

# THE DEFENCE

*By*

Colonel N. FRENKEL, Dr. Hist.

1944

# OF MOSCOW

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**FOREIGN LANGUAGES PUBLISHING HOUSE  
MOSCOW 1944**

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By Colonel N. Frankel, D. H. H.



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**G**RAVE danger threatened the Soviet capital that grim autumn of 1941. The German fascist hordes were madly rushing towards Moscow, determined to possess it at all costs. Ever since the beginning of their war against the Soviet Union the German Command had attached tremendous significance to the seizure of this city. The taking of the capital—that most important political, economic, cultural and strategic centre of the

U.S.S.R.—was, according to Hitler's plans, to bring about the capitulation of the Soviet Union.

The Hitlerite clique felt that the seizure of Moscow would solve several problems simultaneously: the main grouping of the Red Army would be destroyed; the front would be split and the Soviet armed forces disunited, so that they could be smashed piecemeal; a road would be opened for the German troops to the East, to the Volga and the Urals; and the entire political and economic activity of the country would be disorganized.

Appreciating the significance of Moscow for the Soviet people, the Germans thought that by capturing this city they would inflict upon the country such a moral blow as would paralyze its will to further resistance.

At the same time the German Command considered the taking of Moscow one of the best means of sustaining the spirits of the Germans both in the rear and at the front, and compensating for the colossal losses which they had had to bear as a result of the blows dealt them by the Red Army.

Finally, with the capture of the capital the Hitlerites hoped to strengthen their tottering international position by creating the impression upon the entire world that the Land of the Soviets was completely destroyed, and also to instill in the other states a feeling of fear of their might.

Thus Hitler and his myrmidons considered the seizure of Moscow as the prime condition for winning their

war against the Soviet Union. This is why they so persistently declared that "the German Command will regard Moscow as its main goal even if Stalin attempts to transfer the centre of gravity of military operations to another place."

THE German Command moved huge numbers of troops and all kinds of military matériel on Moscow. During the tense fighting for the capital the number of German troops concentrated on this direction amounted to almost one-third of all of Hitler's armed forces operating on the Soviet-German front.

The fight for Moscow had special significance for the Russian people. Apart from the fact that Moscow is one of the largest cities in the world, third only to New York and London in population, it is the capital of the Soviet Union. All the threads of administration of this gigantic state are concentrated here. Moscow has been from time immemorial the centre and fount of Russian statehood and national culture. In the mind of the Russian all the most important historical events, the heroic struggle of the Russian people for its independence, honour and freedom are associated with Moscow. Moscow is the citadel of the Russian spirit, which has never submitted to force; it is the symbol of the struggle and victories of the Russian people. In the centre of this city, at the ancient walls of the Kremlin rest the remains of



the greatest genius of mankind—V. I. Lenin. In this city lives and works that wise and beloved leader of the people—J. V. Stalin.

Not a single person of the Soviet millions could even permit the thought that Moscow might fall into the clutches of the fascist monsters. Every citizen of the Soviet Union, and above all, every Muscovite did all he could to repel the attack of the German fascist hordes on his beloved Moscow.

The bitterness and ferocity of the fighting on the distant and close approaches to the city was unprecedented in the history of warfare.

JUDGING from their military experience in Western Europe the Germans presumed that they would be able to put an end to the Soviet Union in the course of a few weeks. And when in the first days of the war the German armies succeeded in breaking through the lines of the Red Army units defending the Soviet frontier the self-confidence of the Hitlerites knew no bounds. A few days after the outbreak of war the fascist newspapers boastfully described the successes of the German troops in Russia and with insolent self-assurance declared that the road to Moscow and to Leningrad was open, and that soon the German flag with its fascist swastika would be flying over Moscow.

However, these calculations of Hitler's, like many

others, fell through. The chief reason for this was the heroic resistance of the Red Army, a factor unforeseen by the German Command. The daily increasing resistance of the Soviet troops forced the fascist rulers to change their dates more than once, and to keep postponing the day set for the seizure of Moscow. In August 1941 the Germans declared that they would get to Moscow in some two or three weeks. August passed and September passed, but still the Germans failed to reach the capital.

In spite of the fact that the Germans had the most modern military equipment, powerful, high speed armoured and mechanized forces and aviation, their advance along the route to Moscow was slower than that of Napoleon's infantry in 1812.

Napoleon crossed the Russian border on June 24, that is, two days later than Hitler in 1941, and by the middle of September Napoleon had entered Moscow. This time it was not until October that Hitler's tanks and motorized columns, which had swept through Western Europe so quickly, were able to reach a line where they could begin an offensive directly on Moscow, at a distance of 100-150 km. from the city.

The staunchness of the Russian soldiers who fought against Napoleon won them immortal glory and the highest praise from the great conqueror himself.

"They are citadels that have to be destroyed with cannon," Napoleon said of the Russian soldiers.

But the resistance offered by the soldiers fighting against Napoleon in 1812 was excelled by the staunchness and resistance of the Soviet fighters standing in the path of the Hitlerite hordes. This may be explained by the fact that the Soviet Red Army men not only have inherited the best fighting qualities and proud spirit of the Russian soldiers, but they differ from their forebears as regards their position in society. For Soviet fighters have tasted life in the great commonwealth of free peoples of the U.S.S.R., a life for which every officer and soldier of the Red Army is ready to fight to the last drop of blood, to his last breath. And that is just how they fought, astonishing both friend and foe by their heroism.

The stubbornness of the Soviet troops proved an unexpected surprise for the Germans, as they themselves admitted, and in the further course of the war on the Soviet front they have had occasion to feel the force of this stubbornness to the fullest degree.

THE Germans undertook their first offensive on Moscow in the beginning of October 1941. On October 2, the German troops received Hitler's order declaring that the offensive, "the last great decisive combat of this year, has just begun." They had been preparing for this offensive long and elaborately, as Hitler himself declared in the aforementioned order.

"At last the conditions have been created for a final,

tremendous blow," the order reads, "a blow which should lead to the extirpation of the enemy even before the coming of winter. All preparations are already completed, as far as it has been possible for human effort to do so. This time the preparations were made systematically, step by step, forcing the enemy into a position in which we can now deal him a mortal blow."

In order to execute this insidious plan the German Command drew up a large number of picked troops. They threw 17 infantry and 2 motorized divisions, some 1,000 tanks and about 900 aeroplanes against the Red Army units on the Western front, that is, those operating mainly on the Moscow direction.

The Hitlerites felt certain of speedy victory and announced to the world the developing military operations of their troops. In a speech made in Berlin on October 3 Hitler declared: "New operations on a gigantic scale were begun 48 hours ago. They will facilitate the destruction of the enemy in the East. . . ."

And to make his words still more effective Hitler added: "The enemy has already been smashed and will never again be able to muster his forces."

From the very beginning of October 1941 the fighting waxed furious on various sections of the front. Having a great superiority in tanks, aviation and other armaments, the Germans succeeded in wedging into the defence of the Soviet troops. During the first half of October they succeeded in pressing back the Red Army units in several

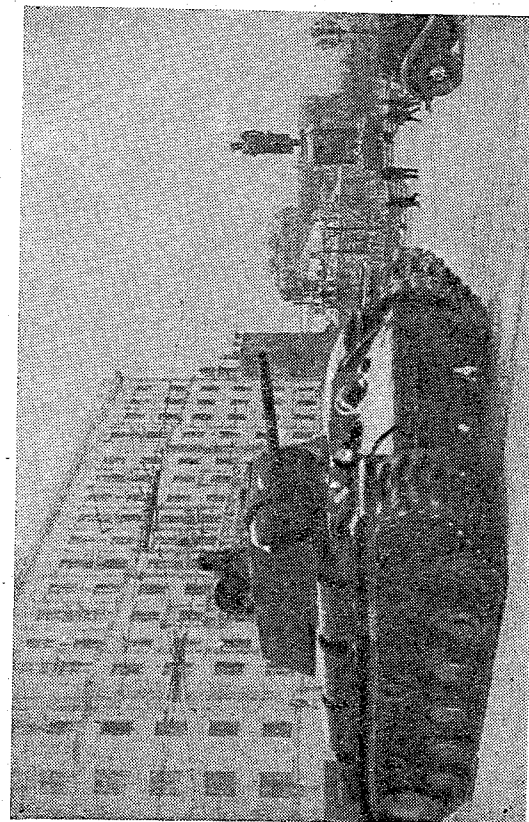


places and seized the cities of Orel and Bryansk. But the German advance cost them tremendous losses in men and matériel. In but two days of battle, October 12 and 14, the units of the Western front wiped out 25,000 German soldiers and officers and destroyed 154 tanks, 460 motor vehicles and 80 guns.

Their October offensive on Moscow cost the Germans greater losses than their conquest of several European countries. The picked German divisions that took part in the attack on Moscow lost up to 80 per cent of their men in these battles. The Soviet fighters stalwartly defended every settlement and every line, and sowed the battlefield with the dead bodies of German soldiers and officers. There was ample reason for the German soldier Simon Baumer to write to his relatives in October: "Our advance on Moscow is costing us tremendous losses in wounded and killed. The Russians are resisting like the devil. It was only in the field that we discovered there isn't another enemy more obstinate than the Russians."

Another German soldier, Reimund Hein, more laconically expressed the mood of the German soldiers who had experienced the difficulties of warfare on the Soviet front: "All I can say is that I'd rather fight ten years in France than one in Russia," is what he wrote to his wife.

The courageous resistance of the Red Army stemmed the advance of the fascist marauders. They no longer pushed ahead at top speed as they had through Western Europe,



*A heavy tank leaves for the front*

but crawled forward slowly, shedding their blood profusely on every foot of occupied Soviet territory.

Hitler did not spare his soldiers, but kept sending new reinforcements, which were ground to dust by the Red Army. He hurried his generals. The dates he set for the taking of Moscow—first October 16, then October 25—went by the board. The Russian winter came on gradually and the goal of the offensive—the seizure of the capital—seemed farther away than ever.

A new date was set by Hitler for the entry of the Germans into Moscow—the beginning of November. He promised that on November 7, the anniversary of the October Revolution, the holiday of the Soviet people, he would organize a parade in Moscow and lead those who had taken part in the storming of the city through the streets and squares of the conquered Soviet capital.

But the October offensive of the Germans collapsed. Moscow was more inaccessible than ever. The participants of the fascist parade-to-be in ever increasing number filled the graves in the German cemeteries, or simply piled up in mounds of corpses on the fields near Moscow, in roadside ditches and pits.

On November 7, 1941, there *was* a parade in Moscow. But no fascist gangsters paraded there before their demoniacal "führer." On the Red Square that day, according to Soviet custom, the proud sons of the freedom-loving Soviet people—fighters of the glorious Red Army—confidently demonstrated their formidable strength before



*Soviet planes fly over the Red Square on their way to the front*

their departure for the front to defend their native land and beloved capital. And from Lenin's Mausoleum their great leader Joseph Stalin, Chairman of the State Committee of Defence, greeted and inspired the fighters of the Soviet Union to new heroic feats.

THE collapse of the German October offensive on Moscow did not mean an end of the danger threatening the city. It was manifest that Hitler would stop at nothing whatsoever in his endeavour to achieve the goal he had set himself.

The situation at the front was favourable for a new offensive of the Germans on Moscow. They had occupied Orel, Bryansk, Vyazma, Kalinin and other cities which served as convenient springboards for large-scale operations against Moscow from several directions.

The Soviet Command was aware of all this long before the collapse of the October offensive on Moscow. Back in October 1941, the Supreme Command of the Red Army took special measures designed to increase the resistance to the German pressure on Moscow and also to create the conditions necessary to repel new, still more powerful blows by the fascist aggressors.

One of the most important of these measures was the Decree of the State Committee of Defence, dated October 19, 1941, providing for the construction of two defence



*Headquarters of the Moscow Defence*

belts around Moscow, one at the distant approaches to the city and the other at the near approaches. The defence of the city along a line running at a distance of 100-120 kilometres to the west of Moscow, was entrusted to Commander of the Western front G. K. Zhukov, famed Soviet General, Hero of the Soviet Union and now Marshal of the Soviet Union. The defence of Moscow on its near approaches was turned over to Colonel-General P. A. Artemyev, then head of the Moscow garrison.

To ensure the defence of Moscow from the rear, to strengthen the rear of the troops defending Moscow and suppress the subversive activities of spies, wreckers and other agents of German fascism, the State Committee of Defence in this decree declared Moscow and adjoining districts in a state of siege from October 20, 1941.

In the same decree the State Committee of Defence called upon the residents of the city to observe order and to render every possible aid to the Red Army in its defence of Moscow.

This decree was of decisive significance in the organization of the defence of Moscow. Both at the front and within the city itself, a high sense of discipline and even more efficient organization were reached. Moscow had become the front.

The publication of this decree aroused tremendous enthusiasm among the troops and the civil population of Moscow. Every private and officer, every inhabitant

of the city, became even more profoundly conscious of the seriousness of the situation and of his duty to the Government and the Command in the defence of the capital.

Gun Commander Sergeant Arshinov, effectively reflected the general mood of all those who participated in the great defence of Moscow when he declared: "All our feelings, all our thoughts are with you, beloved Moscow! We will defend you with our lives!"

According to a custom which has sprung up in the Soviet Union, Soviet people often express their opinion, thoughts and feelings collectively in letters addressed to Stalin. One of the most striking letters of those days is that sent by the privates and officers of a Guards Division, which is written in the form of an oath:

"Beloved Moscow! People! Great Stalin!

"At this historic moment every Guardsman who has already seen battle with the enemy once more repeats the passionate words of his oath. We swear to our mothers who gave us life, we swear to our people, to the Soviet Government and to you, great, beloved Stalin, that so long as our hand can hold the rifle, so long as our hearts beat within us, to our very last breath, we shall fight the enemy mercilessly, and destroy the fascist scum.

"Long live our Socialist Land and its Capital—Moscow!"

Filled with the one desire to defend Moscow come what

may, the defenders of the city set to work with might and main at the front and in the city, fortifying the approaches to Moscow and transforming it into an impregnable fortress.

While observing the precise delimitation of functions and preserving complete independence, the Command of the troops acted in conjunction with the local authorities and public organizations, which rendered it every possible aid.

In addition to the measures taken by the military authorities, all other forces in the city were mobilized and harnessed for the one task—that of strengthening the defence system of Moscow. Every mind was occupied with the problem of making most effective use of all existing resources which might in any way help the defence of the capital.

The people of Moscow were firmly resolved to defend every inch of soil, every street, every house, every brick of their beloved city, but never to surrender to the enemy.

“Great and difficult as the struggle for Moscow may be, we will never give it up to the enemy!”

“We will lay down our lives, but not give up the capital to the enemy!”

That was how the Muscovites spoke.

The determination of the Muscovites to fight for their city was manifested in the fact that they did not wait for the Germans to come up to the walls of Moscow, but went to meet the enemy hordes in order to fight them on the

distant approaches to the capital. Nor did they wait to be called to the ranks of the Red Army. Hundreds of thousands of Moscow patriots went to the front as volunteers. Over 260,000 youths joined the fighting forces during the days of the German offensive on Moscow. They were a splendid reinforcement to the troops of the Western front operating on the distant approaches to the city.

The following episode speaks eloquently of the lofty feelings with which the inhabitants of the capital set off to join the regular troops.

The Pirozhkovs, who had already reached a venerable age, were among those seeing the young people off to the front. In reply to the questioning glance of an old acquaintance, Dmitry Semyonovich Pirozhkov said: “We’re seeing the whole family off. Nikolai and Peter have gone.” And pointing to a girl in military uniform marching by, he added: “See that girl there, with the medical kit? That’s our daughter Klava. We sent them all ourselves. Mother and I have charged them to smash the Germans and not let them get to Moscow.”

Tens of thousands of Muscovites joined the ranks of the Popular Volunteer Force which fought shoulder to shoulder with the regular units of the Red Army. Many Moscow divisions of the Popular Volunteer Force had been formed the summer before and were trained and tempered in battle. Some of them had even been awarded the title of Guards Division for their outstanding military achievements.

Simultaneously with the dispatch of volunteers and members of the Popular Volunteer Force to the front, every district of Moscow formed workers' battalions and rear combat detachments. These were new powerful, armed reserves, which Moscow was getting ready to reinforce the troops operating on its defence lines.

The flower of Moscow joined the workers' battalions. Coming from all possible professions, these people took up arms and joined the ranks of the fighters for the capital. Among them were Stakhanovite workers, professors, architects of the Moscow subway, carters, cinema producers, house janitors, electricians, students, and factory managers.

Young men and women in their early 'teens tried not to lag behind and joined the workers' battalions together with old people. During the formation of a workers' battalion in the Krasnaya Presnya District, 17-year-old Nina Zhavoronkova, a student at the Geological Institute, came to the District Soviet with her gas-mask and medical kit and asked to be accepted into the battalion. Upon being refused, she declared: "I won't leave here until you agree to send me to the front. My father and brothers are in the Red Army fighting those bestial Hitlerites. And now my beloved city is in danger and I can't stay at home. My place is among the defenders of Moscow."

The young patriot was so persistent in her demand that it was granted, and she was enrolled in the workers' bat-

talion. Whole families joined the workers' battalions. For instance, take the family of Professor Korzinkin, author of a number of scientific works. With his son Sergei he joined the ranks as a private in a workers' battalion, while his wife enlisted as a nurse. The school teacher Baldano, together with his wife Sofya Zinovyevna and son Vadim, joined a workers' battalion and mastered the art of warfare. Among the other volunteers who joined at the time the Baldanos did, were three couples: Kruchenkova and her husband Skvortsov, Karpova and her husband Yutkin, and Katanskaya and her husband Ludvig.

People discarded their peace-time habits; they moved out of their cozy, comfortable homes into trenches and blockhouses on the defence lines on the near approaches to the capital. They all had but one goal at that time, namely, to master the use of arms as fast as they could, to comprehend the grim science of warfare and to prepare themselves in the best possible way for most difficult battles with the hated enemy.

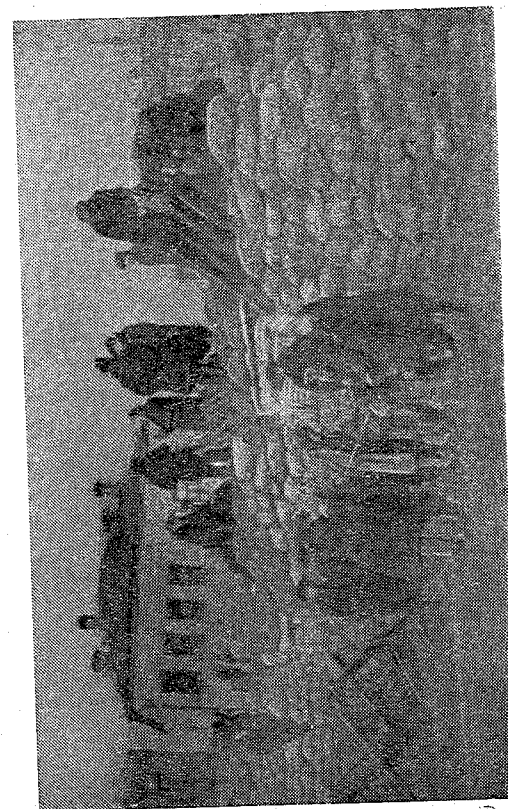
Most of the men in the workers' battalions had already served in the Red Army and some had participated in battles for their native land. Their military training proceeded quickly and effectively. Those who were best prepared in this respect helped their comrades, irrespective of their former position or difference in age. Day and night riflemen and machine-gunners, grenade-throwers and tank-fighters, trench mortar crews and artillerymen

trained intensively. Practice in shooting under conditions simulating actual warfare alternated with tactical exercises; these were lessons in theory and the practical study of bayonet fighting and grenade throwing. Gradually the fighters and units of the workers' battalions became a formidable force fully prepared to meet the enemy.

Those who remained in the city, whether workers at industrial plants of the city, transport workers, employees of state institutions and trade enterprises, scientific workers or students, underwent systematic military training in accordance with the universal military training introduced in the Soviet Union on October 1, 1941. After their day's work they would gather together at special military training points, where they studied under experienced instructors. These people later formed special armed units for the safeguarding and defence of enterprises and institutions. In case of necessity they were to reinforce the units fighting at the front.

Another important measure reflecting the decision of the Muscovites not to let the enemy into their city was the creation of an entire system of defence structures and various obstacles at the approaches to the city.

Realizing the tank superiority of the Germans and fully appreciating the danger of a breakthrough by fascist armoured wedges to Moscow, the Command and Moscow organizations took most energetic measures to put up as quickly as could be the greatest possible number of anti-



*Street barricades in the Kiev District, Moscow*



tank barriers, converting the open fields around into terrain impassable for tanks.

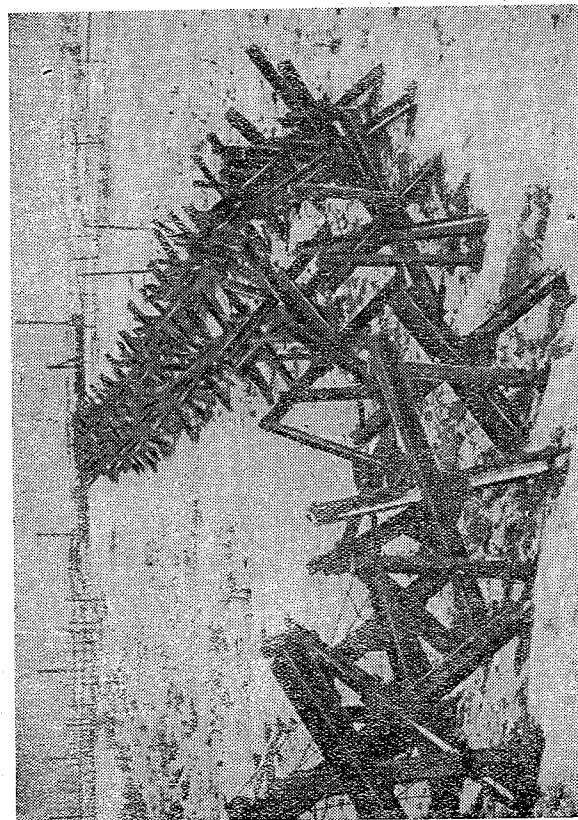
Tremendous means and efforts were required to put up defence structures on such a colossal scale in so short a time. To the honour of the Muscovites be it said that they handled this exceptionally difficult task brilliantly, thanks to the inventive minds of the engineers and scientists in combination with the practical experience of the workers and the great enthusiasm of all.

The line of defence on the near approaches to Moscow was divided up into sectors corresponding to the number of districts in the city. Each district was assigned the definite task of putting up fortifications in its sector.

The Muscovites displayed remarkable perseverance and endurance in overcoming difficulties encountered in putting up their defence structures. Scores of thousands of Moscow inhabitants went to their posts every day and worked there from early morning until late at night, setting real examples of labour heroism.

On one of the sectors a group of about 300 women workers from the "Svoboda" factory went at their job with great enthusiasm. When asked if they wanted to be relieved they replied unanimously: "No, we don't! We won't quit this place until we've finished the job."

A small brigade of workers from the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition working on another sector kept increasing their output every day. In 10 days they excavated 1,000 cu. m. of soil, or over 4 cu. m. per person per day!



*Anti-tank defences on the approaches to the Capital*

In spite of the fact that the working conditions were exceedingly difficult, the people often having to labour with the rain coming down in showers and standing knee deep in ice-cold water, thousands of Muscovites did one and a half and even twice the amount of work scheduled. Groups from the Leather Plant, the Automobile Hood Works, the V. Korolenko Hospital and others, working on the sector headed by Skakalsky, daily did 150 to 200 per cent of their planned work. It was on this sector that the remarkable youth movement for a minimum of 150 per cent plan fulfilment originated.

The old folks kept up with the young. Khokhlov, a 60-year-old worker who had spent 35 years at the Kalinin plant, daily did twice the planned amount of work.

Collective farmers of Moscow Region, especially of those sectors through which the defence line passed, worked hand in hand with the residents of the city. The members of the Maxim Gorky Collective Farm worked especially well. An aged enthusiast of this farm, Ivan Lebedev, said in connection with his high output:

"My son is in the Red Army, defending our country at the front, and I am defending it here near Moscow."

The city's residents were confident that the Germans would not be able to break into the city, that the fascist hordes would be smashed far from Moscow, at the defence lines built there. However, to obviate the unexpected, which always attends modern warfare, they

took all necessary measures of precaution. In the outskirts, on the highways leading to the city, barricades were put up with loopholes for cannon and machine guns. Sandbags, logs, bricks etc., served as the material for these barricades. Anti-tank "hedgehogs" were set up at the approaches to the barricades as well as on a number of streets and crossroads. They were cleverly made of steel beams and rails. Anti-aircraft guns and aerostats took up their posts on the boulevards and squares, and machine guns were set up on balconies and roofs.

Moscow bristled. Its streets and houses were converted into veritable bastions.

But the participation of the capital's inhabitants in its defence was not confined to these measures. Besides sending hundreds of thousands of men to the front to join the fighting forces, the Popular Volunteer Force, the workers' battalions and rear combat units; besides organizing regular military training for the residents of the city; besides taking part in the gigantic work of putting up defence lines—besides all this the Muscovites kept the troops at the front constantly supplied with guns, ammunition, equipment and other necessities.

Needless to say, the entire country was outfitting the Red Army, including the troops defending Moscow. Reinforcements of tanks, planes, guns, shells, fuel, food, etc., kept coming from the Urals, Siberia and other eastern regions of the country. In this respect it can be said that the entire country, all the peoples of the U.S.S.R.,

took part in the heroic defence of the capital. But the Muscovites, fully conscious of their duty to their land, tried to contribute as big a share as possible to this great cause of all the people. With the energy inherent in them, they began to study the possibilities of their tremendous city even more profoundly, in order best to answer the call of the State Committee of Defence: "...to render the Red Army, defending Moscow, every possible aid."

In spite of the difficulties occasioned by the nearness of the front and the evacuation of a number of large plants and factories from the city, Moscow continued to remain a huge forge producing arms and ammunition for the Red Army.

Moscow government organs, public organizations, workers, engineers and scientists, succeeded not only in keeping the large military enterprises working but also in reorganizing the entire industry of Moscow for war needs in the briefest possible time.

Tense creative work went on at full speed at plants and factories. Workers and engineers submitted hundreds of proposals for rationalizing and perfecting productive processes, for studying and using all suitable equipment and matériel.

Bakshinov, director of one of the plants, acting on behalf of the entire staff of workers and engineers, secured for the plant a very important defence order. Within 8 days the workers of the plant developed a new

technological process, made the necessary technical changes and successfully handled their difficult order.

Railway repair shops and depots, in addition to their usual work, built armoured trains and repaired tanks and long-range guns.

Even small shops which had formerly made kerosene stoves, pots and pans and other household articles, and even those that had put out children's toys and fir-tree decorations, now turned to manufacturing trench mortars, shells, grenades and other war supplies.

A number of small plants that had put out carbonated water and fruit drinks before the war now adapted their shops to fill bottles with inflammable liquids to fight enemy tanks.

The departure of large numbers of workers to the army necessarily occasioned certain difficulties in most of the industrial enterprises of the city, and the problem came up of labour power in general and of skilled labour in particular.

New workers, youngsters, old men, housewives came to the plants and factories to take the place of those who had left for the front. The places of fathers who had joined the army were taken by their sons and daughters, brothers were replaced by sisters, wives substituted for husbands, parents superseded their children. Many of the workers, before leaving for the army, trained other members of their families and left them to work at their jobs. The young turner Vikhrov, for instance, taught his sister his trade, and she

took over his place at the lathe, turning out 150 per cent of planned production.

The students of the industrial trade schools, which were organized a year before the outbreak of war, were an excellent labour reserve for Moscow industry. They came to the plants as skilled workers. These young masters also set high production records. Korsakov, one such student, regularly produced three to four times planned output.

Men and women workers, engineers, mechanics set outstanding examples of labour heroism, working with tremendous enthusiasm. Many of them would stay in their shops for days at a time. Sergei Molchanov, a former janitor, is one of many thousands of examples of such labour fortitude. Molchanov went to work at a trench mortar plant. Helped by an older worker, he quickly mastered his difficult trade. Later his teacher, the man who relieved him at his machine on the next shift became ill. To stop production might entail serious damage to the equipment and a long delay in the production of this article. There was no other worker to be found. And so for six days running Molchanov did not leave the plant, working for himself and the other man.

A place of honour in the ranks of the fighters for the Soviet capital rightly belongs to the Moscow women. During those difficult days these Moscow patriots showed the whole world what free Soviet woman was capable of. They took up arms and fought together with the men in the

ranks of the Red Army and workers' battalions. The greater share of the work at plants and factories fell to them. It was these modest heroines who dug thousands of metres of trenches and anti-tank pits. They showed a mother's concern for the wounded, carrying them off the field of battle, nursing them back to health at the hospitals. But they helped the front not only with their labour and care. They also gave their blood to the men. Moscow women donors gave thousands of litres of blood to save the lives of Red Army men.

Nothing was left undone that could be done to help the front. And everything was done with heart and soul. How lovingly did the women of the capital collect warm things and holiday gifts for the men at the front!

TAKEN all together, the measures of the Military Command and of the Moscow organizations, so warmly supported by the three million residents of the city, considerably contributed to the collapse of the first and second offensives of the Germans on Moscow.

Even the absence of a second front, which enabled Hitler to rush scores of new divisions to the Russian front, was of no avail to the enemy. Nor did the thousands of tanks transferred from other sections of the front help. Moscow remained an inaccessible rampart against which the fascist hordes, driven there by Hitler, were smashed.

This in spite of the fact that the second offensive of the Germans on Moscow, begun November 16 and called by Hitler a "general" offensive, was many times greater than the first! This time Hitler hurled 51 divisions into the battle for Moscow—13 tank divisions, 33 infantry, and 5 motorized infantry divisions.

This was indeed a tremendous force. Never before, and nowhere had such a large concentration of troops and matériel been used in operations for the possession of a city. But Hitler was ready to do anything to win the victory, and that—as quickly as possible. He was frightened at the prospect of a prolonged war. He was frightened at the inexorable, approaching Russian winter, for which his army proved to be unprepared. He thundered and roared. Not without foundation did he write in his November order to the troops attacking Moscow:

"Considering the importance of the impending events, especially the approaching winter and the poor equipment of the army, I order you to finish off with Moscow in the immediate future at any cost whatever."

Taught by bitter experience, Hitler no longer set definite dates for the seizure of the capital, but merely demanded that it be taken "in the immediate future" and "at any cost whatever." He wanted to seize Moscow in a gigantic armoured vise from the north and south, and wrest it from the Red Army. But the Red Army, supported by the city, withstood the frenzied attack.

Under the wise leadership of Stalin and his able military

aides, Zhukov and others, the Red Army not only withstood this attack of the German "nippers" but even broke them off, without giving them a chance to close.

The nearer they came to Moscow, the fiercer, the more stubbornly did the Soviet troops, reinforced by the Muscovites, battle against them. They fought like lions, vying with each other in courage and daring, in bravery and fortitude.

Barring the path of the German troops attacking along the Volokolamsk Highway was a defence line occupied by the 316th Rifle Division, called the Panfilov 8th Guards Red Banner Division, in honour of General Panfilov, their commander who had fallen in battle. Twenty-eight men of this division were stationed near the small railway siding of Dubosekovo near Moscow, prepared for the fight. In an attempt to frighten the Soviet fighters, the Hitlerites employed their so-called "psychological" attack here. They moved in serried ranks at full height, firing from their automatic rifles as they went. They were accompanied by large groups of tanks. When the fascists came up to a distance of 150 metres, Sergeant Dobrobabin whistled loudly. This signal to open fire nonplussed the Germans. The slight panic that followed in their ranks was sufficient to enable the Soviet fighters to mow down more than 70 fascists. The "psychological" attack failed. Then the Germans brought up several groups of tanks, about 50 in all. For over 4 hours this handful of Soviet heroes repelled numerous attacks of the German tanks, 18 of

which they smashed. However, the forces were too unequal, and one after another these dauntless men fell in the struggle. Yet they had not let the enemy pass, holding on to their position until Red Army forces had a chance to come up. The name Panfilovites, which has become symbolical in the Red Army of greatness of soul and heroism, is associated with the self-sacrificing conduct of these 28 Guardsmen who stood their ground to the last. Every defender of the capital understood what one of these famous 28 fighters meant when he said: "Russia is great and the Soviet Union is boundless, but there is no place to retreat—Moscow is behind us."

In the battles for their native land and their beloved capital the valiant fighters of the Red Army gave the lie to the old saying, that "one man on a field is not a fighter." They proved, by their brilliant feats, that even a single man is a force on the battlefield if he is ready to fight for his country to the end.

The following are but a few of the countless examples of heroism manifested by the defenders of Moscow:

Borisaiko, a young officer, all alone, fought against three enemy tanks. He let the first come up to within 5 metres and set it aflame with two bottles of combustibles. The fascist crew jumped out of the burning tank, only to be laid flat by a well-aimed grenade. He smashed the second tank with an anti-tank grenade. The third tank turned tail and beat a hasty retreat.

Following the worthy example of this Soviet officer,

two tank-fighters, Sergei Golovachev and Mikhail Valikov engaged nine German tanks. Hiding in the small hollows of the locality from the heavy artillery and machine-gun fire of the enemy, these fearless soldiers let the tanks come close up to them. They then attacked with grenades and bottles of combustibles, smashing and burning four tanks. The other 5 tanks were afraid to come closer and sped into a near-by wood.

Junior Lieutenant Shirmatov was lying behind a mound with a light machine gun when the Germans attacked his position. The enemy was approaching quickly. He could clearly see them running up. But Shirmatov was in no hurry. He knew that the closer he let them come, the more deadly his fire would be. Only when the fascists were very close did Shirmatov press the trip. More than 50 enemy soldiers and officers fell under his fire. The others took to their heels. This daring machine-gunner shouted after them: "Hey there, you, who else wants to visit Moscow?"

During the period of their second offensive, from November 16 to December 6, the Germans lost more than 55,000 in killed alone, and from 120,000 to 150,000 in wounded.

German Corporal Salfinger, in a letter to his parents, described the horror that filled the fascists who took part in this offensive, at the losses incurred by them:

"If we were to collect the dead bodies of the Germans who were killed, and lay them shoulder to shoulder, they would form a line that would probably stretch to Berlin

itself. . . . Today we are the ones who are walking over the bodies of those who fell ahead of us; tomorrow we'll be the dead bodies and the guns and caterpillar tanks will be ironing us out in the same way."

In vain did the fascist scribblers declare boastfully that "the German offensive on the Bolshevik capital has advanced so far that the interior of the city of Moscow can already be seen through good field-glasses."

It was just at that moment that by order of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief Stalin, the Soviet troops, reinforced by large, fresh reserves, went into attack and in a brief space of time smashed the Hitlerite forces and threw them far back from the glorious Soviet capital.

THIS battle for Moscow, like the epic of the Volga stronghold, Stalingrad, will go down in history as one of the greatest encounters mankind has ever known. Here, on the fields near Moscow, the foundation was laid for the complete routing of the German fascist army; here the myth of its invincibility was destroyed once and for all time.

The heroic defence of Moscow and the offensive of the Red Army that followed were a tangible expression of the dauntless spirit of the Soviet people, of their unyielding will to fight for freedom and independence, of their unwavering confidence in their righteous cause and in their victory. This colossal engagement revealed the inexhaustible resources and strength of the mighty Soviet Union.

The collapse of the Hitlerite plans to seize Moscow and subjugate the peoples of the U.S.S.R. is proof of the organic deficiency of German strategy; the developing successes of the Red Army, on the other hand, are evidence of the brilliant strategy of Marshal of the Soviet Union Joseph Stalin.