest is the conclusion by the authors of volume 5 of the 12-volume “History of the World War II 1939-1945”. The flatly assert: “However “Operation Kremlin” failed to achieve its goal” (THE FAILURE OF THE AGGRESSIVE PLANS OF THE FASCIST BLOCK, 1975). And this is despite the serious defeats of the Red Army in the spring and summer of 1942 in the southern flank of the Soviet-German front! And the former, in their turn, were the result of Stalin’s wrong decision to direct our reserves to the central sector of the front, first of all for the defence of Moscow.

But, as it is well known, in reality Hitler decided to strike the main blow in the spring of 1942 precisely in the south direction. And this very choice was explained by several important factors. Firstly, after the fiasco of the Blitzkrieg in 1941 Germany no longer had in the sufficient number human and material resources to carry out offensive operations all over the front.

Secondly, due to the prolongation of the war and planning of the new offensive operations against the Red Army the Wehrmacht started to experience the shortage of fuel for their tank, motorized and aircraft formations. The Romanian oil and synthetic petrol, which the German engineers by means of a complicated and costly distillation produced from brown coal, could not save the situation. Hence, Germany had to seize the Soviet oilfields in the North Caucasus and Transcausus. In this connection Hitler quite unequivocally stated his opinion at the
meeting with the commanders of the Army Group South in Poltava on July 1, 1942: “If I fail to get the oil of Maikop and Grozny, I must put an end to this war” (LIVNEV, 2014).

Thirdly, Hitler did not abandon his hopes to involve Turkey in war against the USSR, which [Turky] kept its 26 divisions along the Soviet-Turkish borders. However, the Turkish government would have decided on joining in the war only in case of the huge successes of the German army. Admittedly Hitler had no illusions about the desire of the Turkish government to join in the war against the USSR on Germany’s side. Hence the German command already in 1939-1940 developed a special plan of the occupation of Turkey by the Wehrmacht under the code name “The Gertrude”. Then this plan was corrected and acquired a new name – “Turkey”. The latter foresaw the seizure of Istanbul in the summer of 1943 by the German formations together with the Bulgarian troops (TSKITISHVILI, 1988).

Fourthly, the Caucasus was the crossroads of the strategically important highways along the coasts of the Black and Caspian Seas to the Middle East from where one could develop the advance on India and link up with the army of general field marshal Rommel that was operating against the British troops in Northern Africa. Finally, fifthly, rich raw materials, food and other resources of the Caucasus after its seizure by the Wehrmacht would have made it possible to do away with their shortage in Germany itself.

The former chief of staff of the High Command of the Armed Forces (The Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (OKW)) of Germany general field marshal Keitel at the Nuremberg trials noted in this connection: “The plan of this operation put forward by Hitler (and its idea belonged entirely to him alone!) after the already irreplaceable attrition of forces and the need to be prepared for the defences everywhere could not be the resumption of the general advance all over the front. So he chose as the goal of the operation the breakthrough in the north wing of the Army Group South…”.

So, due to the obvious and full failure of the Blitzkrieg, in the first place due to the Wehrmacht’s failures during the realization of the “Operation Typhoon”, the German High Command got down to the determination of the future tasks for the Wehrmacht for the military campaign of 1942. On December 8, 1941 in Führer Directive #39 Hitler quite clearly determined the following task: “the Army Group South despite all the difficulties should be prepared, weather permitting, even during the winter to undertake the advance in order to reach the borderline of the Lower Don and Donets; thanks to this there will be created prerequisites for a successful realization in the spring of the offensive operation against the Caucasus” (DASHICHEV, 2005). Besides, in this directive it was just the south direction including the speediest possible capture of Sebastopol, that was a top priority in the determination of the main tasks for the land forces.

METHOD

The authors used a number of historical methods to conduct the research of the offensive operations of the Wehrmacht for the spring-summer campaign of 1942. Among them are the method of concrete analysis, systematicity, historicism and objectivity. All these methods combined allowed the authors to carry out the study of numerous documents and historical facts related to the period under consideration and make an objective assessment of the above-mentioned sources.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

In 1942 Hitler for the first time voiced his ideas regarding the Wehrmacht’s offensive on the South on January 3 in his talk with Japan’s ambassador to Germany Oshima. He stressed that “…for the present he is no longer intending to conduct offensive operations in the center of the front. His goal is the advance on the southern sector of the front” (DASHICHEV, 2005). Then, on February 12, 1942, Hitler signed the “Instruction on the conduct of the operations at the Eastern front after the end of the winter period”. This document in broad outline formulated the main task of the High Command: “After the end of the time of flooded roads there must again be restored a solid, uninterruptedly defended front, which in the region of the operations of the Army Group South will become the starting line for the subsequent advance (DASHICHEV, 2005).
Following this on March 28, 1942 in Hitler’s General Headquarters “The Wolf’s Lair”, that was in Eastern Prussia near Rastenburg, the Chief of Staff of the land forces colonel-general F. Halder expounded to the Wehrmacht’s High Command on the main principles of the future plan of the summer offensive of the Army Group South (KARELL, 2003). This operation will soon receive its code name “Blau” (“Case Blue”). At first, in the course of the development of the indicated operation in March 1942, it had the code name “Siegfried”, but later it was finally indicated as the “Blau” operation. The German historian P. Karell explains the reason for the change in the name of the operation by the following circumstance: “…Hitler no longer wanted to give his operations all kinds of feat of arms-binding names of mythological figures – Friedrich Barbarossa had already had a bad reputation” (KARELL, 2003).

In this connection we will note that Hitler in the spring and summer of 1942 more than once inserted substantial correctives in the already approved operations for the advance of the German Troops in the southern flank of the Eastern front. On August 5, 1942 Hitler signed the plan for the future advance as Führer Directive #41. In the domestic historiography both in the Soviet and in modern Russian there were established settled opinions that “Case Blue” is Führer Directive #41. But neither in the name of this directive nor in its content there is the slightest mention that this is the very “Case Blue”. In reality those were initially two separate documents. The “Case Blue” in broad outline had been prepared by the end of March 1942 and on its basis the OKW staff officers prepared the draft order to the troops to attack. On April 4 this document was presented to Hitler for approval but he said that he intended to insert substantial changes in it. According to P. Karell Hitler expressed his dissatisfaction with an excessive freedom of action which was given in the document to the commander of the Army Group South general field marshal F. von Bock. As a result the draft order in several hours by the morning of April 5 turned into Directive #41(KARELL, 2003). And only then, on April 11, 1942 the General Staff of the High Command of the German Army (OKH) on the basis of Führer Directive #41 completed the development of the “Case Blue” (DASHICHEV, 2005).

The beginning of the realization of “Case Blue” was fixed for June 1942. But prior to its practical realization it was necessary in the first place to create maximum possible favourable conditions for the shock formations of the Wehrmacht. So the Hitlerite command carried out two “…offensive operations with a limited goal – in the Crimea and in the Izyum direction. The Soviet leadership itself by its over-confident strategy to some extent made it easier for the enemy to fulfill this task,” – argues in his research V.V. Beshanov (BESHANOV, 2002). Indeed, prepared in a hurry on Stalin’s insistence those offensive operations that resulted in the rout of the Soviet troops on the Crimean Peninsula and in the region of Kharkov in May - early June 1942, “cleared” the way to the German Army Group South for the realization of its tasks.

True, this plan as an independent document is not mentioned in the published sources. One can only assume that the “Case Blue” implies that the former is just Führer Directive #41. In the “Case Blue” Hitler formulated the goal of the main operation in the south “…to destroy the enemy west of the Don so as to capture the oil-bearing fields in the Caucasus and cross the Caucasian mountains” (DASHICHEV, 2005). At the same time it contained a clearly set, though for the time being of minor importance, task regarding the fate of Stalingrad: “…it is necessary to try to reach Stalingrad or at least subject it to the pressure of our heavy weapons for it to lose its importance as the center of the war industry and as a communications hub” (DASHICHEV, 2005).

Such an ambivalent goal – the Caucasus and Stalingrad - outlined in Führer Directive #41 for the Army Group South testified to the interconnection between those two directions of attack, close interdependence between those two battles that started practically simultaneously. This circumstance allowed G.I. Kolga who had analyzed the content of the “Case Blue” to draw the following conclusion: “It is conventional wisdom, and quite justified, that the battle of Stalingrad…marked the beginning of the turning point in the war. In our view it is more correct to consider this campaign as the battle of the Caucasus-Stalingrad” (KOLGA, 2013).

In his turn S.V. Yanush, speculating in the same key, notes: “The battles of Stalingrad and the Caucasus had not only common genetic origin (both are planned in Führer Directive #45 of the Hitlerite command of July 23, 1942) but also strategic and tactical interconnection in the course of those battles. This interconnection consisted both in the planning of the operations
(“Stalingrad-1”, “Stalingrad-2”) and in the realization of those battles (YANUSH, 2005). We agree with these assertions.

The reader inexperienced in all the subtleties of the military staff planning may easily be confused about all those numerous changes. Still more confusion in this issue appears in case of the regrettable erroneous names of the planned military operations that occur in the historical literature. For instance, the “Encyclopedia of the Third Reich” has it: “Blau” (“Case Blue”) is the code name of the war with Great Britain (VOROBAEV, 2003).

Big difference of opinion also occurs in historical and war literature regarding the structure and content of this plan, precisely Führer Directive #41, the determination of the main task that was formulated in the process of its making. For instance, the “Military Encyclopedic Dictionary”, where the chairman of the chief editorial commission was Marshal of the Soviet Union N.V. Ogarkov, says: “Blau” (“Case Blue”) - the code name of the plan of the advance of the German-fascist troops in the Voronezh direction in the summer of 1942. It was foreseen to encircle and destroy the Soviet troops west of Stary Oskol, move as far as the Don and capture the bridgehead on its left bank” (OGARKOV, 1983). A careful study of the text of Führer Directive #41 shows that, firstly, Stary Oskol as an intermediate or final point of the German offensive is not mentioned in this document at all. This town, located in Belgorod region, i.e. west of Voronezh, was later “figured out” by the military historians according to the geographic principle by having tied its location to other points of the German advance and failures of the Soviet troops. Secondly, such determination of the content of the “Case Blue” is, in our view, oversimplified.

P. Karel argues that the operation consisted of two phases (KARELL, 2003). A.K. Tskitishvili in his work points out that the “Case Blue” consisted of three phases (TSKITISHVILI, 1988). V.I. Dashichev considers that the main operation broke up into three successive, supplementing each other attacks (DASHICHEV, 2005). The truth is revealed in the process of the study of the content of the Führer Directive #41. In it Hitler really determined three attacks. The first one – an all-embracing offensive or a breakthrough from the region south of Oryol in the direction of Voronezh with the purpose of its capture. The second one – the offensive with one military grouping from Voronezh along the Don river to the south in co-operation with another military grouping advancing from Kharkov to the east. The goal – to encircle and destroy the Soviet troops in this region. The third one – this “…should be organized in such a way, so that the forces, attacking the lower Don, unite in the region of Stalingrad with those forces that are advancing from the region of Taganrog, Artyomovsk between the upper Don and Voroshilovgrad across the river Donets to the east. These forces then must link up with the tank army advancing to Stalingrad” (DASHICHEV, 2005). As for the formulation of the main operation on the whole, the former in the text of this Directive looks rather brief and laconic: “its goal... – to rout and destroy the Russian troops in the region of Voronezh, south of it and also west and north of the river Don” (DASHICHEV, 2005).

Towards the beginning of June 1942 the Army Group South gained impressive successes in the course of the offensive operations on the southern flank of the Soviet-German front. As it was noted above, in the Crimea and in the region of Kharkov the Red Army suffered severe defeats, and the German command again took firmly the initiative of waging the war in its hands. Those circumstances favourable for the Wehrmacht were considered by Hitler sufficient enough to declare the realization of the ‘Case Blue’, or speaking more precisely, – Führer Directive #41. So on June 30, 1942 a new plan of the attack of the Army Group South under the code name “Operation Braunschweig” was approved. One more reason for such an urgent renaming of the previously approved plan was, in our view, “the case of major Reichel”. On June 19, 1942 major Reichel, the commander of the operational department of the 23rd tank division was flying to the headquarters of the 17th army corps with some secret documents. Among them were the maps with the marks of the places of the dislocation of the corps divisions and also the operational tasks of the first phase of the “Case Blue”. The plane was brought down and those invaluable for their strategic significance documents fell into the hands of the Soviet command. In order to somehow minimize the damage of this exceptionally unpleasant occasion, furious Hitler ordered to speed up all the preparatory events and rename the plan in order to try to mislead the command of the Red Army (THE INCIDENT WITH MAJOR REICHEL’S BRIEFCASE, 2018).
Nevertheless, it should be noted, that the history of the creation of “Operation Braunschweig”, the exact date of its putting into effect and some other aspects of this document are interpreted in the domestic and foreign historiography in different ways. Some researchers consider, that the “Operation Braunschweig” was not an independent document, but was just a renamed “Case Blue”. we will quote on that score the viewpoint of K. Tskitishvili: “Operation Braunschweig – up to July 30, 1942 was the name of “Case Blue” (TSKITISHVILI, 1988). However the majority of the historians agree that according to the “operation Braunschweig” the Army Group South was set a different task, i.e. to strike a new, not envisioned by “Case Blue”, blow across the Western Caucasus and further along the eastern coast of the Black Sea as far as Batumi. So, in our view, the new plan nevertheless can be considered as a separate, independent document.

At the same time, there is no denying the fact, that both the documents are closely interconnected in terms of content. In view of the fact, as S.I. Linets and S.V. Yanush note in their monograph, “…of no doubt is the fact that the part of the document, mentioned above, i.e. Führer Directive #45, is the logical continuation of the Führer Directive #41 of April 5, 1942 and partially copies the instructions not realized by the Wehrmacht” (LINETS & YANUSH, 2010).

The realization of the “Operation Braunschweig” in early July, 1942 was quite favourable for the Army Group South. The Soviet troops continued to make fighting retreats and Hitler thought that those successes will allow him, just another time, to correct the plan of the offensive operation on the southern flank of the front. So on July 7, 1942 he made a decision to divide the Army Group South into two independent groups of troops with the tasks different in content. As a result of this “lateral troop movement” Army Group A under the command of general field marshal List set off to capture the Caucasus and the remaining part of the forces of the Army Group South, which now became Army Group B, led by general field marshal F. von Bock, received the task to attack Stalingrad (MÜLLER-HILLEBRAND, 2002). Besides the priority, i.e. the determination of the main task, was the Caucasian direction. This is proved by the fact that out of four armies – three – the 17th field army of general Ruoff, the 1st tank army of general Kleist and the 4th tank army of general Hoth were setting off to the Caucasus and only one of them – the 6th field army of general Paulus – to Stalingrad.

On July 13, 1942 Hitler, just another time, changed the plan of the operation on the southern flank of the Soviet-German front that was already in progress. This is how V. Tike writes in his book: “The advance guards of the Hoth’s tank army that stood north of Millerovo and were to attack along the Don and Kalach were turned back in order to be in time to at least envelope the retreating from the region of Rostov Russian divisions. Further only the 6th army of colonel-general Paulus moved in the eastern direction….Hitler thought that he had destroyed the main forces of the divisions of the Soviet Southern front, but the Soviet General Headquarters crossed out the plans of the German offensive” (TIKE, 2005).

Practically simultaneously Hitler made a decision on a substantial reduction of the forces in the both Army Groups, having over-confidently considered, that the Soviet Troops were close to a complete defeat and the Wehrmacht’s victory in the south is only a matter of several days. So, as B. Müller-Hillebrand notes, “…already in July 1942 at the initial stage of the summer offensive, from the front where 68 divisions were attacking, 11 divisions were removed including two tank and two motorized” (MÜLLER-HILLEBRAND, 2002). Among them were two elite motorized divisions: “Adolf Hitler” and “The Great Germany”. Besides, the 11th Army of general field marshal von Manstein was directed to the Army Group North for the speediest possible capture of Leningrad. Thereby Hitler cancelled the realization of the “Blücher Operation”, according to which the 11th army was to force the Strait of Kerch and land on the Taman peninsula to increase the Army Group A.

Such distribution of forces and their simultaneous reduction alarmed the commander of the chief of staff of the OKW general Halder very much. At least, he wrote later about it in his diary. Halder feared the underestimation of the combat abilities of the Red Army which was clearly demonstrated by Hitler with his ill-considered orders. In this connection on July 23, 1942 he noted with bitterness: “The underestimation of the enemy’s possibilities that has always been observed, is gradually taking the grotesque forms and is becoming dangerous. All this is above human powers…” (HALTER, 1971).
The confusion in the historical literature with the names and numbering of the Hitlerite plans is clearly characterized by the example borrowed by the authors from the work by I.B. Moshchansky “The Defence of the Caucasus. The great retreat. July 25 – December 31, 1942”. To illustrate this we will quote this part of the text: “The German leadership developed a detailed plan of the operation over the seizure of the Caucasus under the code name “Operation Edelweiss”, delineated in the Führer Directive #45 of July 23, 1942. Führer Directive #45 (code name “Operation Braunschweig”), which Hitler personally dictated on July 23, 1942, was opposed by many prominent German commanders...” (MOSHCHANSKY, 2010). It turns out that the number of the Directive and the date of its signing fully coincide, but, incidentally, the code name of the plan itself is different – “Edelweiss” and “Braunschweig”. How can this be understood? Is this the error of the researcher? Or is there another explanation for this incident? In our view the solution lies in the content of the Führer Directive #45 of July 23, 1945 itself, which, by the way, has the name “On the continuation of the “Operation Braunschweig”. Point two – “The tasks for further operations” – says: “The Army Group A will be joined by the Italian Alpine corps. These operations of the Army Group A are given the code name “Operation Edelweiss” (DASHICHEV, 2005).

Before this formulation Führer Directive #45 in three sub-points briefly (about one page) says in broad outline about the plans of the offensive advance of the Army Group A on the Caucasus with three military groupings: along the eastern coast of the Black Sea; with the mounting and chasseur divisions in the center for the capture of Maikop and Armavir; in the direction of Grozny and Baku (DASHICHEV, 2005). Essentially this is “Operation Edelweiss”. Again, in the form of a separate plan or directive, this document does not exist.

Highly curious for us is the development of the OKW operations of the Wehrmacht and its allies over the capture of Stalingrad. In the scientific literature there is ingrained the generally accepted in the post-war decades opinion that “Operation Braunschweig” actually contains the instructions on the capture of the town. However, in addition, for some reason, one ignores that Führer Directive #45 “On the continuation of the “Operation Braunschweig” signed by Hitler on July 23, 1942 has on that score a clear instruction. Specifically point four of this document says: “The task is falling to the Army Group B’s lot...to attack Stalingrad, rout the enemy’s military grouping concentrated there and capture the town...Following this the tank and motorized troops must attack along the Volga with the task to move to Astrakhan and there also paralyze the movement on the main riverbed of the Volga. These operations of the Army Group B get the code name “Operation Fischreihen” (DASHICHEV, 2005). Hence, the operation over the capture by the Wehrmacht of Stalingrad has quite a clear and unequivocal name – “Fischreihen” which means ‘heron’ in English. As it is seen from the text of Führer Directive #45, the capture of Stalingrad was the first phase of the “Operation Fischreihen” whose realization ended for the Group Army B by a complete catastrophe on the Volga bank. Therefore the second phase - the capture of Astrakhan - was never realized.

CONCLUSION
As conclusions we note, first of all, that the planning by the German High Command of the operations of the Wehrmacht’s offensive for the spring-summer campaign of 1942 consisted in the impossibility of the attack on the entire of the Soviet-German front. After the failure of the Blitzkrieg in 1941 Germany no longer had the resources for this. As the waging of a long war required huge fuel reserves, food and various raw materials, the southern direction normally came to the fore as the first in its strategic significance for the German political and military leadership.

The development of the “Case Blue” and a successful beginning of its practical realization, on the one hand, convinced Hitler of the correctness of his decision, but, on the other hand, this entailed the reappraisal of the powers and possibilities of the Wehrmacht in the realization of its 1942 summer operation. The consequence of this, despite the timid protests of the German generals, was Hitler’s interference in the course of the operation already under way and the development of the new plan - “Operation Braunschweig” to achieve simultaneously two strategic goals - the occupation of the Caucasus and the capture of Stalingrad. As the subsequent development of the events showed, such a decision was hasty and erroneous. Firstly, the Wehrmacht encountered a fierce resistance from the Red Army, and, secondly, it no longer had the strength for successful divergents, which ultimately led to the defeat both in
the battle of the Caucasus and in the battle of Stalingrad. The end of 1942 – beginning of 1943 marked a turning point in the course of the military operations at the Soviet-German front, which made the defeat of Germany inevitable.

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The development and realization by the nazi leadership of the wehrmacht’s plans of the offensive operation for the spring-summer campaign of 1942 in the south wing of the soviet-german front

O desenvolvimento e a realização pela liderança nazista dos plans da wehrmacht da operação ofensiva para a campanha de primavera-verão de 1942 na ala sul da frente soviético-alema

El desarrollo y realización por parte de la dirección nazi de los planes de la Wehrmacht de la operación ofensiva para la campaña primavera-verano de 1942 en el ala sur del frente soviético-alemán.

Resumo

O artigo mostra a história do desenvolvimento pelo Alto Comando Alemão dos planos da operação ofensiva da Wehrmacht na ala sul da frente soviético-alema para a campanha de primavera-verão de 1942. O objetivo deste artigo é desenvolver alguns aspectos individuais do planejamento pela liderança nazista de “Case Blue” (alemão - Fall Blau) e sua posterior realização. O resultado desta correção foi a rápida criação de dois novos planos estratégicos: “Operação Braunschweig” - a ofensiva contra Stalingrado e “Operação Edelweiss” - a ofensiva contra o Cáucaso. No artigo, os autores, como conclusão, observam que tal dispersão das forças armadas do exército alemão levou, no final, à escassez de forças para a realização de ambos os planos e a derrota da Wehrmacht tanto em Stalingrado quanto na batalha do Cáucaso. As vitórias do Exército Vermelho nessas batalhas resultaram na virada radical em toda a frente soviético-alemã, no início da libertação dos territórios soviéticos das tropas de ocupação alemãs.


Abstract

The article shows the history of the development by the German High Command of the plans of the Wehrmacht's offensive operation in the south wing of the Soviet-German front for the spring-summer campaign of 1942. The objective of this paper is to elaborate on some individual aspects of the planning by the Nazi leadership of “Case Blue” (German - Fall Blau) and its subsequent realization. The result of this correction was a quick creation of the two new strategic plans: “Operation Braunschweig” - the offensive against Stalingrad and “Operation Edelweiss” - the offensive against the Caucasus. In the paper, the authors as a conclusion note that such dispersion of the armed forces of the German army led in the end to the shortage of forces for the realization of the both plans and the defeat of the Wehrmacht both in Stalingrad and in the battle of the Caucasus. The victories of the Red Army in those battles resulted in the radical turning-point at the entire Soviet-German front, in the beginning of the liberation of the Soviet territories from the German occupation troops.

Keywords: The USSR. Germany. The red army. Military planning. The Caucasus.

Resumen

El artículo muestra la historia del desarrollo por parte del Alto Mando alemán de los planes de la operación ofensiva de la Wehrmacht en el ala sur del frente soviético-alemán para la campaña primavera-verano de 1942. El objetivo de este artículo es desarrollar algunos aspectos individuales de la planificación por parte de la dirección nazi de “Case Blue” (alemán - Fall Blau) y su posterior realización. El resultado de esta corrección fue una rápida creación de los dos nuevos planes estratégicos: “Operación Braunschweig” - la ofensiva contra Stalingrado y “Operación Edelweiss” - la ofensiva contra el Cáucaso. En el artículo, los autores como conclusión señalan que tal dispersión de las fuerzas armadas del ejército alemán condujo al final a la escasez de fuerzas para la realización de ambos planes y la derrota de la Wehrmacht tanto en Stalingrado como en la batalla del Cáucaso. Las victorias del Ejército Rojo en esas batallas dieron como resultado un punto de inflexión radical en todo el frente soviético-alemán, en el comienzo de la liberación de los territorios soviéticos de las tropas de ocupación alemanas.