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DAY AND NIGHT

Those who were here will never forget it. When, many years hence, we begin to recall it, and our lips form the word "war," the picture of Stalingrad will rise before our eyes, the bursting flame of rockets, the glow of fires, and in our ears will echo again the heavy endless booming of the bombardment. We shall smell the stifling odour of burning timber and hear the crackle of the red-hot tin roofs.

The Germans are besieging Stalingrad. But when we say "Stalingrad," we mean not the centre of the town, not Lenin Street or even the suburbs. We mean the enormous belt 65 kilometres in length along the Volga, the whole town with its suburbs, its factory yards and workers' settlements. There are many little towns here, fused into one large town, stretching along the whole bend of the Volga. But now this town is not the same as the one we used to see from the Volga boats. It no longer contains the little white houses cheerfully running up the slopes of the mountain, the light river landing stages are there no more, nor the quays with their rows of bathing cabins, kiosks and little houses stretching along the Volga. Now it is a grey and smoky town, where day and night the fire dances and the ashes whirl. It is a warrior town singed in battle, with strongholds of crudely made bastions, with the stones of heroic ruins.

Even the Volga near Stalingrad is not that Volga we formerly knew with its deep and calm waters, its wide sunny reaches, its regular line of pleasure steamers, its whole streets of pine-wood rafts, and caravans of barges. Now the Volga near Stalingrad is a military river. Its quays are pitted with craters, bombs fall into its waves, throwing up heavy pillars of water. Massive ferries and light boats go to and fro across the river towards the besieged town. Weapons of war clatter over it, and the blood-stained bandages of the wounded are to be seen floating on its dark waters.

In the daytime, here and there, houses are blazing, at night the smoky glow stretches to the horizon. The boom of the bombardment and the artillery cannonade hovers over the quivering ground. For some time past there have been no safe places in the town, but during these days of siege the people here have grown used to the lack of security. Fires are raging in different parts of the town. Many streets no longer exist, others are furrowed by bomb craters. The women and children still left in the town find shelter in the cellars and dig caves in the ravines running down to the Volga. After storming the town for so long, the Germans want to take it at any price. The streets are littered with the fragments of shot-down bombers, anti-aircraft shells are exploding in the air, but the bombardment does not cease for a single hour. The besieging enemy is striving to turn the town into a hell, where life will be impossible.

True, it is hard to live in this place where the sky is blazing over your head and the earth trembling under your feet. The sight of these gaping walls and charred windows

of houses inhabited only yesterday, makes your throat contract with hatred. The scorched bodies of women and children, burnt by the Germans on one of the steamers, call for vengeance as they lie stretched out on the sand of the river bank.

If it is difficult to live here at all, it is certainly impossible to live here and do nothing. But to live fighting, to live destroying the Germans, such a life is possible here, such a life is imperative, and we shall live it, defending this town amidst smoke, fire and blood. If death hangs over our head, glory stands beside us; she has become our sister, among the ruins of houses and the cries of orphan children.

It is evening. We are in one of the suburbs. The field of battle stretches out in front of us, the smoking hills, the burning streets. As is usual in the South, it gets dark quickly. Everything is swathed in a bluish-black haze, pierced from time to time by the fiery arrows of the guards' trench-mortar batteries. Marking the fron- line along a huge ring, the white German signal rockets rise into the sky. Night brings no break in the battle. The heavy roar of German bombers goes on; bombs have been dropping behind our backs. A droning in the air, going from west to east, and a moment later, from east to west. It is our planes going west. Look, they have hung a line of yellow flares over the German positions, and bombs are seen bursting on the brightly lit ground.

A quarter of an hour of comparative silence; comparative, I say, because during all this time you hear a heavy cannonade to the north and south and the dry crackling of tommy-guns in front of you. But here they call it silence, because for a long time past they have known none other, and something must be called silence!

At such moments you somehow suddenly remember all that has passed before your eyes during these last few days, the faces of people, now exhausted, now excited, their sleepless, furious eyes.

We crossed the Volga in the evening. The patches of fire were already showing up red against the black evening sky. The ferry-boat on which we were crossing was loaded to excess: it carried five lorries with ammunition, a detachment of Red Army men, several girls from the medical battalion and ourselves. The ferry was sailing under a smoke-screen, but still the crossing seemed to be very long. A twenty-year-old nurse, a Ukrainian girl named Shchepenya, with the rather fanciful first name of Victoria, was sitting next to me on the edge of the boat. She was crossing to Stalingrad for the fourth or fifth time.

Here, in the siege, the usual rules of evacuation of the wounded have been changed: there was no room in this burning town to accommodate all the medical organizations. The surgeon's assistants and nurses, having collected the wounded from the front positions, bring them through the town, put them on the boats and ferries, and after taking them to the opposite bank, come back to fetch new barches of wounded, who are waiting for their help. Victoria and one of my companions discovered they came from the same town, and for half of the way vied with each other in recollections of Dniepropetrovsk, its streets, the house where my companion had lived and the house where Victoria had studied. They recalled their home town in all its details, and it was evident that in their hearts they had not surrendered it to the Germans and would never surrender it; that town, whatever happens, was and would always be theirs.

The ferry-boat was already approaching the Stalingrad bank.

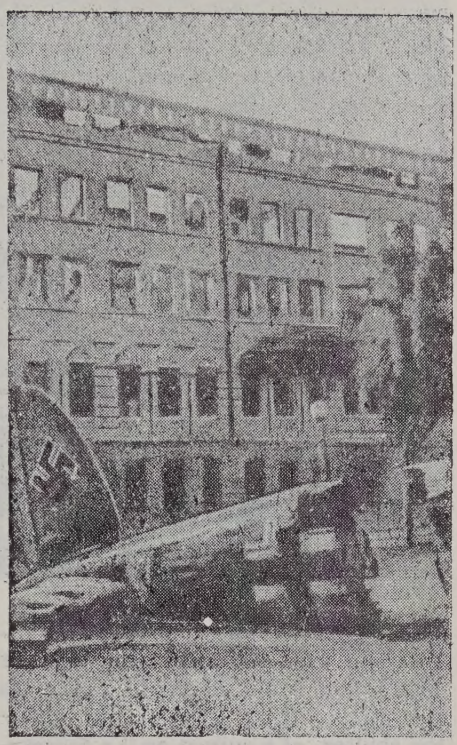
"Even yet, every time I come here, I'm half-afraid to land," said Victoria suddenly. "You see, I was twice wounded, once even very seriously, but for all that I didn't believe I would die, because I had not yet lived at all, had not seen life. Why on earth should I die?"

Her eyes were large and sad at that moment. I knew it was true: it is frightful to have been wounded twice already when you are only twenty, to have been already fifteen months in the war and to come here, to Stalingrad, for the fifth time. There was still so much awaiting her in the future, a whole life of love and possibly even the first kiss, who knows! And here it was night, a permanent uproar, the burning town in front of you, and a twenty-year-old girl was going there for the fifth time. But she had to go though it was so dreadful. In a quarter of an hour she would thread her way among the blazing houses and somewhere in one of the outlying streets, amidst ruins and hurtling splinters, she would gather the wounded and take them to safety, and if she succeeded she would return for the sixth time.

Here is the landing stage, a steep ascent, and that horrible smell of burnt dwellings. The sky is black, but the skeletons of the houses are blacker still. Their mutilated cornices and half-ruined walls are sharply outlined against the skies, and when the distant blaze of a bomb explosion suddenly lights up the sky, the ruins of the houses look like the battlements of a fortress.

And, true enough, it is a fortress. There, in a vault, the staff is working. There, underground, you see the usual bustle of staff activity. Telegraphists, haggar from want of sleep, are tapping out their dots and dashes, and liaison officers, covered with dust and powdered with fallen plaster like snow, hurry to and fro. But in their reports we come across no numbered elevations, no hills and defence boundaries, but just the names of streets, suburbs, villages and sometimes even houses.

The staff and the communication post are hidden deep underground. They are the brain of the defence and must not be exposed to any accident. The people are tired, they all have heavy, sleepless eyes and leaden faces. I try to light a cigarette, but

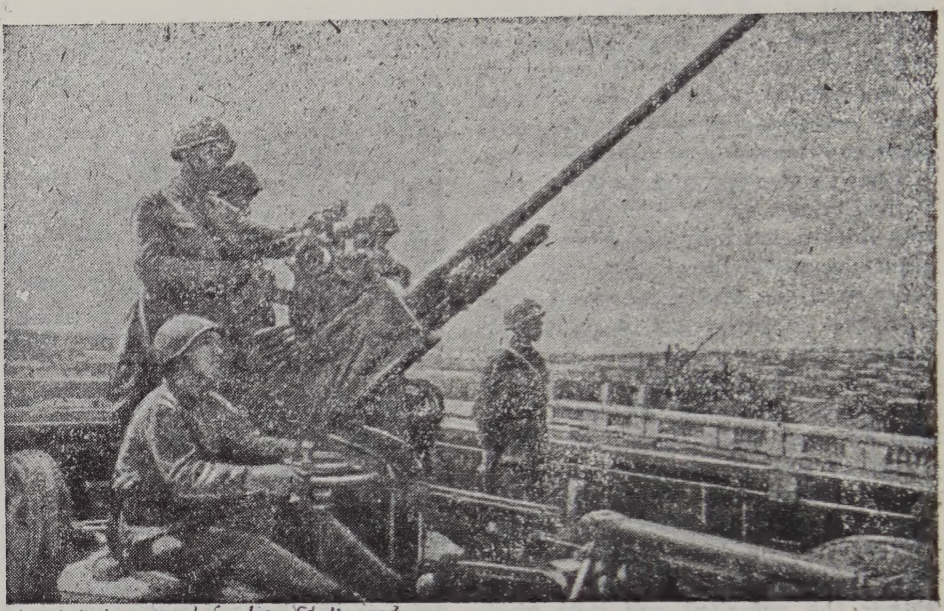


A wrecked German plane in one of the streets of Stalingrad

the matches go out one after another: there is too little oxygen here, underground.

It is night. In a dilapidated four-seater we grope our way from the staff to one of the command posts. Among the line of smashed and burnt-down houses we see one which is still intact. From its gates creaking carts rumble along, loaded with bread: there is a bakery in this undamaged building. The town is living, living at any price. Carts are going along the streets, creaking and suddenly stopping when before them, somewhere round the corner, there flashes the dazzling light of a bursting mine.

It is morning. The bright blue sky is over our heads. In one of the unfinished buildings of a factory the staff of the brigade is stationed. The street leading north towards the German positions is under constant mortar fire. And on



An A.A. battery defending Stalingrad

that very spot where, perhaps, a militiaman used to stand pointing out where you could or could not cross the street, there now stands under the shelter of a ruined wall a tommy-gunner, directing you to the spot where the street slopes down and you may cross without being noticed by the enemy and without exposing the whereabouts of staff headquarters. An hour ago a tommy-gunner was killed on this spot. Now another one is stationed here, and, like his predecessor, he directs the traffic from his dangerous post.

It is quite light now. Today it is sunny, and noon is near. We are sitting in the observation post in soft plush armchairs, as the post is situated on the fifth floor, in a well-furnished engineer's flat. Flower pots moved from the window sill are standing on the floor, and a stereoscopic tube is fastened to the sill. This stereoscope, however, is here for distant observation, since what is called the front-positions can be seen from here with the naked eye. You can see German lorries moving down there near the houses at the end of the village, then a motorcyclist rushes past, then some German soldiers on foot. Several of our mines explode. One machine stops in the middle of the road, another, swinging round, takes shelter near the houses. Immediately afterwards, with an answering roar overhead, German mines land somewhere in the next house.

I turn from the window to the table standing in the middle of the room. Some dry flowers in a small vase, a few books and school copybooks are scattered on it. On one of the copybooks, in a careful childish hand, the word "Composition" is written. Here, as well as in many other flats of this house, life has suddenly been brought to a standstill. But it must and will move on again, because it is for that very reason, I am convinced, that our fighters are struggling and dying amidst the ruins and the fires.

Another day, another night pass by. The city's streets have grown even more deserted, but its heart is still throbbing. We are approaching the gates of a factory. The workers' militiamen whose belted leather coats make them look like the Red Guard men of 1918, carefully examine our papers. At last we find ourselves sitting in one of the underground rooms. All those who remained to guard the factory premises, the direc-

tor, the stretcher-bearers, the firemen and the volunteer guard, all are at their posts.

There are no ordinary inhabitants left in the town, only the defenders remain. But whatever happens, no matter how many lathes have already been removed, the shop is always the shop, and the old workers, who have devoted to the works the best part of their lives, are now guarding it up to the very end, as far as is humanly possible, though all the window panes may be broken and you can still smell the smoke of the recently extinguished fires.

"We haven't noticed everything here," the director beckons us to the board. He begins to tell us how some days ago German tanks pierced the line of defence in one place and rushed towards the factory. It was urgently necessary, before nightfall, to assist the defenders and stop the gap. The director summoned the chief of the repair shop. He ordered the men to complete in the shortest possible time the repairs to those few tanks which were on the point of completion. The workers, who were able to repair the tanks with their own hands, proved to be able, at that critical moment, to man them and turn themselves into tank crews.

In the factory-yard itself, militiamen, workers and receivers formed up into tank crews. They took their seats in the tanks, rattling across the empty yard straight through the the gates of the factory and out into the battle. They were the first to meet the onrushing Germans near the stone bridge across a narrow river. They and the Germans were separated by a huge ravine which could be crossed by the tanks only over the bridge. It was just on this bridge that the German tank column was met by the factory tank crews.

A violent artillery duel followed. Meanwhile German tommy-gunners had started to cross the ravine. At the same time the factory sent forward against the Germans its own volunteer infantry; two detachments of volunteer guards followed the tanks plunging into the ravine. One of these detachments was under the

Reinforcements on a street of Stalingrad

command of Kostyuchenko, the chief of the militia, and Pashchenko, professor of the Technical institute; the other was led by Popov, foreman of the tool shop, and an old worker named Krivulin. On the steep slopes of the ravine the battle took place, sometimes developing into a hand-to-hand fight. In this struggle perished a number of old workers, whose names are now remembered in the factory.

That day the outskirts of the factory settlement were transformed. Barricades appeared in the streets leading to the ravine. Everything was utilized: boiler iron, steel plates, the bodies of dismantled tanks. Just as in the civil war, women brought cartridges to their husbands and girls went straight from the shop to the front positions and, having attended to the wounded, carried them to the rear. Many perished that day, but it was the price paid by the workers and fighters for keeping the Germans back till nightfall when new units were able to reach the spot.

The factory yards are empty. The wind is whistling through the broken windows. When a mine explodes nearby, fragments of the broken panes fall from all sides on the asphalt pavement. But the factory is fighting as the whole town fights. And if it is possible ever to get used to bombs, mines, bullets and danger, then we may say the people here have got used to it all. They have got used to it as nowhere else.

We go over a bridge across one of the town ravines. I can never forget that picture. The ravine stretching out to left and right was swarming like an ant-hill. Its sides were all lined with caves. Whole streets were being excavated. The caves were covered with charred planks and rags; the women had brought here everything that could shelter their little ones from the rain and the wind. I cannot tell you how bitter it was to see instead of streets and cross-roads, instead of a noisy town, these rows of sad human nests.

One more outpost, the so-called front positions. Remnants of houses levelled to the ground and low hills razed by mines. Unexpectedly we met here one of the four men to whom the newspapers dedicated their leading articles a month ago. They had set on fire 15 German tanks, these four armoured fighters: Alexander Belikov, Peter Samoylov, Ivan Oleinikov and Peter Boloto, the one who quite unexpectedly chanced to be here, before us. But after all, why should we say unexpectedly? It was only natural to find such a man here in Stalingrad. It is people like him who are defending the town today. And just because it has such defenders, the town is holding out, in spite of everything, amid ruin, fire and blood.

Peter Boloto has a strong thick-set figure, an open face with quizzical, rather sly eyes. Talking of the fight when they disabled 15 tanks, he suddenly smiles and says:

"When a tank was moving towards me, I thought my last moment had come. Whew! But then the tank came closer and caught fire; it was quite near me, but it was all up with it. By the bye, you know, during that battle I rolled five cigarettes and smoked them up to the very tip. Well, perhaps, to be quite truthful, not up to the very tip, but still I rolled five cigarettes. It's always the way in a battle: you put aside your gun and light a cigarette whenever you have a free moment. You can smoke if you like in a battle but you must shoot straight. If you miss, you won't smoke any more, and that's that."

Peter Boloto smiled the broad, calm smile of a man knowing what's what in soldiering, a life where you may sometimes take a moment's rest and smoke a cigarette, but where you dare not miss your aim.

There are lots of different people defending Stalingrad. But many, very many have that broad, assured smile and like Peter Boloto have steady, hard, unfailing hands. That's why the town is still struggling, even

when, now and then, it seems almost impossible.

The quay, or rather what is left of it: the skeletons of burnt vehicles, the remnants of barges cast ashore, poor tumble-down houses which have escaped destruction. A hot noon. The sun is veiled by thick clouds of smoke. From early morning the Germans have again been bombing the town. Before your eyes you see the planes diving one after another. The sky is speckled with tufts of smoke from anti-aircraft shells, it is like the blue-grey hide of some unreal animal. Fighters are circling overhead with loud shrieks. A furious battle is taking place, without an instant's break. The town is struggling at all costs, even though the price may be dear and the heroic deeds of the people cruel and grim, and their sufferings unheard-of, still it cannot be helped, the struggle is one of life and death.

Gently splashing, the waters of the Volga cast ashore at our feet a charred beam. A drowned woman is lying on it, clutching at it with her burnt distorted fingers. I do not know from where the waves have brought her. Perhaps she is one of those who perished on some steamer, perhaps the victim of a fire on the wharfs. Her face is drawn and twisted; she suffered terribly before she died.

This was the work of the Germans, done before our very eyes. Let them not beg for mercy from anyone who saw it all. After Stalingrad we can have no mercy on them!

CONSTANTINE SIMONOV
Stalingrad.

THE GERMAN

Friedrich Schmidt was secretary of the secret field police of the 626th group attached to the first tank army of the German armed forces. This was his title. The secretary kept a diary. He began it on the 22nd of February of the current year, and finished it on the 5th of May. He wrote it while in Budyonnovka, near Mariupol. Here are some excerpts from Friedrich Schmidt's diary:

Feb. 25th. I never expected that today would be one of the busiest days of my life. . . The woman communist Yekaterina Skoroyedova knew that the Russians were going to attack Budyonnovka some days before it actually came off. She criticized the Russians who are working in with us. She was shot at 12.00. . . The old man Saveli Petrovich Stepanenko and his wife from Samsonovka were shot too. . . The four-year-old child of Goravilin's mistress was also put out of the way. About four o'clock they brought in four eighteen-year-old girls who had crossed the ice from Yeisk. . . A touch of the whip made them see sense. They're all four students, peaches. . . It's awful in the prison cells, they're crammed. . .

Feb. 26th. Today's doings break the record. . . The beauty, Tamara, roused a lot of interest. Then they brought in six fellows and a girl. No persuasions, not even most severe beatings with the lash did any good. They were the very deuce! The girl never squeezed a tear, she only gritted her teeth. After beating her mercilessly, my arm went on strike. . . I've come into two bottles of cognac, one from Lieutenant Koch of the staff of Graf von Förster, the other from Rumanians. I'm happy again. It's blowing from the south, the thaw is setting in. The first company of field gendarmery caught five fellows, of about seventeen, three kilometres north of Budyonnovka. They brought them to me. We started to beat them. I broke the handle of the lash into little bits. Two of us beat at a time. . . However, they wouldn't confess anything. . . Two Red Army men were brought to me. . . They were also flogged. I'm "finishing off" the shoe-

maker from Budyonnovka, who thought he could allow himself some offensive remarks about our army. The muscles of my right arm are aching. It's still thawing. . .

March 1st. Another war Sunday. . . I got my salary, 105 marks 50 pfennigs. . . Today I again dined at the Rumanians'. I had a splendid dinner. At 4 00 p.m. I was unexpectedly invited to coffee with General von Forster. . .

March 2nd. I'm off colour. I got diarrhoea all of a sudden. Have to stay in bed. . .

March 3rd. I examined Lieutenant Ponomarenko, about whom I had received a report. Ponomarenko was wounded in the head on the 2nd of March, ran away to the Rosa Luxemburg collective farm, changed his clothing and hid. The family that hid him lied at first. It stands to reason I flogged them. . . In the evening they again brought in five fellows from Yeisk. As is often the case, they're only boys. Applying my simplified method, that has already justified itself, I made them own up: I got the whip to work, as usual. The weather's getting warmer.

March 4th. Beautiful sunny weather. . Corporal Voigt has already shot the shoemaker Alexander Yakubenko. He's been thrown into the common grave. I'm frightfully itchy all the time.

March 6th. I gave forty marks to the "winter aid" fund.

March 7th. We still live well. I get butter, eggs, fowls and milk. Every day I have some hors-d'oeuvres. . . At 4.00 p.m. they again brought me four young partisans. . .

March 8th. Corporal Sprigwald and Frau Reidman have returned from Mariupol. They have brought the post and a written order to Gros hek about shooting. . . Today I have already had six shot. . . They tell me that another seventeen-year-old, a girl, has arrived from Vossyolyi.

March 9th. How jolly the sunshine is, and how the snow glitters! But even the golden sun can't cheer me up. Today has been a hard day. I woke up at 3 a.m. I'd had an awful dream, that was because today I had to do away with thirty young chaps that had been caught. This morning Maria cooked me a nice tart. At 10.00 they again brought me two girls and six fellows. . . I had to beat them mercilessly. Then the mass shootings began: yesterday there were six, today thirty-three miserable wretches gone astray. I can't eat. It'll be all up if they catch me. I no longer feel safe in Budyonnovka. They hate me for a certainty. But I had to do as I did. If my folk knew what a hard day I've had! The ditch is almost full of corpses now. And how heroically these bolshevik boys and girls know how to die! What is it: love for their fatherland, or communism, that's got into their blood? Some of them, especially the girls, didn't drop a single tear. Why, I call it real courage! They were made to strip (we have to sell the clothing). . . It'll be all up with me, if ever they catch me!

March 11th. The only way to teach a lower race is by flogging them. Near my flat I had a decent lavatory fixed up and hung up a big notice that civilians are forbidden to use it. . . Opposite my bedroom there is the burgomaster's office where workers engaged on earthworks come in the mornings. In spite of the notice they use the lavatory. I am beating the liver and lights out of them for it! In future I'll have them shot for it.

March 13th. I'm so overworked, it's a long time since I wrote home. To tell the truth, I don't particularly want to write to my folk: they don't deserve it anyway. . . Then I ordered a Russian, aged 57, to be flogged, and his son-in-law, for showing insufficient respect to Germans. Then I visited the Rumanian colonel. . .

March 14th. It's frightfully cold again. I've got another bout of diarrhoea, and pains round the heart. I ordered a doctor to be called. .

He diagnosed upset stomach and nervous heart. . . Today I gave orders fo Lyudmila Chukanova, aged seventeen, to be shot. It seems as though I have to kill off boys and girls, that's why I've got a nervous condition of the heart.

March 17th. My first work since morning: I ordered the fifth Russian parachutist to be taken from the hospital on a cart, and right here before the common grave had him shot. . . After this I spent the day peacefully. After dinner I had a walk. The ground is frozen.

March 19th. I stayed in bed. Ordered our military doctor to be called. He listened and said that my heart was all right. He stated that I was suffering from mental depression. He gave me pills for constipation, and some ointment for the itching. . . We've got a good pig. We've ordered sausages.

March 21st. Such a frightful day we've never before had in Budyonnovka. In the evening a Russian bomber appeared, dropped flares, and then twelve bombs. The windows rattled in their frames. You can imagine my feelings as I lay in bed listening to the drone of the plane and the explosions. . .

March 23rd. Today I cross-examined a woman who had robbed my interpreter, Frau Reidman. We gave her a good thrashing on her bare behind. Even Frau Reidman cried when she saw it. Then I went for a walk in the village and dropped in on our butcher. who's preparing me the sausages. . . Then I examined two fellows who had tried to get away to Rostov over the ice. They were shot as spies. Then they brought me a youngster who came over the ice from Yeisk some days ago. . . By the way, they're bringing me liver sausage. It's not half bad. There's a komsomol girl I wanted to thrash. . .

March 27th. The night passed quietly. . . I examined two fourteen-year-old boys found wandering about in the neighbourhood. I ordered a woman to be beaten for not registering herself.

March 28th. I paid a visit to Colonel Arbeitsführer Weiner. At 6.00 p.m. I ordered a man and a woman to be shot who were trying to get away over the ice. . .

April 1st. I received 108 marks in roubles—a big wad of money. Valya is massaging and bathing me again. . .

April 10th. The sun is baking hot. When Maria opens the window in the morning, bright sunshine floods my bed. Now I've got a swollen nose. Maria hunts lice on me. The ice has disappeared, and now it's only aeroplanes that threaten us. I again had several girls and fellows thrashed for not getting registered. Among them was the elder's daughter. I get an unpleasant feeling when it begins to get dark: then I think about bombers.

April 11th. They're all glad I came here. They treat me like a tsar. We have good suppers and drink vodka. . .

April 12th. Every morning I drink hot milk and eat an omelette. . . There's not so much work now. . . Now we work only on a local scale. Punishments consist either of flogging or shooting. Usually I have people flogged on their bare buttocks.

April 16th. Today's been a quiet day. The only thing I did was to settle a quarrel between the elder and the chief of the militia, and then I thrashed three men and one woman who, in spite of the fact that it's forbidden, came to Budyonnovka looking for work. . . Then I thrashed another female, in uniform: she admitted she was a Red Cross worker. . . I several times got vodka, cigarettes and sugar from the Rumanians. I'm happy again. At last Groschek got to the point of recommending that I should be awarded a cross with swords of the second rank for military services, and I received the award.

April 17th. The girls (Maria, Anna and Vera) are singing and playing round my bed. . . In the evening some reports came in, and I went with the interpreter to investigate

on the spot. Women's gossip. I thrashed two girls here in my flat on the bare buttocks. . .

April 18th. A dull, rainy day. I summoned a lot of girls who didn't approve of the secret field police. I thrashed them all.

I need quote no more from the diary of the secretary of the secret field police Friedrich Schmidt. I could hardly bring myself to write the sickening lines. In the whole of world literature you probably couldn't find a more vile and contemptible villain. He shoots boys and girls, and is afraid of aeroplanes. He is a miserable coward. He can't get to sleep in the evenings for fear bombers may come. Here you have a real thoroughbred German. Not for nothing did they give him a cross with swords for his military services: he was a real hero at torturing Russian girls. He even valourously slaughtered a four-year-old child. A disgusting coward, who is tortured by the thought: "But what if they catch me?" He gets diarrhoea, goes itchy all over, with sheer fright. A mean, pedantic-minded little German, he writes down how many eggs he ate, how many girls he shot, and how he alternates between diarrhoea and constipation. He is a profligate and a sadist, admits rapturously: "I thrashed a lot of girls." He hasn't a single human feeling. He is not fond of his folk. He could not find one word of affection for his accursed Germany. He writes with enthusiasm only about sausage, this hangman and butcher. He greedily counts the money he gets for his hangman's work, counts the marks and pfennigs, the roubles and copeks. For one moment something dawns upon this mad beast: he sees with what heroism Russian boys and girls endure tortures, and he asks in terror: "What is it?" A brute blinded by the light of human superiority!

The diary of the secretary of the secret field police is an exceedingly valuable document. True, it is not the first time we have read of monstrous orders about shootings. True, it is not the first time we have found notes about murders and tortures in the diaries of German soldiers. But these were merely references in passing. Here the German himself has given us a full-length portrait of himself. Here the German appears before the world in his true colours.

I ask foreign newspapermen to give the diary of the secretary of the secret police to all the papers of the freedom-loving countries. Let the English and Americans know about the work of Friedrich Schmidt. Let the citizens of the neutral countries learn about it. The conquering German, the cavalier of the cross and swords, the confidential colleague of Graf von Förster, should be known the world over.

I ask our readers, citizens of our beautiful, honest and clean-souled country, to read over carefully these notes of a German. Let their hatred for the vile invaders grow still stronger. They will see before them a hangman with the itch, a brutal bully who breaks the handle of his whip over the tender body of Russian girls; they will see the German, a dealer in sausages, a trader who trades the linen of the victims of his shootings; they will see the murderer of a four-year-old child. Workers, men and women, give more shells, mines, bullets, bombs, more planes, tanks, guns: millions of Germans, such beasts as Friedrich Schmidt, are scouring our country, torturing and killing our dear ones.

I ask my readers, commanders and fighting men of our glorious Red Army, to read the diary of the German Friedrich Schmidt. My friends in the fighting ranks, remember that you have Friedrich Schmidt before you. Not a word more, only guns, only death for all, down to the last one! Reading about our brothers and sisters tortured in Budyonnovka, let us take an oath: they shall not get out alive, not one, not one!

ILYA EHRENBURG

GERMAN BARBARIANS

It was early in the morning in the Extreme North. Two tugs, with two barges in tow, were making their way to a distant port. The decks and the holds were crowded with students, workers, women and children. Many of them were still sleeping soundly, tucked away in corners protected from the wind. In spite of the early morning hour a frolicsome little girl about six years old was running about the deck. This child, with big brown eyes and a scarlet bow in her silky hair, was known to everybody on the barge. Little Lyuda was the pet of all the passengers, these labourers of the Soviet rear on their way across the sea to their new place of work.

The captain of the tug, Pyotr Kapitonovich Mikheyev, knew the route quite well even without the pilot's help. He had in his mind every rock worthy of note, and there were many of them; and that was why he did not want to risk steering the tug close to the shore, but was sailing at a distance of about three miles from land.

The sea was calm, and there was no sign of any danger. Suddenly the water near the barges swirled, and a German submarine appeared on the surface. Mikheyev and the others who were on the decks saw the sailors instantly darting out of the hatchways of the submarine and, with feverish speed, loading the guns.

Immediately Mikheyev turned his tug towards the coast and phoned through to the machine room: "Full speed ahead!"

Somebody who was on the barge shouted: "Don't jump into the water!" But even after this warning very few of the passengers were able to imagine what would happen next. Many of them did not yet believe that a German warship could get any satisfaction out of firing on defenceless Soviet people.

Lyuda's mother caught the little one in her arms. She pressed the child with all her strength to her breast, as though by so doing she could defend and save her.

The Germans were already sailing abreast. They saw quite clearly who was on board these harmless boats. But this did not deter the scoundrels. They opened fire simultaneously from the guns at both ends of the U-boat. The first shells missed their target. The pirates were shooting at very close range, and these misses vexed them. Then the German machine-guns started their furious rattle.

"Lie down!" cried somebody on the deck, and the people who were on the barge flung themselves down, one on top of another. Many among them were already killed, and still more were wounded. The ragged wounds showed that the monsters were shooting with explosive bullets. The low toprail could not protect the passengers even from machine-gun fire, and the brutes in German uniform did not stop firing for a moment.

Meanwhile the tug, after towing the barge close in to sho e, steamed off at top speed to rescue the drowning people. Many had jumped into the icy water. A great number of them sank, the others struggled desperately to reach the steep granite coast. But even here they were shot down by the fiendish German submarine crew. They mowed down the Soviet women and children with cannon and heavy machine-gun fire. And the wounded, exhausted people who had already climbed the steep, slippery rocks, dropped back into the water, struck down by bullets or pieces of shrapnel.

The barge was still afloat and the fascists, realizing the failure of their gunfire, discharged at it from close range a number of torpedoes. The barge was blown up. Only those passengers remained uninjured who were blown into the water by the blast, and who escaped the bullets which followed. The captain of the

tug, Mikheyev, was torn to pieces. People could not even take advantage of the life-boats, as these were all reddled by the machine-gun fire.

Many of the passengers who found themselves in the icy water could not swim. The sea swallowed up several hundreds of people, old men, women and children among them. Those who were still grasping at floating fragments of the barges could distinctly hear, through the thunder of explosions, the children's screams and the heart-rending cries of women. Among the women still swimming, there were some from that very barge where the little girl with the scarlet bow in her hair had been travelling. They thought they could recognize her familiar little voice in that bedlam of cries and moans. Rassokhin the sailor, Kotova the cook, Khozyainov the stoker and Shevelyov the skipper, who were all lucky enough to escape, say they will never forget the screams of the drowning women and children. Their voices were not only heard with the ears but felt with the heart by all who survived.

For two hours the German scoundrels massacred these peaceful Soviet people. Hitler's brutes were not satisfied with the shooting and drowning of several hundreds of civilians. After the sinking of the barge the German submarine cut her way at full speed into the groups of drowning people. The bloody beasts of prey enjoyed this horrible hunt, methodically and deliberately performing their hideous task. The Hitlerites rammed people who could hardly keep afloat. It was quite evident that the Germans had decided to kill off all the passengers and crew, lest there be a witness left to tell the story.

The appearance of our ever-watchful patrol boat forced the criminals to flee. The cowardly German submarine instantly submerged, while our sailors were still busy picking up survivors.

Red Fleet sailor Romanenko who, with others, was on board the patrol boat, told us:

"When we took on board one of the injured men and began bandaging his arm pierced by an explosive bullet, no muscle of his face betrayed the terrible pain. He only regretted that the barge had not been armed. 'If we'd had only one machine-gun,' he said, 'we'd have shown these gangsters. . .' What we saw made us vow merciless revenge. No more mercy for these swine!"

Our sailors hunted long and hard for the filthy U-boat. They scoured the seas for her day and night and finally got on her trail. It's true, they weren't sure whether it was the same one. But what did it matter? One Hitlerite is as good as another.

This U-boat was discovered by our plane, which could not however destroy it as it immediately submerged. But our pilot was able to mark an area where the boat had disappeared, and at once radioed a patrol boat. While the latter was rushing towards the spot, the plane kept the U-boat in sight. Our experienced sailors soon found her. Two depth charges were dropped, and a huge oil patch appeared on the surface. This was rapidly followed by fragments of polished oak with bright brass knobs, the wooden top of a box with Norwegian writing; then other things came floating to the centre of the patch. The U-boat had got what was coming to it.

M. VASSILYEV

LENIN IN FOLKLORE

Dish made by a ceramic artel in Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan

THE NEW SUN

DUNGAN[1] FOLK SONG

Dawn broke of a sudden, piercing the gloom of the night.
Rising, the people wondered: "Whence this magic light?"
The tempest roared, the rain poured down, but the light grew brighter still,
For Lenin is brighter than the sun, night flees before his will!

Wonder of wonders! All poor have become one family, joining hands.
Let justice and wisdom have their way and the people rule their land.
So dazzling a sun hath never shed its light on the earth before,
Lenin proclaimed: "Let brotherly love prevail among the poor."

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[1] Dungan—a Caucasian tribe. *Ed.*

One day some soldiers had an argument. So they rang up to the Kremlin, to the halls where Lenin lived.

"Let us hear what Lenin will say. We must find out the rights and wrongs of it."

At the time when they rang up, Lenin was in bed—oh dear, how sick he was! But the soldiers didn't know about it. And they got very good advice over the telephone. And they were invited to the Kremlin, too, to have tea and have a chat with Lenin.

Soon the soldiers arrived to visit Lenin in the Kremlin. But Lenin could not get out of bed—oh dear, how sick he was!

The soldiers were surprised:

"Why, Vladimir Ilyich, how could you talk to us over the telephone? The doctors won't let you out of your bed!"

Lenin answered:

"That was Stalin I sent to talk to you."

And the soldiers replied:

"The cause is one, and the word is one. Lenin's words, you can see, are no different from Stalin's."

* * *

The enemies wanted to kill Lenin. Ever so many times they shot at him. But Lenin always got better. They would wound him, and the doctors would shake their heads—they couldn't think what to do or how to cure him.

But Lenin would cure himself. Near Moscow there is a high hill. It's a very great hill, but all the same not everyone can see it—it is all in the midst of woods and gardens, and reaches right up to the blue sky.

But Lenin, he is a great big tall man. Why, a big hill seems only a hillock to him. And so he called that hill "Hillocks".[1]

When he was wounded, Lenin would climb up that hill, and from there he could see the whole world. All the seas and oceans, all the fields and meadows of the earth, all the tribes and peoples. And as soon as Lenin looked at the working people, and they at him, at once his health came back to him, he grew stronger, his eyes grew keener and his hand more firm and sure.

From the collection *Folk Legends of the Urals*.

[1] Hillocks, Russian "Gorki," the name of the place near Moscow where Lenin often spent week-ends. *Ed.*

VASSILI GROSSMAN

THE PEOPLE IS IMMORTAL

EXCERPTS

When the freedom-loving peoples are ranged against that most reactionary force in history, German fascism, we see the paramount importance of all that has gone to mould the popular consciousness in the spirit of democracy and true patriotism, fraternal solidarity and respect for human reason and free labour.

These lofty and genuinely human principles have found their fullest and most consistent expression in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. This explains that dauntless courage with which the free peoples of the Soviet Union, bound with ties of fraternal friendship, are withstanding the ordeals of the war. Despite the fact that the Land of the Soviets has been resisting the onslaught of the German-fascist hordes alone for more than a year, despite the fact that a considerable area of the territory of U.S.S.R. has been occupied by the invaders, the courage displayed by the Soviet people in their struggle and their confidence in ultimate victory are growing with every day.

Vassili Grossman's story *The People Is Immortal* shows the connection between this courage and confidence and the education which twenty-five years of Soviet power has given the peoples of our country.

The time of action is laid in a difficult period of the war: the early autumn of 1941. The Red Army, despite the staunchness of its resistance, has been forced to retreat on the Western Front before the war machine of Hitler Germany.

Grossman does not minimize the enemy's strength. He describes, for instance, the efficient organization of the fascist army. But the penetration of a man and writer nurtured by the Soviet power helps the author to go straight to the heart of the essential depravity of their army.

A political worker of the Red Army, a former professor of philosophy in a Moscow university, Bogarev, who is the main exponent in the story of those high ideals and principles in the spirit of which the Soviet people have been nurtured, gives an exceptionally penetrating and just estimate of the soulless and mechanical nature of Germany's fascist military system.

"Bogarev made a close study of the orders of the German command and noted in them an extraordinary propensity for organization: the Germans looted, burned and bombed methodically and in organized fashion; they could organize the collection of empty tin cans in military camps and could elaborate a plan for the most intricate movement of a huge column, providing for all the innumerable details and carrying them out punctually and with mathematical precision. In their capacity for mechanical obedience, for blind goose-stepping, in the complex and tremendous movement of millions of soldiers fettered by unthinking discipline, there was something degrading, something foreign to the free spirit of man."

And the leitmotif of Grossman's story is the struggle between the base herd instinct of the locust swarm or the voracious rat, which motivates the fascist army of invaders, and the lofty spirit of reason of the Soviet people, a reasoning power which makes possible an understanding of the dynamic laws of historic evolution operating in this war of liberation, makes possible an insight into the future, thus steadily and infallibly paving the way to victory.

Grossman shows us by concrete examples how the way is being paved to victory in even the most difficult and unfavourable circumstances. The subject of the story is the history of a military operation carried out by an army formation under General Samarin. This particular operation is by no means an isolated episode. Grossman shows us in an individual instance what brilliant results from a purely military standpoint can be obtained by an army unit if its men and commanders understand that their particular assignment is part of the general scheme and must conform with the laws of historical development. The success of the operation carried out by the regiment under the command of Major Mertsalov, Hero of the Soviet Union, is the result of the fact that at the critical moment every man, every commander acted in

accordance with this lofty spirit of understanding. Babadjanyan's battalion, inspired by the will and thoughts of the political worker Bogarev, did not feel themselves outflanked or defeated, in spite of the enemy encirclement. Every man felt that Babadjanyan's battalion was a regular unit sent behind the enemy lines and that it was their duty to strike as telling a blow as possible at the enemy, there, in the rear. The regimental commander, Major Mertsalov, a man of supreme courage, but not infrequently substituting mere personal bravery for the ability to organize and plan, for that self-control and coolness which is imperative for a commander in the decisive moment of any operation, realized that in his consciousness, as in a lens, was focussed all that the Soviet power had taught him in days of peace and war. The stern demands of war, the sense of responsibility for securing one small sector in the long road leading to victory, burned out all the dross of indefiniteness, vagueness and planlessness in the make-up of this splendid Soviet man. Mertsalov did not become "a new man," he simply became himself, became the man he was meant to be, a man bred and formed by the Soviet power.

In Mertsalov Grossman shows us how a commander is put to the test, how he develops and finds himself in the war. In Ignatyev the author shows us the same process in the rank-and-file Red Army man.

The peasant Ignatyev is a strong, good-natured fellow, an excellent worker, perhaps a bit of a card. He too does not immediately find his real place or himself.

But Ignatyev is filled with a sense of the utmost responsibility for his job in the service, with a sense of blood brotherhood with his comrades. In the Red Army man we see the blossoming of all the traits of character whose seeds were planted in him by the labour of a free man, the love for country of a man who owns it, the great pride of country which for twenty-five years the Soviet power has been fostering in him.

Hatred for the enemy, for the swarms of locusts that have descended on it, and the will to victory mature in Ignatyev's consciousness not only at the sight of the devastation and violence which follow in the wake of the fascist invaders. Ignatyev's coming of age, the moment when he finds his real self, comes when he sees the Germans resting, taking their ease, settled in a Soviet village and living the life of idle landowners. The sight of the brute that has seized the wealth created by the labour of man puts the finishing touch to Ignatyev's peace-time and war-time education.

The basic idea, the guiding principle and purpose of Grossman's story is expressed in the fate of its three heroes, Bogarev, Ignatyev and Mertsalov. And it is no accident that it is Bogarev, the political worker, the philosopher and materialist, who plays the part of leader and teacher of the Soviet Red Army man and the Soviet commander. The strong and inseverable bonds uniting the whole Soviet people with the leaders of the country and with the ideology and principles embodied in the Soviet State, this is what we find exemplified in the relations between Bogarev and Ignatyev, between Bogarev and Mertsalov.

Grossman gives a richly-detailed and vivid description of the Red Army and of the whole Soviet people, which is presenting a solid front to a ruthless and dangerous foe.

All these various and varying people: rank-and-file men, commanders, army leaders, average folk from among the civil population, one and all are inspired by the single desire, the single will for victory.

EUGENIA KNIPOVICH

THE WAR COUNCIL

Before the meeting of the War Council, Divisional Commissar Cherednichenko went forza walk in the park. He strolled slowly along, stopping now and again to stuff the bowl of his short pipe with tobacco. Passing by the old palace with the gloomy tower and the clock that didn't go, he went down as far as the pond. A thick green mane of branches hung down over the water. The swans on the pond gleamed dazzlingly in the morning sunlight. It seemed as though they were moving so slowly and holding their necks so rigidly because the dark green waters were too thick and turgid for them to cleave. Cherednichenko stood still, looking thoughtfully at the white birds. A rather elderly major with a dark beard was walking down the avenue towards the pond from the direction of the

signal office, the wet sand crunching under his jackboots. Cherednichenko knew him: he was from the operations branch and made reports to the divisional commissar on the situation.

"Permit me to have a word with you on an official matter, Comrade Cherednichenko," said the major in a loud voice.

"Certainly, what is it?" answered Cherednichenko, his eyes following the swans who were making for the opposite bank, frightened by the major's resounding tones.

"Information has been received to the effect that yesterday evening at 11 p.m. the enemy began moving large formations of tanks and mobile infantry. Prisoners stated that they belonged to three different divisions of Guderian's Tank Army and that they were given the direction of the movement as Unecha—Novograd-Seversk."

"Well," said Cherednichenko, "I knew that last night."

The major looked curiously at his lined face with their large yet narrow eyes. The divisional commissar's eyes were much lighter than the weather-beaten skin of his face, which had known the wind and the frosts of the Russo-German war in 1914 and the campaigns in the steppes during the civil war. He looked calm and thoughtful.

"Then permit me to give you the latest operations report with information to 4.00 hours. . ."

"Hm," said Cherednichenko, "4.00. . . Couldn't possibly have been 3.57 hours, could it ?"

"Possibly, Comrade Cherednichenko," smiled the major. "On the other sectors of the front the enemy were not particularly active. There was only the report that they had occupied the village of Marchikhina-Buda to the west of the river-crossing, losing about a battalion and a half in the action."

"What village?" asked Cherednichenko turning to the major.

"Marchikhina-Buda."

"You're certain?" Cherednichenko asked loudly and sternly.

"Absolutely certain."

The major was silent for a moment, and then said in a guilty voice:

"Beautiful swans, Comrade Divisional Commissar. Two of them were killed in an air raid yesterday. Their young were left."

The major went off in the direction of H.Q., passing the old maple under which Cherednichenko's orderly was standing. The divisional commissar looked long at the swans, at the vivid patches of light on the green surface of the pond. Then he said softly:

"Oh, mama, Lyonya, shall I ever see you again?" And he coughed with the dry, hard cough of a soldier.

On his way back towards the palace, the waiting orderly asked him:

"Shall I send the car for your mother and son, Comrade Divisional Commissar?"

"No," answered Cherednichenko shortly; then seeing the look of astonishment on his orderly's face, he added: "Last night the Germans occupied Marchikhina-Buda."

The War Council held its sessions in a high domed hall, the long, narrow windows of which were draped with portières. In the half light the tassled red cloth on the table looked black. About fifteen minutes before the session was due to begin, the secretary on duty walked noiselessly across the carpet and whispered to the orderly:

"Murzikhin, have they brought the apples for the commander?"

"I gave the usual orders, and they've already brought the Narzan water and the 'Severnaya Palmyra' cigarettes," answered the orderly in rapid tones.

A few minutes later the chief of staff came into the room, a general with a tired and dissatisfied look on his face. Following him came a colonel, chief of the operations branch,

carrying a roll of maps. The colonel was tall and ruddy-complexioned, whereas the general, on the contrary, was stout and pale-faced. But somehow they resembled one another greatly. Turning to the orderly, who was standing stiffly to attention, the general asked:

"Where is the commander?"

"On the wire, Comrade Major-General."

"Is the connection through?"

"It was put through twenty minutes ago."

"There you are, Pyotr Yefimovich." said the chief of staff, "and your boasted Stemekhel promised to put us through only by noon."

"So much the better, Ilya Ivanovich," replied the colonel, and with the severity expected of a subordinate under such circumstances, he added: "When are you going to get some sleep? This is already your third sleepless night."

"Well, you see, with the situation as it is one simply doesn't think about sleep," said the chief of staff, as he walked over to a small table and helped himself to an apple. The colonel spread his maps out on the big table and also reached out for an apple. The orderly, standing to attention, smiled and exchanged glances with the secretary.

"Here it is," said the chief of staff, bending over the map and staring at the thick blue arrow indicating the direction of the German tank column within the red semicircle of our defensive line. He bit into the apple and exclaimed: "Hell, it's certainly sour!"

The colonel also took a bite of his apple and said hurriedly:

"They sure are, let me tell you. Pure vinegar!"

Angrily he asked the orderly:

"Can't you get any better apples than these for the War Council?"

The chief of staff laughed:

"Don't start arguing about tastes, Pyotr Yefimovich. That's the commander's special order, he's fond of sour apples."

They bent over the table, conversing in low tones. As he went out, the orderly heard the colonel say:

"The main line of communication is threatened, the enemy's objective is quite clear. Just look here: why, they've outflanked us on the left."

"Hm, outflanked," said the general. "Shall we say: a potential threat of an outflanking movement."

They placed the bitten apples on the table and sprang smartly to attention as the commander-in-chief of the front entered the room. Yeryomin, the commander, was a tall, spare man with closely cropped grey hair. His boots clattered noisily as he came in, for he didn't walk on the carpet like everybody else but on the brilliantly polished parquet.

"Good morning, comrades, good morning," he said, and glancing at the chief of staff, asked: "Why have you such a tired look about you, Ilya Ivanovich?"

The chief of staff, who usually addressed the commander by his given name and patronymic, Viktor Andreyevich, at this time, just before the meeting of the War Council, answered loudly:

"I feel fine, Comrade Lieutenant-General," and asked: "May I acquaint you with the situation?"

"Let's have it; and here comes the divisional commissar," said the commander.

Cherednichenko entered the room. He nodded silently and sat down in the chair at the farthest corner of the table.

The situation, as reported by the chief of staff, was extremely serious. It was at that period of the war when the spearheads of the German-fascist army were driven into both flanks of our troops, threatening them with encirclement. Our units had retired to a new line. At every river-crossing, on every bit of hilly terrain there were long and sanguinary battles. But still the enemy attacked and we retreated. The enemy occupied our towns and vast territories.

The chief of staff, who was reporting, his assistant—the colonel, the secretary, the commander, the divisional commissar, all saw the heavy blue arrow driven deep into the body of the Land of the Soviets. To the colonel the arrow seemed terrible, swift, inexorable in its movement across the ruled paper.

The commander knew more than the others about reserve divisions and regiments, about formations still far back in the rear but moving up from east to west; he had a marvellous feeling for the battle-line, he could sense physically all the unevenness in the terrain, the precariousness of the German pontoons, the depth of the fast flowing streams, the sponginess of the swamps where he could meet the German tanks. To him war was not just something worked out on a map projection. He fought on Russian soil, with its dense forests, with its morning mists, with its uncertain light at eventide, with its fields of thick uncut hemp and tall waving wheat, with its hayricks and barns, its tiny hamlets on the steep river banks, its deep gullies overgrown with bushes. He could feel the countless miles of village roads and winding lanes, the dust, the winds, the rains, the blown-up country stations, the torn-up tracks at railway junctions. And the blue arrow neither frightened nor agitated him. He was a general cool and calm, who knew and loved his country, who knew and loved the art of warfare. Only one thing he wanted: offensive action. But he was retreating, and that distressed him.

His chief of staff, an academy professor, possessed all the attributes of a scientist. He was an expert in military tactical methods and strategic decisions, thoroughly versed in the history of military science and fond of drawing analogies between the operations conducted by the armies at the front and the battles of the twentieth and nineteenth centuries. His was a vivid imagination, not inclined to the dogmatic. He was extremely sober in his appreciation of the manoeuvrability and mobility of the fascist infantry and the skillful co-operation between enemy air and ground forces. Once he dreamed that he had the famous Gamelin up for examination in his staff office, and that he had jumped on him with both feet for not understanding the peculiarities of mobile warfare. The retreat of our armies stung him to the quick; it seemed to him that the blue arrow was directed at his own heart, the heart of a Russian soldier.

The chief of the operations branch, a very efficient officer, a colonel by rank, thought in terms of military topography. The only reality he knew was the map projection, and he always remembered the exact number of map sheets that had replaced one another on his table, and exactly what lines had been traced by the blue and red pencils. To him it seemed that war was conducted on maps, prosecuted by staffs. To him the blue arrows indicating the movements of the German mobile columns moved in accordance with mathematical laws. In this movement he could not see the operations of any laws other than geometric laws.

The calmest of them all was the taciturn Divisional Commissar Cherednichenko. "The Soldier's Kutuzov" was the nickname he had been given. During the hottest moments of battle, there was always an atmosphere of extraordinary calm around this unflurried, slow-moving individual with the thoughtful, rather sad face. His witty, laconic repartee, his sharp and incisive words were often recalled and repeated. Everybody knew his broad-schouldered, stocky figure; he sometimes sat on a park bench, his forehead slightly wrinkled, thinking, and every commander and soldier felt happy and lighter of heart when he saw this man with the high cheek-bones, screwed-up eyes and wrinkled forehead, his short pipe clenched between his teeth.

During the chief of staff's report, Cherednichenko sat with his head bowed, and it was impossible to tell whether he was listening attentively or thinking of something else.

When the report was finished, the commander asked a number of questions of the general and the colonel, and then looked over at the divisional commissar, waiting for him to take part in the discussion. The colonel kept taking his fountain pen out of his tunic pocket, trying the nib on the palm of his hand and putting it back again. Over and over again he did this. Cherednichenko watched him closely. The commander was walking up and down the room, the floor resounding under his heavy tread. Yeryomin was frowning. The movement of the German tanks was outflanking one of his armies.

"Listen here, Viktor Andreyevich," the divisional commisssar suddenly said, "you're used from childhood to the green apples you stole from your neighbours' orchards, and other people have to suffer because of you." He pointed to the table. Everybody looked at the apples with the bites taken out of them, and laughed.

"You mustn't put out only green ones," said Yeryomin, "it really is a bit thick."

"Very good, Comrade Lieutenant-General," said the secretary smiling.

"What have we here?" said Cherednichenko, and going up to the map he asked the chief of staff: "You intend to dig in along this line?"

"Along that line, Comrade Divisional Commissar. Viktor Andreyevich is of the opinion that the means of defence at our disposal can be actively and more effectively utilized here."

"That's true," said the commander. "The chief of staff proposes that the best way of carrying out the manoeuvre would be to launch a counter-attack in the vicinity of Marchikhina-Buda and to retake the village. What do you think about it?"

"Retake Marchikhina-Buda?" repeated Cherednichenko, and there was something in his voice that made everybody look up at him. He puffed at his pipe, blew out a cloud of smoke, waved the smoke away with his hand and stood for some time in silence looking at the map.

"No, I object," he said at last, and pointing to the map with his pipe, he began to explain why he thought the operation inadvisable.

The commander dictated an order strengthening the troops on the left flank and reorganizing Samarin's army group. He issued orders for one of the mobile infantry units which he had in reserve to be moved up against the German tanks.

"And I'll give them a good commissar," said Cherednichenko, signing the order after the commander.

Just then came the deafening roar of a bursting bomb, immediately followed by a second. They could hear the steady volleys of the A.A. guns. Not one of those in the room so much as turned his head in the direction of the windows. Only the chief of staff said angrily to the colonel:

"And in a couple of minutes the town ARP people will be sounding the alert."

Cherednichenko turned to the secretary and said:

"Comrade Orlovsky, please send for Bogarev."

"He is here, Comrade Divisional Commissar."

"Good," said Cherednichenko, and, as he left the room, asked Yeryomin: "You agree with me about the apples?"

"Yes, yes, of course I agree," answered the commander. "Apples of all sorts."

"So-o," said Cherednichenko, and walked to the door accompanied by the smiling general and colonel. At the door he turned to the colonel: "I say, Colonel, you shouldn't twist that pen of yours about so much. What do you do it for? How can you vacillate even for a moment?

It won't do, you know. We'll beat the Germans."

Orlovsky, the secretary of the War Council, thought he knew people, but he could never understand the divisional commissar's feeling for Bogarev. The divisional commissar was an old soldier who had served more than twenty years in the Russian Army, and was always somewhat sceptical of commanders and commissars who were called up from the reserve. Bogarev was an exception which the secretary could not understand.

This time the divisional commissar did not smile as usual when he saw Bogarev, who sprang to attention as he approached, but went up to him with an almost stern expression on his face and pronounced in a voice such as the secretary had never heard from him before, not even on the most solemn occasions:

"Comrade Bogarev, you are appointed military commissar of an infantry unit which the staff has entrusted with an important task."

Bogarev said:

"I thank you for your confidence in me."

AT NIGHT

Soon the battalion moved up. The men marched in silence, and only occasionally a commander's voice could be heard, or somebody cursed as he tripped over a tree root humping out into the narrow path. Their way led through an oak forest. The trees were silent, not even a tremour stirring the leaves. High, black, motionless, the forest looked like a great mass cast in a single mould. Coming out of the narrow path into a wide open forest glade, they suddenly discovered a blue-black starry sky overhead, so black that every falling star shooting brightly across the heavens made one start. But soon the forest closed in around them again and the sky became a bowl of golden starry-grained porridge constantly being stirred by the huge paws of the oak trees. The sand track gleamed dully in the gloom.

Leaving the forest behind them, they entered a broad plain. They marched on across fields of uncut grain, and in the darkness they recognized wheat, barley, buckwheat and oats by the sound of the grains falling from the ears, the crunching of the straw under foot, the rustling of the ears which clung to their tunics. And this trampling of heavy soldiers' boots over the soft body of the ungathered harvest, this grain rustling like sad rain which they could feel in the darkness, spoke of war to their peasant hearts more eloquently and loudly than did the blazing conflagration on the horizon, or the red tracks of the tracer-bullets creeping slowly towards the stars, or the bluish shafts of the searchlight rays sweeping across the sky, or the distant rumble of bursting bombs.

This was war of a kind never before known where the enemy rode roughshed over the whole life of the people, levelling the crosses in the church-yards where fathers and mothers were buried, burning children's books, trampling down the gardens where grandfathers had planted apple and black-cherry trees, setting their iron heels on the necks of old grannies who used to tell wondering-eyed children the tale of the cock with the golden comb, hanging village coopers, blacksmiths and grumpy old watchmen. Never before had the Ukraine, Byelorussia and Russia known such things. Never before had such things happened on Soviet soil.

Marching through the night, their heavy boots treading down their native wheat and oats, the Red Army men came to a State farm where, among the little white Ukrainian

cottages, stood black tanks with big-tailed dragons daubed on their sides. And quiet, kind-hearted Ivan Rodimtsev said: "No, it's simply impossible to show them any mercy!"

Even before the first shell burst near the barn, a Red Army man whose name nobody remembered made his way through the wire entanglements, slipped unnoticed between the cottages into the orchards, climbed over a fence and crept up to some hayricks that had been stacked by the Germans the day before. There a sentry spotted him and shouted. The Red Army man silently continued crawling on his way. The sentry was so astonished at the audacity of the man that he just stood there gaping before collecting his wits sufficiently to turn his tommy-gun on him. But the Red Army man was already within a few yards of the hayricks and just managed to hurl a bottle of inflammable liquid into the nearest rick before the bullets got him. The reddish-yellow flames of the burning hay lit up the German tanks, armoured cars and whippets standing beyond in the village square. And immediately, at a range of six hundred yards, the howitzers opened fire.

"The infantry are late," said Rumyantsev angrily to the commissar of the artillery division Nevtulov.

But soon a red rocket gave the signal to attack. The guns ceased fire instantly. There was a moment of silence while the men lying in wait sprang to their feet. Across the dark grove, over the fields of unreaped wheat came a long drawn-out, low rolling "Hurrah!" Babadjanyan's companies were advancing to the attack.

Babadjanyan took the telephone handset from the signaller. The sound of No. 1 company commander's voice came to him direct from the battle-field:

"We've reached the edge of the village. The enemy is on the run."

Babadjanyan went over to Bogarev, and the commissar could see tears in the battalion commander's fiery black eyes.

"The enemy is on the run, the enemy is on the run, Comrade Commissar," he said breathing hard. "Damn it, we could have out them off, the swine!" His voice rose to a shout. "Mertsalov hasn't placed Kochetkov's battalion right! Why'd he put them onto the rear? They should have gone in on the flank!"

From the observation post they could see the Germans running from the outskirts of the village towards the square. Many of them were half-dressed and carried their arms and bundles of clothing in their hands. The long barrack-shed was all in flames, the tanks on the square were blazing, and a high red tower of smoke and flame rose quiveringly over the oil tankers. Officers could be seen among the soldiers, shouting, brandishing their revolvers threateningly, and running themselves.

"Machine-guns, machine-guns forward!" shouted Mertsalov running over to the waiting reserve company. Together with the machine-gunners he ran into the village.

The Germans retreated along the high-road, in the direction of the village of Marchikhina-Buda, which was some nine kilometres from the State farm. Many tanks and armoured cars had gone, and the Germans had managed to carry off their dead and wounded.

Dawn was already breaking. Bogarev examined the smoke-blackened German vehicles smelling of burnt paint and oil, and touched the still warm, dead metal carcasses.

"This morning is nothing like yesterday morning," he thought. "There's no greater pleasure than winning a fight."

The Red Army men were laughing and smiling. The commanders laughed and joked, and even the wounded were talking excitedly with their bloodless lips about the night's fighting.

Bogarev realized that this sudden,

hurriedly prepared raid on the State farm was but a minor episode in our long retreat. With his very soul he could feel the vastness of the territory from which we had withdrawn. He knew that in these past months we had lost thousands of villages and in the course of this night had regained but one. But with his own eyes he had seen the Germans fleeing in all directions, had seen their screaming, frightened officers. He had heard the loud happy talk of the Red Army men, had seen the tears of joy in the eyes of the commander from distant Armenia when his men had driven the Germans out of a little village on the border of the Ukraine and Byelorussia. This was the tiny seed of the great tree of victory.

He was probably the only person in the regiment who knew the real situation in which the troops who had taken part in last night's raid now found themselves. The divisional commissar's parting words had been: "You must hold out, hold out to the last!"

He had seen the map to Front H.Q. and had a very clear idea of the regiment's task: to hold the high-road at the point where it passed the State farm and, as long as their forces lasted, to keep the German units from breaking through to the highway in the rear of the retreating army. He knew that the fate in store for the regiment was no easy one.

At 7 a.m. German bombers came flying over.

They appeared suddenly from behind the forest. "Aircraft!" shouted the sentries. Dive-bombers, breaking formation, strung out in single file and then formed a circle in such a way that the leader closed in on the tail of the last plane, and in this new formation they proceeded slowly and attentively to take stock of what was going on below, the whole "merry-go-round" circling directly over the State farm. This deliberate and nerve-racking roundabout lasted about a minute and a half. The people on the ground were jumping about like children playing at hide-and-seek, running from one shelter to another. "Lie down, don't run!" shouted the commanders. Suddenly the leading bomber dived, followed by the second and then the third; bombs howled and burst with a shattering roar. Black smoke, dust and clods of torn earth filled the air. The men tried to press their bodies closer to the ground, taking advantage of every depression. It was as if the howl of the bombs, the crash of the explosions and the roar of the engines as the aircraft came out of their dive, held them pinned fast to mother-earth.

One of the men raised himself and began to fire at the diving aircraft from his tommy-gun. It was Ignatyev.

"What are you doing? What the hell are you giving our position away for? Cease fire at once!" shouted Myshansky from where he was sitting in a trench.

The soldier, however, didn't hear him and continued firing.

"I order you to cease fire!" shouted Myshansky.

Somewhere quite close-by a second tommy-gun began to crackle.

"Another one... what the hell!..." began Myshansky, looking out and then suddenly breaking off. It was Commissar Bogarev who was shooting...

"The Germans got nothing out of their bombing," said the regimental chief of staff. "Just imagine it, they slogged away for thirty-five minutes, unloaded at least fifty bombs just to wound two men, both mere scratches, and bust a machine-gun."

Bogarev sighed. "No," he thought, "their results were by no means so trifling, the men are talking in low tones again, and that dreary alarmed look is in their eyes again; their spirits have been damped."

Just then Kozlov came up. His face seemed to have grown thinner

and was covered with that dark film so often seen on the skins of men who have just come out of the thick of a battle. Whether it is the soot of fires, the smoke of explosions, the fine dust which the blast following an explosion raises and mixes with the sweat of battle, God alone knows. After battle, however, faces always look thinner, darker and sterner, while the eyes become deeper and calmer.

"Comrade Regimental Commander," he began his report, "Zaitsev has returned from reconnoissance. German tanks have arrived in Marchikhina-Buda; he counted up to a hundred of them. Most of them are mediums, but there are some heavies among them too."

Mertsalov glanced at the commanders' frowning faces and said quietly:

"You see what a position we're in for the Germans, comrades, like a bone in the throat as it were."

And he went off in the direction of the square.

The Red Army men were digging trenches along the road and constructing pits for the anti-tank squads.

Handsome, cheeky Zhavelyov asked Rodimtsev softly:

"You were the first to get into the German store, Rodimtsev. They say there were watches there by the gross! Is that a fact?"

"O yes, there was a heap of stuff there, enough for our grandchildren and great-grandchildren as well," said Rodimtsev.

"Did you grab anything for a souvenir?" asked Zhavelyov giving him the wink.

"What d'you mean... by God!" stammered Rodimtsev in frightened tones. "My nature wouldn't allow me to, it disgusts me to touch their things. And then why should I take anything: I'm fighting to the death."

He glanced round and said:

"Look at that Ignatyev: for every shovelful we dig out he digs three. The two of us have dug one trench while he's gone and dug two by himself."

"And what's more he's singing, the son of a bitch!" said Sedov. "And it's two days since he slept."

Rodimtsev raised his shovel and listened.

"By God, he is singing!" he said in pleased amazement. "What do you think of that?"

That night at H.Q. Mertsalov and Bogarev sat down to supper together. Raising a piece of meat with white bits of cooled off fat on it, Mertsalov said:

"Some people warm it up, but personally I prefer it cold."

Bread and cheese followed the tinned meat, and then they settled down to tea drinking. With the back of the bayonet which did duty as a tin-opener, Mertsalov chipped pieces off a huge sugar loaf.

"Oh, I say, I clean forgot!" exclaimed Mertsalov. "Why, we've got some raspberry jam. What's your reaction towards that, Comrade Commissar?"

"Distinctly favourable, I must say; and, by the way, raspberry's my favourite jam."

"Splendid! Now I myself prefer cherry. That's a jam for you!"

Simultaneously they took a noisy sip at their tea, and simultaneously they raised their heads, looked one another in the eye and laughed.

Life in the firing line draws people close together. You live with another fellow for a day and a night, and seem to know everything there is to know about him: what he likes to eat, on which side he sleeps, whether he, God forbid, grinds his teeth in his sleep, and where his wife has been evacuated. Often you get to know more about him than you would know about your closest friend in ten years of peace-time. Friendships cemented with the sweat and blood of battle are strong friendships. Sipping his tea, Bogarev asked:

"What is your opinion, Comrade

Mertsalov: was our night raid on the State farm a success?"

"What a question!" laughed Mertsalov. "We burst into the place suddenly by night, the enemy fled, and we captured a populated centre. We ought to get medals for it. Why, do you think it was a failure, Comrade Commissar?"

"Of course, it was a failure," answered Bogarev, "a complete failure."

Mertsalov leaned over towards him.

"Why?"

"Why? Because the tanks got away! Do you think that's a joke? With better co-ordination not one of them would have escaped. And what really happened: every battalion commander did as he pleased, knowing nothing of what his neighbour was doing. Well, the result was a thrust at the centre, where the tanks were concentrated. That's the first thing. Now the second. The Germans began to retreat. Artillery fire should have been brought to bear on the road along which they had to effect their retreat, we would have simply mowed them down there. But our artillery ceased fire after the preparatory volleys; it seems, communication with them was broken off, and they, of course, weren't given a fresh task. We should have smashed them, wiped them out, and they got away."

"And," continued Bogarev, checking off on his fingers, "much more was lost sight of. For instance, some of the machine-guns should have been sent behind the enemy. Why, that grove over there is simply made to order for the purpose. Machine-guns should have greeted the retreating troops, while what we did was to put everything we had into a frontal attack, pushing head-on, and in actual fact doing nothing on the flanks."

"That's a fact," said Mertsalov. "They put up a screen of tommy-gunners and attracted our fire."

"Then what should we be getting medals for?" asked Bogarev, and burst out laughing. "Should we get them because the regimental commander, a certain comrade Mertsalov, instead of controlling the fire and movement of rifles, machine-guns, tommy-guns, heavy and light cannon, company and regimental mortars, himself grabbed up a rifle and led a company in attack? Eh? The situation was unusually complicated. The regimental commander shouldn't have gone running round with a rifle in his hand but should have been thinking until beads of sweat stood out on his forehead, should have been making rapid, clear decisions."

Mertsalov pushed his cup to one side and asked in hurt tones:

"And what else do you think, Comrade Commissar?"

"I think a lot more," laughed Bogarev. "It seems that, practically the same thing happened at Mogilyov. Each battalion worked on its own initiative, and the regimental commander went into the attack with a reconnoissance company."

"Well, and what else?" asked Mertsalov slowly.

"What else is there? The conclusion is quite obvious: there is no co-ordination in the regiment, the units as a rule are late in joining the battle, the regiment in general moves slowly, clumsily, communications during battle are rotten, simply rotten. An attacking battalion doesn't know who is on its right flank, friend or foe. Excellent weapons are badly utilized. Mortars, for example, don't come into the battle at all; you drag them around everywhere, but never fire a bomb out of most of them. The regiment doesn't make any flanking movements, doesn't try to outflank the enemy. Bashes at his centre, and that's that."

"Well, well! That's all very interesting," murmured Mertsalov. "And what is the conclusion to be drawn from all this?"

"What conclusion?" repeated Bogarev with irritation. "Why, the conclusion is that the regiment fights

badly, fights far worse than it should."

"Yes, yes. But the conclusion, the fundamental, basic conclusion, so to say?" Mertsalov persisted.

It was evident that he thought the commissar was unwilling to speak out to the end.

But Bogarev continued unruffled:

"You are a brave man, you're not afraid for your skin, but you command the regiment badly. The war is an intricate affair. It includes action by aircraft, tanks, all sorts of fire-arms and ordnance, all of them moving rapidly and working in co-ordination; problems are constantly arising on the battle-field which are more intricate than chess problems, and they must be solved."

"In other words, Mertsalov is no good?"

"I'm convinced that he is. But I don't want Mertsalov to think that everything is perfect. If the Mertsalovs are going to believe that, they will never beat the Germans. In this battle of peoples a knowledge of the arithmetic of warfare is not enough: to smash the Germans you've got to know the higher mathematics." He looked at Mertsalov and asked him gently: "Why don't you drink your tea?"

Mertsalov pushed the cup away from him.

"I don't want any," he said gloomily.

Bogarev smiled.

"You see," he said, "we became friendly immediately. Here we were just drinking tea with marvellous raspberry jam. I told you several sour, unpleasant things, and sort of broke up the tea party. You don't think I find it pleasant for you to be angry with me, to feel that you're offended and most likely cursing me up hill and down dale? But still I'm glad, glad from the bottom of my heart that this has happened. We not only have to make friends, we have to win victories. Be angry if you like, Mertsalov, that's your business, but remember: I've told you some very serious things, and I've told you the truth."

And he got up and left the blindage.

Mertsalov followed him with his eyes, scowling. Suddenly he jumped up and began to shout, turning to the chief of staff, who had just awakened:

"Comrade Major, did you hear how he dressed me down? Eh? What am I to him? Eh? Just imagine! I have been made Hero of the Soviet Union, four wounds in the chest I have."

The chief of staff yawned and said:

"He's a hard man, I knew it from the first."

Mertsalov, without listening to him, continued:

"Just imagine it! Drinks tea with raspberry jam and says as calm as calm can be: 'What is the conclusion? Quite simple. You,' he says, 'command the regiment badly.' What do you think of that? You could have knocked me over with a feather, it was so unexpected. And that to me, Mertsalov!.."

KNOW YOURSELF

Mertsalov woke up long before dawn. The aluminium mess tin standing on the table gleamed dully in the uncertain light. Beside it a map was spread out, held down at two corners by hand-grenades to stop the edges curling up. Mertsalov lit a candle and glancing at the new map laughed to himself. The chief of staff had brought it from the Survey Department at Army H.Q. the day before and had solemnly declared:

"Comrade Mertsalov, on the old map we were always recording retreats. I've brought a new one. Tomorrow we'll christen it with a break-through of the German front."

And they had burned the grim

ord map, obliterated at the folds, leflecting on its faded, wilted paper surface the bloody battles of the retreating Red Army. It had seen everything, this old burned map. Mertsalov had looked at it at dawn of June 22nd, when fascist bombers had flown across the border and appeared above sleeping artillery and infantry regiments. It had seen rain and hail, had been bleached by the sun of sultry July noondays, had fluttered in the wind on the broad expanses of the Ukrainian fields; the tall, primaeval trees in the Byelorussian forests had looked down on it over the heads of commanders.

"Well," said Mertsalov, and glanced disapprovingly at the gleaming mess tin. "We'll have to give them a coat of green, otherwise they give away the men, what with the sun flashing on them in the daytime and the way they gleam at night," he thought.

He pulled his suitcase from under his bunk and opened it. A potpourri of smells rose from it: cheese, smoked sausage, eau de Cologne, perfumed soap. Every time he opened his suitcase, he thought of his wife, who had packed his things for him on the day of the German attack. "Well," repeated Mertsalov, and got himself some fresh underwear and a pair of socks and clear foot-wrappings. He shaved and left the dug-out. He stood there for a moment looking around.

About an hour remained to dawn, and the east was still dark and quiet, as was the west. The earth was shrouded in a vast even gloom. A cold, dark fog hovered among the osiers and reeds on the river bank. You could not tell whether the dim sky was cloudy or clear, so still and motionless was it.

Mertsalov undressed and drawing a noisy breath dashed over the cold, wet sand to the river. "Ugh!" he said as he plunged into the water. He was a long time soaping his head, his neck and ears, scrubbing his chest with a sponge, while the dark night waters around him became foamy with the soap suds. Having washed he put on his clean underwear and returned to the blindage. Sitting down on his bunk, he took a starched white slip from a bundle and sewed it inside the collar of his tunic. Sprinkling the last few drops of eau de Cologne in the bottle on the palm of his hand, he patted it into his cheeks and then talcumed his clean-shaven face, shaking out the powder that still remained in the cracks of the little round box. After that he carefully wiped his cheeks with a damp towel and began to dress leisurely, putting on his navy-blue slacks, a tunic and a new Sam Browne. He was long at cleaning his boots, first wiping the dust from them, then smearing them with shoe polish, brushing them briskly and then whisking a bit of woolen cloth over them until they shone. After he had polished his boots, he washed his hands again, combed his damp hair, straightened up, smoothed his tunic, examined his revolver and slipped it into the holster, took an automatic from his suitcase and dropped it into his pocket, and transferred the photograph of his wife and daughter to his tunic pocket.

"Well, that's that," he said glancing at his watch and waking the chief of staff.

It was beginning to grow light. The cold wind whistled among the reeds, lay like a quivering net over the river, scampered hurriedly over the open fields, skipped lightly over the trenches and anti-tank pits, sent the fine sand of the mounds over the blindage swirling, and bowed the bushes on the clearing at the barbed wire entanglements.

The sun rose in the skies over the vast fields, like a venerable old judge, knowing neither agitation nor passion, ready to occupy its accustomed lofty place. The dark night clouds began to glow like coals, burning with a lurid and dusky brick-coloured flame. Everything on this morning seemed sinister, heralding the turmoil of battle. It was an ordinary autumn morning. Over this territory, on exactly such

a morning one year ago, fishermen had passed on a visit to the village, and the ground, the sky, the sun and wind, all were filled for them with peace, tranquillity, and the beauty of the countryside. But this summer everything was ominous: the haystacks in the moonlight, the apple orchards, the white-washed walls of the cottages, the paths, the wind sighing through the wires, the deserted nests of storks, the melon-patches, the russet buckwheat, all the miracles of the Ukrainian soil, drenched in blood and salt with tears.

The attack began at five a.m. Black attack-planes flew over the infantry. These were new aircraft that had only recently arrived at the front. They flew at a very low altitude, and the men could see under their wings the heavy bombs, ready to drop. Smoke rose over the positions of the Germans, and a low rumbling rolled along the entire horizon. Simultaneously with the first avalanche of bombs the regimental and divisional artillery opened fire. The quiet air, through which only the morning wind had run so recently, was filled with the whine and roar of explosions, no room now for the wind.

Mertsalov very much wanted to lead the 1st Battalion in the attack, but he kept himself in check. During these minutes for the first time he really felt the importance of his having been at headquarters. "Damn it, he was right after all," he thought angrily, recalling his distressing conversation with Bogarev that evening. Every day the memory of that disquieting conversation came back to him. And now he realized and saw how many threads of the battle were gathered in his hands. Even though every commander had been given explicit orders the evening before and knew perfectly what he had to do, even though instructions to bombers, attack-planes and fighters were extremely precise and detailed, even though Major Seryogin, commander of the heavy-tank battalion, had sat over the map with Mertsalov for over an hour, nevertheless, as soon as the attack had been launched, the enemy had begun to operate energetically, and this demanded skilful manipulation on the entire intricate and swift-moving system.

Twice Soviet planes had flown over the German forward positions, and black columns of smoke rose over the German trenches and blindages. But when the infantry had gone into attack immediately following on the heavy tanks, the Germans had opened heavy fire from all their artillery, mortar batteries and anti-tank cannon. The battalion commanders reported to Mertsalov by telephone that the infantry had halted and were pinned to the ground: the enemy fire was so intense that it was impossible to advance. Mertsalov rose and opened his holster: it was necessary to get the men on their feet at all costs, to advance! This seemed the simplest of matters to a man who knew no fear to shout: "Forward, men, follow me!" and to dash into the thick of the fray. For a moment he experienced a feeling of savage disillusionment: could it really be that he had so carefully and painstakingly prepared today's battle to no avail, could it be that he had for the first time worked out the details of the forthcoming fray with such academic thoroughness to no avail?

"No, Comrade Chief of Staff," he said wrathfully, "war has always been and will continue to be the art of fearing neither enemy nor death! I must get the infantry on their feet!"

But he did not leave headquarters. The telephone rang again, and immediately after it another call came.

"The air attack is having little effect on the enemy in his trenches. The enemy is retaining his firing power," reported Kochetkov. "His guns and mortars are keeping up constant fire."

"The tanks are encountering heavy artillery fire, the infantry has halted and the tanks have gone on ahead. Two of them have had their caterpillars smashed," reported Seryogin.

"I don't think it advisable to advance further.

And once again the telephone rang, the air-force liaison officer was inquiring about the effectiveness of the bombing and wondering whether it would be advisable to plan the raids differently, since the pilots were reporting that our infantry were not advancing, while the enemy artillery was still active. Just then a lieutenant-colonel, the artillery liaison officer, came into headquarters with a number of important problems that required immediate attention.

Mertsalov lit a cigarette and sat down at his desk frowning.

"Shall we repeat our raids on the infantry?" asked the chief of staff.

"No," replied Mertsalov.

"We should again order the infantry to move forward. The advanced units have halted some three hundred metres from the enemy. It is possible to advance another hundred metres in spurts," said the chief of staff.

"No," replied Mertsalov.

He was sunk so deep in thought that he did not even notice when Divisional Commissar Cherednichenko came in. Nor did the chief of staff look up at him. The divisional commissar walked past the sentry, standing at attention in the blindage, sat down in a dark corner near the bunk where the messengers usually sat, and sucking on his pipe, calmly and attentively listened to the telephone conversations, keeping his eyes fixed on the faces of Mertsalov and the chief of staff.

Cherednichenko had come to Mertsalov past Samarin's command post. He had wanted to be there when the attack began, and knowing that Samarin was always on the scene of any important operation, had decided to meet the army commander at the forward position.

Mertsalov gazed at the map and with a mind intense to the point of physical pain saw the fighting as an integral whole, where there arose points of fierce intensity which then weakened and finally disappeared, creating a picture like that of an ever changing magnetic field. He saw the pivots in the enemy's system of defence, pivots against which his attacks, varying as they were in intensity, were nevertheless smashed. He saw how the various components which went to make up the whole were superimposed one on another, how their coexistence was purely automatic, not interfering with but giving each other greater impetus like superimposed oscillations of equal wave length. His brain dynamically recreated the numerous factors that went to make up this intricate battle. He measured the striking force of the aircraft tearing to the attack, of the heavy tanks, of his counter-fire of the field and heavy batteries, and he could feel the potential strength of Bogarev's troops lying behind the enemy's lines. Everything stood out vividly in the brilliant and joyous light that seemed to flood his whole mind. An extraordinarily simple, mathematically irrefutable solution occurred to him. It is thus that a mathematician or physicist is sometimes overwhelmed at the outset of an experiment by the complexity and contradictory values of the elements he is investigating in some seemingly simple and ordinary phenomenon. The scientist tries passionately to combine, to bring into accord these disintegrating, antagonistic elements, but they slip away stubbornly, swiftly, resiliently. And as a reward for the arduous work of analysis, for the tense search for a solution, a simple and clear idea occurs to him that dispels all the complexity and yields the only correct and amazingly simple, irrefutable solution. This is what we call creative genius. And something of this kind was experienced by Mertsalov as he was endeavouring to solve the difficult problem that had arisen before him. Perhaps never before had he felt such agitation or such joy. He put his plan before the chief of staff.

"But, I say, this goes against. . ." And the chief of staff enumerated those factors to which Mertsalov's proposal ran counter.

"What of it?" was Mertsalov's remark.

He deliberated for a moment. Yes, it sometimes required more strength and courage to take the responsibility for adopting a decision than to do some high deed of valour on the field of battle.

But Mertsalov found this courage in himself, the courage to decide. There were times when asked to account for himself after an engagement a commander would answer: "When I saw that things were going badly, I took the lead. What else could I have done?" But Mertsalov knew that this offering of himself as a sacrifice in no way relieved him of the responsibility for the outcome of the battle.

The situation was as follows. The blows of our aircraft had been unable to smash the German infantry, who had dug themselves into the ground. German artillery and mortars hampered the movement of our tanks, cutting off the advancing infantry from them. The infantry that had moved ahead, their ranks thinned and dampened by German artillery and mortar fire, came within the zone of German tommy-gun and machine-gun fire. Our artillery, which outnumbered the German artillery by almost two to one, was dissipating its strength by directing its fire along the entire broad front of the German outer defences. Mertsalov saw that the fire power of the Russian aircraft, tanks, artillery and infantry, evenly distributed as it was over all elements of the German defences, was devoting only a fourth or a fifth of its effective strength to the German guns and mortars. And it was these guns and mortars that had to be smashed. In that lay the key to success in the first phase of the attack.

And without raising his voice, Mertsalov issued his orders to the regimental and divisional artillery, to the heavy-tank battalion, the attack aircraft, the bombers and fighters that had been bombing and machine-gunning the Germans on his instructions. He ordered the infantry to withdraw and to occupy a position for an attack on the sector of the front where the greater number of the German artillery and mortars was concentrated. Mertsalov knew that the Germans, relying on the power of their artillery, had only small infantry forces in these places. He knew that the fire strength at his disposal would enable him to silence the German artillery without difficulty. He chose for attack the strongest sector of the German front, realizing and sensing the possibility of the strongest becoming the weakest, thus preparing the way for a breach.

The chief of staff groaned to himself when he heard Mertsalov's orders. Imagine concentrating infantry against artillery and mortar batteries! Imagine withdrawing without a fight from positions that had been won with such difficulty and so much bloodshed!

"Does the infantry really have to retreat, Comrade Mertsalov?" he exclaimed.

"That's my name," said the regimental commander, "and has been for the past thirty-five years."

"Comrade Mertsalov, we've advanced eight hundred metres, do you mean to say that we're not going to dig in?"

"I've given my orders, and I have no intention of changing them."

"But you know," said the chief of staff softly, "how strict Samarin is about orders to retreat. And here, at the very outset of the attack, and after our recent unsuccessful retreat at that, you're staking everything on one card."

"I am," said Mertsalov, and pointing to the table he added: "And the results will go on this map. Chuck it, Semyon Germogenovich. I know what I'm doing, I'm no youngster to be playing about."

A loud voice could be heard at the entrance to the blindage. Mertsalov and the chief of staff sprang to their feet smartly as General Samarin came towards them.

He glanced at the distressed face

of the chief of staff and greeting him with a nod of his head he asked:

"Well, how's it going: have you broken through?"

"No, Comrade Major-General," replied Mertsalov, "we have not broken through yet, but we will."

"Where are your battalions?" asked Samarin curtly. As he was approaching regimental headquarters, he had encountered retreating tanks and infantry and had asked the lieutenant on whose orders they were retreating. "On orders of the regimental commander, Hero of the Soviet Union, Major Mertsalov," came the precise reply. And this reply had thrown Samarin into a fury.

"Where are your battalions, why are they retreating?" asked Samarin in voice that was terrible by its very quietness.

"They are retreating in orderly fashion, at my instructions, Comrade Major-General," replied Mertsalov, and suddenly noticed that Samarin, standing stiffly at attention, was looking at a man who was coming towards him from a dark corner of the blindage. He looked in that direction and also stood to attention: standing before them was a member of the Military War Council of the Front.

"Good morning, Comrade Samarin! How do you do, comrades?" said Cherednichenko. "I haven't said hello to you thanks to the fact that the sentry here let me pass. I've been sitting over there on the bunk and watching how you fight."

"All the same I'm right," thought Mertsalov stubbornly. "And I'll show them."

Cherednichenko glanced at Samarin's frowning face, then at the excited chief of staff, and said:

"Comrade Mertsalov!"

"Yes, Comrade Divisional Commissar. . ."

For a second the divisional commissar looked him straight in the eye. And in this calm and somewhat wistful glance Mertsalov saw with joy and a lightening of the heart that the divisional commissar knew everything. He sensed that Cherednichenko realized what an important and solemn occasion this was in the military life of the regimental commander.

"Comrade Mertsalov," said Cherednichenko slowly. "I'm pleased with you, Comrade Mertsalov. You're making a good job of directing the operations, and I'm convinced that you will gain the day." He threw a quick glance at Samarin and continued: "On behalf of the Service I want to thank you, Major Mertsalov."

"I'm at the service of the Soviet Union," replied the regimental commander.

"Well, what way, Samarin, shall we be going?" said Cherednichenko throwing his arm around the general's shoulders. "There's something we have to talk over. Besides we have to let people work. Here all of us chiefs have come swooping down on them, and they have to stand around at attention. They've lots to do, let's leave them to it."

Before leaving the blindage he went over to Mertsalov and asked him in a low voice:

"Well, how do you like your commissar, Major?" and smiling he added quite softly: "Had a run in with him? Am I right? Did you?"

And to Mertsalov it was just as if Cherednichenko had been present at that evening tea, as if he were reminding him of the secret connection, now understood by him, between that night and the present day.

AT BRUCHMÜLLER'S HEADQUARTERS

Colonel Bruchmüller, commanding the German unit which was preparing to force the river, was entertaining a visitor in the person of Colonel Grün, a representative of the General Staff who had arrived

the previous day. On the morning, when the surprise Russian counter-attack began, they were breakfasting together at headquarters, which was housed in a school-building.

Bruchmüller and Grün were old acquaintances and had had a long talk on matters concerning the front and home affairs. Grün occupied a higher and more brilliant post than the front-line colonel, but all the same he held his host in considerable respect. Bruchmüller was well known in the German army as a master hand at the employment of artillery in battle. Brauchitsch had once said of him: "That man isn't named Bruchmüller for nothing." Apparently Brauchitsch had in mind the famous German colonel of the same name who had won renown in the war of 1914 for his skill in organizing attacks with massed heavy artillery. And Grün, ignoring the intricate caste system in the army, which permitted intercourse exclusively with people of one's own circle, had been quite frank in what he told the stout, bald-headed colonel concerning the mood of the higher staff officers and the situation within Germany itself. His tales had excited and angered Bruchmüller.

"Yes," he had said with all the simplicity of a soldier, somewhat to Grün's consternation, "while we're fighting here that crowd keeps up its wrangling. In the end all these intrigues, industrialists, national-socialists, Fronde and counter-Fronde among the generals, will only muddle things up. It ought to be made quite clear: Germany is the army, the army at the front is Germany. It is we and we alone who should decide how and what."

"No," Grün had said, "tomorrow I will tell you about things no less important than successes at the front, things which are every day becoming more complicated, more insupportable for the higher officers. There are days when the situation is nothing short of paradoxical."

But he had been unable to continue his conversation that morning because of the sudden offensive that had been launched by the Russians, and the attention of both the colonels was of course concentrated on what was going on right then and there.

Communications were excellent, and Bruchmüller, ensconced in his staff headquarters, had a complete picture of the battle: wireless or telephone brought him news of the course of the action every five or six minutes.

"The Russians are making a frontal attack with equally distributed pressure all along the line. That's what they call 'hitting head-on'," said Grün, glancing at the map, "and apparently they themselves see the ineffectiveness of such actions. In their orders this is frequently pointed out as a defect."

"Oh, that's what they're like," said Bruchmüller, "the Russians have peculiar natures. But do you know that during the fighting I have never once been able to determine the character of the commander opposing me. it's always diffused and hazy? I never know what he likes, which are his favourite weapons. I'm not at all pleased with this, I don't like fogs."

"What else can you expect?" said Grün. "They've come up against all the intricacies of our modern German warfare. Aircraft, tanks, parachute landings, manoeuvre, combined thrusts, dynamic, three-dimensional war."

"By the way, they've brought up a large number of heavy tanks and new aircraft on our front. Their black armoured vehicles are particularly effective, *Schwarztod* (black death) our troops call them."

"Yes, but they can't do much with them. Look at this!" said Grün, holding out the report which the clerk had just typed out.

Bruchmüller smiled.

"You must admit," he said, "things here are so well organized that even if you or I came up against such a

system of defences as ours, we'd just have to throw up our hands in despair."

And leaning forward so that his broad chest rested on the table, he began to give an enthusiastic account of his system of gun emplacements.

"It reminds me of a toy my son is fond of playing with," he said. "It consists of three rings, one linking into the second, the second into the third, and the third into the first again. The thing is to puzzle out how to separate them. You can't break them, they're made of steel! The secret is that the rings open just where they seem strongest and the most solid."

Telephone and wireless brought good news from battalions, companies and batteries: the Russian attack had died down.

"It astonishes me that they managed to advance 800 metres. I don't deny their courage," said Grün. Lighting a cigarette, he asked: "When do you propose to force the river?"

"In three days time," answered Bruchmüller. "I have my orders." His spirits suddenly rose and he felt in an extraordinarily good humour. Stroking his stomach, he said:

"What under the sun should I have done if I had remained in Germany with my appetite? I expect I should have died. Believe it or not, I want my lunch already. I have everything I want here. I've been fighting since September, 1939, and, by God, I could act as culinary adviser in the finest international hotel by now. I've made it a rule to eat the national dishes of the country where I'm fighting. In the matter of food I'm a cosmopolitan." He cast a rapid sidelong glance at Grün: could such a skinny individual, whose sole drink was black coffee and who dined on bouillon with croutons and lean boiled chicken, have any interest in such matters? Maybe his weakness for good cooking, a weakness of which Bruchmüller was proud, would simply be disgusting to Grün.

But Grün was smiling and listening to him with interest: he liked the colonel's lively talk about food. It would make a comical story to tell in Berlin.

Bruchmüller, thus encouraged, continued:

"In Poland I ate *zrazy* and *fzlaki*, nasty stuff but devilish tasty, *klecki*, *knyszy* and sweet *mazurki*, and I drank *starka*; in France I tried all kinds of *ragouts*, *legumes*, *artichokes*, *frits fins*, and did I drink real imperial wines there; in Greece I reeked of garlic like an old market woman, and I was afraid my insides would simply burn up with all the pepper I ate. Well, and here it's sucking pig, geese, turkeys, and a perfectly delicious dish, *va-re-ni-ki*, sort of little boiled white dumplings with either cherries or cottage cheese inside them, and then just smothered in sour cream. You must try them today."

"No, thank you," said Grün, laughing and raising his hand as though fending off some danger, "I want to see Berlin and my wife and children again."

At this juncture the adjutant announced that the Russian tanks were withdrawing, covering the retreating infantry with their fire, that Russian aircraft was no longer appearing over the infantry positions and that artillery of all calibres had ceased fire.

"There you are, that's your infamous fog for you," said Grün.

"No, that's not it," answered Bruchmüller, frowning. "I know how stubborn the Russians can be."

"Do you still believe in the fog?" asked Grün jokingly.

"I believe in the strength of our arms," answered Bruchmüller. "Maybe they've quietened down, and maybe they haven't. Most likely, not. That's not important. What is important is this," and he struck the map with the back of his hand.

Clusters of red circles had been

drawn with a thick Faber's pencil between the green of the forests and the blue of the rivers and lakes. These were the emplacements of the German artillery and mortars.

"That's what I believe in," repeated Bruchmüller.

He said these words slowly and significantly. It seemed to Grün that Bruchmüller had in mind not only the war effort of the Russians but also the subject of their yesterday's conversation.

Fifteen minutes later the telephone told them that the Russians were again active.

The first bomber attacks were directed against the heavy batteries. Immediately afterwards came the report that Russian heavy tanks had entered the German battalion mortar positions. Then Major Schwalbe reported that his 105 mm. guns had come under a hurricane of Russian heavy artillery fire.

Bruchmüller immediately realized that the Russian effort was not distributed evently all along the line but had a definite direction. He could all but feel the forceful, alarming prick of a sharp weapon that was searching around for him. He was so closely and habitually connected with his troops that this feeling developed into a physical reality, and he unconsciously put his hand on his chest in an effort to get rid of this disturbing and disquieting feeling. But the feeling did not disappear, it continued.

The Russian bombers had scarcely flown away before their fighters appeared over the artillery positions. Battery commanders reported that they could not maintain fire because the gunners had taken cover in the dug-outs.

"Maintain fire at all costs and with maximum intensity," ordered the colonel.

He was immediately keyed up to the highest pitch. The devil take it, not for nothing did he bear the name of Bruchmüller! Not for nothing was he known and respected throughout the army! He was indeed an experienced, resolute and capable soldier. When he was still at the Academy, his instructors had spoken of him as being representative of the real German officers' corps.

The whole of the huge, well-ordered, well-oiled and excellently functioning staff machine seemed to tremble under the force of his willpower and immediately got under way. Telephone bells rang, the adjutant and subalterns moved smartly from the field-telegraph office to the colonel's room, the radio-transmitter buzzed away incessantly, despatch riders gulped down a Russian schnaps, jammed their caps down over their eyes, and dashing out of the school yard raced away on their motor-cycles in clouds of dust along roads and paths.

Bruchmüller himself spoke over the telephone with his battery commanders.

No sooner did the Soviet fighter aircraft make off than dive-bombers appeared over the gun emplacements. Bruchmüller realized that the Russian commander's objective was to smash and silence his big guns. Gun after gun was put out of action. Two batteries of mortars were wiped out together with their crew. The Russians were systematically going for one gun emplacement after the other.

Bruchmüller called up the infantry battalion which he had been holding in reserve, but within a few minutes he was informed that the black Russian attack planes had come skimming over the column of troop-laden trucks as they advanced towards the front and had plastered them with cannon and machine-gun fire. Bruchmüller ordered the infantry to abandon the trucks and to proceed on foot. But even this was impossible, as the Russians opened concentrated fire on the road, making it impassable.

For the first time in his life the colonel felt as if his hands were tied. Somebody's will was hindering him.

interfering with his arrangements. It was an unbearable thought that for even a minute the man on the other side of the front should have the advantage of him.

Quite suddenly he recalled how a year ago, when he had been in France, he had attended at an unusually delicate operation which was being made by an eminent professor, a world authority on brain surgery, who was visiting the front. The professor had introduced a strange flexible instrument, something halfway between a needle and a knife, into the nose of the unconscious patient, and with his dexterous white fingers had worked the gleaming instrument farther and farther into the patient's nose. They had explained to Bruchmüller that the injury was somewhere above the occipital bone and that the professor was getting at it by introducing his slim instrument between the cranium and the cerebrum. The operation had amazed Bruchmüller. And now, at this moment, it appeared to him that the man opposed to him had just such an intent face, such dexterous fingers as that surgeon, and was passing his steel instrument through the darkness between the precious nerve centre and the thread-like nerve fibres.

"What's happening?" asked Grün.

"What's happening is that the Russian is showing his character at last," answered Bruchmüller.

Again he leaned over the map. The enemy was calmly developing the game. Now Bruchmüller could see his face.

"Russian infantry is attacking our artillery positions," came the report from the forward positions. At the same moment an officer came running in shouting:

"Herr Oberst, the Russian heavy artillery is firing from our rear."

"No, I'll outplay him yet," remarked Bruchmüller with conviction.

The wind slammed the open French windows to, set the doors creaking, and made the big school map on the wall rustle. The print of the shaggy brown head of prehistoric man was fluttering in the wind in such a fashion that his powerful jaws seemed to be working as though he were setting them stubbornly.

DEATH WILL NOT CONQUER!

Rumyantsev's observation post was quite near the Germans. Lieutenant Klenovkin, who was lying in the bushes, saw two officers coming out of an underground shelter, drinking coffee and smoking. He could hear their conversation distinctly, saw a telephonist reporting to them and one of the officers, evidently the senior, giving him some order. Fuming at himself, Klenovkin glanced at his watch. It was a shame that he had not studied German when he had the chance. He could make out every word they said but could not understand it. The howitzers were in position on the edge of the woods, a thousand metres from the spot where Klenovkin was lying. The infantry were concentrated there too. The wounded had also been brought up, they were lying on stretchers and in trucks, which were ready at a moment's notice to follow on after the advancing infantry.

Telephonist Martynov, who was lying beside Klenovkin, watched the German telephonist with particular interest. He was both amused and irritated by this German who held the same job as he did.

"Sly mug he has. You can see he's a boozer," whispered Martynov. "If he ever got into our line, he wouldn't understand a word. Damned German!"

Everyone's nerves were unusually strained, beginning with Klenovkin, who was lying quite close to the German blindage, and ending

with the wounded and the youngster Lyonya, waiting in the dim forest for the attack to begin. The cannonade, tommy-gun and machine-gun fire and bursting air bombs could be heard by all. Aircraft frequently zoomed over the heads of the Red Army men towards the German positions. The men were hard put to it to keep a check on themselves, not to wave excitedly or shout when the planes dived over the German trenches.

Bogarev was no less agitated than the others. He could see that even Rumyantsev and the fearless, jolly Kozlov were tense and overwrought with the waiting. The phases of the battle which they had agreed were to precede the attack had already passed. The time that had been agreed on for launching the combined blow had passed. And still the signal was not given. Whenever the din of the battle grew louder, the commanders would break off their conversation and began to listen attentively and to look around. But still there was nothing, Mertsalov did not call them.

Strange indeed and unusual did this battle sound to the men who were behind the German lines. All the sounds were reversed: the bursting shells were the Russians', the artillery volleys were sent by the Germans. Occasionally a bullet whistled overhead, and this was the whistle of a Russian bullet. The chatter of tommy-guns and the machine-gun bursts sent by the Germans sounded particularly ominous and alarming. And this unwonted state of affairs, this topsy-turvy noise of battle also affected the men.

They lay behind trees, in the underbrush, in the tall hemp that had not yet been gathered, listening and peering intently into the clear morning air, darkened only here and there by smoke and dust.

Oh, how good the earth was in those moments! How precious to the men seemed its heavy folds, the sere hillocks, the ravines, overgrown with dusty burdocks, the forest pits. What a marvellous fragrance emanated from the earth: humus, dry dust and forest dampness, mould and mushrooms, dry berries and fallen twigs so often sodden with rain, then crisp and crackling again. The breeze wafted the warm and nostalgic fragrance of faded flowers and withered grass from the fields. In the half-light of the forest, suddenly pierced by rays of the sun, a misty rainbow began to glow on a cobweb hung with dewdrops, seeming to breathe a miracle of tranquillity and peace.

There Rodimtsev lies, his face pressed to the earth. But he is not sleeping. His eyes are fixed on the ground near the briar bush. He is breathing noisily, drawing in the fragrance of the soil. He is watching with interest, eagerly and attentively, what is going on around him. An ant column is marching along an invisible road, dragging bits of dry grass and twigs. "Maybe they're at war too," muses Rodimtsev, "and these are columns that have been mobilized to dig trenches and build fortifications. Or maybe someone is building a new house, and these are carpenters and masons on their way to work. . ."

The world which his eyes see, his ears hear, his nostrils breathe in, is enormous. An arshin of earth at the woodland's edge and a briar bush. How enormous is this arshin of land! How beautiful this bush, though flowerless now! Across the dry ground, like a fine streak of lightning, is a crack. The ants pass along a bridge in strict order, one after the other, while those on the other side of the crack patiently wait their turn. A lady-bird, a plump little woman in a red calico dress, is hurrying along, looking for the crossing. And look there: a field mouse's eyes glisten as he rises on his hind legs and rustles around in the grass just as if no one were there. A gust of wind, and the grasses sway and bow, each kind in its own way, some humbly

and quickly prostrating themselves to earth, others stubbornly, angrily, quivering, their flat, meagre ears ruffling out, food for the sparrows. And on the briar bush the hips stir, yellow, reddish, fired by the sun like clay by flame. A spider's web, which has obviously long been abandoned by its owner, sways in the wind; in it are entangled dry leaves, bits of bark, and in one spot there is even a fallen acorn weighing it down. It looks like a net that has been thrown up on the shore, the fisherman drowned.

And how much there is of such land, such woods, how many countless arshins where life exists! How many dawns even more beautiful than this Rodimtsev had seen in his lifetime, how many swift summer rains, how many bird calls, cool breezes, night mists! How much work! And how wonderful were the hours when he came home from work and his wife asked him sternly and yet with loving concern: "Are you going to eat your dinner?" And he had eaten mashed potatoes with sunflower-seed oil and watched his children and the sunburned arms of his wife in the quiet closeness of the cottage. And now how much of life is there ahead. . . Can it be much? After all, everything can end right here, in the space of a brief five minutes. And hundreds of Red Army men are lying in the same way, thinking, recalling home and wife and children, looking at the earth, the trees, the bushes, breathing in the morning fragrance. There is no better earth than this in the whole world.

Thoughtfully Ignatyev says to his comrade:

"The other day I overheard a conversation between two lieutenants. 'Just imagine,' they said, 'here's a war going on, and all around are orchards and birds singing, what we do doesn't matter a bit to them. . .' I've been thinking about that. It's not so. Those chaps simply didn't look into it deeply enough. All life has been affected by this war. Take horses. What don't they suffer! Or I remember when we were stationed in Rogachov: every time there was an air alarm the dogs would crawl into the cellars. I even noticed one bitch hiding her puppies in a ditch, and as soon as the raid was over, she took them out for a walk again. And what about the birds, geese, chickens, turkeys,—don't they suffer at the hands of the Germans? And here, all around us, in the woods I've noticed that the birds have begun to be frightened: as soon as a plane appears, clouds of them rise into the air, twittering and screaming as they whirr off. How much woodland has been destroyed! How many orchards! Or, I've just been thinking: there's fighting going on, about a thousand of us come and flop down here, and the whole life of these ants and mosquitoes goes bang."

He rose to his feet and looking at his comrades said with wistful joy:

"Oh, but it's good to be alive, chaps! It's only on a day like this that you realize it. Seems like you could lie like this for a thousand years and never get tired of it! You can breathe!"

Bogarev listened to the sound of the fighting. Suddenly the howl of explosions began to die down. The red-starred planes were no longer flying over the German positions. Was it possible that the attack had been repulsed? Was it possible that Mertsalov had been unable to smash the German defences to the extent of launching a joint attack with Bogarev? Sorrow gripped Bogarev's heart. The idea that Mertsalov might have failed was intolerable, agonizing. He no longer saw the light of the sun; it seemed to him that the blue sky had darkened and become black. He did not see the open glade spreading before him. Everything faded away, the trees, the fields. His entire being was filled with hatred for the Ger-

mans, hatred alone. Here, on the outskirts of the forest, he could clearly picture the sinister force that was crawling over the land of the people. The land belonged to the people! In Moore's utopias and Owen's visions, in the works of the great French philosophers, in the writings of the Decembrists, the articles of Byelinsky and Herzen, in the correspondence of Zhelyabov and Mikhailov, in the words of the weaver Alexeyev was expressed the eternal yearning of mankind for a land knowing no slavery, a life ordered in accordance with the laws of reason and justice, for a land owned by all, a land where the eternal inequality between those who work and those who provide work has been done away with. Thousands upon thousands of Russian revolutionaries had perished in the struggle. Bogarev knew them like brothers. He had read about all of them, knew their last words and letters to their mothers and children, knew their diaries and their secret conversations recorded by friends who had lived to see liberty, knew the roads they had travelled to exile in Siberia, the stations where they had stayed the night, the jails where they had been put in fetters. He loved these people and honoured them as his nearest and dearest. Many of them were workers from Kiev, printers from Minsk, tailors from Vilna, weavers from Byelostok, cities now occupied by the fascists.

With every fibre of his being Bogarev loved this land that had been won in the storm and strife of the Civil War, amidst the tortures of hunger. The land, be it still poor, be it still living a life of stern toil, stern laws. . .

Slowly he made his way among the men stretched on the ground, stopping from time to time to say a few words and walking on.

"If Mertsalov," he thought to himself, "does not give the signal within one hour, I shall lead the men into the attack and break through the German defences on my own. In exactly one hour."

To him the battle that day, after the long line of retreats, had become the symbol of a turning point and maturity.

"Mertsalov should be successful," he told Kozlov, "there's no other way about it, or I have seen nothing and understood nothing."

He caught sight of Ignatyev and Rodimtsev, walked over to them and sat down on the grass. It seemed to him that at this moment they were talking and thinking of the same thing that occupied his thoughts.

"What are you talking about here?" he asked.

"Well, you see, we're discussing mosquitoes," said Ignatyev with a guilty laugh.

"That's it!" thought Bogarev. "Are we then really thinking about different things in this hour?"

The signal was seen by scores of the men, red rockets shooting from the Russian lines towards the German. And on the instant Rumyantsev's howitzers thundered forth. A thousand men froze stock-still. The thunder of the howitzers informed the Germans that Russian troops had concealed themselves in their rear.

Bogarev cast a swift, happy glance around the field, squeezed the hand of Kozlov who was on the right flank, and said to him: "I'm banking on you, my friend," drew a deep breath and shouted:

"Follow me, comrades, forward!"

And not a man remained lying on the kind, warm, summer earth.

Bogarev ran ahead, and an unwonted emotion seized his entire being. He drew the men after him, but they, too, bound to him in a single, eternal and indivisible whole, seemed to be impelling him forward. He heard their heavy breathing behind him, the rapid, heated beating of their hearts was transmitted to him. This was the people who were winning

their land in battle. Bogarev heard the tramp of boots, and this was the tread of all Russia passing over to the attack. They were running faster and faster, and the shouts of "Hurrah!" kept swelling and rising, growing and spreading. It was heard through the thunder of the battle by Mertsalov's battalions as they charged in a bayonet attack. It was heard by the peasants in the distant village occupied by the enemy. This "Hurrah!" was heard by the birds rising high into the heavens. This "Hu-r-r-ah!" shook the blue air and galvanized the earth.

The Germans fought desperately. They took up a circular defence, opening machine-gun fire. But the two waves of Russian infantry advanced steadily towards each other. The Red Army men jumped over ditches and trenches, cut wires, flung grenades into trucks and armoured cars. The steel tanks, that had been dug into the ground, flared up with the intensity of the Russian fire. Were these the same men that not long ago had feared a loud word in the forest? Were these the ones that had listened to the cawing of the crows, taking it for Germans talking? By now Mertsalov's battalions not only heard the "Hurrah" that came from the German rear, but already saw the begrimed faces of their comrades, covered with the sweat of battle, already distinguished between the grenade-throwers and the riflemen, already made out the black tabs of the artillerymen and the star on Lieutenant Kozlov's forage cap.

But the Germans still kept up their resistance. Perhaps it was not only pluck that governed their stubbornness, perhaps it was that the belief in their own invincibility with which they were intoxicated did not want to leave them in this moment of defeat. Perhaps it was that the soldiers, accustomed to victory for seven hundred days, could not and would not understand that on this seven hundred and first day defeat had come to them.

But the line of the front was breached and smashed. . .

The first two Red Army men met, embraced, and through the roar on the field a voice shouted:

"Give us a fag, brother, haven't smoked for a week!"

And there the first surrounded German machine-gunners raised their hands, and a hump-nosed, freckled tommy-gunner shrieked: "Rus, don't shoot!" and threw his black tommy-gun on the ground. And there, with hanging heads, a chain of prisoners was already passing, minus their caps, their jackets open at the throat, unbuttoned so recently in the heat of the battle, their pockets turned inside out to show that they carried no revolvers or grenades. And there the clerks, and telegraph and wireless operators were being led out of headquarters. And there the grim battle-stained men were silently gazing at the corpse of a stout German colonel who had sent a bullet through his brain. And there a young commander was already counting up with a rapid glance the German guns and tommy-guns, cars and tanks abandoned on the field.

"Where is the commissar?" the men asked of each other.

"Where is the commissar?" asked Rumyantsev.

"Who has seen the commissar?" asked Kozlov, wiping the sweat from his brow.

"The commissar was with us all the time," said the men, "the commissar was with us."

"Where is the commissar?" asked Mertsalov loudly, making his way among the wrecked cars, grimy, filthy, his new tunic tattered and torn.

And they told him:

"The commissar was ahead, the commissar was with us."

Over the captured battle-field mercilessly lit up by the sun, a small khaki armoured car drove up. Cherednichenko stepped out.

"Comrade Cherednichenko," said Mertsalov to him, "your son is in that

baggage train that's coming up now. Bogarev took him with his detachment."

"My Lyonya?" said Cherednichenko. "My son?"

He looked at Mertsalov, and Mertsalov, without replying, lowered his eyes. Cherednichenko stood there mutely, watching the trucks coming from the forest.

"My son," he said again. "My son."

And turning to Mertsalov he asked:

"Where is the commissar?"

Again Mertsalov was silent.

The wind whistled over the field. . .

From over there, where the flames were already beginning to burn low, two men were coming. Everyone knew them. It was Bogarev and Ignatyev. Blood seeped through their clothing. They walked supporting one another, with heavy, slow steps.

BELA BALAZS

EDUCATION

"Come, Jürgen, back to your work!"

Meister Jan spoke in a deep warm voice, not stern but very decided.

"Right away, father," answered a tall, fourteen-year-old boy standing in the window recess. "I only want to see the Germans change the guard at the town hall."

The bright rays of the morning sun gleamed upon Jürgen's silver-blond hair and his starved pale face. The light penetrated through a small Gothic window deeply set into the thick old wall, forming with its recess almost a detached chamber. But it hardly reached the old locksmith's workshop, where Meister Jan sat bent over his tools. With its sturdy, smoke-covered beams the room reminded one of a Rembrandt background.

"What is there to see in the German guard?" grumbled the locksmith screwing together two iron plates. "I should think you were fed up with the sight of these Germans."

"I am wondering. . . they have doubled the guard since yesterday, father, and have stationed a machine-gun at the Löwenbrunnen entrance."

"Have they?" and Meister Jan looked up with interest, his thick dark eyebrows contracting. He was about fifty and bore himself with the pride characteristic of the old Dutch journeyman. Irony was expressed on his grave face which sparkled like a crystal among dark broken cliffs. "Well, if they have doubled the guard, it only means that their fear has doubled, too. It will be soon tripled, and all their soldiers will not be enough to guard the country. Go back to your work, Jürgen."

The pale boy returned up to the work-bench and took his seat on a low stool.

"Whom have they to fear, father?" Jürgen resumed the conversation. "We have no soldiers and no arms left. The fascists have stolen them or destroyed them all."

"They are afraid of you, Jürgen," returned the deep, warm voice of Meister Jan.

"Me?"

"Yes, and of the other Dutch children. As you grow up their fears grow, too, and you are growing very quickly."

The old locksmith looked at his son gravely and placed his strong palm upon the boy's narrow shoulder. He handed Jürgen the two iron plates; they were tightly screwed together.

"Unscrew them!"

"But, father, you have just screwed them together, why should I unscrew them again?"

"I want you to learn to loosen a bolt quickly and noiselessly. Who knows, it may turn out to be much more important than you think. No, that won't do, you rattle too much. You must insert the screw-driver

gently; see, like this, and then with your left hand. . . . see?"

Meister Jan separated the slabs without a sound. The boy picked up the steel plates and practised without asking any more about the why or wherefore. He knew what it was all about, this pale fourteen-year-old youth.

The heavy carved oak door of the workshop was thrown open and a stooping careworn old woman in black entered the room. Her white starched Dutch cap stood out in the semi-dark workshop. The big clogs clicked on the floor.

"Good morning, Meister Jan!"

The old lady's voice was timid, tender and shaky with tears.

"Good morning, Frau Wilma." Meister Jan stretched out both his hands in welcome. "Come, sit down."

Jürgen hastened to dust a chair and to bring it for her.

"I've only looked in for a moment, dear Meister Jan," she panted. "I must run back quickly to my poor husband."

"How is Klaus?" asked Meister Jan gently.

The old woman started crying inaudibly. That was her answer.

Meister Jan touched her shoulder without a word. And that was his answer.

"That's just it. That's why I have come to you. . ."

Frau Wilma stopped and looked diffidently around the workshop.

"You may speak freely," muttered the locksmith. "There is no one to hear us. Does it really look so bad with Klaus?" he added.

"If I only could give him some better food! His wounds and his mangled kidneys could still be cured. But they don't let us have even dry bread, and so he is failing."

"Jürgen," the locksmith called, turning to the boy. Jürgen hurried to the tool-box and brought back a piece of bread on a plate.

"Klaus is a proud Hollander," said Jan meanwhile. "He is a hero. Take this piece of bread for him, Frau Wilma."

"But I can't do that. What will you have yourselves?"

"I've eaten my fill today, already," smiled Jürgen. "I'd only get indigestion." And he put the bread in the woman's bag.

She dried her eyes.

"Oh, it is just as well that your wife has not lived to see these times."

"No, it is a pity that my wife is not alive," answered the locksmith gravely. "We'd have one more stout fighter, and a merry one, too. She was a true Dutchwoman. She could laugh even when things looked very dark. We need people like that today, Frau Wilma. Cheer up, my friend!"

"Yes, yes, you are quite right." The old woman got up and slowly walked to the door, her clogs clicking on the hard floor. "Why don't you come to see us, Meister Jan? My Klaus says that he has to tell you something he can trust nobody else with. . . and speaking is already so difficult for him. . ." She fell to crying again.

"I'll come at once," answered the locksmith with his hand on the door-handle. "But dry your tears first, Frau Wilma. We mustn't let the Germans see our tears. Now put your handkerchief in your pocket. These cut-throats must see that they have not broken us."

"Thanks, Meister Jan," whispered the old woman, lifting her head and pulling herself together. "You are right, it's hard but I'll try. Goodbye!"

Frau Wilma opened the door and started convulsively. Her face was pale.

A German soldier was standing on the threshold.

He carried no arms but only a bent steering wheel, his fat swollen face was red and covered with sweat. His small pig eyes were swimming. He was drunk, there was no mistaking it. Still he could have heard some-

thing if he had been standing outside the door long enough.

"Good evening, Meister locksmith," said the German in a faltering, screaching voice. Meister Jan was not sure that this nazi chauffeur had overheard the conversation with Frau Wilma, and motioned Jürgen to maintain silence.

"Well, good-bye, Frau Wilma," said Meister Jan easily, and shook the old lady's hand, as if the German were not there at all. "I'll follow you at once."

"No, no, Meister locksmith, you can't leave the shop yet once," grinned the German and entered the room. "You've got to put these damned things to rights first. Look here, this steering wheel is a little loose."

"Well, good-bye." And the locksmith, quite re-assured now, helped Frau Wilma down the steps of the workshop, closed the door and returned to his bench. All his actions were marked with the greatest repose and purposely very slow.

"And now you will repair this very quickly, won't you?"

"Have you a written order for me?" asked the locksmith very coldly, while Jürgen retired into the darkest corner of the workshop.

"Written order? Why, surely you won't insist on a written order for such a trifle," smirked the drunken German and moved to the bench with somewhat unsteady steps. "You, Dutchmen, seem to be more fastidious than the German soldiers themselves. You're a pack of old foxes, that's what you are. Now, don't you go asking for written orders, because you won't get any. See? Why, I haven't even reported this damage to my ober-leutnant. And why should I? It's repaired in ten minutes. Besides, my ober-leutnant thinks the old car can run for ever. Leave it to him to put a fellow under arrest for the smallest breakdown. That's because he knows nothing about cars himself. He'll get the surprise of his life one day. Everything will go to blazes some day soon. . . No, I have no written order, but you will mend it all the same, Meister locksmith, won't you? Just for the sake of friendship."

Meister Jan let the man talk, and his hard steady face never moved for a second. He washed his hands, buttoned a collar to his shirt and calmly made ready to go. Jürgen copied his every movement: washed his hands after his father and put on a white collar. When the German had finished his long speech, Meister Jan calmly took his hat from the peg. Jürgen, too, reached for his cap. Meister Jan turned politely to the German:

"I am very sorry, but you know I mustn't do anything without an order."

"But nobody will know anything about it," begged the chauffeur.

Meister Jan lifted his thick eyebrows and said pathetically like a preacher in church:

"But my conscience would know and let me have no peace." A mocking light gleamed in the corner of his eye. "Because the discipline of the German army is a thing I honour above everything else."

"Oh, stop it, stop that blinking nonsense, you old Dutch fox! Now look here, I can do you a good turn one day. Here, for instance," and he pointed to the empty plate Jürgen had brought the bread on. "That plate needn't stand there so empty. I could get something for you from the mess room."

"Thank you for your kindness," said Meister Jan with a bow. "'Always keep empty plates and open graves ready,' is a saying with us."

The chauffeur stared at him with puzzled eyes:

"Kept ready for what?"

The locksmith's eyelids dropped a little, and he answered meekly:

"To fill them when their time comes." And he put on his hat. "Let's go, Jürgen."

"What did I hear you say? To fill the plates. . ." murmured the German. "And the open graves? Fill them too, eh?" He stopped suddenly and his eyes stared glassily.

"Say that again," he screamed, "fill the graves when their time comes? What the hell do you mean? Who told you that?" And he swung the steering wheel threateningly.

"A merry Dutchman," answered the locksmith coldly.

The German roared:

"Merry Dutchman, eh? Which one? Who is he, the dirty swine?"

"Oh, he is dead now, lived some hundreds of years ago." Again mockery glinted in the locksmith's eyes. His bow was deep and respectful. "Let's go, Jürgen. Dutch artisans are not allowed to undertake any work without a written order. Good morning!"

Jürgen's bow was an exact repetition of his father's, and his voice rang with the same accent: "Good morning!"

They calmly left the shop, the nazi following close on their heels, swinging the steering wheel as his unsteady steps carried him to the door.

"You just wait, you damned old Dutch fox, you just cross my path again some day, and I'll teach you how to fill plates and graves, too! Just you wait, you!"

Meister Jan and Jürgen crossed the sunlit square which formed the centre of the ancient Dutch town. On one side of the square stood the town hall; it had stood there for over five hundred years, and its stern Gothic walls had seen many an eventful day. There was something grim and grave about the old building, something of the spirit that showed on the face of Jan, the town's best locksmith. It seemed to express mockery and anger at the shame of the swastika flag flying from the roof of its tall tower.

The square still bore traces of German bombs, but Meister Jan and Jürgen did not look at them, nor at the town hall with the doubled German guard in front of it and the swastika flag flying from its roof. It was too painful a sight.

The few people they met all looked sad, tired and starved.

"Is Uncle Klaus going to die?" asked Jürgen.

"Yes," answered the father. "But not in vain. He has done his bit for Dutch freedom."

Suddenly they heard a shrill "Halt!" Meister Jan calmly walked on without looking round. His son did the same. But they knew that the voice belonged to a German officer who just come out of the town hall.

"Halt, you two!" shouted the officer in a louder and, this time, firmer voice that rang through the square.

Father and son exchanged glances and continued on their way. One or two passers-by turned to look after them and smiled as soon as they recognized Meister Jan.

"Insolent rabble!" screamed the officer. "I'll teach you manners! Guard!" He pointed to the locksmith and the boy. "Bring them here!"

A soldier ran after the two and seized Meister Jan by the shoulder.

The locksmith turned quietly; he looked surprised and bored.

"What is it?" he asked politely.

"Ober-leutnant wants to see both of you," the soldier barked in a husky voice.

"With pleasure," answered Meister Jan even more politely, "only I can't."

"How do you mean, you can't?"

"Well, you hold me pinned to this spot," said the locksmith with a sly smile.

The soldier was embarrassed and removed his hand.

"Thanks. Come, Jürgen, the Herr Ober-leutnant there wishes to tell us something."

They walked up to the young German officer who made no attempt to conceal that he was nervous and annoyed.

"Good morning, Herr Ober-leutnant," Jan said with condescending friendliness as he took off his hat. "Can I do anything for you?"

And he eyed the officer so gravely and calmly that the nazi was quite taken aback and shouted:

"Haven't you heard?"

"Heard what?" asked Jan with quiet interest.

"Me shouting 'Halt!'"

"Yes, Herr Ober-leutnant, I heard you. Your voice was loud and clear."

The officer flushed with fury.

"Well? And you have the cheek to tell me that to my face? You heard me and kept on walking, what?"

"Just so, Herr Ober-leutnant," and the locksmith nodded with cool composure. "I heard you but I did not stop."

The Ober-leutnant gasped for breath.

"But. . . but, what cheek! How did you dare?"

"I beg to offer my excuses, Herr Ober-leutnant," and the locksmith smiled with exquisite politeness. "I could not know that your order was meant for me." A mocking light played in the eyes of Meister Jan, and young Jürgen could hardly keep from laughing.

"So that's it?" roared the officer. "You did not know I meant you, you impertinent swine! And why have you not saluted, you dog of a Dutchman?"

The insult brought an expression of icy coldness on Jan's face. Jürgen stood biting his lips. All at once he felt his hand clasped warmer by his father's. Jürgen knew: it meant "Keep calm."

"I did not salute the Herr Ober-leutnant because I did not see him," said Jan.

"So, so. . ." The officer brought a large white handkerchief and blew his nose loudly as he searched for an answer. "Away with you!" he roared all at once. "Get away and be quick about it!"

"It has been a great pleasure," said Meister Jan taking off his hat courteously and smiling. "I'll take my leave now with your permission," he added with a bow. "Good-bye, Herr Ober-leutnant!"

Young Jürgen took off his cap exactly like his father and repeated after him: "Good-bye, Herr Ober-leutnant!" He had to bite his lips to keep back a spasm of laughter.

Walking erectly and proudly, their heads raised high, the two Hollanders crossed the square.

Soon they turned into the narrow street where Klaus, the locksmith's friend, lived. The Germans had "examined" him about the fire at the railway round-house a week ago. They could get nothing out of him and tortured him till he was all but dead. Jan found the street full of excitement. People were running to their houses panic-striken, and doors and windows were being hastily barred.

"What is the matter?"

"German lorries! They are coming again to requisition supplies."

"I should think they don't want any more supplies," said the locksmith as he caught sight of the cars. "They are packed to the top. Seems, they have requisitioned somewhere else!"

The first car rolled past him, and at the wheel Jan recognized the chauffeur who had been to his workshop an hour or so ago. Time had not sobered him, nor had anyone repaired his steering gear, and the car rocked suspiciously. Meister Jan took off his hat and grected his acquaintance with marked politeness, but there was irony in his eyes.

The car crashed into the pavement and came to a standstill with a loud thud.

The driver scrambled out of his cabin, threw open the hood and scratched his head. "Damn it!" he grumbled, spat and cursed again. He glanced round with anxious eyes looking for assistance, and saw Meister Jan who, with Jürgen, formed part of a small group of interested onlookers.

"Hello, locksmith!" shouted the chauffeur. "Come and have a look at the old wheel-barrow. Give us a hand and we ought to bring her back to life."

"Awfully sorry, but I know nothing about motor-cars," smiled Meister Jan pleasantly. He seemed anything but brokenhearted over the accident.

"I've had enough of your nonsense now!" cried the nazi, his face

white with rage. "You know enough about cars. I'll get five days in the can if my car doesn't report at the station in half-an-hour. Besides, the whole damned business is your fault. Come now, let's fix her and forget about it."

"I should be only too glad to help you. . ."

A green sedan drew up beside the lorry and the ober-leutnant sprang out.

"What's up now? Why don't you go on?" he shouted at the driver.

"A slight accident, Herr Ober-leutnant."

"Slight, did you say? You have run into the pavement, you're drunk and you will ruin the car. I'll have you arrested for this."

"Not my fault," murmured the chauffeur. "The steering wheel is broken. It is a case of sabotage, Herr Ober-leutnant."

"Sabotage?" the ober-leutnant came closer to the driver and spoke in a subdued voice. "Sabotage? Whom do you mean?"

The driver looked round and saw the proud, mocking, smiling face of the locksmith. He flushed with anger and pointed to Meister Jan.

"That locksmith there, he had to repair the steering wheel."

"Oh, you!" exclaimed the officer, recognizing the man who had just caused him a few unpleasant moments. "We've got you redhanded this time, you insolent rascal!"

"I've not even touched the steering wheel. The chauffeur brought it to me to be mended."

"That will be seen at the examination. Arrest him!" The officer called to the guard.

Two armed guards stood on either side of Jan. On the other side of the street, on a large white wall for all to see was a sign: "Sabotage will be punished by death."

Locksmith Jan was taken to the ancient town hall whose dark walls had seen the many ordeals of Dutch people. People crowded together in the small paved square. They did not approach the building, for another machine-gun was being mounted at the Löwenbrunnen door and a squad of German soldiers were coming up at the double to reinforce the guard. The men kept close to the houses on the opposite side of the square. They stood pale and anxious with worry and stared with burning wrath at the windows behind which, they knew it only too well, Meister Jan was being put through a nazi "examination." Patrols of two nazi soldiers paced the square in front of the crowd.

One of the nazis stopped.

"Look, there is the kid who was with him!" he shouted as he snatched Jürgen's arm. "You're the locksmith's son, aren't you?"

Jürgen's face twitched with pain but only for a fraction of a second; he pulled himself together, held his head up and answered in a loud, crisp voice:

"Yes, I am the son of the Dutch locksmith Jan."

"So-o? Then come along to your daddy."

The soldier dragged the boy with him.

"You needn't drag me. I can walk without your help," said Jürgen in exactly the same superior tone which his father used habitually.

The first thing Jürgen saw when he was brought into the committee room of the old town hall were two officers sitting at a green-covered table. The ober-leutnant stood beside them. In front of the table was Meister Jan, flanked on either side by a nazi trooper. Jürgen could see only his back, but he knew that his father had been beaten by the bleeding cut across the nape of his neck. His coat was dirty and torn at the shoulder. Meister Jan had obviously been thrown on the floor and kicked. And yet there he stood erect and with his head held high.

The ober-leutnant was shouting at the top of his voice:

"Are you going to tell us where and when you damaged that car?"

"I can't tell you," answered Jan equably. "Indeed I can't tell you."

"I see!" and the ober-leutnant came closer; the other two officers leaned forward and watched with interest. "Perhaps you're bound by an oath?" asked the ober-leutnant in a whisper. "Is that so? You are afraid of the vengeance of your countrymen?"

And before Jan could give any answer the ober-leutnant turned to the two officers at the table.

"He won't tell us. That means that there is a secret organization and he belongs to it." Having said this, he turned to the locksmith: "Let me give you some sound advice: tell us everything. Just give us the names of your accomplices, and we will set you free. Come, don't stand there staring at me! When did you damage that car?"

"I can't tell you when and where," Jan spoke in a soft voice. "How can I give you details of something I have never done?"

Jürgen, who had meanwhile been brought up to the table, could detect a sparkle of mockery in his father's eyes.

"You insolent dog!" bellowed the ober-leutnant and struck Jan across the face with his riding whip. "You want to make a fool of me, do you? I'll teach you to crack your silly jokes!" He nodded at the two soldiers guarding Jan. "Wrench his arms back!"

Meister Jan's arms were wrenched behind his back and pulled up till his bones were heard to crack at the joints.

Jürgen grew pale and reeled back. One of the soldiers caught him just before his frail body fell to the floor. This attracted the ober-leutnant's attention:

"Oh, there is that urchin! Come here, will you? Take a good look at your father, a very good look, so that you may learn what it means to go against the German army. A little education will do you good!"

Only now was the old man aware that his son was in the room.

They looked at each other in a silence that was more expressive than words could ever be. "Keep yourself in hand," Jan's glance said to the boy, "let them see no weakness."

The ober-leutnant walked up to Jürgen:

"Your father shall be free, but only if you tell us when and where he broke the car and how he did it."

Jürgen looked straight into the officer's eyes.

"Father did not break that car."

"So you want your father to be tortured, you heartless puppy! Go on, pull his arms back!"

The soldiers again jerked his arms, but Jan was silent, and Jürgen knew that he approved of his answer to the German.

"What has your father done to the car?"

"Nothing," answered the boy's pale lips.

"I'll bring you round. See if I don't," said the ober-leutnant whisking his riding whip and nodding at the soldiers.

The locksmith's joints cracked. Meister Jan dropped on his knees and bit his lips to smother a cry of pain. Jürgen shuddered and could hardly keep on his feet. He wanted to run to his father, to throw himself at his torturers. His eyes filled with tears. Meister Jan turned his drooping head to his son and cried panting and hoarsely:

"A good joke, my Jürgen, isn't it?! A joke!"

The boy pressed his lips together and, mustering all his will-power, fought down his terror and called aloud:

"A joke, father, a joke!" And as he saw the strained and tortured lips of his father form to a stubborn smile, his own pale lips answered with a smile, too.

The ober-leutnant wiped his forehead:

"Obstinate, insolent rascals! If you won't speak now I'll just finish you off!"

Meister Jan lifted his head again: "I'd chat with you with pleasure,

Herr Ober-leutnant," he said softly, "but my position is somewhat too uncomfortable for a heart-to-heart talk."

"Let go of his arms," commanded the officer.

The two soldiers released the locksmith's and helped him to his feet. Jan straightened himself, stretched out his arms as if to make sure that they were still intact, and rubbed the spots that hurt most. All this he executed very calmly and slowly.

"Well, how long do you want us to wait?" stormed the ober-leutnant losing patience. "Did you come here to massage your body?"

"Just a minute, Herr Ober-leutnant," and Jan nodded kindly and placidly, though the officer was by this time almost jumping about in fury. "Give me another minute now, and I will talk better later," and he continued calmly to massage his arms.

The officer threw himself upon him and shook him:

"I'll give you two seconds more. What do you want to tell us?"

Meister Jan smiled and answered:

"That I am not a fool, Herr Ober-leutnant."

This unexpected reply astounded the nazi to such an extent that he released the locksmith.

"What do you mean?"

"Simply that I would never risk my life for an old worn-out truck. Really, it wouldn't be worth my while, Herr Ober-leutnant. Indeed it wouldn't."

"So that's it!" and the officer scuttled back to the table and pointed his riding whip in triumph at the locksmith. "You say it isn't worth your while to risk your life for an old worn-out lorry. But it would be worth while to risk it for something valuable. Is that what you mean? Well? The sabotage would be worth while if it wrecked a whole transport. That is what you want to say? You would risk your life for that, what? Speak up, you old rascal!"

"They are your words, Herr Ober-leutnant, I said nothing of the kind."

"You did. You would risk your life to destroy a military transport. Now then, that is true, isn't it? You dog of a Dutchman!"

With his whip he slashed the locksmith across the face.

Jan clenched his fists. His eyes glittered with fury, but not a sound came from his closed lips.

The officer turned to the two sitting at the green-covered table.

"He is not saying anything. He does not deny it. That means that he confesses."

And Meister Jan nodded to his son smiling with dogged contempt:

"A good joke, my boy!"

Jürgen answered in a polite voice:

"A good joke, father!"

Meister Jan was led away. Jürgen ran after him. The silent crowd that had waited outside tense and holding its breath, followed at some distance but only to be driven back at the next street corner.

"Back! Break up!" shouted the nazi troopers.

"We shall remember you, Jan!" came a clear voice from the crowd.

It was dark in Meister Jan's workshop, but Jürgen stood at the bench practising the trick his father had taught him in the morning: the trick of unscrewing locks without a sound.

The door opened, the boy looked up and saw Frau Wilma. His big eyes burned feverishly in his deathly pale sallow face. Frau Wilma sobbed and clasped him in her arms.

"My poor unhappy child!"

"Sit down, please, Aunt Wilma," said the boy, still holding the tools. He didn't even turn his head to the sobbing woman. With never a tear in his eyes, he kept to his work. "I am busy," he said. "You must not cry, Aunt Wilma. Don't you remember, you promised my father not to cry."

But the old woman paid no attention:

"Oh, your poor father! You are left quite alone now, and you are still just a child!"

"Yet the Germans doubled their guard," answered Jürgen with his eyes on his work. "We are growing quickly."

Frau Wilma did not understand the connection, but she was in no mood to ask questions.

"You will come and live with me now, Jürgen. Pack your things," and then she hugged him again and cried: "I'll take your mother's place, dear child. I'll be your mother now."

"Don't cry, Aunt Wilma. The Germans mustn't see any Dutch tears. I'll come later in the evening, but I have some work to do first, Aunt Wilma."

This sounded so grave and so unlike a fourteen-year-old child that the old woman got up and walked to the door.

"I'll be waiting for you, my dear," she said as she reached the door.

Jürgen saw her to the door and whispered into her ear:

"Cheer up, Aunt Wilma! There are some who laugh even at the gallows." The boy's face was so pale that it seemed to stand out in the darkness.

Night was descending on the Dutch lowlands. The grey outlines of the wind-mills slowly faded into the darkness. Pale moonlight gleamed wanly on the still waters of the canals. Sailing boats were asleep near the shores. The whole country was quiet, but it was the sinister silence of a nightmare.

A German patrol paced sleepily along the railway line. Jürgen could see the men as he lay hidden in the tall heather. And then he saw the troop train slowly forging its way forward. There was but very little time left, just enough for the patrol to reach the bridge, where it had to turn and retrace the same path.

Jürgen crawled noiselessly through the high grass. One more quick glance to make sure all was clear, and he crept up to the tracks. But all this took time, and he had less than ten minutes left!

But it was not for nothing that Meister Jan had shown his son how to undo bolts quickly, and Jürgen had practised thoroughly. In less than ten minutes the rails were unscrewed in three places, and not the slightest sound had been heard.

The patrol reached the bridge and turned back. One of the soldiers said:

"Look, that grass over there seems to be moving. Someone is crawling through it."

"Doesn't look like it. If it's a human being, it must be a child. Most likely it is nothing but a rabbit."

"Well, a rabbit may come in handy, too," said the first, and taking aim fired his gun.

But he was to have no rabbit that night. His shot was followed by a terrific din. The troop train had missed the rails and was rolling down the embankment, engine and all.

From out the blazing, smoking wreckage, amid the hissing of steam, came the moans and cries of wounded men.

But not a sound came from the wounded child in the high grass.

It was late, and Frau Wilma walked uneasily up and down her little room stopping at the door to listen and rushing to the window every time she heard or thought she heard footsteps.

At long last there was a light knock. Frau Wilma lost no time in opening the door. Something fell into her arms.

"Jürgen!"

"Not so loud, Aunt Wilma! And first of all, lock the door."

Aunt Wilma shut the door, jerked the bolts to and carried the boy to the bed.

"Jürgen, my dear child!" she whispered. "You are bleeding!"

Jürgen looked up at her, there was a smile on his pale lips.

"Don't worry, no one saw me. Everything is just as it should be. It's a good joke, Aunt Wilma! As we grow, their panic increases, and there is no way out for them..."

On the River Don

A heavy blow shook the tank and a broad shaft of flame appeared as if suspended over the observation-slit. The shell had hit the heavy KV tank slap in its lower part. Sharonov, the mechanic, let go the steering wheel: his helmet with the earphones had caught fire. Sharonov snatched off the helmet and put out the fire. His eyes smarted as if a whip had given him a stinging cut across the bridge of the nose. But the mighty tank was alive, its steel body was throbbing rhythmically, the motor was doing its work. Sharonov fingered his closed eyelids, but felt no tickling of the eyelashes, they were gone. He tried his eyebrows, and found none, there was nothing but scorched skin. The first stab of pain had passed. and with an effort he forced his leaden eyelids open.

It was imperative to go on. The tank was almost in the very centre of the antitank area. Sharonov turned to the observation-slit, but where only a moment before there were flashes of explosions and the glittering of corn in the sun, now only a black abyss seemed to yawn. A wave of anguish flooded Sharonov's heart, the foreboding of a disaster, irreparable though not yet fully grasped. He tried and tried to force his eyes open wider, beads of perspiration standing out on his forehead. A gentle puff of air made its way through the observation-slit and cooled the tankman's burning temples; but the blackness that had engulfed him was still there, and Sharonov without really believing his own words, cried out to his comrades behind him:

"Boys, I think I've gone blind!"

Before an answer came, a startling thought flashed through his mind:

"What the hell's all this? The tank mustn't stand rooted to the spot, it mustn't!"

From somewhere quite close to him

Tanks in a hilly district, Southern front

I. I. Dubov, twice decorated. The tank under his command has accounted for eleven German tanks on battle-fields near Tsymlyanskaya

there came the roar of a bursting shell and the muffled drumming of its splinters on the armour of the tank. Sharonov pressed the lever, and the vehicle readily responded. A blind mechanic was driving a tank.

. . . On the eve of the attack, just before nightfall, the general had visited the tank unit. The crews formed up before their respective machines. The heavy KV's were half-screened by the man-high corn, and covered on top with leafy branches. The field was in flower, and the light breeze swayed the corn spikes set with pale yellow earrings. Beside Sharonov stood the tank commander Lieutenant Napolsky, gunner Senior Sergeant Zabolotnykh, junior mechanic Podossinnikov and wireless-operator Menshikov.

The general went from tank to tank. The men fell in at the command of "attention," but from the machines where the general lingered came exclamations and hearty laughter. That parade before the battle was rather like a meeting with an old friend. For a long time the general had had all kinds of arms under his command, yet he was still crazy about tanks.

In this unit there were a good lot of his former fellow-soldiers, and he knew them like the palm of his hand.

The general stopped before Sharonov. On his breast, beside the star of Hero of the Soviet Union and the two Orders of Lenin, the mechanic noticed the badge "For Excellence in Tank Driving."

"Well, what kind of a fight are you going to put up tomorrow, Sharonov?" asked the general, holding out his hand.

"I'll fight as long as I've got eyes to see," replied the mechanic and flushed with embarrassment, for the moment the answer was out of his mouth it seemed far too pompous.

The general nodded approvingly and strode on.

. . . And now when the blind mechanic started his tank, there came back to him, clear and vivid, those funny little earrings adorning the corn spikes, and the badge on the general's breast, and all that had happened an hour ago, at the outset of the engagement.

Through the ravines a group of KV tanks had advanced undetected close up to the enemy's positions. There remained only a field to cross, a field exactly like the one where our tanks had been hidden the day before; except, perhaps, that in this field it was the German tommy-gunners and grenade-throwers who were now taking cover; but for the KV's this was child's play, nothing more. The tanks rushed into the corn, and in no time it became only too clear that they had run blindly into an antitank concentration. The field was alive with guns concealed in the corn. There had been none there during the first half of the night when our scouts had combed the place,

but before daybreak the Germans had contrived to cram it with antitank weapons. It came out afterwards that there had been about one hundred guns in an area of five by two kilometres.

The very first shells, bursting on lateral armour-plates of the leading tanks, showed Sharonov what the enemy was up to: the German artillerymen were deliberately letting our tanks pass and then opening fire either on the side wall of the machine or on its rear.

Sharonov all but passed the nearest gun as though taking no notice of it; then suddenly swerved sharply at full speed, and the tank was facing the gun. A dash forward, and a wheel of the gun crunched. In this way Lieutenant Napolsky's machine crushed four antitank guns and three trench-mortars. . .

And then, bang! came that idiotic shell hitting the lower part of the turret. And this sudden blindness. For a few seconds more Sharonov ran the machine in utter darkness, undecided what to do next. Lieutenant Napolsky bent over to him and shouted:

"Gone blind, old chap? Let Podossinnikov take your place, quick! We'll bandage your eyes presently."

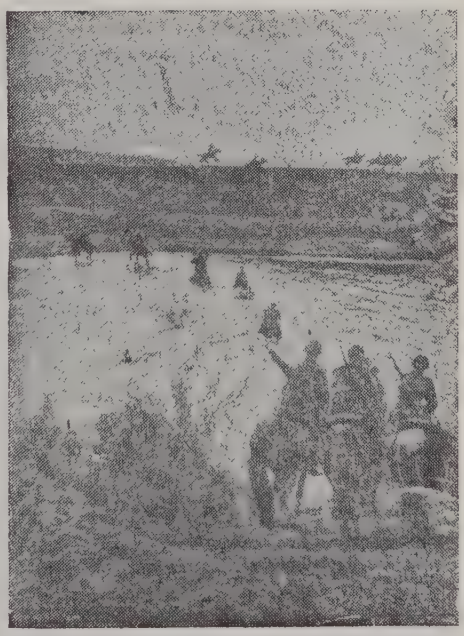
But Sharonov's mind was made up the moment he heard the lieutenant's voice.

"Let me go on driving, Comrade Commander, do let me!" he implored. "There's nobody who knows her like I do. I'm strong enough all right. I'll drive. And you direct me, Comrade Commander, you just direct me."

Sharonov shouted this breathlessly, repeating the same words over and over again as though afraid they wouldn't convince the lieutenant.

But hardly had he stopped speaking when he felt a slight push on his right shoulder. Sharonov understood and felt a rush of relief; with a deft movement he smoothly turned the machine to the right. The mechanic's trained intuition told him there was a metal body under the caterpillar, a gun, no doubt; though blind, he guessed with his mind's eye where he was; then, giving the tank a turn, he took the gun nicely with his caterpillars over the very shield, and went ahead, crushing the crew into the bargain. Now there is a gentle pressure on his left shoulder, and the tank turns to the left; just a pat on the back, and the KV rushes forward; a touch on the head means "stop," and the machine comes to a standstill.

Responsive to the touch of the lieutenant's hand, the blind man hurled the machine this way and that, crushing under it guns and trench-mortars, and driving German artillerymen, like pegs, into the soil. He actually saw the battle-field through his commander's eyes. And it was almost uncanny, the way his ear was becoming sharper and sharper: it seemed to him that through the roar and din of the KV he could hear not merely the confused noise of the fight but could catch each separate sound. So when Napolsky's hand sent him in the proper direction, Sharonov not only with his ears but with all his taut nerves, with his



Don-Cossack cavalrymen forcing a river west of the Don

whole being singled out in the crash the clang of colliding steel masses and knew what was to be his next move. He had the sensation that he was striding ahead of his own tank and, himself unseen, showing the steel monster its way across the field. The darkness around was nothing to him now. He no longer strained his burned eyelids to see things. In this tense concentration all his senses blended into one. He was not blind any more.

For all Sharonov knew, scarcely a few minutes had elapsed since that impenetrable sheet of darkness had parted him from the world of sight; as a matter of fact, the KV with its blind mechanic had been operating on the battle-field for over an hour; it had crushed three more trench-mortars and four guns, had long since crossed the corn field, rammed through one of the enemy's heavy tanks and brought down two medium tanks with the fire from its turret-gun. At last, when artilleryman Zabolotnykh was wounded, and they had run out of ammunition, Sharonov by the lieutenant's order turned the machine away from the battle-field fight.

Sharonov crawled out of the tank. He stood staggering in the middle of a glade. To steady himself he took hold of Podossinnikov's shoulder. The sun was a dazzling golden ball in the clear crystal cup of the sky. Sharonov threw back his head: above was blackness. Night enfolded him. And then it was that he recalled his reply to the general: "I'll fight as long as I've got eyes to see." Well, he had fought on even after he had lost them.

A. KRIVITSKY,

A. POLYAKOV

Told by a Circassian

He was a tall Circassian, handsome with that peculiar beauty with which nature has so generously endowed the people of the Caucasus. His features seemed hewn out of rock and expressed the grim independence so characteristic of mountain dwellers. Looking at him it was hard to believe that only a few hours before he had been on the brink of death and that only an accident had saved his life.

Liaison plane U-2, returning to its aerodrome, flew over an aul (Asian village) occupied by the Germans. As usual, it flew low, almost touching the trees. Below the pilot lay the landscape of war. The cut-throats had penetrated into the mountains only three days before, but their way along the gorge was a trail of ashes, a line of charred ruins.

The village, one of the trading centres of Circassia, stood at the crossing of three mountain roads. Always a noisy, bustling spot, it was especially so in autumn when caravans, laden with bales of wool, dried apricots and rugs, wended their way from Balkaria, Kabarda and Chechnya. Shaggy buffalos dragged creaking "arbas" filled with huge vats of ewes-milk cheese and barrels of wild mountain honey; donkeys jogged along bearing swaying baskets of grapes, bags of corn; puffing and snorting, lorries climbed the hills with loads of astrakhan skins, fleecy Caucasian fur caps. Silversmiths from distant Kubachi displayed in the bazaar daggers with cunningly-wrought hilts, silver-plated gazyri[1] and horse bridles sewn with gold thread.

But now down below lay heaps of smocking bricks, all that was left of the village. Over the ruins the mosque reared a charred tower whose blackened half-moon faintly glittered in the sun's rays. In the square opposite the mosque stood a tank with a black cross like a spider upreared.

Not a living soul was about. Having seen much of war, the airman guessed what had happened to the villagers.

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[1] Appurtenances on the national costume of the mountaineers, originally serving as cartridge-holders.

His blood boiled as he thought of them having been either shot or burnt alive in their own homes, as had happened elsewhere.

After leaving the village behind, the airman noticed a group of people walking in single file on a path along the gorge. They were dressed in grey tunics, the hated tunics of the German soldiers. Only one person, he who walked ahead of all the others, wore the high shaggy fur cap and Circassian national coat. The airman observed that he strode along with the firm straight tread of one confident of his strength, even though his hands were tied behind him and the rope's end was trailing in the dust.

As the aeroplane roared above them, the troop scattered and pressed against the crags. Only the Circassian continued to march ahead with his firm step. Suddenly a bold thought flashed through the airman's mind: what if he tried to rescue the Circassian? But what could one do with a small training plane when landing on the rocks was impossible, and no one could be taken on board? He decided to use his machine-gun to separate the Germans from their prisoner.

He began to fly back and forth over the gorge, peppering the narrow path with machine-gun bullets. The Germans crept into the fissures of the rocks, not daring to poke their noses out; but the Circassian went on ahead with the same unhurried step. He walked further and further. The airman continued to fire and did not cease even when the Circassian had disappeared round a bend in the path. The Germans sat in their fissures, and the Circassian, having turned the corner and finding that nobody was following him, began to run.

It was hard to run, for his hands were tied behind his back and he might easily trip and fall over the precipice. Turning his back against a sharp rock, he managed to saw through the rope. Now his hands were free. Then he lowered himself over the cliff and, clutching at stones and roots of trees, began to slide down. From childhood he had been accustomed to climb up and down the steep rocks, driving sheep which pastured high in the mountains.

Crossing the gorge and hiding among the rocks, he followed a direction which he thought would lead him to his own people. Over him, in both directions, planes with red stars were flying. Somewhere not far away they suddenly dived and disappeared. The Circassian knew that here there was a deep valley where the shepherds used to pasture their flocks.

At a turn of the path there appeared before his eyes a mountain aerodrome, an aerodrome surrounded on all sides by jagged peaks. Formerly it had been a rich mountain pasture, but now the tall thick grass had been mown.

The daylight was fading and the sun coloured the snowy peaks a deep purple. Unceasingly the roar of engines could be heard as the aeroplanes, bombers and fighters, took off and landed in never-ending succession. A group of airmen resting after a raid sat under an aeroplane wing. Amongst them was Fedya Prihodko, the man who had saved the Circassian's life.

The Circassian sat beside him, his legs crossed in Turkish fashion. In complete silence the airmen listened to his fearful tale. His name was Murid Kardangushev, and he acted as scout in a mountain cavalry regiment which had fought a rear-guard action through the Kuban and Circassia down to the Terek. The enemy had paid dearly for every inch of ground. By night-raids, forays into the staff headquarters and long-distance raids into the rear the cavalrymen harried the Germans. The regiment had hacked 6,000 Germans to death, and daily added to the number. Each cavalryman carried a notebook in which strokes indicated the number of Germans killed, and Murid's notebook contained thirty-two such strokes.

With agony in their hearts the mountaineers passed Cherkessk, their capital, and left behind their birthplaces

where the sight of every rock and stream now caused bitter anguish. Murid's aul lay somewhat to the side of the way along which the regiment was retreating, and so he had no chance to see his own hut. However, he soon learned that the Germans had occupied his mountain village.

The regiment now took a stand, and the commanding officer sent Murid on a scouting expedition to learn the enemy's strength. Murid was to go straight in the direction leading to his native village. Violent feelings overwhelmed him as he neared the place. How were his old father, mother and Bilya, his wife? Was five-year-old Hachim, his only son and the last to carry on the family name, yet alive?

Before reaching the village Murid left his horse on a ledge in the gorge and cautiously crept forward. He decided to avoid a clash with the sentries and make his way to the village itself. It was already midnight when Murid slipped past them and went towards his own hut.

Here was the corner, there the familiar poplar with its rustling, gleaming white leaves. But his home was gone. All he saw before him was a heap of stones and reeking ashes. At the end of the village Murid found the only hut which had escaped destruction. It belonged to Mussa, a ninety-seven-year-old villager, who recognized Murid when he entered.

"What are you doing here? Go away, at once, my son, or you will come to grief! I'm the only one left in the village, all the others are no more!"

"What?!" Murid recoiled, aghast.

"Didn't you know, my son?" asked the old man. "A great disaster has come upon our village. When the Germans came, they burnt everything and killed everyone: women, children and old people. Only old Mussa remains, and tomorrow they're coming for him!"

And then the old man began to tell him the horror of it all.

The day the Germans came into the village, they drove all the inhabitants into the mosque, propped logs up against the outside door and set fire to the building. The mullah they locked inside the minaret. When the flames began to envelop him, the old man cried out: "Be silent, ye faithful! May your silence confound the enemy!" So the people in the burning mosque met their death in silence. Women smothered their children so that their cries would not gladden the hearts of the Germans. In this fire Murid's father and mother perished.

"What about my wife and child?" asked Murid in a hollow voice.

"They also perished," answered the old man sorrowfully. "Only they did not die along with the others. . ." And the old man told Murid how his wife and little son had perished.

When all the village inhabitants had been driven into the mosque by the soldiers' rifle butts, an officer pointed to Murid's wife who held her son in her arms; the soldiers pulled her out of the crowd. Evidently her proud mountain beauty had caught the officer's eye. He seized her arm and dragged her after him.

It was not hard to guess his intentions, and they were not lost upon the mountain woman. As they were passing a narrow path over a precipice, she suddenly snatched her hand away from the officer's arm, and with her son in her arms leaped over the cliff into the abyss below.

"You know the law of the mountains, Murid," said the old man solemnly. "Go and carry it out, Circassian! We have a blood-feud with the Germans now, and we'll continue to kill them as long as one person of our tribe remains alive!"

And Murid began to take vengeance on his enemies. His regimental commander very often sent him on scouting expeditions. He wandered around the villages. Not a day passed but Murid's notebook showed one or two more strokes. A German soldier would go to the well for water and never return; later he would be found there strangled. While making their morning rounds in a ruined mosque a German patrol would collide with

the body of a soldier suspended by the neck to the crossbeams. A baby tank moving along a narrow mountain road was suddenly blocked by fallen rocks. Before the tank-drivers could drag the rocks aside, three quick rifle volleys had cut short their lives. From a mountain summit an avalanche of stones suddenly hurtled down upon a German battalion and buried all the soldiers beneath it. One morning the stream which served the soldiers with drinking water and water for the tanks, turned out to be dried up. Who could guess that high up in the mountains a human hand had changed the course of the stream?

But the most fearful punishment was suffered by that fat German officer of whom Mussa had told Murid. The mountaineer dogged his footsteps for a long time, but the officer was as wary as a fox. He never went out alone and never left the village. However, one day, under the very noses of the soldiers, a lariat was thrown down from an overhanging rock and the officer was neatly lassoed and hauled up above. With horror the petrified soldiers watched their chief swaying from side to side above them. The other end of the rope had been tied to an old cedar which grew on the crags. Thus the officer met his end.

The Germans, naturally, organized a man-hunt for Murid, placed sentries on all the paths, behind all the ledges, and set ambushes. But the Circassian was as elusive as a real abrek. The German officers continued to find their sentries with their throats cut. At an ambush an avalanche of stones again dropped on them, and the sentries were hurled into the chasm below. With a skilfully thrown dagger Murid pinned the new German commanding officer to a tree.

The enemy would never have captured Murid had it not been for a traitor, Malil Maksudov, a rat who lived in the neighbouring village. He had sold himself to the Germans. This traitor knew all the ins and outs of the mountain paths and managed to discover Murid's hiding place. He led the Germans there, and Murid was seized as he lay asleep. Tied hand and foot, he was thrown into a pit, and for the night they put Malil in the pit beside him. The traitor attempted to extract from Murid information as to where his regiment was. He urged him to go over to the Germans, promising him freedom and money. . .

"My hands were tired," said Murid with hatred, "but all the same, when the Germans looked into the pit in the morning, they found the traitor dead. . ."

Stretching out his hand, the Circassian plucked a poppy growing near him. For a long time he gazed at it through narrowed lids and ended:

"I waited until he had fallen asleep, and then I bit through his throat."

All were silent. The mountain peaks, muffled in their dark cloudy cloaks, were also silent. From the gorge came a blast of wind and the swift roar of a mountain torrent.

A. KALININ

North Caucasus.

Military Surgeon Olga Rybina

The steamer on which Olga Rybina, military surgeon of the 3rd rank, has been sailing for just about four months, was used in peace-time for pleasure cruises. Soft sofas, large port-holes, brightly painted panels, all that hacks back to the boat's former, carefree days.

Now the sofas are somewhat threadbare, plywood has often taken the place of broken panes of glass, white paint has been replaced by a bluish-grey imitation of the waters of Lake Ladoga. The little steamer that used to take out of town the lads and girls of Leningrad who wanted to spend Sunday on the water, closer to nature, is now been

Wounded men being carried onto a Red Cross boat

turned into a floating infirmary.

A difficult and at first sight thankless part has fallen to the lot of Olga Rybina. After working in one of the Leningrad hospitals, where she had risen during the war to be chief of her section, she had to undertake the evacuation of the wounded from the front, across Lake Ladoga. Many wounded were put on stretchers by Rybina herself and transported under her care to the ship, and finally carried up the coast and sent to the rear. This all would seem to be simple enough. Yet what a great strain it was on the energy and efficiency of this twenty-four-year-old woman to make the exhausted and sometimes captious and fretful sufferers feel as comfortable as possible!

Trip follows trip. How often one has to deprive oneself of sleep in order to wash and tidy up between the arrivals of two new batches of wounded!

During the first few days, one trip took Olga Rybina about four hours, but later on the time was reduced to one hour and a half.

One day a storm broke over the lake. The steamer could not take shelter. She was obliged to remain for a long time in the open roadstead, though not equipped for such emergencies. The wounded got very hungry. Rybina got some food and arranged for tea and bread and butter to be given to the patients. And now, ever since that day, the feeding of the wounded during the trip across the lake has become a custom. To organize all this on a tiny ship was no easy matter, still Rybina's persistence and initiative solved the problem.

An event took place not unusual in wartime. The ship came in late, at about one a.m. The wounded were taken off, and then suddenly German bombers appeared in the sky. Quite close to the ship came the shriek of falling bombs, explosions...

Rybina was at her action post on the upper deck. The nurses were spreading out their first-aid equipment. A piece of shrapnel had torn away two fingers from the ship's singnalman's hand. In spite of the bombardment, Rybina dressed the wound. Moans were to be heard from the pilot's cabin. Rybina rushed there. Semyonov, the lieutenant-captain, lay bleeding on the floor, blocking the entrance with his body. It was impossible to get into the ca-

bin. Rybina ran up on deck and got to the wounded man through the port-hole. To stop the bleeding was no easy matter: the pilot's thigh bone was broken. Rybina injected morphine to alleviate the pain and antitetanus serum, just in case. Nurse Natarkhina, her assistant, managed to bandage the less seriously wounded soldiers. Meanwhile the anti-aircraft gunners were defending the ship. And they did not fail.

Rybina grew accustomed to the ship, and she now likes this naval service. She is beloved by the men and officers of the Red Fleet for her energy, her courage and her drive.

"A woman sailor," she is called, "a real woman sailor." And there can be no higher praise.

A. TARASSENKOV

The Ladoga Fleet.

Moscow Students Lend a Hand

(Personal impressions)

Towards the end of August the leading workers of classes for adults (Moscow City Board of Education) were called in to a meeting by their chief. In a few words we were informed that the pupils of secondary schools, as well as the students of colleges, were to be mobilized for farm work in the Moscow region till October 1st.

We were instructed as to the work and the food rations of the new recruits: increased bread allowance, lightened norms of work for adolescents, no delicate or sick people to be enrolled.

Our school trains specialists in socialist planning and accounting. Our students are reputed to be serious people who know what they are about. The Mozhaisk district where we are going is one of the most difficult to live and work in: for three months it bore the yoke of German occupation. We are being sent to the sovkhoz (State farm) "Dairy Giant," where until last winter they used to keep 3,500 cows, while now there are only thirty left on the eight farmsteads of the sovkhoz. Most of the herds were evacuated quite far to the east, and though they will be returned now, it will take a considerable time, if only for the simple reason that cows were never meant to be champion walkers.

I send a man ahead to reconnoitre and find out the inevitable hitches, and, meanwhile, I start preparing the pupils. There are ten forms all told, and I have a heart-to-heart talk with each. All goes swimmingly, the young people's spirits are high, and the students one after another express their eagerness to go in for field-work; in one of the classes my information is met with a burst of applause. Only our young men look a bit rattled when informed that they are not to join us: there are very few young men among our pupils, those there are having been either invalided out of the army or exempted from military service on account of ill health. Some of them start arguing and trying to convince me that farm work would not do them any harm, but I am inexorable: instructions require separate brigades of men and women, and we have not got enough men to organize a men's brigade.

I next explain the rules permitting exemption from the mobilization, but this part of my information gets but scant attention; everybody is too elated for that, and I am showered with questions concerning the particulars of the approaching journey. To little Rosa S. I try to convey as gently as I can that there is no need for her to

produce a medical certificate: the committee will simply mention in its proceedings that she is exempted (this tiny girl's right arm was amputated up to the very shoulder). But Rosa is very pertinacious in asserting that the task will be what she can well cope with, as she has always lived in the country, and is at home with all kinds of farm work; finally, she shows me her notebook with all my lectures neatly written down: she wants me to see how well she can write with her left hand.

Our oldest student, Comrade K., who is a woman of fifty-three, is also eager to go with us.

By now everybody has heard of the enrolment. The house is ringing with young voices, asking for lessons to be stopped immediately, so that people may go home and make ready for the departure, which is to be in two days' time. The teachers, most of them rather glum, behold their deserted class rooms with melancholy looks. One of them, however, a sixty-five-year-old man, bravely declares his intention of joining us, and looks quite chagrined when informed that he must be left behind, as he has been appointed to teach a group of graduates, whom he has to prepare for the examinations as quickly as possible: the country's industries need planners and accountants.

On the next day the committee discusses the applications for exemption. But we are by no means beset with importunate requests; the boot is definitely on the other leg, I have a lot of trouble with people who desire to go and whom we can't take along: the sixteen-year-old boy R., suffering from heart disease, has persuaded his mother to let him go; Kolya Z. is but fifteen, yet he has already received his baptism of fire: last winter he lay for four hours under the debris of a house smashed by a demolition bomb; he looks all cut and chopped about by splinters, yet the idea of staying behind puts his back up. The worthy citizen K. comes again and tries to convince me that she knows how to sheaf corn and wheat. There being no alternative, I make no bones about it and refuse all the three.

At last all the preliminaries are over, passes signed, places reserved on the train for those who are to go, and directions left with those who are to stay behind.

At six a.m. the first batch assemble on the school premises. There is a brief roll-call, and we start for the underground station. Everyone is carrying her own hold-all and suitcase. The ineradicable citizen K. has turned up again, nothing daunted, baggage and all; but now I'm really vexed and order her to go home without more ado.

After a short run by the underground we emerge in front of the Byelorussian railway station and draw up in a double file. The station master shows us into our carriage. It is Sunday, and the morning train is placed at the disposal of organizations going to the country for harvest work or to their vegetable gardens near Moscow.

Once more I check the number of girls by the list, and discover that there is one too many: this is little Rosa S., who, as it comes out, has been painstakingly hiding from me all the morning. I make an attempt at persuading her to return to town as there is no way for her to take part in our main task, the harvesting of wheat; but her blue eyes fill to overflowing with tears, and her girl friends plead for her so fervently that there's nothing left for me but to relent and capitulate, my hope being that the poor little thing may be given some job in the sovkhoz office.

We have to go by train only 110 kilometres, but this is a line in the frontal area, and the train moves slowly.

Half way down we are told that we're entering the zone which was occupied by the Germans. All the

Students helping with the harvesting. A still from a news-reel

passengers cluster to the windows. Well, here they are, the traces of the vandals' sojourn, these desolate roofless houses with shattered walls and pitlike windows gaping black, these chimney pots sticking up unexpectedly from amid bushes of burdock; the very trees are crippled, some charred, others cleft as if struck by lightning or cut slantwise by shells. Here and there the victims of last winter's bitter frost are to be seen: fruit-trees killed by the cold; on a hill, a sorry sight against the background of surrounding verdure, a whole apple-orchard stands like a grey ghost in its transparent shroud of dead twigs.

Yonder is a shattered factory; and that? That is the ruins of Tuchkovo, a big railway station, where not a single house has remained intact. Further on we pass two kilometres of debris where a big village used to be; the ruins are already almost hidden by a rich overgrowth of wild bushy weeds; only some chimney-pots have survived, and now and again, on the outskirts of the village, a barn or a bath-house; beside these you may notice camp-fires, household goods and chattels: people are living there. I look more attentively and see that there are dug-outs and little wattle huts scattered all around; the whole area is seething with life. Everybody is working, children and old people included. Where destruction and death have left their stamp on everything, new life is springing up: here a brickyard restored and working to its full capacity, there the railway workers' new barracks, the fresh-sawn wood of their walls golden-hued in the sun, and last but not least, wherever you turn your eye, tilled fields and luxuriant crops. Now I understand why the burnt out villages have not yet been rebuilt, though there's wood enough and to spare. Labour is scarce, and all hands are busy in the fields, the more so as there are scarcely any horses left. So people do their utmost in taking care of their mother-earth. This cool and showery summer everything grows like Jack's beanstalk, the crops are a marvel to see, and will fully justify people's

hopes and repay their heroic labours, patience and grit.

When, on arriving in Mozhaisk, our merry crowd pours out into the square in front of the station, it is something of a disappointment to see that there are no lorries awaiting us, as the management of the sovkhoz has promised; instead, there are a couple of two-horse waggons, that can accommodate only our luggage: the lorries are wanted in the fields, where work does not stop even on Sundays. The eight farmsteads of the sovkhoz are scattered over an area of some scores of kilometres, and three trucks certainly provide inadequate transport for a sovkhoz which used to have a good garageful of vehicles, and which in these hard times, far from reducing the volume of work, has even extended its tillage. There are over twenty kilometres to go, but my girls put the luggage on the carts like lambs, without any fuss, and are ready to hoof it.

So we step out merrily in the direction of the town, and soon cross a damp dell transformed into a vegetable garden. Conspicuous on a knoll, the huge carcass of the former hospital stands surrounded with its retinue of charred corpses of trees, which once formed a lovely park. Hospitals and schools are the very first thing the Germans destroy in their savage hatred of everything connected with the word "culture." As a matter of fact, there are very few stone or brick houses left here. In the centre, and particularly on the outskirts of the town and along the bank of the Moskva River, all the big buildings turned by the Hitlerites into forts and blindages are now just so many dismal wrecks. The spacious town with its graceful Gothic cathedral has become a mere village of wooden structures. In the middle of it the ancient church lies in ruins. Its massive walls are being gradually dismantled and the bricks carried off.

On the lovely slope leading to the bridge over the Moskva River, we are stopped by a patrol and our papers looked through. On reading our voucher, the Red Army men become quite affable and wish the girls good luck.

We enter the fields, and the girls can't resist the temptation to pick flowers; before long everyone has posies of blue-bells, and all their heads are adorned with chaplets of corn-flowers and daisies. But soon we again come across grim reminders of the war: by the roadside, there are frequent little enclosures, each railing in a mound and a simple tombstone with a red star on it: these are the graves of our brave Red Army men killed on these distant approaches to Moscow.

Several of the pupils have scrambled on to the carts on top of the luggage and started a lively conversation with the drivers, who tell us interesting things about the sovkhoz; but after a while the talks turn again to the days of the German occupation.

The invaders were here for three months, twice that time has passed since then, but one can't help feeling that the ordeal of those terrible days will never be blotted out of people's memories. The nazi robbers have ravaged the rich sovkhoz; the thoroughly electrified up-to-date cattle-sheds are dark and empty; some of them were burned down, as well as the dwelling houses. We listen to these tales, and it comes home to us that during three months death was hovering over the locality, and that those who were not brushed by its annihilating wing can't grasp even now how it happened that they have remained alive. But the hardest thing to bear was to witness the tortures the Germans inflicted on the Red Army men, mostly wounded, whom they took prisoners: they were stripped of their warm clothes, felt boots and fur caps, and locked up in cold barns during the severe frosts; they were given neither food nor water, nobody attended to their

wounds, and when interrogated they were beaten up and tortured. Every attempt on the part of the townspeople to help the prisoners in any way was ruthlessly punished by death.

We are going on along the road; red-starred planes are soaring overhead; we hear the rumblings of a distant cannonade, and about every little bridge on our way there are enclosures around mined strips of land.

At last, far off on a hill, we make out the white church-tower of the village of Klementyevo, near which the sovkhoz that is our destination is situated. The tower served the Germans as a commanding and observing station and is now transparent, like an open-work stocking, with embrasures its architect never meant to be there. On coming nearer we see a demolished hospital and a burnt down secondary school for 1,000 children; this latter is a recently built, two-storied edifice which from afar looks as good as new, but can boast neither floors nor ceilings, neither window-frames nor doors, nothing but its brick shell.

We pass the valley of Iskon, a tributary of the Moskva River, and in the gathering dusk arrive at the sovkhoz by way of a splendid birch drive.

The doors of the club-house are hospitably open, the floors inside look smarting with recent scrubbing; we have been expected. We feel just a bit done up after the journey and quite willing to part company with our bags. While I am fixing things in the sovkhoz refectory with a view to supper, a waggonload of straw is brought to the club; the girls, like so many rather noisy sparrows, swoop on it, carry it into the building, and a moment later the club-house floors are already neatly strewn with it.

When both supper and our company are ready to be introduced to each other, we march off in pairs, duly armed with spoons and bowls for the imminent encounter, in the direction of the natty-looking little house in the birch-park, which is the dining-hall. After supper we return to the club-house, and the tired girls are all for an immediate shakedown.

In the morning, the girls on day-duty get our bread allowance at the bakery for the whole day; then a hot breakfast is served in the dining-hall, and we are permitted to take a rest till dinner-time (at midday). The political department takes the opportunity, and there is a meeting just before dinner.

The afternoon is spent in moving to farm No. 4, where we are to work.

The house alloted to us on farm No. 4 is only half-extant: the other half the Fritzes first turned into stables; then they thought better of it and brought it down altogether. Our next-door neighbours are some collective farmers evacuated here from the western districts. Now, the front-line being shifted further to the west, they will return to their homes in the liberated zone. During their stay here the collective farmers have worked on the sovkhoz fields; their work, according to the farm manager, has always been excellent, and they did half as much again and even twice as much as required of them by the sovkhoz plan.

Well, by now our girls have also been alloted their tasks, almost before they have unloaded the luggage from the waggons, and have left for the field to stock wheat. In two hours' time I get the first report of their work: they have done well; before nightfall they finished the job—dried the sheafs wet with yesterday's rain and staked it in three huge stacks close to the field threshing-barn, where this very night it will be threshed by moonlight. One team volunteered to work at night, two others the manager is organizing with the assistance of the elder students.

Meanwhile, supper is ready, and we go to the dining-hall; this is just a room, and not too spacious either,

behind the farmshop. There is a shortage of tables and benches, but the girls don't feel in the least like grumbling: the cabbage soup smells heavenly, and oh! what a flavour: the wheat porridge tastes delicious, and no wonder, as the wheat to make it came directly from the combine; and, besides, the cook has such lofty ideas of what a helping should be, that the ones we get here seem to be three times as big as those we used to get in Moscow; and then, those whose appetites are extra keen can get another helping.

The girls, as lively and merry as ever, compare notes on the first day of field work; it seems, the only drawback of this place is there being very few people about and no military men at all. All around the farm the fields stretch out as far as the eye can see. After a good chat my sparrows get sleepy, and most of them go to bed.

But those who are on the night shift decide not to sleep at all. They are to start off at eleven p.m. At a quarter to eleven one of the girls gets up briskly and gives the word. The others follow her lead, and we all go out. The moon is bright, dew has fallen, and it is cold. The manager is on the spot and superintends the setting of the threshing machine. The enormous stacks cast black velvety shadows, the dewdrops glitter like diamonds. The cannonade is more clearly heard at night. The teams are shown their respective places, some handing the sheafs, others receiving the grain or raking off the straw, as it may be; soon the work is in full swing. By three in the morning, an hour ahead of time, all is done, the wheat prepared has been threshed and the girls, feeling chilly in the early-morning freshness, come back to the dormitory and settle down to a good rest: they are free till dinner time.

Later in the morning the manager speaks approvingly of our students' work.

Having given everybody his or her task and seen to it that a hot breakfast should be sent to the fields for the ploughmen, the manager turns his attention to the daily accounts, ticks off all the hands in the ledger (there are more than two hundred of them, all told), and compares yesterday's output as against the plan. Then he puts down all the figures on a large blackboard for all to see.

We settle the last organizational matters together: the fifty-six girls will make eight teams, according to age. The leaders of socialist emulation, who have shown initiative and organizational abilities, will be made foremen. Then there will be "the newspaper-readers" who must keep their comrades well posted in the current events. A middle-aged housewifely student is charged with carrying out workers' control in the kitchen and over food rationing in general. Little one-armed Rosa will keep the work-accounts of all the teams. Ira, whose lungs are not what they ought to be, will be given a job in the book-keeping office, while her girl-friend, whose shoes look anything but robust, is appointed receiver of grain, a function of responsibility and trust.

While this is going on, the carpenter makes some additional tables and benches for the dining-hall; a large milk can is brought from the store-room to boil water for the dormitory; the house-keeper is already weighing bread for dinner and proposes to have the bath-house heated. So by and by everything clicks into place, and next day there is nothing to prevent me from going back to Moscow: why, there are two more students' brigades to organize.

My return journey to the main farmstead is accomplished on a cart sent to the central store for provisions. There I change for a lorry going to Mozhaisk with a load of cabbages for the Red Army. The railway station is two kilometres

from the town, these I must do on foot.

Just then enemy planes make a raid, and an air-fight starts up above. I hear the angry buzzing of motors, as if of an enormous swarm of infuriated bees, but being short-sighted can't discern anything in the sky; I also fail to hear the air-raid alarm, so I walk on serenely across the vegetable gardens, and by the time the state of affairs dawns upon me, the enemy planes have already been driven away.

Notwithstanding the air-fight, everything goes on very much as usual at the station: tickets are sold at the booking office, and the guards show the passengers into the carriages.

There are many soldiers in train, going on commissions and on furlough. Civilians' journeys have now also something to do with military affairs: three young men enter the compartment dragging in a fixed-platform trophy machine-gun; this will pass through a repair-shop and will make then an excellent visual aid for the Vsevobuch (General Military Training). An old woman is on her way to her son who has been wounded and is now at a hospital. Another passenger is from the village where Zoe Kosmodemyanskaya met her tragic death; so she relates the frightful tortures that infinitely staunch girl had to endure to her fellow-passengers who listen spell-bound, though probably all of them have read about this in the newspapers. Here and there people talk of the Germans, of families wrenched asunder, of damages and ruined property. Even when we have left the zone that was temporarily occupied by the Germans, the conversation revolves round to same subject. One feels that the impressions left by the unbidden guests are as deep and painful as any physical wounds can be, and that the feelings they call forth need an outlet and require attention and sympathy even from casual company.

When just before arriving in Moscow I change my seat for one nearer to the door, my new fellow-passenger is a woman with a boy of twelve or so. She asks me some question, just to break the ice, and at once plunges into a narration of what the Germans did to her collective farm and how they burned down the farm cattle-shed. "And that shed was *such* a beauty!.." The burning down of that cattle-shed is for her a greater sorrow than the ruination of her own homestead.

Oh yes! The impression this invasion will leave in the people's hearts is very deep: it will never fade.

Immeasurable is the hatred of the Russians for the foe, infinite is their love for the Red Army which with unprecedented heroism is exterminating the rapacious and cruel Hitlerites.

The boys and girls from Moscow schools worked in the fields a little more than a month, and during this time they achieved quite a lot. Their help made it possible to conclude harvesting some two or three weeks earlier than usual. In this the mobilization of school youth for harvesting work played an important part. It's very comforting to feel oneself an efficient fighter on the labour front, taking one's share in the great effort of the whole country.

NATALYA ROSLAVETS

THE PEOPLE IN WAR-TIME*

Most of the material printed in the newspapers lives the short life of a day, for often new events and impressions swallow up those which attracted our attention yesterday. That is why it is not without a feeling of anxiety that one opens a book which offers us material which has already appeared in the daily press. The question arises: can it stand the test of time?

The Great Patriotic War, which is the title of the book under review, is a collection of literary productions, some of which have already appeared in the press. The book owes its success to its stories, sketches, poems and articles, all imbued with warmth and ardour, a passionate love for the fatherland and its heroic defenders, combined with bitter hatred for the enemy.

In this collection we find the names of the most prominent Soviet writers, such as Mikhail Sholokhov, Alexei Tolstoy, Ilya Ehrenburg, Sergeyev-Tsensky and Leonid Sobolev, side by side with the younger representatives of the literary world.

* *The Great Patriotic War*. A collection of literary articles. The State Literary Publishing House, 1942.

From the very first pages of the book the reader is carried away by the huge scale of the events dealt with, by the feeling of their historical significance and of the tremendous importance of the days we are living through.

The Fatherland is the title of Alexei Tolstoy's deeply patriotic historical sketch.

"Our nest, our fatherland has taken possession of all our sentiments, all our thoughts. And everything that we see around us, all that we did not notice and appreciate perhaps before, such as the smoke impregnated with a smell of rye-bread rising from the chimney of a snow-covered peasant-cottage, is poignantly dear to us. The human faces around us which have become so serious, the eyes of everyone we meet, eyes haunted by one perpetual thought, and even the sound of the Russian language, all this is ours, and we, who live in these evil times, feel ourselves to be the guardians of our country.

All our thoughts centre around it, all our rage and fury arise from the outrages inflicted on it, and we are ready to die for it."

This sketch by Alexei Tolstoy, together with the talented feuilletons by Ilya Ehrenburg, are splendid examples of the genre of war literature which have won a secure place in the pages of the Soviet press.

The writers and poets represented in this volume glorify the courage and valour of the Soviet warriors. That is why the following lines from Alexei Surkov's *Songs of the Brave* printed in this book have become so popular among the people:

The brave are called by Stalin
To fight the fascist bands.
What bullet dares the brave to strike,
What bayonet dares to stab?

The hero of another story by the same author, *The Third Adjutant*, thinks the same.

"The commissar thinks that the brave are killed less frequently than the cowards. Of this he is firmly convinced. He likes to repeat it and gets angry whenever anybody tries to argue with him on this point.

He was liked but feared in his division. He had a way of his own to train people for war. He could learn the value of a person by taking him from divisional head-

quarters or from the regiment, and going round with him everywhere, not leaving him for a moment, wherever he had to go that day.

If there was an attack, he would take him along and fight side by side with him.

If the man passed the trial, the commissar would make acquaintance with him once more the same evening.

'Your name?' he would suddenly ask in his abrupt voice.

The astonished commander would mention his name again.

'And mine is Kornyev,' the commissar would then say, stretching out his hand. 'Now, after we've tramped round together and lain on our stomachs together, now let us get acquainted.'"

We regret to state that abroad there are still "observers" to be found who, though recognizing the valour and bravery of the Russians, try to explain it by referring to some "primitiveness," which, they say, is just the contrary to the "spiritual complexity" of the Western-European men. This legend is so absurd that it scarcely needs to be confuted.

The bravery and grit of the Russian fighting for his life prove the high morale of the people's army. Each fighter feels behind him the support of the whole country. One reads with deep emotion a story by Wanda Wasilewska *The Brotherhood of Peoples*, about a great human friendship which united the crew of a tank.

"'Where's the Brotherhood of Peoples?' the commander would ask, and every Red Army man would immediately point to a large grey tank. There were three of them: a Ukrainian, a Russian and a Jew. The crew of the tank. But they always kept together not only in the tank, they were an inseparable trio everywhere."

They loved their country and hated the enemy with a terrible deep-seated hatred. And in the same way the representatives of all the nationalities inhabiting the Soviet country fight shoulder to shoulder against the enemy. The glory of their militant deeds finds its reflection in the works of the writers of all the peoples of the Soviet Union. And in this volume we find, side by side with Russian writers and poets, stories and poems by Ukrainian authors (who are especially well represented in this book), such as Bazhan, Yanovsky, Rylsky, Panchenko; by the Byelorussians Kupala, Brovka, Krapiva; by the Kazakh Akyn Jamboul; by a Georgian poet, Ilo Mossashvili, and a Tartar poet, Yerikeyev.

The bravery and endurance of the Soviet fighting men is very well rendered in the story by Sergeyev-Tsensky, entitled *In the Snow*.

"The snow-storm had piled up large snowdrifts in some places, and in others had bared the hillocks of the tundra, and walking had become more difficult, or so it seemed to him; but, in fact, it was simply that he had lost his strength, for though the night's rest had helped him, still the effect was not for long. His leather coat seemed too heavy for him... He could scarcely drag his feet one after another, he thought of emptying his pockets to make walking easier. The pistol?—No, a wolf might appear once more... The aviacompass?—Not that either, you can't find your way to the seashore without it... He felt in his pockets, found a pencil, now quite unnecessary to him, and threw it away.

He walked like someone in delirium, but still he managed to drag his heavy feet while peering forward to where the sea should appear. And when towards evening it appeared at last, he was already so weak that he could not even feel any joy. But just then he noticed the dark figure of a man, the first he had met for days, and the first thing he did was to draw his incredibly heavy pistol.

As the last people whom he had seen were German pilots who wanted at all costs to kill him, so this new man seemed to his tired eyes also a German. But a moment later, fainting with fatigue, he was in the tender hands of a North Fleet sailor, who was soon joined by three others, anxious to help him."

Our fighting men are inspired by a sacred thirst for revenge against their treacherous enemy. Joseph Utkin, the poet who has taken part in many a fight and been wounded in one of the battles, tells us in his poem *To the Red Army Man* about a little Russian girl killed by the fascist beasts. And addressing the Red Army fighter, the poet exclaims:

She was awaiting the news
From you, my friend,
Of your terrible, just revenge
For her suffering and innocent death.

Personal trouble and grief, personal anxiety shrink before a common trouble. In one of the poems of the book, the poet Simonov, as if in reply to Utkin, speaks of the "grey-haired boy," the colonel's son. After his wife's death the colonel carried his son away with him on the gun-carriage. The boy could not even take leave of his dead mother who had perished from an enemy bomb.

"With a sleeping toy pressed to his breast, the grey-haired boy slept on the gun-carriage." And in the last lines of the poem the author exclaims:

Not where we lived before
My home now is,
But there, where they bereft
The boy of his.

Our fatherland is a big house open to all. During the year of war two cities have become dear to the whole country: they are Moscow and Leningrad. A special section is devoted to them in this volume.

Drawings by Zhoukov from the book "The Gregt Patriotic War": Father and son, partisans both

Two of the poems are particularly fine: one by Jamboul, the venerable bard of Kazakhstan, and the other by the Leningrad poet Nicholas Tikhonov, *Kirov Is with Us*.

Vsevolod Vishnèvsky, a Leningrad writer, addresses the young folk of his city with an ardent call to defend Leningrad:

"Put aside, if you have them, your petty personal interests. The question is now not of our personal interests. . . And he who is foolish and naive enough to think now of his private interests and personal safety makes a great mistake, for his people will never forgive him, and the enemy will show him no mercy.

Be brave, boys and girls of Leningrad! Be worthy of the great heroes who fight for their fatherland, for honour and truth, who go through fire and endure torture and suffering.

History gives us no other choice. It points clearly and unmistakably to the path we must follow. Accept great battles and hard experience, endure them, show your grit and ability."

These words ring out with no less force to all the rest of the freedom-loving youth of the whole world.

The partisans are self-sacrificingly fighting hand in hand with the Red Army. Many poems and songs have been composed on this subject. Semyon Kirsanov dedicates his poem to a partisan, well-known under the name of "Grandfather." Petrus Brovka, a Byelorussian poet, sings the fame of his fellow countryman, the brave partisan Bumazhkov. One cannot read without sincere emotion the sketch by P. Pavlenko and B. Izakov about the death of the partisan Nikolai Bolshakov who was tortured by the fascists:

"The Germans dragged Bolshakov to the village while he was still alive. He was all covered with blood and fainting when they began to question him. All the peasants of the collective farm were ordered to be present that they should see a Russian partisan shamelessly betray his people.

But Bolshakov was silent.

Then some zealous brute began to poke at Bolshakov's wound with his bayonet. The peasants gasped in horror. Somebody began to sob.

The partisan moaned, but did not answer a single question.

Then, breaking his teeth and wounding his face in the process, they forced open his mouth with a knife.

'Speak, you Russian pig! Speak, you rascal!' shouted the Germans, baffled in their attempts to conquer this iron will which was as strong as ever in the wounded and tortured body.

Bolshakov spat out the blood from his mouth, but did not say a word.

He slightly opened his eyes, looked round at the brutes, and heaving a sigh, closed his eyes again, preparing to suffer all they intended to inflict on him.

He was still alive and fully conscious.

It was not an insensible body that the Germans were torturing, but a strong, living soul.

'Speak, Russ!'

And when it became clear that this bleeding but fearless Russian bolshevik would not utter a sound, they decided to burn him.

'Ein moment! You swine! You'll speak yet, my fine beauty!'

Shouting and whistling around the hero, they dragged Bolshakov to the nearest shed, tied him to the door and set the building on fire. The peasants took their caps off; the women covered their faces with their hands.

He was silent.

It was a rainy night, the wood was wet, and the shed kept on burning all night long. . . "

Leonid Sobolev in his stories shows profound knowledge of a sailor's life, describing the heroes of Odessa and Sevastopol with great affection. They live under his pen, all these representatives of that splendid race of Black Sea sailors, the very sight of whom strikes fear into the heart of the enemy.

"The Black Commissars," "The Black Storm-Cloud," "The Black Devils," these are the names the Rumanians have applied to the marines of the Red Fleet. The seamen came into the trenches from their ships just as they were in their black trousers and reefers, and their black caps on. Such was the picture the Rumanians carried away with them after the first encounters, which brought out all the qualities of the seamen: their stubbornness, courage, unity and scorn of death. The Rumanians were the first to taste their metal when the sailors, having let them approach close to their trenches, moved them down under a furious fire and then rushed forward to counter-attack; when they saw their tall black figures flashing hither and thither among the verdure and the yellow maize, when their sharp bayonets plunged into the backs of the escaping Rumanians. The appearance of the sailors had changed considerably since that first meeting. Now they were in khaki uniforms with pilot caps and tent-cloaks. But often, jumping up onto the parapet for a counter-attack with one swift leap as though onto a bridge, these sailors would pull out from somewhere their navy caps and the ribbons would wave as they ran, and the black caps floated again in the rustling maize, a fearful vision of "The Black Storm-Cloud," a rushing, formidable force bearing down on the enemy to crush and destroy him."

A series of articles and sketches by Ehrenburg, Sholokhov, Ostrovsky and Slobodskoy give us a loathsome picture of the typical fascist soldier.

Boris Yampolsky, who had made his way through the occupied towns and villages of the Ukraine back to the East, in his story of *The Green Greatcoat* describes the innumerable vile crimes of the fascist usurpers.

"On the moors of Poltavshchina, in the dense forests of Popovka and Dikanka one may meet hairy people looking like savages, more dead than alive. They lie among the reeds or on a couch made of leaves, and have no strength to move. They are fugitives from the camps.

At the beginning of October, on my way from Piryatin to Lubny, I met a crowd really terrible in appearance. They were being driven to a concentration camp. Thirty soldiers on motor-cycles, armed with tommy-guns, were driving several thousands of people, hungry, frozen and sick, among them half-naked women and old men carrying sacks. A motor-cycle in front, a tankette behind, and one had to run to keep up with the motor-cycle. Pressing their hands to their hearts, they ran and fell, moaning and raising their hands to heaven, and ran on again. Those who lagged behind were shot: the motor-cyclist had no time to be bothered about a sick old man or woman.

Where were they being driven? What were they being so cruelly tormented for? They were not only prisoners fo war, there were also civilians among them, mobilized to dig the trenches; there were old men and women, mothers of children, even young girls.

One October day, at nightfall, I was passing the station of Romodan. During the first snow-storm several thousands of citizens had been collected in a camp in the open air. Hungry and tortured, they suddenly began to sing:

Far is my mother-country. . .

It seemed as though the air were full of the vibrant ringing of bells. I began to sob. I wanted to call out:

'Can you hear us, mother-country? Can you hear us, you Red Army men? Beat the Germans! Stab the Green Greatcoats! Cover the roads with German corpses! Flood the rivers with their black blood! Save your brothers!'"

Hangmen and sadists, skilled in rob ery and plunder, drunk with their easy victo-

ries, they had marched into Russia for loot. The Red Army, the whole Soviet people rose and cut the comb of the cocksure insolent usurpers. Profligate and thievish, abominable in their crimes, they have been depicted in numerous stories and sketches by Soviet writers.

"In ancient times people thought that there existed a mythical animal, the basilisk. According to Pliny's description, this creature was terrible. When he looked at the grass, it would fade. When he crept into the woods, the birds died. The eyes of the basilisk conveyed death. But Pliny said that there was one remedy against the basilisk: it was to place him before a mirror. The wicked reptile could not bear his own reflexion and expired." So writes Ehrenburg in one of his feuilletons. All his articles, feuilletons and short stories, as well as those by the other writers mentioned above, show us as in a mirror the face of those de-humanized brutes, the modern Huns.

Mikhail Sholokhov in his story *Prisoners of War* introduces to us some of the "conquerors of the universe" who now find themselves imprisoned in Soviet territory. Here is Berkmann, a corporal. He has fair wavy hair, his none-too-clever blue eyes are wide apart. He is an absolute Aryan, much the worse for the war and very hungry.

What does he think about the result of the war with Soviet Russia? He considers this venture hopeless. "The Führer certainly made a mistake in attacking Russia."

Here is another prisoner, a typical hitlerite "fighter" of the younger generation:

"A twenty-year-old youth with no sign of whisker. Smoothly combed hair, blue pimples on his face and restless, thievish eyes. He is a member of the German national-socialist party. A tankist who has been to France, Yugoslavia and Greece. He flatly refuses to answer any questions put to him, but in phrases learnt by heart he speaks about the supremacy of the German nation, about the inferiority of the French, English and Slavonic peoples. No, he is not a man, he is a pie that has been stuffed with something tainted; he hasn't a single thought of his own, no spiritual interests. We asked him whether he knew Pushkin or Shakespeare. He wrinkled up his forehead thought a little and then said: "Who are they?" And on hearing the answer, he curled his thin lips in a contemptuous grin and said:

'I don't know anything about them and don't want to. I haven't the slightest need of them.' "

The book ends with some specimens of the anti-fascist satire of Soviet writers.

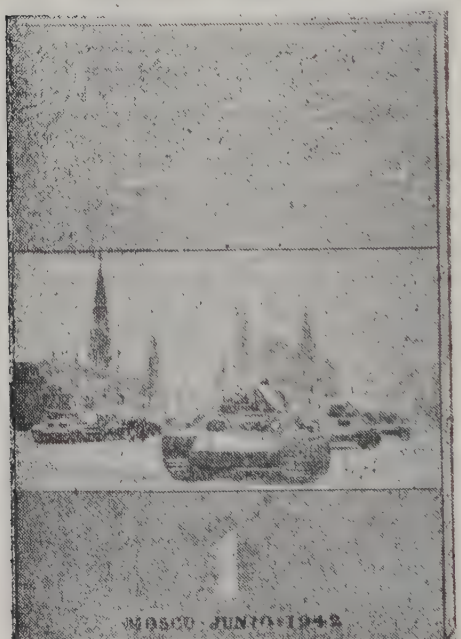
Here we have mentioned but a small part of the material printed in the book. Let us repeat once more that the book is a kind of symposium devoted to the first year of the Patriotic War, a symposium consisting of extremely interesting material.

It is a real "class-book of hatred."

Special mention must be made of the artistic get-up of the book and the well-chosen and skilfully executed drawings from nature and the photographs.

VLADIMIR ROUBIN

SPANISH EDITION OF "INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE"



During these grim days of the patriotic war the first copies of the fortnightly Spanish edition of *International Literature*, editor Cesar M. Arconada, have appeared in Moscow. The news of the forthcoming publication of that magazine, the first literary magazine in Spanish to be brought out in Russia, aroused lively comment in the Latin-American press. The Foreign Commission of the Soviet Writers' Union has received congratulations on the new publication from outstanding representatives of Spanish and Latin-American literature, including Rafael Alberti and Maria Teresa Leon, Venceslao Roces, a group of Cuban progressive writers headed by Juan Marinello, Enrique Serpa, Emma Perez, the famous Uruguayan critic Ildefonso Perez Valdés, the leader of the Argentine People's Theatre Leonidas Barletta, and others. It is interesting to note that the majority of the authors who write expressing their appreciation of the publication, inform the editor that they are sending articles and other material to be used in the new edition.

The new magazine which is one of the

editions of the *International Literature* published in foreign languages, is not simply a replica of these, although it naturally pursues the same general aim of portraying typical Soviet people now engaged in an unprecedentedly-heroic struggle against the German-fascist invaders, and the continued development of Soviet culture under the grim conditions of the Great Patriotic War. Considering the specific interests of the Latin-American readers, the Spanish edition of the *International Literature* has alotted comparatively much space to articles of an historical and journalistic character. These articles unmask the attempts made by Hitler's gangster agencies in the Latin-American countries to falsify and distort the events of world history, especially with relation to present-day events, with the purpose of paving the way for the seizure of the South-American countries by the German-fascist scoundrels and their Spanish hirelings.

The first three numbers of the magazine contain a wealth of varied material. All these numbers include a section entitled "Facts and Data," in which the editors explain to the Latin-American readers the most important events which have taken place during the preceding fortnight, both in political and cultural life.

Below follows a summary of the literary, artistic and journalistic material published in the three numbers of the magazine;

1. *Salute to the Red Army* (poem by C. M. Arconada).

2. N. Tikhonov: *Leningrad Stories* and *The Flag of Sevastopol.*

3. A. Tolstoy: *The Fascists in Yasnaya Polyana* and *Kill the Beast!* (articles).

4. I. Ehrenburg: Excerpt from the novel *The Fall of Paris* and an article *Patriotism.*

5. F. Panfyorov: Excerpts from the novel *With Their Own Eyes.*

6. M. Sholokhov: *Hate.*

7. C. Simonov: *Wait for Me* (poem).

8. C. M. Arconada: *Under the Sky of Madrid* (story).

9. Jamboul: *The Friendship of Peoples* (poem).

The magazine features special sections for children and anti-fascist humour. The translations of the literary material are of high quality, due to the fact that the excellent Spanish stylist C. M. Arconada is on the editorial staff.

The wealth of information on art in the Soviet Union given in the magazine deserves special mention. With an eye to the great interest manifested by the Latin-American reader in these matters, every number of the magazine contains well-illustrated notes and articles on the Soviet theatre, cinema, painting, etc. The following material may be found in the numbers already published:

D. Shostakovich: *The Great Slavic Culture.*

P. Markov: *Nemirovich-Danchenko.*

E. Petrov: *The Triumph of Russian Music* (Shostakovich's 7th Symphony).

R. Katzman: *New Films.*

L. Nikulin: *War and Peace* (based on Tolstoy's novel) *in the Maly Theatre.*

S. Durylin: *The Painter Nesterov* (obituary).

I. Kruti: *Korneichuk, the Playwright.*

V. Grossman: *An Opera About a Great General* ("*Suvorov*").

N. Karintsev: *The Ballet "Merry Wives of Windsor" at the Nemirovich-Danchenko Theatre.*

The outward appearance of the magazine, its cover, print and illustrations, produce a very favourable impression.

In welcoming the publication of the first Spanish literary magazine in Russia, we wish it success in its great undertaking, which is of extreme importance to the common struggle of the democratic countries against Hitlerism and its hirelings.

V. NIKEL

A STRIKING PATRIOTIC PLAY

Already in his early *Tales of Sevastopol*, Tolstoy wrote: "Truth is the real heroine of my novels, it is she I love so deeply, whose beauty I have tried to portray in my stories, the heroine who was, is and always will be beautiful."

The presence of this heroine is always felt in all the novels of the great Russian writer, and above all you feel it in his great novel *War and Peace*.

War and Peace is one of the great epics of the world and can be compared only with the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, which are the most treasured possessions of humanity. We, Russians, are justly proud of this epic, not only because it is sacred for every Russian, but also because its heroine, whom Tolstoy loves so dearly and whose name is truth, is typical of Russia's national genius. The greatness of any writer of genius consists in this combination of perfection in his particular medium and the full expression of his national spirit. Leo Tolstoy was such a man.

This novel, although dealing with a bye-gone historical period, will never lose its vitality. The portraits of Russians in *War and Peace* are alive in our hearts, and we shall always associate them with the Russia of the beginning of last century.

This masterpiece acquires new significance in the days of this Great Patriotic War. The heroic struggle of the Russian people against the army of Napoleon, the ever-growing resistance of Russia and the final defeat of the enemy, all these pictures were painted by a genius who embodied the simplicity and truthfulness of our people.

War and Peace is both the expression of the popular spirit and the generalization of the great military experience of Russia. The sublime example of mass heroism which was shown to the world in 1812, is being repeated on an even greater scale in these days when a cruel danger hangs over our country. The same patriotic words uttered by the heroes of 1812 resound in our hearts as though we had just heard them. Here are the words of the manifesto: "And may the ruin with which he threatens us recoil on his own head, and may Europe, delivered from bondage, glorify the name of Russia!"

These are the words of Kutuzov, that now ring forth menacingly and with passionate fervour from the mouth of the actor playing his part: "I shall prove how wrong the arrogant enemies of my country are. Shall the Russians accept peace? Where—in Russia? I tell you solemnly: for twenty years I can wage war in Russia against the

A scene from the play

"The Great Patriotic War of 1812" in the Maly Theatre. Left to right: N. Ryzhov as Pierre Bezuhov, K. Kalininskaya as Natasha and M. Tsaryov as Andrey Bolkonsky

whole world, and shall force everyone to see Russia as she really is."

The whole country is now united in profound scorn for the enemy and in burning hatred against him. We may confidently say that the history of Russia, the history of the Russian people, has never known or recorded such depth of hatred for the enemy as that which marks the present period. That is why Andrey Bolkonsky's thoughts, on the eve of the battle of Borodino, so closely resemble our ideas of today: "The battle is won by the side that has firmly resolved to win. . . a hundred thousand Russian and a hundred thousand French troops have met to fight, and the fact is that these two hundred thousand men will fight, and the side that fights most desperately and spares itself least will conquer."

And here are the words where the feeling of retribution, so strong in us now, is thundered forth by the very same people at an identical moment:

"The French have destroyed my home and are coming to destroy Moscow; they have outraged and are outraging me every second. They are my enemies, they are all criminals to my way of thinking. And so thinks Timokhin, and all the army with him. They must be put to death. Since they are my enemies, they can't be my friends."

The dramatization and present performance of *War and Peace* in the Maly Theatre is not only a theatrical undertaking, but the fulfilment of a widespread Russian wish. The great epic has been dramatized over and over again. The dramatization of classical novels has always been a very tempting enterprise, but it has also been very difficult. If this is true of the novels of Dostoyevsky and Turgenyev, it is even more so of an epic like *War and Peace*.

Just as the drama and the novel are essentially different media, so also are the play and the epic. The men who wrote the stage version of *War and Peace* for the Maly Theatre—Sudakov, Gorchakov and Kruzhkov—have overcome a great difficulty. This difficulty was increased by the fact that in *War and Peace*, as is well known, two lines are constantly being interwoven, the war scenes and the peace scenes. The dramatists have concentrated on the war, the events referring to the personal lives of the heroes being but slightly touched upon. These are shown only when bearing directly on the war. Only a few domestic scenes in the Rostov house have been introduced into this war play.

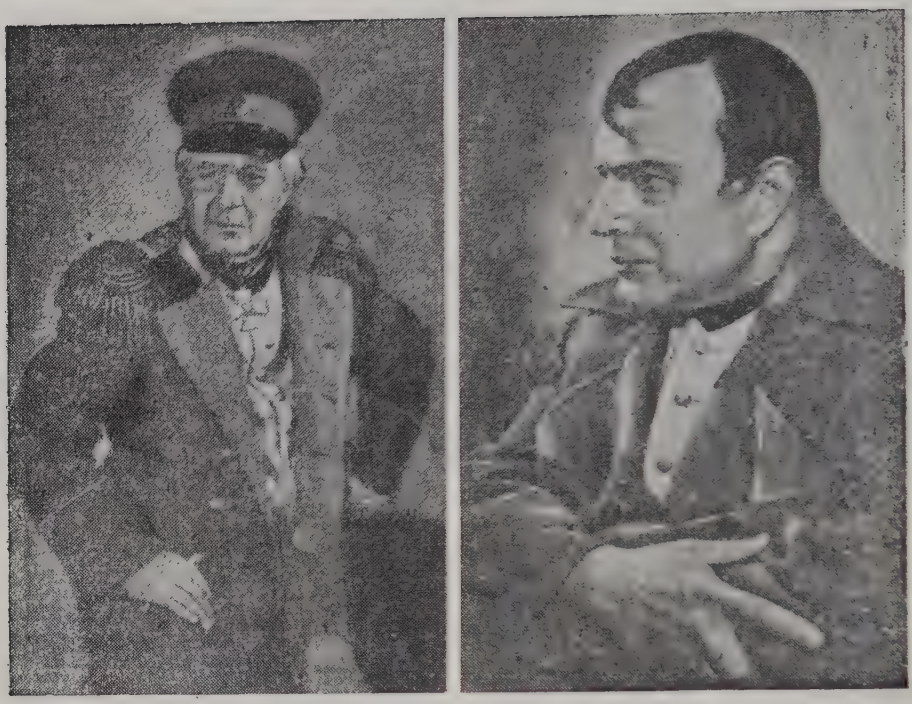
The theatre has resorted to the old-established form of staging a novel, where the scenes are connected by the narrator's spoken passages. This is quite right. The marvellous prose of Tolstoy, read in place of a prologue to every act, sounds like a musical introduction.

War, war with Napoleon dominates the development of the play, the development of the characters in this performance of *War and Peace*.

A great patriotic play has thus been created.

The spectator follows the march of events with passionate interest, sympathizes with the Russian soldiers of 1812 and hates the enemy. When the Russian general Balashov, answering Napoleon's question: "By what routes can one reach Moscow?" says: ". . . there were very many roads, and among them was the road to *Poltava*, the one selected by Charles XII," the whole audience breaks into applause.

It really was a remarkable first-night performance. Our ancestors were moving, speaking and suffering on the stage. But



N. Yakovlev as Kutuzov and K. Zubov as Napoleon

they uttered words familiar to us, bringing back to our minds the recent battles for Moscow, for Russia. Their words, as well as their heroic deeds, have gained a deeper and quite contemporary meaning, stirring our patriotic feelings profoundly.

The thoughts of Andrey Bolkonsky concerning the fate of Russia, the patriotic impulse of Peter Rostov, the heroic deeds of Captain Timokhin, inspire our present-day spectator and rouse his patriotic enthusiasm.

Not all the scenes of this play are equally impressive. Side by side with beautiful scenes, full of feeling, in the Rostov's house, are to be found scenes quite alien to Tolstoy's style, as, for instance, the scene where Kutuzov receives news of Napoleon's departure from Moscow, where depth of feeling is replaced by morbid pathos.

Now a few words about the different actors.

The task of these actors of the Maly Theatre consisted primarily in conveying Tolstoy's simplicity and truth to the spectator. In this respect we must mention A. I. Sashin-Nikolsky in the small role of the officer Timokhin. Count Rostoptchin is well performed by the People's Artist of the R.S.F.S.R., N. A. Svetlovidov, and also Countess Rostov as performed by A. A. Yablochkina, People's Artist of the U.S.S.R. The figure of Napoleon is impressive as presented by K. A. Zubov. He depicts the character of Napoleon to perfection, just as Tolstoy himself understood him, with all his bombast, with his pretence of being both a great man and a great adventurer, together with the inevitable ruin resulting from the collision with the true greatness and simplicity of the Russians. In the same category of people devoid of simplicity Tolstoy includes Viscount de Bossay. The interpretation of this personage by V. A. Vladislavsky might have been perfect had he not somewhat overacted.

The part of Andrey Bolkonsky, as played by M. I. Tsaryov, may be a matter of dispute. He appears lacking in that strength of character and originality which form his principal charm in the book.

Pierre Bezuhov is incomprehensible as interpreted by N. I. Ryzhov. The outer presentation of the role, the make-up, the absent-minded air, are excellent. Unfortunately, either owing to the authors or to the actor himself, we see on the stage only an eccentric figure, in which there is nothing of the philosopher.

Kutuzov is quite within the capacity of that talented and experienced artist N. K. Yakovlev. But unfortunately his depth and simplicity are sometimes eclipsed by unnecessary pathos. This is the exact opposite of Tolstoy's conception of Kutuzov, a man not only much simpler but incomparably more imposing, more concentrated, and with more character.

Rather questionable are the renderings of Tolstoy's prose as given by A. A. Ostuzhev. This splendid tragic actor reads Tolstoy's connecting passages with too much pathos.

Such are the slight defects of this great and very interesting work as produced by the company of the Maly Theatre.

At the present moment *War and Peace* should be performed as often as possible in the Soviet theatres. No writer has ever expressed so truly the strength of the Russian people and the doom awaiting their enemies, as did Leo Tolstoy.

His inspiring message is now heard on the stage of the Maly Theatre. The producer I. Y. Sudakov, the decorator P. V. Williams, and the company deserve full praise. They have created a patriotic play of great emotional and social power.

Terrible is the retribution which will be exacted by the avenging Russian people, inevitable is the destruction of its enemies. The new performance of the Maly Theatre, so warmly greeted by the Moscow audiences, is dedicated to the Russian people, to the courage of their sons, to the doom of their enemies.

CONSTANTINE TRENEV

ONE DAY

It is the 13th of June, 1942, the three-hundred-and-fifty-sixth day of the Great National War.

Moscow. Moscow appears on the screen lit by the first beams of the rising sun filtering through the light haze of the early summer morning. The drone of engines floats over Moscow. Five fighter-planes are passing over the Kremlin, over the still sleeping squares and the sparkling silvery bends of the Moskva River. Barrage balloons are moving earthwards. And we hear a song. This song seems to be wafted from the blue mists of the distant horizon, it is echoed by the fighter-engines, it merges with the chimes of the Kremlin tower, its beat is accentuated by the crisp, measured tread of the soldiers, parachutists who are marching off to the front along the Moscow embankments. It is a song about Moscow, about Stalin, about our country:

Stalin and Moscow—in these two words alone
All that's dear to the heart is blended.

The sun rises over a country which is waging a great war of liberation. From the snow-covered hills of the far-off Arctic where on this summer day ski troops are attacking a hill occupied by the enemy, to the very bastions of immortal Sevastopol on which the Germans shower thousands of bombs, the vast expanse of the Land of the Soviets passes before us. All through the film *One Day of War* we see our country steeped in blood. Our own country, our great people, our proud, staunch, courageous people who are sure of their victory and deal heavy blows to the enemy.

From the first shot of this wonderful film, with his perception, his nerves and every heart-beat the spectator feels at one with its heroes, these real people whose appearance and deeds throughout one day have been caught and preserved by the lenses of one hundred and sixty cameramen, witnesses and participants in this gigantic struggle. Seeing this film, involuntarily one clenches one's fists in wrath, and a lump rises in one's throat from the deep, poignant pain one feels for the sufferings of our own dear country tortured as it is by hangmen. This film incites one to fight and inspires one with the certitude of victory. Such a people cannot be destroyed, such a people will never bend their heads under the yoke of slavery. It is a film about a great invincible people. It is a film about our coming victory.

This film shows us one day of our struggle. Just one ordinary common-place day, the 13th of June. A telegraphic order was given, and at daybreak on that same day a whole army of cameramen started filming.

History will gratefully remember these humble, daring men, our Soviet cinema newsreel men, who have made this picture and who daily give us their film reportage of the war. Some of them have died in the battle, with the camera in their hands. The survivors are continuing their work. They have been at the front from the very first days of the war. Burrowing in the ground, they endure the fiercest bombing and artillery fire, they lie in wait with daring snipers and anti-tank gunners. Ever on the watch for the enemy, they sleep in the open air, they suffer cold and privations, even when wounded they return to their units. They have lost the habit of wearing civilian clothes, they have learnt to appreciate the comradeship of the front whose first law is to help your pal in battle. But although enduring this great strain, the cameramen who have now acquired all the toughness of soldiers, have yet lost nothing of their chief quality, that of artists and reporters. This is amply demonstrated by the material chosen for the film *One Day of War*.

The level reached by this full-length film created by the work of one hundred and sixty cameramen, is very high, both from the artistic and technical standpoints. This we may freely say without making any allowances for the difficult circumstances in which it was filmed. It shows us shots taken in the rain, in the fog, during battles, on board a war plane, in a sub-

Stills from the film "One Day of War":
1. Cameraman Bobrov at work.
2. Cameraman Levitan shooting scenes on the Southern front.
3. Cameraman Shneiderov on the Western front

marine, in blindages, in the haze of early dawn and in the twilight. In all the shots we see not merely the efforts of the cameramen to photograph rather unfilmable objects, but also their ability to mobilize every means of artistic presentation, their skilful treatment of light, the compositional perfection of the shot and the coherence of every episode.

It is difficult to pick out in this film any episode as being the most impressive and moving, yet some should be mentioned. The scene is an aerodrome. The pilots are sitting in their planes. Preparedness No. 1. A piano stands on a lorry. Emil Gillels is giving a performance for the airmen. The powerful chords of Liszt's music ring out in the stillness of the hot summer day. The pilots' hands rest on their joysticks. At any moment the mighty machines can shoot up skywards, carrying death to the enemy. But now, in this short interval between air fights, these resolute, stern men are sitting with bent heads engrossed by the marvellous music.

Planes are flying to besieged Leningrad. This heroic city emerges in all its austere beauty. German heavy guns are bombarding it. Houses are burning. Little, four-year-old Lyuda Gromova is lying there, on the house-steps, killed by a bomb. The nazi monsters want to subdue the heroic town by murdering children. . .

"For the tears shed by mothers, for our bereavements, soldiers, fire!"

With thundering detonations, the Germans get an answer from the forts of Kronstadt and the heavy guns of the Leningraders.

Now we see the partisan country. This remarkable sequence was taken deep in the enemy rear by the cameraman Veinerovich. The partisans rush into a village occupied by a punitive expedition. There is a real hand-to-hand fight on the screen. Before our eyes the partisans kill the fleeing panic-striken Germans, and here in the village street, in the thick of the battle, they thriftily pick up the smoking hot German tommy-guns and rifles. Over there we see a running German corporal. A partisan sticks a bayonet in his back. He falls. A traitor is led by the partisans to the outskirts of the occupied village. He is followed by some women. Tearing heavy sticks out of the paling, they break through the lines of the escort and strike the wretch who betrayed his people to the enemy, who sent to the gallows and put to torture scores of Soviet citizens. Near the gully beyond the village the people's tribunal has met. The trial is brief, and the judges implacable. The will of the Soviet people is done. It is the verdict of maimed, tortured women and children. A salvo resounds. People die as they live. The traitor has got his due.

An aircraft is landing on an aerodrome at the front. It is moving downwards, rocking slightly from side to side and sliding on its wing, then it cuts into the ground. Mortally wounded, riddled with bullets by the "Messerschmitts," pilot Antonov managed to fly his plane down to his own aerodrome. Gently his comrades lay the mortal remains of their friend on a stretcher. It so happened that the cameramen Kazakov and Katzman had a sound-camera with them. So now we can hear the voice of one of the young airmen, the words he uttered when bending over the dead body of his friend:

"Brother airmen," says he, choking down his grief, "he lived with us, and now he has flown back to die with us. Let us pledge our word before our native land to avenge the death of our friend."

The oath of the Soviet airmen bodes ill for the foe. Scores, hundreds of planes take off. German aerodromes, staffs and transport columns are caught in the sights. Bombs rush downwards, the earth writhes under the heavy explosions. Nazi planes blaze on the dromes, the advanced area of the German defence zone swells up in fire and smoke.

Maria Shimko carefully stows away in the wardrobe the silk frocks of her beloved daughter. Here are her high-heeled evening shoes. Mashenka loved dancing. The sounds of a waltz are heard, and the eager pairs of dancers whirl before us. But now the waltz changes into a march, and the girls' tender feet shod in heavy army boots march along the dusty road. Smiling, beautiful Mashenka is marching to the front with her girl-friends, and seeing her off, the announcer says: "We shall dance together again, Mashenka!"

A heavy artillery battery is sighting the nazis. The battery commander shouts "fire" and turning to the audience he gives the order:

"More ammunition!"

The rear answers him:

"The front needs it. We'll do it!"

And on the screen springs up the mighty symphony of the heroic labour of millions of workers at the defence works. Shells, bombs, steel, mines, tommy-guns, tanks, planes.

Never before has the might of our defence industry been shown so impressively on the screen. We see a country turned into a military camp. Our victory is being forged at hundreds of plants both great and small. It is our victory we see in the streams of steel, in the mighty works of Magnitogorsk pierced by the shaft-like rays of the sun, we find it in the united will of millions of valiant young and elderly Soviet people handling machine-tools, breaking up rocks, producing oil, coal, iron, grain and cotton.

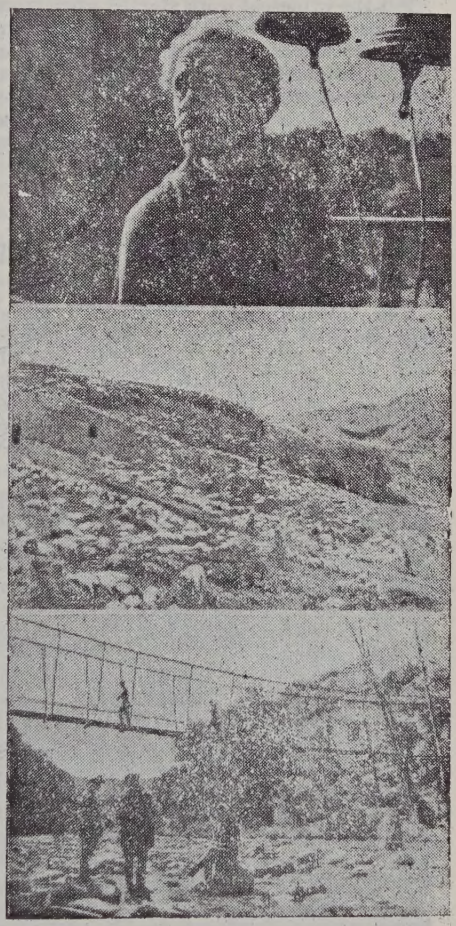
The skill and pictorial talent of cameraman Victor Dobronitsky are brilliantly unfolded in many of these shots.

Here is one of the most impressive episodes of the film: tanks are going into attack. The camera is inside the foremost vehicle. Through a peep-hole in the tank the spectator sees how the powerful steel fortresses break down and crumble the German defence. A nazi anti-tank gun is shooting, it is squashed into the ground by a Soviet tank which mows down with its machine-guns the running Fritzes. The enemy tanks are ablaze.

"You won't escape!" says the announcer, and powerful shell explosions burst in the gully where the German infantry are running in panic. The ringing of bells floats over a village which is enwrapped in black smoke. Our tanks are rushing through the burning village. Sobbing for joy, the liberated Soviet citizens embrace the soldiers. The church bells are ringing. An old man is standing at the top of a half-demolished church. The wind is tearing at his grizzled mane. He is setting all the bells aringing:

"The Russians have come!"

Evening has come. Formidable squadrons of Soviet airships are flying on a distant raid far into the German rear. On the ground, far below, fires are burning and shells bursting. The bombs are finding their targets.



Stills from the film "One Day of War":
1. A collective farmer sets the bells ringing to announce that the Red Army has entered the village.
2. The sheep of Kazakhstan give splendid wool which is turned into warm clothing for the Red Army.
3. In the North Caucasus Red Army units frequently have to cross mountain streams on swinging bridges

Thus ends the three-hundred-and-fifty-sixth day of the Great National War.

At night the heavy artillery guns boom. The battle is going on.

And that is the end of the picture.

The hardest job was that of the film director. He had to co-ordinate the hundreds of episodes which compose the film. The complex creative problem of compiling a coherent work of art lay before the gifted director Michael Slutsky. Slutsky coped successfully with this difficult task in close co-operation with Alexis Kapler who understands profoundly the nature of the documentary film. They carried out extensive preliminary work which ensures the success and quality of this fine work.

But the principal work started when from all sides the material came flowing in, when thousands of metres of film lay in masses before them on the cutting table, when in all this ocean of facts one had to pick out those which would symbolize thousands of similar events occurring daily.

Here, in the cutting room, the final construction of the film and its dramatic framework were conceived. Visual, acoustic and emotional touches created the links between one episode and another, and the sequence of the episodes also depended on their subject-matter. But on the whole all this minute creative work was subordinated to a general idea.

Daniel Pokrass who composed the song about Moscow specially for this film worked hard to make the music an integral part of the film. Every episode is expressed in sounds inseparable from the subject and the inner rhythm of its content. The music for this film is a decided success for the composer.

Though consisting of so many separate episodes, *One Day of War* strikes the spectator as being one organic whole. It is a notable work of Soviet cinema art.

ROMAN KARMEN

"HOW THE STEEL WAS TEMPERED"

The late Nicholas Ostrovsky's novel *How the Steel Was Tempered* has long since been placed within the reach of readers all over the world. Translated into many European and other languages, it became deservedly popular as a narrative of the first years of construction in the young Soviet Republic, of the heroism of the Soviet people. Ostrovsky's novel helped to understand how, in the terrible conditions then prevailing, Soviet people succeeded in defeating both the White generals' bands, the German troops that occupied the Ukraine and all other enemies who encroached on the soil, freedom and independence of our country.

The characters of Pavel Korchagin, his brother Artem, the seaman Zhukhray and others are brought to life on the screen in a new film-adaptation of the book by the Kiev and Tashkent cinema-studio. Yes, the Ukrainian film industry is alive and flourishing! Like other industries, it was evacuated far eastwards, where it is continuing very productive work. This latest film released will prove a keen weapon in the struggle against the German-fascist invaders.

It has been produced by the author of the scenario Mark Donskoy, who was awarded the Stalin prize and is well-known for his series of pictures on Maxim Gorky's works.

In interpreting the characters of a literary work for stage or screen, it invariably happens that one has to depart somewhat from the text. The peculiar requirements of the cinema, the necessity for compressing all the action into a short space of time, the hour-and-a-half to which the picture is usually limited, obliges the author of the scenario based on the novel to concentrate his attention on one, usually the chief, subject-line of the adapted work. And this is precisely what Donskoy has done.

His scenario shows only one episode from the life of the hero, Pavel Korchagin. The whole film centres around events connected with the days when the Ukrainian people fought the German troops who, aided by the myrmidons of German imperialism, the Ukrainian nationalists, occupied the Ukraine.

To intensify the action and preserve throughout the line of the subject, Donskoy had to depart in some degree from the book, but on the whole these deviations are justifiable and expedient. Very successful, for example, is the conclusion, when the Red troops and the partisans burst into a settlement occupied by the Germans in time to save from hanging a group of young Ukrainian patriots sentenced to death by the occupation authorities. A conclusion of this kind is in tune with the audience's feelings and mood, for everyone present is inflamed with the same relentless hatred of the German invaders as the people in the film and as in the days when the action took place, days that brought so much grief and suffering to our people.

The audience's attention is held by the fate of the hero, who puts up a valiant fight against the German invaders, and by the general patriotic tone of a film that has so much in common with the events of today's

Great Patriotic War of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. against Hitlerism.

From the very first scenes the audience's sympathy is claimed by the hero's single-mindedness and will-power. Pavel Korchagin may be truly said to be fashioned of tempered steel. And he is not alone in possessing this quality: there are friends and comrades, young Ukrainian girls and men, who are secretly preparing for the expulsion of the army of occupation from their native land.

The general plot is simple enough. Pavel Korchagin, a young Ukrainian, lives at home with his mother and his brother Artem who works on the railway as an engine-driver. During the Civil War, the power in the little country town where the Korchagin family lives changes hands very often. The action begins with the German troops' entry, in company with those traitors to the people, the Ukrainian nationalists, in whom one so clearly discerns the prototype of the Lavals and Quislings. The Red forces withdraw, leaving secret political work in the hands of a seaman Zhukhray. Due to his energy, many of the German command's plans fall through: trains with stolen food for Germany are not dispatched and the railwaymen, among whom Zhukhray has been doing some agitation, declare a strike. When Artem, threatened with death, is forced to drive a train bearing a detachment of German soldiers, punitive expedition sent against the partisans, he and another railwayman kill the German sentry and derail the train.

The Germans track down the sailor and arrest him. By an accident, Pavel manages to set Zhukhray free, but himself falls into German hands. He is betrayed by Leshchinsky, a highschool boy who had an old account to settle with Pavel. It concerns a girl to whom Leshchinsky had been paying attention but who showed preference for Pavel. When he is set free, Pavel finds shelter with a girl he loves. Next day he is sent across the front to the Reds. Assisted by many of the local people, Zhukhray organizes a partisan detachment and becomes its commander. Pavel's friends in his secret activities are working untiringly to secure the expelling of the Germans. Some of the young people fall into the hands of the German occupation authorities who condemn them to death on the gallows. At the moment when the execution is about to take place, the Red Army and the partisans burst into the town. The Germans take to flight, deserting the ill-starred Ukrainian nationalists, who meet the fate they deserve, the fate that awaits everyone who betrays his own people to the enemy.

The scenes where the Germans burst into the town are very well done. Before ever the audience sees the Germans, it is warned of their approach by a music that conveys the heavy, muffled, crushing tread of the much-drilled German soldiers. The pillaging of the place is memorable, too. The producer has found an excellent method of showing vividly what German imperialism brings the civilian population.

Still from the film: B. Perset-Petrenko as Pavel Korchagin

Still from the film: Pavel Korchagin at war

To terrorize and cow the population was the programme of the German occupation army that entered the Ukraine in 1918. But the Ukrainian people were not to be cowed by the dire threats of any invaders. They retaliated with a people's war, and aided by a brother nation, the Russians, expelled the Germans from their native land. The Germans have learned little from the lessons of history. But the Ukrainians will remind them and repay them a hundredfold for all the suffering they have brought the Ukraine.

After having derailed the enemy troop-train, Artem joins the partisans. From now on his only aim is to kill the oppressors of the people. "We've got to kill them!" he is never tired of repeating. It is the same idea that possesses every Soviet patriot today.

In the partisans' camp in the depths of the woods Zhukhray reads the appeal he has just received. And Stalin's fiery words imbue the fighters with fresh impetus to fight with new strength and confidence in victory over the enemy.

The audience is carried away by the events on the screen. At times one forgets that this is a historic film, so closely do the depredations the Germans once perpetrated in the Ukraine tally with their atrocities today. The film calls on us to struggle against the German invaders, reminds us that the Ukrainian people have beaten their unbidden guests once, and strengthens our confidence that they will do so yet again. Herein lies the mobilizing significance of a picture that must undoubtedly be a success with audiences in democratic countries that have risen to struggle against a German imperialism which brings the nations of the world a yoke far heavier than the Tartars brought.

TIMOFEI ROKOTOV

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