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## THE STRENGTH OF OUR SPIRIT

*From a "Pravda" article:—*

**I**N this grim war victory is the fruit not only of the mighty forces embodied in the Soviet State, in its economic system and its planned economy. It is also the fruit of the morale of our people, of its progressive and lofty world outlook. The noble aims which we defend on the battlefield give us wings.

We are defeating the enemy with tanks and aeroplanes and guns, and with first-class armament forged in our factories. We are defeating the enemy with the ability of our generals, our officers and men, and with our moral superiority and our high morale. We are higher than our enemy. We have opposed against him such moral principles and such a world outlook that we cannot but win.

In this war reason is set against insanity, truth against lies, honour and conscience against shamelessness, civilisation against barbarism, man against beast.

"Everything must be perfect in man—both his face and his clothing, both his soul and his thoughts." These wonderful words of Chekhov were found in the diary of Zoya Kozmodemyanskaya. She was such a person. And as such a person she went into battle against the beast who wears the uniform of the Hitlerite Army.

Mankind has long realised the danger of the savage instincts instilled and cultivated by German imperialism. "You progeny of the Teutonic Knights!" exclaimed the great French writer and humanist Victor Hugo—"You will fight a shameful war. You are the exterminators of many people and ideas which the world needs. You will show the world that the Germans have become vandals, that you are barbarians murdering civilisation."

Insensate ferocity has long distinguished the mode of war practised by the German imperialists on neighbouring peoples. But the bandits and marauders who looted Belgian, French and Russian towns, who fired explosive bullets, who put new gases into use, who shelled Red Cross hospitals—these seem mere whelps by comparison with those who, in our time, organised the death factory near Lublin.

Only people whose hearts are petrified, who have lost the last human semblance could have put those devil's furnaces into operation, where hundreds of thousands of war prisoners and victims of the fascist terror were burnt with accursed German tidiness.

What monsters scattered the ashes of burnt corpses in fields and allotments as fertilisers for their cabbages!

The most wrathful words known to mankind are too feeble to brand the black crimes committed and being committed by the Hitlerite cannibals. No criminal code could have envisaged the sombre crimes committed

by the Nazi hangmen. What measure of punishment, then, will the day of judgment render?

That day is already not far distant. Each Soviet victory at the front, each Soviet victory in the rear, brings nearer the date of our just and terrible retribution.

Neither by shootings nor gallows, by murder vans nor devil's furnaces, nor by factories of death shall the Hitlerites intimidate mankind. Their bloody orgies will lead to an exactly contrary end. Their atrocities fan still higher the flame of hatred for the German invaders. All the freedom-loving peoples of the world hate them.

Victory is granted to people of strong will, people who are courageous and brave. Victory is granted to people of high morale, with a clean and noble spirit.

All the spiritual and physical forces of our people are given to-day to the struggle against the enemy. Everything is subordinated to this struggle. Everything personal retires into the background, and we judge a man by the degree of his participation in the war, by his behaviour in wartime and his contribution to the common cause of the people.

A new generation of people has grown up in our country: a new morale, new ideas determine the life, labour and being of the Soviet people. This morale has helped and still helps us to wage victorious war against fascism.

We are proud of the high moral level of our citizens. This pride is understandable and lawful.

We have surmounted the most difficult obstacles in the path to victory. We are filled with boundless energy and indomitable will. We do not spare ourselves the heavy demands of war.

*"Lenin, the great founder of our State, used to say that the chief virtues of Soviet men and women must be courage, valour, fearlessness in struggle, readiness to fight together with the people against the enemies of our country. These splendid virtues of the Bolshevik must become the virtues of millions and millions of the Red Army, of the Red Navy, of all the peoples of the Soviet Union."*

That is what the great Stalin said to our people in the first days of the Patriotic War.

The words of our leader reached the hearts of millions. They determine our life and our labour and our behaviour in wartime. They enter into the moral code of the Soviet man. Great and noble are the ideas and aims for which the precious blood of the best people of our country is being poured forth on the fields of battle, for which Soviet people are toiling in the rear. We live and fight in an historic time. The fate of coming generations depends on the success of our struggle—the fate of human civilisation.

*(Continued on page 2)*

### STORMING ON

The Soviet Information Bureau communique states that during August 13 west of Pskov the Soviet troops continued their offensive and captured by storm the town of Vyru (district centre of the Estonian S.S.R.), as well as more than 60 other populated places, including Sakhodi, Viaike, Madala, Sokiula, Palumetsa, Raudsepa and Ryuge, and the railway stations of Otsa, Nynova and Vyru.

North-west of Rezekne (Rezhitsa) they broke down enemy resistance and captured the town and railway station of Madena (district centre of the Latvian S.S.R.), as well as more than 20 other populated places, including Bikseri, Reti, Bulyni, Tsiskany, Lazdona, Ariki, Ranke and Tepshi.

North-west and west of Byelostok they continued

their offensive operations, in which they captured more than 80 populated places, including the town of Gonendz and the large populated places of Dobnary, Kuleshy, Bzheziny, Gelchin, Menzhenin and Vysoky Mazovetsk.

North and north-west of Sedlets they fought their way forward and captured more than 100 populated places including Drewnowo-Golyn, Boguty, Kamienczik-Wielki, Wojowka, Suleiow, Kury, Franczyszkow and Mostowka.

West of Sandomir, on the bridgehead on the left bank of the Vistula, they repelled counter-attacks launched by enemy infantry and tanks.

On other sectors of the front there were no essential changes.

During August 12 Soviet troops on all fronts disabled or destroyed 75 German tanks: 66 enemy planes were brought down in air combat or by A.A. fire.



## An Engagement on the Nyemen **GUNNERS v. PANZERS**

By War Correspondent Vadim Kozhevnikov

**T**HIS battle was fought on a green meadow between two copses on the banks of the Nyemen. The day was bright and sunny.

The howitzer batteries of a Soviet Guards unit had been on the road for many hours. The crews were badly in need of rest and the tractors of inspection. The commander ordered a halt, and the column swerved from the road, emerging in a cool, refreshing grove.

The enormous guns, to which anything less than a 3ft. wall seemed as fragile as porcelain, sidled among the slender trees, looking particularly ungainly and tremendous. These same howitzers had helped to smash the German defences at Vitebsk, and to storm the stone lairs of the enemy garrison at Vilno.

Then it happened. Fifty-eight German panzers and 20 troop-carriers bore down headlong on the Soviet batteries, which had not had time to get into fighting formation. All the advantages were with the enemy.

However, the Soviet gunners were not taken entirely by surprise. Some time ago the enemy had rushed considerable tank groups to aid the surrounded garrison at Vilno. These tanks had arrived too late, and in any case were helpless against the firm grip of the Soviet troops around the city. So they began to dart from place to place, thrashing around in a desperate attempt to emerge on the main road.

Knowing that these panzers were on the loose, the Soviet artillerymen left several guns at the ready before they settled down to rest. Look-out men and spotters were at their posts.

### **The Senior Lieutenant's Cap**

The panzers approached in open order, racing headlong straight for the copse, their cannon and machine-guns blazing. The charming trees around our batteries shivered and crashed.

Senior-Lieut. Virlov directed the battle. He flung his cap on the ground, dropped on one knee and shouted gaily: "Hold on, boys. I won't budge a step from this cap! Who'll take a bet on it?"

Captain Semyon Terekhov turned his gun on the enemy tanks and waited for them to get within close range. The gunlayer was killed. Terekhov replaced him. A direct hit set the first German tank ablaze. At the same moment a bullet wounded Terekhov in the chest. Before he collapsed he put another enemy tank out of action. He died by his gun.

Imanov's gun was concealed in a ryefield. He was nearest the enemy, and had to withstand the attack of

26 machines. His gun shield was smashed, but he resisted the temptation to fire until the leading tank was looming right over him, whereupon he killed it with his first shell. Imanov smashed four panzers. Though badly wounded by a shell splinter in the back he continued firing.

Sergeant-Major Shamin knocked out two tanks. Sergeant Amershayev accounted for two more. Pokrovsky died by the flaming hulk of the tank he had set alight.

The enemy tried to skirt the Soviet positions. The artillerymen turned their guns. To the rear of the batteries the drivers and men of the commissariat companies were holding their own against German Tommy-guns.

In two hours the Soviet guardsmen put 24 heavy German tanks out of commission. Towards the end of the second hour the enemy retreated.

### **ONE MONTH ON 2nd BALTIC FRONT**

*The following statement has been issued by the Soviet Information Bureau on enemy losses and war material captured by troops of the 2nd Baltic Front from July 10 to August 10, 1944:—*

Troops of the 2nd Baltic Front during their offensive operations between July 10 and August 10 of this year inflicted the following losses on the enemy in men and material:

*Destroyed:* 167 planes, 147 tanks and self-propelled guns, more than 1,000 guns of various calibres, 300 mortars, 1,450 machine guns, 1,560 lorries. The enemy lost more than 60,000 officers and men in killed alone.

*Captured:* 79 tanks, 820 guns of various calibres, 200 mortars, 1,653 machine guns, 10,899 rifles and Tommy-guns, 84 radio-transmitters, 869 lorries, 199 motor-cycles, 94 traction-engines and tractors, 467 carts with army supplies, 1,877 horses, 14 locomotives, 203 wagons, 203 stores of ammunition, arms, equipment and provisions; 9,636 officers and men were taken prisoner.

Thus the total German losses in the main types of war material and in men during one month's offensive engagements on the 2nd Baltic Front amount to: 69,636 men killed and taken prisoner; 167 planes; 226 tanks and self-propelled guns; 1,820 guns of various calibres; 500 mortars; 3,103 machine guns; 2,429 lorries.

## **VON PAULUS APPEALS: REMOVE HITLER!**

*Von Paulus, the German Field Marshal captured by the Red Army during the Stalingrad battle, has issued the following appeal to the German people and to German officers and men who are prisoners of war in the U.S.S.R:—*

**A**T Stalingrad the Sixth Army under my command, fulfilling the order of Adolf Hitler, fought to the last, in the hope that by sacrificing itself it could give the High Command an opportunity of ending the war with results more favourable for Germany. These hopes were not justified.

Recent events have made Germany's continuation of the war mere senseless bloodshed. The Red Army is advancing on a broad front and has already reached the frontiers of East Prussia. In France the Anglo-American troops have pierced the German defences and have broken through to terrain giving wide operational freedom.

Neither in the East nor in the West has Germany reserves capable of restoring the situation. The enemy's superiority in the air and on the sea is so overwhelming that the position, in consequence, is becoming more and more hopeless.

For Germany the war is lost. Germany finds herself in this position, despite the heroism of her army and of the people as a whole, through the fault of the State and military leadership of Adolf Hitler.

To this it should be added that the methods adopted by many of Hitler's representatives towards the population of the occupied countries evoke disgust in every real soldier and in every sincere German, and will bring upon us the most serious reproaches from all the peoples of the world. If the German people do not dissociate themselves from such crimes they will bear full responsibility for everything.

In view of these circumstances, I consider it my duty to make the following declaration to the whole German people and to my fellow-prisoners:

Germany must remove Adolf Hitler and set up a new State leadership, which will end the war and create conditions which will ensure the continued existence of our people and the establishment of peaceful, friendly relations with our present opponents.

(Signed) **PAULUS**, Gen. Field Marshal.

*Moscow, August 8, 1944.*

### **STRENGTH OF OUR SPIRIT—(continued)**

To be equal to the demands made by this historic epoch—that is the task of our high morale. We triumph and shall triumph once and for all over the enemy with our fighting armament. We triumph and shall triumph once and for all over the enemy with the strength of spirit of our people—a courageous, noble, clean spirit.



## THE ROAD TO PARIS

By Ilya Ehrenburg

WHEN our troops were approaching East Prussia and the capital of Poland, Hitler could stand the strain no longer. He began moving his divisions east. He wanted to stop our offensive. We did not stop.

Meanwhile our Allies got going. They moved west and got as far as Brest. They turned south and reached Nantes. They swept east towards Chartres. And from Chartres to Paris it is less than 60 miles. The climate of France is beginning to resemble the climate of Byelorussia, and the resemblance is scarcely likely to please the Germans.

As for us, we are doing our share. Every day we are liberating hundreds of inhabited places and killing thousands of Germans. Hitler did not stop us, and he has lost a good part of France.

A year ago Hitler admonished the Fritzes: "Keep your eyes on the west." He is not likely, at this stage, to advise them to gaze east. There's no comfort for the Fritzes in the east. The Fritzes have nowhere to turn their eyes: doom stares at them from every point of the compass.

Our soldiers are delighted with the fine work of the Allied soldiers. The era of yards is over and the era of miles has begun. Our Allies have clearly acquired the taste for the offensive. That is pleasing to us all. We are moving by different roads, but we are heading for the one place—Berlin.

Brittany, land of austere fishermen and tender lace-makers, has been liberated. They are proud folk who live there. The men who dared the storms to fish for sardines gave France her best sailors. In the cemeteries of Brittany there are empty graves—the graves of men drowned at sea. Every Breton knows how to fight the elements. For three years Brittany fought an unequal fight with the invaders, and now the day of liberation has dawned.

### The Volga of France

Girls in white caps hail the *francs tireurs*. Children hunt out the last Boches in the forests of Le Fayet. The dead bodies of Germans float down the Loire—and the Loire means to the French what the Volga means to us.

It is a broad river with islands overgrown with alders. All around are vineyards. Here the best French is spoken. Here are the Renaissance castles and mansions. Here the carefree Ronsard composed his sonnets. Here the indefatigable Balzac panted from excess of blood and excess of living.

Anjou's capital, beautiful Angers, noisy working-class Nantes, quiet Le Mans . . . Then there's Chartres and its ancient cathedral, its dreamy angels, its windows of blood and copper. Over the western portal is depicted the last judgment.

### THE OILWORKERS OF RZESZOW

AS soon as they had occupied the little-developed Rzeszow oilfield, the Germans tried to restart production. But the engineers and workers did not intend to supply the enemy with oil which would be used in the struggle against the Allies. They left the field and went home. A "special representative," Dr. Johann Pferd, arrived from Berlin. Police detachments made mass round-ups. All the workers and engineers were driven to the oilfield under threat of shooting and registered there. Twenty of them were hanged to intimidate the rest.

The workers were declared mobilised. Barracks were built for them and surrounded with barbed wire. The prisoners were watched by guards, who also escorted them to and from work. They were only permitted to go home once a week. German overseers stood over them with whips, which they never hesitated to use.

Besides the whips there existed a whole system of corporal punishments, administered in the Commandant's office. Those to be punished were issued with coupons. The right side of the coupon said: "Administer to bearer

Let the liberating troops glance at the sword of the judge. That sword demands the blood of the child-slayers.

From Chartres a wonderful road leads via Versailles to Paris. Is there a Parisian who doesn't know this road? Allied tanks are moving along it now. Soon we shall know what Paris did on the eve of its liberation. I am convinced that Paris is not waiting. Paris is fighting. Later, Paris will burst into flower. But now the hand of Paris reaches for a pistol or a stone.

The French have no tanks, no artillery. But they have the fury which helped their forefathers to smash their oppressors. French guerillas have liberated Vannes. They are fighting with grenades and old rifles, but they are fired with the wrath which has accumulated these four years.

The commander of a French guerilla detachment has issued this Order of the Day: "Frenchmen! Remember that every German who gets away alive from France will return to France—he or his son. Our Allies are driving back the Boches. We must kill the Boches. Not a single German must escape alive! Bullets for the invaders! Rope for the traitors!"

### They Know Their Enemy

Hitler's communiques offer consolation to the Germans: "We have abandoned Rennes. We have exterminated 89 French terrorists . . . We have retired north from Le Mans. We have exterminated over 100 French terrorists."

The cannibal is trying to justify himself: he has lost two French provinces—but he has killed a lot more Frenchmen! We know what Hitler means by "terrorists"—old peasants, nuns and children. But the guerillas have not yet been killed off. On the contrary! They are busy exterminating the Germans.

The French know whom they are fighting. Reports of the grim death factories in Lublin and Belzhitsa, where thousands of Frenchmen were slaughtered, have reached the guerillas: they have reached Paris, where the thunder of the patriot offensive already rends the black August sky.

The French know that in Lublin the Germans asphyxiated their victims with gases; that in Belzhitsa they electrocuted them. Every Frenchman, whatever his ideas or religion, will say, on learning of the fate of Leon Blum: "The Boches must not be allowed to get away alive. They must be driven not beyond the Rhine, but into the Louvre, into the Seine, into the ground."

That is what we are doing. We are drowning them in the Vistula, burying them in the Carpathians, in the sands of Livonia.

The road to Paris is a good road. We wish our comrades-in-arms God-speed. Soon Paris too will be on the move. Paris too, will march to Berlin.

—strokes with a rubber club." On the other side was a receipt for the punishment.

Pszebyrzewski, a Polish engineer, showed a *Pravda* correspondent one such coupon. He himself had been beaten twice. On the first occasion he was given 15 strokes, on the second, 25. Many died during the beatings. A miner foreman, Zygmunt Kruszelnicki, went insane. A list of persons shot and imprisoned in concentration camps at the Brzozow oilfield from Rzeszow district alone contained over 500 names.

Many Poles joined the guerillas. A detachment named after Mickiewicz, organised by a local teacher, set fire to a large quantity of oil.

An old engineer, Wladislaw Bombisz, described the German occupation in these words: "We lived in utter darkness, and learned that the sun shone somewhere only through a secret radio set belonging to the local priest: this kept life in us."

Today the streets of Brzozow are full of men wearing red and white sleevebands. These are Polish guerillas, who help the Red Army patrols. The Polish and Soviet flags wave from the balconies.



# THE BIGGEST DEATH FACTORY IN EUROPE (2)

By Konstantin Simonov

*Below is a further instalment of Simonov's account of the "vernichtungslager" of Lublin.*

As you drive along the Chelm highway, the outlines of numerous low, grey-roofed buildings loom up on your right, about 300 yards from the road. These buildings are arranged in precise rows and separated by barbed wire fences. You get the impression of a largish town, with accommodation for tens of thousands of people.

You turn off the road and drive through a gateway in the barbed wire fence past rows of neat huts with trim front gardens, rustic armchairs and benches. Here the guards and the officers in charge of the camp were quartered. Here too was a smallish hut which served as a brothel for the guards. The women were selected exclusively from among the prisoners, and as soon as any one of them became pregnant she was sent to be done away with.

Further along the drive are the sheds in which clothing taken from the prisoners was disinfected. The disinfectant was introduced through pipes running along the roofs and ceilings. During the process, the pipes were stopped up and the doors hermetically sealed.

The structure of these sheds, with their walls of rough planks and their light doors, is too flimsy to suggest that they might have been used for any but their apparent purpose. But a little further away is another disinfecting chamber, built on entirely different principles. It is a room about eighteen feet square and a little over six feet high. Walls, ceiling and floor are all built of solid grey concrete. The other sheds were equipped with shelves for clothing. There are no shelves here. This room is absolutely bare. A single large steel door hermetically closes the entrance. It is fastened from outside by means of impressive steel bars.

\* \* \*

In the walls of this concrete vault are three apertures.

Two of them are in an outer wall, and are fitted with pipes leading out into the open. The third aperture is in an inner wall. It is a spy-hole, a small square window barred on the inside by a stout steel grid fitted into the concrete. A thick pane of glass covers the far side of the aperture.

What is on the other side? We leave the chamber, and find that built on to it is another, smaller room, also of concrete. The glass-covered side of the spy-hole is flush with the wall of this room. Here there is an electric switch. And on the floor stand several hermetically sealed cylindrical tins labelled with the word "Cyclone," and in smaller letters "For special use in the Eastern Regions."

About 250 people could be packed at a time into the adjoining chamber. They were stripped naked, and packed so tightly that they occupied little space. The steel door was closed and its edges were sealed with clay. Specially trained operators wearing gas masks then poured the "Cyclone" from the cylindrical tins into the chamber. The small, bluish, innocent-looking crystals, on contact with the oxygen in the air, began to generate poisonous gases which simultaneously affected all centres of the human organism.

Members of the S.S. squad turned on the switch in the small annexe, illuminating the poison chamber, and through the spy-hole watched all the stages of asphyxiation, which, according to various witnesses, lasted from two to ten minutes. The window is set in the wall at roughly the height of the human face. The people in the death chamber were packed so close that they did not fall as they died, but remained in an upright position.

Incidentally, "Cyclone" really is a disinfecting substance. It was actually used for disinfecting clothes in the neighbouring sheds. Everything looked fair and above-board. The lethal action of the substance depended on the quantity which was introduced into the chambers.

A few hundred paces further on is a vacant site, where some sort of building must have stood. And indeed, until the autumn of 1943 there was a crematorium here. That autumn another more efficient

crematorium, which I shall describe later, was completed, and the one on this site was dismantled. A primitive structure, its capacity was too small, far below that of the well-designed gas chamber.

It was in fact nothing but a large shed where two huge steel furnaces stood on brick foundations on a cement floor. The cremation process took far too long. True, it was not intended that it should reduce the corpses completely to ashes, but it took at least two hours for the bodies to fall apart into charred bones.

The total capacity of the crematorium was not more than 150 bodies per day, whereas the gas chamber could dispose of 250 persons at once. Before the new crematorium was built, on days when large numbers of persons were exterminated some of the bodies had to be removed in trucks to a field outside the camp, where they were buried.

The fence surrounding the camp consists of two rows of posts 8ft. high, strung with barbed wire which juts out at the top to form a horizontal screen. Between the two rows is a 6ft. space, across which a third row of wire is strung diagonally from the top of one row to the bottom of the other. The wire used to carry an electric current powerful enough to kill a man.

Originally the fence was not electrified. The Germans were induced to take this further precaution by an episode which occurred in May, 1942. A party of 17 Russian prisoners-of-war, who had been sent to Krembecki forest near the camp to bury persons who had been shot, used their spades to kill seven Germans, and ran away. Two of them were caught, but the other fifteen escaped.

This encouraged some other Russian prisoners-of-war to make the attempt. There were 150 of them—all that remained of 1,000 brought to the camp in August, 1941—and since the May incident they had all been confined in the same block. One June night, collecting all the available blankets, and laying five one on top of another, they contrived a sort of bridge across the barbed wire. It was very dark. All but about fifty got away. Those who remained in the camp were immediately led out, laid on the ground, and shot with tommy-guns.

The Germans then hastily electrified the fences of four out of five blocks. In the fifth women were confined.

\* \* \*

We reach another auxiliary block. It is less carefully fenced off than the rest. That is not surprising, for only the dead or the half-dead were brought here, or persons scheduled for immediate execution, and they were escorted by a heavy guard. Behind this fence nobody except the S.S. men and the crematorium operators lived longer than an hour.

In the middle of an empty field a tall, square brick smoke-stack rises from a low rectangular brick building. This is the crematorium. It has been preserved intact. A little farther on are the remains of a large brick structure. In the few hours that elapsed between the time the news of the Red Army's break-through reached the camp and the arrival of our troops, the German camp personnel tried to obliterate the traces of their crimes. They had no time to blow up the crematorium, though they set fire to the auxiliary building. But the evidence remains.

The crematorium annexe consists of three principal chambers. One was found full of half-charred clothing. These garments had belonged to the last contingent of victims, and had not yet been removed. Of the next chamber only part of one wall remains standing. Into this wall are fitted several pipes of a smaller diameter than those we saw in the gas chamber. This chamber was also a gas chamber in which asphyxiation was practised, whether with "Cyclone" or some other gas has not yet been ascertained. On days when the slaughter was unusually heavy and the main gas chamber could not cope with the job, a proportion of the victims were brought here to be gassed.

(To be continued)

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