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GUERRILLAS WHO MAKE HISTORY

From a "Pravda" article:

TWENTY-SEVEN names are added to the family of Heroes of the Soviet Union. Among them is the legendary "Dyadka" ("Uncle") Minai (Minai Phillipovich Shmirov, leader of an underground party organisation), Vladimir Tsaruk, Boris Bulak, who commands a guerilla detachment and Grigory Tarkuyev, fearless wrecker of enemy trains. More than a thousand persons have been awarded the Order of the Red Banner. The Soviet people greet their brave sons, the glorious guerillas, men and women.

All through the Patriotic War they have been the Red Army's reliable helpers. Their struggle in the rear has worried the life out of enemy divisions before they even reached the front. They have disorganised, destroyed and cut communications, smashed up-garrisons and military headquarters. The guerillas operate in collaboration with the Red Army. They have given the Red Army particularly important help in our summer offensive. They have helped to force great water barriers, to storm towns and fortified areas. They disrupt the movement of enemy reserves to the front.

Guerilla formations led by the fabled Ukrainian commander Sidor Kovpak, twice-decorated Hero of the Soviet Union, carried out deep in the Carpathians a raid in which nearly 3,000 enemy officers and men were killed, and 19 trains, 41 oil derricks, several oil refineries and storage tanks containing 50,000 tons of oil were destroyed.

The Byelorussian guerillas have covered themselves with undying glory. They number more than 300,000 courageous people whose sole aim in life was to wreak merciless vengeance on the invader. The German-

Fascist army on the territory of Byelorussia operated in conditions of constant stress. Large forces had to be diverted to guard communications, bridges, stores and workshops.

The guerillas of Byelorussia prepared the ground for the Red Army's successful offensive throughout the territory of the Republic.

Byelorussia was the scene of the so-called "war of rails." In the summer of last year guerilla detachments aiding the advancing Red Army liquidated railway guards, captured sidings, and in two nights blew up 36,000 rails. In June they blew up 47,000 rails in seven days and paralysed evening traffic both at the front and deep in the rear.

By surprise attacks in the rear guerilla detachments and formations captured several towns and populated places: 1,500 guerillas from the "Vorniansky" Brigade actively assisted units of the Red Army in liberating the regional town of Vileika.

The historic service the guerillas of Byelorussia have rendered their people include the saving of hundreds of thousands of Byelorussians from extermination by the Germans, or from being driven into Hitlerite slavery.

The strength of the guerilla movement has its source deep in its patriotic, popular character, and in the initiative displayed by the mass of the people led by the Bolshevik Party. The Bolsheviks of the Ukraine and Byelorussia were the soul, the organisers and leaders of the guerilla movement.

While continuing to smash the enemy, the Byelorussians have already set about reconstructing their ruined towns and villages, their industry, transport and agriculture. The bright days of liberation have dawned.

Glory to the Soviet guerillas! Glory to the peoples' avengers!

ENEMY ATTACKS REPELLED

The Soviet Information Bureau communique states that during August 15, north and west of Petseri (Pechory), the Soviet troops captured more than 80 populated places including Mikitomae, Yarvepa, Levi, Vana Koiola, Mustaiye, Osula, Urvaste, Kassi and Madise, and the railway stations of Ilumetsa, Orava, Kurenurme, Vabina and Anne.

In the area of the town of Rasseinyai they repulsed enemy infantry and tank attacks and inflicted heavy losses in men and material.

East of Praga they repulsed attacks made by large forces of enemy infantry and tanks.

North-west and west of Sandomir they continued fighting to extend the bridgehead on the left bank of the Vistula, and captured several populated places.

West of the town of Sanok, they repulsed enemy infantry and tank attacks.

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

During August 14, Soviet troops on all fronts destroyed or disabled 114 German tanks; 29 enemy planes were brought down in air combat or by A.A. fire.

"GOOD LUCK TO YOU"

Moscow Comment on Southern France Landings

Extract from Leon Volynsky's broadcast over Moscow radio:

Not so long ago von Kluge was rash enough to aver that he would deal the Allied armies a blow which they would remember for generations to come. Real Prussian

bombast. Words are cheap. It is making them good that counts, and that is far beyond von Kluge's power.

And now news has come of the appearance of British, American and French fleets off the southern coast of France, and of the successful start of landing operations. Good luck to them!

There is another side of the fighting in France that must not be forgotten. The report on partisan operations in France since June 6, that is to say, since the first Allied landing, speaks eloquently enough for itself. By their gallant operations in the enemy rear and along communication lines, the French patriots have rendered the Allies valuable aid both in Normandy and in Brittany.

Now that events in Southern France are opening a fresh page in the struggle for the liberation of France, the enemy will be forced to scatter his already dwindling forces, and that when he is almost without reserves.

The days of the detestable Hitler regime and its "New Order" are numbered. There is every reason to hope that the co-ordinated, mighty, overwhelming operations of the great anti-Hitler Powers will cut the number to a minimum.

EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

The All-Russian Education Conference opened in Moscow yesterday. People's Commissars for Education of Union and Autonomous Republics, Directors of Regional, Territorial, District and Town Educational Departments, Members of the Academy for Pedagogical Studies, and prominent school-teachers are taking part.

CAPTURE OF OSSOVETS

By Lieutenant-Colonel P. Milovanov, Red Army

AFTER shattering the German defences along the river Brzozowka north-west of Byelostok, the Soviet forces ran into another strong defence belt about twelve miles further on. It shielded Ossoverts at a distance varying between three and six miles, beginning on the river Bobr east of Gonendz, a strongpoint covering the approaches to the town. From there it stretched southward, reinforced by a thick network of fortified villages, and then turned west, fringing Ossoverts from the south.

The defences were manned by the retreating enemy units which had fallen back on Ossoverts, stiffened by a few reserve groups from the rear. The Soviet troops drove a wedge right through them straight from the march. The Germans counter-attacked with infantry and tanks supported by heavy artillery, mined the roads, destroyed the bridges and the railway.

These demolitions complicated the task of getting tanks, self-propelled guns and artillery through in the wake of the infantry. The infantrymen covered the swamps with branches and dragged the guns across. Gunners, tank men and self-propelled gun crews laid a foundation of logs for their equipment. Not once did the infantry men have to manage without artillery support. The self-propelled guns paved a way for them and took on German tanks during the counter-attacks. The Soviet Air Force, too, gave formidable support, and accounted for a considerable proportion of German guns and tanks destroyed.

Gradually the battle front approached Ossoverts, enveloping the town from the south-east. Units advancing along the left bank of the Bobr approached Gonendz, three miles to the north-east. Other units by-passed the fortress from the south, cut the highway leading southward and approached the river. A German group pressed back to the waterway continued to resist stubbornly.

Guns Manhandled Across Swamps

The first task was to capture Gonendz. One infantry unit, after forcing the Bobr to the north-east, emerged north of the town. This unit had to operate on excessively difficult terrain. The banks of the Bobr, particularly the western bank, are flanked by swamps several miles deep and impassable even for horse-driven vehicles. The river, too, is no mean obstacle. It is between 75 and 90ft. wide on this sector, and 6 to 9ft. deep. Despite all this, the infantrymen got themselves and the heavy guns across.

After a feint attack from the east, followed by a blow from the main forces, striking from the south, Gonendz was captured, and Ossoverts was approached simultaneously from north-east, and south-east. One Red Army unit caught the Germans napping by advancing from Gonendz along the swampy bank of the river. The enemy had believed it impossible for a force of any size to approach along this sector. But the Red Army men got through and approached the fortress and railway station from the north. Another unit advanced across the marshes south-east of Ossoverts. Here the bogs are overgrown with shrubs, and are passable even for tanks.

ONE MONTH ON 1st UKRAINIAN FRONT

The Soviet Information Bureau states that troops of the 1st Ukrainian Front commanded by Marshal of the Soviet Union Koniev, during the period of offensive operations from July 13 to August 12 this year, inflicted the following losses on the enemy in men and material:

Destroyed: 567 planes, 1,404 tanks and self-propelled guns, 1,220 guns of various calibres, 1,230 mortars, 2,100 machine guns, 80 armoured cars, 190 armoured troop-carriers, 1,350 lorries, 1,000 carts with military supplies.

The enemy lost 140,000 officers and men in killed alone.

Captured: 120 planes, 537 tanks, 2,395 guns of various calibres, 2,638 mortars, 3,635 machine-guns,

Ossoverts is an ancient fortress, which the Germans had strengthened with ferro-concrete. In its reconstructed form it was a tough nut to crack. Heavy cannon and machine-gun fire poured from its height. Before storming the fortress the greater part of the fortifications had to be reduced and the fire silenced.

Our artillery pounded the fortress steadily for several hours, and a mass air bombardment followed. Wave after wave of Petliakovs and Ilyushins dropped their loads, snuffing out the A.A. batteries in the first few minutes. After the destruction of a number of strong-points the enemy's fire weakened considerably.

A siege began in the evening and continued throughout the night. By the morning both town and fortress had been cleared of the enemy. According to prisoners the preliminary bombardment took a heavy toll of the garrison.

GUNNERS SHIELD VISTULA BRIDGEHEAD

By Captain Bubennov

West of Sandomir the enemy is mounting fierce counter-attacks against the Soviet units which have occupied extensive positions on the left bank of the Vistula, and is sustaining very heavy casualties. In one day's fighting Soviet units established beyond the Vistula knocked out 52 German tanks. Credit for this feat belongs mainly to the artillery. That same day the Germans lost several thousand men killed or captured.

For their counter-attacks on the left bank of the Vistula the German Command called in several fresh tank divisions and infantry brigades formed from rear units. They managed to get together a strong tank and infantry group to co-ordinate with the troops already engaged in this sector. An order issued by the German Command and seized by the Soviet troops, shows that the task of the enemy tank units, supported by attack planes, was to split our forces operating in this sector and seize a very important bridge.

The Germans have not given up hope of achieving this. On one sector they used two infantry regiments and seventy tanks, supported by groups of thirty to forty planes which attacked the Soviet positions from the air. A fierce battle developed. The Germans succeeded at first in approaching our lines, but were stopped by the gunners and hurled back with severe losses.

The artillerymen played a conspicuous part in this battle. They bore the main blow of the German assault. A mass of tanks bore down on them, but crews stuck to their posts, knocking out enemy tanks at close range. When their guns were put out of action they seized their tommy-guns and gave their attention to the enemy infantry following in the wake of the tanks. In a single morning they destroyed 22 machines.

The Germans counter-attacked simultaneously on another sector, employing up to fifty tanks and nearly two regiments of infantry, but fell back without achieving anything, having lost 18 tanks and about a thousand men killed.

39 armoured cars, 277 armoured troop-carriers, 10,377 lorries, 41 locomotives, 1,286 railway wagons, 28 trains, 7,019 carts with military supplies, 12,060 horses, 190 ammunition arms, equipment and provision stores.

32,360 German officers and men were captured.

Thus in one month's offensive operations of troops of the 1st Ukrainian Front, which ended in the rout of the enemy grouping in the Lvov direction and the liberation of the Soviet Ukrainian Towns of Lvov, Stanislav, Drohobych, Stryi, Borislav, Sambor and Rava Russkaya, German losses in the main types of military equipment and in men were: 172,360 captured or killed, 687 planes, 1,941 tanks and self-propelled guns, 3,615 guns of various calibres, 3,868 mortars, 5,735 machine-guns and 11,727 lorries.

THE FATE OF THE FIRM OF PALM BROS.

By Ilya Ehrenburg

BEFORE me lie some letters, copies of several documents, and a bundle of photographs. They tell the story of a German family, a story as edifying as a parable.

Otto Palm, aged 62, lives at Neukochen, near Stuttgart. On the death of his brother Hermann Palm, he became sole proprietor of the firm of Palm Brothers, paper manufacturers, of Neukochen.

Otto Palm had three children: two sons and a daughter. The elder son, Sigurd, was his father's hope. From the age of ten he studied the paper trade, preparing to step into Otto's shoes. But while studying the paper trade, with special reference to the world market, Sigurd did not forget that he was a born conqueror. Like other of his fellow countrymen, he wanted to subjugate the world for the greater prosperity of the Reich and the firm of Palm Brothers.

And so, as a corporal of the 258th Artillery Regiment, he marched cheerfully on Moscow. But something went wrong, and on September 10, 1941, Sigurd Palm was buried in Borisov. Over his grave was planted a cross and a swastika, ornate enough to testify to the importance of the firm of Palm Brothers.

Old Palm's daughter, Ingeborg, died suddenly of heart failure; about the same time her year-old son died. As for Otto's second heir, Wilfried Palm, he continued to conquer the world, first in France and then in the east.

A Cushy Job for an Heir

After the loss of his elder son, Palm realised that the conquest of the world was not without its unpleasant side. On January 15, 1942, he wrote an application to the High Command of the German armed forces. He informed them of the death of his first-born and of his daughter and grand-child. He pointed out that his late daughter had married a native of Alsace, and that his son-in-law could not, therefore, become head of the firm of Palm.

"I request," he wrote, "that my second son Wilfried be released from military service, as he is the sole heir of one of the oldest firms in Germany. Our firm is now working on war orders. If my son Wilfried is killed, it will pass into strange hands."

Before me lies a photograph of old Palm. He is a corpulent German without a neck, but with a starched collar. His breast is decorated with the Military Service Cross.

He ends his application with the words: "Heil Hitler." But, being a German of the old school, he possibly has his doubts about Corporal Hitler's military genius.

A MEMORIAL TO REPIN

By Pavel Radimov

ON August 5, the foundation stone of a monument to the great Russian artist Ilya Repin was laid at Chuguyev, in the Kharkov region, the town where he was born and spent his childhood and youth. At the age of 19 he went to St. Petersburg on money he had earned by working for an icon painter in his home town.

The first picture to win him renown was his "Barge-Haulers on the Volga," painted when he was 29 years old. He produced his greatest works in the 'eighties of the last century, which saw the completion of "The Procession of the Cross in Kursk Province," "Ivan the Terrible and his son Ivan Zaporog," "Cossacks Writing a Letter to the Sultan," and "Unexpected Confession." About the same time he produced a remarkable gallery of portraits of Russian public figures—writers, composers, actors.

In 1926 the Soviet Government sent a delegation of artists to visit Repin, who was living in Koukkala, then under Finnish rule. Their instructions were to purchase from him some paintings for Russian museums, and so to help the great artist materially, for he was known to be in poor circumstances. The delegation consisted of the artists Brodsky, Katzman and myself. Repin

The High Command replied at once to the esteemed manufacturer: Wilfried Palm could not be discharged, but in view of services rendered by the old firm, it had been decided to assign him to a regiment which was "incurring minimal risk."

To judge by the photographs, Wilfried Palm was a typical Fritz, tall, pallid, with bulging expressionless eyes. His intellectual horizon may be judged from the following entry: *May 7, 1940*. Wunder made bet with Palm. If the war ends by Christmas, 1940, Wunder will pay Palm five marks."

The son did not possess his father's intelligence. He believed that Corporal Hitler would conquer Europe by Christmas, 1940.

He sat snugly in the rear for over two years. His father sent him postcards adorned with a view of the paper mills, and Wilfried waited patiently for the conquest of the world.

The war front drew a little nearer. Wilfried amused himself with amateur photography.

On June 7, 1944, Otto wrote to his son: "At last the long-awaited Anglo-Saxon invasion has begun. It is still not clear what turn events will take, but let us hope we are nearing decisive battles and that we shall see peace this year. As for myself, I have to attend a conference in Vienna in the interests of the firm. I shall go there next week, if it is possible to travel on the railways."

The Front Comes to Wilfried

I don't know whether Otto Palm still believed in the conquest of the world, but he still believed in the future of his firm: he knew that his son was a long way behind the front line.

Wilfried photographed Sigurd's ornate grave and sent the snap to his father. The old man said to himself: "He is in Borisov. That's far enough from the front."

But something unforeseen happened: before Wilfried knew where he was, the Russians were on top of him. Wilfried did not go to the front. The front came to him. And on July 1, 1944, Major Chebonenko's guardsmen killed Wilfried Palm without the least thought for the old firm.

Old Otto has plenty to think about. He lost two sons in Borisov: one when the Germans invaded the city, and the other when they fled. In Borisov the fate of the Neukochen paper industry was decided.

Possibly old Palm is now cautiously hinting that the interests of the respectable old firm demand the removal of Corporal Hitler. But no putsch can save the situation. I am convinced the old firm will soon pass into strange hands. And they won't be German hands.

received us very hospitably, asked us many questions about our country, which he always loved dearly, about Soviet art and the new way of life. He was 82.

I remember him well, a pensive old man with waving grey hair, in a tussore silk jacket and a flowing white tie. He talked a great deal about literature. He knew the classics well, quoted Homer and Theocritus. In his garden, where Gorky, Chaliapin, Ivan Pavlov and Vladimir Mayakovsky had once walked, he had paths and flowerbeds named after his favourite authors.

His right arm had become useless from over-exertion, and he had learned to paint with his left hand. The irresistible passion of the painter burned strongly in him to the very last days of his life.

He was kind enough to pose for us. When we suggested that we should like to do his portrait he went at once to the chair where models generally posed for him. He sat for three hours. The study I did on that occasion is now in the State Tretyakov Gallery.

WOMEN'S MEETING IN MOSCOW

Moscow Radio will broadcast the proceedings of the Fourth Meeting of the Soviet Women's Anti-Fascist Committee, to be held in the Soviet capital on Sunday, August 20, at 5 p.m. (British Double Summer Time.)

THE BIGGEST DEATH FACTORY IN EUROPE (4)

By Konstantin Simonov

I HAVE related the history of the Lublin "annihilation camp" and have described its present appearance. I have had an opportunity to examine perhaps only one hundredth part of the evidence which will eventually become available to the investigating commission. I have talked with Dr. Barychev, a Russian war prisoner, who was head doctor at the infirmary attached to the camp, with civilian engineers and workers who were employed on the construction site, with people who were in the camp either as war prisoners or as ordinary prisoners, as well as with S.S. men who served in the camp guard.

The primary consideration which governed the actions of the S.S. men who ruled the camp was that all persons brought there, whether war prisoners or ordinary prisoners, whether Russians, Ukrainians, Poles, Byelorussians, Jews, Frenchmen or Greeks, would be annihilated sooner or later, and would never leave the camp alive to tell the tale. This basic consideration determined both the conduct of the guards and the methods of annihilation employed in the camp.

Rumours about the death camp might of course reach the ears of people living round about, but that didn't worry the Germans. They felt themselves masters in Poland. They believed the territory known as the "Polish Government Generalship" had been conquered for ever. Those within its borders would live in terror of the Germans. Therefore the gruesome rumours that spread all over Poland were from the Germans' point of view, even desirable.

On days when the slaughter was heavy, the stench of corpses permeated the environs of the camp. Even as far away as Lublin, people had to cover their faces with their handkerchiefs. The Germans liked to see it. This would impress all Poland with the strength of their rule and with the horrors in store for everybody who dared to resist.

The pillar of smoke that for weeks and months on end rose from the tall chimneystack of the main crematorium was visible from far off. But that did not worry the Germans. Like the stench of the corpses, this smoke was a means of inspiring terror. In the view of all, long columns of people were marched along the Chelm highway and entered the gate of the Lublin camp, never to emerge. That, too, was proof of the power of the Germans. It showed Poland that they could do what they liked, and nobody could call them to account.

* * *

It was a strict rule that all prisoners brought to the camp before being assigned to the general huts, had to complete twenty-one days' quarantine in the infirmary. This was assuredly a sound medical principle. However, one detail must be added: on the orders of the Commander of the camp all war prisoners sent to the infirmary for quarantine were assigned to huts where there were patients suffering from active tuberculosis. In each of the frightfully overcrowded huts there were 200 consumptives, and in each 200 other prisoners were packed to undergo quarantine. It is not surprising that 70 to 80 per cent. of those who died a so-called "natural" death in the camp, died of tuberculosis.

In essential, the infirmary was only another section of the "annihilation camp." The methods of slaughter were many and varied.

The first slaughterhouse was a wooden booth between two rows of barbed wire. From one end of the hut to the other, just beneath the ceiling, stretched a long beam from which hung eight leather nooses. Here all prisoners who had become enfeebled were hanged. In the early days there was a shortage of labour, and the S.S. men didn't destroy healthy people just for amusement. They only hanged those who had been weakened by hunger and disease.

Only ordinary prisoners were hanged in this booth. The war prisoners were a privileged group. When they became too enfeebled for work they were led in groups outside the camp and shot. They were only hanged

when there were too few to make up a party. It wasn't worth while to send one or two under escort into the forest. So they were hanged together with the ordinary prisoners.

Soon the first primitive crematorium with the two furnaces described in a previous article was built. There was some delay with the gas chamber however, and at this period the following method of slaughtering the feeble and sick was mainly employed: A small room was built on to the crematorium, with a door so narrow and low that when a man was pushed into it he willy-nilly had to bow his head. On the other side of the entrance stood two S.S. men, one on each side of the door, armed with a short, heavy iron rod. When the victim squeezed through the door with his head bent he was clubbed with an iron bar on the nape of the neck. If one S.S. man missed, the other struck. Usually this was enough to kill the victim, but if he was only stunned he was counted for dead and put into the furnace. It was a general rule in the camp that any prisoner who fell and could not rise should be regarded as dead.

Sometimes people in the last stage of exhaustion were killed by being kept in the cold for hours on end. Then there was the "evening exercise." People exhausted by the day's work were compelled, after evening inspection, to run for an hour and a half around the living block; the circuit was about a mile. In the morning the dead bodies lying along the fence were gathered up.

* * *

These were, so to speak, ordinary everyday methods of killing. But the beasts who had once tasted human blood were not satisfied. Killing became not only their job, but their entertainment. I shall not dwell on the amusements common to all German camps, such as picking off a man with a rifle from the watch tower, or beating to death hundreds of starving people. I shall only mention amusements peculiar to Lublin camp.

A favourite practical joke of the S.S. men was to pick on one of the prisoners, accuse him of violating the rules of the camp, and tell him he was going to be shot. The prisoner was put against the wall and the S.S. man would put a revolver to his forehead. In most cases the victim, expected to be shot, would instantly close his eyes. An S.S. man would fire in the air, and at that instant another S.S. man who had crept up to the prisoner unperceived would strike him over the head with a piece of heavy board. The prisoner would drop senseless. When he came to and opened his eyes the S.S. man standing over him would jeer: "Here you are, in the next world. As you see, there are Germans in the next world, too. You can't escape them anywhere!" And since the victim was usually unable to rise, the S.S. man, having had his fun, would finally shoot him.

Another "practical joke" was played in the big pool located in one of the sections of the camp. The victim would be made to strip, then pushed into the pool. When he tried to climb out of the water the S.S. men standing on the edge would kick him back into it. If he managed to evade their blows he had the right to climb out. He was given exactly three seconds to dress. His tormentors would time him, and if he hadn't dressed within the prescribed limit—and of course no one managed to get dressed in three seconds—he would be thrown back and tortured until he drowned from sheer exhaustion.

"Practical joke" No. 3, invariably ended in the death of the butt of the joke. Before a prisoner, guilty of some misdemeanour was killed, he would be led over to the large, sparkling white wringer used by the camp laundry and made to place his fingers between the heavy rubber rollers. Then an S.S. man, or possibly another prisoner forced into their service, would turn the handle. The victim's arms would literally be mangled up to the shoulder. His agonising screams afforded great entertainment. Naturally, a man with mangled arms, like any other person unable to work, would be destroyed.

(To be continued)

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