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PATRIOTIC WAR:
80 YEARS
SINCE THE BEGINNING**

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EDITOR'S LETTER

FACE OF WAR



For the second month in a row, the main theme of our issue is war! Or rather, the memory of the war. Every year on May 9 we celebrate Victory Day, the greatest of our great victories. Usually we miss to recall the beginning of the Great Patriotic War. But this year, the date of June 22 is marking the 80th year since the beginning of the worst tragedy in our history.

The Great Patriotic War which began on June 22, 1941, was a war of extermination and enslavement. The physical destruction of the Jewish population of Europe by the Nazis is widely known. But a terrible fate was prepared for the Slavic population, especially Russians. The Nazis called the Slavs “Untermensch” which is translated as “sub-human”. According to Himmler, “Sub-human is a biological being created by

nature, with arms, legs, a semblance of a brain, with eyes and a mouth. Yet this terrible creature is only partially human. It has facial features similar to human ones, however a subhuman is positioned spiritually and psychologically lower than any animal. There is a chaos of wild, unbridled passions inside this creature: an unnamed need to destroy, the most primitive desires and undisguised meanness.”

62 countries with a total population of 1.7 billion people participated in World War II. The total losses in World War II ranged from 50 to 80 million people, of which 26.6 million were Soviet citizens. 6.8 million of our military order were killed in battles, and 1.8 million were tortured in captivity. The rest of the victims – in fact, two thirds of the deaths – were civilians: 7.4 million people were exterminated deliberately, 2.2 million people died in slave labor in Germany and 4.1 million people died from hunger and disease. This is what the war that began 80 years ago brought to the Soviet people.

Everlasting memory!

Victor Loupan



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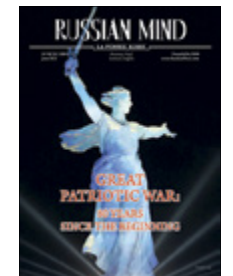
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HIGHLIGHTS

GREAT WAR

*Before the attack against the USSR,
the German army perceived World War II as a kind of “walk”*

VICTOR LOUPAN,
Head of the Editorial Board

In the May issue of the magazine “Russian Mind” dedicated to the celebration of Victory Day, your humble servant wrote that a great victory was preceded by a great war. Because the other side of greatness is negative. Victory is a holiday! Victory is joy! But war is horror! War is woe! Moreover, a single recollection of war pushes a person to a metaphysical comparison with the infernal principle. When something went wrong, my grandmother often said: “If only there was no war!” And these words, spoken almost swiftly, immediately downplayed the importance of the seemingly serious issue.

The beginning of the fascist aggression

The war that we call the “Great Patriotic War” began at dawn on June 22, 1941. The German army, which had long been pulling troops to the western border of the USSR, unexpectedly went on the offensive. I say “suddenly”, but not because the war was unexpected – it was expected, it was written about, it was talked about, – but because the non-aggression pact signed in 1939 was still effective between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.

It has been written a lot about this treaty both before and after 1991. In the West, it is still argued that it

became the main impetus for the outbreak of World War II. This is, of course, extremely tendentious! Because everything looked completely different from the point of view of the Soviet government.

The treaty between Germany and the USSR was signed on August 23, 1939. But before that, in the same 1939, Soviet-Anglo-French negotiations were held in Moscow, which convinced the Soviet leaders of the unwillingness of Western countries

the parties undertook to refrain from aggressive actions and attacks against each other. In the event of an attack against one of the parties by a third power, they pledged to not provide support to the aggressor state and avoid participating in allied groups directed against one of the parties, resolving disputes and conflicts between themselves peacefully.

The agreement signed on August 23, 1939 in Moscow by the chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR, Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov and German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop for a period of 10 years, also contained a “secret protocol” dividing the spheres of influence “in the case of a territorial-political reorganisation of the regions that are part of the Polish State”.

It should not be forgotten that the above-mentioned took place before the outbreak of World War II. In June 1941, the war was going on for two years, although this, perhaps, cannot be called a war.

The hostilities began on September 1, 1939, when German troops crossed the Polish border, which provoked a declaration of war on Germany by France, Britain and a number of other European countries maintaining allied obligations with Poland. The United States declared its neutrality.



to cooperate with the USSR in organising a joint rebuff to the then emerging fascist aggression. Under the fear of creation of a united anti-Soviet front, the Soviet government was forced to look for an alternative way to ensure the national security. That is why both Stalin and Molotov accepted the German proposal to conclude a non-aggression pact.

There was already a neutrality and non-aggression pact between Germany and the USSR signed back in 1926. Based on its main provisions,

France and England, although they declared war on Germany, did nothing. Therefore, having not received any support from the West, the Polish armed forces practically ceased to exist by mid-September. On the evening of September 17, the Polish government and high command simply fled to Romania. On the same day, a note issued by the Soviet government and served to the Polish ambassador to the USSR, stated that “since the Polish state and its government ceased to exist, the Soviet Union is obliged to take the lives and property of the population of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus under its protection”. These formerly Polish territories are still part of Ukraine and Belarus.

Fall of Western Europe

On April 9, 1940, after almost a year of inactivity on the western front, Germany invaded Denmark and Norway and occupied them in two days. On May 10, Germany invaded Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. The Dutch government surrendered on May 15, and the Belgian on the 28th of May. The invasion of France began on June 5, and on the 14th of June the German army entered Paris without a fight. And on June 22, in the same carriage where Germany’s surrender was signed in 1918, the disgraceful Franco-German armistice was signed, under which France tolerated the occupation of most of its territory, the demobilisation of almost the entire land army and the internment of the navy and aviation. In the so-called “free zone”, the dictatorial regime of Marshal Pétain set a course for close cooperation with Germany – the so-called “collaborationism”. The military power of France was so great that its sudden and complete defeat defied any rational explanation.

This is in a nutshell what happened in Europe on the eve of the Great Patriotic War. Before the attack against the

USSR, the German army perceived World War II as a kind of “walk”

Right here we should recall another important event of the year 1940 – the annexation of the Baltic states, Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the USSR.

Back in the fall of 1939, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania signed the agreements with the USSR, according to which Soviet military bases were located in their territories.

But on June 17, 1940, the Soviet Union issued an ultimatum to the Baltic states, accusing them of violation of an earlier agreement and demanding the resignation of their governments, dissolution of parliaments, appointment of early elections and consent to the introduction of an additional contingent of Soviet troops. The Baltic governments accepted these demands. Immediately thereafter, coups d’état took place in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, bringing communist-friendly governments to power.

After the introduction of additional units of the Red Army, uncontested elections to the supreme authorities were held in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania: only communist-minded parties were allowed to participate in the elections. On July 21, 1940, the newly elected parliaments proclaimed establishment of the Soviet socialist republics and sent petitions to join the Soviet Union. Lithuanian SSR was included into the USSR on August 3, followed by Latvian SSR (August 5) and Estonian SSR (August 6).

As for Bessarabia, which exists now as Moldova, on June 27, 1940, the Soviet government sent two ultimatum notes to the Romanian government, demanding the return of Bessarabia and the transfer of Northern Bukovina to the USSR as a “compensation for the enormous damage inflicted on the Soviet Union and the population of Bessarabia by the 22-year rule of Romania in Bessarabia”.

Bessarabia was annexed by Russia before establishment of Roma-

nia, after the victory in the Russo-Turkish War of 1806–1812. In 1918, taking advantage of the collapse of the Russian Empire and the outbreak of the Civil War in its former territory, Romania introduced its troops to the territory of Bessarabia and then included it into the kingdom – motivating this by the fact that Bessarabia was part of the medieval Moldavian principality, and the population spoke the Romanian dialect, that is, the “Moldavian language”. Northern Bukovina, also annexed by Romania in 1918, was not part of the Russian, but the Austro-Hungarian Empire, while it was mainly inhabited by Ukrainians.

Although Romania was an ally of Germany, it agreed to meet these requirements. On June 28, 1940, it withdrew its troops and administration from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, after which Soviet troops entered their territories without a single shot. On August 2, the Moldavian SSR was formed on part of the territory of the former Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (present-day Transnistria). The south of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina were included in the Ukrainian SSR.

So, literally before the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet Union significantly increased its territory in the western direction.

June 22, 1941

The Great Patriotic War began early in the morning, actually at night, on June 22, 1941, with the invasion of the Soviet territory by the troops of Hitler’s Germany and its European allies: Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Finland, Croatia, with the active support of the Waffen-SS motorised divisions from France, Belgium, the Netherlands and other Western European countries. They were joined by the Baltic and Ukrainian

paramilitary nationalist formations incorporated into the Waffen-SS, which took an active part in the extermination of Soviet people.

The forces of the Third Reich also used national formations consisting of the natives of the North Caucasus and Transcaucasia: the Bergmann Battalion, the Georgian Legion, the Azerbaijani Legion, the North Caucasian SS detachment, etc. The XV SS Cossack Cavalry Corps led by General von Panwitz and other Cossack units also fought in the Nazi army. To justify the use of the Cossacks, Hitler's propaganda developed a delusional "theory" based on which the Russian Cossacks were "descendants of the Ostrogoths". The Russian corps of General Steifon, the corps of Lieutenant General of the Tsarist army Peter Krasnov, and a number of separate units formed from citizens of the USSR and White emigrants also fought on the side of Germany.

The term "Great Patriotic War" went down in history immediately after the message broadcasted on radio by the newsreader Yuri Levitan, whose voice was known throughout the country: "Attention! Moscow is speaking! We are transmitting an important announcement from the government. Citizens of the Soviet Union! Today at four o'clock in the morning, without declaring war, the German armed forces attacked the borders of the Soviet Union. The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people against the German fascist invaders began. Our cause is just! The enemy will be defeated! Victory will be ours!"

The very next day this unusual phrase was used in the editorial articles of "Pravda" newspaper in relation to the war that has just begun. However, in a very belated Stalin's radio address to the Soviet people, which was declared on July 3, 1941, the words "great" and "patriotic" were used separately. It means that at first the name was perceived not as an official term, but as one of the emotional expressions, along with

such phrases as "holy people's war", "holy patriotic people's war", "victorious patriotic war". According to the generally accepted statement of historians, the name "Great Patriotic War" appeared by analogy with the Patriotic War of 1812. Later, the term "Patriotic War" was officially documented in the introduction of the military Order of the Patriotic War, established by the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on May 20, 1942. However, to this day it is not recognised by the Western world. In English-speaking countries, the term *Eastern Front World War II* is used, and in German historiography it corresponds to *Deutsch-Sowjetischer Krieg* (German-Soviet War), *Russlandfeldzug* ("Russian campaign"), *Ostfeldzug* ("Eastern campaign").

The development of a plan for Germany's attack against the USSR began under the strictest confidence a year before the invasion, back in July 1940. By that time, Germany had already captured Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxem-



The first days of the war – the advance of the Nazis deep into the USSR

bourg and defeated France. With his flash-like victories, Hitler radically changed the strategic balance of power in Europe. He did not only bring France out of the war, but also

expelled the British army from the continent. Thus, there was simply no power in Europe to oppose the Third Reich. All this happened in just a few weeks, during the year of 1940. And in the spring of 1941, Germany also invaded Yugoslavia and Greece.

On December 18, 1940, Hitler signed Directive No. 21 of the Supreme High Command of the Wehrmacht, which became the main guiding document in the war against the USSR. The directive bore a strange code name: "Operation Barbarossa". It assumed the defeat of Soviet Russia in one short campaign. To achieve this goal, it was planned to use all the ground forces of the Third Reich, with the exception of small formations performing occupation functions in Europe. It was also supposed to use two-thirds of the Air Force and a small part of the Navy. Immediate operations with a deep and rapid advance of tank spear heads, the German army had to destroy most of the Soviet troops in order to prevent the withdrawal of combat-ready units deep into the country. After that, quickly pursuing the enemy, the German troops had to reach the Arkhangelsk – Volga – Astrakhan line, creating there, if necessary, conditions for the German Air Force to "affect the Soviet industrial centers in the Urals".

By June 22, 1941, fascist Germany concentrated three army groups near the borders of the USSR. The first strategic echelon contained 157 divisions (of which 17 were tank and 13 motorised) and 18 brigades, including allied troops. Air support was provided by three air fleets. Additionally, there were 24 divisions in reserve. In total, 181 divisions (19 tank, 14 motorised, 18 brigades) numbering 5.5 million people, 3712 tanks, 47,260 field guns and mortars, 4950 combat aircrafts, took part in the attack against the USSR.

On the Soviet side, the border districts and fleets of the USSR numbered 15 armies consisting of 172 divisions (including 40 tank divisions which were approximately

half manned): 3.3 million soldiers and officers, 60 thousand guns and mortars, 11 thousand mostly outdated aircrafts, 13 thousand also mostly outdated tanks. Border units numbering about 100 thousand people, carried out physical defense of the state border.

If we compare the balance of forces as of June 22, 1941, we cannot say that Germany had an advantage over the USSR. With the exception of personnel, where the Wehrmacht outnumbered the Red Army by one million people, in all other parameters the German troops were quantitatively inferior to the Soviet ones. The latter had one and a half times more guns and mortars, three and a half times more tanks and assault guns, and twice as big as aircrafts number.

But, despite that, the beginning of the Great Patriotic War turned out to be catastrophic.

"The tragic beginning of the war for the Red Army was one of the most encrypted pages in our history. We can already talk about generations of historians trying to find out the true reasons for our failures at the beginning of the war, but this problem has not yet been resolved," P.N. Bobylev, a researcher at the Institute of Military History of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, wrote.

After 1991, much was written in Russia that the Red Army was retreating ingloriously, that millions of Soviet soldiers and officers surrendered without a fight. In fact, this was not true. The heroic defense of the Brest Fortress, the battles for Kiev, Odessa, Sevastopol are glorious pages of our history. They are. However, as a result of the battle for Kiev, the Soviet South-West-

ern Front was completely defeated. This fatality opened the way for the Germans to the south. And already in October 1941, German troops captured the entire Crimea except Sevastopol. The defeat of the Red Army in the south opened the way



The term "Great Patriotic War" went down in history immediately after the message broadcasted on radio by the newsreader Yuri Levitan

for the Germans to Donbass and Rostov-on-Don. By the end of October, Kharkov fell and the main cities of Donbass were occupied. On November 21, the 1st German Panzer Army entered Rostov-on-Don, thereby achieving the goals of the Barbarossa plan in the south of the USSR. But exactly a week later, the Soviet troops unexpectedly drove the Germans out of Rostov.

The failure of Operation Barbarossa

Shortly before the battle for Moscow, German troops completely occupied Lithuania, Latvia, Belarus, Moldova, Estonia, a significant part of the RSFSR, Ukraine, and advanced up to 1200 km deep into the USSR, while losing 740 thousand people, of which 230 thousand were killed. These were unprecedented losses for the German army since the beginning of World War II. But irrecoverable losses of the

Red Army were much worse. By the end of 1941, they amounted to 3,138,000 people.

In the early days of the war, the Red Army lost a huge amount of military equipment, including about 8,000 aircrafts that did not even have time to take off – they were mostly destroyed at airfields. But the Luftwaffe also suffered significant losses: during the first month of fighting German troops lost about 1,200 aircrafts.

With the loss of Donbass and the Krivoy Rog iron-ore basin, the Soviet Union lost its most important raw materials and industrial centers. The USSR also lost such cities as Minsk, Kiev, Kharkov, Smolensk, Odessa, Dnepropetrovsk. Leningrad was

in the blockade. The most important sources of food in Ukraine and southern Russia fell into the hands of the enemy. Millions of Soviet citizens ended up in the occupied territories – hundreds of thousands died or were driven into slavery.

By the end of 1941, the fascist hordes were already in the suburbs of Moscow. The Germans encompassed Leningrad and starved its citizens to death. Hitler dreamed of a parade of German troops in Red Square. One of those responsible for the capture of Moscow was the famous German General Guderian. He has already approached Kashira in the southwest direction which was very close to Moscow. However, due to the inhuman efforts of the troops of the Western Front under the command of General G.K. Zhukov, the offensive of the German army was stopped in all directions. The attempt to occupy Moscow failed. The counteroffensive began. It did not last long, but due to it the threat to Moscow was eliminated.

The enemy was stopped near Moscow, Leningrad and Rostov-on-Don, which meant the failure of Operation Barbarossa.

It is generally accepted that the Battle of Stalingrad was a turning point that foreshadowed the collapse of the Third Reich. But here is what the German historian K. Reinhardt writes: "Hitler's strategy aimed at conquering world domination failed near Moscow. In December 1941 – January 1942 many German generals have already come to the conclusion that the war was lost".

Why were there so many prisoners?

One of the most heartbreaking pages of the beginning of the war is the fate of our prisoners of war. Based on Western sources, the total number of our captives reached 5.5 million people. The Commission of the Ministry of Defense of the USSR announced an approximate figure of 4 million. 1.8 million people returned from captivity, of which approximately 340 thousand ended up in the NKVD camps as having compromised themselves in captivity.

Why were there so many prisoners? There is no simple answer to this question. Some historians believe that overwhelming majority of them was captured at the beginning of the war, as a result of capture in the so-called "big pockets". The tragic beginning of the war generated many situations when large groupings of the Red Army, having exhausted all possibilities for resistance, were captured.

Thinking about the number of prisoners, one should also take into account the fact that the German command, in violation of the Hague and Geneva Conventions, considered not only soldiers and officers of the Red Army, but also all employees of party and Soviet authorities, men (regardless of their age) who departed together with the retreating

troops, sometimes all men in general between the ages of 16 and 55, partisans and underground fighters, hostages taken in areas covered by the partisan movement, – as prisoners.

The harshest conditions of detention of Soviet prisoners of war were caused by Hitler's ideological rejection of the idea of Communism, aggravated by the Nazi theory of the racial inferiority of the Slavs, in particular Russians.

At a meeting of the highest command personnel of the Wehrmacht held on March 30, 1941, Hitler said: "The Communist has never been and will never become our comrade. It's about the fight to destroy. If we do not treat them like that, then, although we will defeat the enemy, in 30 years the communist danger will arise again. Commissars and persons belonging to the GPU are criminals and should be treated like criminals. Political commissars are the basis of Bolshevism in the Red Army, bearers of an ideology being hostile to National Socialism, who cannot be recognised as soldiers. Therefore, after being captured, they must be shot".

There were many party and Kom-somol workers in the Red Army,



Operation Otto Preliminary Plan for Operation Barbarossa – August 1941

who were considered by the Nazis as "commissars". They were not recognised as soldiers and were killed after being captured. Regarding this, the German command even issued the "Order on Commissars".

In 2006, the newspaper *Argumenty i Fakty* published a long article about the tragedy of the Vyazemsky pocket.

According to Ivan Semushkin, a participant of the battle, "I am deeply convinced, that the Vyazemsky pocket in the fall of 1941 was a military tragedy that was unprecedented in history. Misjudgement of the command and the general situation at the front led to this. According to the data published in the press, 37 divisions, 9 tank brigades, 31 artillery regiments of the High Command reserve and 4 field directorates of the armies were surrounded in the Vyazma area (the million-people group of Red Army troops ceased to exist within a short period of time). Soviet troops lost about 6 thousand guns and over 1200 tanks. However, since we have always liked to distort unpleasant facts and gloss over the truth, I am sure that there were much more losses..."

There were many similar pockets at the beginning of the war.

"The Germans had a task to destroy the manpower of the USSR in general and prisoners in particular," the participant of the battle, writer Boris Runin says. "Unbearable conditions were established for the prisoners. On the way to the camp, they were not fed at all. They ate cabbage leaves, roots, rye heads from unharvested roadside fields that they found along the way. They drank water from road puddles. It was strictly forbidden to stop at the wells or ask the peasants for water. So, five days long – from October 9 to 13, 1941 – they drove a column of prisoners to the Dorogobuzh camp. The convoy was accompanied by a car, on which four coaxial machine guns were installed.

On the way in one of the villages, under the stove of a burnt house, the prisoners saw a half-burnt potato. About 200 people rushed after it. Four machine guns fired directly into the crowd. Several dozen prisoners died. On their way the prisoners rushed into the fields with unharvested potatoes, and machine guns immediately opened fire.

The wounded prisoners suffered severely from thirst. It was possible to

get, with great difficulty, as less as one or two tablespoons of water a day only for the seriously wounded. Parched lips cracked, tongues swollen from thirst. There was no medical service, no medicines and no wound textile. A ward with 160 wounded is given two bandages a day. Bandages are not done a month long. When the bandage is removed, the wounds appear filled with worms that are picked out by handfuls. Frozen limbs looked like black stumps, meat and bones fell off in black pieces. Many wounded prisoners froze their limbs right there in the wards. There was no iodine for the operated patients; it was replaced with glizol. The wounded rotted alive and died in terrible agony. Many begged to be shot and thus relieved of their suffering. The smell of rotting meat, the cadaverous stench from undeleted corpses fill the chambers. The death rate from hunger, cold, disease and executions in the camp reached 3–4 percent a day. It means that the entire number of the prisoners died out in a month. During two and a half months of autumn (October, November and part of December) when counted together with the civilian prisoners who constituted the majority, 8,500 people died in the camp, that is more than 100 people on average per day. During the winter months, 400 to 600 people died



Due to the inhuman efforts of the troops of the Western Front under the command of General G.K. Zhukov, the enemy was stopped near Moscow, Leningrad and Rostov-on-Don, which meant the failure of Operation Barbarossa

every day. Every day 30–40 long dray carts were loaded with the dead and frozen corpses. In the piles of corpses, which were piled up like firewood near the barracks, there were also alive ones. We often saw hands and

feet moving among these piles, eyes opened, lips whispered: "I am still alive". The dying were buried together with the dead people..."

Such a terrible war preceded the Great Victory.

RUSSIA

VICTORY PARADE ON RED SQUARE

Vladimir Putin attended the military parade marking the 76th anniversary of the Victory in the 1941–1945 Great Patriotic War

Thirty-seven infantry units took part in the parade on Red Square: officers, sergeants and soldiers of military formations and units, students and cadets of military academies, Su-26 and Nakhimov schools and cadet corps, Young Army members, as well as units of the Emergencies Ministry, National Guard Troops and the Border Troops of the Russian Federal Security Service. Servicewomen were represented by parade units from the Military University, Military Academy of the Signal Corps, a branch of the Military Logistics Academy, the Military-Space Academy, and the Air and Space Defence Academy. Overall, almost 12,000 personnel were engaged.

Over 190 units of military hardware were on show, including the legendary T-34 tanks of the Great Patriotic War and the cutting-edge T-90M Proryv and T-14 Armata tanks, Kurganets infantry fighting vehicles, and Koalitsiya-SV artillery systems. Engaged in the parade were also Iskander-M mobile short-range ballistic missile systems, Buk-M3 and Tor-M2 surface-to-air missile systems, Pantsir-S mobile air defence systems and S-400 Triumf system. Yars mobile intercontinental ballistic missile launchers also crossed the square as part of the hardware column.

The parade concluded with an air show with 76 aircraft and helicopters in the sky, including Mi-26 heavy transport helicopters and Mi-8 multipurpose helicopters, Mi-35 attack helicopters of the Berkut aerobatic team, as well as a Kamov Ka-52 assault helicopter and a Ka-52 Alligator

and Mi-28 Night Hunter assault helicopter. A group of three Ilyushin Il-76 transport planes, Tupolev Tu-160 and Tu-95MS strategic bombers capable of carrying cruise missiles flew over Red Square, accompanied by two Ilyushin Il-78 refuelling tanker planes and followed by Sukhoi SU-35S jet fighters, SU-24 bombers, Mikoyan MiG-31 supersonic interceptors, Sukhoi Su-57 fighter jets and a Li-petsk Aviation Centre mixed group of ten Sukhoi Su-30SM, SU-35 fighter jets and SU-34 fighter bombers. The Russkiye Vityazi (Russian Knights) and Strizhi (Swifts) aerobatic teams were penultimate to fly their Sukhoi Su-30SM and Mikoyan MiG-29 fighter jets in the famous Kubinsky Diamond formation. To conclude the airborne part, a group of six Su-25 assault jets flew in the Moscow sky spraying aerosols that matched the colours of the Russian national flag.

The President watched the parade with President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon.

The President Vladimir Putin's address at the military parade

Citizens of Russia, Dear veterans, Comrades soldiers and sailors, sergeants and warrant officers, midshipmen and sergeant majors, Comrades officers, generals and admirals,



Happy Victory Day! The Victory had a colossal historic significance for the fate of the entire world. It is a holiday that has always been and will remain a sacred day for Russia, for our nation.

It is our holiday by right, for we are blood relatives of those who defeated, crushed, destroyed Nazism. It is ours because we descend from the generation of victors, a generation we are proud of and hold in great honour.

Our dear veterans, we bow before your courage and strong spirit and thank you for this immortal example of unity and love for our Motherland.

You proved that only together it is possible to achieve what seems impossible. You defeated a merciless enemy, defended your home, your children, and your country. You came out an absolute victor in the battle against Nazism and eternalised the memory of May 9, 1945.

We will always remember that it was the Soviet people who demonstrated the ultimate heroism. During the harshest times of war, during the crucial battles that determined the course of the fight against Nazism, our nation was alone on the toil-some, heroic and self-sacrificing road

to Victory. Our people fought to the bitter end at every frontline, in the fiercest battles on the ground, at sea and in the air.

People of all ethnicities and faiths fought for every inch of our soil. For the fields on the approaches to Moscow, for the Karelian rocks and Caucasus passages, for Vyazma and Novgorod forests, for the shores of the Baltic Sea and the Dnieper, for the Volga and Don steppes.

The heroism of Soviet troops and the unfaltering spirit of civilians are perpetuated in the glorious titles of Hero Cities, awarded to Moscow and Leningrad, Minsk and Kiev, Stalingrad and Sevastopol, Murmansk and Odessa, Kerch and Tula, Novorossiysk and Smolensk.

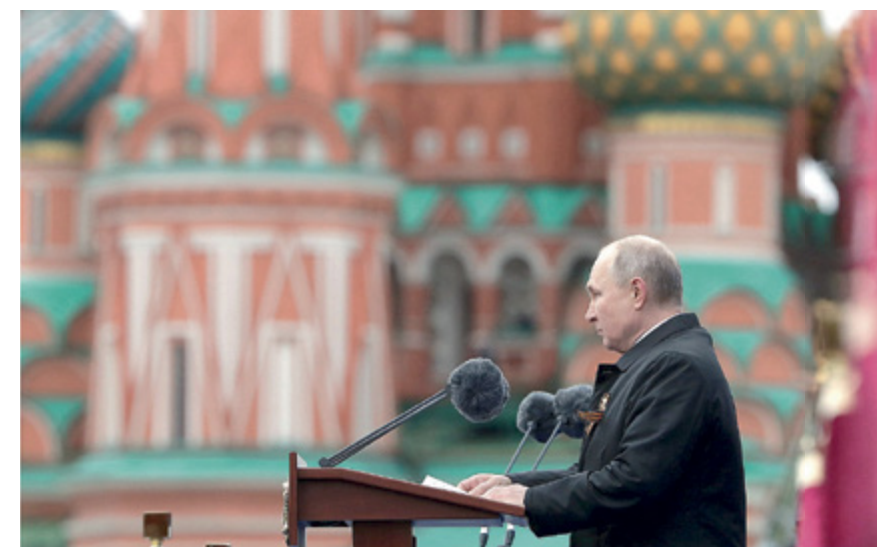
The unbreakable bond between frontline fighters and those at the home front ensured that our troops were provided with everything they needed for the Victory, thanks to the efforts of plants in the Volga region and the Urals, Siberia and the Russian Far East, the cities of Kazakhstan and Central Asian republics. We remember those who offered shelter and support to the evacuees who were forced to leave their homes.

Today we gratefully celebrate the memory of an entire generation of great heroes and dedicated workers, and remember our frontline fighters, brave partisans and members of the underground resistance.

We can feel the never-ending pain of the people of Leningrad who suffered through the siege; the concentration camp prisoners, and the countless tragedies of the people who lived in the occupied territories.

We bow to the blessed memory of those whose lives were taken away by that war; the memory of sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, grandfathers, husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, fellow soldiers, family members and friends. We mourn the veterans who have passed.

I ask for a minute of silence.
(A minute of silence begins.)





Friends,
This year, we celebrate 80 years since the beginning of the Great Patriotic War.

June 22, 1941, is one of the most tragic dates in our history. An enemy attacked our country and invaded our land to kill and to spread death and pain, horror and immeasurable suffering.

This enemy not only wanted to overthrow the Soviet political system but also to destroy us as a state, as a nation and wipe our peoples off the face of the earth.

We responded to the invasion by the Nazi hordes with a united, formidable and unstoppable determination to repel that invasion, to do everything in our power for the enemy to be defeated and for the criminals and murderers to receive inevitable and just punishment.

The Soviet people fulfilled their sacred oath, defended their Motherland and liberated Europe from the 'brown plague'.

The Soviet people issued a historic verdict to Nazism with the power of their weapons on battlefields and with their moral strength and righteousness, the self-sacrificing bravery of soldiers' mothers and the faithfulness of those who waited, every day, for a message from the frontline from their loved ones. The Soviet people won thanks to the power of

kindness and charity that has been inherent to our national character since the earliest times.

This power was manifested in the heroism of doctors and nurses who saved the wounded and fought for every life in the trenches, in the heat of battle, and in hospitals on the frontline and on the home front.

Back then, in 1941 there were still four years of the most violent war ahead. That war was a strike at our future, our youth, our youngest generation and, therefore, those who were never to be born.

The war brought upon us so many unbearable ordeals, grief and tears that it is impossible to forget. Those who are plotting new aggressions cannot be forgiven or justified.

It has been almost 100 years since the time when the abominable Nazi beast was gaining insolence and predatory strength in

Central Europe. The slogans of racial and ethnic supremacy, anti-Semitism and Russophobia were becoming more and more cynical. Agreements designed to stop the landslide towards a world war were easily broken off.

History demands that we learn from it. Unfortunately, attempts are

made to deploy a large part of Nazi ideology and the ideas of those who were obsessed with the delusional theory of their own supremacy.

This ideology is not only supported by radicals and international terrorist groups of all kinds. Today we are witnessing the surviving members of those killing squads and their followers trying to rewrite history and justify the traitors and criminals whose hands are smeared with the blood of hundreds of thousands of civilians.

Our people know too well how this can end. Every single family in our country cherishes the sacred memory of those who fought for our Victory and we will always be proud of their feats.

Russia is consistently defending international law while continuing to protect our national interests and the security of our people.

Our guarantees are the glorious Russian Armed Forces, descendants of the victorious troops, and, of course, our joint efforts for the sake of our country's development and the wellbeing of Russian families.

Our veterans, their fates and loyalty to the Motherland is the example we follow. It is the summit that we must strive for while reaffirming the significance and the value of the great Victory in our thoughts and deeds, in our present and future endeavours for the sake of our Fatherland.

Glory to the victorious nation!

Happy Victory Day!

Hurrah!

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DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND SORROW

The Day of Remembrance and Sorrow (The Day of National Remembrance of the Victims of the Great Patriotic War) is observed annually on June 22

June 22, 1941 is one of the saddest dates in the history of Russia – it is the day the Great Patriotic War began, when the troops of Germany and its allies invaded the territory of the USSR.

On June 8, 1998, according to the decree of the President of Russia, the day of June 22 was declared the “Day of Remembrance and Sorrow”.

This day reminds of all those who died in battles, were tortured to death in Nazi captivity, who died in the rear from hunger and hardship. We mourn all those victims who, at the expense of their lives, fulfilled their sacred duty, defending their Fatherland during the iron years of war.

In the early morning of June 22, 1941, without declaring war, the Nazi German armed forces attacked the borders of the Soviet Union, carrying out a massive blow on military and strategic targets and multiple cities. So the Great Patriotic War began, which lasted 1418 days and nights, where the USSR lost about 27 million people, but was able to hold out against the fire of the enemy.

The Great Patriotic War was part – and the main content – of the entire Second World War involving more than 60 states. The hostilities were conducted over extensive areas of



Europe, Asia and Africa, as well as in a vast ocean.

In a severe bloody war, the Soviet people made a decisive contribution to the liberation of the peoples of Europe from fascist domination and to the defeat of Hitler's troops. On May 8, 1945, the final Instrument of unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany and its armed forces was signed.

The Great Patriotic War ended in victory for the USSR, but at what cost?! At the cost of human suffering and huge losses that fell to the lot of the Soviet people.

On this day, national flags are lowered on public buildings in the territory of the Russian Federation, St. Andrew's flags are lowered on the

ships of the Russian Navy, flags with crape bands are displayed on residential buildings. Entertainment events and programs are canceled in cultural institutions, on the television and radio, throughout the day.

Commemorative events are held all over the country, flowers and flower tributes are laid at the monuments of the Great Patriotic War, the Candle of Memory action is held. This day is especially remembered in the military units of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.

In the post-Soviet states, on June 22, national flags are also lowered and various solemn and memorable events are held with the lighting of candles, laying of flowers at monuments and memorials.

HISTORY

THE MILITARY PARADE OF 7 NOVEMBER 1941



A column of tanks runs along the Red Square during the military parade dedicated to the celebration of the 24th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. Photo by V. Malyshev. 7 November 1941. Main Archive Department of Moscow.

80 years ago, at the height of fighting for Moscow, the legendary military parade of 1941 was held on the Red Square. On 7 November, some 3,000 soldiers, Suvorov Military College students and cadet detachments marched on the Red Square.

The military parade on the Red Square on 7 November was a tradition and the chief event of the Revolution anniversary's celebration. But in 1941, when the Nazi troops were rapidly advancing through the territory of the Soviet Union, the country was not up to it.

Late October and early November of 1941 were, perhaps, the hardest days for Moscow. An evacuation of industrial enterprises was underway, with bridges and factories mined, and the enemy located in 70–100 km from the Moscow centre.

On 28 October, the decision to hold the parade was made at a meeting with the members of the Politbureau and military commanders. At first, when it was proposed to hold a military parade, everyone fell silent, but after a pause there was a unanimous 'Yes, sure, it will raise the spirits of the troops and the rear!'. Preparations for the solemn march began.

On 2 November, the author of the famous march 'Farewell of Slavianka', bandmaster of Dzerzhinsky division Vasily Agapkin, was announced to be appointed chief conductor of the parade and given the task to collect a combined orchestra. By the time, most of the musicians from the full-time combined orchestra went to the military units of the garrison, the others joined the front. An orchestra from Gorky (now Nizhny Novgorod) came to the rescue.

The main condition of preparation for the parade was strict confidence: the brass band rehearsals on the Red



Square were prohibited to be heard – no marches, no drumming or fanfare allowed. The country's leadership feared that those sounds could alert Muscovites and cause panic. So rehearsals were held in Khamovniki, in the arena to hold horse race. Deputy People's Commissar of Defence of the USSR Marshal Semyon Budyonny came there, too. He tamed his horse to the sounds of marches and even gave instructions about the orchestra's repertoire. He was supposed to review troops.

Lieutenant General Pavel Artemyev, a commander of the Moscow military district and the Moscow defense zone was entrusted to command the parade.

Formal meeting of the Moscow City Council, dedicated to the 24th anniversary of October Revolution, was scheduled for 6 November. It took place not in the Bolshoi Theatre, which by that time had already been mined, but at Mayakovskaya metro station. Its lobby held 2,000 people.

Increased security was arranged, with a loudspeaker radio system installed.

On 6 November, a special 10-carriage train was formed at Belorusskaya metro station, which arrived with the USSR's leaders at Mayakovskaya five minutes before the meet-

ing. The opposite side of the platform had already had a 10-carriage train, which housed the orchestra, cloak and refreshment rooms, and a recording studio.

'Our cause is just, so we will win!', the slogan was announced all over the country from Mayakovskaya metro station.

Only after the formal meeting, around 11:00 pm, the parade commander Pavel Artemyev told the unit commanders about their participation in the military parade on the Red Square. There were only 10 hours left.

The parade was supposed to last 1 hour 1 minute and 20 seconds, according to preliminary calculation.

By 08:00 am (for security reasons, it was decided to shift the start an hour back), the entire territory from the Moskvoretsky Bridge to the Historical Museum was occupied with troops. 28,467 people (infantry, cavalry, riflemen, machine gunners, tankers and militia) took part in the event. It featured 296 machine guns, 18 mortars, 12 anti-aircraft machine guns, 12 small-caliber and 128 medium and high power guns, and 160 tanks (70 BT-7, 48 T-60, 40 T-34, two KV).

300 aircraft were supposed to participate, but due to a heavy snowfall

and blizzard, the air part had to be cancelled.

People were ready for any turn of events. In case of the Red Square bombing, 35 medical points were on duty, including ambulances, five emergency relief crews, 15 firefighters and other special machinery to eliminate the consequences of fires, buildings, gas and electric networks destruction.

The parade was opened by cadets of the 1st Moscow Krasin Red Banner Artillery School to Chernetsky's march 'Parade'. The cavalry paraded to the sounds of 'Cavalry Trot'.

The whole world heard the radio broadcast from the Red Square, with famous Soviet radio commentator and journalist Vadim Sinyavsky reporting.

The fearlessness and courage of the Russian people were highly appreciated in the world. The UK newspaper The News Chronicle wrote: 'The arrangement of a traditional parade in Moscow at a time when there were hot battles on the outskirts of the city is a great example of courage and bravery.'

And the Daily Mail praised the military parade on 7 November 1941 as 'one of the most brilliant displays of courage and confidence that has ever taken place during the war'.

The official portal of the Moscow Mayor and Moscow Government

Party and Government leaders on the Lenin Mausoleum's podium during the military parade Photo by V. Malyshev. 7 November 1941. Main Archive Department of Moscow.

HISTORY

THE BATTLE FOR STALINGRAD

HARIS GAZDAR

The Battle for Stalingrad became a symbol for heroism, sacrifice, bloodletting, tenacity, ruthlessness and tragedy all in good measure. There is much in the story that continues to fascinate students of warfare: one of the largest tank battles ever fought, strategic blunders and masterstrokes, a personal duel between Hitler and Stalin, the brilliance of General Zhukov, but above all, “a psychological turning point” of the Second World War.

After a series of spectacular successes against ill-prepared Soviet defenders, Nazi German forces attempted to take Moscow in November 1941. Their progress ground down, however, and by December they were forced to abandon the attack. In the meanwhile, things had gone well for them in the south, and having captured the main grain producing areas of the Ukraine and Russia, Hitler decided to make a lunge for Caspian Sea oil. Stalingrad was the gateway to Baku. This decision more or less sealed the fate of the war in Russia. From the military point of view, there would be a turning point, if not in Stalingrad, then somewhere else along this route. Stalin appears to have understood this, decided that the stand will be made at the city named after him, and gave General Zhukov the task of laying a trap and then closing it.

But how did Hitler’s forces allow themselves to get ‘trapped’ so deep into Russia, at the far end of Europe? If the fate of Napoleon’s armies in the winter of 1812 at the hands of the Russian expanse and winter had preyed upon the minds of Hitler and

his generals, why would they choose to extend their supply lines even further to the east?

To the extent that Hitler’s politics, as laid out by him in *Mein Kampf*, were in the driving seat, we have an answer. Race was the predominant theme. Two groups were singled out as inexorable enemies of the noble Aryan: the “cunning parasitic Jew” and the “subhuman Slav”. A central tenet of foreign policy was to create living space or *Lebensraum* for Germans by annexing Poland, Ukraine and Russia for settler colonisation. The inhabitants of these lands would either be deported or turned into slave labour for German settlers. With expanded territory and resources, Germany could truly become a “World Power” so that the Aryan race could take its “rightful place as the builder of civilisation”.

Some wartime commentators in the west argued that Hitler had abandoned his plans of *Mein Kampf*, which was published in 1925, in favour of a more ‘conventional’ aim of replacing the Bolshevik government with a collaborationist regime, like the Vichy in France. The conduct of the war in the east formalised under new rules of engagement such as the notorious Commissar and Jurisdiction Orders, however, made it clear that Hitler saw this as a “war of annihilation”, not just of the “Jewish-Bolshevik” regime,

but of the people of the occupied land. What seems, with the benefit of hindsight, like an ill-thought and suicidal lunge to the east was no “mission creep”. It was a primary aim of Nazi Germany’s war.

In his book, Hitler set out his position in favour of *Lebensraum* compared with the policy of seeking colonies in Africa and Asia. He argued against an overseas colonial policy, not because he thought it was outmoded and collapsing, but because he believed that it was firmly entrenched. A racial empire was there to stay, it would be difficult for anyone, let alone the natives themselves, to dislodge England from its colonies:

“England will never lose India unless she admits racial disruption in the machinery of her administration (which at present is entirely out of the question in India) or unless she is overcome by the sword of some powerful enemy. But Indian risings will never bring this about. We Germans have had sufficient experience to know how hard it is to coerce Eng-



The German Advance on Stalingrad September 1942



Center of Stalingrad after liberation

land. And, apart from all this, I as a German would far rather see India under British domination than under that of any other nation.

“The hopes of an epic rising in Egypt were just as chimerical. The ‘Holy War’ may bring the pleasing illusion to our German nincompoops that others are now ready to shed their blood for them. Indeed, this cowardly speculation is almost always the father of such hopes. But in reality the illusion would soon be brought to an end under the fusillade from a few companies of British machine-guns and a hail of British bombs.”

The Soviet Union, however, was a different proposition altogether:

“This colossal Empire in the East is ripe for dissolution. And the end of the Jewish domination in Russia will also be the end of Russia as a State. We are chosen by Destiny to be the witnesses of a catastrophe which will

afford the strongest confirmation of the nationalist theory of race.”

While Hitler admired England’s racially-ordered colonial system, it was the other contemporary landgrab which was seen as the more appropriate model for German expansionism. America’s Manifest Destiny had come to final fruition in 1890 with the end of armed resistance by the native peoples at Wounded Knee.

The moral and strategic arguments for the landgrab to the east were one and the same. A superior race deserved resources it could fight to take. Just as Indians and Egyptians could not overthrow the English, and the native peoples could not resist the United States, so the ‘Jewish-Bolshevik cabal’, by violently removing the German blood line of the Tsars, had left the lands of the Slavs ready for the picking. While racial supremacy and territorial hunger were not the sole preserves of Nazi Germany,

Hitler’s shrill and frantic articulation of these ideas had closed off the possibility of a more cold-headed assessment of ground realities.

Hitler’s forces were not just trapped by the Soviet strategy of retreating before the Nazi German advance, while keeping the bulk of their military strength in secret reserve. They were also trapped on the wrong side of history.

The Battle of Stalingrad was a turning point in the practice of empire. Racially-ordered settler colonialism, which was at its apogee when Hitler’s ideas were formed, and which had seemed feasible enough at the start of Nazi Germany’s war in the east, went into unstoppable retreat, with perhaps one or two notable exceptions remaining. The British Empire ended, India and Egypt became independent, and Germany emerged as a world power without any further need for *Lebensraum*.

FIELD KITCHENS

MARIA AFONINA

Frontline cooks demonstrated incredible creativity to give soldiers a high-calorie and varied diet. Here is a look at the clever culinary tricks they employed, according to Russia Beyond.

Meals for soldiers were prepared using field kitchens. Just like the field bakeries that were used for baking bread, these kitchens first appeared at the end of the 19th century. They were placed on a wheeled trailer or on the back of a flatbed lorry, and consisted of several cauldrons (between one and four) and a compartment to store food and kitchen utensils.

Field kitchens used firewood, and in order to conceal the smoke from the enemy the food had to be prepared early in the morning before sunrise and in the evening after dark. It took 40 minutes to boil water in a cauldron, three hours to prepare a two-course lunch, and an hour and a half to prepare dinner. At night the kitchen was very busy: potatoes were peeled and cauldrons were washed. At the start of World War II most cooks were women.

Delivering the food was another challenge, and soldiers had to carry the heavy cauldrons with food from the field kitchen to the frontlines via trenches, risking their lives. The main dish served was *kulesh* – soup made of millet to which other ingredients, for example lard or vegetables, could be added. Also, field kitchens also served popular Russian soups such as *borsch* and *shchi* (cabbage soup), as well as stewed potatoes and buckwheat with boiled or stewed beef or canned food.



The daily rations for Red Army soldiers and unit commanders was adopted on Sept. 12, 1941, and consisted of a specific list of food-stuffs: bread (800–900g), second grade wheat flour (20g), groats (140g), macaroni (30g), meat (150g), fish (100g), combined fats and lard (30g), as well as vegetable oil, sugar, tea, salt and vegetables (potatoes, cabbage, carrots, beetroot, onion and herbs).

Oddly enough, there were also tobacco rations (20g daily) and rations for matches (three boxes a month). Non-smoking women received butter, biscuits and chocolate.

The menu for pilots was more varied and higher in calories. In addition to basic daily rations they received fresh or condensed milk, cottage cheese, sour cream, eggs, butter and cheese, as well as fruit extract and dried fruit.

Submariners also had special additions to their diet: red wine, sauerkraut, salted cucumbers and raw

onions. These foods were supposed to prevent scurvy and compensated for the shortage of oxygen on board. Sailors received rusks.

Small vessels could bake bread on shore, and large ships had special stoves.

Towards the end of the war the food situation worsened, so rations were cut.

Cooks did what they could to vary the rations, which became increasingly meagre towards the end of the war. For instance, they made carrot tea by grating carrots, and then boiled it with *Laetiporus sulphureus* tree fungus. The carrot gave the infusion a sweetish taste and the fungus a pleasant dark hue.

Closer to the end of the war in the spring of 1944 the Soviet army received cornmeal from the allies. Some cooks did not know what to do with it and added it to bread, causing it to become crumbly and quickly stale. This naturally angered the men.

Other cooks, however, realized that they could make flatbread out of it.

VIRTUAL EXHIBITION “WRITER’S COMPANY”

YULIA KAZAKOVA



In May on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the beginning of the Great Patriotic War and the 76th anniversary of the Great Victory, the Russian House in Brussels presents a virtual exhibition “Writers’ Company”.

The exposition is dedicated to the participation of Soviet writers in the Second World War. It was based on materials from the collection of the State Museum of the History of Russian Literature named after V.I. Dal. Photos, autographs, documents convey the daily routine of writers in wartime.

The Writers’ Company joined the main forces in the first weeks of the war. In the Krasnopresnensky district of Moscow, a detachment of the people’s militia gathered to join the hostilities. The Union of Soviet Writers, the Literary Fund and the Literary Institute were located not far from each other. Writers felt their calling and could not stand aside. So, two “writers’ companies” joined the

22nd regiment of the Krasnopresnenskaya people’s militia.

Members of the movement took part in the battles near Smolensk. After leaving Yelnya’s entourage, the “writers’ companies” were disbanded,



ed, and the writers shifted to the editorial committees of central and front-line newspapers.

“Writers’ Company” occupies a separate place at the military exhibition at the State Literary Museum. The exposition conveys the life path of writers and war correspondents who captured the history on the pages. Basically, former journalists become writers, but the path of the “writers’ company” was different – the war forced writers to become journalists.

The editor-in-chief of *Krasnaya Zvezda* D. Ortenberg began the practice of recruiting writers to work in the newspaper. Among the war correspondents of those years were A. Platonov, K. Simonov, V. Grossman, A. Beck, E. Petrov, M. Sholokhov, O. Berggolts, V. Vishnevsky, I. Ehrenburg, V. Kaverin, L. Slavin, A. Gaidar, Y. Krymov, S. Gudzenko, Y. Levitansky, P. Blyakhin, A. Stein, A. Kron, N. Tikhonov, A. Tarkovsky, M. Svetlov and others.

THE GREAT COMMEMORATION

*Eternal memory to all our relatives and acquaintances, to all those we remember and forget,
to all our heroes, to all those who worked hard for the Great Victory,
to all the innocent victims of the Great Patriotic War!*

AUGUSTINE SOKOLOVSKI,
Priest, Doctor of Theology

One of the most important church holidays of the liturgical year is Pentecost. The feast of Pentecost is directly connected with the event of the Resurrection of Christ.

Having risen on the third day, according to the Holy Scriptures, the Lord Jesus remained with the disciples for forty days, appearing to them and instructing them in the truths about the Kingdom of God. On the fortieth day, He ascended to heaven and sat at the right hand of the Father, as stated in the Creed. When the Lord ascended, He promised His disciples to send the Holy Spirit. This is the event of the descent of the Holy Spirit celebrated by the Church on the Day of Pentecost. “When Pentecost day came around, they had all met together, when suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of a violent wind which filled the entire house in which they were sitting; and here appeared to them tongues as of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak different languages as the Spirit gave them power to express themselves” (Acts 2;1–4).

The main hymn of the feast, the troparion, says: “Blessed are You O Christ Our God, You have revealed the fishermen as most wise by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit through the You drew the world into Your net. O Lover of Man, Glory to You!”. The kontakion of the Pentecost says the same with other words: “When the most High came down and confused the tongues, He divided

the nations; but when he distributed the tongues of fire, He called all to unity. Therefore, with one voice, we glorify the All-holy Spirit!”. Thus, the Feast of Pentecost is a celebration in honour of the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit, whom He gave to His disciples. In the Russian Tradition, this celebration is also called the Day of the Holy Trinity.

So, Pentecost is celebrated on the fiftieth day after Easter, and therefore the date each year moves depending on the date of the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ. This year, Pentecost falls on June 20, which is important and significant for the Russian Church, which commemorates the 80th anniversary of the beginning of the Great Patriotic War on June 22. This coincidence is very important and filled with meaning.

After all, on the Saturday before the feast day of Pentecost, according to the liturgical rule of the Orthodox Church, the universal commemoration of all the Orthodox Christians who have died from ever must take place. This universal funeral commemoration is analogous to the All-Souls’ Day in protestant or catholic Christianity. It is celebrated on the eve of the Day of the Holy Trinity and is called the Pentecostal. This year, on June 19, the Church on this day especially prays for all the countless victims of the Great Patriotic War, and especially remembers the fallen soldiers, deceased veterans, home front workers and all those involved in the national feat.

Memorial days are designed by the Church to remember all those

who have no one else to remember and for whom there is no one else to pray. This is the meaning of universal, that is, worldwide, funeral remembrances, which usually take place on Saturday during Great Lent. But the Pentecostal All Souls’ Commemoration is a special day in the Orthodoxy. This year it almost coincides with the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, which is why the Church remembers all the people who took part in this great and tragical exploit.

So, this year, one of the most meaningful Christian Orthodox Feasts, the Day of Pentecost, in some way coincides, or, better, the date of the Pentecost 2021 itself relates to the days of sad remembrance. That is the eightieth anniversary of the beginning of the Great Patriotic War 1941–1945. The 22 of June is known to be a special memory and remembered with sorrow in our country.

Indeed, this date is one of the most mournful dates in the history of our country, our people and all mankind. In the second half of the XX century, in the Soviet era, they talked about 20 million dead. Our days it is clear that the number of direct victims of fascist aggression against our people far exceeds this already high number. In this very understatement and inability to count the total number of victims, the greater tragedy of what happened reveals. The inexhaustibility of human grief, the beginning of which in our people began with these days.

It is important to emphasize that in Soviet times, the perspective of



the tragic event of the outbreak of War was exclusively secular, political, historical, deeply sincere and human, but, unfortunately, devoid of a religious component. This lack of religious, biblical, spiritual understanding created a kind of vacuum. Perhaps this was the reason that this date has become somewhat erased in time. After all, the indelible bases on the religious, theological, and spiritual.

The mournfulness of the eightieth anniversary commemorated on these days in a very symbolic way coincides with the All-Souls' Commemoration, which in 2021 falls

on the Saturday before the Day of the Pentecost which is traditionally called Parental Saturday. This memory provides the opportunity, not only for believers and church people, but also for every person to share the memory of all those who were killed, starting from the first moments from the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, and until its end, who died later from wounds and hardships, who simply was not born because of the huge number of those killed during the War.

According to the teaching of the Church, during this special period, during the first seven weeks after

Easter, any special commemoration of the departed is withdrawn from the liturgy, as if abolished and even made impossible. This suspension is not oblivion but the transfer of the names of the departed into the special sphere of the prayerful sovereignty of the Church. After all, during the Easter Period, all of the departed in one way or another are necessarily remembered at the Liturgy in the Eucharistic Prayer during the Divine Liturgy. Simply the words of such commemoration are not usually heard in the church for they are read and heard before the altar itself. Thus, in the absence of special commemoration on these days, the Lord Himself takes upon Himself the care of all those who have lived.

So, today, on the Pentecostal All Souls', the first day on which such separate commemoration of the departed is not even possible but made obligatory for the first time since Easter, the Church as a community of faithful gathers in the Church for the commemoration of all those who have lived. Whom we knew and whom we did not know, whom we sympathize with, about whom we mourn, but also those whom we never knew, about whom, at times, we never heard in their lifetime but on whose intercession and boldness before God we hope, for these people were truly righteous. "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" (John 15;12-13).

On this day before the Pentecost everyone has the desire, the will and the hope to share the joy of Easter with those who lived before us; to tell them that the Lord Jesus rose from the dead, and that from now on He has dominion over hell and death. As He Himself says in the Apocalypse – that is, in the biblical New Testament book of Revelation by John the Evangelist – while sharing His victorious victory over death with the faithful, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and be-



hold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades" (Rev.1:17-18).

When the Wandering Church performs a prayerful commemoration of the departed, the faithful are called to remember that they, our departed and our dead – let us emphasise this word with the philosopher Giorgio Agamben – do know that Christ has risen. They know that a universal resurrection awaits them. That that flesh, that body and those bones they possessed, that skin "in which I live" – to quote the title of a contemporary film – will be resurrected by the Lord on the Last Day. "We shall see God with bodily eyes", as the Carthaginian Church teacher Augustine confesses in "The City of God" (22:30).

In this shared knowledge – our knowledge of their knowledge and our knowledge with them – our communion in memory with those whom we know by name is revealed. What can we say about those who are unknown to us, who are completely forgotten and erased from human memory, and for whom there is no one else to pray? Here it is absolutely necessary to have the biblical and dogmatic knowledge that every

prayer of the Church, and every intercession of the Church as the Body of Christ, is the prayer and intercession of... the Lord Jesus.

The Lord Jesus Christ, God the Word, the Incarnate Son of God is simultaneously and unalterably the true, genuine human being. Who fulfilled the will of the Heavenly Father, who asked, prayed

and interceded for everyone to his last breath, and most importantly, as the Scriptures testify, for his murderers (Lk.23,34).

The Lord Jesus fulfilled the covenant and fulfilled the divine will. Killed for the sins of the world, Jesus was resurrected by His Heavenly Father. This Resurrection – the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus – was the divine answer to meanness, cowardice, betrayal, crime and sin, to that designed greatest victory of the forces of evil in history which the darkness would have won if God had not raised Jesus. God and the Father raised the Lord. "Christ Jesus died, but He also rose again: He is at the right hand of God, He also makes

intercession for us", writes the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Romans (Rom.8:34). The prayer of the Lord Jesus cannot be unheard.

This means that the memory of all those – their names and faces, faces and smiles, bodies and memories, joys and sorrows, losses and fortunes, biographies and lives – all of whom no one else remembers, is remembered by the Lord Jesus. Through His prayer Jesus grants them His redeeming intercessory power. We, in remembering those who are forgotten or have no one to remember, join in this life-giving grace. Knowing then that the Lord will never let us out of His hand either.

Eternal memory to all our relatives and acquaintances, to all those we remember and forget, to all our heroes, to all those who worked hard for the Great Victory, to all the innocent victims of the Great Patriotic War!

"Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the Book of Life" (Rev.20;11-13). Christ is Risen!



FILMS

MUST-WATCH MOVIES OF THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

7 films that properly address and preserve the memory of the major moment in history – soviet Great Patriotic War.

The Cranes Are Flying (1957)

The Cranes Are Flying is a 1957 Soviet film about the Second World War. It depicts the cruelty of war and the damage done to the Soviet psyche as a result the Great Patriotic War.

This landmark film by the virtuosic Mikhail Kalatozov was heralded as a revelation in the post-Stalin Soviet Union and the international cinema community alike. It tells the story of Veronica (Tatiana Samoilova) and Boris (Alexei Batalov), a couple who are blissfully in love until war tears them apart.

In Moscow, on June 22, 1941, Veronika and her boyfriend Boris watch cranes fly over the city as the sun rises and then sneak back into their families' apartments. Hours later, Boris's cousin Mark wakes him with news that the Germans have invaded.

Winner of the Palme d'Or at the 1958 Cannes Film Festival, *The Cranes Are Flying* is a superbly crafted drama with impassioned performances and viscerally emotional, gravity-defying cinematography by Kalatozov's regular collaborator Sergei Urusevsky.

Ballad of a Soldier (1959)

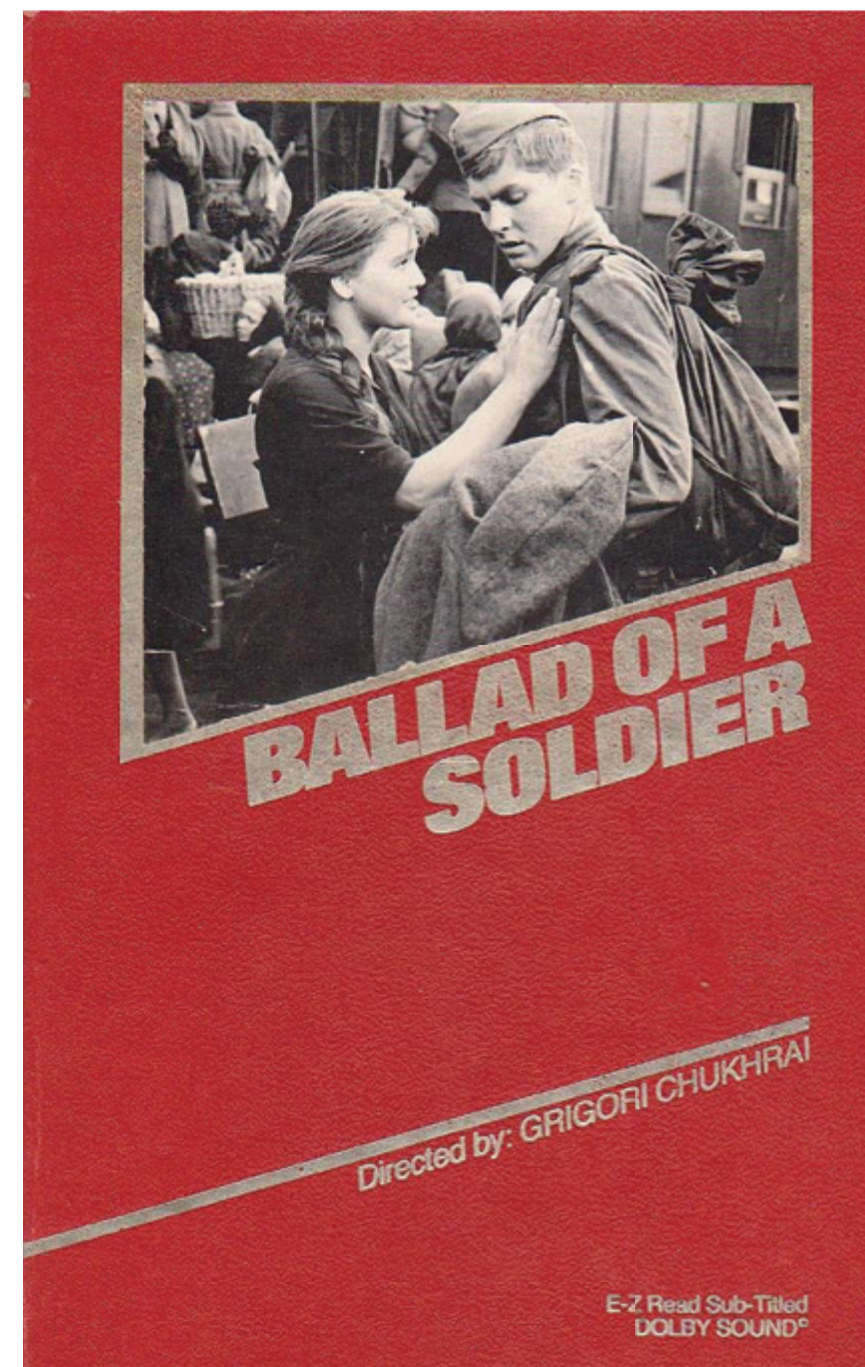
Ballad of a Soldier is a 1959 Soviet film directed by Grigory Chukhrai and starring Vladimir Ivashov and

Zhanna Prokhorenko. The film was produced at Mosfilm and won several awards, including the BAFTA Award for Best Film From Any Source and was nominated for the Oscar for Best Original Screenplay.

During Great Patriotic War nineteen-year-old Red Army soldier Alyosha Skvortsov (Vladimir Ivashov) single-handedly destroys two attacking German tanks. His commanding general wants to give him a medal, but Alyosha asks instead for a leave to see his mother and to repair the leaking roof of their home. He is given six days.

On the train eastwards he meets Shura who is on her way to her aunt. In those few days traveling together they fall in love.

Alyosha gets to see his mother only for a few minutes before having to



make his way back to his unit. His mother vows to wait for him. The voiceover tells us that while he could have gone far in life if he had lived, he will always be remembered simply as a Russian soldier.

The Alive and the Dead (1964)

The Alive and the Dead is a 1964 Soviet film directed by Aleksandr

Stolper based on the eponymous 1959 novel *The Living and the Dead* by Konstantin Simonov.

The film takes place in a time warp from the first days of the Great Patriotic War and until the middle of the winter of 1941–1942, before the beginning of the Soviet counterattack near Moscow. Ivan Sintsov (Kirill Lavrov) is a correspondent with an army newspaper. The war starts while he is on vacation with his wife. He

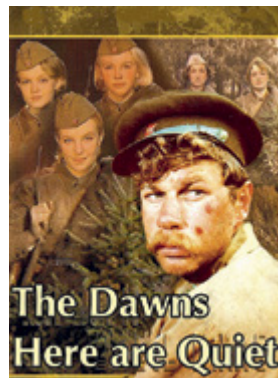


tries to return to his unit which is located in Western Byelarus. However, it is impossible since the unit is overrun by the advancing Wehrmacht. Near the town of Borisov, he meets another officer also trying to reach his unit. They go on a road and try to get a car going in the direction they need. As the other officer stopped the car, a German air raid starts. The direct hit blows up the officer and the car he stops. Sintsov continues his journey alone. He is eventually assigned to one military newspaper, located in Mogilev and, later, another near Yelnya. The movie describes his work as a war correspondent during these trying times.

The Dawns Here Are Quiet (1972)

The Dawns Here Are Quiet is a 1972 Soviet war drama directed by Stanislav Rostotsky based on Boris Vasilyev's novel of the same name. The film deals with antiwar themes and focuses on a garrison of Russian female soldiers in World War II. It was nominated for an Oscar in the Best Foreign Language Film category.

It is late spring of 1942, and the Great Patriotic War is in full swing. A long way off from the front-line, at some God-forgotten junction, the Germans make an air landing op-



eration in an attempt to get through to the Kirov railway and the White Sea – the Baltic Sea Canal. These aren't just ordinary paratroopers. This is a team of seasoned and highly trained infiltrators, the elite of the Waffen-SS, superhumans. The only thing in their way is an anti-aircraft artillery unit of corporal Vaskov and five young women in training. It may seem like a fight of local significance, but the country's main strategic transportation artery is at stake. Can the corporal and his 'petite newbies' prevent Nazi sabotage and at what cost?

Come and See (1985)

Come and See is a 1985 Soviet anti-war film directed by Elem Klimov and starring Aleksei Kravchenko and Olga Mironova. Its screenplay, written by Klimov and Ales Adamovich, is based on the 1978 book *I Am from the Fiery Village*, of which Adamovich was a co-author.

The film's plot focuses on the Nazi German occupation of Belarus, and the events as witnessed by a young Belarusian partisan teenager named Flyora, who – against his mother's



wishes – joins the Belarusian resistance movement, and thereafter depicts the Nazi atrocities and human suffering inflicted upon the Eastern European villages' populace. The film mixes hyper-realism with an underlying surrealism, and philosophical existentialism with poetical, psychological, political and apocalyptic themes.

Panfilov's 28 Men (2016)

Panfilov's 28 Men (it is also known as *Battle for Moscow*) is a 2016 war film based on a legend about a group of soldiers – Panfilov's Twenty-Eight Guardsmen – heroically halting and destroying German tanks headed for Moscow. It is set in the Eastern Front



of World War II and covers the 8th Guards Rifle Division operations during the 1941 Battle of Moscow.

The film is directed by Kim Druzhinin and Andrey Shalopa.

Battle for Sevastopol (2015)

Battle for Sevastopol is a 2015 biographical war film about Lyudmila Pavlichenko, a young Soviet woman who joined the Red Army to fight the German invasion of the USSR and became one of the deadliest snipers in World War II. The film, a joint Russian-Ukrainian production, was released in both countries on April 2, 2015; its international premiere took place two weeks later at the Beijing International Film Festival.

The movie revolves principally around the events of the siege of Odessa and the siege of Sevastopol of 1941–1942.

The film is directed by Sergey Mokritskiy and stars Yulia Peresild as Pavlichenko. In addition to Beijing, where Peresild was awarded Best Actress award, the film has also appeared at Cannes Film Festival.





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EXHIBITION

CHURCHILL AND CABINET WAR ROOMS – A MUST-SEE IN LONDON

ANITA CAMERON

Churchill War Rooms is one of London's must-see attractions, which has only recently opened its doors to public. Make sure you don't miss this exhibition – for a limited time only, you will be able to explore the Second World War's impact on London life with a unique art exhibition housed within the War Rooms. Wartime London: Art of the Blitz features works by Henry Moore; Eric Ravilious; Evelyn Dunbar and more.

The Churchill War Rooms is one of the five branches of the Imperial War Museum. The museum comprises the Cabinet War Rooms, a historic underground complex that housed a British government command centre throughout the Second World War, and the Churchill Museum, a biographical museum exploring the life of British statesman Winston Churchill.

During the Second World War, a group of basement offices in Whitehall served as the centre of Britain's war effort. The complex, known as the Cabinet War Rooms, was occupied by leading government ministers, military strategists and Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

Following the devastation of the First World War, military planners feared up to 200,000 casualties from bombing in the first week of a future war.



Image: IWM

Plans to evacuate the prime minister, cabinet and essential staff from London were drawn up as early as the 1920s, but concern that Londoners would feel abandoned if the prime minister and government were in a safe place, and issues about the speed of evacuation, led to a search for an emergency shelter in central London.

In June 1938 the New Public Offices building was selected. It was near Parliament, with a strong steel frame and a large basement. The basement was adapted to provide meeting places for the War Cabinet during air raids and also housed a military information

centre based around a 'Map Room'. Here, vital information for King George VI, Prime Minister Churchill and the armed forces was collected.

The Cabinet War Rooms became fully operational on 27 August 1939, a week before Britain declared war on Germany. Churchill's War Cabinet met here 115 times, most often during the Blitz and the later German V-weapon offensive.

The Cabinet War Rooms were in use 24 hours a day until 16 August 1945, when the lights were turned off in the Map Room for the first time in six years.