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### My wartime experiences

It was Saturday. It had been drizzling since the morning, which made the Germans' retreat difficult because there was no lack of mud on the backroads. Something struck me – maybe they really were retreating? Maybe they who had ruled over our land until now would go, leaving charred villages and towns behind? From what people were saying I couldn't believe [the Germans] really were leaving. It seemed like it was just some kind of manoeuvre. There had been a great activity on the road since the previous day with loaded carts and trucks. They drove westwards with whole herds of cattle which looked about and moaned miserably. I couldn't sleep that night, I kept hearing the moaning of the cattle, the rattle of the carts and the shouts of the retreating Germans.

On Sunday, the Germans were fleeing regiment by regiment and there was no doubt that war was close at hand. Then I heard projectiles falling heavily one after the other and I saw the burning town. That sight filled me with terror and at first I couldn't get a hold of myself, but later I wasn't afraid at all and I stood on the road and watched the Germans flee. There was concern on every face. I could see anger, hate, and the grief that held them together on each of their faces.

I was still on the road when the Germans had gone. Suddenly, I saw a soldier in the forest with a gun in his hand and a helmet on his head. Then I saw a dozen of them. They walked around the forest, searching and looking into all the deepest nooks and crannies. They were Soviet pioneers. Soviet tank soldiers came to our village that evening. We welcomed them with great joy, we threw flowers to them and offered them whatever we could. I couldn't calm down for a very long time that day because that event had shaken me and I was glad that the German power had been broken.