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The terrible fall 1941 (Жудасны лістапад 1941-га)

On the night of 21/22 June 1941 members of an amateur arts circle were staying for the night in a local orphanage. In the morning they were going to go to Mozyr to participate in a contest. But the steamer moored to bring awful news – the war had broken out! On the 25th of August fascists marched into the town. They organized a police department from local scoundrels. All the Jews were resettled to the reservation – ghetto which was located in the heart of the town. For about 2 months ex-craftsmen and their families had lived in fear waiting for a miracle. Despite the awful tortures, night exactions, outrage of local police who stole their gold, child sexual abuse, the Jewish population believed in high standard of German high command. They did not have an idea that operation code-named Selection had entered a completion phase and their fate had been predetermined. In the beginning of November the German commissar Gans Jocham Kolmorgen, the commandants of Narol, Elsk and Kalinkovichi, burgemeesters and commanders of platoons came to the town for a private conference. They discussed the operation's details with scrupulousness inhering to Germans: the march routes of prisoners column, the quantity of arms and ammos and so forth. The Jewish population extirpation operation was planned to be carried out on November 19. In the article "Poluveka tomu nazad nad Pripatuy" in the columns of "Kalinovicheskie Novosti" newspaper Vladimir Smolyar tells what happened that day: "They walked in an uneven column being surrounded by armed escorts and trained sheep dogs. The old went ahead; women held their children in arms, teenagers held each other hands keeping the heads down. It looked like a funeral procession. You could see desperation, suffering, tears and sorrow in their eyes. It was hard to keep their feet on ice-covered ground. The old fell to the ground and women fainted. A prayer of the damnation they were singing mournfully sounded over the column. They led them out to the only town square. They stopped? Why? They consulted and told something over for a while and then go beyond the village where the Pripyat flows into the Dnieper. A sandy hill and steep riverside... They were allowed to sit down for a while. Old folk heading their faces eastward bowing low to the ground were singing Kedysh very loudly. They didn't notice the moment when machine-guns started their monologue hailing people with bullets. Terrified people tore around but bullets caught them. Only desperate young men plunged into the water. Only one of them survived according to people stories". Vladimir Smolyar devoted himself to journalism and has spent many years finding records of Holocaust in Yuravichi and Kalinkovichi district. As a result a lot of his articles were published in "Kalinkovicheskie Novosti" newspaper columns. The article "Krasnii Sneg" (The red snow) published in "Kalinkovicheskie Novosti" newspaper runs about the events on November 1941 in Yuravichi: "Everybody knew the house of an old man Zalman. He was very professional in shoe-making. He mastered her daughter Hruma this craft. And later she surpassed him. People called her Hruma the Milliner or Hruma the Seamstress. Girls and women came to the village from neighborhood. She was a hard-to-find beauty: a fancy face, gypsy dark eyes jet-black braids. Not only Jewish guys but noblemen from the whole town chased her. She married and became a widow early. She brought up her daughter alone. She truly loved her husband so she refused all the offers of hand and heart. Three or four years before the war all the folk

were talking about Hruma's wedding. Her fiancé Vasiliy was a handsome accordionist but he was fond of the bottle. People were surprised because she was Jewess. But nobody knew what was happening in Zalman's soul. He told dashing away his tears that she would not be happy. He might feel it. Hruma gave a birth to two girls. Zalman became happier though his beard went grey. The war broke out. Vasiliy joined local police. The old Zalman was resettled to ghetto. When Jewish children and old folk were escorted deathwards Hruma was begging Vasiliy and burgomaster to save her father. She was threatened and turned out. Few people saw her then in the town. They only knew that she lived at Vasiliy's mother place. Vasiliy himself hit the bottle badly. But before spring people found another two naked corps of Hruma and her elder daughter near the place where Jews were executed. Everyone knew that this was Vasiliy who killed them. Later somebody remembered Vasiliy leading Hruma and her daughter deathwards. Some people said that they were walking holding their heads proudly and Hruma was begging Vasiliy not to touch her daughter. Two shots returned an echo. He run back and didn't look back because he was afraid to hear the victims' voices. He burst into the house. His eyes glowed feverishly and his face was convulsed. "Where are they? Where are the Jewish spawn? I will kill'em all!" - He cried. His mother rushed to children, put her arms around them and held them tight. She fell on her knees and said: "Kill me first, kill our innocent souls". Vasiliy jumped out from the house. She was staring at the holy Virgin Mary icon crying for mercy. She disavowed her son at heart and was begging to save his sinful soul. She regained consciousness when snow whirl opened a closed door. Vasiliy didn't appear at home since that time. But villagers saw him in the fall of 1944. He was escorted to Yuravichi from Mozyr prison to show the place where he had killed his wife and daughter. He was digging out the grave himself. What about the twin-girls? They did not know who their parents are. They called a mother their grandmother Akulina. And people did not tell them about that trouble. The children were brought up by grandmother. Well it didn't last long. She had been ill for a long time and died peacefully. The girls were moved to Yuravichi orphanage. Then they moved out of the town. They didn't have an idea where their grandmother had died and where was buried. They only knew that they had spent the childhood here in Yuravichi near the walls of the ancient catholic church. The Nazis crimes emergency state investigation statement is still being kept in Mozyr branch of State Archives. It was signed on the 9th of December 1944 and it runs about terrible crimes of Nazis and local police of the town in 1941. The massacre on Pripyat was the first step in operation Selection. The commission that signed the statement consisted of its president M.A. Belyai, the president of Yuravichi rural soviet, I.O. Yushkevich, a doctor of Yuravichi hospital, L.M. Gorchanko, the headmaster of Yuravichi junior high school, K.V. Telesh and P.S. Kasyano, collective farmers of kolkhoz Krasnaya Zorya, a priest of Yuravichi church S.I. Jmichenko with commissioner of Kalinkovich district commission of investigation of crimes Nazis committed during the temporary occupation. On first days of 1941 on the order of chief of police Kojemyak and his deputy Emelyanov Jewish population was moved in Padgornaya street. Few families lived in a house. Nazis robbed their houses without their permission on the order of German authorities including cattle which belonged to locals. Jewish people were forbidden to move in another street after they had been resettled or they were executed by shooting. They had to wear yellow arm-bands. On the 18th of November 20 policemen came to Yuravichi from Kalinkovich aboard. Together with Yuravichi Nazi police they drove about 200 people of all ages out to market place. Then under threat of being shot they drove them out to Yuravichi suburbs where at the Pripyat riverside they were shot down. They used a machine gun and other arms to killed absolutely innocent people. They left the corps for animals and dug them only after 7 days. On the 27th of November 1941 and then in the beginning of December they committed such massacres of Jewish again. It was the same story: marketplace, ravines, shots...Thus Nazi monsters killed more than 400 people including 207 children, 128 old men among which more than 100 were ill. The check-roll of killed without guilt is attached to the statement. The postscript says that 414 people are not on the list because their names have not been defined.

Derailing trains (Ляцелі пад адхон эшалоны)

The first mobilization took place on the 24th of November. 267 soldiers from Yuravichi went to war. The ones who stayed began to live according to the rules of wartime. The war moved inland so it was necessary to save national and kolkhoz property, think about harvest and future life. But it was not easy. The ex-headmaster of Yuravichi school who was a commissar of partisan detachment during the war Boris Katsen remembers that time: «After Stalin's speech on the radio on the 3th of July 1941 I conducted party meeting. All the 12 communists joined voluntary military forces. Komsomol members, teachers and other locals joined them. I was summoned to district committee where they proposed me to become the commissar of detachment. I suggested enrolling all the young men of pre-induction age. The offer was accepted». B.B. Milyavsky had been appointed as a commander of detachment. He did military service and held sergeant rank. Soldiers were given weapons and accommodated in barracks. They stood guard and check document of strangers. Alerts took place and they also caught parachutists. They created military bases with arms, equipment and provisions at hard-to-reach places at Litvin Lake. On the 22nd of August when enemy was reaching Kalinkovichi we went to the woods. The chairman of Yuravichi rural committee Simanovich has always been blamed that he didn't evacuate property in time. "We should not push the panic button!" – he claimed. Nevertheless a part of cattle was moved to Orlovskaya province. Some people also moved out from Yuravichi. There often were commotions which turned into panic. On the 24th of August retreating Red Army units moved through Yuravichi. Some of the soldiers moved even in the morning on the 25th of August when few hours later 30 enemy motorcycles burst into the town. They entered people houses like hosts and seized the best things. The first victims appeared. At Aron Kantor's place where artel was located they found a small-bore riffle. Aron was shot. Gershun was also shot. On first day of the occupation Yuravichi town council headed by burgomaster Redeh was established. Police office and gendarmerie were located there. They also elected the burgomaster and the headman of Yuravichi. Yuravichi police commandant's office was organized in October. Its members were bitter enemies of Soviet power. They were armed with rifles and also they had 2 machine-guns. Everybody in the town was supposed to register there. The local Jews suffered in particular. They were robbed, turned out of houses, shot down. The land and provisions were divided like a kolkhoz harvest: 5 sheaves a workday. The major part was taken by local police. Families of communists, partisans and active workers didn't get anything. Partisan units allocated in the forest near Yginecs. There were 40 people there during the first war fall. The president of Yjinecs kolkhoz S.Bobrov was a commander. I was a commissar. Pavel Dubanecs was a party whip. Two machine-guns, two assault rifles and rifles were in the inventory. On the third day of staying in the forest Bobrov went to the village to bring oxen to the detachment. But he met deserters on his way and they killed him. The delinquent was sentenced to be shot. The death of the commander had a bad influence on the detachment. People began to break up. Some of them headed to front, the other came back home. Only 15 people who were devoted to motherland stayed. The ex-head of People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs commissar Bogdanov headed the unit. Partisans distributed leaflets and committed the act of sabotage at the railroads near Galyavicsi. They blew up gas-filling station at the highway. They also had run-ins with local police who repeatedly tried to catch partisans in forests. Bochar was killed in the fall under puzzling circumstances and the case stayed cold. On November the detachment split up. A part of partisans joined the Red Army. The ones who stayed became the core of Kalinkovichi partisans unit. After a few months since the beginning of war a komsomol-youth group headed by Vasily Lyavko was organized without regard to the terror on Nazis. Georgiy Yanushkevich, Nikolay and Vladimir Telesh, Valentin and Leonid Micskevich, Stanislav Kozlovskiy and others joined the group. Young patriots helped to collect arms and ammos and carried out partisans tasks. In 1942 many

armed dwellers of Yuravichi went to the woods to revenge on enemy for humiliation and violence, tears and blood of friends and families. M.L. Kozlovsky, I.M. Lucskevich, I.A Gorchanko, A.I. Yashcenko, I.R. Yashcenko. Y.M.Kasyan, M.P.Telesh and many others were among them. Whole families joined partisans units: the families of kolkhoz blacksmith I.I.Micskevich and kolkhoz driver S.M.Buldik.

People who saw atrocity of Nazis at every step burnt with revenge. Their hearts were full of hatred against those bastards. And the place started to get too hot for Nazis. In the national archive of Belarus there are documents which contain details about it. For example Voroshilov partisan unit command report says: "On the 23th of June 1942 on the road Yuravichi-Kalinkovichi a cargo-truck was blown up. Twelve policemen were killed and wounded". ... In the beginning of July 1942 on the river Pripayt near Yuravichi two barges loaded with grain were destroyed. A steamer and raft were damaged. The commissar of Shchorsa partisan detachment V. Komarov remembers the organization of partisan struggle in his article "Leteli pod otkos esheloni" (Derailing trains) which was published in "Flag Kommunizma" newspaper: We located an interim partisan camp tot far from Chornovshcina village in Kalinkovichi district. We started to communicate with local communists. Sons of Vasiliy Levko who were among them told us where the warehouse with arms was located. They also told important information about the number of enemies in Kalinkovichi and Yuravichi. We got ready for our first attack at that time. We placed the arms in operational readiness. Timofei Semenchuck from Moldova, Dzemenkov from Syberia and Hromov form Ivanov province were my fellow-fighters. We set connection with Voroshilov partisan unit in Kalinkovishi district that was headed by Kuzma Bakun.

In summer 1942 they started to attack. The first baptism of fire took place at Yuravichi. They shattered the garrison of local police. But it didn't go off smoothly as Komarov described. His fellow-fighter Leonid Volkov wrote about that event truthfully: "The operation of Yuravichi garrison crushing defeat was decided to be carried out at dawn when policemen are tight asleep. Liaison officers Grigory Panglish, Vasiliy Levko, Georgiy Yanushkevich gave accurate information about guard-posts and their plans of the day. We approached the town in the evening, defined the tasks and waited till dawn.

The operation started unsuccessfully. When the partisans walked down Yuravhichi hill to the town and began to take up positions the guard noticed them and opened fire. A shoot-out set off. The partisans lied down while policemen fired from two-storied building. The fight dragged out. Some of policemen tried to escape but came under fires. The chief of police escaped through gardens and hid in the house next door. But partisan Pyatro noticed it. The chief was shamefully shot under the bed. The partisans approached the two-storied building and started to toss grenades to windows. They also tried to set it on fire but they were not able to do it. Nevertheless a tossed grenade set it on fire. They might win this fight but they received a message that Nazi units from Mozyr went to rescue fascists. The order was to go back. Partisans managed to set a leather factory on fire and take trophies: clothes and ammunition. Everybody gathered at the assembly place when they heard a powerful explosion. Mine-layer Alesha touched a mine. A 22-year-old boy died. They carried him to barn in the suburbs of the town, covered him with canvas and hid. We left Yuravichi. There were many injured among us. The operation dished it out to occupants but we didn't relish the victory. As we found later nobody was going to help them".

It was hard to teach people to fight. But without regard to the first fails the national struggle gathered its pace: they derailed trains and fascists lose comfort day by day.

Fascists didn't rely on local police so they reinforced the garrison with Slovaks. Slovak rifle battalion located in temple complex in Yuravichi. But partisans got in their hair anyway. In the morning of March 22, 1943 Chernigov partisan unit headed by A.F. Fedorov attacked Yuravichi garrison. Fedorov writes in his report: "The opposition was neutralized and partisans now control the village. We are still

taking fire from the group of Germans which is in the church's building". After this fight Hitlerite command reinforced the local garrison with Hungarians. All the more they didn't trust Slovaks. This is why Slovaks left the garrison and came over to partisans. The evidence is an archive document signed by commander Belay and commissar Borisenko of partisan unit named after Frunze. It says that civilians who helped partisans were enlisted to local police. They distributed leaflets and gave partisans information about intentions of Germans against partisans. Five policemen in Yuravichi garrison actively helped partisans. They stole eight rifles, twenty grenades, a great amount of cartridges and tobacco. Eighteen policemen of Yuravichi garrison came over to partisans. Liaison officers helped them to carry it out. A Slovak garrison was disbanded as well. As a consequence of undercover work in the garrison fifteen armed Slovaks came over to partisans. It had been planned that the whole company would come over but the garrison was relocated. Slovaks destroyed a prison, eliminated guards, set free three partisan families and sent them in vehicles to forests. Rudolf Lyandatsky, Milan Mitak, Nicolay Revelak were among the Slovakian anti-fascists. A liaison officer of the underground Nina Tapliga organized meetings with them.

Prisoners of war(Паланяні)

Prisoner of war In July 1943 Hitlerites declared mobilization of Yuravichi, Berezovka, Slobodka and others villages' youth to labor camps in Germany. About eighty young men under the escort of twenty five of local policemen and three Germans were sent to Kalinkovichi. Dzemenkov platoon from the 2nd Kalinkovichi partisan unit laid an ambush on their way. When the captive youth reached it the platoon opened fire on the escort. Panic spread among them. Some of policemen were killed and youth dispersed. But not the whole youth was such lucky. Plenty of Yuravichi youth got to labor camps in Germany. Anna Belyay, Nadejda Dunai, Polina Kozlovskaya, Maria Plevaka, Valentina Klimivich, Katerina Hraneko were among them. Many of them were only 17-18 years old. Yuravichi girls worked at different places: factories, farms. Those who worked at factories could learn a trade. Galina Belay worked at a major plant. Germans mention how dexterous she was so she started to operate crane. A large frame swept over the workers' heads once. A German rushed to the top and found Galina had passed out because of hunger. She was moved to nutrition unit and hardly recovered consciousness. Nadejda Dunay got to an aircraft factory in Tempelgoph. She ate skilly and two hundred grams of bread a day. She wore overalls and wooden shoes. They lived in barracks that were guarded by sheep dogs and worked 12-14 hours a day. But when the situation in the lines had changed fascists began to treat prisoners better. They even organized excursion to Reich chancellery and to movies where prisoners could see Germans examining Moscow through the field glasses on screen. Bombings began when the Red Forces approached Germany. During the bombings Nadejda burnt her arm hard which had been healing for a long time. Nevertheless Nazis didn't bate their demands. Five harnessed prisoners to transport hardware. During of the bombings many of them were not afraid of building being destroyed around so they didn't hide. They only think that brownshirts deserved it and rolled on the victory. The captive girls from Yuravichi met different Germans: inveterate fascists who served Fuhrer and those who were tired of this bloody war. Sometimes they met anti-fascists who struggled against fascists. For example Anna Shymanskaya got to aircraft components factory in Lihtenberg. She was supposed to pack components in boxes which were sent to the front. She saw a German worker who trusted her put little mines in the boxes. According to him the mines would not blow up until boxes delivered to the front so nobody could suspect them.

Sonya Belskaya had worked for Germans for three years. She got to Germany in April 1942 being a 16-year-old-girl. She worked as a laborer at aircraft factory. Aleksandr Gorchanko got to alien soil against her will where she worked at synthetic fuels factory. The young man managed to escape and

made his way eastward. But he was caught, brutally beaten and sent to the labor camp where he demolished Berlin ruins. But not everyone came back home in good health. For example Ivan Telesh made a long way home. He remembers: "I faced the war in Kamenets-Podolsky. I carried war in Ukraine near Zaporozhje and survived in Harkov disaster in spring 1942. By the 18th of May we run out of ammunition and provisions. We were dead on our feet so we were taken captive. It's hard to describe what we had to bear during stay in a labor camp: coldness, hunger... Sometimes people had to eat dead bodies in order not to die from hunger. We stood blows and violence. The commander of regiment Medvedev and senior political commissar Juk were among us. We were given a round loaf per person then they loaded us in a train and sent to Germany. At Budorb station all of us were put up at the big camp where there were Poles, Frenchmen and Englishmen. But Soviet soldiers suffered most of all. They draw "SU" letters on our backs. We did not have belts; we wore rags on our legs, ate goup and starved. In a week they started to send troop trains to work in mines. We decided to escape though we were guarded by dogs. We tore barbed wires off the windows and jumped out. I was the first who did it. We had been heading eastward for five nights eating grain on fields when a hunter who was German took us to police office. We found ourselves in a camp again and tried to escape again. I managed to get pincers to make a hole in wire entanglement. We had been walking for a week robbing German cellars but when snow fell Germans detected us by the footprints we had made. They brought us back. A commandant adjudged the punishment – 100 lashes that meant to die. But they had pity so they whipped us 25 times a day for 4 days. We got through it. My companion in misfortune did not even cry during the execution. They brought us to German Folg so we came to senses a bit. The master's son died at the front. His daughter who was a military doctor escaped from Stalingrad on the last airplane. She did not like to wear military uniform. Grandfather and grandmother were kind and fed us stealthily. There were 18 of us the laborers. We were set free by Americans in April 1945. They changed our clothes, feed us well. I sent a letter home. My sister Nina replied that father had died at the front, sister Sofya who was a manageress in Yuravichi hospital and saved many lives died with typhus in March 1944. Nina herself married her sister's husband. Young men were drafted into the army. The ones who were older including me went back home on foot. Moths passed... We walked a thousand miles to Voroshilovsk and there we worked in mines. It took another 5 years for me to come back home to Yuravichi".

Heroes of front (Герої-франтавікі)

People had to face a lot of thins during the war time and they had even more things to do. The combat report of Iosif Lucskevish that was given by command of Ukraine partisan movement headquarters says that he took part in 35 battles against fascists and Ukrainian nationalist. He took part in 19 explosions that were performed to derail enemy echelons. He mined railways itself for 12 times. He controlled 4 explosions being a commander of raiding party. He learnt that the war had broken out in Chuguev in Harkov region. His maiden battles took place at Belarussian sector but forces were not equal so they had to fell back and then they were encircled. His division broke the blockade by a miracle and battled at Bryansk sector where they suffered a defeat again. Iosif Lucskevich and his division mates were taken captive. 3 days after he managed to escape. It was enough to remember for the rest of his life how fascists do violence to prisoners of war. As soon as he had reached his people he joined Saburovo partisan detachment. He had his partisan baptism of fire during the defeat of Narovlyani garrison. They moved combating from here to Jitomir region through Elsk and Lelchicsi. In Ukraine he took part in warfare as a member of Rovensky partisan unit. Soon it was detached into Suvorov unit where Lucskevich and others had to perform a special assignment within the territory of Poland. Under Warsaw the partisan unit joined units of army that was sent to

Lvov for reorganization. Lucsevisch was sent to the 1st Ukrainian front from here. He got demobilized as Companion of the Order of the Red Flag, the Great Patriotic War 1st and 2nd classes. He was also awarded by Partisan of the Great Patriotic War 1st and 2nd classes medals just in 1946. Here goes a combat report of Anastasia Gorchanko. Being an 18-year-old girl she helped wounded soldiers on battlefields under threat of being killed or wounded at best. The front nurse of the field engineer battalion of the 60th guard division of Belarussain front as well as all front nurses had only one idea on their minds – save as many soldiers as possible to put them into service again. Those who struggled against occupants had such a high spirit so they did not spare their lives and were not ashamed to talk about it. This is what a Red Army soldier E.I. Barinov wrote from the front lines to his wife who was evacuated: "We have lived together for a long time, my darling but I have to leave you because the foul beast attacked our motherland to confine us. Damned Nazis are the reason of all the troubles. But we will not let them rule. There is so much hatred and resentment in my heart that I would tore their filthy souls into pieces and my revenge would know no bounds. The victory is getting closer and I will do my best to defeat the enemy. Just support me with your ardent love". Yuravichi people had to learn different roads during the years of distemper. I.A. Telesh wrote "From Moscow to Berlin. Telesh I.A." on the walls of defeated Reichstag. The bearer of the Order of Lenin colonel Ivan Telesh defended Moscow in 1941 and crushed enemy in its den in 1945. About ten dwellers of Yuravichi took part in the battle of Stalingrad. Those were P.L. Ptashka, Y.P. Telesh, P.P. Telesh, M.I. Kasyan, G.M. Lapusta and others. Among people from Yuravichi were those who liberated Belarus and Ukraine, Eastern Europe, assaulted Berlin. They proved again that Yuravichi's land gave the world true heroes and people of spirit. Here goes another evidence of it. This is the letter from command that were sent from front to the liberated town.

"Dear Sofya Ivanovna! Not long ago the division where your husband Ivan Dubrovsky serves combated against enemy which outnumbered our force. Your husband showed the masterpiece of courage and battlecraft. The enemy attacked 5 times but they had to step back with losses. Your husband kept the guard firmly and fanned Nazis with a machine-gun. As a result the enemy stepped back with great losses. The headquarters of division highly appreciated your husband's endurance and spirit so he was awarded with the Order of the Red Star".

06.15.1944

Military unit commander assistant Halsky.

When Sofya Ivanovna read the first lines of this letter in 1944 she nearly fainted because she realized it was a "killed in action" note. But Ivan Dubrovsky was given a chance stay alive. He was wounded twice: in November 1944 and in April 1945 but enemy bullet could stop him on his way to victory. He got to front in December 1943 straight after the village liberation where he worked as a bookkeeping clerk at shoe cooperative. Recruits were taught military science for 3 months and their baptism of fire took place not far from Yuravichi – at Merlinskies farmsteads in Elsk district. Then he performed a feat which was awarded with the order of the Red Star with his fellow-villager Leonid Patashek who was his second string. He came back from the war being disabled person of group II. He tried to close up the wounds but then he decided to help family without regard to endless pain. First he worked as a warder. Then in 1950 when "Udarnik" and "Krasniy Flag, "imeni Kuibisheva" and "Pervogo Maya" kolkhozes were merged into "imeni Lenina" he became an assistant of chief accountant there. In 1952 Ivan was promoted to chief accountant. It should be mentioned that he learnt the trade willfully. In 1968 he graduated from Gomel agricultural technical school by correspondence. He always got high marks because he was used to do his best whether he fight, worked or studied. He was taking up the post for more than 30 years. He was personally invited for great projects and posts but he had never left Yuravichi, his homeland. Yuravichi's dweller Aleksand Gorchanko committed a heroic act during the war with Japan. After he had graduated from secondary medical school he was drafted to navy. He took part in battles at Hasan Halhin-Gol lakes. He saw the war through at west baselines

protecting motherland from possible Japan attacks. He did not hear about his relatives all that time. Only after Yuravichi liberation he learnt that his parents and sisters are alive. But he failed to meet them. It happened in September 1945. His marine battalion took part in combat of the liberation of town Seisin from Japan militarists. A company of submachine gunners occupied the high ground and kept guard. Enemy performed counterattacks several times. As they failed they resorted to a trick: 200 samurais disguised themselves as civilians, cut behind the enemy and opened fire. Our soldiers died one after another. Gorchanko supplied soldiers with ammunition and appeared where enemies attacked cruelly. His submachine gun fanned samurais and his aim was certain. The ammunition he delivered gave the opportunity to hamper the enemy's trick but an enemy bullet caught Gorchanko. For his courage and heroism a company senior sergeant he was posthumously awarded with the Order of the Great Patriotic War 1st class by. On the order of the 22nd of May 1967 of USSR Department of Defense he was put on list of the 3rd tank company of 36324 military unit of Pacific Fleet. Pioneer unit of Uravichi high school was named after him. Group-captains Fedor and Andrei Telesh laid down their lives during battles with enemy.

Liberation (Вызваленне)

On the 27th of November the 2nd Kalinkovichi partisan unit swept out Nazis from Ogorodniki on the order of command of the 61st army and joined with Soviet forces active unit. On the 28/29 of November people from Boici, Vadovichi, Chornavshchina, Berezovka and Slobodka met their liberators. The 11th rifle regiment of the 55th division headed by major Cholidze was the first one that forced its way to Yuravichi. At that time German and Hungarian units passed Pripyat over the bridge that was detonated right away. Enemy also headed to Prudka but the 111th regiment chief of staff major Yarovoi told that Soviet soldiers had met with resistance. The command of regiment sent the battalion of lieutenant Trohin to save the town while major units attacked fascists at the front. The cosmoliners of the 84th regiment came to help the infantrymen. The gunners of sergeant A.M.Gascshin transported a gun through swamp in their hands to open covering fire in time. Hero of the Soviet Union I.O.Semyanchenko, a sniper A.I.Aponasevich who killed more than a hundred fascists, a battalion commander major S.M.Poshachanko, sappers I.K. Artamonov and K.I.Yuranev who defused thousands of mines, a lieutenant mortar man I.F.Moskalei and many others were among the soldiers of the regiment. And there were many rookies from Chernigov region who were neither taught nor equipped. Fascists did not sustain a double-attack and scarpered. They left 50 wounded and captive people.

Major Smyalkin headed the 107th regiment on the left bank at the front at that time. The group ruled by Alexander Dima traced 3 earth-and-timber emplacements and a dug-out at the southern of Yuravichi. They sneaked up to the enemy weapon emplacements, killed all the fascists in the dug-out and seized the position without losses.

At 6 am on the 29th of November Soviet soldiers tired of the night fight appeared in Yuravichi streets. Horses hauled guns, soldiers carried machine-guns and mortars on their shoulders. Town dwellers came out from their shelters and met the liberators with tears of joy in their eyes. Grigory Potashko's wife took out a portrait of Lenin. The portrait was painted with oils on a 2-meter-high veneer by an inmate of an orphanage E.Shihamn. Before the war it the portrait lied at the center in kolkhoz club. When fascists approached the town Grigory Potashko suddenly remembered that the portrait had been left in the club. He was there in a few minutes. He picked it off, wrapped with bagging, and hid it at attic. On the same day in the evening fascists stayed at his place. The new hosts and policemen

turned Yuravichi upside-down trying to find the portrait but they failed. Grigoriy Potashko did not see the victory. He died of typhus in 1943. He told her wife ante mortem: "Our soldiers are going to be here soon...take care of the portrait". She kept his last will. (This portrait is kept in a school museum).

Yuravichi looked painfully after the liberation. Many houses were burnt up or ransacked by fascists to build dug-outs and defenses. Burnt and destroyed German materiel was everywhere. Windows in houses were smashed out, fences were burnt. Smoke and ashes smothered the town. On the next day after the liberation fascists tried to take the village. But they were attacked by the 111th regiment. Drunk submachine gunners faced "Tigers"(German tanks). A severe fight started.

German tanks approached the positions taken by the battalion of senior lieutenant Trohin. Soldiers lied in trenches, let the tanks pass and then started to attack German infantry. When the tanks got away the commander of battalion with the head of staff and soldiers a bayonet attack that made enemy go back.

The tanks that were not supported by infantry could not do much. Missiles and bullets that hit some of the tanks made them stop forever.

Two soldiers stood out during that this fight. One of them was sergeant Ivan Kisilev. The other's name was not defined. They put an enemy tank out of action with an ominous cross on its side while it was moving towards them with the intention to squash them. Sergeant Kiselev let the tank approach for a few meters, tossed a grenade and fell to the ground. The explosion banged. A left track was destroyed and the tank moved by inertia. His fellow-fighter was killed. The tank rolled on its right track, covered fainted Kiselev with turf and stopped. The fight calmed down. Silence fell on the field where it had been a fight just now. Night was falling. German tankers got out the tanks and began to fix repair them. They walked on the turf that covered Kiselev. It helped to regain his consciousness. He shook his arms and legs. "I should be alive" – he thought to himself. But he could not touch his head with his arm because he was pressed much by the turf. And he could not turn over because Germans were close. He heard them fix tracks. The sergeant was gasping but his sufferings did not last long. Germans started engines. "This is the end", – he thought. His heart burst and body broke out in a cold sweat. – The tank will squash me so no one will notice me lying here". The ground shook and pushed him off. The tank fetched the way with clanking tracks. "I'm lying hear alive while enemy escapes" – he said to himself. He forced himself, got out the ground and followed the tank. He tumbled over and reached the tank with his last strength to toss two antitank grenades under the tank. The blast wave threw him aside and he fainted again. But the tank stopped forever. His fellow-fighters picked him and captured the tankers. Unfortunately the bearcat did not see the victory. After a few days in Mozyr liberation fight he died a hero's death. He was buried in a common grave in Astrajanka village in Mozyr district. The whole 3rd battalion of the 519th regiment died in the fight for village Gryada. Only two soldiers survived. Germans fought for each territory. Armies needed fresh forces. More than 100 rookies from liberated Yuravichi were drafted to the army. M.A. Hrashkov remembers about those days: "We were drafted in Berezovcsi recruitment center and later sent to the 111th regiment though I had a white ticket. In a week I was lying in a trench with a machine-gun and looked through a hollow at burnt Gryada. There were four trench lines in front of the village. Germans held their positions at graveyards. Five guys from Yuravichi were with me but they died soon". Yuravichi land paid too dear for liberty and independence: 312 Soviet soldiers died during the liberation of Yuravichi, 188 Yuravichi dwellers did not come home and remained to lie on the fields of war.

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