

VOSPOMINANIA I RAZMYSHLENIA. By G. K. Zhukov. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo agentstva pechati novosti, 1969. 751 pp. 3 rubles, 20 kopeks.

Few books published in the USSR in recent years have attracted as much attention in the West as Marshal Zhukov's memoirs. The book, however, is not completely new. Portions of it, concerned with the Second World War, have already appeared in *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal* or as the author's contribution to anthologies covering particular battles. Four chapters have already appeared in translation in Harrison Salisbury's *Marshal Zhukov's Greatest Battles* (1969). The complete memoirs do not add much to these chapters, although there are additional tidbits, such as the dismissal of the former Marshal Kulik, which had not been mentioned in the magazine version.

Zhukov's early career shows a determined young man rising from soldier of the tsarist army through the ranks of the Red Army to the command cavalry division and corps. There is an excellent account of this rise which also gives a detailed and impressive picture of the young Red Army. The events, however, that gave Zhukov an opportunity to reach the pinnacles of command, the terrible purges of the thirties, are barely mentioned. Zhukov's comments about the decimation of the leadership of the White Russian Military District where he served are confined to a remark that the latest commander, M. P. Kovalev, was no Uborevich or I. P. Belov (both purged). Zhukov is also reticent about his prewar relations with Stalin. Is it true, for instance, as General Stuchenko has hinted, that Zhukov took his orders at Khalkhin Gol directly from Stalin rather than from the nominal commander G. M. Shtern? Also interesting is Zhukov's account of the war games and conferences held in December 1940 which led Stalin to replace the fumbling Meretskov with Zhukov as chief of general staff. Three other Soviet accounts of the same events by Meretskov, Eremenko, and M. I. Kazakov give the impression that Zhukov was a rather clever opportunist and careerist. Zhukov now claims that he did not cherish the position of chief of staff.

Like most military leaders, Zhukov attempts to justify himself, blame others for failure, and answer a variety of critics and rivals. The latter include, among others, Khrushchev, the six-volume history of the Great Patriotic War written under his auspices, and the still formidable Marshal Chuikov. The six-volume history criticized Zhukov's tenure as chief of staff and the lack of preparation of the Red Army for the German invasion. Zhukov, however, vigorously defends the prewar efforts to shape the Red Army for the inevitable conflict and partly blames the Soviet intelligence for incorrect assessments—this despite the clear warnings of Dr. Sorge. Other failures are blamed on Stalin (such as the destruction of Efremov's Thirty-third Army in the spring of 1942) or are tacitly ignored (the escape of the First Panzer Army from a potential Stalingrad in April 1944).

Although Zhukov praises Stalin's general leadership, force of personality, and steel nerves (he did not panic at the start of the war as some claim), he is far from the uncritical admirer that some Western writers portray. Stalin made some very serious mistakes: his all-out offensive on the entire front in the winter of 1941, the disastrous attempts to break the Leningrad blockade in the spring of 1942, and, perhaps worst of all, the complete misreading of the German intentions in the summer of 1942 when the Soviet pre-emptive strike proved to be a great disaster, allowing the Germans to advance to Stalingrad and the Caucasus. The last fiasco seems incredible, and paradoxical if recent German claims are true that Stalin, through the Soviet espionage rings, was informed of all German plans. Stalin's

vacillation (strikingly similar to Hitler's) during the Battle of Kursk could easily have caused a repeat of the disasters of the previous summer.

Despite its weaknesses, which are typical of military autobiographies, the book conveys a feeling of excitement and urgency, and there is little doubt that this view from the top in the greatest struggle of arms in history is worth the attention not only of students of Soviet history but also of the general reader. For those who do not read Russian, a definitive translation by Professor John Erickson is in the works.

There are some factual errors in the narrative. Zhukov lists P. V. Rychagov, commander of the Air Force in the spring of 1941, as an army general (p. 210). This rank, of course, is almost never given to an arms general. All other Soviet sources list the thirty-year-old Rychagov as a lieutenant general of aviation. Also, one of the pictures following page 224, probably taken in the fall of 1940, in the Kiev Military District, shows Zhukov and Timoshenko inspecting the troops of what seems to be none other than that supreme *persona non grata*, A. A. Vlasov.

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DISASTER AT MOSCOW: VON BOCK'S CAMPAIGNS, 1941-1942. By *Alfred W. Turney*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1970. xvii, 228 pp. \$6.95.

Lt. Col. Turney traces Field Marshal von Bock's performance as commander of Army Group Center in 1941, in the German advance from the Soviet border to the outskirts of Moscow and, more briefly, in the South in the first half of 1942. Using von Bock's detailed war diary as his major source and guide, he is thus able to reconstruct how German planning, the decisions by Hitler and by fellow commanders, the performance of German and Soviet troops, and the balance of challenges and difficulties looked, both in victory and in retreat, to one of the leading conservative Prussian professionals of the old school.

As in other, more comprehensive studies of the German campaign, what emerges is the lack of contingency planning, the illusions in Hitler's headquarters, the recriminations among military and political figures, the failure to prepare for winter combat, the lack of reserves, and the underestimation of Soviet skill and stamina. Still, the author appears to believe that the invasion was "fundamentally and politically sound"—whatever that means.

Von Bock was dismissed when his armies failed before Moscow, in late 1941, and, after another brief stint as commander of Army Group South, was cashiered in July 1942. He was convinced that he had been made a "monstrous scapegoat" for the miscalculations of his superiors. The author (now a professor of history) does not give his own estimate of von Bock's share of responsibility for failure. Some of the glimpses from the war diary are valuable, but there is little else in the book that provides any novel insight or interpretation. While he makes occasional use of other records, Colonel Turney did not consider it necessary to delve deeply into other sources. He does not systematically compare von Bock's diary with other German, Soviet, or Western accounts and analyses of the campaign. Hence no independent judgment of the relative importance of the many variables in the "disaster at Moscow" is possible.

A perhaps minor source of confusion and annoyance, unfortunately widespread among books based on German sources, is the (easily avoidable) use of German