AN ANALYSIS OF THE HISTORICAL ACCURACY OF TOLSTOY'S WAR AND PEACE

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE HISTORICAL ACCURACY OF TOLSTOY'S WAR AND PEACE

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RICHARD A. VOLLMER

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INTRODUCTION.

While studying at the University of California I often visited the many little curio shops owned by White Russian émigrés in the San Francisco bay region. During one of these visits I met a gentleman who took a great interest in my studies. "When I was a student," he said, "my life's ambition was to write the world's greatest novel. But I read War and Peace and now I know that the world's greatest novel has already been written."

Not being a literary expert I cannot attest to the truth of the gentleman's statement. However, Count Leo Tolstoy's famous historical novel is certainly one of the foremost literary works of modern times. But literary excellence is not the only forte of War and Peace; the historian will find this work a reliable narrative of Russia's part in the Napoleonic Wars.

The life of several fictional families prominent in St. Petersburg and Moscow society at the turn of the nineteenth century forms the basis for the theme of the novel. The young men of these families take active part in the Napoleonic Wars, and in this way Tolstoy weaves together his story of peace on the homefront and war on the battlefront.

Tolstoy takes his reader along with the Russian army as it marches into Austria in 1805 to oppose Napoleon. The reader witnesses the defeat of the Russian and Austrian forces at Austerlitz and is present at the Tilsit conference

two years later. But it is Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812 that dominates the reader's interest as the story of War and Peace unfolds. This sanguinary adventure, one of the outstanding military campaigns of history, is so vividly presented that the reader can almost feel the hardships endured by both the French and Russian forces.

Though the theme of War and Peace is built around the lives and loves of fictional personages, Tolstoy describes many actual events and introduces his reader to the important historical characters in the struggle between Napoleon and Russia. The reader meets Napoleon, Alexander, Emperor of Russia and Napoleon's chief political adversary, such famous Marshals as Ney and Murat, and Tolstoy's hero, old General Kutusov, Napoleon's leading opponents on the field of battle.

References to historical persons and events were not inserted into War and Peace with reckless abandon. Aylmer Maude, Tolstoy's biographer and personal friend, says "... Tolstoy was scrupulously careful as to the actual incidents of the historic scenes depicted, and never put a remark into the mouth of an historical character for which he had not good warrent [sic] ."[1] This thesis has been prepared with the intention of substantiating, or refuting, Tolstoy's historical accuracy.

Before proceeding with the main portion of this thesis it will be of benefit to glance at the life of the author

[1] Aylmer Maude, Life of Tolstoy (2 vols., London, 1930), I, 433.

of War and Peace. The two volume work of Aylmer Maude, Life of Tolstoy, furnishes a complete picture of the life of this great Russian author. Maude's personal relations with Tolstoy contribute much to the value of this book.

Count Leo Tolstoy was born in 1828 on his family's estate, Yasnaya Polyana, two hundred miles south of Moscow. He spent a few years at Kazan University, and in 1851 went to the Caucasus as a cadet in the Russian army. In 1854 he was commissioned in the artillery and immediately went to the Crimea where he took part in the defense of Sevastopol during the Crimean War (1854-55). With the close of that war he withdrew from military service to devote his time to developing the family estates. He married in 1862 and in 1863 began work on what was destined to be his greatest book, War and Peace. "Tolstoy used at this time to spend whole days in the Rumyantsev Museum in Moscow studying books and manuscripts relating to the times of Alexander I,..."[2] He even spent several days at Borodino sketching the environs and talking with the few survivors of that famous battle of 1812.[3] The first complete edition of War and Peace was published in 1869. Tolstoy died in 1910 at the advanced age of eighty two.

The experiences of Tolstoy's family life enabled him to present a living picture of the world of the Russian aristocracy in the early nineteenth century, and his service in the Crimea was invaluable in giving him a true

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[2] A. Maude, Life of Tolstoy, I, 303.
[3] Ibid., I, 303.

feeling of what war is like. His descriptions of battle scenes and thoughts of soldiers are extraordinary.

The factual material in this study is drawn mainly from the Napoleonic memoir writers whose works were accessible. To test overall historical accuracy, the works of several of the foremost Napoleonic historians have been consulted. The famous twelve volume work of Adolphe Thiers, History of the Consulate and the Empire of France under Napoleon, has been frequently quoted since Tolstoy often makes direct references to Thiers. The Modern Library's edition of War and Peace, translated by Constance Garnett, was used as the basic work in this thesis.

CHAPTER I

AUSTERLITZ

In the spring of 1805 Napoleon was at Boulogne, on the English Channel, preparing his army for an invasion of England. In April the Third Coalition was created when Russia signed a treaty with England and joined in the war against Napoleon. Austria joined the coalition in July and declared war against Napoleon in September. But in August, in anticipation of the strategy of the Third Coalition, Napoleon abandoned the plans of an invasion of England and marched eastward into Germany. Meanwhile, Emperor Alexander of Russia began moving his troops westward into Moravia. "...the Russian troops were occupying the towns and villages of the Austrian archduchy, and fresh regiments kept arriving from Russia..."[1] says Tolstoy as he begins the story of Russia's role in the Third Coalition.

Napoleon outmaneuvered and surrounded the Austrian General Mack at Ulm, on the Danube River in Wurttemberg, and on October 20, 1805, Mack peacefully surrendered his army. At this time the Russian troops under Kutuzov were encamping at Braunau, in Bavaria, 160 miles west of Vienna. Enroute from Ulm Mack reports in person to Kutuzov at the Russian headquarters. "You see the unfortunate Mack," Tolstoy has the Austrian general say.[2]

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[1] Count Leo Tolstoy, War and Peace (New York, n.d.), p.97.

[2] Ibid., p.109.

Both Thiers[3] and Theodore A. Dodge, in his four volume work Great Captains - Napoleon,[4] mention that Mack passed through Braunau and reported to Kutuzov. General Rapp, one of Napoleon's principal field officers, states that at Ulm Mack appeared before several French officers who did not recognize him and he said to them "'You see before you the unfortunate Mack!'"[5] Tolstoy may have taken this remark and incorporated it into the Braunau report since, as will be seen later, Tolstoy has used Rapp's memoirs.

Seeing that he was greatly outnumbered by Napoleon, Kutuzov began to withdraw his troops along the Danube in order to reach the Russian forces still moving into Austria. Tolstoy says "Kutuzov fell back to Vienna,[6] destroying behind him the bridges over the river Inn (in Braunau) and the River Traun (in Linz)...."[7]

Rapp recalls "...he [Kutuzov] abandoned the Inn, the Traun, and the Enns, and disappeared...."[8] General Savary, one of Napoleon's staff officers, states "...we found not a single bridge that we had not to rebuild entirely: the Russians burned them in a manner that was till then unknown to

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3 Louis Adolph Thiers, History of the Consulate and the Empire of France under Napoleon (12 vols., London, 1894, trans., by D. Forbes Campbell and John Stebbing), IV, 27.
4 Theodore A. Dodge, Great Captains - Napoleon (4 vols., London, 1907), II, 222.
5 General Count Jean Rapp, Memoirs of General Count Rapp (2 vols., London, 1823), II, 38.
6 Perhaps the translation should be "toward Vienna". The Russians never passed through the Austrian capital.
7 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p.120.
8 J. Rapp, Memoirs, II, 50.

us;..."[9] Thiers[10] and Dodge[11] say that Kutuzov withdrew burning the bridges along the Danube.

But the French forces were not the only concern of Kutuzov as he withdrew. Tolstoy mentions that the Austrian populace grew increasingly hostile toward the Russians while the Russians began to lose confidence in their Austrian allies.[12] Thiers, a leader of the Napoleonic Legend school, states "They [Russians] plundered, ravaged, even murdered, behaving like downright barbarians, so that the French were almost regarded as deliverers by the people of the country...."[13] Dodge modifies the statement of Thiers by saying that the French did everything possible to create a rift between the Russians and the Austrians.[14]

Occasionally the Russians had to halt to enable their baggage and artillery to keep up with the main force. At these halts it would sometimes be necessary for the rear guard to engage the French vanguard. Tolstoy notes that especially stubborn and courageous actions took place at Lambach and Amsteten, along the Danube ninety miles west of Vienna.[15] Dodge says that at Lambach "...the French imperial recruit for the first time tasted the quality of his new foe, and learned to respect his courage and endur-

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9 General Jean Savary, Memoirs of the Duke of Rovigo (4 vols., London, 1828), I, 102.
10 L. A. Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, IV, 31.
11 T. A. Dodge, Great Captains, II, 222.
12 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p.132.
13 L. A. Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, IV, 36.
14 T. A. Dodge, Great Captains, II, 225.
15 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p.133.

ance...."[16] and at Amsteten "...the French here got a better idea than before of the stubborn courage of the Russian soldier,..." [17]

On the ninth of November Kutuzov crossed over to the left bank of the Danube leaving the main French force on the right bank. On the eleventh Kutuzov halted his retreat, turned his army, and at Durrenstein, on the Danube fifty miles west of Vienna, attacked the corps of Marshal Mortier coming up the left bank. Tolstoy relates how the exhausted Russian troops completely routed the French in their first important engagement.[18]

Thiers,[19] Dodge,[20] and Friedrich M. Kircheisen, in his book Napoleon,[21] all tell of the bloody encounter at Durrenstein. This battle is also mentioned by such memoir writers as Savary;[22] General Marbot;[23] then a young field officer with the French, Count Segur,[24] one of Napoleon's aides, and Baron Meneval,[25] Napoleon's private secretary. All these writers include something Tolstoy forgot to mention - the French were outnumbered six to one!

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16 T. A. Dodge, Great Captains, II, 226-27.
17 Ibid., II, 228.
18 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 133.
19 L. A. Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, IV, 38-41.
20 T. A. Dodge, Great Captains, II, 233-34.
21 Friedrich M. Kircheisen, Napoleon (New York, 1932, trans. by Henry St. Lawrence), p.331.
22 J. Savary, Memoirs, I, 105.
23 Jean de Marbot, Memoirs of Baron de Marbot (2 vols., London, 1892, trans. by Arthur J. Butler), I, 179-80.
24 Jean de Segur, An Aide-de-Camp of Napoleon (New York,1895, revised by Count Louis de Segur; trans. by H.A.Patchett-Martin), p. 216-20.
25 Claude-Francois de Meneval, Memoirs of Baron Claude-Francois de Meneval (3 vols., New York, 1894, ed.by Napoleon Joseph de Meneval; trans. by Robert H. Sherard),I, 393.

In an attempt to cut off Kutuzov Napoleon sent Marshal Murat ahead to capture Vienna. The main bridge across the Danube in the Austrian capital was a long wooden span called Tabor Bridge. The French hoped to capture this structure before the Austrians could fire it. Bilibin, one of the lesser fictional characters in War and Peace, tells Prince Andrey Bolkonsky, one of the principal fictional characters, how the French gained control of Tabor without firing a shot and without having the bridge burned.[26]

Vienna was undisputed and the French marched straight to the bridge unmolested. The Austrian rear guard was ready to fire the bridge when Marshals Murat and Lannes and General Beliard walked across it and talked to the Austrian officers convincing them that an armistice had been called (though this was untrue). While the false parley was taking place the French troops crossed the bridge, threw the incendiary material into the river, and captured the Austrian guns.

Thiers,[27] Dodge,[28] Kircheisen,[29] and August Fournier, in his work Napoleon the First,[30] tell of the ruse at Tabor Bridge in words similar to those of Bilibin. Marbot,[31]

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26 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 144-45.
27 L. A. Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, IV, 42-44.
28 T. A. Dodge, Great Captains, II, 238-39.
29 F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, p. 331.
30 August Fournier, Napoleon the First, (New York, 1925, ed. by Edward G. Bourne; trans. by Margaret B. Corwin and Arthur D. Bissell), p. 311.
31 J. Marbot, Memoirs, I, 181-82.

Meneval,[32] Savary,[33] and Captain Jean Coignet, then an enlisted man with the French,[34] all tell the exact same story.

With Vienna in the hands of the French, Murat hastened northward to intercept Kutuzov's line of march. The Russian general planned to turn northeast from the Danube and try to march to Olmütz and meet the main force of the Russian army. Murat was in a position to halt his march. Taking a gambler's chance, Kutuzov sent General Bagration southeastward to Hollabrunn to try to stop Murat.

Tolstoy says that when Bagration's force confronted Murat the French marshall thought it was Kutuzov's whole army and was afraid to attack. Remembering the success of his false armistice at Tabor Bridge, Murat proposed a three-day truce, his object being to allow enough time for the French forces to collect at Hollabrunn, thirty miles northwest of Vienna, and then overwhelm the Russians. But the ruse backfired on Murat because time was just what Kutuzov needed to escape the French. Kutuzov ordered Bagration to send General Winzengerode, a staff officer of the Emperor Alexander, to Murat with a false armistice ostensibly from the Emperor of Russia. Napoleon soon learned of Murat's blunder and ordered him to attack Bagration immediately.[35]

Kircheisen[36] and Fournier[37] agree with Tolstoy's description of the false armistice at Hollabrunn. However,

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[32] C. Meneval, Memoirs, I, 396.
[33] J. Savary, Memoirs, I, 106.
[34] Jean Coignet, The Narrative of Captain Coignet, (New York, 1890, ed. by Loredan Larchey; trans. by Mrs. M. Carey), 121.
[35] L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 151-52.
[36] F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, p.332.
[37] A. Fournier, Napoleon the First, p. 311.

Thiers[38] and Dodge[39] have a different version of the armistice. They say that Bagration initiated the request for an armistice hoping that Murat would be duped and thereby enable Kutuzov's main force to escape.

The question now arises as to which interpretation to accept as closer to the actual happening. All four authors are eminent Napoleonic scholars, but the author of this thesis believes Kircheisen and Fournier to be slightly more reliable than Thiers and Dodge. Thiers was one of the first scholars to undertake the writing of the history of Napoleon and therefore could not have had a knowledge of all the documents available concerning Napoleon's era. Dodge, though usually reputable, has worked mainly from secondary sources and, having written after Thiers, may have been influenced by Thiers. Kircheisen and Fournier both lived many years after Thiers and have therefore benefitted by all the Napoleonic scholarship that has gone before them. Also, they were not as prone to use secondary sources as was Dodge.

Napoleon wrote a biting despatch to Murat chiding him for being duped by Bagration and treating with Winzengerode, an unauthorized envoy. Murat was ordered to march on Bagration's force. Thiers[40] and Dodge[41] have practically the same translation of this despatch as Tolstoy.[42]

Upon receipt of Napoleon's despatch Murat attacked

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38 L. A. Thiers, History of Consulate and Empire, IV, 49.
39 T. A. Dodge, Great Captains, II, 246-47.
40 L. A. Thiers, History of Consulate and Empire, IV, 50.
41 T. A. Dodge, Great Captains, II, 247-48.
42 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 152-53.

Bagration. Tolstoy gives a stirring description of the action at Hollabrunn where the outnumbered Russian force held the French in check until late into the evening.[43] Tolstoy has only one footnote in War and Peace and it appears in the narrative of the battle at Hollabrunn. Supplementing his description of a Russian infantry charge, Tolstoy includes this footnote: "This was the attack of which Thiers says: 'The Russians behaved valiantly and, which is rare in warfare, two bodies of infantry marched resolutely upon each other, neither giving way before the other came up.' And Napoleon on St. Helena said: 'Some Russian battalions showed intrepidity.'"

The quotation from Thiers is found in the fourth volume of the History of the Consulate and Empire on page fifty. Napoleon's 26th Bulletin from Znaim, dated November 13, 1805, contains the statement "Some battalions of Russian grenadiers showed great intrepidity...." [44]

Thiers,[45] Dodge,[46] Kircheisen,[47] and Fournier[48] give brief accounts of the Hollabrunn action all in accord with Tolstoy's presentation (Tolstoy includes much material on the experiences of fictional characters). Mention is made in War and Peace of the Russians setting fire to Hollabrunn.[49]

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[43] L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 153-74.
[44] Eighteen Original Journals of the Campaigns of the Emperor Napoleon, (2 vols. London, 1817), II, 46.
[45] L. A. Thiers, History of Consulate and Empire, IV, 50.
[46] T. A. Dodge, Great Captains, II, 248.
[47] F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, p. 333.
[48] A. Fournier, Napoleon the First, p. 313.
[49] L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 162.

Marbot, who passed through the town following the battle, states, "This unlucky town had been so completely burnt that we could not find a single house to take shelter in...."[50]

Bagration succeeded in holding back Murat until Kutuzov could escape. Kutuzov joined the main body of Russian troops at Olmütz, in Moravia, 110 miles north of Vienna, where they were encamped with the Emperor Alexander. Nikolay Rostov, a fictional junior under Kutuzov, went to visit some of his friends who had just arrived at Olmütz with the Russian Imperial Guard. Tolstoy says "The guards had made their march as though it were a pleasure excursion, priding themselves on their smartness and discipline. They moved in short stages, their knapsacks were carried in the transport waggons, and at every halt the Austrian government provided the officers with excellent dinners...."[51] Savary, who was at the Allied headquarters as an envoy of Napoleon, recalls "...I saw the Russian guards pass by on their arrival from St. Petersburg to join the army. It was a magnificent body, composed of men of prodigious stature, who did not appear to be very much fatigued with so long a journey."[52]

When all the Russian troops were assembled together with the Austrian forces a grand review was staged at Olmütz. Tolstoy describes the impressions of the young Rostov as he watches Alexander ride among the regiments. "The handsome, youthful Emperor Alexander....attracted the greater share of attention with his pleasant face and sonorous, low

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50 J. Marbot, Memoirs, I, 185.
51 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 215.
52 J. Savary, Memoirs, I, 122.

voice...."[53] Savary comments favorably on Alexander by saying "...he awed me by the majesty and nobleness of his look. Nature had done much for him; and it would have been difficult to find a model so perfect and so graceful...."[54]

A council of war was held at Olmütz by Alexander and Emperor Francis of Austria. Tolstoy relates "At the council it had been decided, contrary to the advice of the elder generals, Kutuzov and Prince Schwarzenberg, to advance at once and to fight a general engagement with Bonaparte.... The voices of those who urged delay, and counselled waiting for something and not advancing, had been so unanimously drowned and their arguments had been confuted by such indubitable proofs of the advantages, that what had been discussed at the council, the future battle and the victory certain to follow it, seemed no longer future but past...." Tolstoy says it was the younger officers of the staff, led by Russian Prince Dolgorukov and egged on by Austrian General Weierother, the chief of staff, that convinced Alexander that the time had come to strike at Napoleon.[55]

Thiers states that Alexander was taken in by Weierother's plan of action and was"...wholly under the influence of the Dologoroukis,..."[56] Fournier mentions that Alexander was especially urged on to battle by Weierother.[57] Savary recalls that in his mission to the Allied head-

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53 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p.223.
54 J. Savary, Memoirs, I, 114.
55 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p.227.
56 L. A. Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, IV, 56.
57 A. Fournier, Napoleon the First, p.236.

quarters he noticed "All the young people who were there really believed that we [French] were afraid, and endeavouring to escape from them." [58]

Kircheisen says "Alexander and his flatterers were convinced that they would have an easy task in defeating Napoleon...."[59] But he feels that Kutuzov's plan to retreat into Moravia was opposed because of the widespread belief that supplies would not be abundant enough to sustain the Allied army for a long period of time. Hence, it was recommended that an attack would be the lesser of two evils. [60]

Tolstoy gives the story of General Savary's mission to the Allied headquarters:

> At dawn on the 17th,[61] a French officer was conducted from our Allied outposts into Vishau. He came under a flag of truce to ask for an interview with the Russian Emperor. This officer was Savary. The Tsar had only just fallen asleep, and so Savary had to wait. At midday he was admitted to the Emperor, and an hour later he rode away accompanied by Prince Dolgorukov to the outposts of the French army. Savary's mission was,...to propose a meeting between Alexander and Napoleon. A personal interview was,... refused, and instead of the Tsar, Prince Dolgorukov,... was despatched with Savary to undertake negotiations with Napoleon,... 62

Thiers describes the Savary mission much as Tolstoy does,[63] but Savary, in his memoirs, relates a different version. Napoleon sent him to treat with Alexander and upon arrival at the Allied headquarters [eight o'clock in the morning] he learned that the Russian Emperor was still retired, so he elected to wait. After an interview with Savary,

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58 J. Savary, Memoirs, I, 126.
59 F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, p. 335.
60 Ibid., p. 334
61 November 29th on the Western calendar.
62 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 233.
63 L. A. Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, IV, 59.

Alexander refused to treat with Napoleon on the grounds that the Austrian emperor must also be included. Following the interview Savary spent the remainder of the day at the Allied headquarters. Being unsuccessful in gaining an armistice on the first attempt, Napoleon sent Savary back to Alexander, this time requesting a personal interview between the two emperors. Alexander refused the interview but sent Dolgorukov along with Savary to speak with Napoleon.[64]

Concerning the fact that Savary spent an entire day at the Allied headquarters Meneval says "The Emperor Napoleon had sent General Savary from his bivouac to present his compliments to the Emperor Alexander, and at the same time to take notice of what was going on around him." [65]

Allied headquarters throbbed with activity as preparations were made to attack the French. "At ten o'clock in the morning [eve of the battle of Austerlitz], Weierother with his plans rode over to Kutuzov's quarters, where the council of war was to take place. All the commanders of columns were summoned..."[66]

Tolstoy tells of the eager Weierother blurting out his intricate battle plan to the indifferent generals; pudgy Kutuzov sleepily ignoring the plan and having no desire to command the operations of the next day; Buxhevden with his mind far away; Miloradovitch giving attention tainted with sarcasm; Langeron trying to argue with Weierother; and Doh-

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[64] J. Savary, Memoirs, I, 112-27.
[65] C. Meneval, Memoirs, I, 339, Savary's memoirs hint of this mission when he tells of his watching the arrival of the Russian Imperial Guards. See above, page 9.
[66] L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 236.

turov seemingly the only one seriously interested in the plans.[67]

Tolstoy's description of the war council agrees with Thiers[68] and Kircheisen.[69] Tolstoy, however, says that Weierother was entirely responsible for drawing up the complicated plan[70] while Kircheisen maintains that "Weyrother, it is true, was ordered to draw up a plan of operations, but this merely meant writing down the instructions given him by Alexander and his advisers...." [71]

Prince Adam Czartoryski, Polish patriot and personal advisor to Emperor Alexander, was present at Austerlitz and comments on Weierother in a manner similar to Tolstoy:[72] "He [Weierother] was an officer of great bravery and military knowledge, but, like General Mack, he trusted too much in his combinations, which were often complicated, and did not admit that they might be foiled by the skill of the enemy...." [73]

Czartoryski goes on to say "I did not take part in the military council assembled to carry out this decision [to attack Napoleon] as it was entirely opposed to my opinions. I do not know whether General Kutuzov was admitted to it; but his advice was certainly not listened to....The instructions

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67 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 236.
68 L. A. Thiers, History of Consulate and Empire, IV, 65-66
69 F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, p.335.
70 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 236.
71 F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, p. 335.
72 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 236-37.
73 Prince Adam Czartoryski, Memoirs of Prince Adam Czartoryski and his Correspondence with Alexander I (2 vols., London, 1888, ed. by Adam Gieland), II, 102.

which were to direct the movements of each general did not, I think, reach them till the morning of the 2nd of December [the day of the battle of Austerlitz]..."[74]

While the Allied council of war was in session on the eve of Austerlitz, eighty miles north of Vienna, Nikolay Rostov was on picket duty in the front lines stumbling through the darkness: "Behind him could be seen the immense expanse of the dimly burning fires of our [Russian] army; before him was the misty darkness...."[75] Marbot recalls "There was no moon, and the darkness of the night was increased by a thick fog which made progress very difficult...."[76]

The senior officers on the picket line fancied they had heard some commotion in the French lines and sent Rostov to investigate. Tolstoy remarks "The shouts and lights in the enemy's [French] army had been due to the fact that while Napoleon's proclamation had been read to the troops, the Emperor had himself ridden among the bivouacs. The soldiers on seeing the Emperor had lighted wisps of straw and run after him, shouting, 'Vive l'empereur!'" Tolstoy then goes on to give the proclamation.[77] It is the typical Napoleonic proclamation urging the soldiers to fight bravely and win a victory worthy of their nation and their emperor.

Several memoir writers, present at the demonstration, substantiate Tolstoy's description. Marbot and Constant,

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[74] A. Czartoryski, Memoirs, II, 106.
[75] L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 241.
[76] J. Marbot, Memoirs, I, 197.
[77] L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 244-45.

Napoleon's valet,[78] tell how Napoleon rode through the bivouac amid the shouts and lighted straw torches of the troops. Marbot adds that there was band music and says that the Emperor's escort struck upon the idea of torches to illuminate the pathway.[79] Coignet mentions the music of regimental bands and notes that the enthusiasm of the men was not because of the proclamation but because of the presence of the Emperor.[80] Barres, a French line officer, recalls the men trying to light Napoleon's path and following after him with their torches.[81]

Napoleon's proclamation on the eve of Austerlitz appears in Thiers[82] and Dodge[83] with almost the identical translation as in Tolstoy.

The morning of the battle the Allied troops scurried about in cold fog trying to be at the right place at the right time. Tolstoy presents a very real picture of the anxiety of the troops as they were marched to-and-fro and finally halted when the higher command had to admit that the march orders were in great confusion. "But after they had been marching on for about an hour in the thick fog, a great part of the troops had to halt, and an unpleasant impression of mismanagement and misunderstanding spread through

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78 Constant, Memoirs of Constant (4 vols., New York, 1895, trans. by Elizabeth G. Martin), II, 133.
79 J. Marbot, Memoirs, I, 197.
80 J. Coignet, Memoirs, p.122.
81 Jean-Baptiste Barres, Memoirs of a Napoleonic Officer (New York, 1925, ed. by Maurice Barres; trans. by Bernard Miall(, p. 74.
82 L. A. Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, IV, 64.
83 T. A. Dodge, Great Captains, II, 278-79.

the ranks...." [84]

Barres[85] and Savary[86] recall the heavy fog on the morning of the battle, and Kircheisen says "Dense clouds covered the country and prevented any clear view...."[87] The latter also states that confusion was produced in the Allied ranks due to the late hour at which the Allied plans were distributed and the many wrong distances used in those plans.[88]

Czartoryski reflects the tactical situation in the final hour of preparation:

> ...I looked round in every direction and saw a vast plain. A column of Austrian infantry which seemed to me loose in formation came to arrange itself in order of battle. Anxiety was impressed on the faces of the Austrian generals, the officers, and even the soldiers. The artillery officers alone did not give way to the general depression, and expressed absolute confidence in the effect of their guns. Our wings did not seem to be in any way secured; on the right were to be seen the Guards, who, following the plan traced out to them, were to move off to a greater distance, which would render it difficult to render any assistance on the side, while on our left it was impossible. [89]

The fog shrouded the field of battle at Austerlitz and hid the French forces from the eyes of the Allies. Tolstoy relates that Napoleon, on horseback with all his marshals, stood on the heights above the battleground and waited for the opportune moment to attack the Allies. "His forecasts were turning out correct. Part of the Russian forces were going down into the valley towards the ponds and lakes, while part were evacuating the heights of Pratzen, which he [Napoleon] regardedas the key position, and had intended to

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84 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 245-47.
85 J. Barres, Memoirs, p. 75.
86 J. Savary, Memoirs, I, 132-33.
87 F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, p. 335.
88 Ibid., p. 335.
89 A. Czartoryski, Memoirs, II, 107.

take. He saw through the fog, in the dip between two hills near the village of Pratzen, Russian columns with glittering bayonets moving always in one direction towards the valleys, and vanishing one after another into the mist. ..." About nine o'clock the sun broke through the fog and shone brilliantly on the opposing forces. This was the moment; Napoleon gave orders to begin the battle.[90]

Thiers mentions the fog and Napoleon waiting until what he judged to be the critical moment to begin the battle: the moment when the sun gleamed down on the field.[91] Dodge also tells of the heavy mist which hid the French lines and describes the "...sun of Austerlitz..."[92]

Meneval recalls Napoleon's actions: "The Emperor, on horseback from the break of day, surrounded by his marshals, kept them by his side until the mist,...had been entirely dispelled. Then, on a signal which he gave, each galloped off to his corps..." [93]

Segur remarks: "During this time the rising sun was obsecured by heavy mists which seemed to the Russians to favour their flank movement forwards to the left; but on the contrary they veiled our attack, only deferred to surprise this imprudent and foolish manoeuvre in the very act." [94]

Marbot says "The Austrians and Russians fell into the snare perfectly, for, weakening the rest of their line, they clumsily crowded considerable forces into the bottom of Tel-

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90 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 248-49.
91 L. A. Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, IV, 67.
92 T. A. Dodge, Great Captains, II, 282.
93 C. Meneval, Memoirs, I, 400.
94 J. Segur, Aide of Napoleon, P. 248.

nitz, and into the swampy valleys bordering on the pools of Satschan and Monitz...."[95]

By concentrating their forces on the flanks the Allies weakened their center [Pratzen Heights]. It was this weak portion of the line Napoleon determined to break through and thus split the Allied front. The Allied forces did not expect a French offensive in the Pratzen sector and when a French column began ascending the heights they were totally unprepared to repel the attack.

Tolstoy gives an especially stirring account of the action on the Pratzen Heights.[96] "'Is it the enemy?... No....But, look, it is...for certain....What does it mean?' voices were heard saying....a voice in naive terror cried... 'Hey, mates, it's all up!' And this voice was like a command....there was a general rush, crowds, growing larger every moment, ran back in confusion..."[97]

"...Prince Andrey, feeling the tears of shame and mortification rising in his throat, was jumping off his horse and running to the flag....'Lads, forward!' he shrieked... 'Hurrah!'...he ran forward in the unhesitating conviction that the whole battalion would run after him....One soldier started, then another, and then the whole battalion with a shout of 'hurrah!'..." [98]

Thiers does not describe Pratzen as dramatically as Tolstoy, but the account in War and Peace is essentially the

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95 J. Marbot, Memoirs, I, 197.
96 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 253-56.
97 Ibid., p. 254.
98 Ibid., p. 255.

same as that of the former.[99] Tolstoy mentions that Kutuzov received a cheek wound,[100] a detail found also in Thiers.[101] Dodge has the same essentials and adds that at Pratzen "The Russians indeed delievered (sic) a hearty attack with the bayonet, but they were met by a short range fire of the French line;..."[102] This last statement seems to pertain to Prince Andrey's attempt to rally the troops into a counter-attack.

Segur recalls the storming of Pratzen: "The plateau attacked on the front and in flank was scaled at a quick step ....The enemy [Allies] was completely surprised; some were still marching towards their left, the others were facing us on three lines, holding their ground badly....their lines one after the other turned tail, leaving their knapsacks on the ground before them, abandoning their artillery even, and flying before our bayonets...."[103]

Czartoryski, present at Pratzen with the Emperor Alexander, says:

> Suddenly we perceived some French columns advancing rapidly and pushing back the corps opposed to them. When I saw the promptitude of the French troops, it seemed to me to augur ill for the result of the day; the Emperor Alexander also was struck by the rapidity of this movement, which caused a real panic in the Austrian ranks....A moment later there was an outcry for the Emperor's safety; everyone turned his horse and galloped off....[104]

While the French center was taking Pratzen, General Bagration was busy engaging the French left flank. Nikolay

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[99] L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, IV, 71.
[100] L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p.254.
[101] L.a.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, IV, 72.
[102] T. A. Dodge, Great Captains, II, 286.
[103] J. Segur, Aide of Napoleon, p. 249.
[104] A. Czartoryski, Memoirs, II, 107-08.

Rostov was sent in search of Kutuzov for more detailed orders. On his way across the lines he rode in front of a Russian cavalry charge and narrowly missed being trampled. Tolstoy pictures this charge: "The horse-guard had hardly passed Rostov when he heard their shout, 'Hurrah!' and looking round saw their foremost ranks mixed up with some strange cavalry, in red epaulettes, probably French....This was the brilliant charge of the horse-guards of which the French themselves expressed their admiration. Rostov was appalled to hear afterwards that of all that mass of huge, fine men, all of those brilliant, rich young officers and ensigns who had galloped by him on horses worth thousands of roubles, only eighteen were left after the charge." [105]

The "brilliant charge of the horse-guards" is difficult to determine exactly. Segur says the horse-guard attacked Vandamme's battalions, broke through the French lines, and almost overran Napoleon! Rapp was sent on a countercharge.[106] Marbot tells of a charge upon the battalion of Napoleon's brother Joseph by the horse-guards under Grand Duke Constantine. "This regiment, composed of the most brilliant of the young Russian nobility, lost heavily...."[107]

Dodge relates that the Imperial Russian Lancer Regiment was far out of position due to a misunderstanding when entering the field. But this regiment went ahead and charged some French cavalry only to be caught in the cross fire of

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105 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 256-58.
106 J. Segur, Aide of Napoleon, p.252.
107 J. Marbot, Memoirs, I. 198-99.

the French lines and be badly decimated.[108]

Thiers presents still a fourth charge by a detachment of the horse-guard. This particular charge was met by a fierce countercharge by French cavalry under Bessieres. "Napoleon, who was present at this engagement, was delighted to see the Russian youth punished for their boasting...."[109]

Tolstoy closes his story of the Allied defeat at Austerlitz by describing the panic and suffering of the Russian left wing as it tried to escape the French who were pushing it back onto the lakes at the south end of the battlefield. He tells how men, horses, and cannon all tried to crowd across the narrow dam at Augest while undergoing a deadly cannonade from French artillery. Dolohov, a fictional character, tries to save the day by leading some of the troops out across the thin ice, but the ice breaks and unknown numbers sink from sight.[110]

Dodge gives a similar description of the disaster: "...Doctorov's division strove to reach an outlet to Aujesd by a path between the two ponds....Some two thousand, attempting to cross on the ice, were destroyed by the French artillery, the shot of which broke their flimsy footing...."[111] Thiers also says about two thousand perished as the thin ice, pelted by artillery, gave way.[112]

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108 T. A. Dodge, Great Captains, II, 289.
109 L. A. Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, IV,78.
110 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 264-65.
111 T. A. Dodge, Great Captains, II, 292,
112 L. A. Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, IV,78-79.

Barres,[113] Coignet,[114] Marbot,[115] Segur,[116] and General Lejeune, a French staff officer,[117] all recall the piteous plight of the Russians at the lakes. All say many thousands sank to their deaths. Lejeune estimates at least six thousand died while Barres says up to fifteen thousand lost their lives.

Kircheisen, however, introduces a different view of the action at the lakes: "In the French Bulletin 30 it was maintained that during the retreat some 20,000 Russians were drowned in the lakes. This impudently falsified statement has passed into most histories, even recent ones, and seems to be ineradicable. The fact is that when General Suchet at Napoleon's order had the lakes searched a few days after the battle, he found there only 36 guns, 138 horses, and 3 soldiers!" [118]

Kircheisen's explanation is probably closer to the truth than Thiers or Dodge for reasons already considered.[119] The figures given by memoir writers cannot be relied upon because of the inability of an untrained observer to accurately estimate the size of a large body of people. These writers were probably influenced by the report in Bulletin 30.

Following the debacle at Austerlitz the Russians withdrew from Austria and did not oppose Napoleon again until a

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113 J. Barres, Memoirs, pp. 76-77.
114 J. Coignet, Memoirs, pp. 124-25.
115 J. Marbot, Memoirs, I, 200.
116 J. Segur, Aide of Napoleon, p.255.
117 Louis Lejuene, Memoirs of Baron Lejeune (2 vols., London, 1897, ed. and trans. by Nancy Bell), I, 32.
118 F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, p.336.
119 See above page 7.

year later [winter of 1806] in the war in Prussia and Poland. Tolstoy's treatment of the interim between Austerlitz and the Polish war concerns the affairs of his fictional characters in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

The actual fighting of the war in Poland is contained in War and Peace only to the extent of presenting the experiences of fictional persons in the Russian reserve forces which never reach the battle front. However, the climax of the war in Poland - the conference at Tilsit - is brought into the story when Nikolay Rostov endeavors to get an interview with the Emperor of Russia to plead for the life of a comrade condemned to death by a military court. Rostov arrives at Tilsit only to find that Alexander is engaged in a conference with Napoleon.

Boris Drubetskoy, an acquaintance of Rostov, and a staff officer assigned to the Russian Guard at Tilsit, was present on the banks of the Niemen River when Alexander met Napoleon on the raft. Tolstoy describes the scene: "He [Boris] saw the raft with the royal monograms, saw Napoleon's progress through the French guards along the further bank,... He saw both the Emperors get into boats, and Napoleon reaching the raft first, walked rapidly forward, and meeting Alexander, gave him his hand; then both disappeared into a pavilion...." [120]

This meeting is similarly presented by Thiers,[121] Kircheisen,[122] and Fournier.[123] Memoir writers, Marbot,[124]

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120 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 374.
121 L. A. Thiers, History of Consulate and Empire, IV, 564-65.
122 F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, p.401.
123 A. Fournier, Napoleon the First, pp. 385-86.
124 J. Marbot, Memoirs, I, 374.

Lejeune,[125] Coignet,[126] and Savary[127] all mention the occasion in words much like those in War and Peace.

On July 9, 1807, the last day of the conference, the French guards gave a dinner for the Russian guard battalion. Tolstoy tells of the festivities through the eyes of Rostov: "In the market-place he [Rostov] saw tables set out and preparations for the banquet; in the streets he saw draperies hung across with flags of the Russian and French colours, and huge monograms of A and N. In the windows of the houses, too, there were flags and monograms." [128]

Prior to the dinner the French and Russian guards held a mass review for Napoleon and Alexander. Tolstoy says that during the review Napoleon asked Alexander to choose the Russian who "...bore himself most valiantly in this last war,'..." This soldier was presented the Legion of Honor.[129]

Constant recalls: "The French imperial guard once gave a dinner to the guards of the Emperor Alexander. The repast could not have been gayer,..." He goes on to say "...His Majesty Napoleon paid a visit to the Emperor Alexander, who received him at the head of his guard. The Emperor Napoleon asked his illustrious ally to point out to him the bravest grenadier...He was presented to His Majesty, who detached from his buttonhole his own cross of the Legion of

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125 L. Lejeune, Memoirs, I, 70.
126 J. Coignet, Memoirs, p. 152.
127 J. Savary, Memoirs, II, 75-77.
128 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p.377.
129 Ibid., pp. 380-81.

Honor and fastened it on the breast of the Muscovite soldier..." [130]

Captain Elzear Blaze, a French field officer, remarks: "One of the finest reviews ever held in this world is [sic] certainly the one held by the Emperor Napoleon at Tilsit, ..."[131] Lejeune notes: "...the time [at Tilsit] was fully occupied with fetes, brilliant parades, and dinners,..."[132] Barres mentions: "The Infantry Guard gave a dinner, on the open ground behind our quarter of the town, to the 800 Russian Guards who came on duty about their sovereign...."[133]

Coignet gives a detailed description of the banquet: "More beautiful tables were never seen, all decorated with epergnes made of turf, and filled with flowers. In the back part of each tent there were two stars with the names of the two great emperors formed of flowers, and draped with the French and Russian flags."[134] Thiers says Napoleon was generous in his presentations of the Legion of Honor, but he does not go into detail.[135]

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130 Constant, Memoirs, II, 200-01.
131 Captain Elzear J.L. Blaze, Recollections of an Officer of Napoleon's Army (New York, 1911, trans. by E. Jules Meras), p. 229.
132 L. Lejeune, Memoirs, I, 71.
133 J. Barres, Memoirs, p.114.
134 J. Coignet, Memoirs, p.154.
135 L. A. Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, IV, 588.

CHAPTER II

THE ADVANCE

"Towards the end of the year 1811, there began to be greater activity in levying troops and in concentrating the forces of Western Europe, and in 1812 these forces... moved from the west eastward, towards the frontiers of Russia, where since 1811, the Russian forces were being in like manner concentrated."[1] Thus Tolstoy begins the story of Napoleon's expedition into Russia.

The causes of the expedition of 1812 were many. Thiers says the conflicting interests of France and Russia in Turkey, especially Constantinople, were an important factor; also Napoleon's incorporating the lands of the Duke of Oldenburg - Alexander's uncle - into the Empire of France contributed to the friction. He mentions Russia's persistence in evading the demands of the Continental System and thinks the armament race of 1811 and early 1812 was significant.[2]

Joseph Fouché, one of Napoleon's ministers, feels the ukase issued by Alexander in December, 1810, putting high tariffs on wines, laces, and luxury goods - France's most important exports - was the most prominent reason for the rift between Napoleon and Alexander. He rates Alexander's protest over the Oldenburg affair as the second cause and the movement to the north of Russia's Moldavian army as the

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[1] L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 563.
[2] L. A. Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VII, 463.

third cause.[3] Fouché says he often cautioned Napoleon against a conflict with Russia, only to be ignored. Napoleon once said to him "...how can I help it, if an excess of power leads me to assume the dictatorship of the world?... I must amalgamate all the people of Europe into one,..." [4]

Fournier lists several reasons: Alexander's fear that Napoleon might want to revive the Polish state - the main reason; Napoleon's marriage to Maria Louisa of Austria though he first considered the hand of Alexander's sister, Anne; French secret opposition to Russian designs in Turkey; Russia's evasion of the Continental System; the Oldenburg affair; and the ukase of December, 1810, putting a high duty on wines and laces, items of major importance to French commerce. "It was now that Napoleon spoke of his world-wide plans and held up to view his prospective world-monarchy...." [5]

Eugene Tarlé, a present day Russian historian, in his book Napoleon's Invasion of Russia 1812, offers a view hinting of the contemporary political and economic philosophy in Russia. He maintains that it was bourgeois imperialism that led Napoleon to try to subdue Russia. Likewise, it was the proddings of the Russian nobility, hungry for British markets, that led Alexander to flout the Continental System.[6]

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[3] Joseph Fouché, Memoirs of Joseph Fouché, (London,1892),p.304
[4] Ibid., p.310
[5] A. Fournier, Napoleon the First, pp.516-20.
[6] Eugene Tarlé, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia 1812 (New York, 1942), pp. 1-12.

General Caulaincourt, French ambassador to Russia and aide to Napoleon on the 1812 campaign, states in his memoirs that Alexander did not desire war and that Napoleon was continually reminded of this. Napoleon, however, constantly thought up excuses, usually trifling, as to why there should be a war between France and Russia.[7]

Czartoryski's memoirs contain the following excerpt from a letter from Alexander to Czartoryski dated January 31, 1811: "It is beyond doubt that Napoleon is striving to provoke Russia to rupture with him, hoping that I will make the mistake of being the agressor [sic]. This would be a great blunder in present circumstances, and I am determined not to make it...." [8]

Kircheisen, however, takes an entirely different view of the matter. He contends that Alexander was the aggressor through his deliberate violations of the Continental System. Russia's persistence in arming forced Napoleon to take counter measures. Alexander's demand for withdrawal of French troops from Germany was the spark that ignited the tinder; Napoleon was forced to act while military circumstances were in his favor.[9] But further on Kircheisen makes a statement that leads one to question his original thesis: "Long before Napoleon decided to make war on Russia he had arranged for the printing of false Russian notes...."[10]

This discussion on the causes of the invasion of 1812

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[7] General de Caulaincourt, With Napoleon in Russia (New York, 1935, ed. by Jean Hanoteau), p.4.
[8] A. Czartoryski, Memoirs, II, 225.
[9] F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, p. 545-49.
[10] Ibid., p.573.

has been presented to furnish a background for Tolstoy's explanation of the motivating forces behind the great campaign in Russia. Most of the reasons given above are considered in War and Peace, but Tolstoy holds these as only minor tangible conditions. "...the war was bound to happen, simply because it was bound to happen...he [Napoleon] was in bondage to those laws which forced him...to do what was bound to be his share in the common edifice of humanity in history."[11] This is Tolstoy's theory of history.

The elaborate preparations for the campaign were about to be put to test. On his way to the Niemen River, the Russian frontier, Napoleon made a grand tour across Europe, culminating at Dresden. Tolstoy writes: "On the 29th of May Napoleon left Dresden, where he had been spending three weeks surrounded by a court that included princes, dukes, kings, and even one emperor [Francis of Austria]...."[12]

Constant describes this journey: "...we were very much petted in all the residences where we stopped...One should have seen Napoleon at Dresden, surrounded by a court of princes and kings, in order to get an idea of the highest point which human grandeur can attain...."[13]

Kircheisen,[14] Fournier,[15] and Tarlé[16] tell of the splendor at Dresden in similar words. Thiers says "Dres-

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11 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp.563-65.
12 Ibid., p.566.
13 Constant, Memoirs, III, 264-65.
14 F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, pp. 556-57.
15 A. Fournier, Napoleon the First, p. 532.
16 E. Tarlé, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, pp. 48-50.

den overflowed with princes and ministers jostling each other [to get near Napoleon]..."[17]

Napoleon did not spend three weeks at Dresden, however. This is one of Tolstoy's few chronological errors. Caulaincourt says Napoleon spent two weeks there, arriving on May 16th and departing on May 29th.[18] Thiers agrees with Caulaincourt's dates.[19]

Napoleon reached the Niemen on June 22nd and immediately began reconnoitering the French position. Tolstoy tells how the Emperor put on a Polish uniform when he inspected the river bank so as not to arouse the Cossack scouts on the other side.[20] Dodge,[21] Lejeune,[22] Caulaincourt,[23] and Méneval[24] mention this incident. Colonel Labaume, one of Napoleon's field officers, recalls: "Napoleon...in the disguise of a Polish soldier, examined from the heights which dominated Kowno the most suitable point at which to effect the passage of the river;..."[25]

On June 24th Napoleon crossed the Niemen and the invasion began. Tolstoy relates the story of how Napoleon, after crossing the Niemen, galloped up to the bank of that river in Kovno and ordered a squadron of the Polish cavalry to look for a ford. The overenthusiastic old colonel

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17 L. A. Thiers, History of Consulate and Empire, VII, 507.
18 Caulaincourt, With Napoleon, p.34; p.38.
19 L..A. Thiers, History of Consulate and Empire, VII,507.
20 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p.567.
21 T. A. Dodge, Great Captains, III, 463.
22 L. Lejeune, Memoirs, II, 151.
23 Caulaincourt, With Napoleon, P. 46.
24 C. Méneval, Memoirs, III, 26.
25 Eugene Labaume, The Crime of 1812 and Its Retribution (London, 1912, trans. by T. Dundas Pillans), p.21.

plunged his men into the rapid river and lost some forty men before reaching the other side.[26]

Thiers mentions an incident which is probably the same one, but quite different in detail. After crossing the Niemen Napoleon rode up to the bank of the Wilia River at Kovno and commanded that pontoon bridges be laid (the Wilia flows into the Niemen at Kovno). The Polish cavalry swam the rapid river and lost twenty or thirty men.[27]

Méneval recalls still a third version of what is probably the same story. After describing Napoleon's crossing of the Niemen he says:

> I will now speak of an incident which happened to a Polish squadron, and which occurred whilst crossing a small river. I do so because the losses which it is alleged were suffered by these squadrons have been stated with a great deal of exaggeration. The bridge having broken down, the Poles bravely swam across the river - which was swollen by the rain....Their loss amounted to one light cavalryman... 28

Marbot tells this story in almost the same words as Méneval:

> Beyond Kovno flows a small stream called the Wilia, the bridge over which had been cut by the enemy; and the storm having swollen it, Oudinot's leading scouts were stopped. The Emperor Napoleon came up just as I reached the spot with my regiment. He ordered the Polish lancers to sound the ford, and one man was drowned....If I emphasize this detail it is because the accident to the Polish lancer at the passage of the Wilia has been vastly exaggerated. 29

Following the crossing of the Niemen Napoleon set himself to numerous administrative tasks. Tolstoy mentions one of these as "...hastening the arrival of the counterfeit rouble notes that had been prepared for circulation

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26 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p.568.
27 L. A. Thiers, History of Consulate and Empire, VII, 522.
28 C. Méneval, Memoirs, III, 27.
29 J. Marbot, Memoirs, II, 215.

in Russia...."[30]

Fournier writes that rubles were "...struck off in Paris by the millions..."[31] Thiers says a great sum of false rubles had been "...forged in Paris without scruple, ..."[32] Kircheisen's statement has already been noted: "Long before Napoleon had decided to make war on Russia he had arranged for the printing of false Russian notes...."[33]

While Napoleon was busy at Dresden Alexander was in Vilna preparing his army for the defense of Russia. Naturally all the ambitious courtiers wanted to please the Emperor so he was submerged in a whirl of balls and fetes. On the evening of June 24th Alexander attended an elaborate ball given at Zakreta, Count Bennigsen's - Alexander's senior general - suburban home. Tolstoy describes the ball as a "...brilliant and festive entertainment. Connoisseurs declared that rarely had so many beauties been gathered together at one place...." During the ball Alexander learned of the French invasion but suppressed the news until the following day.[34]

Thiers,[35] Tarlé,[36] and Kircheisen[37] mention the festivities on the night of the invasion; the latter specifically mentions Zakreta.

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30 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 569.
31 A. Fournier, Napoleon the First, p.544.
32 L. A. Thiers, History of Consulate and Empire, VIII, 118.
33 F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, p. 573.
34 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 569-71.
35 L. A. Thiers, History of Consulate and Empire, VIII, 4.
36 E. Tarlé, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, p. 59.
37 F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, p. 560.

Madame Choiseul-Gouffier, a Lithuanian noblewoman intimate with the Court of Alexander, recalls the fateful evening:

> I never saw one [ball] so beautiful, and never was there a farewell so merry...Who would have thought, in seeing the grace and brilliancy which Alexander displayed on that evening, that it was during the ball that he received the news that the French had crossed the Niemen....Six months later I heard Alexander say that he suffered intensely in being obliged to show a gaiety which he was far from feeling. 38

Before departing from Vilna as the Russian army began its retreat Alexander sent General Balashov to Napoleon with a final offer of peace. Tolstoy writes that Balashov experienced difficulty in being recognized by the French sentinels but was finally allowed to pass.[39] The Russian general then encountered a colorful officer on horseback: "Balashov was some ten yards from this majestically theatrical figure in bracelets, feathers, necklaces and gold, when Julner, the French colonel, whispered to him reverentially, 'The King of Naples!' It was in fact Murat,..." Murat stopped and chatted with Balashov discussing his mission and deploring the war. Balashov then continued on his way.[40]

Thiers tells of Balashov's mission and notes that he was detained in the French lines before being allowed to proceed. Perhaps Tolstoy gets his impression of Murat from Thiers who pictures the King of Naples "...glittering with gold, and his head covered with plumes, galloped through the

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38 Madame La Comtesse de Choiseul-Gouffier, Historical Memoirs of the Emperor Alexander I and the Court of Russia (Chicago, 1900, trans. by Mary B. Patterson), p. 91; p.94.

39 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 572-73.

40 Ibid., pp.573-75.

the midst of his numerous squadrons." Thiers adds that Murat spoke amiably with Balashov and lamented the state of war.[41]

Tolstoy writes that Balashov was next ushered into the presence of Marshal Davout who treated the general with a minimum of respect and detained him at the marshal's headquarters for four days before allowing him his interview with Napoleon. After all this time Napoleon had moved the French imperial headquarters to Vilna and Balashov was obliged to backtrack.[42]

Thiers says that Davout received the Russian envoy "... with coldness, reserve, and silence...." and detained him because he [Davout] had orders not to let envoys pass until Napoleon had reached Vilna.[43]

Balashov was finally granted an interview with Napoleon. Tolstoy comments that the Russian general was granted all the courtesies at Napoleon's disposal. "Though Balashov was accustomed to the pomp of courts, he was impressed by the splendour and luxury of Napoleon's court."[44] War and Peace contains a lengthy discussion which took place between Napoleon and Balashov.[45] The Emperor decried the fact that the war was forced upon him. He criticized the men who surrounded Alexander, and would not talk of peace as long as Alexander demanded withdrawal of the French behind the Niemen.

Following the interview Napoleon graciously invited

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41 L. A. Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 12.
42 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 575-77.
43 L. A. Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 12.
44 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, P. 577.
45 Ibid., pp. 578-82.

Balashov to dinner. Tolstoy notes that Bessieres, Caulaincourt and Berthier were present and "...he [Napoleon] sat Balashov beside him, and addressed him affably...."[46] But the Russian envoy returned to his emperor unsuccessful in his mission of peace. The war had definitely begun.

Méneval recalls that arrival of Balashov brought a ray of hope to Napoleon's headquarters that peace might be concluded before the war dragged on. But Napoleon would not agree to Alexander's terms, and though the Emperor of France was irritated at the offer he treated Balashov well.[47]

Caulaincourt states that Davout was ordered by Napoleon to detain Balashov until the French reached Vilna, but when Balashov was finally presented to Napoleon the utmost courtesy was shown. The Russian general dined with Napoleon, Berthier, Bessieres and Caulaincourt, though peace was out of the question.[48]

Constant's memoirs contain a much different version: "...M. Balachoff, dreading, like nearly all his countrymen, a reconciliation between the two Emperors, had delievered [Sic] his message in such a way as to irritate the pride of His Majesty [Napoleon], who sent him back after having received him badly...."[49] Perhaps M. Constant refers to Napoleon's spirited criticism of the Russian Imperial staff and the rejection of peace offers. The statement of Caulaincourt, present at the dinner, should bear greater consideration than

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46 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, P.582.
47 C. Méneval, Memoirs, III, 28-29.
48 Caulaincourt, With Napoleon, pp. 50-51.
49 Constant, Memoirs, III, 269.

the contentions of Napoleon's valet.

Thiers says that Balashov was received at Vilna with perfect politeness, though Napoleon said it was too late to talk of peace.[50] The dialogue between Napoleon and Balashov is presented by Thiers almost verbatim with that in War and Peace, except that the Thiers version is shorter.[51] No mention is made of the dinner.

The Balashov mission is given considerable emphasis by Tarlè who tells much the same story as Tolstoy.[52] Tarlè states that the only account of the interview between Napoleon and Balashov is contained in the Russian general's memoirs, but Tarlè questions their exactness; he feels unauthentic dialogue was added. He also mentions that Thiers has used excerpts from these memoirs.[53] From this it can be deduced that Tolstoy probably used the memoirs of Balashov in writing War and Peace.

As a final reflection on the Balashov mission the opinion held by Kircheisen[54] and by Fournier[55] is offered. Both men say that the Russian general was courteously treated. However, they contend that his real mission was not to plead for peace but to spy on the French headquarters. This theory is certainly not refuted by any of the above statements.

Meanwhile, the Russian army had been divided in three:

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50 L. A. Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 24-25.
51 Ibid., VIII, 25-26.
52 E. Tarle, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, pp.59-68.
53 Ibid., p.60.
54 F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, p.562.
55 A. Fournier, Napoleon the First, p.543.

the northern army, under Barclay de Tolly, was to defend the Dvina River, the southern army, under Bagration, was to defend the Dnieper River, and the third army, under Tormasov, was in reserve. Alexander accompanied the army of Barclay de Tolly, though the Emperor was to have no specific command function. Tolstoy outlines the cosmopolitan imperial staff retained by Alexander: there were numerous Prussian generals, a Swedish general, a Sardinian general, the former Prussian minister Stein, the Russian chancellor, and the Emperor's brother - the Grand Duke Constantine.[56]

Thiers describes Alexander's staff almost exactly as Tolstoy,[57] while Kircheisen presents a list even longer than in War and Peace.[58] Carl von Clausewitz, Prussian military theorist and a colonel holding various staff positions in the Russian army in 1812, in his book, The Campaign of 1812 in Russia, pictures the Russian imperial staff much as Tolstoy does.[59]

At the opening of his story of the campaign of 1812 Tolstoy states " There was no general plan of action [for Russia]. The vacillation between all the plans that were proposed and the inability to fix on any one of them, was more marked than ever after the Tsar had been for a month at headquarters...."[60] However, Tolstoy soon places the army of Barclay de Tolly in the fortified camp of Drissa on the

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56 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p.590.
57 L. A. Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 5.
58 F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, p.556.
59 Carl von Clausewitz, The Campaign of 1812 in Russia, (London, 1843), pp. 9-10.
60 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p.569.

Dvina River, though he gives no reason why the army is there.[61]

In outlining Alexander's staff Tolstoy concludes with: "...and the last and principal figure, Pfuhl, was there [Drissa] because he had created a plan of warfare against Napoleon, and having made Alexander believe in the consistency of this plan, was now conducting the plan of the whole campaign...."[62] General Pfuhl was a former Prussian officer serving on Alexander's staff. War and Peace contains a thorough description of the Russian staff wrangling over the wisdom of Pfuhl's plan,[63] yet this plan is never actually explained by Tolstoy. Likewise, no mention is made of when or why Alexander decided to adopt the plan.

Clausewitz gives the details of Pfuhl's plan which was patterned after the tactics of Wellington at Torres Vedras in Portugal. Barclay was to withdraw to the heavily fortified camp of Drissa and hold that position against the advancing French. Bagration was to use his army to harass the French flanks and wear down Napoleon's troops. When the invader was sufficiently weakened Barclay's army was to march from Drissa and attack and defeat Napoleon.[64]

Concerning Tolstoy's statement that the Russians had no plan of action at the beginning of the campaign, Kircheisen says "All foreigners sought if possible to enter Russian service, and if they happened to be soldiers they felt bound to submit proposals to the Tsar as to the conduct of the future

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61 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 589.
62 Ibid., p. 589.
63 Ibid., pp. 598-601.
64 C. von Clausewitz, Campaign in Russia, p. 15.

war with Napoleon....so that finally, as the result of all these conflicting opinions, complete chaos prevailed at Russian Headquarters, and nobody knew what was actually going to be done."[65]

Though Tolstoy devotes several pages to discussing Pfuhl's personality and the opposition to his plan[66] - eventually persuading Alexander to disregard the plan - Kircheisen merely states "It is unnecessary to enter into detail with regard to the various plans for the campaign, or those put forward by Phull,...for none of them was put into practice...."[67] Yet Kircheisen later remarks: "Alexander had hoped at first that Barclay, whose troops had entered the fortified camp at Drissa between July 9th and 11th, would be able to await the French attack at this point, but the defences were still a long way from completion, and there could be no hope of holding them against a greatly superior force...."[68]

Fournier holds a view similar to Kircheisen, though he does not even mention Pfuhl's name. "...it must not be supposed that there was any definite purpose in view at the Russian headquarters....burning all stores and magazines behind him a la Wellington, Barclay marched hurriedly to Drissa, where a fortified camp was established like Torres Vedras. Here he wanted to wait for Bagration, ...The Russians received word that Bagration could not come

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65 F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, pp. 556-57.
66 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 591-601.
67 F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, p.557.
68 Ibid., p. 563.

up, abandoned their ill-chosen position...and marched to the east...."[69]

Dodge also contends there was no preconceived plan of action against Napoleon. "At Drissa was a huge intrenched camp, but being on no highway and liable to be turned, it lacked strategic value...."[70] "There seemed to have been no specific plan of campaign: Alexander had decided to play a waiting game."[71]

Thiers has a different opinion of the whole matter. He says that from the beginning of the campaign there were two schools of thought on how to defend Russia: one plan was to advance and ravage Poland and East Prussia and then retreat leaving Napoleon with barren country; the other plan was to withdraw immediately into Russia and cause the French to flounder in the supply problems of the vast plains.[72] Thiers states that Alexander decided to use Pfuhl's plan from the outset.[73]

Clausewitz, present on the staff at Drissa, is convinced that Pfuhl's plan was what Alexander had in mind when the Russians began their retreat from Vilna. He thinks Alexander liked the plan because it reminded the Emperor of Wellington's successful tactics in Portugal.[74]

Tarlè, too, is of the opinion that Alexander immediately launched the Russian army on the execution of Pfuhl's plan.

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69 A. Fournier, Napoleon the First, pp. 544-45.
70 T. A. Dodge, Great Captains, III, 456.
71 Ibid., III, 453.
72 L. A. Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 5-6.
73 Ibid., VIII, 8.
74 C. von Clausewitz, Campaign in Russia, p.14.

"According to eyewitnesses, the Tsar arrived at Vilna firmly convinced that Phull's plan was good...."[75] "Acting on Phull's advice, Alexander, without consulting either Barclay or Bagration, ordered the construction of a 'fortified camp' in the tiny town of Drissa on the Dvina...."[76]

The question of whether or not the Russian army had a definite plan of action to follow when the campaign of 1812 opened seems to be a matter of personal opinion. None of the writers mentioned has produced conclusive evidence to prove his contention. If someone could present a Russian field order, a communication of Alexander, or some similar document, stating the objective of the retreat from Vilna the question would be answered. But there seems to be no such document extant.

Tolstoy gives a complete description of General Pfuhl. He mentions that Pfuhl was "...disposed at all times to be irritable and sarcastic..."[77] and states: "His love for his theory led him to hate all practical considerations,and he would not hear of them. He positively rejoiced in failure, for failure, being due to some departure in practice from the purity of the abstract theory, only convinced him of the correctness of his theory."[78]

Clausewitz recalls his impressions of Pfuhl: "The author [Clausewitz] never saw a man who lost his head so easily..."[79] "...he had framed for himself a one-sided and

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75 E. Tarle, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, p.73.
76 Ibid., p.71.
77 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p.596.
78 Ibid., p.597.
79 C. von Clausewitz, Campaign in Russia, p. 6.

meagre system of war, which could stand the test neither of philosophical investigation, nor historical comparison ...."[80] "He laughed like a madman at the defeat of the Prussian army at Jena in 1806; after the entire catastrophe, his irony broke loose on everything which had happened."[81]

Alexander's presence at the headquarters of the Russian army evoked criticism from several members of the staff. They felt that the Emperor's constant perusal of Barclay's orders hindered the operations of the army. Likewise, the demands of the large imperial staff did not make for efficiency in the field. Finally a few of the men more intimate with Alexander took it upon themselves to suggest that he leave the army. Tolstoy remarks:

> ...at Drissa, Sishkov, the secretary of state,...wrote to the Tsar a letter to which Balashov and Araktcheev agreed to add their signatures. In this letter he took advantage of the Tsar's permitting him to offer his opinion on the general question, and respectfully suggested the sovereign's leaving the army, urging as a pretext for his doing so the absolute necessity of his presence to rouse public feeling in the capital. 82

Thiers mentions the growing dissatisfaction in the army with the Emperor's presence and tells of the letter urging Alexander to leave. Thiers says Araktcheev and Balashov brought the letter to the Emperor.[83] Tarlé also tells of such a letter to Alexander. He notes that Shishkov, Araktcheev and Balashov collaborated in writing the letter.[84]

Tolstoy relates how Alexander went on a tour of inspection at Drissa and listened to Colonel Michaud deplore

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80 C. von Clausewitz, Campaign in Russia, p. 6.
81 Ibid., p. 7.
82 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p.594.
83 L. A. Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 51-52.
84 E. Tarlé, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, p.80.

the poor defenses of the camp. "...Colonel Michaud had accompanied the Tsar on a tour of inspection about the Drissa fortifications; and had tried to convince the Tsar that the fortified camp, constructed on Pfuhl's theory, and hitherto regarded as the chef d'oeuvre of tactical science, destined to overthrow Napoleon - that that camp was a senseless absurdity that would lead to the destruction of the Russian army."[85]

Tarlé mentions Alexander's inspection of the camp and how the Emperor heard the criticisms of Michaud.[86] Clausewitz recalls the inspection, conducted by Pfuhl, and remarks: "He [Michaud] appeared less than any one satisfied with the whole matter; and it was he who finally declared himself against the camp of Drissa,..."[87]

After receiving the letter urging his departure from the army, and after hearing the dark forebodings of the value of the Drissa camp, Alexander called together his staff and numerous advisors and held a council. Tolstoy comments: "...not a military council - the Tsar loved to have things vague - but a meeting of a few persons, whose opinions he wished to hear in the present difficult position...."[88] The decisions of this council resulted in the Emperor's leaving the army and the abandonment of the Drissa camp.[89]

Thiers describes this council mentioning the numerous

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85 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 585.
86 E. Tarlé, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, p.79.
87 C. von Clausewitz, Campaign in Russia , p.34.
88 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p.595.
89 Ibid., pp. 597-601.

staff officers and advisors, just as in Tolstoy's account, and says the outcome saw Alexander leave the army and give complete command to Barclay de Tolly who immediately abandoned Drissa.[90]

Clausewitz makes no mention of the council but makes the rather vague statement: "...it had now been determined not to give battle in the Drissa camp..."[91]

Constant mentions the "...immense works at Drissa, where they [the Russians] had constructed an enormous intrenched camp..." Napoleon was positive the Russian army would give battle at Drissa and most of his officers were dismayed at the retreat; they hoped for a decisive encounter and quick victory for France.[92]

After leaving the army Alexander traveled to Moscow where Rastoptchin, the Governor, called a great meeting of all the Moscow nobles and merchants. These influential personages gathered at the Slobodsky palace to hear the pleas of the Emperor for aid in the war. The scene was dramatic. Tolstoy conveys the emotion of the assembly by telling of the tear filled eyes, the pledges of men and equipment, and the Emperor's inability to speak because intense feeling choked his voice.[93]

Thiers depicts the scene: "...at the sight of Alexander himself, coming to demand the support of the nation against a foreign invader, their excitement had burst forth

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90 L.A. Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 52.
91 C. von Clausewitz, Campaign in Russia, p.36.
92 Constant, Memoirs, III, 271.
93 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp.631-36.

in sobs and cries of affection...."[94]

Sir Robert Wilson, British observer with the Russian army in 1812, in his book The Invasion of Russia, relates: "...Alexander reached Moscow, and found the patriotism, loyalty, and resolution of all classes excited to the highest degree of enthusiasm."[95] "His reception was accompanied by so many affectionate proofs of attachment and fidelity that he could hardly control his emotions;..."[96]

Labaume recalls how he stopped at a monastery on the road to Moscow during the French advance and spoke with an old Russian monk who read aloud a letter recently received from Moscow. The letter told of the nobles and merchants gathering at the Slobode palace to await the arrival of the Emperor. After being read Alexander's manifesto "... the nobles announced their eagerness to sacrifice their fortunes, and even their lives, for the country, and undertook to raise, equip, and maintain a force for the defence of Moscow...." The merchants voted to levy upon themselves sums proportionate to their holdings. The Emperor appeared, thanked the assembly, and regarded them as the surest support of the throne.[97]

Tolstoy writes of the pledges made by individual nobles to man and equip entire regiments. Pierre Bezuhov, the principal fictional figure in War and Peace, was among those who offered entire military units. "On hearing that

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94 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 122.
95 Robert T. Wilson, The Invasion of Russia, (London, 1860, ed. by Herbert Randolph), p.51.
96 Ibid., p. 79.
97 E. Labaume, Crime of 1812, p.126.

Count Mamonov was furnishing a regiment, Bezuhov at once told Count Rastoptchin that he would furnish one thousand men and their equipment."[98]

Tarlé makes note of these personal grants: "... individual wealthy men and magnets from among the nobility (such as Count Mamonov) pledged themselves to raise and equip entire regiments..."[99]

Meanwhile the French pushed farther into Russia and on August 16th they were at the gates of Smolensk. Napoleon thought the Russians might defend the city, but Barclay again decided to retreat after a brief, but bloody, engagement. Tolstoy describes the attack on Smolensk not in terms of military maneuvers but by telling of the trials of the townspeople. He vividly portrays the French cannonade and catches the fear and panic of the people as they set fire to their city and rushed from its gates.[100]

Caulaincourt tells of the fierce cannon fire by the French and the red sky above the city as it went up in flames. Only a few of the main buildings stood unharmed.[101] General Rapp says "... the battle was obstinate, the cannonade violent...the bridge and public buildings were a prey to the flames...." Smolensk was half consumed by fire.[102]

Thiers depicts the scene: "... the French artillery directed an incessant fire against the city, in which it committed great ravages, and slew many of the troops with

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98 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p.636.
99 E. Tarlé, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, p.160.
100 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 647-54.
101 Caulincourt, With Napoleon, p.80.
102 J. Rapp, Memoirs, II, 190.

which it was overcrowded."[103] "Through the midst of the darkness suddenly poured forth torrents of flame and smoke, ...Our artillery [French] added fresh flames to the fire, and rendered the city untenable by the enemy Russians."[104]

Coignet recalls the sight: "The city took fire that beautiful August night....All those fine storehouses were a solid mass of embers,...It is impossible to describe the different colors of the blaze...."[105].

A comrade of Labaume told him: "'It would be impossible adequately to describe the horrible scene of devastation presented by the interior of Smolensk. My entry into this town will be the epoch of my life. Picture to yourself all the streets, all the squares, encumbered with dead or dying Russians, and the flames lighting up far and wide this frightful spectacle.'" [106]

The region around Smolensk was suffering from a severe drought. Both armies experienced great difficulty in traversing this almost waterless waste. Tolstoy presents a true picture of privation: "The cattle lowed from hunger,... The marshes were dry....the infantry sank to their ankles in the soft, stifling, burning dust, that never got cool even at night. The sandy dust clung to their legs and to the wheels, rose in a cloud over their heads, and got into the eyes and hair and nostrils and lungs...The higher the sun rose, the higher rose the cloud of dust,...When they

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103 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire VIII,88.
104 Ibid., VIII, 92.
105 J. Coignet, Memoirs, p. 221.
106 E. Labaume, Crime of 1812, p. 73.

[soldiers] reached the villages, there was a rush for the wells. They fought over the water and drank it down to the mud."[107]

Jakob Walter, a German conscript in the French army, mentions in his memoirs: "The very great heat, the dust which was like a thick fog, the closed line of march in columns, and putried water from holes filled with dead people and cattle brought everyone close to death; and eye pains, fatigue, thirst, and hunger tormented everybody...."[108]

Clausewitz comments that "The summer was unusually hot and dry, the seat of war was not rich in water, the smaller streams were for the most part dried up,...There was, therefore, a general want of water,..."[109]

Tarlé says "... the French soldiers literally fought for a drop of muddy water from the swamps...."[110] Labaume recalls that French soldiers dug into the ground with their bayonets searching for water.[111] Lejeune remembers: "... the heat was intense, and the sand rose in masses of white dust as our columns advanced, choking us and completing our exhaustion...."[112]

Tolstoy relates that beyond Smolensk the French captured a Cossack, a member of the Russian General Platov's corps, who had lost his horse. The prisoner was brought

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107 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 654-55.
108 Jakob Walter, A German Conscript with Napoleon (Lawrence, Kansas, 1938, ed. and trans. by Otto Springer), p.37.
109 C. von Clausewitz, Campaign in Russia, p. 175.
110 E. Tarlé, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, p.178.
111 E. Labaume, Crime of 1812, p. 66.
112 L. Lejeune, Memoirs, p.170.

before Napoleon who questioned him, with the aid of an interpreter. The prisoner spoke freely telling of the rumors which infested his squadron and confirming Napoleon's suspicions that a great battle was near at hand.[113] "If a battle is fought within three days the French will win it, but if later, God knows what will come of it,..."[114] The Cossack was ignorant of the identity of the person with whom he spoke. When he was informed that he was in the presence of the great Napoleon he appeared dumbfounded. Napoleon had him mounted on a fresh horse and set him free.[115]

The incident of the cossack in War and Peace is not purely historical because Tolstoy identifies the man as Lavrushka, the servant of a fictional character called Denisov. However, the details of the affair and the dialogue between Napoleon and the cossack are taken from Thiers's work; in fact Thiers's name is mentioned several times in the narrative.[116]

Caulaincourt remarks about a cossack captured east of Smolensk. He recalls that the cossack was taken before Napoleon and spoke without compulsion about the rumors of a coming battle and the way the cossacks preyed on the French stragglers. Napoleon gave the cossack a new horse and some pieces of gold and released him.[117]

Constant tells of several cossacks captured beyond

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113 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 663-64.
114 Ibid., p.664.
115 Ibid., pp. 664-65.
116 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire,VIII,121.
117 Caulaincourt, With Napoleon, pp. 88-91.

Smolensk, being questioned by Napoleon. "These men seem made to be eternally on a horse..." and drink brandy like water!"[118]

After telling of the evacuation of Smolensk War and Peace dwells briefly on the activities of its fictional characters in Moscow as the war closes in on them. Tolstoy includes the affairs of Pierre Bezuhov: "To divert his mind...,Pierre drove out to the village of Vorontsvo, to look at a great air balloon which was being constructed by Leppich to use against the enemy,..."[119]

Kircheisen maintains that Rastoptchin, the governor of Moscow, had hired a certain Leppich - really a German named Schmidt - to construct a balloon capable of carrying men and materials over the French lines; the object was to scatter explosives on the enemy. But the plan was a failure.[120]

Tarlé goes into some detail over Leppich and his balloon. "...he [Rastoptchin] made a great fuss over a certain Leppich, a German adventurer who claimed that he could build a balloon in which he would rise above the French army. He had hinted that with luck Napoleon himself might be destroyed.[121] "Having swindled enough Government money out of his patron [Rastoptchin] , Leppich vanished into thin air - without the help of his non-existent balloon...."[122]

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118 Constant, Memoirs, III, 252-53.
119 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 702.
120 F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, p. 571.
121 E. Tarlé, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, p. 218.
122 Ibid., p.219

CHAPTER III

BORODINO

Murmurings of discontent with the strategy of Barclay de Tolly began to reach the ear of Emperor Alexander, and the farther into Russia Barclay's army retreated the louder and more numerous became these whispers. Soon the opposition to Barclay became public, and most of the influential nobles and army officers were clamoring for a new commander-in-chief. Tolstoy says Barclay was unpopular for two reasons: his avoidance of battle with Napoleon, and his foreign name. In connection with this second reason Tolstoy emphasizes the growing animosity toward the German officers serving in the Russian army; he notes that Barclay was a German.[1]

Bagration, leading the second army, detested Barclay and tried to delay the joining of the two armies. War and Peace contains a letter written by Bagration to Araktcheev, one of Alexander's advisers, deploring the general's position: "For God's sake, send me somewhere else, if only in command of a regiment, for here I can do nothing. The headquarters are crammed full of Germans, there's no living here for a Russian, and no making head or tail of anything. I supposed I was serving my sovereign and my country, but in practice it comes to serving Barclay. I must own I do not care to."[2]

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1 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 639.
2 Ibid., p.640.

The salons of the fictional personages in Moscow are brought into the conflict concerning Barclay to show the general displeasure in the court circles. Tolstoy describes how the nobility gradually built up a clamor for General Kutuzov, hero of the recent Turkish war.[3]

> ...on the 8th of August[4] a committee, consisting of ... Saltykov, Araktcheev, Vyazmitinov, Lopuhin, and Kotchubey was held to consider the progress of the war. This committee decided that the disasters were due to divided authority; and although the members of the committee were aware of the Tsar's dislike of Kutuzov, after a deliberation they advised the appointment of Kutuzov as commander-in-chief. And that same day Kutuzov was appointed... 5

Tarlé mentions the council called by Alexander and includes the same members as Tolstoy.[6] He also shows the same letter from Bagration to Araktcheev as is contained in War and Peace.[7] According to Tarlé, Barclay was a good general and realized that Napoleon could not be halted early in the campaign, still his subordinates were jealous of him and called him a foreigner.[8] Tarlé states that despite what many writers have said, Barclay was not a foreigner and a German; he was of Scot ancestry and was born and raised in Livonia.[9] Tarlé emphasizes the animosity between Bagration and Barclay and says it led to inefficient generalship in manoeuvring the Russian armies.[10]

Dodge maintains that "Barclay de Tolly was a staunch

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3 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 659-61.
4 August 20th on Western calendar.
5 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p.661.
6 E. Tarlé, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, p.166.
7 Ibid., p. 138
8 Ibid., p. 82
9 Ibid., pp. 86-87.
10 Ibid., pp. 87-90.

if not a great soldier...."[11] "The nobles did not understand the wisdom of retreat:...The blame was cast upon Barclay, who was not of Russian blood; and Kutusov... became the hero of the nation...."[12]

Clausewitz thinks the evacuation of Smolensk without a decisive battle had great influence on the decision to replace Barclay.[13] As to the claim that Barclay was a foreigner, Clausewitz says "Barclay was, in truth, no foreigner; he was the son of a Livonian clergyman, a native of the province; he had served from his youth in the Russian army, and there was therefore nothing foreign in him but his name, and perhaps, also, his speech; for he spoke Russian ill, and was more accustomed, by preference, to the German language...."[14] As to the hatred of German officers, Clausewitz states: "It was a trait of the Tartar character to consider as a traitor an officer,...without reasonable ground, merely on account of his name....The indivual foreign officer did not suffer by it, for his associates, who were able on near inspection to judge of his intention, did them justice. The Author [Clausewitz], for instance, almost always had to boast of the best reception,..." [15]

Sir Robert Wilson wrote from Smolensk in August, 1812, to Sir George Cathcart, British ambassador at St. Petersburg:

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[11] T. A. Dodge, Great Captains, III, 452.
[12] Ibid., III, 565.
[13] C. von Clausewitz, Campaign in Russia, p.136.
[14] Ibid., p. 137.
[15] Ibid., pp. 138-39.

The exaltation of General Barclay to the supreme command was originally an unpopular measure; but the conduct of the campaign, which commenced by the sacrifice of six fertile provinces, magazines, &c., has excited a most general discontent against General Barclay and General Foule [Pfuhl], who is supposed to have counseled the operations. ... 16 It must be stated that General Barclay does not possess the confidence of the army....I consider General Barclay as terrorised [sic] (if I may use the expression) by the reputation of his enemy....I am certain he is not making a war of manoeuvre upon any fixed and prearranged military system, but a war of marches without sufficient arrangement and method. I should hope that a sense of this necessity, and of his inability to recover the confidence of his officers and soldiers, will induce him to resign, and yet serve his country as a meritorious officer in a less responsible station. 17

Cathcart, however, is not a severe critic of Barclay. In his book Commentaries on the War in Russia and Germany in 1812 and 1813 he writes:

A systematic retreat of a large force was conducted by Barclay de Tolly with the greatest of skill;...A certain degree of disunion and party spirit prevailed throughout the army while it was under the command of Barclay de Tolly, and impaired its capability for prompt and vigorous exertion....Bagration and Bennigsen were, individually, able and meritorious officers, yet they would have been more likely to injure the cause by jealousy and rivalry, than to prove cordial subordinates....it would have been difficult for an army, under any commander, to keep pace with the sanguinary expectations of those who watched the reflex of the tide of invasion with intense eagerness at a distance from the scene of operations....18

Kircheisen says all the Russian generals hated Barclay because he was a foreigner and because he failed to give battle against Napoleon. The entire army rejoiced at Kutuzov's appointment as commander-in-chief.[19] Fournier, also, states that Barclay was in disfavor because

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16 R. T. Wilson, Invasion of Russia, p.382.
17 Ibid., p.384.
18 George Cathcart, Commentaries on the War in Russia and Germany in 1812 and 1813 (London, 1850),pp.55-63.
19 F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, pp. 566-67.

he was a foreigner (though he really was a Livonian) and because he did not defend Smolensk.[20] According to Thiers, Barclay was blamed for the losses of Vilna and Smolensk. "The cry of popular passion, swelled by the voices of those who envied him, spread not only throughout the army, but throughout the whole country, denouncing Barclay de Tolly..."[21]

So it was that sixty-seven year old, one-eyed General Kutuzov assumed command of the Russian army and began preparations to halt the advance of the French. Though Pierre Bezuhov, a fictional character, is the principal figure in War and Peace, Kutuzov is the hero of the story. Tolstoy constantly praises the old general and comes to his defense when charges are made that Napoleon should have been trapped in Russia but escaped because of Kutuzov's laxness.

Tarlè also believes that Kutuzov was the hero of 1812; he devotes some eight pages to extolling the virtues of the old soldier.[22] However, the merits of General Kutuzov are presented in a manner hinting of the influence of political thought prevailing in Russia today: "He [Kutuzov] will be remembered as the genuine representative of the Russian people in the most terrible moment of Russia's existence."[23]

Kircheisen speaks well of Kutuzov: "The value of the new Commander-in-Chief lay less in his military attain-

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20 A. Fournier, Napoleon the First, p.553.
21 L.A.Thier, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 124.
22 E. Tarlé, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, pp. 168-76.
23 Ibid., p. 168.

ments than in his personal qualities, which had made him popular among the Russian people. His sound knowledge of men, his tactfulness - though he had little education - and his political shrewdness, and finally his vast experience of warfare made him eminently suited to the position to which he was now raised, for his duty was not only to fight the enemy but to accomodate himself to the wishes of the Emperor and the officers of his army...." [24]

Eugene Stschepkin, writing for the Cambridge Modern History, says of Kutuzov: "Physically weakened by age, he lacked the mental energy required for contending with Napoleon, but he had talent enough to play a Fabian part...."[25]

Wilson mentions General Kutuzov:

> When he joined the army he was seventy-four years old,[26] and though hale, so very corpulent and unwieldy that he was obliged to move about, even when in the field, in a little four wheeled carriage.... [27] A bon vivant - polished, courteous, shrewd as a Greek, naturally intelligent as an Asiatic and well instructed as an European - he was more disposed to trust to diplomacy for his success than to martial prowess, for which by his age and the state of his constitution he was no longer qualified. [28]

Thiers does not speak highly of Kutuzov. He describes him as being "...so perfectly worn out by war and pleasure as to be scarcely capable of holding himself on his horse,

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[24] F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, p. 567.

[25] The Cambridge Modern History, Lord Acton (ed.), Vol.9, Napoleon, (London, 1906) p.494.

[26] Kutuzov was sixty-seven years old when he took command in 1812. He was born in 1745 (Encyclopedia Britannica, Eleventh Edition, Vol. XV, p. 956).

[27] Tolstoy describes Kutuzov: "...Kutuzov had grown stouter and more corpulent than ever; he seemed swimming in fat...." p.692. Tolstoy often mentions Kutuzov's carriage.

[28] R. T. Wilson, Invasion of Russia, p.131.

thoroughly corrupt, false, perfidious, and a liar..."[29]

All Russia was clamoring for a decisive battle with Napoleon and it was General Kutuzov who was chosen for this task. After assuming command of the army on August 29th Kutuzov immediately made plans to halt the French advance. The stand he determined to make against the French was at Borodino, a small town eighty miles west of Moscow. A detailed discussion of the merits of the Russian position at Borodino opens the section of War and Peace devoted to this great battle:

> In giving and accepting battle at Borodino, Kutuzov and Napoleon acted without design or rational plan....The Russians did not seek out the best position; on the contrary, on their retreat they had passed by many positions better than Borodino. They did not make a stand at one of these positions, because Kutuzov did not care to take up a position he had not himself selected, because the popular clamour for a battle had not yet been so strongly expressed,...The fact remains that there were stronger positions on the road the Russian army had passed along, and that the plain of Borodino,...is in no respect a more suitable position than any other spot in the Russian empire to which one might point at hazard on the map. 30

Tolstoy has opened himself to criticism in the above statement. What does he mean when he says Kutuzov and Napoleon acted without design or rational plan? Napoleon was eager to engage the Russians in a decisive battle. "Had not Napoleon ardently longed for a pitched battle, he never would have attacked at Borodino...." says Dodge.[31] Fournier relates that Napoleon was so anxious to face the Russians in open battle that he could get little sleep. "If Kutusoff would only stand firm! Napoleon was

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29 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 124.
30 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 705-06.
31 T. A. Dodge, Great Captains, III, 566.

so excited by this question that he hardly slept..." And the entire French army was eager to fight: "...they [French troops] all came back and donned their best uniforms, for the long-desired festival was at hand...."[32] Kircheisen states that "As Napoleon drew near the Russian positions at Borodino he felt glad to be able at last to begin the decisive battle...."[33]

Did Kutuzov have a reason to make his army face about and oppose the French? "Kutusow would certainly not have delivered the battle of Borodino, from which he probably expected no victory, if he had not been compelled to it by the voice of the court, the army, and the nation at large...." writes Clausewitz.[34] Dodge says "The new commander [Kutuzov] had orders to fight the battle which the czar and the nation demanded for the safety of Moscow;..."[35] Wilson states: "Bound to the stake by the circumstances of his Kutuzov's appointment, he could not decline the battle which he had heard vociferously demanded wherever he had passed;..."[36]

Tolstoy is correct in saying that the Russian position at Borodino was inferior to what it should have been, but he does not consider the circumstances under which Borodino had to be chosen. Clausewitz tells that the position was chosen by Colonel Toll, the chief-of-staff, who also had selected all of Barclay's positions. "...it was assuredly

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32 A. Fournier, Napoleon the First, p.554.
33 F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, p.568.
34 C. von Clausewitz, Campaign in Russia, p.142.
35 T. A. Dodge, Great Captains, III, 566.
36 R. T. Wilson, Invasion of Russia, p.131.

not the best among the many which that officer had thought fit for the purpose of a battle."[37] Clausewitz goes on to say that Russia is poor in military positions. Either the land is swampy, covered with forests, or almost completely level. "If a commander, then, wishes to fight without loss of time, as was Kutusow's case, it is evident that he must put up with what he can get." [38]

Tarlé presents a strong defense for Kutuzov's choice of position at Borodino:

> Only a few of the early military critics of this campaign understood that the battlefield chosen by Kutuzov was the only one possible, for the simple reason that Napoleon with his main forces was now keeping Kutuzov's rear-guard within his range of vision, and Konovnitsin [the rear-guard commander] was forced to retire fighting every inch of the way. Kutuzov could, to be sure, speed up his retreat and leave Konovnitsin to his fate, but even then Napoleon, after smashing Konovnitsin, would still have been able to overtake Kutuzov somewhere near Mozhaisk [near Borodino] and make him accept battle. Kutuzov chose rather to stop near the Kolotsk monastery, fortify whatever position he found there,...and await Napoleon. The position for battle was none too good, and some military historians claim that it was quite bad, but it had to be accepted. 39

Kircheisen says that Barclay was intending to give battle at Tsarevo-Zaimishtche when Kutuzov replaced him. "He [Kutuzov] had originally intended to offer battle in the position chosen by his predecessor, but by the advice of Bennigsen, whom he had made Chief-of-Staff, he decided to fight at Borodino, so that if he were successful the credit might not go to Barclay de Tolley!..." [40]

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37 C. von Clausewitz, Campaign in Russia, p. 142.
38 Ibid., p.148.
39 E. Tarlé, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, p.180
40 F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, p. 567

Tolstoy is definitely in error when he says that not until the days of Borodino - early September - was there a popular clamor for a decisive battle. It was the popular clamor for a battle that was one of the reasons for replacing Barclay with Kutuzov.[41]

The weakness of the Russians' left flank is discussed next by Tolstoy. He contends that the Shevardino redoubt was not an advanced position, as some writers claim, but was the intended left flank until captured by the French; then a new redoubt had to be dug on the Russian left. Tolstoy says that while pursuing the Russian rear-guard the French stumbled upon Shevardino. Napoleon decided to take that redoubt in order to enable his army to deploy closer to the Russian lines. Tolstoy asks why Shevardino was so determinedly defended on September 5th if it was only an advance redoubt. He says six thousand men died defending the redoubt when only a picket of Cossacks would have been necessary to hold, and then withdraw, if Shevardino were only an advanced position. "After the loss of the Shevardino redoubt, we found ourselves on the morning of the 25th[42] with our left flank driven from its position, and were forced to draw in the left wing of our position and hurriedly fortify it where we could....and the disadvantage of that position was aggravated by the fact that the Russian generals, not fully recognising the facts...,retained their extended formation..., and, consequently had to trans-

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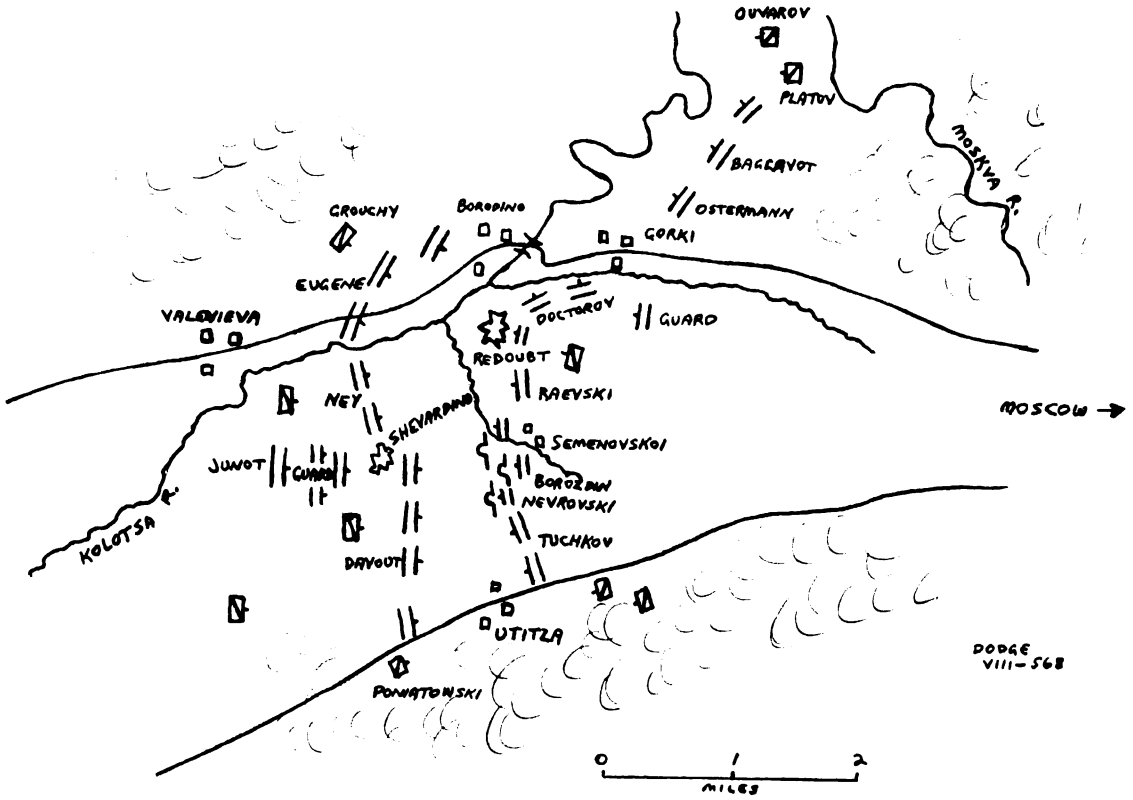
41 See above page 51.
42 September 6th on the Western calendar.

fer their troops from right to left during the battle...."[43]



Kircheisen substantiates Tolstoy's assertion regarding Shevardino: "His [Napoleon's] first move on September 5th was to capture the trenches of Shevardino, which were originally intended to cover the left flank of the Russian position...."[44] Fournier says "The most westerly of his [Kutuzov's] redoubts was captured by the French on September 5th after a fierce struggle: this pushed the left wing of the Russians back from the Kalotza against the other lines, so that they were arranged in the shape of an elbow with

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43 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 706-07.
44 F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, p.588.

the angle at Borodino...."[45] Dodge states that the Russian position at Borodino was tactically strongest on the right and not until the eve of the battle - September 6th - did Kutuzov begin transferring troops to the left.[46]

Coignet tells of stumbling upon Shevardino: "In order to pass into the plain occupied by the Russians, it was necessary to leave the wood. As soon as we emerged from it we saw, on the right of the road, a large redoubt which shelled us as we came out. We had to make unheard-of efforts to take it...."[47]

Labaume recalls the action at Shevardino much as Coignet does. He says that after pursuing the Russians through some woods the French came out on a plain. "Towards our extreme right [the Russian left] the Russians had a redoubt situated between two woods, from which a murderous fire carried consternation into our ranks. They had constructed it to strengthen their left wing, which was the weak part of their entrenchments. Napoleon saw this at once, and that there was nothing for it but to carry this redoubt...."[48] Labaume goes on to say that following the fighting at Shevardino he was sent to reconnoiter the lines. "...their [Russians'] left was much weakened by the loss of the redoubt which we had taken on the previous day.... As to our right, it will be understood that our success of

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45 A. Fournier, Napoleon the First, p.554.
46 T. A. Dodge, Great Captains, III, 571.
47 J. Coignet, Memoirs, p.223.
48 E. Labaume, Crime of 1812, p.95.

the previous evening had enabled us to approach Kutusoff's extreme left,..."[49]

Tarlè does not commit himself on the question of the Shevardino redoubt but says "Later military writers insist that this redoubt near the village of Shevardino was one of the fortified points of the position chosen by Toll for the imminent battle, but that it was decided to move the left flank a short distance eastward, to cover it with a Semenovsky trench and earthworks, which were quickly erected...."[50]

Wilson, however, holds to the theory that Shevardino was an advanced entrenchment. "...in advance, on a hill situated between two small woods , about eighteen hundred yards in front of the village of Chewardino, was another field work intended to delay the progress of an enemy moving on Semenowskoie."[51] He further states that late in the evening on September 5th the Russians were ordered to withdraw from Shevardino after a fierce defense against French attacks : "...to withdraw from it, as it was out of the main defensive line of the position,...and by checking, as it had done, the evening's approach by the French , had fully accomplished the object of its construction."[52]

Clausewitz also thinks Shevardino was an advanced position, and as regards the Russians having to hurriedly dig positions, he says that all the earth works at Boro-

49 E. Labaume, Crime of 1812, p. 95.
50 E. Tarlè, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, p.181.
51 R. T. Wilson, Invasion of Russia, p.135.
52 Ibid., pp. 137-38.

dino were not ordered to be dug until the entire army had arrived.[53] He is in accord with Tolstoy when he states that the heavily manned Russian right had to be shifted to the left during the battle.[54]

Caulaincourt recalls that the day before the battle - September 6th - Napoleon observed the Russians digging new fieldworks, probably to replace the one lost at Shevardino.[55]

Tolstoy states that "...on the 25th[56] not a shot was fired on either side;..."[57] Thiers agrees with this statement: "By a species of mutual consent the 6th had been allowed to pass by without even the discharge of a musket...."[58] But Rapp and Caulaincourt made observations to the contrary. Rapp says that while reconnoitering the lines he was fired on with grapeshot by the Russians; a similar mishap befell Napoleon that day.[59] Caulaincourt mentions that September 6th was spent in observation, except for Polish units which gained advantageous ground for the French.[60]

Concerning the weather of September 6th, Tolstoy says "...it was a bright August[61] morning..."[62] However, in the evening the weather changed. "The night was dark and damp; a slight drizzle was falling almost inaudibly...."[63]

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53 C. von Clausewitz, Campaign in Russia, p.151
54 Ibid., p.152.
55 Caulaincourt, With Napoleon, p.95.
56 September 6th on the Western calendar - the day before the battle of Borodino.
57 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p.704.
58 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire,VIII,134.
59 J. Rapp, Memoirs, II, 200-01.
60 Caulaincourt, With Napoleon, p.95.
61 September on the Western calendar.
62 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 708.
63 Ibid., p.735.

Thiers gives the same description of the weather. The morning was sunny[64] but in the evening "...soldiers slept around huge fires, which had been lighted to protect them from the chill of the night, and the damp arising from a shower of small rain which had fallen during the evening."[65] Constant recalls a cold, fine rain being driven in sheets by the wind[66] but does not tell whether or not this rain fell all day.

On September 6th, amidst preparations for the battle on the morrow, an elaborate religious procession marched through the Russian lines. Tolstoy relates:"A church procession was coming up the hill from Borodino. In front of it a regiment of infantry marched smartly along the dusty road, with their shakoes off and their muskets lowered. Behind the infantry came sounds of church singing. Soldiers and peasants came running down bareheaded to meet it, ...'They are bringing the Holy Mother! Our defender... the Holy Mother of Iversky!...' 'The Holy Mother of Smolensk...' another corrected." [67]

Dodge tells of the religious procession: "Kutusov issued no proclamation, but he paraded the Smolensk statue of the Holy Virgin, which had been borne by the priests from that city, and told the soldiers that they were fighting for her and for God, against the enemy of all God's laws. During the 6th the Russian soldiers attended divine service,

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64 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 129.
65 Ibid., VIII, 135.
66 Constant, Memoirs, pp. 177-78.
67 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 712.

and the men received absolution...."[68]

Lejeune recalls the procession:

> ...their General [Kutuzov], knowing the superstitious piety of his soldiers, took care to rouse their fanaticism by making the war appear to be one in defense of their religion. He had the image of a certain canonized bishop, which it was said had been miraculously rescued from the impious hands of the French, carried through the ranks with all the pomp due to some sacred relic. It excited the greatest enthusiasm wherever it appeared, and we could hear the shouts of joy with which its passage was greeted...[69]

Thiers says: "...they [the Russians] were on their knees in the midst of a thousand flambeaux, before a miraculous image of the Madonna of Smolensk, saved, it was said, on the wings of angels from the conflagration of that unfortunate city, and now carried in procession by the Greek priests through the bivouacs of the camp of Borodino,..."[70]

Tarlé mentions that Napoleon was disturbed at the unrest in the Russian positions. "Some sort of commotion was apparent, and all the while the sounds of a distant din reached him. At midday, the French learned that Kutuzov was inspecting his troops, and that the ikon of the Smolensk Mother of God was being bofne round the Russian camp...."[71]

The eve of the battle of Borodino saw Napoleon conclude his duties as commanding general and engage in various personal affairs. Tolstoy tells of the arrival of Colonel Fabvier from Spain with the news of the French reverse

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[68] T. A. Dodge, Great Captains, III, 571.
[69] L. Lejeune, Memoirs, pp. 177-78.
[70] L. A. Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII,134.
[71] E. Tarlé, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, p.184.

at Salamanca,[72] also mentioned by Caulaincourt,[73] Thiers,[74] and Tarlé,[75] and describes Napoleon's reception of M. de Beausset bearing a painting of the Emperor's son, the King of Rome.[76]

Tolstoy says that Napoleon found an agreeable surprise when he stepped from the sleeping section of his tent and saw de Beausset displaying the picture. The Emperor was so delighted that he ordered the painting be set outside his tent so the Guard could see it.

Caulaincourt,[77] Meneval,[78] and Constant[79] all mention the incident of the painting and the latter two tell of the enthusiasm shown by the Guard when seeing the picture displayed outside the Emperor's tent. However, Méneval, Caulaincourt, and Tolstoy do not agree as to Napoleon's reception of the painting. Meneval says the Emperor was impatient to see it and ordered its container opened in his presence, while Caulaincourt states that Napoleon found it hanging in his tent when he returned from a reconnaissance. Thiers throws a fourth light on this picture by saying that the Emperor did not display it to the Guard but had it replaced in its box.[80]

Breakfast followed the presentation of the painting, and after dining Napoleon dictated a proclamation for the

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72 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 726-27.
73 Caulaincourt, With Napoleon, p.94.
74 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire VIII,135.
75 E. Tarlé, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, p.185
76 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 727-28.
77 Caulaincourt, With Napoleon, p. 95.
78 C. Méneval, Memoirs, III, 52-53.
79 Constant, Memoirs, III, 259.
80 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII,135.

troops telling them of the importance of the coming battle and promising them good quarters and an early peace if they would carry the day. Translations of this proclamation, almost verbatim with that in War and Peace,[81] are mentioned by Rapp,[82] Caulaincourt,[83] Dodge,[84] and Tarlé.[85]

Tolstoy presents the attack order drawn up by Napoleon the day before the battle - September 6th.[86] Though one French division was to feign a flanking movement on the Russian left, the main strategy was an infantry frontal assault on the Russian earthworks. Tolstoy criticizes the way Napoleon deployed his troops and says "...not one of the instructions given was, or could be, carried into effect...."[87] Napoleon's plans failed not because he violated any of the rules of military science but because the opposition from the Russians was insurmountable.

Dodge has Napoleon's attack order in a translation almost identical with that of Tolstoy.[88] As to the success of this order Kircheisen says"...hardly any of the instructions for the attack given by Napoleon on September 6th could be carried out as they were found to be quite impossible in practice."[89]

Napoleon's health on the day of the battle prompted Tolstoy to include a discussion as to whether or not the

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81 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 729.
82 J. Rapp, Memoirs, II, 203.
83 Caulaincourt, With Napoleon, p.96.
84 T. A. Dodge, Great Captains, III, 571.
85 E. Tarlé, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, p.184.
86 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 730-31.
87 Ibid., p.731.
88 T. A. Dodge, Great Captains, III, 574.
89 F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, p. 569.

Emperor's headcold impeded his decisions at Borodino.[90] The commentary stresses the fact that it is fate and the armies themselves which determine the tide of battle and not just one man's judgment.

General Dumas, the French quartermaster-general in 1812, recalls in his memoirs:

> It has been frequently asserted that Napoleon did not display his usual activity on this day. His apparent indifference has excited astonishment; it has been intimated that he laboured under bodily exhaustion; that he was not able to call into action all the resources of his genius; in short, that his star began to grow dim, even in the midst of victory. Napoleon certainly appeared to be indisposed; he had undergone excessive fatigue during the two preceding nights, which he had employed in reconnoitering in person the positions,... [91]

Fournier says "The generals hardly knew him from the old Napoleon; they laid everything to the inflammation of a severe cold and the constant pain he was suffering, but in particular to his overstrained nerves, that were unequal to the new task after such wearing excitement...."[92]

Kircheisen tells of Napoleon's lack of energy on the day of the battle and mentions the Emperor's heavy cold, but does not state an opinion as to the effect of the cold.[93] Lejeune blames the headcold for Napoleon's apathy in regard to the events of the battle.[94]

Constant mentions that Napoleon had "...great exhaustion throughout his person..." and had been suffering from a cold which caused a loss of voice on the day of the

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90 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 732-34.
91 Mathieu Dumas, Memoirs of His Own Time (2 vols., London, 1839), II, 384.
92 A. Fournier, Napoleon the First, p.555.
93 F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, p. 569.
94 L. Lejeune, Memoirs, II, 187.

engagement. "During all the time that the battle of the Moskowa [Borodino] lasted, the Emperor had attacks of dysury [sic]...."[95] However, Constant makes no statement that anyone on the French staff felt that the headcold hampered Napoleon. Thiers considers the headcold but says it was "...not of a nature to paralyze his powerful intellect...."[96]

Napoleon could not sleep during the early morning hours preceding the battle. He inspected the lines several times and at three o'clock decided to sit down and relax; he had some punch and engaged in conversation with General Rapp. Napoleon talked of the state of the army since leaving Smolensk and inquired into the distribution of supplies. Tolstoy probably took this conversation [97] from Rapp's memoirs; Rapp presents the dialogue almost verbatim with that in War and Peace.[98]

"A solitary deep cannon shot boomed out on the right, hovered in the air, and died away in the stillness. Several minutes passed. A second, and a third shot was heard, the air was full of vibration; a fourth and a fifth boomed out majestically, closely on the right."[99] Tolstoy begins his narrative of the battle of Borodino.

Labaume says the long awaited encounter commenced when "...a cannon-shot from one of Sorbier's batteries an-

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95 Constant, Memoirs, III, 259-60.
96 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 146.
97 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 734-35.
98 J. Rapp, Memoirs, II, 202-03.
99 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 736.

nounced that the battle had begun...."[100] Wilson visualizes the scene: "...the enemy [French] suddenly opened fire from their right battery...with a thundering peal, which was followed by lightning flashes from all the other batteries."[101]

As the battle began Napoleon situated himself at the Shevardino redoubt. While describing the progress of the fighting by the French Tolstoy always refers to Napoleon as being at this redoubt.[102] Lejeune mentions: "The Emperor announced that he would establish his headquarters on the redoubt taken the evening before [Shevardino], and as a matter of fact he passed a great part of the day on that elevated position, sitting on the steep bank of the exterior slope,..."[103] Kircheisen says Napoleon rode to Shevardino and stayed there for twelve hours "...in complete apathy, and seemed as little impressed by good news as by bad...."[104] Kircheisen hints that the Emperor's health was to blame for this apathy.[105] Fournier[106] and Dodge[107] also say that Napoleon remained at the redoubt during the entire course of the battle.

During his description of the battle Tolstoy brings in an incident concerning one of Murat's adjutants and General Beliard. In War and Peace Murat sent an adjutant

100 E. Labaume, Crime of 1812, p.101.
101 R. T. Wilson, Invasion of Russia, p.142.
102 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 745-51.
103 L. Lejeune, Memoirs, II, 178.
104 F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, p.569.
105 See above page 69.
106 A. Fournier, Napoleon the First, p.556.
107 T. A. Dodge, Great Captains, III, 575.

to Napoleon requesting reinforcements. "'Tell the King of Naples [Murat],' said Napoleon, 'that it is not midday, and I don't yet see clearly over my chessboard....'" Just after the adjutant departed General Beliard rode up and breathlessly told Napoleon that if another division were brought up the Russians would be annihilated. "'You are very hasty, Beliard,' said Napoleon, '...It is easy to make a mistake in the heat of the fray. Go and look again and then come back to me.'"[108]

. Rapp makes mention of this same incident but eliminates the adjutant from the story. According to Rapp, General Beliard had reconnoitered the wooded area on the battlefield and noted the Russians in retreat. He told Murat of this and urged an attack by a fresh division. Murat sent him to Napoleon. The Emperor answered Beliard's request for reinforcements by saying, "'I do not see sufficiently clear on my chess board; I expect news from Poniatowski [commanding the troops in the woods]. Return, examine, come back.'"[109] Thiers tells of General Beliard in much the same words as Rapp.[110]

Meanwhile, Kutuzov was no more busy than Napoleon. Tolstoy describes the Russian commander: "Kutuzov, with his grey head hanging, and his heavy, corpulent frame sunk into a heap, was sitting on a bench covered with a rug,... He issued no orders, and simply gave or withheld his assent to what was proposed to him....From long years of

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108 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 748-49.
109 J. Rapp, Memoirs, II, 206-07.
110 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 140.

military experience he had learned, and with the wisdom of old age he had recognized, that one man cannot guide hundreds of thousands of men struggling with death;..." [111] Tolstoy adds that "Kutuzov was with difficulty chewing roast chicken,..."[112]

Eugene Stschepkin, in the Cambridge Modern History, states: "Kutusoff remained inactive the whole time at Gorki, far behind the line of battle, leaving Barclay, Bagration, and Yermoloff to their own devices." [113]

Kircheisen says that Kutuzov kept his activity to a minimum and engaged in "...the enjoyment of culinary delights,...with a view to avoiding all possible responsibility for the outcome of the battle...."[114]

Clausewitz mentions that he saw Kutuzov only briefly during the battle, but that glimpse left an unfavorable impression. He says it was an impression held by most of the Russian officers. "...he [Kutuzov] was almost a nullity. He appeared destitute of inward activity, of any clear view of surrounding occurrences, of any liveliness of perception, or independence of action. He suffered the subordinate directors of the contest to take their own course, and appeared to be for the individual transactions of the day nothing but an abstract idea of a central authority...." Clausewitz admits he could be wrong, but says that in later years he never had cause to change this opinion. [115]

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111 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 751-52.
112 Ibid., p.753.
113 Cambridge Modern History, IX, 495.
114 F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, p.569.
115 C. von Clausewitz, Campaign in Russia, p.141.

Tolstoy tells of the rumor that the Russians had captured Marshal Murat. The general staff was jubilant and Kutuzov, though trying to retain an air of reserve, ordered the news spread through the ranks.[116] Clausewitz remarks that he was standing near Kutuzov when the news arrived telling of the alleged capture of Murat. "The enthusiasm blazed up like lighted straw;..." But it was later discovered that the prisoner was General Bonami and not Murat.[117]

Woltzogen, the adjutant-general, came to inform Kutuzov of the menacing position of the French on the Russian left. Tolstoy says "The sagacious Barclay de Tolly, seeing crowds of wounded men running back, and the ranks in disorder, and weighing all the circumstances of the case, made up his mind that the battle was lost, and sent his favourite adjutant [Woltzogen] to the commander-in-chief to tell him so."

When Woltzogen told Kutuzov of the Russian withdrawal along the left flank, the old general grew angry and sputtered "'How dare you, sir, tell me that? You know nothing about it. Tell General Barclay from me that his information is incorrect, and that I, the commander-in-chief, know more of the course of the battle than he does.'"

Kutuzov added: "'The enemy has been repulsed on the left and defeated on the right flank...Kindly return to General Barclay and inform him of my unhesitating intention to attack the French to-morrow,'..."[118]

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116 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p.752.
117 C. von Clausewitz, Campaign in Russia, p.159.
118 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p.753.

Kircheisen tells of this same incident:

> When Colonel Wolzogen, sent by Barclay, appeared in the presence of the Commander-in-Chief to report the loss of the positions and to ask for further instructions, Kutuzov shouted angrily at his aide-de-camp and said, in order to impress his hearers, that he was better informed of the way the battle was going, and would place himself next day at the head of his forces and annihilate Napoleon's army. 119

The French and Russians fought at Borodino from sunrise to sunset. Tolstoy says that toward the end of the day Napoleon was urged by one of his generals to use the Guard which had been kept in reserve all day. "'Eight hundred leagues from France, I am not going to let my Guard be destroyed'" answered the Emperor.[120]

This statement is found, almost verbatim, in Thiers: "'I will not destroy my guard. At a distance of eight hundred leagues from France, it would be scarcely wise to risk our last remaining reserve.'" [121]

Caulaincourt mentions that Berthier and Murat reminded Napoleon that the day was ending and the only chance for a French victory was to use the Guard in an attack. But they went on to say that success at the price of the Guard would really be a check and urged the Emperor not to commit the only corps remaining at full strength. They suggested that the Guard would be of more value in future engagements. Caulaincourt says Napoleon hesitated but finally resolved not to use the Guard.[122] Méneval states that Napoleon answered a request to use the Guard with the

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119 F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, pp. 569-70.
120 L..Tolstoy, War and Peace, p.751.
121 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 147.
122 Caulaincourt, Memoirs, p.101.

retort "'If there's a second battle tomorrow, with what shall I fight it?'" [123]

Stschepkin says "Napoleon had himself to thank for the fact that the result of the battle did not justify these sacrifices. If he had called up his Guards, who were still 20,000 strong, he might have annihilated the Russian army...."[124]

Kircheisen writes: "There is no doubt that the entry of the French Guard would have proved the undoing of the Russian army, but Napoleon would not risk losing his picked troops, for he was reckoning with the possibility of a fresh engagement."[125]

Dumas recalls that after the battle, while at supper on the field, Napoleon said to him, "'People will be astonished that I did not bring up my reserves to obtain more important results, but it was necessary to keep them, in order to strike a decisive blow in the great battle which the enemy will offer us before Moscow: the success of the day was secured; I had to think of the success of the campaign, and it is for that that I keep my reserves.'"[126]

The Russian regiment commanded by Prince Andrey Bolkonsky was held in reserve behind the Semyonovskoye redoubt during most of the action, but Tolstoy says it was forced to suffer under intense artillery fire from the French.[127] Clausewitz remarks that the Russians allowed

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123 C. Méneval, Memoirs, III, 54-55.
124 Cambridge Modern History, IX, 496.
125 F. M. Kircheisen, Napoleon, p.570.
126 M. Dumas, Memoirs, II, 386.
127 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p.755.

their reserves to form too near the battle lines and thus endured needless losses from French artillery.[128]

As the sun began to set at the end of the day the fighting, which had resulted in no clear victory for either side, began to subside. The Russian artillery, however, was stubborn and continued to answer the French cannonade. When told of this continued resistance, Tolstoy says Napoleon answered, "'They want even more!...Well, let them have it then.'"[129]

Thiers gives Napoleon's answer: "Since they are still anxious for it,...let them have it!'"[130] Tarlé has almost the same reply: "'Intensify the fire, if that's what they want!...Let them have it!'"[131]

When the great battle finally came to an end a most sanguinary and hideous scene was revealed. Tolstoy makes an effort to describe the battlefield: "Some tens of thousands of men lay sacrificed in various postures and uniforms on the fields and meadows...where for hundreds of years the peasants...had harvested their crops...At the ambulence stations the grass and earth were soaked with blood for two acres round....Storm clouds gathered, and a drizzling rain began to fall on the dead, on the wounded, on the panic stricken,..."[132]

Jakob Walter recalls the scene: "This beautiful grain

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128 C. von Clausewitz, Campaign in Russia, p.155.
129 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p.761.
130 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 147.
131 E. Tarlé, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, p.201.
132 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 763-64.

region without woods and villages could now be compared to a cleared forest....the ground was covered with people and animals...."[133] Thiers says "Ninety thousand men,...covered the battlefield, dead or wounded....they lay in heaps without distinction of nation."[134] Coignet relates:"...near their [Russian] field hospitals there were piles of dead bodies and heaps of limbs which had been amputated."[135] Labaume mentions: "The weather, which had been magnificent during the day, became cold and wet towards night,..."[136]

Kutuzov may have entertained ambitions to make a fresh attack the next day, but the fighting had been so fierce on September 7th that the Russian general could not hope to rally his troops. Tolstoy says "...all that evening and next day news was coming in of unheard-of losses, of the loss of one-half of the army, and another battle turned out to be physically impossible."[137]

Stschepkin mentions that "Kutusoff had intended to continue the battle the next day; but in view of his losses, he abandoned this intention, and on September 8, before daybreak, began his retreat...."[138] Clausewitz tells that the Russian officers still felt able to oppose Napoleon, but upon hearing of the frightful losses Kutuzov determined to withdraw from the field.[139]

Who won the battle of Borodino? Both armies camped

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133 J. Walter, A German Conscript, p. 39.
134 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII,148.
135 J. Coignet, Memoirs, p. 225.
136 E. Labaume, Crime of 1812, p. 110.
137 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 769.
138 Cambridge Modern History, IX, 496.
139 C. von Clausewitz, Campaign in Russia, p. 167.

overnight on the battlefield, but on the morrow the Russians began to withdraw. Napoleon had possession of the field and nothing more. Tolstoy voices his opinion: "Not the victory, signalised [sic] by the capture of rags on the end of sticks, called flags, or of the ground on which the troops were standing, but a moral victory, that which compels the enemy to recognise [sic] the moral superiority of his opponent, and his own impotence, was won by the Russians at Borodino...."[140]

Tarlè,[141] and Kircheisen[142] also feel that though Napoleon continued his march to Moscow, Borodino was a moral victory for Russia. Fournier says "It was only a battlefield that Napoleon won on that September day, not a battle...."[143] Thiers maintains that Borodino was a French victory, though he says Napoleon was embarrassed by having nothing to show for the victory.[144]

What was the price of this bloody battle to France and Russia? The authors consulted in this thesis do not agree exactly, but a comparison of their estimates will give the reader an idea of the number of lives sacrificed in the struggle.

The reader must ask himself which estimates can be trusted most. The credibility of Thiers, Fournier, and Kircheisen has already been discussed.[145] Tarlè is prone to preach a Russian peoples' war; Stschepkin was a Russian scholar and may have held prejudices (though his figures are near

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140 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 765.
141 E. Tarlè, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, p. 204.
142 F.M.Kircheisen, Napoleon, p. 570.
143 A. Fournier, Napoleon the First, p. 555.
144 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII,149.
145 See above, p. 7.

those of Kircheisen); and Clausewitz was present at Borodino and probably was influenced by estimates made on the field. The writer of this thesis tends to believe Fournier and Kircheisen, though their figures are at variance.

TROOP CONCENTRATIONS AT BORODINO

	Forces at Beginning of Battle		Losses (killed and wounded)	
	French	Russian	French	Russian
Cambridge History (Stschepkin)[146]	120-130,000	103,000	28,000	50,000
Clausewitz[147]	130,000	120,000	20,000	30,000
Fournier[148]	130,000	120,000	36,000	44,000
Kircheisen[149]	124,000	121,000	28,000	50,000
Tarlè[150]	130,000	127,800	50,000	58,000
Thiers[151]	127,000	140,000	30,000	60,000
Tolstoy[152]	120,000	100,000	20,000	50,000

An average of the above estimates (considering the above discussion) would place the French strength at about 130,000, and the Russian strength at about 120,000; the French lost about 30,000, and the Russians lost about 50,000 at Borodino.

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146 Cambridge Modern History, IX, 494-96.
147 C. von Clausewitz, Campaign in Russia, p. 64.
148 A. Fournier, Napoleon the First, pp. 554-56.
149 F.M.Kircheisen, Napoleon, pp. 567-68.
150 E. Tarlè, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, pp. 188-89, p. 201.
151 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 132-34, 148.
152 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 705.

CHAPTER IV

MOSCOW

The Russians departed from Borodino and withdrew toward Moscow with the French close at their heels. At Fili, within sight of the ancient capital of Russia, Kutuzov halted his army and called a council of his generals to determine whether or not a last stand should be made against the French.

At two o'clock in the afternoon, says Tolstoy, the council met in the cottage of the peasant Andrey Savostyanov. All the important generals were there: Yermolov, Toll, Barclay de Tolly, Dohturov, Ostermann, Raevsky, Konovnitsyn, and Bennigsen. Bennigsen was the leader of the group that advocated making a stand at Fili and dominated the discussion. He was supported by Yermolov, Dohturov, and Raevsky. But after some debate, Kutuzov rose and sternly said, "'...I, by the authority intrusted me by the Tsar and my country, give the order to retire.'"[1]

Tarlè tells of the same council at Fili. He enumerates the generals present - the same ones as mentioned by Tolstoy -, remarks on Bennigsen's urging a last engagement, and mentions Kutuzov's order: "'...By the authority granted me by the Tsar and the Fatherland, I command retirement.'..."[2] Thiers also describes the council at Fili, much as Tolstoy does, except that he lays stress on Barclay de Tolly suggesting a withdrawal all the way to Vladimir. "Kutusoff had already, however, determined upon his course of action[3], and we must confess that

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[1] L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 771-75.
[2] E. Tarlè, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, pp. 210-11.
[3] Thiers refers to the Russian withdrawal eastward through Moscow and then southwestward to Tarutino.

it was worthy of a great captain...."[4]

One week after the bloody encounter at Borodino the French were at the gates of Moscow. A vivid description is given by Tolstoy of Napoleon's first view of the great city: "At ten o'clock on the 2nd of September[5] the morning light was full of the beauty of fairyland. From Poklonny Hill Moscow lay stretching wide below with her river, her gardens, and her churches, and seemed to be living a life of her own, her cupolas twinkling like stars in the sunlight....[6] 'Let the boyards be brought to me,' said he, addressing his suite. A general, with a brilliant suite of adjutants, galloped off at once to fetch the boyards."[7] The general was probably Murat.

Napoleon waited several hours for a deputation of boyards, but none ever came - Moscow was almost completely deserted. The Emperor grew impatient and ordered his troops to occupy the city. He spent the first night at an inn in the Dorogomilov suburb.[8]

Tarlè's narrative of Napoleon's first view of Moscow agrees with that of Tolstoy except for the time of day. "At two o'clock in the afternoon Napoleon with his suite ascended Poklonnaya Hill, and Moscow unfolded before their eyes. A bright sun shone down on the vast city sparkling with innumerable golden domes...."[9] Napoleon was infuriated that Moscow

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4 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII,151-52.
5 September 14th on the Western calendar.
6 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 813.
7 Ibid., p. 814.
8 Ibid., pp. 814-16.
9 E. Tarlè, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, p. 229.

prsented no delegation of nobles to him. He ordered the city be occupied and spent the first night in an abandoned house near the Dorogomilov gate.[10]

Caulaincourt recalls that Napoleon first viewed Moscow from the Sparrow Hill[11] at ten o'clock on the morning of September 14th, and sent Murat into the city to find a deputation of city authorities. After sometime Napoleon learned that the city was abandoned, except for numerous wretches.[12]

Thiers says: "At length having reached the summit of a hill, the army beheld beneath it an immense city, brilliant with a thousand colours, crowned with a multitude of domes gleaming in the sunlight,..."[13] Concerning a deputation from the city, Thiers writes: "The information sent to Napoleon of the actual state of affairs deeply afflicted him. He had waited during the whole afternoon the arrival of the keys of the city,..."[14]

Constant's memoirs have this to say about Napoleon's billet on the night of September 14th: "The Emperor halted at the entrance of the faubourg Dorogomilov, and was lodged, not in an inn, as some persons have said, but in a house so dirty and miserable thatthe next morning we found in his bed and clothing a sort of vermin very common in Russia...."[15]

Labaume remembers the first view of Moscow: "The staff, while waiting for a bridge to be thrown across the Moskwa,

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10 E. Tarlè, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, pp. 231-33.
11 Dumas uses the same name for this hill. Poklonnaya, used by Tarlè and Tolstoy, means bow, or salute. Dodge mentions the Hill of Salute at Moscow.
12 Caulaincourt, With Napoleon, pp. 110-11.
13 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 156.
14 Ibid., VIII, 158.
15 Constant, Memoirs, III, 279.

took station at about eleven o'clock upon a high hill, whence we perceived in a brilliant light a thousand gilded domes, which, glittering in the rays of the sun, resembled in the distance so many luminous globes...."[16]

"At four o'clock in the afternoon, Murat's troops entered Moscow...." says Tolstoy as he begins the section devoted to the occupation of Moscow. Murat's arrival at the Kremlin was greeted by musket fire, but two whiffs of grapeshot silenced this fragment of resistance. Tolstoy cites Thiers while describing the actions of a few vagabonds who barricaded themselves in the Kremlin: "Thiers has indeed devoted some eloquent lines to their memories. '...Some of them were sabred, and the Kremlin was purged of their presence.'"[17] This reference to Thiers is found on page 157 of volume eight of the History of the Consulate and the Empire.

Tarlè mentions the incident of the vagabonds at the Kremlin[18] and also says that Murat entered Moscow "...about midday...."[19] Sergeant Bourgogne, a member of the French Guard, recalls this brief skirmish and says that two cannon shots dispersed them.[20]

Coignet was present at this affair and comments:"...we were assailed by a perfect hail of shot, fired from the windows of the arsenal. We wheeled about; the doors were burst open, and we found the ground floor and first story filled

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17 E. Labaume, Crime of 1812, p. 132.
17 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 834-36
18 E. Tarlè, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, p. 232.
19 Ibid., p. 231.
20 Jean Bourgogne, Memoirs of Sergeant Bourgogne (New York, 1899, ed. by Paul Cottin), p. 15.

with drunken soldiers and peasants. A carnage ensued..."[21]

"The town itself meanwhile was deserted." says Tolstoy. "There was scarcely a creature in the streets. The gates and the shops were all closed; here and there near the pot-house could be heard solitary shouts or drunken singing. No one was driving in the streets, and footsteps were rarely heard...."[22]

Dumas entered Moscow shortly after Murat to secure supplies. He mentioned that all the streets were deserted and the city was like a tomb.[23] Labaume recalls: "A mournful silence brooded over these deserted quarters, and even the most intrepid hearts were depressed by this awful isolation..."[24]

Bourgogne remembers entering Moscow: "We were astonished not to see anyone come out...We could not understand this total silence, and we imagined that the inhabitants, not daring to show themselves, were peeping at us from behind their shutters...."[25]

The sack of Moscow presented a weird picture. Tolstoy gives a brief description of the marauding soldiers and says: "Moscow was without its inhabitants, and the soldiers were sucked up in her, like water into sand,..." Shops were looted, storehouses were rifled, generals invaded carriage shops for equipage - the city was in turmoil.[26]

Most of the memoir writers devote considerable space to

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21 J. Coignet, Memoirs, p. 228.
22 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 819.
23 M. Dumas, Memoirs, II, 389.
24 E. Labaume, Crime of 1812, p. 137.
25 J. Bourgogne, Memoirs, p. 17.
26 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 837.

this episode in the invasion of Russia. Labaume says:"The farther I advanced the more were the streets leading to the Bourse [warehouse] obstructed by soldiers and beggars, carrying with them all kinds of effects;..."[27] Coignet tells of a colonel who systematically looted churches and melted the silver icons into ingots which he sold.[28] Walter remarks: "...each soldier was now citizen, merchant, innkeeper, and baker of Moscow...."[29] Bourgogne comments: "...the whole place was filled with everything we could want..."[30]

Following his commentary on the pillage in Moscow, Tolstoy takes up a discussion of the causes of the great Moscow fire. The French claim that Rastoptchin, the governor of Moscow, was the instigator of the conflagration while the Russians blame the excesses of the French for the fire. Tolstoy, however, refuses to take sides in this matter and blames the fire on the fact that Moscow was predominantly a city of wooden construction exposed at that time to occupation by careless soldiers. "...we cannot disguise from ourselves there could be no such direct cause of the fire, since Moscow was as certain to be burned as any village, factory, or house forsaken by its owners, and used as a temporary shelter and cooking place by strangers...."[31]

Cathcart,[32] Thiers,[33] Fournier,[34] and Tarlé[35] all believe

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27 E. Labaume, Crime of 1812, p. 139.
28 J. Coignet, Memoirs, p. 230.
29 J. Walter, A German Conscript, p. 44.
30 J. Bourgogne, Memoirs, p. 18.
31 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 837-38.
32 G. Cathcart, Commentaries, p. 75.
33 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 154-55.
34 A. Fournier, Napoleon the First, p. 558.
35 E. Tarlé, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, p. 236.

Rastoptchin is the guilty party. The governor is said to have removed all the fire fighting equipment and released vandals from the jails with instructions to fire the city.

Dodge,[36] Stschepkin,[37] and Kircheisen[38] subscribe to Tolstoy's theory that Moscow burned through the negligence of its pillagers. Wilson says there is much evidence for and against Rastoptchin, yet there is no definite proof of the cause of the fire.[39]

Clausewitz has a different opinion of the cause of the great fire. "...the confusion which the Author [Clausewitz] had witnessed in the streets as the rearguard defiled; the circumstances that the smoke was first seen to rise from the extremities of the suburbs still haunted by cossacks, conveyed to the Author's mind the conviction that the fire of Moscow was a consequence of the disorder, and of the habit into which the cossacks had fallen of first thoroughly pillaging, and then setting fire, every abode which they were obliged to evacuate to the enemy...." However, Clausewitz later began to wonder if perhaps Rastoptchin was really to blame since his defence against the accusations of arson were rather weak. But Clausewitz is, like the other writers mentioned, indefinite as to the cause.[40]

Though Tolstoy discusses the causes of the Moscow fire, he does not consider the damage done or the significance of the fire. According to Kircheisen, Moscow contained some

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36 T.A.Dodge, Great Captains, III, 597.
37 Cambridge Modern History, IX, 496.
38 F.M.Kircheisen, Napoleon, p. 571.
39 R.T.Wilson, Invasion of Russia, p. 173.
40 C. von Clausewitz, Campaign in Russia, p. 189.

8973 buildings before the fire and 2368 buildings after the fire; almost three quarters of the city fell prey to the flames.[41] He maintains that the fire caused the pillage and disorder to increase among the French because the soldiers tried to save as many goods from the fire as was possible. But all this marauding only accentuated the disorganization of the French army and Napoleon was unable to restore it to its former discipline.[42]

The fire also gave a hint to Napoleon ofthe tenacity of the Russian people. Thiers says "Napoleon's feelings during this terrible conflagration were the bitterest and most sombre he had ever experienced in the course of his life. He had never hitherto lost his confidence in his own good fortune,... But now for the first time he seemed to perceive the possibility that he might be the subject of some great disaster."[43]

The one month of French occupation in Moscow found Napoleon busily engaged in municipal activities. War and Peace briefly describes his efforts in reorganizing the municipal government under a council, his unsuccessful endeavors to stimulate commerce, and his encouragement of theaters for the troops.[44] "His activity in Moscow was as marvellous and as full of genius as anywhere else. Command upon command and plan upon plan was continually being issued by him from the time he entered Moscow to the time he left it...."[45]

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41 F.M.Kircheisen, Napoleon, p. 571.
42 Ibid., p. 572.
43 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 163.
44 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 936-37.
45 Ibid., pp. 932-33.

Constant's memoirs mention the erection of a theater near the Kremlin. Several poverty stricken French actors who remained in Moscow were recruited and the army was encouraged to attend the performances. "...the Emperor was tormented by his administrative genius even amidst the ruins of the great city. To divert himself from the anxieties caused by outside affairs, he busied himself with municipal organization...."[46]

Kircheisen mentions that Napoleon at first busied himself with the reorganization of the local government and tried to give impetus to trade but the few people remaining in Moscow were in no mind to co-operate. Kircheisen maintains that most of Napoleon's wishes were carried out by Berthier and most of his activity was limited to dictating to this officer. "Apart from this he [Napoleon] did little....Often he layon a sofa and read novels...."[47]

Tarlé also tells of Napoleon's new city government composed of a council of Russian citizens. Tarlé presents a proclamation issued by this new government calling upon all remaining citizens of Moscow to co-operate with the laws. In return for this co-operation they would receive protection from the new police force.[48] This proclamation is the same as one that appears in War and Peace.[49]

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46 Constant, Memoirs, III, 293.
47 F.M.Kircheisen, Napoleon, p. 573. Constant remarks that during this period Napoleon usually had Voltaire's History of Charles XII on his night table (Vol. 3, p. 293).
48 E. Tarlé, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, p. 296.
49 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 933-34.

Labaume writes: "With the object of inspiring them [citizens of Moscow] with some degree of confidence, he [Napoleon] had divided the remains of the city into quarters, appointed governors for each of them; and installed magistrates entrusted with the administration of justice among the few people who remained...."[50]

"As regards philanthropy, too - the fairest jewel in the conqueror's crown - Napoleon did everything that lay within him...." says Tolstoy. "He visited the Foundling Home; and as he gave the orphans his white hands to kiss, he conversed graciously with Tutolmin [the supervisor]..."[51] This passage may have been taken from Thiers who writes: "...he [Napoleon] visited the hospital on foot, and was received at the gate by General Toutelmine, surrounded by his pupils, who threw themselves at Napoleon's feet, kissing his hands, and catching hold of the skirts of his coats, eager to thank him for having preserved their lives...."[52]

Tolstoy again quotes directly from Thiers when he tells of Napoleon paying his soldiers and indemnifying the few remaining residents of Moscow who were dispossessed at the hands of the marauding French army. "Then, as Thiers eloquently recounts, he [Napoleon] ordered his soldiers' pay to be distributed among them in the false Russian notes he had counterfeited: -

'Reinforcing the use of these methods by an act worthy of him and of the French army, he had assistance distributed to those who had suffered loss from the fire. But as provisions

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[50] E. Labaume, Crime of 1812, p. 165.
[51] L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 935.
[52] L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 165.

were too precious to be given strangers, mostly enemies, Napoleon preferred to furnish them with money for them to provide themselves from without, and ordered paper roubles to be distributed among them.'[53]

This passage from Thiers is found on pages 164 and 165 in volume eight of the History of the Consulate and the Empire. Regarding the payment of the French troops, Thiers mentions the counterfeit rubles and says "He also paid the army in these paper roubles, at the same time arranging, however, that those officers who desired to send their pay to France should be able to exchange this paper for genuine money at the government treasuries."[54]

Maintenance of discipline was one of Napoleon's main problems. Tolstoy says "...orders were continually being issued for severely punishing nonfulfilment of military duty and for putting an end to pillaging."[55] But little heed was paid the Emperor's commands. Tolstoy goes on to remark: "The army, like a herd of cattle run wild, and trampling underfoot the fodder that might have saved them from starvation, was falling to pieces,..."[56]

Thiers writes that Napoleon "...issued the most stringent commands for the suppression of pillage,..."[57] General Caulaincourt comments: "The fine state in which some corps were maintained to the very last moment, compared to the disorder and destruction suffered by others that had seen no longer service, proves that our greatest foe was lack of discipline..."[58] Dumas remarks: "The situation of subsistence, the pillage of

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53 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 935.
54 LA.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 164.
55 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 935.
56 Ibid., p. 937.
57 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 164.
58 Caulaincourt, With Napoleon, p. 161.

the ruins left by the fire, especially of the cellars, in which there was still a quantity of wine and spirituous liquors, contributed to relax discipline;..."[59]

While in Moscow Napoleon hoped that Alexander would sue for peace, but the Emperor of Russia had no intentions of bowing to Napoleon. Tolstoy tells that Napoleon sent General Tutolmin, the superintendent of the Foundling Home, and Captain Yakovlev, a dispossessed Moscow noble, to St. Petersburg to deliver letters to Alexander hinting of Napoleon's desire for a treaty. However, no reply was made to these messages.[60]

Thiers mentions these two letters and says that Tutolmin's letter to St. Petersburg was to inform the empress, the patroness of the Foundling Home, that all was in good order. Tutolmin's letter went by messenger to the Russian capital while Yakovlev carried his letter in person.[61] Tarlé agrees with Thiers on these letters.[62]

Soon after the abandonment of Moscow, Kutuzov sent Colonel Michaud to St. Petersburg to give the official report of the affair to the Alexander. War and Peace contains a lengthy conversation between the two men. Michaud told Alexander of the Russian army's fear that the Russian Emperor might sue for peace before Napoleon was expelled from the country. Alexander said he would "...go and eat potatoes with the meanest of my peasants rather than sign the shame of

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59 M. Dumas, Memoirs, II, 397.
60 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 933, p. 936.
61 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII,166-67.
62 E. Tarlé, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, pp. 290-91.

my country and my dear people,..."[63]

Tarlè presents this same dialogue and says seven years later Michaud gave the details of this meeting to Mikhailovsky-Danilevsky who was commissioned to write the official Russian history of the war. The complete conversation appears in the latter's work.[64]

After leaving Moscow the Russian army withdrew toward the southwest and finally encamped near Tarutino, a small town some forty five miles southwest of Moscow. This position enabled Kutuzov to protect the southern provinces, receive supplies from those provinces, and oppose any move Napoleon might make toward a retreat. Tolstoy says this "...famous oblique movement..." was no work of a military genius as many authors claim but was only the natural position into which the army should withdraw. "So natural was this oblique movement movement...that that direction was the one taken by the flying bands of marauders from the Russian army,..."[65]

Thiers believes that the oblique movement was "...worthy of a great captain..." Of all the plans that were presented to Kutuzov, he decided on Tarutino - a move which proved wise. "This was the plan drawn by the old Russian general from all the various counsels which he had received; drawn from them with a sagacity as profound as it was fatal to the French,..."[66]

Clausewitz says that several authors have considered

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63 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 874-75.
64 E. Tarlè, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, pp. 244-47.
65 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 920.
66 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire,VIII,152-53.

the oblique movement as an example of the ultimate in military strategy. He remarks that several officers of the Russian staff proposed a retreat to the south and west of Moscow; he emphasizes that this retreat was not the plan of one man but was evolved by many. "...we think it no degradition from the merit of the Russian commander [Kutuzov] to maintain that this notion of an oblique retreat had in itself no singular merit, and has been overrated by authors."[67]

It was now October and Napoleon had received no offers of peace from Alexander. The situation of the French army in Moscow was becoming serious. Supplies were becoming scarce and winter was approaching; Napoleon had to have peace. Early in October General Lauriston was sent to Tarutino to question Kutuzov on the possibilities of opening negotiations to end the struggle.

Tolstoy explains Lauriston's mission in unique words:

> The wild beast wounded at Borodino lay where the fleeing hunter had left him; but whether alive and strong, or only feigning, the hunter knew not. All at once a moan was heard from the creature. The moan of that wounded creature, the French army, that betrayed its hopeless plight, was the despatch of Lauriston to the camp of Kutuzov with overtures for peace.[68]

Kutuzov would not hear of treating with the enemy in the heart of his native land so he sent the French general back to Moscow with the tacit declaration that the invader must fight his way out of Russia.

Thiers says that Lauriston was directed to make his mission appear as if he came to ask Kutuzov to lessen the ferocity of the Russian resistance. If these overtures were

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[67] C. von Clausewitz, Campaign in Russia, p. 185.
[68] L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 921.

accepted by the Russian commander, then Lauriston was to hint at the possibility of concluding peace. However, the mission was unsuccessful.[69]

Fournier mentions that Kutuzov told Lauriston he had no power to treat with France but would inform Alexander of the Lauriston mission. But Alexander continued to ignor all mentions of peace.[70]

Robert Wilson, the British observer accompanying the Russian army, tells of an unusual circumstance surrounding the Lauriston mission. General Bennigsen, the Russian chief-of-staff, suspected Kutuzov of treachery when he heard of the proposed interview between the Russian commander and General Lauriston. Bennigsen expressed his suspicions to other generals of the Russian staff, and they, too, felt as he did. Bennigsen summoned Wilson to him and requested the British officer, as a neutral party, to go to Kutuzov and inform him of the suspicions of the officers of the staff. Wilson was to be as tactful as possible, but was to impress upon the old Russian general the fact that the staff would not tolerate a treaty with the French and would dispossess him of his authority if a treaty resulted from the meeting with Lauriston. Kutuzov was finally persuaded to ask Lauriston to the Russian Headquarters (a secret meeting had been previously arranged) and in front of several members of the Russian staff the French general was told that peace was impossible.[71]

This accusation of treachery is based entirely on the suspicions

69 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 174-75.
70 A. Fournier, Napoleon the First, p. 560.
71 R.T.Wilson, Invasion of Russia, pp. 182-90.

of Bennigsen and has not been accepted by such historians as Kircheisen, Fournier, Stschepkin, and Tarlè.

Tarlè mentions Wilson in connection with the Lauriston mission. He paints Wilson as hating Kutuzov and spying on him for Alexander, while spying on both for the British government. Tarlè also remarks that Lauriston complained to Kutuzov of the barbarity of the Russian peasants. The Russian general replied that the French were receiving their just dues.[72]

Efforts toward peace had failed and the rigors of a Russian winter were near; Napoleon had to decide where his army would spend the coming months. The Emperor hesitated until he learned that the Russian army had struck at his advanced guard near Tarutino, then he decided to march to meet Kutuzov. Tolstoy says the French army was "...getting nearer its ruin everyday it remained in Moscow[73]..But it did not move....It only started running when it was seized by panic fear at the capture of a transport on the Smolensk road and the battle of Tarutino...."[74]

Fournier[75] and Kircheisen[76] mention that Napoleon had determined to withdraw to Smolensk but when the news came of the Russian offensive at Tarutino he decided to immediately march to the southwest to aid Murat. Tarlè maintains that Napoleon was hesitant about leaving Moscow and departed at the news of Tarutino because he thought Kutuzov was launching an offensive.[77]

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72 E. Tarlè, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, pp. 307-09.
73 See above, page 91.
74 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 937.
75 A. Fournier, Napoleon the First, p. 561.
76 F.M.Kircheisen, Napoleon, p. 575.
77 E.Tarlè, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, pp. 316-17.

Clausewitz comments:

As Kutusow from Tarutino had three marches less than Buonaparte to make Smolensko, the latter thought it better to begin his retreat with a kind of renewed offensive, and to throw back Kutusow....By such a manoeuvre he would nullify the advance which Kutusow possessed over him...[78]

Now the great retreat begins.

[78] C. von Clausewitz, Campaign in Russia, p. 73.

CHAPTER V

THE RETREAT

Before turning to the story of the great retreat from Moscow consideration should be given to the details of the battle at Tarutino. Marshal Murat was in command of a French force sent to Tarutino to watch the Russian encampment. Because the Russians showed no signs of aggressiveness the French fell into a careless habit of posting little, if any, guards.

Tolstoy tells of a Cossack unwittingly coming upon the French camp while hunting. News of the laxness of the French soon reached the ears of Bennigsen who proposed an offensive against Murat. Kutuzov was not favorable to unnecessary engagements with the French but succombed to the enthusiasm of his staff and allowed the preparation of a plan of attack.

The attack was to take place on October 17th, but the disposition orders for Yermolov, one of the generals who urged the offensive, did not reach him until it was too late to rally the troops. Tolstoy says he was not at his post because he deemed it necessary to attend a large ball being held for the officers.

The morning of October 17th Kutuzov rode out to inspect the Russian positions and found that the troops were without orders and had not moved forward. Tolstoy relates how the old general vented his rage on two innocent officers: Eichen, a staff officer, and a Captain Brozin.

The next morning the attack was again ordered and this time the operation was actually carried out, although it was not successful. The Cossacks of General Orloff-Denisov made a surprise charge upon the French, catching the camp unawares with most of the men still in their undershirts. Tolstoy says the Cossacks halted their charge to begin looting and thus lost their chance to capture Murat. Seeing that the Cossacks were not completing their charge, the French reformed and recaptured their camp. Infantry support did not come to the aid of the Cossacks because Bennigsen, in command of a portion of the foot troops, confused his directions and completely missed the French camp. Kutuzov, commanding the infantry ordered to attack the French center, was apathetic about the whole venture and did not commit his troops. Tolstoy infers that this lack of initiative on Kutuzov's part was very wise since the entire attack was doomed to failure because of the complicated maneuvers.[1]

Tarlè gives a detailed account of the action at Tarutino. He says "Kutuzov wanted no battle, not even a minor one, but he gave in to his generals, having decided to prevent the clash from developing into a major engagement...." Tarlè's description of the entire venture closely follows Tolstoy's account, even to the mention of the officers Eichen and Brozin. He does not, however, tell of the officers' ball but remarks that Yermolov could not be found in time to be given his orders. Mention is made of Kutuzov's lack of co-operation; Tarlè even hints that aid from the old general might have resulted in a total defeat of the French. But no explanation is given

[1] L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 924-31.

for Kutuzov's actions.[2]

Thiers relates a similar story of Tarutino and says "...by means...of ill judged tactics on the part of the Russians, Murat succeeded in falling back in safety..."[3]

Coignet was sent to the French camp near Tarutino with a despatch. He describes his arrival at the camp:

> I came upon a body of cavalry in retreat - our men, on bare-back horses. They had just been surprised while grooming their horses. I could not find Prince Murat; he had run off in his shirt. It was pitiful to see those fine cavaliers running for their lives....[4]

Wilson was present in the Russian camp at the time of the battle of Tarutino and mentions Kutuzov's reluctance to fight. Wilson is especially critical of Kutuzov for not committing his troops at a time when their presence might have meant a Russian victory. "The vast superiority of Kutusow's force and the defective position of the enemy rendered the success obtained very incommensurate with the means employed. Kutusow was master of the enemy's fate, when he suspended the offensive and changed it to a timid defensive...."[5]

When the news of the French reverse at Tarutino reached Napoleon he gave the order to leave Moscow.[6] It was amid plunder laden carts and wagons the French army departed from Moscow says Tolstoy. He likens this march to the last desperate lunge of a mortally wounded beast.[7]

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2 E. Tarlé, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, pp. 317-21.
3 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 188.
4 J. Coignet, Memoirs, p. 232.
5 R.T.Wilson, Invasion of Russia, pp. 206-12.
6 See above, page 96.
7 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 938.

Fournier says of the start of the retreat: "...the whole array was not unlike a migrating tribe."[8] and Stschepkin remarks: "The French host resembled a horde of nomads rather than an army;..."[9] Jakob Walter thought "...all looked like a crowd of gypsies."[10] and Coignet says "It was scarcely possible to make our way, for the road was blocked up with carriages, and all the army plunderers were there in great number...."[11]

Bourgogne gives the most vivid description of this march:

> We found ourselves amongst a great number of carts and waggons (sic) driven by men of every nationality....This crowd of people, with their varied costumes and languages, the canteen masters with their wives and crying children, hurried forward in the most unheard of noise, tumult and disorder...[12]

Seventy miles southwest of Moscow the French encountered the Russians at Maley Yaroslavets in a close fight which left the field, covered with ten thousand corpses, in the hands of the French.[13] The significance of this battle, says Tolstoy, was that Napoleon was convinced he must retreat from Russia:

> At the council in Maley Yaroslavets, when the French generals, affecting to be deliberating, gave various opinions as to what was to be done, the opinion of the blunt soldier, Mouton, who said what all were thinking, that the only thing to do was to get away as quickly as possible, closed every one's mouth; and no one, not even Napoleon, could say anything in opposition to this truth that all recognised.[14]

Thiers mentions that at the council at Malo Yaroslavets,

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[8] A. Fournier, Napoleon the First, p. 562.
[9] Cambridge Modern History, IX, 498.
[10] J. Walter, A German Conscript, p. 49.
[11] J. Coignet, Memoirs, p. 233.
[12] J. Bourgogne, Memoirs, p. 56.
[13] L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 194.
[14] L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 956-57.

when Napoleon was at a point of indecision as to a general retreat, he asked the opinion of Mouton who said, without hesitation, that the French should leave Russia as soon as possible. Although Napoleon deferred giving the order to retreat, Mouton's advice seemed to have profound influence.[15]

Rapp recalls: "The General [Mouton] explained himself with frankness: he had often done it before Napoleon, who treated him as a malcontent, but nevertheless liked him much."[16]

The morning after the engagement at Maley Yaroslavets Napoleon had just started on a tour of inspection when a troop of Cossacks swarmed down on his suite and almost captured him. "The Cossacks...swept down on the Emperor, and all but took him prisoner...." says Tolstoy. "...What saved Napoleon...that day was...the booty, which...tempted the Cossacks to let their prey slip...."[17]

Both Caulaincourt and Rapp were witnesses to this scene. Caulaincourt recalls that some three quarters of a mile from Napoleon's headquarters the Cossacks were raiding an artillery park. Due to the poor light everyone thought the intruders were French until Rapp shouted, "'Halt, Sire! The Cossacks!'" A cavalry charge by Bessieres sent the pillagers scurrying away.[18] Rapp mentions nothing of the artillery park but says that Caulaincourt was the first to call attention to the Cossacks.[19]

Sergeant Bourgogne recalls this same incident though

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15 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 196.
16 J. Rapp, Memoirs, II, 245.
17 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 957.
18 Caulaincourt, With Napoleon, p. 173.
19 J. Rapp, Memoirs, II, 226-27.

he gives no details. He was a member of the French party that dispersed the Cossacks.[20] General Dumas was ill during the fighting at Malo Yaroslavets and tells how he was lying in a hut near where Napoleon was almost captured. He says that the entire area was swarming with Cossacks.[21]

Following Malo Yaroslavets the French army began retreating westward toward Smolensk over the route which it used when marching on Moscow. Tolstoy heaps severe criticism upon Napoleon for this choice of route which lay through the devastated country through which the army had already passed. The countryside, stripped of all crops and animals, could not possibly support the French troops:

> Let the most skilful tacticians, supposing that Napoleon's object was the destruction of his army, try and devise a series of actions which could, apart from any measures that might be taken by the Russians, have ensured with such certainty the complete destruction of the whole French army as the course taken by Napoleon.[22]

Clausewitz believes that Napoleon made the correct decision when he elected to retreat over the Smolensk road:

> We have never understood why it has been so obstinately contended, that Buonaparte should have taken another line for his retreat than the one by which he had advanced. From what could he draw his subsistence, but from his magazines? ...The army would have been starved in a week.[23]

Tarlé agrees with Clausewitz on this point and even quotes from the latter concerning the need of retreating toward supply depots.[24] Fournier also mentions the necessity of retreating toward magazines and adds that Napoleon did not want to march along unknown roads subject to attack by roving Cossacks.[25]

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[20] J. Bourgogne, Memoirs, p. 59.
[21] M. Dumas, Memoirs, II, 403.
[22] L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 932.
[23] C. von Clausewitz, Campaign in Russia, p. 199.
[24] E. Tarlé, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, p. 327.
[25] A. Fournier, Napoleon the First, p. 562.

The French army now made Smolensk its goal. There it was hoped that food and equipment would be available to relieve the suffering which had steadily magnified itself since the departure from Moscow. But Napoleon's forces were disillusioned - Smolensk was bare.

Tolstoy comments:

> It was not because the soldiers knew there were plentiful supplies in Smolensk and reinforcements, nor because they were told so....but because this was the only thing that could give them the strength to move and to bear their present hardships, that they...deceived themselves, and rushed to Smolensk as to a land of promise.[26]

Méneval vividly describes the plight of the retreating French when he says

> We hoped to find provisions, clothes, and fodder at Smolensk for Napoleon had frequently repeated his orders that stores of all kinds were to be collected in abundant quantities in this town. But this expectation was doomed to disappointment owing to an incomplete execution of his orders and the perfidy of various agents in the supply department, and the army was forced to continue its march in the same state of destitution....[27]

Smolensk on the retreat literally mocked the ragged French army, says Caulaincourt, for it was here that the French, for the first time, really felt the futility of the whole venture. "It seemed as if the Emperor [Napoleon] were expecting some miracle to alter the climate and end the ruin that was descending on us from every side."[28]

Labaume recalls Smolensk: "This town...where we had expected to find the end of our misery, most cruelly shattered our fondest hopes, and became, on the contrary, the scene of

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[26] L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 958.
[27] C. Méneval, Memoirs, III, 71.
[28] Caulaincourt, With Napoleon, p. 209.

our deepest humiliation and the acme of our woes...."[29]

Bourgogne writes: "...we were supposed to reach Smolensk the following day, the hope of getting food and rest,... inspired many of our men to superhuman exertions, in spite of the frightful cold and every kind of privation."[30]

The French army was on the south bank of the Dnieper River which runs east and west through Smolensk; Kutuzov and the Russian army were to the south of the French. In Smolensk Napoleon could have crossed over to the north side of the Dnieper, but "...in this instance Napoleon committed a fault little worthy of his genius...he failed to take care to place the Dnieper between the Russian army and himself..."[31]

Up to Smolensk the French army had retreated en masse, but now Napoleon decided to split up into four serials marching one day apart. Marshal Ney, with the Third Corps, was ordered to remain in Smolensk until the last day, four days following Napoleon who was in the first serial, "...a fatal resolution, which cost the lives of many of our best troops."[32]

Napoleon soon realized the gravity of his error when he found the Russian army blocking the road at Krasnoe. Napoleon and the first serial got through without a struggle but the following units were less fortunate.

Tolstoy says

...for three days, the separate parts of the French army passed, as it were, through the lines of the Russian army; first the viceroy's (Prince Eugene's) troops, then Davout's, and then

[29] E. Labaume, Crime of 1812, p. 228.
[30] J. Bourgogne, Memoirs, p. 78.
[31] L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 217.
[32] Ibid., VIII, 218.

> Ney's. They all abandoned one another, abandoned their heavy baggage, their artillery, and half their men, and fled, making semicircles to the right to get around the Russians by night...Ney...reached Napoleon at Orsha with only a thousand men, having abandoned all the rest, and all his cannons, and made his way by stealth at night, under cover of the woods, across the Dnieper.[33]

Caulaincourt recalls the severe fighting at Krasnoe and says the entire French army was worried over the precarious situation of Marshal Ney. "The Emperor fixed his hopes on Marshal Elchingen's [Ney's] rare courage and presence of mind."[34] Clausewitz writes that Kutuzov was still hesitant to attack Napoleon but the actions at Krasnoe were costly to the French, though they appeared to be the victors in the struggle.[35]

Concerning Ney's position, Rapp recalls Napoleon saying to him, "'Our situation is unparalleled; if Ney extricates himself today, he must have the devil in him!'"[36] Méneval paints a vivid word picture of Ney's Third Corps bayoneting its way through the Russian lines and sacrificing a thousand man rear guard to enable the remaining troops to scramble to safety across the frozen Dnieper.[37]

The accusation made by Tolstoy that the French abandoned each other probably stems from the fact that Marshal Ney was left to fight his way out of an almost hopeless position with no aid. Marshal Davout has often had to bear the stigma for abandoning Ney since Davout led the last corps through

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33 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 996.
34 Caulaincourt, With Napoleon, p. 227.
35 C. von Clausewitz, Campaign in Russia, p. 78.
36 J. Rapp, Memoirs, II, 245.
37 C. Méneval, Memoirs, III, 74-76.

Krasnoe prior to Ney's arrival. Caulaincourt says Davout was to have waited for Ney, but because the two men were at odds with each other in private life many of Napoleon's officers believed Davout had purposely left Ney to the mercy of the Russians.[38]

Thiers believes Napoleon was at fault and not Davout:

> By ordering the 1st Corps [Davout's command] to follow the other troops in their departure from Krasnoe, and at the same time directing it to await there as long as possible the arrival of Marshal Ney, he [Napoleon] threw upon this heroic and well-disciplined corps the terrible responsibility of abandoning Marshal Ney....[39] he [Napoleon] had the wickedness to allow the odium of the abandonment of Marshal Ney to fall on Marshal Davout...[40]

In fervent praise of the heroic stand of Russia against Napoleon, Tolstoy completely slights the French military prowess. His description of the savage fighting and miraculous escape of the French at Krasnoe is too derogatory toward their courage: "Seeing the enemy unexpectedly, the French were thrown into confusion, stopped short from the suddenness of the fright, but then ran on again...."[41]

Sergeant Bourgogne tells how the beleaguered French soldiers formed into squares and, under deadly artillery fire, actually drove back the Russian infantry.[42] The strength and cunning of the retreating French were strained to the utmost at Krasnoe. They wanted to get out of Russia, but they were not a flock of wild geese fleeing pell mell.

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38 Caulaincourt, With Napoleon, p. 225.
39 L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 212-13.
40 Ibid., VIII, 224-25.
41 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 996.
42 J. Bourgogne, Memoirs, pp. 103-16.

The last major obstacle in the French retreat from Russia was the Berezina River. Tolstoy says that at St. Petersburg General Pfuhl had conceived a plan to trap Napoleon at the Berezina, but he does not give the details of the plan.[43] Thiers says the Russian armies from St. Petersburg and Moldavia were to unite at the river and halt the French retreat. Kutuzov, coming up from the rear, was to aid the other two armies in encircling the French and Napoleon would at last be forced to surrender.[44]

Napoleon succeeded in outmaneuvering the Russians at the Berezina and, amid intense suffering at the crossing of the river, escaped this last attempt to halt the retreat. Though only a remnant of his army remained, Napoleon proved that his retreat could not be halted.[45]

Tolstoy describes the scene of agony during the crossing: "When the bridges were broken down, unarmed soldiers, camp followers,from Moscow, women with children, who were with the French transport, all under the influence of vis inertioe, dashed forward for the boats, or rushed into the frozen water instead of surrendering."[46]

Constant recalls this incident: "It was literally over a road of crushed bodies that the wagons of every sort reached the bridge...crowds of poor wretches who were trying to cross it were seen to fall into the stream and be sucked under the masses of ice...."[47]

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[43] L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 1023.
[44] L.A.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire, VIII, 182.
[45] L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 1023.
[46] Ibid., p. 1023.
[47] Constant, Memoirs, IV, 10.

Walter[48] and Labaume[49] tell an identical story of the misery created by the collapse of one bridge and the burning of the other. General Marbot also tells of the suffering at the bridges but feels that just a little more concerted effort on the part of the French general staff to organize the crossing would have eliminated almost all the agony.[50]

Tolstoy is especially sympathetic toward the masses of French camp followers who plunged to their deaths in the icy Berezina in an attempt to cross the river and remain with the French army. "Their impulse was a reasonable one ...the French had no need of authentic evidence that half of the prisoners - whom the Russians were unable to look after, however much they desired to save them - were dying of cold and hunger...."[51]

The Russians, however, were not alone in their problem of caring for prisoners. Constant recalls seeing the French herd Russian prisoners together and drag them along on the retreat march with the air of conquerors. But these prisoners were nothing but a source of added misery. "When the victors are dying of hunger, what becomes of the vanquished? Hence these miserable Russians, worn out by hunger and marching, nearly all perished that night...."[52]

Tarlé, however, says there were several instances at

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48 J. Walter, A German Conscript, p. 93.
49 E. Labaume, Crime of 1812, pp. 268-69.
50 J. Marbot, Memoirs, II, 318-23.
51 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 1023.
52 Constant, Memoirs, IV, 12.

the Berezina where Russian soldiers shared their camp fires with French stragglers.[53]

The crossing of the Berezina found the French almost out of Russia and enabled Napoleon to put the entire Russian army at his rear instead of in front and on the flanks. The Emperor decided this was the time to leave his army and hasten to Paris. Tolstoy is caustic in his remarks about this flight: "Their chief commander wrapped himself in a fur cloak, and getting into a sledge, galloped off alone, deserting his companions....The final departure of the Emperor from his heroic army is represented by the historians as something great - a stroke of genius."[54]

Thiers shows that Napoleon had many reasons for hurrying back to Paris: the Malet conspiracy,[55] the fear that Germany might revolt once the news of the Russian disaster became known, and the belief that another army could quickly be rallied to renew the Russian campaign.[56]

Despite such valid arguments the French army was not cheered by the departure of their Emperor. Constant recalls, "By daybreak next morning the army knew all. The impression produced by the news is indescribable. Discouragement was at its height. Many soldiers blasphemed and reproached the emperor for having abandoned them. There was a universal cry of

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53 E. Tarlé, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, p. 387.
54 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 996-97.
55 LA.Thiers, History of the Consulate and Empire,VIII,208-12. General Malet escaped from prison and spread news that Napoleon had been killed and that he had been appointed commander of the Parisian troops. The plot was soon discovered.
56 Ibid., VIII, 239-40.

malediction...."[57] Labaume also tells how the French soldiers cursed Napoleon for leaving them in what they considered their darkest hour.[58]

The French army, minus Napoleon, managed to drag itself across the Niemen and escape from the close pursuit of the Cossacks. Only about thirty thousand French troops crossed the Niemen on the retreat while more than four hundred thousand had marched into Russia the preceding June says Tarlè.[59] Kircheisen estimates that of the six hundred thousand that eventually entered Russia through the entire campaign scarcely one hundred thousand returned.[60]

"During three or four days the streets of Vilna were filled again with a throng of men." writes Madame Choiseul-Gouffier. "I cannot say soldiers since it was impossible to recognize them in that character under the grotesque garments which covered them."[61]

On December 11, 1812, General Kutuzov and the Russian army entered Vilna. "...Kutuzov found old friends and old associations..."[62] writes Tolstoy. Madame Choiseul-Gouffier tells of Kutuzov's triumphal entry and his visit to her. He had won great distinction but "Nevertheless he was unsatisfied, he said, for not having been able to make himself master of the person of Napoleon...."[63]

Emperor Alexander arrived in Vilna on December 23rd.

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57 Constant, Memoirs, IV, 15.
58 E. Labaume, Crime of 1812, p. 275.
59 E. Tarlè, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, p. 397.
60 F.M.Kircheisen, Napoleon, p. 587.
61 Choiseul-Gouffier, Historical Memoirs, p. 120.
62 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 1025.
63 Choiseul-Gouffier, Historical Memoirs, p. 124.

Despite Napoleon's rout Alexander was dissatisfied with Kutuzov for failing to annihilate the French in the depths of Russia. Tolstoy remarks: "...the Tsar had shown him [Kutuzov] the highest marks of respect, but every one was aware that the Tsar was displeased with the commander-in-chief...."[64]

During a conversation with Madame Choiseul-Gouffier, Alexander mentioned Kutuzov's accomplishments: "'This old fellow ought to be contented. The cold has done him good service."[65]

Prior to awarding the Order of St. George to Kutuzov, Wilson claims Alexander said to him: "'I know that the Marshal [Kutuzov] has done nothing he ought to have done - nothing against the enemy that he could avoid; all his successes have been forced upon him....but the nobility of Moscow support him, and insist on his presiding over the national glory of this war. In half an hour I must therefore... decorate this man with the great Order of S. George, and by so doing commit a trespass on its institution;..."[66]

Kutuzov could see little reason for continuing the conflict into Europe so Alexander gradually relieved him of his command. The old Russian general was at the end of his career and on April 28, 1813, at Bunzlau in Silesia, he died.[67]

At the close of War and Peace, Tolstoy looks back and says:

Who has not asked himself: How was it all the French were not

64 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 1027.
65 Choiseul-Gouffier, Historical Memoirs, p. 144.
66 R.T.Wilson, Invasion of Russia, p. 356.
67 E. Tarlé, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, p. 402.

captured or cut to pieces, when all the three Russian armies were surrounding them in superior numbers, when the French were a disorderly, starving, and freezing rabble, and the whole aim of the Russians (so history tells us) was to check, to cut off, and to capture all the French?

How was it that the Russian army, that with inferior numbers had fought the battle of Borodino, failed in its aim of capturing the French, when the latter were surrounded on three sides? (At the Berezina) Can the French be so immensely superior to us (Russians) that we are not equal to beating them, when we have surrounded them with forces numerically superior? How could that have come to pass?...68

Tolstoy goes on to say that historians answer these questions by commenting that Kutuzov and other Russian generals failed to carry out certain maneuvers at opportune moments. Tolstoy replies that if these men were really to blame why weren't they brought before military tribunals? The claim is also made that Kutuzov deliberately hindered Russian attacks on the French. Tolstoy answers that Kutuzov could not hold back his generals, as was witnessed at the battles at Krasnoe and Tarutino fought against his will. Because the French managed to escape from Russia despite numerous traps set by the Russian army, Tolstoy says most Russian military historians reluctantly admit that the great retreat from Moscow was a series of victories for Napoleon and nothing but defeats for Russia.

Concerning the Russian plan to stop Napoleon, Tolstoy maintains that the Russian army never planned to cut off the French, and even if it did, such a plan could never have been achieved. There was no object to such a plan says Tolstoy because, in the first place, Napoleon was fleeing with all possible speed. Why try to stop him? Second, "...it would have been

68 L.Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 998.

idle to stop men on the road, whose whole energies were bent on flight...." Third, why should the Russian army lose men trying to destroy the French when the French were rapidly destroying themselves through cold and starvation? Fourth, it would have been absurd to capture the Emperor Napoleon with all his dukes "...since possession of such prisoners would have greatly enhanced the difficulty of the Russian position,..." And last, why should the Russians have tried to capture the French army when it could not even feed and clothe its own men?[69]

Tolstoy says any plan to cut off the French would have been impossible since large columns of troops on extensive battlefields cannot be moved about with minute precision; maneuvers never coincide with plans. Also, the Russian army could not halt the great inertia of the French retreat without many more troops than it actually had. Tolstoy maintains that the expression to cut off is meaningless because one army cannot bar the retreat of another army. The retreating army can always go around its opposition; it can escape under cover of darkness; and soldiers can only be taken prisoner if they allow themselves to be taken, and the French would not surrender. But the main reason why it was impossible to stop the French retreat was the conditions under which the war was fought. Tolstoy says the Russians suffered just as much as the French, losing fifty thousand men in the pursuit - half their army - through starvation, sickness, and wounds.[70] It was no easy task to maneuver in knee-deep snow. "They

[69] L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 999.
[70] Fournier affirms this figure (p. 569).

[the Russian army] are not to blame because other Russians, sitting in warm rooms at home, proposed that they should do the impossible."[71]

The people of Russia, writes Tolstoy, were not worried over whether or not Napoleon was captured; their only aim was to rid their homeland of the invader as rapidly as possible. And their aim was aided by the rapid flight of the French themselves, by the guerrilla warfare on their part, and by the efforts of the Russian army.[72]

Tolstoy claims historians have studied the letters of sovereigns and generals and have come to the erroneous conclusion that the plan of 1812 was to cut off and capture Napoleon - a plan that was never put into operation.

> ...the historians wrote the history of the nobles' sentiments and fine speeches of various generals, and not the history of the events themselves....They attach great importance to the words of Miloradovitch [one of Kutuzov's principal lieutenants], to the honours bestowed on this general or that, and the proposals made by them. But the question of the fifty thousand men who lay in the hospitals and graveyards does not even interest them, for it does not come within the scope of their researches....The plan of cutting off Napoleon and his army never existed save in the imagination of some dozen men. It could not have existed because it was absurd and could not be carried out.[73]

Tolstoy now comes to the defense of General Kutuzov. "Posterity and history have accepted Napoleon as grand, while foreign writers[74] have called Kutuzov a crafty, dissolute, weak, intriguing old man; and Russians have seen in him a nondescript being, a sort of puppet, only of use owing to his

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[71] L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 1000-1001.
[72] Ibid., p. 1001.
[73] Ibid., p. 1001.
[74] See statement by Thiers, above page 56 and statement by Wilson, above page 95.

Russian name..."[75] But in reality it was Kutuzov who saw the uselessness of attacking the French when they died in great numbers from the rigors of the retreat. It was Kutuzov who did not want to sacrifice Russian lives to oppose the rapid retreat of the French. Tolstoy says Kutuzov spoke of a golden bridge for the French to get them out of Russia, but none of his generals could understand this. Kutuzov was the only one who could recognize the future value of presents events. Only he could see the futility of the pursuit. And wasn't he the one who foretold the doom of the Allies at Austerlitz?

"Strange and terrible to say, Napoleon, the most insignificant tool of history, who never even in exile displayed one trait of human dignity, is the subject of the admiration of the Russian historians, in their eyes he is a grand homme." But it is Kutuzov, who did not want to kill and maim and who had mercy on the suffering soldiers, who is the truly great man. "To the flunkey no man can be great, because the flunkey has his own flunkey conceptions of greatness."[76]

One cannot read thoughtfully Tolstoy's commentaries on the war of 1812 without realizing the great truth contained in his words. Many historians seem to be good critics of the past, but miss the fundamental reasons underlying the actual outcome of events. Too often history texts devote more time to explaining what should have been done than to presenting the real forces in history. In considering Tolstoy's criticizm of the historians of the war of 1812 it must be remembered

[75] L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, p. 1011.
[76] Ibid., pp. 1011-14.

that when he wrote War and Peace (1863 to 1869) the Napoleonic Legend school was at its height.[77] Since the time of Tolstoy historical research on Napoleon has continued and today the war of 1812 is not presented as a glorious venture of Napoleon and a humiliating defeat for Russia.

Tolstoy's contentions are supported by Kircheisen:

> He [Kutuzov] has been criticized for his behavior...and it has even been suggested that he was acting in connivance with the enemy. This, however, is quite unjustified. Kutuzov was a shrewd man. He saw that the French army was doomed in any case to destruction, and the more eagerly it hastened to leave Russia, the sooner must the disintegrating process be completed. Those, especially the foreign Generals, who devised schemes of all sorts to catch Napoleon and his army and annihilate them, did not pause to consider that the Russians were, after all, only human, and could not be expected to perform the impossible. If they were to pursue the French, they must march equally fast, and through districts which had been completely drained of resources. Kutuzov could not, however, quite bring himself to ignor the demands brought by his Generals, and he ended by following the French, but at a safe distance....[78]

Tarlé also holds Tolstoy's point of view, but, unlike Tolstoy who holds Emperor Alexander in high regard, he considers Alexander the personification of all that was bad in early nineteenth century Russia and the archenemy of Kutuzov.[79] Concerning the French escape at the Berezina, Tarlé says "...regardless who was guilty, it was no use crying over spilt milk. Napoleon had escaped."[80]

Fournier gives no opinion of the success or failure of the Russian army in 1812, but in reference to the Berezina, he remarks: "...neither of these [Kutuzov, Tchitchagov, and

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[77] A. Fournier, Napoleon the First, pp. v-vi.
[78] F.M.Kircheisen, Napoleon, p. 577.
[79] E. Tarlé, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, pp. 361-73.
[80] Ibid., p. 386.

Wittgenstein, the Russian generals who were to co-operate at the Berezina]...was of a calibre to annihilate the greatest general of the age...."[81]

Dodge presents his view of the action at the Berezina: "It must not be forgotten that none of the Russian generals knew much about his colleagues' movements;...and despite orders from St. Petersburg, each of the army commanders had been acting on his own ideas, with only a very general view of cooperation."[82]

Dumas substantiates Tolstoy's reference to military operations: "...if we consider the difficulty of acting in concert at such great distances, and of effecting such a concentration of forces at a given point, we may doubt whether this plan was really conceived and prepared with... precision..."[83]

Thiers opinion of Kutuzov has already been cited,[84] as has Wilson's suspicion of the old Russian general's treachery.[85] In all these years since 1812 no evidence has been produced to prove Wilson's assertion. Kircheisen flatly states it is untrue[86] and Fournier makes no mention of it.

General Clausewitz, who was with the Russian army on most of the campaign, praises the actions of Kutuzov. "Never was a pursuit conducted with such activity and exertion...." Clausewitz only criticizes Kutuzov for his lack of co-operation

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81 A. Fournier, Napoleon the First, p. 572.
82 T.A.Dodge, Great Captains, III, 671.
83 M. Dumas, Memoirs, II, 418.
84 See above, page 56.
85 See above, page 95.
86 See above, page 117.

at the Berezina, but doubts if Kutuzov's support would have made any difference to the French escape. Tolstoy's explanations of Napoleon's escape are almost identical with those of Clausewitz. The latter emphasizes the severe weather, the great losses of the Russians, and the great hardships endured on the pursuit.[87] In one concise statement, Clausewitz gives his opinion of Kutuzov: "...Kutusow was compelled to come forward as an independent commander, and this command was one of the proudest of which history bears record..."[88]

Tolstoy ends War and Peace with an epilogue inquiring into the forces of history. He says ancient historians attributed historical events to the will of the Deity, but modern historians have discarded this philosophy and seek to explain history as the acts of the free wills of individuals. To Tolstoy, this modern philosophy is as wrong as trying to ascribe to free will the movements of the bodies of the universe. Tolstoy maintains that the leading figures in history are not the masters of their actions but their actions are the manifestations of the desires of history. In short, men do not make the history, history makes the men. "...if the subject of history is to be the study of the movements of peoples and of humanity, and not episodes from the lives of individual men, it...is bound to lay aside the idea of cause, and to seek the laws common to all the equal and inseparably interconnected, infinitesimal elements of free will."[89]

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87 C. von Clausewitz, Campaign in Russia, pp. 212-15.
88 Ibid., p. 140.
89 L. Tolstoy, War and Peace, pp. 1101-36.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has been written to prove, or disprove, the historical credibility of Count Leo Tolstoy's novel War and Peace. On the preceeding pages the writer has considered all the historical incidents mentioned in War and Peace and has compared Tolstoy's version of them with the versions contained in the works of the more prominent Napoleonic historians and in the memoirs of men who took part in the incidents. A perusal of the evidence presented will reveal that for the most part all references in War and Peace to historical incidents are references to historical fact.

The literary style of this thesis may lead one not acquainted with War and Peace to assume that Tolstoy's book is a mere enumeration of historical occurances. However, such is not the case. War and Peace is primarily a novel, and such historical events as the Battle of Austerlitz and the Napoleonic invasion of Russia are integral parts of the book only because they have great effect upon the fictional characters. And it is because Tolstoy describes historical events in terms of their effects upon individuals that his book is so valuable to students of history.

Tolstoy takes the narrating of history out of the realm of recitation of facts and figures. By presenting historical incidents through the eyes of fictional persons Tolstoy makes his reader feel that he is a witness to an actual historical event. While the average historian describes a battle from

facts he has taken from documents such as official reports and field orders, Tolstoy tells the story of a battle in terms of personal experiences. His reader watches cannon balls fall around him, sees men slump dead at his feet, and feels the emotion of a charge or a retreat. Tolstoy manages to do all that and still keep his narrative within the bounds of historical fact.

Leo Tolstoy is one of the greatest literary figures of modern times. In an article in The Independent, shortly after Tolstoy's death, Dr. William L. Phelps, Professor of Literature at Yale, stated, "There is not a single person on the planet at this time December, 1910 who seems worthy to fill the place left vacant by Tolstoy. This makes his death an international event."[1]

To the historian, though, Tolstoy is important because he is the leading exponent of the Russian patriotic point of view regarding the war of 1812. His interpretation of the history of that struggle has exerted great influence on the thought of modern Russian historians, such as Tarlė.[2] But this interpretation has not been just the voice of Russian patriotism; it has been accepted as the true version of the war of 1812 by F. M. Kircheisen, the international Napoleonic authority.

When considering the historical accuracy of War and Peace and Tolstoy's interpretation of the war of 1812 it must be

[1] William L. Phelps, "The Influence of Tolstoy," The Independent, vol. 69(1910), 1188.

[2] Dietrich Gerland, Review of Tarlė, Napoleon's Invasion of Russia, 1812, American Historical Review, vol.48(1943), 311.

remembered that War and Peace was written before the work of such great scholars as Kircheisen and Fournier. The only histories available then were such prejudiced works as Thier's History of the Consulate and Empire and Mikhailovsky-Danilevsky's Russian official history of 1812. Tolstoy seems to have been able to look beyond these one-sided interpretations and see the true story. This thesis has shown where Tolstoy quotes from Thiers many times, yet Tolstoy opposes Thiers on many points, such as the personality of Kutuzov, where Thiers has since been declared in error.

Tolstoy's theory of history should prove interesting to historians. He condemns historians for trying to explain minute incidents in terms of human desires while ignoring the overall driving force of history. To Tolstoy all great men are mere tools of history and their accomplishments and failures are nothing more than the desires of history. In War and Peace history is presented as a human drama and not as a cold chronology of political and military events. Tolstoy is not content to enumerate single historical incidents but seeks to show the link between these incidents and the great flow of history.

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An excellent survey of the Napoleonic era is the ninth volume of the Cambridge Modern History (24 vols., London, 1906, planned by Lord Acton). The specific periods covered in War and Peace are found in Chapters IX and X (the Third Coalition), by E.M.Lloyd, retired British soldier and specialist on Napoleonic military history, and Chapter XVI (the war of 1812), by Eugen Stschepkin, professor of history at the Russian Imperial University of Odessa. This work contains lengthy bibliographies for each chapter.

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book was generally considered the best one volume biography of Napoleon prior to the publication of Kircheisen's work. This book contains a lengthy bibliography.

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George Cathcart, English ambassador at St. Petersburg during the Napoleonic invasion, in Commentaries on the War in Russia and Germany in 1812 and 1813 (London, 1850), gives a short account of the invasion of Russia and includes many personal observations.

Emperor Alexander had many foreign officers on his staff in 1812. One of these men was the Prussian Carl von Clausewitz, later to gain distinction as a writer on military theory. His The Campaign of 1812 in Russia (London, 1843), is a commentary on the war of 1812 interspersed with personal experiences.

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Adrien Jean B.F.Bourgogne, Memoirs of Sergeant Bourgogne (New York, 1899, ed. by Paul Cottin), was a member of the Old Guard in the 1812 campaign and gives a vivid account of the great retreat.

General de Caulaincourt, With Napoleon in Russia (New York, 1935, ed. by Jean Hanoteau), was onee ambassador to St. Petersburg and as a staff officer in 1812 was constantly at Napoleon's side.

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