

Also by Henri Michel

THE SHADOW WAR

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THE SECOND
WORLD WAR

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CHAPTER 3

The Battle of Stalingrad

IN 1942 Stalingrad was a city of 600,000 inhabitants, extending for nearly forty miles along the right bank of the Volga; it was a great industrial and communications centre. At this point, there was no bridge across this great Russian river, which was from half to one and a quarter miles wide and could be crossed only by ferries and boats. Hitler had ordered the Wehrmacht to capture and destroy the city. The strategic purpose was to cut the great connecting link from north to south formed by the Volga. But the very name of Stalingrad and its role in the Bolshevik revolution seem to have obsessed the Führer to such an extent that he attached a symbolic and almost mystical significance to conquering it. Since the Russians, for their part, were equally determined to retain the city, its approaches and later the centre itself were to be the scene of hard fighting for nearly five months followed by the most sensational reversal of any situation in the whole of the Second World War.

I THE GERMAN OFFENSIVE

Whereas the Germans – Halder, for example – say that the targets of the German summer offensive of 1942 had become known to the Russians, the latter claim that they were expecting it to take place in the direction of Moscow; according to them, it was this error of judgment which was responsible for the Wehrmacht's initial victories; but the Soviet Chief of Staff set about rectifying it as quickly as possible. As early as July 1942, he transferred two of the reserve armies to the Stalingrad front, which had been entrusted to General Yeremenko, with Nikita Khrushchev as party delegate and member of the Military Council.

In mid-July, when it became obvious that the attacker's aim was to capture the city, a line of defences was set up in the suburbs of Stalingrad, using a work-force of about 20,000 people. At the same time some of the city's inhabitants were taught how to handle AA guns and thousands of workers enlisted in a people's militia to defend the factories.

As the only railway line on the left bank was under enemy fire and the Volga itself was not safe, since the Luftwaffe had it covered, Stalingrad's industry was adapted to manufacture arms for its defenders; thus the tractor factory went over to assembling tanks which were sent straight from the testing bench to the front. But Stalingrad had still not become an entrenched camp nor a really fortified city.

In the first few months the Germans showed themselves almost irresistible, even though the Fourth Armoured Army had been withdrawn from the sector to be used in an attack on Rostov in the south. The Sixth Army, under Paulus, with two armoured and two infantry corps, was given the task of capturing Stalingrad and then of striking out towards Astrakhan in order to paralyse all traffic on the Volga. At the beginning of August it had reached the outer perimeter of the city's defences; some of their advances were most spectacular; thus the 14th Division advanced thirty miles in three days, from the Don loop to north of Stalingrad, reaching the Volga on August 23.

Instead of attacking the front at each end, so as to take the city from behind, the German command chose a frontal attack; it was letting itself in for a street battle. On August 25 the Soviet military on the Stalingrad front declared a state of siege, which did not prevent the Russian troops from having to be brought back inside the defensive perimeter on September 2. Paulus had eleven divisions, three of them armoured, against which Yeremenko could put up only five infantry divisions and two tank brigades. The Soviet command sent five divisions as reinforcements. In order to relieve the city it launched an attack in the north against the enemy units which had reached the Volga; this did not achieve any great success but gave the city a little breathing-space.

The Soviet reinforcements were being ferried across to the right bank of the Volga by the army flotilla; in this way 65,000 men and 24,000 tons of ammunition were convoyed across protected by armour-plated motor boats and floating batteries of artillery and AA guns; 35,000 wounded soldiers and 200,000 civilians who were of no use for the purpose of defence were taken back in the reverse direction.

However, on September 12 the front ran along a line varying from one to six miles from the built-up area. On the 13th the assault on the city began. Until the 26th the fighting took place chiefly in the centre and southern quarters; most of the industrial quarters in the north were not yet directly threatened. But the factories came under fire from the Germans and had to stop work and be evacuated. Since the Volga could no longer be used as a north-south communication line, the objectives fixed by Hitler in his directive of April 5, 1942 had been won. Thus any continuing attempts to capture the whole city were now only a matter of prestige.

guns, so-called 'fists', concentrating as many as 200 guns every 1,000 yards or so. Above all the Soviet general staff were determined not to confine themselves to a static defence; any enemy advance must be checked by an immediate counter-offensive.

Since September 1942 a plan for a vast Soviet counter-stroke had been worked out in conferences at which Stalin met Zhukov, Voronov, Yeremenko and Vassilievskg. In October the weak points of the German positions, which had now become stabilised, had been detected. The German positions were based much more on the Don than on the Volga, which they had reached only at a few points. But even on the Don their situation was not favourable. Indeed, the Russians had retained or acquired bridgeheads on the right bank of the river, notably in the Serafimovitch sector; they had remained in control of the outlets of passages through a string of lakes. From some of the heights to which they had been clinging they could threaten the Sixth Army's flank. Above all, the corridor created by the advance of the German tanks between the Don and the Volga formed a narrow isthmus where any defence in depth was impossible. In short, the Soviet forces were enveloping the Fourth Armoured Army and what is more, the Sixth Army; and the latter was protected on its flanks only by satellite armies which were not very sound. Operation 'Stalingrad' rested on shaky foundations.

The plan for the Soviet counter-offensive provided first of all for the destruction of the German forces which had ventured directly into Stalingrad. The attacks were to be launched from the north by the army group from the Don in the direction of Kalach; from the south in the direction of Abganerovo by the group of armies from the Stalingrad front; this double enveloping movement would close like a vice on Paulus' Sixth Army. The battle to achieve this encirclement was to take four days; it was to be supported by minor diversionary attacks at Kalinin and Vyazma. The objective was therefore strictly limited and clearly defined.

The Soviet Armies found themselves facing the Italian Army, two Romanian Armies and the German Sixth and Fourth Armies, that is, fifty divisions, of which five were armoured and four motorised; but their reserves were dispersed as well as reduced in number. On the front as a whole the Russians did not have any real superiority, either in manpower or in armaments; the quality of their Air Force was even distinctly inferior. But in the Stalingrad sector they had mustered 25 per cent of their large infantry units and 60 per cent of their armoured and mechanised forces. They thus obtained a local superiority of two to one in men and eight to one in tanks. On their lines of penetration their superiority was much more marked and indeed overwhelming; thus the Fifth Armoured Army was attacking with odds of seven to two in manpower.

From June to December 1942, according to Marshal Rokossovski, the forces engaged by each camp changed as follows:

	June 1942			September 1942			December 1942		
	Men	Tanks	Air-craft	Men	Tanks	Air-craft	Men	Tanks	Air-craft
Soviet	187,000	360	337	590,000	600	389	854,000	797	1,035
German	250,000	740	1,200	590,000	1,000	1,000	846,000	770	1,066

The task of dispatching Soviet reinforcements became more difficult when the autumn rains caused the waters of the Volga to rise six and a half feet above normal and then a little later on when the river began to freeze. Russian engineers had to construct ten crossing-points.

On three occasions German raids damaged the cables on the left bank which were supporting the three footbridges by which pedestrians crossed the river. The steppe-like character of the terrain and the fact that built-up areas were few and far between meant that it was difficult to conceal the Russian troop concentrations; accordingly the units moved about only at night; in clear weather all movement was held up for twenty-four hours; during the day the men hid in the villages or, where there were none, at the bottom of gullies. This huge effort seems to have been badly assessed by the German general staff, although the Romanian general, Dimitrescu, several times expressed anxiety. But Paulus did not worry much about it and when the Soviet Army took up the offensive with considerably larger resources, it came as a disagreeable shock to the Wehrmacht.

III THE ENCIRCLEMENT OF THE GERMAN SIXTH ARMY

The Soviet attack began on November 19 on the Don front under the command of Rokossovski and continued on the 20th on the Stalingrad front under Yeremenko.

The movement along the Russian lines extended for more than 185 miles but the breakthrough was achieved over less than 125 miles. In order to destroy the enemy forces in depth the Russians had arranged their attacking troops in four successive echelons. After some eighty minutes of intensive artillery preparation, short but sharp, they launched their shock and mine-clearing units and the units of heavy tanks and self propelled guns, supported by the Air Force. These paved the way for the mobile groups of medium and light tanks and of motorised infantry,

starting-point, Kotelnikovo, which he lost on December 31. Von Manstein's counter-offensive had not succeeded.

V THE CAUSES OF THE GERMAN DEFEAT

What was the encircled Paulus doing in the meantime? After the war the Stalingrad disaster gave rise to long and lively controversy, both among the Germans who had taken part and among German and Soviet historians. Several German generals, including Zeitzler, vainly tried to take credit for having had the shrewdness to warn Hitler of the danger of clinging to Stalingrad at any price. Their clear-sightedness and courage in contradicting their Führer seems to have been greater after the event than at the time. Soviet historians vehemently criticise the German argument that by ordering a 'gradual withdrawal' in good time Hitler would have saved the Wehrmacht from the Stalingrad disaster; they showed that the Soviet offensive was strong enough and on a large enough scale, in the new circumstances which this withdrawal would have created, to advance just as quickly and successfully in other sectors, in Voronezh, for example; besides, if the German forces which had ventured towards the Volga had retreated, those which had advanced a long way into the Caucasus would have been exposed and forced into a hasty and more hazardous withdrawal. As for von Manstein and Paulus, they each, in their Memoirs, threw the responsibility for the defeat on to the other. Is it possible from these contradictory statements to determine what actually happened?

At the source of it all was Hitler's pigheadedness in regarding any withdrawal as a defeatist operation; it is certain that the Führer, who was in communication with Paulus over the head of the latter's superior officer, von Manstein, had ordered the commander of the Sixth Army not to abandon any of the positions he was occupying, in what he called the 'Stalingrad fortress'. But it seems equally certain that even in the autumn of 1942, the Wehrmacht's general staff, probably misled by the great successes of the summer, did not think that the Red Army was in a position to launch any major winter operations; after all, why should the Sixth Army not set up in the part of Stalingrad which it had conquered a strong-point capable of offering lengthy resistance to Soviet attacks?

The problem, then, was whether the encircled Sixth Army could be sufficiently well supplied to withstand the severe winter and to hold its own against the enemy. As there was no question of bringing supplies up by land, the task could be given only to the Luftwaffe. This was where Goering's personal responsibility came in. In his usual boasting way, the Field Marshal undertook to arrange for the daily lift of the 300 tons of various items which careful calculations showed to be the minimum needed

by the Sixth Army in order to keep going. Did Goering, as Rohden writes, express this opinion against the judgment of the experts and air fleet commanders who argued that they now had a reduced number of aircraft, that the machines were the worse for wear and that the Russian winter presented unforeseen hazards? At all events, it is clear that Hitler, who wanted nothing better than to believe Goering, trusted him blindly, in spite of the unfortunate precedent of the failure of the Battle of Britain and the well-known boastfulness of the Luftwaffe's Commander-in-Chief; it is also probable that Goering, like a good courtier, had eagerly anticipated his Führer's wishes.

In these circumstances what else could Paulus do but obey? The head of the German Sixth Army did not lack character. In his sector he had of his own accord cancelled the orders for the execution of the Red Army's political commissars and the systematic extermination of the Jews. He was also an experienced tactician, conscientious to a fault. But this fine German general was imbued by tradition and by nature with the doctrine of respect for discipline; in addition, he did not have the overall view of the situation which could have enabled him deliberately to take initiatives which in any case went against his nature.

Accordingly on December 19, when Hoth's tanks came to within thirty miles of his own, Paulus did not move, since he had been refused permission to attempt a break-out which would have meant abandoning advanced positions which both the Führer and the OKW – the head of the German nation and his superior officers – ordered him to hold at all costs. To explain his failure to act, Paulus put forward psychological and technical arguments. Although the army corps generals had all been in favour of a sortie, he said, the officers and soldiers of the Sixth Army preferred to try to hold on to their positions. Furthermore, there was not enough petrol for the tanks to cover more than three-fifths of the distance separating them from those of Hoth. In short, Paulus could not have attacked even if he had wanted to, since the soldiers' reluctance and the lack of fuel made any advance very risky. Von Manstein refuted these arguments; an advance of a mere twenty miles or so, he wrote, which Paulus admitted to be feasible, would have enabled Hoth, by dint of a tremendous effort, to join up with him; however narrow, the corridor thus formed would have made it possible either for the Sixth Army to escape or for it to receive the supplies enabling it to keep going afterwards.

Manstein had told Paulus all this by telephone on December 23. The head of the Sixth Army therefore knew perfectly well how he stood and it was a struggle with his conscience which prompted him to act as he did. However much he sympathised with his soldiers' sufferings and despite his anxiety about their future fate, Paulus did not think it possible to disobey orders which he was told were necessary in order to prevent the

south wing of the Wehrmacht's front from collapsing and to allow a new front to be established later on. He wrote: 'Is a responsible leader, when faced with the prospect of his own death or of the destruction or capture of his army, thereby released from his duty to obey orders?' And in his heart of hearts his answer to this question was 'no'. In these circumstances, von Manstein hardly had a right to criticise Paulus for not disobeying. He himself, who was his superior officer, had never given him any orders to this effect, since this would have involved an act of disobedience on his part. Paulus' drama was, in fact, at this moment that of the whole Wehrmacht which thought it its duty to obey the Führer of the German people *perinde ac cadaver*, despite the objections which everyone was beginning to raise in his own mind but which few had the courage to express.

VI THE DEATH THROES OF PAULUS' ARMY

Paulus had set the daily amount of supplies he needed first of all at 500 and then at 300 tons; this he never received. At the beginning, the aircraft were flying night and day and since the take-off areas were not very far from Stalingrad – about 125 miles – the load amounted to 137 tons per day for as long as Hoth's attempt to join up with the Sixth Army lasted. But when, following upon Hoth's withdrawal, the air bridge became longer, flying conditions grew more difficult because the pilots were hampered by fogs and storms and were subjected, in addition, to Russian AA fire which was becoming continually more powerful the closer it came. The Russians also raided the take-off bases and landing-strips; they sent up rockets similar to those used by Paulus to mark his landing-grounds, so as to throw the relief aircraft off course and shoot them down. The Sixth Army, for its part, lacked competent staff and its reception areas were becoming more and more restricted and dangerous as the Russian vice closed round them.

At the beginning of January, cold, fighting and disease had deprived Paulus of 80,000 men. The troops' rations had been reduced to just over five ounces of bread and one ounce of fat per man per day. The wounded could no longer be evacuated and on January 28 Paulus gave orders not to feed them any more so as to help keep up the strength of those who were fighting. In the second fortnight of January the amount brought in by air continued to decrease; it dropped to 70, 60 and even as low as 40 tons per day. It became more and more necessary to resort to parachute drops, for the planes could no longer afford to take such extreme risks; many containers were lost, either because they broke as they hit the ground or because they fell outside the reception area.

As its struggle to survive grew harder and harder, demoralisation set in in the Sixth Army and dissension in the German camp. Letters written by officers and soldiers shortly after Christmas and held back by order of the OKW showed that 57 per cent of the men no longer believed in victory; 33 per cent displayed indifference to the régime; 34 per cent were hostile. A general's son whose father had refused out of a sense of duty, to evacuate him from Stalingrad, violently reproached him and threatened to desert; a pianist was in despair because his hands were frostbitten; one officer wrote that this hell had caused him to lose his faith; fathers and husbands made known their last will and testament; perhaps through fear of the censorship, only one soldier dared to express his revolt; the rest sank into despair, which resignation did little to mitigate. The Sixth Army's general staff and Paulus himself had the feeling that their colleagues, and especially the Luftwaffe, had abandoned them; the Luftwaffe turned on the Wehrmacht and Hitler came down like a ton of bricks on both of them.

During this time the Russians did not remain inactive. Voronov was in charge of operations. On January 8, he sent an ultimatum which was rejected by Paulus on Hitler's orders. On January 10, more than 7,000 pieces of artillery, well over 400 to the square mile, started a massive softening-up process which was then completed by the bombers. In the evening, the first German line was broken through and the Russians advanced three to four miles. But it took two Soviet Armies three days to dislodge the second line of defence.

On January 17 Paulus' units poured into Stalingrad, some of them in disorder. On January 24, in order to spur the defenders on to greater efforts, Hitler showered them with titles and decorations; Paulus was promoted to field marshal. Goebbels' propaganda machine sang the praises of the men's heroism: 'The Red hordes smashed against their granite resistance.' This did not prevent von Seydlitz, Paulus' second-in-command, from suggesting that they accept the new Russian ultimatum. Disciplined to the last, Paulus rejected it, but he informed von Manstein that 'there is no longer any sense in prolonging the struggle; the catastrophe is inevitable; in order to save the men who are still alive I request immediate permission to surrender.' This permission was refused him; Hitler was categorical: against the Reds it was a case of conquer or die.

On January 25 street fighting began. Paulus gave permission for shock detachments to be formed and gave them a free hand to try to break out from their encirclement; but most of them failed. The area of resistance, the 'cauldron of Stalingrad', was gradually shrinking; on January 31 the last section surrendered in the south. On February 1 a report by the German VIII Air Corps read: 'Five aircraft have just returned from their mission; three did not find our troops; the fourth thought it caught sight

of something; the fifth saw some lights.' A few hours later another message signalled: 'The course of our lines can no longer be made out; the enemy is on our former landing-ground.' On this day the German Sixth Army ceased to exist.

On February 2, the last section in the north surrendered, including Paulus. Ninety-one thousand men, among them 2,500 officers and twenty-four generals, were captured with hundreds of guns and tanks; 20,000 wounded came out of the cellars; since January 10 the encircled units had lost 100,000 men.

Germany declared three days of national mourning. But Hitler, in his funeral speech, had one last dig at Paulus: 'He could not succeed in crossing the threshold of immortality.'

VII THE SOVIET WINTER OFFENSIVE 1942-3

The victory of Stalingrad was the most outstanding episode of the Soviet offensive in the beginning of 1943 but in fact the whole of the front had been shaken, either simultaneously or sector by sector. The Wehrmacht had given ground everywhere.

Faced with being cut off, the German Armies whose task it was to seize the Caucasus had to make a hasty withdrawal of 375 miles in forty days. The Russians could not check their retreat until they had captured Stalingrad and restored rail communication out from the city. The German troops thus succeeded in withdrawing as far as Rostov; those which could not manage this were evacuated by sea. In this sector the Wehrmacht's order to withdraw had been given in good time, so as to avoid a second encirclement which would have turned the Stalingrad defeat into an irretrievable disaster. This success had been achieved in the nick of time, for Rokossovski's Don group of armies had advanced 125 miles southwards and on February 14 recaptured Rostov.

Further to the north, Vatutin, at the head of the south-west group of armies, had crossed the frozen Don and advanced as far as the Donetz.

On the Voronezh front, Golikov's group of armies had cut the poorly equipped and already demoralised Hungarian troops to pieces. In a matter of days one division had been destroyed and two more had to be withdrawn from the front. The first Soviet objective - to open up a gap in the German defences - was achieved in the course of two weeks in January 1943. The Hungarian Second Army had lost 140,000 men and eighty per cent of its equipment; the survivors were sent back to Hungary. In February, the Soviet line of advance had reached Kursk in the west, Kharkov further to the south and then ran along the Dnepr near Dnepropetrovsk. At the

end of February a German counter-attack pushed the front line back to the Donetz but did not succeed in crossing it.

On the Moscow front the USSR capital was finally freed; the pocket held by the enemy at Rzhev and Vyazma was mopped up. Although the northern sectors remained quieter, on the Leningrad front Schlusenburg was reconquered.

Thus the Red Army had dealt a crushing blow to Hitler's hopes, to the OKW's calculations and to Goebbels' propaganda. Despite its losses, not only had it not been forced to remain on the defensive during the winter or compelled to restrict itself to small attacks but it had launched an almost all-out offensive more powerful than the previous year. One very good German army had been captured and four satellite armies destroyed; a considerable part of the Wehrmacht's artillery, engineering and reserve units had been obliterated. In spite of the particularly severe cold, the total advance was 125 miles on average and had sometimes attained 375 miles. An immense territory of 7,500 square miles - almost the area of France - including the northern Caucasus, Stalingrad, Rostov, Voronezh and most of the districts of Krasnodar, Voroshilovgrad, Smolensk and Orel, had been liberated.

VIII THE IMPORTANCE OF THE VICTORY OF STALINGRAD

The name of Stalingrad resounded all over the world, and Soviet historians rightly see the Red Army's brilliant success as the most crucial victory of the Second World War and one which marked its turning-point.

True, this was not yet final victory. Von Manstein was not entirely wrong in stressing that the Wehrmacht's southern wing had not been destroyed; to which Yeremenko replied that the Russians' hopes did not extend that far. The German Army had shown that its remaining forces were still formidable when, taking advantage of a somewhat hasty Soviet advance which had not been consolidated because of insufficient reserves, it had gone over to the offensive again at Kharkov. With the Nazis, you couldn't count your chickens before they were hatched. Nobody could foretell how the struggle between the armies would develop when the summer returned and which of the two would be in a position to take up the initiative.

It had nonetheless been proved that the Wehrmacht was not invincible and Hitler was the cause of its first great defeat. He had taken all the decisions privately with Zeitzler, the OKW's Chief of Staff, and he did not seem to grasp the full seriousness of the setbacks. At a conference of the OKW on January 23, 1943, while everyone was expecting Paulus to

surrender at any minute, Hitler spoke of everything except Stalingrad; he seemed to be concerned only with future party meetings at Nuremberg and with the need to build a new hall. This lack of response to reality was not compensated for – quite the reverse – by the Führer's direct interference in the details of operations when he had neither the technical experience nor the necessary information to reach a decision. In short, although Hitler and his generals were not yet at loggerheads, the military leaders' confidence in him was beginning to suffer a few hard knocks.

Germany's allies were particularly affected. At the very moment when she was losing the last of her colonial empire, Italy had left her best equipment and her crack units in the USSR. Hungary had no army left and could not hope for any compensation for her defeats. General Antonescu wrote to Hitler that the Romanian Army, 230,000 strong in November 1942, had been reduced to 75,000 in January 1943. Both Count Ciano and the Romanian Foreign Minister, Mihail Antonescu, had begun to toy with the idea of breaking loose from the German yoke. Turkey, who had been both attracted and alarmed by Germany's great successes in the summer and was on the verge of rushing to help her to victory, crept back into her shell of neutrality.

It was not, of course, only at Stalingrad that a balance of forces had been reached which gave promise of a new era. But in the battle of the Atlantic convoys, this balance could well be upset by some technical invention of one of the belligerents and although it was full of promise for the future, the effects had not yet made themselves felt. At El Alamein the British victory showed yet again that the Italians were incurably weak and perhaps also that Germany had not sent sufficient forces to Africa. But at Stalingrad it was the full power of the Wehrmacht which had been beaten; the fact that tactical errors had been made did nothing to detract from the Red Army's extraordinary recovery. It had realised how to use the vast spaces of the USSR to the best advantage, how to retreat in order to come back more strongly and how to seize or create favourable opportunities. Its victory was due not only to 'General Winter' nor to the Russian soldier's dogged qualities and capacity for suffering. It had been able, at the right time and place, to provide manpower and equipment superior to those of its opponent; a new team of strategists had worked out the plans most appropriate to the circumstances and had carried them out in the field. The Soviet victory was the Red Army's victory, but it was also the victory of the Soviet economy and of the Bolshevik régime.

For the Communist party had completely identified itself with the Russian nation in order to give it leadership and train it for battle. Contrary to the hopes of the invaders, even after the first setbacks rebellion had not broken out either amongst the non-Russian population or among the peasants. Victory was going to knit the Russian people even more

closely to its leaders who no longer appeared as having achieved power through a revolution stemming from national defeat but as the rightful heirs of the men, régimes and social classes which had built up the greatness of Russia.

Finally, this victory was Stalin's victory. Neither the failure of the policy of compromise with the Reich nor the setbacks of the first few months of the war had shaken his authority or weakened his determination. He had taken all responsibility, both political and military, upon himself, and had proved himself capable of shouldering it. His calm self-assurance, his nerves of steel, his realistic way of looking at things and his deep-seated cynicism, which was not bothered by principles or scruples, had enabled him to combine determination and efficiency.

The USSR gained enormous prestige throughout the world from a victory which she had achieved entirely on her own. The memory of the dubious era of the German-Soviet pact was fading away like a passing accident. She alone among the great Allied powers identified her cause with that of the oppressed peoples. She offered everyone the example of steadfastness in adversity, and by resisting the occupier she was pointing the road to victory. In every country she became a source of strength and pride to the Communist party, which was the spearhead of the underground struggle. The workers' strikes in northern Italy in March 1943 and the unification of the Resistance forces in France in the spring of the same year were not entirely unconnected with Stalingrad.

In short, the USSR seemed set to take advantage of any German defeat by filling the large vacuum that it would create in Europe. True, this defeat was not yet in sight; the Nazi Reich even strengthened its position by setting itself up as the champion of the struggle to oppose any revival of the threat of Bolshevism.

But the USSR, for her part, had earned the right to be more demanding with regard to her Anglo-Saxon allies. How was the 'strange alliance' which had been born out of the Nazi peril going to work?