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## My wartime experience

On a Saturday morning in 1944, a commotion broke out in the streets. All around us we could hear the roar of engines – the Germans were leaving. Some of the Germans had already left, but many remained. At 3.00 p.m., the German starost, the Gestapo, and the gendarmerie were still in the town. They knew that they would be defeated, but they were not expecting the Soviets to appear so quickly.

In the evening the town was lit up by Soviet planes. The next day the Soviets took over the airfield. Those Germans who had still not managed to leave milled around, without their hats and helmets, just trying to escape from death. Their faces were worried and angry, full of hatred. The Soviets kept shooting. All around you could see flames and the ruins of houses.

The next day German aircraft appeared over the town. You could guess that they were observing the situation before carrying out a bombing raid. That day we went to a nearby village. A large shelter had been built there, and it could house more than 50 people. As night fell, we all lay down to sleep – apart from the administrator, who was busy making sure everyone was safe.

All of a sudden, he informed us that German planes were drawing near. We jumped to our feet. We looked outside. The whole town was lit up. The planes bombed their targets without a pause. When the farmers saw that the aircraft were approaching the village, they started letting out their cattle, horses and pigs, just to save them from death in the event of a fire. The roar of bombs was accompanied by the mooing of cattle and human cries.

In the morning it finally calmed down. The next day daddy built us our own shelter, and we spent the rest of the day in it in greater safety.