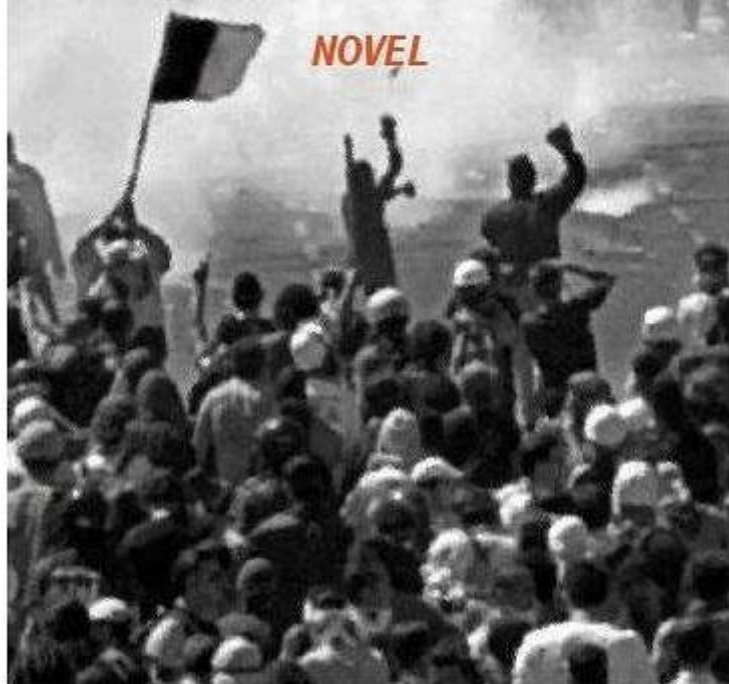


Alexander Merow

Prey World

Counterrevolution

NOVEL



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Novel

Part IV

Prey World

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Foreword

This is the English version of the fourth book of Alexander Merow's "Prey World" series. The novel was translated by Thorsten Weber and the writer.

It is still no professional translation and the translator is still no "native speaker" or English teacher. He is just a guy, who loves science-fiction and dystopias. So try not to laugh at some of the translated phrases, or the wrath of a real freak will come over you! And Mr. Merow and his friend are really some kind of "freaks".

The author has already found a lot of interested readers all over Germany, and we hope that he will also find some new readers in the English-speaking countries. Furthermore, we would be glad, if a "real" mother-tongue speaker would edit this English version one day.

Now the fight against the World Government and the New World Order goes on. By the way, soon the fifth part of the "Prey World" series will be published in Germany. And we will also translate "Prey World V - Civil War 2038" in the next months. Anyway, have fun with this book and start thinking about the world we live in. We are sure, that you will find a lot of similarities to reality.

And always remember...

"Only a fool would think that "Prey World" is nothing but fiction!" Alexander Merow

Alexander Merow and Thorsten Weber, Berlin 2011

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“It is the task of the Defense Section of the Rus to be sword and shield of our movement. The DSR shall protect the people of Belarus on the one hand, but on the other, it shall destroy the forces of decomposition and treason inside our nation by all available means!”

Artur Tschistokjow, “Speeches and Writings”, Volume XIII

“The forces that oppose us have already taken over the so called “Western Civilization”. That means, they have taken over everything our ancestors have invented and created. Meanwhile, they rule over our technology and use it against us. From television to the computer, from the rifle to the warplane - they haven’t invented these things, but nevertheless, today they belong to them.

And the “Western Civilization”? Can it be rescued anymore? No! Not at all! Because this civilization is already rotten to the core, it is infected and there is no more chance to heal anything. Furthermore, the “Western Civilization” of today is not the European civilization. Never compare these two totally different things!

So the death of the ugly chimera, that is called “Western Civilization” in our days, is the basic requirement of our mother Europe`s rebirth.”

Artur Tschistokjow in: “The Way of the Rus”, chapter IX, “Rising from the Ashes”

“Countless young men of the Aureanic caste have been inspired by the ancient myth of the “Birth War”. The age-old tales of Artur the Great and Farancu Collas are a some kind of cultural artifact – even today!

But has the legendary Artur really existed? And what is with his general Farancu Collas, the mythological hero of prehistory? In our times, we don`t know much about the ancient period of the so called “Birth War”. Renowned historians, archivators and archaeologists of the Golden Empire are nevertheless sure, that there must have been a great war in Hyboran (known under the name “Europe” in the ancient ages) and in other parts of Terra about 13000 years ago.

Was this the mythological “Birth War”? Was this the time of Artur the Great and his brave general Farancu Collas?

Many historians still insist, that the saga of the “Birth War” has a true core. They tell us, that our ancestors, the forefathers of the Aureanic men, have been saved by Artur the Great, as the old legend says. But in reality, we don`t know enough about prehistory to come to a satisfying result. So the question remains: Are these men just products of imagination or have they really lived?

Dronax von Asaheim, Higharchivator and Magister of Prehistory in the year 3981 after Malogor*

* 15231 A.D.

Reconstruction

Frank looked up at the dark, cloud-covered sky for a second. Then he stared ahead again and recognized some dark shadows behind the veil of pouring rain in front of him. The heart of the rebel was pounding with excitement and fear, while Frank felt how the panic started to strangle him. Adrenaline shot through his veins, burning in his limbs like a corrosive acid. Now, the shadows came closer.

Besides Frank were dozens of other men, who were paralyzed with fear of death just like him. In these few seconds, he thought of Julia and tried to remember her beautiful face. He would never see her again, because today his life would end. The shades stepped forward.

“Firing squad ready!”, it echoed through the rain.

In this moment, Frank wasn't able to think anymore. Finally, the noise of a volley ripped the silence and agonizing pain seized Frank's body. He broke down and fell headfirst onto the rain-soaked meadow...

Foreign Minister Wilden grabbed Frank's shoulder, when the young man jumped up from his chair as if stung by a tarantula. A loud rumbling followed.

“What? What's up?”, stammered Kohlhaas confusedly, while a lot of heads turned around.

“I should ask you that, Frank! What is wrong with you?”, whispered Wilden, feeling awkward. Artur Tschistokjow and the other members of the Belarusian government were puzzled.

“All right...just got frightened...”, explained Frank meekly in Russian. The rest of the men was still staring at him.

The Belarusian rebel leader cleared his throat and tried to suppress a grin. He had already noticed, that Frank had dozed off during the conference.

“Is not interesting what we are talking about?”, asked Tschistokjow in German and tried to look strict and authoritarian again.

“All right, sorry!”, whispered Frank, looking a little embarrassed at the ceiling.

Thorsten Wilden shook his head and muttered: “I don’t know what to say...”

The leader of the trooper units of the freedom movement just yawned quietly and took a small bottle from the table. Then he drank some orange juice and looked around.

Frank was sitting at a magnificent, long wooden table in the presidential palace in Minsk and around him were the members of Artur Tschistokjow’s new government and the president of Belarus himself.

Thorsten Wilden, the head of the village community of Ivas, briefly smiled at Frank, then he shook his head again and examined some documents. Artur Tschistokjow, the leader of the Freedom Movement of the Rus, that had come to power in Belarus and Lithuania, cleared his throat once more and said to the two Germans: “The political enemies in our country are defeated, my friends. All important positions are in the hands of our men. Now we can use television, radio and the newspapers to educate the people in the sense of the revolution.”

“The Japanese want to form an alliance with us. Likewise, the Philippines. Yesterday, I have talked to the Japanese foreign minister Mori”, returned Wilden.

“Well, I will sign the contracts tomorrow!”, assured Tschistokjow.

Wilden nodded and studied the documents in front of him. Meanwhile, the President explained the current situation and spoke Russian again.

“In the coming months, we will use all tax receipts to overcome the social crisis and to create new jobs. The Global Trust Fond will no longer get a single Globe from Belarus and Lithuania - but that is obvious anyway. In addition, the days of the Globe are counted in our country. We will reintroduce the Rouble as an independent currency, and also establish an own state bank”, explained the president to the members of his cabinet in their mother tongue.

“I am currently working on a concept to rebuild the heavy industry of Belarus. Furthermore, we must help the collapsed middle class. I will give you the documents tomorrow, Mr. Tschistokjow!”, said Dr. Gugin, the minister for economic affairs.

“Remember what I have told you. We will resettle a part of the population in the rural areas as farmers, so that they can look after themselves. About the nationalization of the banks, we will speak in the next days”, replied the leader of the Rus.

“Just as you wish, Mr. Tschistokjow”, muttered Dr. Gugin and nodded approvingly.

Frank looked at his smart uniform. He had become a general. However, in a time of slow reconstruction of a crisis-torn country like Belarus, there was fortunately not much to do for him. Currently, everything seemed to be peaceful and the 33 year old man hoped, that this peace would last.

“What’s about the support of the Belarusian youth? I have thought about a national youth organization”, remarked the minister for families and youth, a sturdy, brown-haired man named Ivan Morozow.

“Come to my office tomorrow. Then we will talk about everything. This topic is very important and must not be ignored!” Tschistokjow raised his forefinger and his blue eyes were shining.

“What does international press say to our revolution?”, asked the president in German, looking at Frank and Wilden with a smile.

“You already know most of the reports, Mr. President. The reaction of the international media was reserved – more or less. Apparently, they give Belarus not more attention than the Philippines. And the situation is stable in Eastern Asia, as Mr. Mori has told me. Japan has sent about 50000 soldiers to the Philippines to support the revolutionary government”, expounded the foreign minister.

“Well, no big reports about us from our friends of the international media! Nevertheless, they agitate against me, but it is not as bad as the campaign against Matsumoto before the Japanese war”, said Tschistokjow and leaned back in his chair.

Meanwhile, Kohlhaas thoughtfully beheld the conference room and admired the old frescoes at the ceiling, which was covered with dark oak wood. Then he looked out the window and suddenly grinned to himself.

Thorsten Wilden called his good friend Artur Tschistokjow in this official round “Mr. President”. Frank had to smile occasionally because of that. An elderly Russian, the minister for transport, Maximilian Lebed, looked at him quizzically at each grin and shrugged his shoulders.

The Belarusian head of state was now talking about the next steps to consolidate his political power, the elimination of unemployment and the boosting of the domestic industry. The conference should still last for hours.

Finally, Tschistokjow pointed out that the minister for health should organize help for all citizens of Belarus, who had

already been registered with the new implantation Scanchips of the World Government. It was important to remove these dangerous chips as soon as possible. About 200000 Belarusians had been registered in the time before Tschistokjow`s takeover.

“So what? How was it?”, asked Alfred Bäumer, Frank`s best friend, when the young man slowly came down the numerous stairs which lead to the main entrance of the presidential palace.

“Artur is planning a lot. He is just a fascinating person. Wilden is still in his office”, answered Kohlhaas.

“He wants to stay in Minsk today?”

“Yes, he will drive to his apartment after the meeting!”

Bäumer pointed at the front wall of the presidential palace and smiled: “Look at this!”

Frank craned his head. “Do you mean the bullet holes next to the window?”

“Yes!”

”It`s a crazy world!”

Alf grinned. “It was not me!”

“And I`m innocent too. Maybe a few bullet holes on the east side of the palace are a legacy of my gun”, joked Kohlhaas.

The two men drove back to their home village and enjoyed travelling through Lithuania without sorrows and fear. The revolution in spring of this year had been successful and the rebels had finally made it to force the vassal governments of Belarus and Lithuania to abdicate.

Frank and Alfred had risked their lives to free two tiny territories with barely 14 million inhabitants. Now these countries were independent again. Around them, the overly powerful World Government was ruling the rest of the planet - except for Japan and the Philippines. Meanwhile, it was the question how the World Union would react on their

rebellion. Frank had days of unbridled euphoria behind himself. Yes, the prospect of life in a country that belonged to them, was still like a dream for the two rebels. A dream which could hardly realized. But beyond all revolutionary pathos, they had only won a tiny piece of land for themselves. What did Belarus and Lithuania count in this big world? Meanwhile, Alf had, unlike Kohlhaas, who was still enthusiastic, returned to the hard ground of reality.

“They can crush us at any time. So don’t dream too much of freedom and peace, Frank”, he was telling his friend with increased regularity.

The hall of the lodge house, carried by adorned, red columns, was overcrowded with people. Today, the Council of the 300 had come together for its annual meeting in the central building of the lodge “The Shining Star” in the heart of New York.

No other than the World President himself, as the representative of the supreme body, the Council of the Wise, had visited his fellows on this day, to give them new instructions.

Multi-billion dollar company bosses, owners of telestations and many other influential persons looked forward to the dark-haired man in the black robe, who walked past them without saying a word towards a speaker’s desk. The World President scrutinized his audience with cold eyes, adjusting the big gold chain around his neck. Then he started with his speech.

“My dear fellows!

I greet you all in the name of the Council of the Elders. Today, I talk to you about some important decisions of the wise and there are a lot of other things to discuss too. The last months have again been crowned by incredible

successes, that have brought us one step closer to the sacred goals of our organization. But also some problems have appeared, which we have to solve in the near future! Before I recall the successes into our memories, I will start with the problems.

After Japan and the Philippines, also Belarus and Lithuania have made themselves temporarily independent. Furthermore, they have reestablished their old countries.

Anyway, the elders have given the uprising in Belarus not much attention in the last months, but now, our internal GSA studies have made it necessary to take a closer look at the situation in eastern Europe.

Belarus is a small country of absolutely minor political significance. I think we all know this. Nevertheless, the revolution of Artur Tschistokjow is quite remarkable and gives us some cause for concern - up to a certain point.

This man has created a powerful mass movement in a few years and something like that could be dangerous on a grand scale one day. Tschistokjow knows us and our plans and has managed it in a brilliant way to gather millions of discontent people under his leadership. His so called Freedom Movement of the Rus is well organized and extremely militant.

Furthermore, he has given his followers more than just a rebellion. He has given them a new belief, a new ideology, and moreover powerful visions of the future. Tschistokjow's propaganda is intelligent and addresses the patriotic and social instincts of the simple man. And his success is amazing! Not even Matsumoto has created a revolutionary movement like this out of nothing.

This Russian is fanatical, fearless and seems to be incorruptible, what makes it difficult for us to stop him with ordinary means. Apart from this, Tschistokjow fights our organization with a ruthlessness, as the GSA-reports show

us, we haven't seen since decades. Apparently, he is ready for anything and this makes him dangerous!

"Only a man who knows our plans and is able to speak to the masses can become a danger for us!" This is what the writings of the elders say.

And the Belarusian president is such a man. If he can expand his influence to Russia and the Ukraine, then uncomfortable times are waiting for us, my fellows!

The social situation in these regions is completely desolate, and accordingly millions of Russians and Ukrainians are also susceptible for Tschistokjow's ideology.

Our GSA agents expect a revolutionary atmosphere in eastern Europe in the near future. If the Freedom Movement of the Rus is able to unite the impoverished masses against us in Russia, then this could have global political consequences.

Desperate and angry crowds have never been a problem for us, as long as they have remained leaderless. But under the banner of a hierarchically run organization and a man like Tschistokjow, they can become lethal weapons!

Above all, Russia must remain in our hands, because it is the key to Europe and one of the most important countries on earth. So the Council of the Elders will soon decide, when the GCF will invade Belarus and Lithuania to extinguish Tschistokjow and his regime. This should not be a problem. Belarus is not Japan!

Nevertheless, we have also a so called "Plan B" in our pocket. The risk that millions of frustrated people could rise against us one day, can not be banned only with GCF troops. No, we need something else: A revolutionary movement that has been created by us - and obeys us!

What we have successfully accomplished in the past, we will now do again. Where the masses are poor and desperate, threatening to rise against us, there will be our own

revolutionary movement, in order to absorb and redirect their anger!

We will preach a new idea to the malcontents, in order to defuse their revolutionary energy in our sense: We will give them collectivism!"

A whisper went through the audience and many Lodge Brothers seemed to be confused. However, the chairman of the World Union continued with his speech, outlining the main ideological principles of "collectivism". Shortly afterwards, he earned thunderous applause.

He still spoke for several hours about all kinds of aspects of world politics and explained the next steps of the global brotherhood and the goals of the elders. The devilish ideas and plans stayed behind the closed doors of the lodge house and no ordinary man got to hear them.

A loud female voice sounded in Frank`s shabby living room. The young man had come back to his home village for a few days and enjoyed the daily idleness.

Now, he was watching a report on Lithuanian television about the Belarusian president, it had the title: "Artur Tschistokjow saves our country".

For more than an hour, the revolutionary policy of the Rus was introduced in all its particulars. The blond rebel leader was shown at the reopening of an industrial plant in Minsk and happy workers thanked him for their new jobs. Shortly afterwards, Frank saw Tschistokjow laughing and joking with some little children in a Belarusian primary school.

Then, some citizens of Minsk were interviewed, thanking the president for banishing the foreigners, that the Medschenko government had brought to Belarus and Lithuania. They said, that the crime rate had significantly declined in all bigger cities since then. At the end of the report, the head of

state himself was interviewed and talked about the current situation, promising all Belarusians to do everything for a better future.

Frank smiled and said to himself: "Well, Artur, there is still a lot to do for us. Nevertheless, we'll make it somehow. Yes, we can!"

Artur Tschistokjow and Thorsten Wilden walked down a long corridor in the presidential palace. Outside, a thaw had set in and the huge pile of snow in front of the window was slowly dissolving under the warm rays of the spring sun.

"Japan is our official ally now. I have phoned with foreign minister Mori yesterday. Matsumoto has promised to support us with a bigger sum of money", explained Wilden.

Artur seemed to be lost in thought. He just nodded and remained silent for a moment. Then he returned: "Sounds good..."

"You're worried, aren't you?"

"Yes, the World Government will destroy everything we have built up with a single strike. The GCF will come soon, I'm sure, Thorsten", grumbled the rebel leader in German.

"But what can we do against them, Artur? We don't have the ghost of a chance against the Global Control Force!"

"The revolution must go on in Russia, the Ukraine and the Baltic countries. This is our only way to survive", replied Tschistokjow.

"Yesterday there has been a famine riot in Prague. Several thousand people have made an illegal demonstration", said the foreign minister.

"I've seen it on television", answered Artur Tschistokjow.

The new president of Belarus looked at his German friend with sad eyes. Then he ran into his office and Wilden followed him. Tschistokjow showed him some papers.

"Here! I will go to Russia and make the Freedom Movement of the Rus bigger. Some of my people are already there, preparing demonstrations and rallies", said the blond man in German, while he tried to smile.

"But at first, we have to establish the revolution here in Belarus to rebuild the country. We still have so much to do, Artur!", replied his grizzled friend.

"This will be your task, Thorsten. I must bring the revolution to Russia and Ukraine. If we stop now, they will quickly smash Belarus down with their military. You understand?"

Wilden seemed to be confused, but he quickly realized that Tschistokjow was right. It was impossible to defend a small country like Belarus if the GCF would attack. So the revolution had to be expanded to the east with one goal: Keeping the Lodge Brothers in Russia busy and win the masses for Tschistokjow.

Without doubt, Russia was full of millions of poor and desperate people, but a confrontation with the system in would lead to an unspeakably long and hard fight.

"If we go now just in defense, then we will soon be destroyed", remarked Tschistokjow vigorously. "We have to attack! There is no other way!"

Wilden nodded. The joy about the successful coup in Belarus had already been displaced by the concern for the preservation of everything the rebels had achieved in the last years. But Belarus and Lithuania were nothing but two unimportant and tiny countries, compared with Russia.

A few days later, Tschistokjow started his work and drove to Smolensk, in order to call his men together. Meanwhile, his supporters had already begun with the distribution of leaflets in the regions near the Belarusian border.

At the beginning of April, there was a first rally with several hundred Rus in the small Russian town Klincy. The police

behaved reservedly and just observed the demonstrators from the distance. The media in Russia reported in the usual manner about the rally and slandered Tschistokjow`s supporters as “political lunatics” and “terrorists”.

Shortly afterwards, Artur`s followers systematically infiltrated the villages and small towns along the eastern border of Belarus, and distributed tens of thousands of pamphlets in only a few days. During this campaign, the Rus got a lot of support among the people in the rural areas, who suffered from poverty and unemployment. After a brief stopover in Minsk, Tschistokjow traveled to Velikie Luki and met some of his Russian comrades.

Meanwhile, the men of the Belarusian government continued to implement the political instructions of their leader. Several million Roubles were used to create new jobs. Moreover, a makeshift social insurance system was established. Tschistokjow`s ministers rescued some industrial complexes from collapsing and numerous jobs could be saved. The promotional machinery, that was now in the hand of the Rus, did its work too, carrying the ideas of the new government into the minds of millions.

The majority of the people had a lot of sympathies for Tschistokjow and his social measures, which improved the living conditions of hundreds of thousands. Despite everything, all this did not alter the fact that Tschistokjow could fight the social crisis only rudimentarily. His land was diplomatically and economically isolated, and Japan and the Philippines were the only countries which gave Belarus the possibility to export goods.

“To Russia?”, groaned Frank. “You must be joking!”

“No! Of course not! Artur has already asked for Alf and you. The struggle continues!”, answered Wilden seriously.

“Demonstrations, flyers and fights again?”, huffed Alfred Bäumer indignantly.

“Yes, what else! Did you really think, that the fight is over? What do you think will happen if we sit back here and take things easy?”, asked the foreign minister of the revolutionary cabinet.

“Hey, Thorsten, we are still exhausted from all this...”, moaned Frank.

“No! Absolutely out of question! Either we go on with the political struggle in Russia or the GCF will invade Belarus and our little revolution is over! We have to go on with our assault on the system!”, exclaimed Wilden excitedly. “We can relax enough one day - in our coffins!”

“Yes, but...” Alf was stunned, while Wilden was staring at him with a glare.

“Our next goal must be Moscow”, declared the gray-haired man then.

Frank smiled contemptuously. “Moscow? Are you nuts, Thorsten?”

”No, I am not! Artur and me have already analyzed the situation meticulously. There is no other way for us. Belarus alone is nothing. Don`t think, that we live in a mighty fortress that can`t be touched.”

Kohlhaas rolled his eyes and looked out the window. Wilden banged on the table.

“I see you all in Vitebsk - tomorrow! I have to drive back to Minsk now! Call Sven and all the others, Frank, we need every man!”

The village boss turned around, closed the kitchen door and disappeared. Alf was swearing silently and Frank didn`t say anything at all. On the next day, they drove with the others to Vitebsk. After their arrival, Frank and Alfred were sent to Veliz, together with about fifty Rus. Here, they had to spread propaganda material of the freedom movement till the

southern border of the Russian city Velikie Luki. Subsequently, they were sent to the east of Latvia to do the same.

Frank was repeatedly ranting against these “coolie jobs”, but he knew that they were necessary, because without an “intellectual preparation” of the people, they would never revolt in the future.

In the meantime, Artur Tschistokjow had organized a rally in Jelgava. About 5000 of his followers came and Kohlhaas led the trooper units once again. During the demonstration, there were a few clashes with the local police, but all in all, the security forces reacted cautiously, because they were outnumbered. However, the ordinary people cordially welcomed the demonstrators.

The quality of life of the inhabitants of Latvia and Estonia had increasingly deteriorated in the last months. Everything had become more expensive, from sandwiches to electricity. In return, joblessness was meanwhile the general state among the younger men.

Tschistokjow’s television propaganda from Belarus could also be watched in the neighboring regions – although it was illegal - and reached a lot of desperate people who were hoping for a political change. So the Rus found a fertile hotbed for their ideology in the regions beyond the borders of Belarus.

At the end of the month, Tschistokjow led more than 30000 people through the Latvian city of Daugapils, marching with them to the main building of the municipal administration.

Riots and street fights with the police followed, about 300 people got wounded or even killed. At the end of the day, the Rus had prevailed and the local security forces were forced to give up the city. Frank and Alf had stood in the front row once again, but they finally left Daugapils unharmed.

Some days later, they continued their propaganda campaign for Tschistokjow. Day and night they were on the road, until total exhaustion.

In the first week of summer 2036, foreign minister Wilden flew to Japan to talk to president Matsumoto about some important questions of a future alliance policy. His family remained in Ivas and had not seen the former business man from Westphalia since weeks.

With a loud snort, Frank sat down on the battered plastic seat of a dilapidated bus shelter in the outskirts of Roslavl. He threw his backpack, which was filled to the brim with leaflets and newspapers of the freedom movement, into a corner of the bus shelter of gray concrete. Alfred Bäumer and some Russians came and positioned themselves in front of him with questioning looks.

“We still have to distribute leaflets in some streets, general Kohlhaas”, said a young man and smiled timidly.

“Damn! I`m not a mailman, I fed up with all this! Throw your leaflets into the next garbage can, boy!”, grumbled Kohlhaas and put the young activist off. Alf scratched his beard, looking down at Frank.

“Just a few streets, then we will drive back home...”, said Bäumer, while his friend gave him an angry glance.

”No, I do not want to! For today, it`s closing time! Call the rest of our men together and then we will go to our cars. Back to Belarus, to hell with this ugly Russian city...”, hissed Frank annoyedly.

Alf, also tired and unenthusiastic, tried to tell Frank something about discipline and perseverance, but the general remained on the plastic seat like a stubborn mule. ”General Kohlhaas with the burning feet capitulates now!”, he moaned.

”Artur Tschistokjow has said that every man is needed for our propaganda campaign. Even the men of the trooper units”, said Bäumer.

“Good night, buddy!”, answered Kohlhaas with a tired smile and closed his eyes.

After a few minutes, Alf and the other activists of the Rus walked away to distribute some more leaflets. Frank just ignored them and finally dozed off.

Roslavl was a dreary looking city in the immediate vicinity of the eastern border of Belarus. Out here in the suburbs, the men met only a few locals in the streets. Everything looked ugly and depressing, like the cloudy sky, which reminded Frank on a gray wall, keeping the sunrays away from earth.

About an hour later, Bäumer came back with the other men. Now, even the rest of the Rus fed up with running through the streets and distributing leaflets.

Meanwhile, Kohlhaas had fallen asleep and was lying on three plastic seats. From a distance, he looked like a homeless man who had settled in a bus shelter.

“Get up, you bum!”, whispered Alf softly into the ear of his friend, while the Russians started to laugh.

Frank stood up, growling and ranting. Then he rubbed his eyes and grinned broadly.

“I could just sleep and sleep and sleep”, muttered Kohlhaas, when they were on the way back to Minsk.

“I don`t like this too, but we must keep up our discipline”, admonished Bäumer.

“Shall we distribute these fucking leaflets till Siberia, Alf? I thought we are troopers of the movement and no paperboys...”

“Without an intellectual groundwork, there won`t be a revolution here. At first, the Russians must know what Tschistokjow wants, Frank. Artur has explained this several times.”

“Yes, but Frank does not want to do this crap as well, Frank is in fact not a robot with a giant battery in his ass”, moaned Kohlhaas.

”But Artur has said...”

“Artur is not my daddy!”

“But something must be...”, returned Alf energetically.

His friend shook his head and grumbled: “I just want some free days, some holiday, Bäumer. Artur is crazy, if he really believes that we could liberate a land like Russia. It is the biggest country on earth!”

“Artur and Thorsten have told me, that our first strategical goals are the cities in western Russia. Moreover...”, said Alf, but he was interrupted by Kohlhaas.

“Shut the fuck up, you big baby from Dortmund. General Kohlhaas wants to make a nap now!”, muttered the young man, leaning his head against the window of the passenger door.

“But I thought the invasion of Belarus and Lithuania was scheduled for the end of the month?”, said a gray-haired man at the end of the large table.

“Yes, but we had to redispense”, answered the chairman of the Council of the Elders.

“Iran stands close to a civil war! Our sub-governor in Teheran is increasingly under pressure, because of the Islamic rebels”, added the World President.

“And what does that mean now?”, he heard from the side.

“It means that we have to redeploy GCF troops from Russia to Northern Iran, brothers. An escalation of the situation there could torch the whole Near East and these Islamic franc-tireurs in Iran can’t be compared with a horde of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip who throw some stones at our people”, grumbled the head of the World Union.

The chairman of the council nodded approvingly. The World President continued and said: "We can smash Tschistokjow and his bunch of ridiculous revolutionaries even in the next months. In addition, we have already talked about this topic at our last meeting.

The most powerful weapon against all kinds of rebellion will nevertheless be the ideology of collectivism, especially in Russia, but also in other countries, where it will be represented by our agents - members of our organization! This will quickly steal Tschistokjow's thunder. Moreover, it will minimize the danger of a real revolution in Russia."

"And you expect that this tactic will be successful, brother?", asked one of the elders thoughtfully

The president looked at him with a blank expression and replied: "I think that this method will be much more effective against men like Tschistokjow, than GCF occupation troops and police forces.

We will incite the poor people and the different classes against each another, so that they fight with all their hatred among themselves. It has already worked in the past and this time it will work too!"

"What's about Matsumoto? This morning he has threatened us to occupy the island of Sakhalin and other parts of Siberia with his troops if we attack Belarus", remarked one of the gentlemen.

"He will not do anything! I don't think that he would invade Siberia, risking a war outside his damn islands! Only to help Belarus? Such a small country? He just tries to play with his muscles, that's all!", muttered the chairman of the Council of the 13.

The World President showed a self-righteous smirk and drummed his fingers on the tabletop. Then he said: "It's time to talk about more important things than Belarus or Lithuania, my brothers. For example about the mass

registration with our implantation Scanchips. What do you have to say to the development of the operation, gentlemen?"

The chairman of the council stonily looked at the other elders, waiting for answers. An old man in a fine suit requested to speak and raised his hand...

Artur Tschistokjow had temporary returned to Minsk to clarify some important political questions. He was still surprised that no GCF troops had mustered at the borders of his country so far. Moreover, the foreign media propaganda against him was not that aggressive as he had expected.

Meanwhile, Tschistokjow was ruling over Belarus and Lithuania since four months, but there was no sign of a military strike against his regime. The rebel leader wondered. Even a small GCF-army was able to crush his tiny country like a bug under a heel, but everything remained eerily quiet.

So the Rus just gave their best to restore order in Belarus and tried to carry the revolution into the regions beyond the borders of their tiny dominion. They went on unwaveringly. Just as they had always done it before.

Latvia was selected by the Freedom Movement of the Rus as the next target for a political overthrow. Frank, Alf, Sven and several thousand supporters flooded the country with propaganda material and joined a big demonstration in Liepaja. Here, 20000 people gathered under the banner of the dragon head and protested in the port city. The event ended without any major clashes with the local police.

Artur Tschistokjow's next step was a march to Riga to bring down the vassal government. Now, the preparations for the

coups were in full swing and the trooper squads of the Rus were equipped with more weapons from Japan.

The leader of the freedom movement was planning to come to Riga with about 30000 armored men. Before that, important strategic goals should be brought under control, as already proven in the Belarusian revolution. Wilden had meanwhile returned to Minsk and brought good news from the Far East. The Japanese president Matsumoto had assured to lend Belarus and Lithuania his support in the case of an GCF attack. But what he really meant with this was still vague. Nevertheless, it sounded good and Tschistokjow hoped the best for the invasion of Latvia.

Step by Step

Frank pressed the receiver tighter against his ear and listened eagerly to the phone's dialing tone. After about a minute, Agatha Wilden, Julia's mother, answered. The wife of the foreign minister greeted Kohlhaas with some restraint and went then to the upper floor to call her daughter.

"Hello?"

"Hello, Julia! It's me!", said Frank excitedly, leaning against the dirty glass window of the telephone booth.

"Hi! How are you?", asked Julia dryly.

"Don't ask! All our activists are working around the clock. We are preparing a big thing, but I'm not allowed to tell you any details. If someone listens, you know", explained Kohlhaas.

"Another big thing?"

"Yes, I'm near the border of Latvia. Alf is also here. Tomorrow we will...", said the young man and interrupted himself in the next second.

"Aha! Nice!", returned Julia.

"And what do you do?", Kohlhaas wanted to know.

The daughter of the village boss was silent for a moment, then she replied: "Nice, that you ask me about my life, Frank. I'm just reading some books about pedagogy. Incidentally, it is very remarkable what Artur Tschistokjow writes in "The Way of the Rus" about the education of the youth, isn't it? But I'm also reading ordinary pedagogy books. It is an interesting topic."

"Education?" Frank was surprised.

"Yes, exactly!"

“Artur writes that all education has to serve only one purpose: The youth must...”, recited Frank, but the young woman cut him short.

“I know, but I would like to deal more with other books at first. More general books, because I want to become a teacher.”

“What?”

“I want to become a teacher, Frank. Hence my interest in these topics. Maybe I’ll go to Vilnius to study there. That would be great, wouldn’t it?”, said Julia and seemed to wait eagerly for Frank’s reaction.

“Why? What? To Vilnius?” Kohlhaas started to stammer.

“Yes, the university of Vilnius is a great institution. My father says the same. I think, I have the talent to be a good teacher. What do you say?”

Frank muttered under his breath. “Why don’t you just stay in Ivas?”

“Shall I hang around here forever? I want to do something with my life. You are gone, my father is gone and also all the other young people from our village. No, I have decided to become active now. I could imagine to go to Vilnius, in order to study there. During the semester breaks, I could help Mrs. de Vries. She is planning to build up a small village school in Ivas. I have already talked to my father and he likes the idea...”, explained Julia.

“A school in Ivas? Yes, that’s a good idea. But you don’t have to study in Vilnius to become a teacher, Julia”, said Frank not very enthusiastic.

“Anyway, I think I should do that. Actually, I am already studying, because education has always been an interesting topic for me. One day I will work in a big school, maybe in Minsk...”

“Well, you don’t have to study, Julia. You are the daughter of the foreign minister and you can get every job you want”, grumbled Kohlhaas.

“Nevertheless, I will study pedagogy. I think, it is also good for the revolution if Artur’s ideas and visions are given to the young generation by dedicated teachers, isn’t it?”, retorted Julia.

“Of course, this is extremely important. The children of today are the fighters of the freedom movement of tomorrow. This is what Artur always says. Incidentally, it is very commendable that you have read “The Way of the Rus”. It is the duty of everyone to intensively put up with Artur’s ideology, because only then there is a basis for the fight...”, said Frank, when Julia started to moan quietly.

“All right, Sir! Enough political training for today. When will you come back to Ivas?”

“I can’t say it exactly. We have much to do in the coming days. No one can foresee how the situation will develop in the near future”, answered Frank.

“Be careful, my dear! Don’t forget your own life among all these great revolutionary visions. Even though Artur’s great book tell us, that the sacrifice of the individual is one of the highest virtues, I would be happy anyway if I see you again - alive!”, said Julia with a slight hint of irony.

“Don’t worry, I won’t be killed or something...”, gave Frank back, trying to laugh.

Julia hesitated for a few seconds with her answer, then she replied: “You can hardly impress me with all that talk. I prefer a living Frank to a dead hero of the revolution.”

Iran had become a place of rebellion and civil war in the last months and the situation was escalating more and more. The Islamic rebels had captured the cities of Mashad and Esfahan after weeks of street fighting and were now driving

the loyal troops of sub-governor Kerman back to the south. In return, the World Government ordered the immediate support of its vassal with more GCF troops and sent tens of thousands of soldiers to the Middle East.

Many units, which had been stationed in southern Russia, were brought to the north of Iran in order to smash the Islamic rebellion.

In other regions of the Middle East, for example in Palestine, it also came to street fights and riots what forced the Lodge Brothers to react. So the World Government and the international media gave all their attention to the Iran and the Arabic world, a region that was a war zone since decades.

On the other hand, Belarus and Lithuania were temporarily spared from an invasion of the Global Control Force, what gave Tschistokjow and his comrades a little more room to breathe.

After three weeks of tireless work in Latvia, Frank was summoned to Minsk, in order to assist during the preparations of the march on Riga. Artur Tschistokjow had gathered not less than 40000 armed men in Silaulai in northern Lithuania and finally gave them the order to invade Latvia on 01.07.2036. At dawn, many trucks started moving and brought the first trooper units across the border of the neighboring country. Shortly afterwards, the first targets in eastern Latvia were occupied by the Rus. The rest of the men followed an hour later and marched directly towards the Latvian capital.

When the rebels reached the outskirts of Riga, countless cheering citizens joined the crowd, following the marching columns of the rebels. And even whole police squadrons defected to Tschistokjow's armored units, strengthening their ranks.

Frank looked around and beheld the shouting people that came out of the side streets, cheering and applauding at the trooper units of the Rus. It were thousands of men and women and their number was growing with each passing minute. Chants echoed through the city and countless dragon head flags were waving above their heads.

“Hurry up! Dawaj!”, screamed Kohlhaas and urged his men to advance faster.

Alf followed him, trying to keep abreast with his impetuous friend. Meanwhile, the center of Riga was only a few kilometers away from the rebels.

“Do you think we`ll bring home the bacon today?”, asked Bäumer and seemed to become nervous.

“No resistance anywhere! All police officers, who have appeared, have joined our marching columns so far”, replied Kohlhaas confidently.

The general smiled and calmed Bäumer down. Now the growing crowd was marching toward the government building, singing and shouting. In the inner city, the Rus were awaited by even more screaming people.

“No GCF troops! No resistance at all!”, remarked Kohlhaas with surprise and scratched his head.

“Presumably they have withdrawn. I haven`t expected this”, said Alf in surprise.

And the crowd was still growing. Finally, Artur Tschistokjow appeared, waving his hands. He was greeted by the Latvians with resounding cheers. When he started his speech, tens of thousands of people had gathered around him.

”I declare, that Latvia is free! Furthermore, this country will leave the World Union today”, he shouted, while a wave of enthusiasm was rolling through the streets of Riga.

The troopers of the freedom movement occupied the abandoned government building after Tschistokjow`s

speech. Other trooper units took strategically important targets throughout the city in the meantime.

Not a single shot was fired at that day. Latvia had been liberated without any bloodshed. No resistance, no GCF soldiers - nothing!

A few days after the successful takeover, they learned, that the Latvian sub-governor Maximilian Feinbergow and his cabinet had already left Riga the day before Tschistokjow's invasion, while the few GCF soldiers had withdrawn to Russia.

Artur Tschistokjow appointed Lukas Alanin, the leader of the Latvian section of the freedom movement, as the new president of the country. Then he ordered measures to overcome the social crisis and left it to Peter Ulljewski and his units to smash the remaining power structures of the World Government.

On 10.07.2036, Tschistokjow announced the preliminary conclusion of the Latvian revolution in front of a huge crowd in Riga. A great victory celebration followed a little later in Minsk. After the celebrations in the Belarusian capital, Frank and Alf went back to Ivas and looked forward to some days of peace and relaxation.

"What did Wilden want?", groaned Frank and let the sun shine on his face.

Alf turned off his cellphone and put it on the table. He was annoyed too.

"Next week, we have to come back to Minsk. There is much to discuss", moaned Bäumer.

"Even the best fighter deserves a break!", said Sven on the other end of the table, sipping on his beer bottle.

Frank was holding his head and said nothing. Then he stood up. "I'm going home now. Are you coming with me, Alf?"

“No! I will still stay here for a while. Sven and me want to play skat.”

“All right! See you tomorrow!”, said Kohlhaas and left his friends alone.

The young man strolled through the already dimly lit village and finally entered his house. Totally exhausted, he went to bed and immediately fell asleep.

With a blissful countenance, Frank was lying on his back and looked sapped, but nonetheless happy. Soon the general had found a restful sleep, while his mind showed him another strange dream vision...

An old man and a little boy walked across a sun-drenched plain full of strange plants and grasses. Above them, there was a purple sky and the silhouettes of three moons could be seen in the distance.

“Grandfather, how long do humans already live on this world?”, asked the boy the white-haired man.

“Here? On Sakar IV? Well, about a hundred years ago, the first human colonists have come to this planet...”

“And from which planet do we come at all, grandfather?”, the boy wanted to know, looking at the old man with a questioning look in his eyes.

“From which planet?” The white-haired man smiled. “Well, Sylcor, we humans are from the holy planet Terra. It is the cradle of our species and it’s far, far away from here in another part of the galaxy!”

“How far, grandfather?”

“Very far, Sylcor! Thousands of light years stand between Sakar IV and Terra. It is incredibly far. A journey to Terra would last a long time...”

The little boy perked his eyebrows up. “When did the first humans leave Terra to fly to the stars?”

“Ha! This little boy wants to know everything!”, said the old man and scratched his beard. “It is a long time ago. No one knows this exactly anymore. It was the time, when a great man has saved the light-born people from extinction, initiating the age of their rule.”

“The light-born people?”, repeated the astonished boy.

“Yes, our ancestors. The men and women of the Aureanic caste who call the force of mind and invention their own”, explained the old man.

The two walked towards the horizon and beheld the sky above their heads. Then the little boy suddenly stopped and took the hand of his grandfather.

“Who was this great man?”, he asked.

For a short moment, the grandfather was looking for an answer. Shortly afterwards he said: “Nobody really knows who it was, my little friend. This man has received many names during the ages. Some people call him Artur the Great, others have named him the Holy Kistokov. Still others see just a legendary figure in him and claim that he has never existed. And there are also some people who say, that another man has laid the foundations for that, what we call the civilization of the Golden Men.

Since his death, if he has ever existed, several ages have passed. There are hardly any relicts from that prehistoric era, because it lays in the dark depths of the past.

Anyway, I believe that this man has been there, a long time ago. After the Holy Kistokov, the light-born people traveled to the stars and spread out in the planetary systems around Terra. Eventually, they learned to fly through the hyperspace and created likenesses and servants of artificial material. One day, they have found other beings of extra-terrestrial origin who struggled with them for power and life-space between the stars - and still do it today.”

"You mean the aliens? The Grushloggs, the Elban, the Necthan, the Rachnids and all the others?", asked the child with an astonished face.

"Yes, and the rest of them! Exactly!", answered the old man smiling.

"Please tell me the whole history of mankind!", demanded the boy, pulling on the robe of his grandfather.

"Oh, my little boy! This would last far too long. Moreover, I don't know the whole story, Sylcor. Nobody knows it. Much is only legend and myth. Often, the timelines are incorrect and the records are full of contradictions. There were many eras and the prehistoric ages still lay in darkness.

Our archivators tell of the Great Age of Technology when the Aureans even topped their own genius and their artificial servants turned against them.

Then came the era of the Hyperspace Storms. After the times of interstellar colonization, our ancestors finally reached the borders of the galaxy and the Empire of Men was founded.

The galactic civil war initiated the next era and its aftereffects lasted for centuries and still torment us today. About 2000 years have passed since then. Perhaps even more - or less. Who can say this with certainty? Much of what the archivators believe to know about the previous millennia is often little more than legend, Sylcor."

"But now we are here!", exclaimed the boy, laughing and sitting down on a little rock.

The grandfather stroked through his soft, blond hair and had to laugh as well.

"Yes, today we are here! That's a fact!", he said and sat down next to his grandson.

When Frank woke up on the next morning after ten hours of sleeping, he had to chuckle because of his funny dream.

Nevertheless, he did not attach all too much importance to it. When Kohlhaas came into the kitchen, he recognized that Alfred was still in his room.

The young man drank a cup of coffee, went into the living room, turned on the TV and sat down on the old, shabby couch with a silent yawning. Then Frank zapped through the countless television channels. Most people in Belarus and Lithuania were only allowed to watch the official television programme, but Frank and other prominent fighters of the freedom movement had some kind of exceptional permission.

Suddenly he paused and wondered. On the screen, he saw a bearded man who was interviewed by a pretty reporter. Frank paused, sharpening his ears to understand the English speaking woman. She smiled into the camera and said: "So, you are a revolutionary philosopher, Mr. Mardochow, aren't you?"

"Yes, I am!", answered the man.

"Could you give us a view into your ideas, Mr. Mardochow?"

The bearded man nodded. "Yes, of course! The social injustices around the world have prompted me to think about a better future society. A society without social distinctions, guided by justice and equality!"

"Do you have any specific suggestions to remedy the social injustices around the world, Mr. Mardochow?"

"Yes, not only suggestions. I have a concept – and its name is collectivism."

"Could you please explain collectivism for our viewers?"

"Yes, no problem, madame! The collectivist society is a society without social differences. Collectivism means the overthrow of capitalist exploitation mechanisms and the transfer of all private property into the hands of the people. It means, that poverty and injustice could not exist anymore in a society like this", said the philosopher.

“How do you want to implement something like that?”, asked the reporter.

”If there is no other way, then revolutionary actions will be necessary! The poor and exploited people must unite to overthrow their oppressors. The property in our world has to be redistributed for the benefit of all. I promise a world, where everyone is rich, a world without any class distinctions and mechanisms of exploitation.

Apart from that, all the different cultures, races, religions and values have to be resolved definitively, because they prevent people from being equal and lead to wars and mechanisms of mutual exploitation by the various groups. In a world, where differences between human beings no longer exist, there will be no more room for social injustice. Collectivism is therefore the only sensible response to the terrible social crises of our time!”

“Are you a philanthropist, Mr. Mardochow?”, asked the woman.

”From the bottom of my heart, madame! I have developed the collectivist idea of a world of justice and human sensitivity to help the underprivileged people. For many years, I have traveled around the world and the ubiquitous misery has touched me deeply.

For years I had only one question on my mind: How can I help these millions of poor people in all parts of the world? So I have developed the revolutionary idea of collectivism!”, told Mardochow, stroking his gray beard.

The pretty reporter looked into the camera and smiled, then she said: “Ladies and gentlemen, this was Theodore Mardochow and his idea of collectivism. More and more people across Europe and around the world believe, that this man has actually found a way to overcome hunger, poverty and misery with success. Some celebrate him, others regard him as a visionary. Anyway, “Channel

Triangle” thanks you for watching the show. Now, have fun with the following movie!”

Frank turned off the television and was baffled. “This guy is supposed to be a revolutionary and they give him the chance to talk about his ideas on TV? They even promote and don’t shoot him? This whole thing stinks like a dead fish!”

Kohlhaas went into the next room, booted up the computer and searched on the internet. There was a lot to learn about Theodore Mardochow and his “new” ideology. Now, Alf came down the stairs, but Frank hardly noticed him and was eagerly studying some texts.

“The International Declaration of Collectivism”, he muttered quietly and read a writing of the philosopher. Then he read some newspaper articles which reported very favorably about Mardochow and his ideas.

Apparently, numerous collectivist groups had already been founded, shortly after the publication of the declaration, in the most bigger European cities. Especially in Russia and the Ukraine, collectivist organizations sprang up like mushrooms.

When Frank and Alfred came back to Minsk, this new movement ruled every talk in the presidential palace. Artur Tschistokjow was totally confused and tried to develop a strategy against the new menace. As an expert of the global political background, he had quickly realized, who was the driving force behind the alleged social revolutionary idea of collectivism.

Nevertheless, this new ideology was a brilliant move of the Lodge Brothers, because now more and more people joined the rival movement. The teachings of equality, freedom and justice fell on a fertile soil in Russia and at the beginning of July, collectivist groups and associations had already been founded in every small town in eastern Europe.

Furthermore, the media supported this new movement, never reporting in that hateful way as in the case of the Rus. To the contrary, the collectivists were always depicted as reformers and philanthropists.

Soon it came to a first mass demonstration in St. Petersburg, led by the collectivist leader Vitali Uljanin from Moscow. The police behaved lethargically and was finally attacked by thousands of angry demonstrators.

Uljanin declared war not only on the entrepreneurs and capitalists, but above all on the Freedom Movement of the Rus and all other non-collectivist groups. He called Tschistokjow a "traitor of the workers" and a "reactionist". The leader of the Rus was overwhelmed and had to admit, that he needed some good advice now.

"It will not last long until there is a collectivist group in every little village. Even some of our own men seem to fall prey to this Pied Piper Uljanin!", grumbled the Belarusian president, looking at his friend Peter Ulljewski with a scowl.

"Not if I can help it!", snorted the sturdy Russian and banged on the table. "Those bastards won't course through our country, Artur!"

"Uljanin has brought more than 100000 people on the street at his last rally - and the police did nothing. I have seen all the reports on television, Peter.

At our next demonstration there won't be just clashes with the Russian police, but also with incited masses of collectivists. They will attack us!"

Peter hissed a curse and uttered wild threats. "That's worse than the GCF! I did not expect something like this!"

"Our enemies are much more cunning than we have thought...", muttered Tschistokjow.

"Every collectivist agitator, who dares to come to Belarus, will be hanged!", shouted Peter.

“Yes, this will be necessary!”, added Artur.

“And now?”

“We will go on with our fight - as always! I`m working on a new law to promote the Russian families. Moreover, Wilden has signed an export agreement with Japan and the Philippines, so that we can strengthen our economy, at least a bit!”

“Shall we continue with our activities in Russia?”, Peter Ulljewski wanted to know and seemed to become extremely nervous.

“Of course!”, said Tschistokjow and was fuming with rage.

“On the 1th of August, we will make a demonstration in Smolensk!”

”In Smolensk?” Peter gaped and stared at his best friend.

“Yes, exactly! Our group there is already at work since weeks to prepare the rally. There is a lot of poverty, what means big potential for us, Peter. We must not rest now!”, shouted the rebel leader.

“This demonstration will end in a giant street fight”, groaned Artur`s oldest companion.

“Yes, it will!”, remarked Tschistokjow grimly.

Frank and the others drove back to Russia and spent their days with distributing leaflets and data discs in the villages around Smolensk. They rarely met any supporters of the collectivist movement, only one time some mummied persons threw stones at them. The few police officers in this region just ignored them.

At the end of July, they returned to Vitebsk and Julia visited Frank there. Kohlhaas hadn`t seen the young woman all too often in the last weeks, because he had always been on the road. But now, he was glad that she had come. The pretty daughter of the foreign minster was still his big love and Frank had a guilty conscience, because he hadn`t spent

much time with her. Meanwhile, Artur Tschistokjow had stabilized his reign with the help of television and radio and was travelling through Belarus, Lithuania and Latvia to organize his followers for the new propaganda offensive.

Vitali Uljanin, whose real name was only known by his closest aides, walked through his office in the headquarter of the Collectivist Association for Social Justice (CASJ). Since the early morning hours, he was already dictating instructions and now he had called some section leaders into his office.

The little man with the dark goatee and the brown cunning eyes beheld his fellows and said: "Meanwhile, the Freedom Movement of the Rus has taken Latvia and Tschistokjow builds up structures there. Hence, we must prevent its expansion to western Russia by all means! Our organization needs a militant arm, gentlemen."

"The preparations for it are in full swing. But we need a punchy name, Mr. Uljanin", answered one of the section leaders.

"I have chosen "Collectivist League of Justice", diminutive CLJ", remarked the head of the CASJ.

"Sounds great!", came from the side.

"I know!", answered Uljanin, grinning broadly.

"Tschistokjow is planning a rally in Smolensk, as I have heard yesterday. On 1th of August!", said a plump man in the background.

Uljanin slowly walked towards him and raised his index finger. "Our CASJ section there is already preparing a demonstration too. This time, the Rus will face our men. Wherever they occur, they will be confronted with the revolutionary power of collectivism from now on!"

The section leaders nodded and looked at Uljanin with admiration. The chairman of the CASJ went behind his desk

and pulled a DC-Stick out of the drawer. Then he smiled at his staff.

“Tomorrow I will speak at the rally in Kursk, and then we will smash Tschistokjow and his fascist scum in Smolensk!”

“But the Rus are not harmless and can become very aggressive”, said a worried-looking functionary.

“The police in Smolensk will be on our side. In addition, the media will pin any outrage on Tschistokjow`s organization and furthermore drum up business for our event, that our supporters will come in superior numbers.”

“However you do it, Mr. Uljanin...”, muttered one section leader thoughtfully.

“Smolensk will become Tschistokjow`s nightmare!”, hissed the collectivist leader, clenching his bony fist.

Conflict in Smolensk

Frank and Alfred had driven from Orsa to Smolensk in the early morning hours. In the southern part of the city, they had joined a group of their comrades and now they were waiting for the beginning of the rally. Meanwhile, it was already 11.00 o'clock and more and more Rus came from everywhere. After a while, the crowd started to move and marched flag-waving and singing in the direction of downtown, where even more Rus were waiting for them. Hundreds of citizens came out of their houses and followed the marching columns of Tschistokjow's men. Two hours later, about 30000 enthusiastic supporters welcomed the leader of the freedom movement with loud chants.

Shortly afterwards, they had reached the city center of Smolensk. A huge crowd had already gathered there - the police talked of more than 100000 people - who had come to the rally of the collectivists. Police helicopters circled above the heads of the demonstrators, filming everything the Rus did.

When Tschistokjow's supporters had arrived in Smolensk, there had already been clashes between them and Uljanin's followers. Three Rus had been attacked by a masked horde of their political opponents. One of them was killed with a knife. An atmosphere of violence and hatred had meanwhile seized the whole city and Frank expected the worst for this day.

"What shall we do now? The large square in the inner city, the Mesto Tschelabeki, is packed with collectivists! It's a great mass! Uljanin himself leads them!", said Kohlhaas and his heart was pounding with excitement.

Artur Tschistokjow stared at him grimly and growled in German: "Yes, I know. These pigs knew about our demonstration. We will march from the Novaya Ulitsa to Mesto Smolenski - then I will start with my speech."

"You want to march through Smolensk in the direct proximity of Uljanin`s rally? Only two streets are between the Novaya Ulitsa and the Mesto Tschelabeki. They can probably even see us!", said Frank, holding the electronic map of Smolensk on his DC-Stick under Tschistokjow`s nose.

The leader of the Freedom Movement of the Rus nodded and replied: "We must have no fear, Frank!"

They still waited for some stragglers, while Kohlhaas became more and more nervous. Finally, Frank called the trooper units together and gave them the order to advance. More than 30000 demonstrators followed.

"Russian workers come to Artur Tschistokjow!", shouted the protesters at the top of their lungs. The long worm of people slowly made its way through the streets and finally turned into the Novaya Ulitsa, a broad side street near the large square in the city center.

Frank heard Uljanin`s voice in the distance. Shortly afterwards, the first collectivists and policemen appeared. Immediately, the men on both sides started to shout insults, while more and more collectivists blocked the way of the Rus.

Frank took his gun from the shoulder and the trooper next to him did the same. Alf peered nervously around and loaded his rifle, while Uljanin`s supporters were raising their fists in the distance, screaming and howling.

"Traitors of the workers! Reactionists! Fascists!", they yelled full of hate.

A few minutes later, they attacked. Hundreds of collectivists rushed forward, poured out of the streets and a hail of

cobblestones came down on Tschistokjow's men. Frank quickly put on his helmet. Somewhere he heard a shot, then the chaos was complete. A few dozen men of the CLJ opened fire from a side street, and the Russian policemen started to shoot too.

"Come on!", screamed Frank, pushing Alf to the side.

With a loud cry, the furious collectivists assaulted the Rus and beat them down with iron bars and clubs. Frank smashed his rifle butt into the hateful grimace of an attacker, while a Russian trooper behind him was hit by a bullet .

Tschistokjow's followers retreated, some of them jumped behind garbage cans and cars, in order to find cover. Then the collectivists came even from behind, attacking the Rus like angry beasts. Finally, the men of the freedom movement were seized by panic and many of them desperately tried to break out of the encirclement.

Frank jumped out his cover behind a burning car and fended an opponent off. After his well-aimed stroke, the collectivist staggered backwards and Frank rammed a combat knife right into his throat. Blood squirted into his face and the man fell to the ground with a short death-rattle.

"Come on! Get out of here!", roared Bäumer and fired at a group of approaching police officers. They two rebels ran towards a big park and tried to regroup the other troopers, but they failed. Most of them were already fleeing, running for their lives and trying to escape through the narrow side streets .

Like hunted dogs, Frank and Alf raced through an avenue and turned then into a side street, where they met the next opponents. A screaming horde of collectivists jumped out of a dark corner, brandishing clubs and baseball bats. It were scary looking men, eager to smash some of the hated Rus. Dirty, unshaven guys, incited from head to toe. One of them

just missed Frank's face when he tried to crush his head with a crowbar. Finally he hit the shoulder of the rebel and the young man screamed out in pain.

In return, Kohlhaas slammed him to the ground and kicked him against the skull with full force, while Alf mowed down two roaring collectivists with his rifle. The rest of the enemies ran away after Bäumer's shots.

"Give me the DC-Stick!", shouted Frank and pulled the data carrier out of Alf's hand. With trembling fingers, he typed through the menu and opened the city map of Smolensk.

"Follow me!" He waved Bäumer nearer and they turned into another street.

After half an hour, the two had reached their car and drove away with screeching tires. At the roadside, a few supporters of Uljanin were shouting at them, while they throw some cobblestones in the direction of the car. Frank suddenly rolled down the window.

"What are you doing?", asked Bäumer.

"I send our friends a volley of gunfire!", snorted Kohlhaas.

"No, put that rifle away, man!", hissed Alf nervously.

But his friend did not listen to him, the adrenaline had already whipped him up like a wild animal. As the collectivists saw his assault rifle behind the window, they ran away screaming, but Frank fired at them, sending five of them to the ground.

"Greetings from Belarus, assholes!", he yelled.

"Let's get out of here! You are totally crazy. I have enough for today!", muttered Alf and accelerated the car.

Finally, the two found a feeder road to Orsa and reached the Belarusian border after a perilous journey.

What had happened to their comrades, they did not know at that time. However, they could imagine that the rally had ended in a giant debacle.

In fact, the demonstration in Smolensk had been a disaster and a total defeat for the Freedom Movement of the Rus. Several members of Tschistokjow`s organization had been killed or heavily wounded.

After the rally, the collectivists had chased the scattered groups of their rivals through the streets of Smolensk till the morning hours of the next day. They had ambushed Tschistokjow`s men at the railway stations or had waited for them in dark streets to beat them up or even murder them. Artur Tschistokjow had escaped a raging horde of his enemies and had even been wounded in the upper arm.

The media in Russia reported about the riots in Smolensk in their usual way, and made the rally of the freedom movement to an “Attack of the Rus on the peaceful demonstration of the collectivists”.

“Each state has arisen from the need to suppress the eternal conflict between rich and poor. Moreover, each state has arisen under the influence of the constant struggle of rich and poor people. Hence, every state is always the state of the most powerful economic class, which is also the ruling political group.

This ruling, economic class is always thinking up new methods to put down the poor masses. The state and its regulations are therefore the base of the capitalist exploitation system, what means that the natural character of each state is exploitation...”

Artur Tschistokjow crumpled up a piece of paper and threw it into the middle of the big conference table. The other members of his cabinet shook their heads.

“Well, well! This is Mardochow`s great philosophy! Silly talk and lies! We all know the global state, that his Lodge Brothers have created in reality. And we know its character: Brutal Oppression, destruction of cultures and nations and

slavery of all mankind. This agent of the World Government can not fool me with his cheap lies!", grumbled the Belarusian president in German, while Frank and his foreign minister were staring at him.

General Kohlhaas was back in the presidential palace in Minsk and rolled his eyes, when Tschistokjow talked about the collectivist ideology.

"Mardochow can not fool us, but he can fool most of the people. This concept has already worked many times in mankind`s history, because the mass is credulous and stupid!", remarked Wilden angrily.

Artur Tschistokjow held his injured arm, swore under his breath and told his ministers a few things in Russian. Then he applied the attention to the foreign minister again.

"I have seen on TV, that the collectivists now are driving with cars full of bread through the country to feed the poor. Understand?", said the leader of the Rus in German.

"I have seen it too. The collectivists get that a lot of sympathy from the people with things like that. A rolling Suppenküche!", muttered Kohlhaas.

"Suppeküsche? What is that?" Artur was puzzled.

"A rolling soup kitchen - in English. Anyway, the problem is, that the collectivists apparently have never-ending reserves of money to finance such actions. Feeding the people is the best method to recruit new members for the CASJ. And then, they can instigate them against us", remarked Wilden.

"But it is nothing but a giant fake! A fraud!", complained Tschistokjow. "We are the real revolutionaries and we will be the only ones, who can free the Russian people and solve the social problems!"

"We know this, but the mass of the people does not!", said Frank and shook his head.

Economy minister Dr. Gugin and the other participants of the meeting were getting a bit grumpy and Artur apologized

for having previously ignored them. He repeated everything of importance in Russian and the audience nodded, smiling at Frank and Wilden. Then, the German foreign minister added some things in perfect Russian, and talked about a few additional details.

Shortly afterwards, defense ministers Lossov said: "It would be the best for us, if the collectivists would make their revolution in Russia. After a while, all the people would recognize, that their economical concept is just nonsense."

"That`s right!" General Kohlhaas chuckled quietly.

Wilden came a bit closer to him and whispered: "It`s amazing how the collectivist movement has virtually appeared out of nowhere, and how it has become a force like this within only a few months. It must be a new strategy of the Lodge Brothers to put us down. The media support Uljanin with all their might and have already unleashed a collectivist revolution hype.

Who is that Uljanin at all? Where does he come from? He was there at once! The media made him famous - overnight! And it is the same with Theodore Mardochow."

Frank grimaced and stared into space. "We can only go on, Thorsten! There is no more turning back!"

While Uljanin and his followers made several rallies and demonstrations in several Russian cities, winning more and more ground, the revolutionary zeal of the Freedom Movement of the Rus began to stagnate. The aftereffects of the defeat in Smolensk had heavily damaged the morale of many Rus.

Until the end of the month, the Belarusian president and his cabinet concentrated only on domestic things. Tschistokjow initiated his new settlement and agriculture program to give young families a future in the rural areas of Belarus. Apart

from that, Dr. Gugin desperately tried to end the economic crisis and did everything to create new jobs.

After an incubation period of intense frustration, Artur Tschistokjow was again ready to fight. Meanwhile, a lot of his supporters in Russia and the Ukraine had left the movement and some of them had even changed sides. Now they were members of the much more successful CASJ.

Almost everywhere in western Russia, the collectivists had build up structures, worked with a good organization and did everything to put down the Rus. Soon they used intimidation and terror to keep their enemies calm.

They collected the names of their political opponents, sought out their addresses, raided their meetings points, burned their houses and beat them up.

In September, Tschistokjow went to Pskov, where he founded a new chapter. Frank and Alfred drove again, together with hundreds of their comrades, to northern Russia and distributed newspapers and pamphlets. In Ostrov, at the Latvian border, they were attacked by a small group of young collectivists. However, the attackers did not know that Frank, Alf and the other troopers were no ordinary Rus, but experienced street fighters, and finally ended in the hospital.

But ultimately, these actions were only a drop in the bucket. It was time for a successful demonstration to eradicate the humiliation of Smolensk and to regain the lost pride.

Hence, Artur Tschistokjow eventually chose the city of Roslav at the Belarusian border and led a crowd of 10000 people through the streets. The local police wasn't able to stop the Rus and the rally blindsided the collectivists. The few hundred of them, who had gathered for a spontaneous demonstration, were beaten down by Tschistokjow's troopers. This was some kind of success, and it was more than necessary after the defeat of Smolensk. However,

Belarusian television glorified the protest march in Roslav as a “great political victory”.

Shortly afterwards, the Rus went on with their actions in the small villages along the border. They went to the poor and the desperate, giving bread to the people like the collectivists had done it before.

In the meantime, Peter Ulljewski and his DSR men raised a collectivist underground group in Vilnius and several men were arrested.

The GCF invasion of Belarus, originally planned for September 2036, was postponed again. More and more soldiers of the Global Control Force were transferred from Russia to Iran, where the rebels were slowly driven back into the mountains.

Furthermore, it was heading towards a crisis also in other countries. In India, above all in the larger cities, there were riots in the course of water shortages, which had to be quelled by the GCF. Once again, the World Government recruited new soldiers for the international force, because they were needed to keep millions of discontent people under control.

For wars against secessionist states like Japan or Belarus, they were currently not available. But with the collectivists and the Russian security forces, the Rus had more than enough enemies. Moreover, it was improbable that Tschistokjow`s movement was able to resist Uljanin`s organization in the long term.

Despite everything, Tschistokjow`s men continued to infiltrate the northern part of the Ukraine and western Russia. The confrontation with the collectivists steadily increased, but this did not impress most of the Rus. Minister Dr. Gugin had meanwhile stabilized the economy of Belarus, up to a certain point. Nearly all inland revenues flowed back into the domestic industry and agriculture as

subsidies, or were used for various reconstruction activities. In early October, Artur Tschistokjow finally abolished the Scanchip and reintroduced the cash. All banks in Belarus, Lithuania and Latvia were nationalized, while the international press reacted with a fire of hatred and slander. The money value was now connected with the manpower of the people - a revolutionary act, which caused the Global Bank Trust a lot of headaches.

Frank had barely had time to return to Ivas. So Julia was still far away from him. Furthermore, she had ignored his offer to rent an apartment in Minsk. No, in these days, Frank lived only for politics...

Outside it was dark and Frank was sitting in an almost empty apartment in the center of Gomel. He was already here since three days, but tomorrow Kohlhaas would drive to the Russian border again, in order to go on with the propaganda campaign for Tschistokjow. Alf and five other Russians from the trooper units lived here too, sleeping on old mattresses or uncomfortable cots. At the moment, Frank was alone, because Bäumer and the others were somewhere in the city to buy food.

Gomel - this city had seen a terrible bloodbath in the times, when the freedom movement had conquered Belarus. Frank and Alf always remembered the so called "Blood Rally", when they walked down the streets here.

In the course of the infamous Gomel rally, the Belarusian police had once shot down hundreds of protesters. Today, the younger members of the freedom movement often talked about "Gomel" with a touch of heroic glorification, but Frank and Alf, who had been there, only remembered a slaughter.

And scenarios like this would return, if they tried to conquer Russia. There was no doubt, as Frank said to himself. And

one day, his eternal luck would finally vanish and death would find him.

“Sisyphean task...”, muttered Frank, staring at the ugly, yellow wallpaper on the opposite wall.

“If Julia goes to Vilnius to study, then I will lose her in the end”, it flashed through his mind.

But what should Frank expect from her? Should she wait for him forever, always hoping that he would come back one day? After decades of struggling? He would probably rather return in a coffin to his home village, Kohlhaas thought sadly. This was much more realistic than any great victories over an enemy that still seemed to be invincible.

In any case, he had Julia “under control” if she would stay in Ivas, as he explained it to himself. He would have her in sight, like a military unit or a squadron of troopers. However, Julia was no trooper on a strategic map, but a very intelligent, beautiful woman who had the right to do something with her life.

“Soon you will be vanished, my dear. And I will still be trapped in this life that becomes more and more meaningless for me”, said Frank, while he beheld Julia’s photo.

What would happen, if she studied in Vilna, Minsk or another city? Would a second “Victor” appear? A nicer, wiser and better man than himself? A man who was not a hero, but a normal, lovely person?

Frank tried to ban these thoughts from his mind and his mood became worse with each passing minute.

“If she would be a good woman, then she would support me. I sacrifice myself also for her and everyone else”, he hissed angrily and suddenly clenched his fist.

But only seconds later, he became aware of the fact that Julia was an independent human being. Moreover, the daughter of the foreign minister was more than just an

appendage of her father. And she was no barbie doll in the hand of a depressive street fighter like him. She had not only an angelic face, but also a keen mind. Anyway, she would live her own life. She would study and leave Ivas, and Frank had no right to stop her.

“Fuck!”, he growled and kicked against the old, shabby sofa in the middle of the room.

Shortly afterwards, the door was unlocked and a bunch of loud chattering troopers came in. Alf made a stupid joke in broken Russian and his comrades started to laugh. Kohlhaas moaned quietly and shook his head.

“Good food, my friend. Very tasty...hmmm...”, said Bäumer with Turkish accent, brandishing a plastic bag. A stupid grin followed.

“Tasty...hmmm...”,

“Yes, nice!”, muttered Frank.

“Aren`t you hungry? Here my friend, good food, my friend!”, bugged Alf.

“Very funny!”

“What`s up, dude?”

“Nothing!”

“Hey, Alexei! Tell Frank that joke with the young women and the car. It`s really great!”, shouted Bäumer at a Russian.

A broad-shouldered trooper immediately came to Kohlhaas and started to talk. Alf was laughing in advance, although he had heard the joke many times before.

“Okay, Frank...”, said the Russian. “Four young women are on a hill where an old car is. Suddenly, a guy comes around and he has a huge...”

Bäumer started to laugh like a drunken sailor and the sturdy Russian lost the thread for a moment. Then he tried to remember the rest of the joke, while Frank was staring at him, full of frustration and rolling his eyes...

While the freedom movement tried to expand its influence in western Russia, they CASJ conquered one city after another. Vitali Uljanin conducted the “Day of the Workers and the Disenfranchised” in Moscow, and no less than 300000 people gathered in front of the Kremlin. But his time, the situation got out of control.

After the event, thousands of frustrated people marched through the city on their own and the anger exploded. Clashes with the police, who had received the order to let the demonstrators act, followed and 23 officers were killed. Uljanin`s supporters stormed through the streets like a marauding horde and smashed everything to pieces. Many immigrants from the republics of the former Soviet Union, which now inhabited great parts of Moscow, joined the frenzied mass and devastated the inner city. Finally, the mob was raging in the streets of Moscow for several days.

The media tried to hush up the riots, but the “Day of the Workers and the Disenfranchised”, which had originally been planned as a promotional event for collectivism, remained in the minds of many citizens of Moscow as an outbreak of violence and terror.

Artur Tschistokjow immediately took the opportunity and announced on television, that the collectivists had shown their “devil`s faces” in Moscow.

In return, the Rus organized a number of smaller rallies in the Russian cities near the border. They marched with over 12000 demonstrators through the small town of Pytalovo and could not be stopped by the police. A few days later, Artur Tschistokjow spoke in Nowgorod, Percoy, Izborks and Sebez in front of several thousand people. These border towns could be reached and left quickly, in case of emergency. But all the rallies took place without bigger problems. Where collectivist disturbers appeared, they were

chased away by the armed troopers. Slowly but surely, Tschistokjow's organization won ground in some parts of western Russia and new local chapters and trooper units were founded.

Artur Tschistokjow made Sergei Spehar, an ambitious and combative man in the early thirties, to the supreme leader of the Russian section of the freedom movement. His younger brother, Timur, got the leadership of the freedom movement in the Ukraine.

Furthermore, Tschistokjow gave the local chapters more independence and autonomy, so that it was easier for them to organize rallies and demonstrations on their own.

And this strategy was successful. The two brothers deployed a feverish activism and expanded the influence of the freedom movement in many cities.

They made several demonstrations in the Ukraine and even one in the south of Nowgorod. But the Rus chose only smaller towns and avoided the bigger cities, which were already in the hand of the CASJ. Nevertheless, the conflict between the Rus and the collectivists became more intense. At the end of October, four young members of the freedom movement were shot in Krestcy by some CLJ men. Four days later, masked thugs stabbed the local chapter leader of the freedom movement in Jamm. Tschistokjow's supporters took revenge and killed three collectivists in Nowgorod. But this was just the beginning...

After weeks full of activism, Frank and Alfred had returned to Ivas and enjoyed some quiet days. Sven Weber and the other young men from the village were still on the road - somewhere in Russia. One week ago, two young men from Ivas had been caught by the police and were taken into custody, as Julia told them. Since this day, nobody had heard from them anymore.

Today, Kohlhaas had stayed in his bed for hours. Around noon, he got up and walked through the forest behind his house. How much had he missed this little village in the last months!

Then he visited Julia and went with her to Steffen de Vries café. Towards evening, he went to HOK, the computer expert of the community.

“Let`s see, what has become of my nephew Nico!”, he thought to himself, and decided to ask the corpulent computer freak to take a look at Nico`s Scanchip.

HOK`s still not renovated house appeared abandoned. The shutters were closed and no sign of life could be seen from outside.

“Holger, get out!”, shouted Frank and banged against the front door. A shutter was pulled up and a rumble was heard.

“Who`s there?”, it resounded inside.

“The GSA!”

“What?”

“It`s me! Frank!”

Kohlhaas heard HOK coming down the stairs with loud steps. Then Holger opened the door.

“Frank! What can I do for you?”

“Am I disturbing?”

“No!” HOK grinned.

“Oh, I just wanted to visit you. Maybe there is something new on Nico`s Scanchip...”

“Nico?”

“My nephew!”

“Oh, that Nico! Shall I look at his chip?”

“Yes, if it is not too much work for you.”

“Oh, no! Since the revolution in Lithuania, I`m not very busy anymore”, grumbled HOK disappointedly.

“And what are you doing all day long now?”, asked Frank.

“This and that. Hanging around, surfing on the Internet and so on”, answered computer scientist.

“You could join the freedom movement. It would keep you fit!”, said Frank sardonically.

“To get a bullet in my head? No, street fights are not my specialty. Sorry!”, returned HOK. “And now come in please.” They went to the upper floor. Meanwhile, the cyber-freak had a second computer room - with a view on his neglected garden.

“This is true luxury! Two computers! One on every floor!”, explained HOK. Frank perked his eyebrows up and looked around.

Suddenly, his glance hit a dirty glass vitrine full of odd miniatures. Frank was baffled.

“Hey, that`s impossible! No, this can`t be! These figures are old miniatures from Battle Hammer, aren`t they? How cool is that?”, he exclaimed.

HOK smiled. “Oh? You know Battle Hammer?”

“Sure! Once I had a lot of these miniatures: Orcs, humans, elves, dwarves and so on”, answered Kohlhaas delightedly.

“Then you will know these guys...”, said HOK, pointing at some great painted miniatures.

“Uh, these are some knights of the Golden Order, right?”

“Bingo! That`s right. Congratulaions! I have more than 6000 miniatures. A huge army of humans, an orc horde, several hundred dwarves...”

“Brilliant!”, shouted Frank and was happy like a little boy.

“Come on!” The computer freak pulled his guest with him, leading him into another room.

Frank gaped. Here were even more vitrines full of miniatures.

“Wow!” Kohlhaas was more than amazed.

“I have the fantasy and the science-fiction version of Battle Hammer. And the expansion packs. Last week, I have

ordered some more undeads on the Internet. Meanwhile, these old miniatures are very valuable!", remarked HOK with a grin.

"I had some undeads too...", said Frank.

"Look at this, Frank. My undeads! Vampires! Normal skeleton warriors! Zombies, Tomb crawlers...", mumbled the corpulent computer nerd and showed his astonished guest a giant army of miniatures which was standing on the window sill.

"I had to leave my beloved orcs and the rest of my collection in my apartment in Berlin, when they have brought me to Big Eye", muttered Frank.

"Do you still know the old rules of Battle Hammer?", asked HOK.

"Well, it is a long time ago..."

"I have all the rule books here, Frank!"

"Sounds good..."

"Finally, I have found someone who knows Battle Hammer. Here in Ivas! That's crazy", cheered HOK.

"Yes, it is!" Kohlhaas became more and more enthusiastic.

"We should play in the next days. What do you think? Do you prefer Space Battle Hammer or Battle Hammer Fantasy?", urged HOK.

"I don't really care. The main thing is we play and have some fun", replied Frank smiling.

"Hach!" The twisted computer freak tenderly stroke a monster of tin with his thick fingers. Meanwhile, the miniature was covered with dust, but HOK treated it like a treasure chest. "My little one, I thought that you would never get used again..."

A little later, the two sat in front of a computer and HOK was racing again, with inconceivable velocity, through the secret data banks of the registration authority of the administrative sector "Central Europe".

“There he is, your nephew”, he said after a while.

Frank stared at the screen. It had only lasted a few minutes until HOK had found the access to the sub-files on Nico`s Scanchip.

“Oh, shit!”, he suddenly shouted out.

“What`s up?”, asked Frank, trying to decipher the tiny letters on the screen.

“Nico Günther, GCF Junior Academy Berlin. What the hell...?”, muttered the computer freak.

Frank swallowed and could not believe his eyes. This was a bit too much for his mind...

After Kohlhaas had gone home, he was on the Internet again and visited the website of the “GCF Junior Academy Berlin”.

There was a photo of his nephew, where the ten year old boy was proudly smiling in his uniform, holding a certificate in his hands. “Junior officer of the year 2036, Nico Günther” could be read under the photo. Frank shook his head and turned the computer off.

“That`s more than sick!”, remarked Alf who had come into the living room. He clapped Frank on the shoulder and tried to calm him.

“He is the best in his class, the little boy”, said Kohlhaas with a quiet sigh.

“I did not want to believe it, when you told me that”, came from Bäumer, who was puzzled too.

Frank gave him a cynical smile. “First they liquidate his mother, put him into an orphanage and now they make the boy to an officer of the GCF. These damn rats!”

“The GCF likes orphans, good human material...”

“I know! It is the best human material!”

“What can I say?!” Alf shrugged his shoulders.

“My last living relative becomes an officer of the GCF. That’s a bad joke!”, groaned Frank.

“Maybe one day he will shoot his uncle Frank and they will tell him that he has saved the world from an evil terrorist monster.”

“Who knows what they have told him about his mother and you, Frank?”

“Lies! What else?”, grumbled Kohlhaas.

Alfred was silent and beheld his friend, who looked out the window with tears in his eyes.

“Welcome to the madhouse! This world is nothing but a giant pile of shit!”, he whispered and went into his bedroom.

Although he had been tortured by doubts, depressions and almost no sleep, Frank went nevertheless to HOK to play Battle Hammer. After all, it was a good method to find some distraction for a few hours. The tabletop game let Frank dive into another world, where he was save from the unpleasant reality around him.

HOK had positioned hundreds of miniatures on a beautifully decorated table. Frank commanded a lovingly painted orc horde, while his opponent played the humans.

“I cast with my orc shaman the “Magic Head Butt” on your general!”, said Frank and diced.

“Ha, ha! It does not work!”, laughed HOK.

Kohlhaas moaned. “Well, let`s do the close-combat phase! I start with my orc warlord and his bodyguards!”

“Damn!”, mumbled the computer freak, sceptically staring at the dice that rolled across the table.

“Your soldiers will be smashed by the green horde”, said Frank dryly.

“Wait until my turn...”, replied his thick counterplayer, waiting for revenge.

HOK moved his troops forward and put on a self-sure grin.

“My knights attack your goblins!”

“And my swordsmen will kick some orc asses!”

Shortly afterwards, HOK diced and a triumphant cry resounded through the shabby house. Frank scratched his head.

“Hmmm...”, he muttered thoughtfully.

In the end, Frank was ultimately defeated by his experienced opponent, but the game had nevertheless given him a lot of fun. The two men agreed to meet for a rematch in the next days, and Frank asked HOK to buy some more miniatures for him on the Internet.

“I`m starting with Battle Hammer again. It`s just the coolest game on earth. If you can find some of these old figures on the Internet, then please order them for me”, said Frank and walked off.

“Got it!”, answered HOK and smiled.

Having a Tough Time...

Frank had enjoyed his little holidays in Ivas, but now Tschistokjow had called for him again and the vacation was over. Grumbling and ranting, Frank left his home village and drove to Minsk. His friend Alf followed him, as always.

In the meantime, HOK had bought a complete orc horde on the Internet and the miniatures were waiting for their new owner, who was already on the road in western Russia. Kohlhaas was sent to Cernihiv to organize the propaganda campaign there.

The Rus had spread in some more cities and new local chapters had been founded. Tschistokjow had successfully spun his web and the freedom movement had moreover formed an alliance with the Voskhod Solnza, a group of patriotic Russians from Nowgorod.

At the same time, the conflict with the collectivists was steadily increasing. Dozens of men had been wounded or even killed in the last weeks on both sides. A protest march through Bryansk was stopped by Sergei Spehar, when his men were attacked by a huge mass of angry collectivists.

The police had furthermore arrested several hundred Rus at that day and some section leaders were now waiting for their indictment because of breach of the peace.

In return, Vitali Uljanin was building up his movement on a grand scale and the media gave him the chance to spread his ideology all over Russia.

The collectivists demonstrated in many cities and their number multiplied within a short time. Often, the members of the CASJ attacked the Russian police after the rallies, knowing that the officers had the instruction to behave passive, in order to avoid confrontations.

Uljanin now increasingly recruited Asian immigrants for the CLJ. They lived in great numbers in the bigger cities and in metropolises like Moscow, about half of the population was of non-Russian heritage. The CASJ leader promised them a lot of privileges and was eager to fill the ranks of the CLJ with these men.

In some regions, the militant arm of the collectivist movement was soon dominated by non-Russian troopers. In many bigger cities, especially in Moscow, the CLJ units consisted of a substantial part of Azerbaijanis, Georgians, Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Chinese, Turks, Armenians and other Asians.

Another big part of the armed collectivist units were Russians, who had completely fallen through the social network and had nothing to lose anymore. These men were driven by pure desperation, following every man who promised them a better future..

Most of the CLJ troopers didn't understand the "philosophy" of Theodore Mardochow or his political principles. But the promise of social justice and equality sounded like music in their ears.

The collectivist agitators had a great talent to instrumentalize these desperate men, and as part of an angry crowd they could become extremely dangerous and were able to smash nearly every opponent in their unbridled rage.

However, in the ranks of the Freedom Movement of the Rus it was often the same kind of men. A big part of Tschistokjow's followers was as poor and desperate as the ordinary collectivists, who were ready for anything. The main difference was, that Tschistokjow's men were all Russians or other Europeans.

Thus it were often totally frustrated fanatics on both sides who fought each other in the streets, driven by different ideologies.

“In Eastern Europe, almost 20 million people are already registered with an implanted Scanchip. In England, it is about 68% of the population. In North America, over 100 million people...”

“Go on!”, said the World President bluntly.

His secretary, Mr. Morris, looked up briefly with a submissive smile and continued reporting.

“In Germany, it is about 16 million people...so far!”

“In France about 20 million people...”

“In Italy...”

“Good! That’s enough, Mr. Morris!”, interrupted the chairman of the World Union his secretary.

“Yes, Mr. World President!”, answered the gray-haired man.

“In 2034, the whole operation has started with a lot of zeal. But now, the mass registration is stagnating!”, growled the politician and stood up from his chair.

“I can not explain it, Mr. World President”, stammered Morris.

“You don’t have to explain anything, because that’s not your task!”

“Yes, Mr. World President!”

“The implanted chip is the key to our global reign. And only power and domination are the things in this world, which are really important for us”, muttered the head of the World Government and walked through his luxuriously furnished office.

“But the media tell the people every day, that the registration is good and necessary. So why is it stagnating since a few months?”, asked the secretary.

“The voluntary registration was level 1. Soon level 2 will follow. This will be the second step: the forced registration! First in North America and then in Western Europe”, murmured the World President.

Mr. Morris was silent for several minutes and seemed to brood. He nervously fiddled with his pen, then he took a deep breath.

“Some people say, that the implantated Scanchips contain poisoned nano-capsules. They say that registered people can be killed with a single touch of a button. It looks from the outside like a heart attack or something like this...”

The World President was silent and had his back turned to the old secretary. Now he turned slowly around and looked at Mr. Morris, perking his eyebrows up.

“What did you say?”, he asked.

Morris gulped and tried to smile friendly. “Well, I have read something on the Internet, about the new Scanchips...I mean...”

“What have you read, Mr. Morris?”

“This nonsense with the poisoned nano-capsules in the implantated Scanchips. Nonsense! Conspiracy theories!”, answered the secretary with trembling voice.

The World President cleared his throat. “Why should the World Government put poison into the new Scanchips? This sounds really weird, my friend.”

Morris was relieved. After all, his boss looked now more friendly and seemed to be relaxed.

“I have found a website, a couple of days ago, where somebody has written that the World Government could kill people who behave politically incorrect with these new implanted Scanchips. They just press a button and then...then the poison capsule is activated and...”

“This sounds like a bad science fiction, eh?” The World President grinned.

“Yes! Like a really bad science fiction story. Yes!”, laughed Mr. Morris.

“Would a humanistic and democratic World Government do something like that, my friend?”, asked his boss.

“No! This is absurd! But it’s getting worse with all these conspiracy theories on the Internet. They write a lot of stupid stuff, you know...”, said Mr. Morris.

“How long do have your implanted Scanchip, my friend?”, asked the World President with an impish face.

“How long, Sir? Well, I think I was one of the first people who have been registered. This new Scanchip is a great idea. It replaces the payment, the identity card and so on”, explained the secretary casually.

“And you are still alive! So you do not have a poisoned nano-capsule inside your body, Mr. Morris! Ha, ha!” The World President was holding his belly with laughter and his servant nodded approvingly.

“Yes, that’s right, Sir!”, came back from the gray-haired man.

“What grade have you actually reached in our organization, Mr. Morris?”

“What?”

“Are you still in the 4th grade?”

The secretary was baffled for a moment. “Yes, unfortunately I am still in the 4th grade, Sir...”

“I wish you a nice day, Mr. Morris”, said the chairman of the World Union and clapped on his servant’s shoulder.

The aged man looked at him and didn’t know what to say anymore. He had really enjoyed this light-hearted chatter with his master. In such a personal way, he had never talked to him before. This had been one of the greatest moments in his life, as Mr. Morris thought.

“I go now, Mr. World President!”, he muttered and fetched his laptop.

“Good bye, my friend!”, replied his boss, staring after him with an expressionless face.

Mr. Morris left the skyscraper and hurried through the streets of New York City, because he still had to buy a present for his oldest daughter, who celebrated her birthday today.

When the secretary came home, he was already awaited by his loving family. After a nice party, before he went to bed, he hugged his oldest daughter like a man who was just content deep inside.

When Mr. Morris was lying on his back, he smiled to himself and remembered the interesting talk with the most powerful man on earth. Then he fell asleep with a feeling of deep happiness and satisfaction.

The next morning, his wife found him dead in his bed. Apparently, he had suffered a heart attack, while he was sleeping. But this was not unusual, because Mr. Morris was already 61 years old.

Artur Tschistokjow and Sergei Spehar were already preparing another rally, this time in Velikie Luki. Ahead of the event, the Belarusian president had announced on television, that the Rus wanted to come again to Smolensk. The Russian authorities and the CASJ reacted immediately, while Uljanin himself came to the city to speak in front of over 60000 people.

A massive police presence, this time also elite units of the Global Policy (GP), unbolted the inner city hermetically. Ultimately, even some GCF soldiers were ordered to Smolensk. Finally, everybody expected bloody riots, but nothing happened. Not a single Rus appeared - at least, not in Smolensk. Instead, more than 17000 of Tschistokjow's supporters marched through the streets of

Velikie Luki and overwhelmed the small number of their political opponents and the local police.

The Freedom Movement of the Rus triumphed on that day, while its enemies grasped at nothing. They were made to look like fools and in the end, the frustrated collectivists took their anger out on the police. A day full of riots and destruction followed. Despite the admonitions of Uljanin, the mass got out of control after the rally and went rampaging through the streets.

On the other hand, Artur Tschistokjow leaned back grinning in the president palace in Minsk, watching the television reports. With this new orgy of senseless violence, the collectivists had lost a lot of sympathies among the population and the Russian policemen.

Finally, the Belarusian president took the opportunity for his own propaganda attack on the collectivists. He called Uljanin a "Pied Piper" and his followers a "Mongolian horde" on Belarusian television.

Nevertheless, the World Government was still not very interested in Belarus and the two Baltic States, because it were just three tiny countries with a population of hardly 15 million people. The Lodge Brothers had to rule over the lives of more than 8 billion people and at that time they had more important problems than Artur Tschistokjow and his little rebellion. Moreover, the freedom movement did not make the impression, as if it could overrun Russia and Ukraine in the next months.

In the meantime, the GCF had driven the Islamic rebels out of the bigger cities in Iran and the civil war had come to an end - more or less. Anyway, the Iranian revolution had failed. There was no more doubt about that. Mass executions and a wave of arrests followed the war.

The renegade forces had to return to their old tactic of guerrilla warfare and finally disappeared in the rugged highlands of northern Iran.

Meanwhile, Japan had sent some military advisers and technical equipment to Belarus, in order to help the small country to build up a defensible army.

Artur Tschistokjow implemented the general conscription again, building up a regular army which was called the "Volksarmee of the Rus". The first military parade took place in Minsk at the end of November. In the following months, Belarus started to produce modern firearms and even a few Japanese "Gunjin" tanks.

A little later, Matsumoto gave his allies a small number of missiles with nuclear warheads, which Tschistokjow planned to use as a threat in case of emergency.

But nevertheless, all these armament efforts were ridiculous and there was not much, Belarus would have had against an army like the Global Control Force.

On the other hand, the attempts of the Rus to build up a regular national army showed the population the spirit of ability to put up a fight. Especially Tschistokjow's supporters felt stronger now, because their country became - slowly but surely - a real state.

Back in 2018 and the following years, not only the world's national states had been abolished, but also the independent armies of all countries. Soon after, they had completely been replaced by the GCF.

This had advantages and disadvantages for the Lodge Brothers. Of course, the biggest advantage was the fact, that the nations were disarmed and helpless.

However, the Global Control Force remained the only regular army on the planet and it was subjected to an incredibly cumbersome administration and could not react very flexibly.

So the GCF was a giant organization with the task to monitor and control billions of people all over the world. Like the Roman legions, they were always moved on the world map from one hotspot to the next and were constantly in use somewhere, in order to enforce the New World Order with an iron fist.

Only in exceptional situations, it could happen, that the World Government allowed it to a sub-governor to recruit some kind of national militia for a short time.

So it had been in the Iranian civil war, as sub-governor Kerman had sent out his own citizen militias against the Islamic rebels, before the regular GCF units had arrived. Such a procedure spared the “human resources” of the international forces, because when a rebellion or a civil war broke out somewhere, the expendable militiamen were sacrificed at first.

“I thought that the revolutionary mood would continue to spill over from Belarus to western Russia, but I am probably wrong”, said Wilden and walked beside Frank through an autumnal park in Minsk.

“Meanwhile, the collectivists take the bread out of our mouth. Apart from that, Russia is so incredibly big. You do not even know where to begin!”, answered Kohlhaas contritely.

“We must try to take over the rural regions as a first step, this is our only option. The big cities are still in the hands of the system and the collectivists. Uljanin`s movement has become really huge. He has won millions of people and the number of his followers is still growing. We can only dream of things like that.”

The two men sat down on a bench on the verge of a pond. Some ducks had recognized them and started to croak. Frank smiled and threw some bread crumbs into the water.

“We will never be able to win enough power in a country like Russia. This is just madness!”, he muttered.

“Madness? It is the only way to survive for us, Frank! Soon, we will try to liberate Estonia. Artur is already planning the next operation”, remarked the foreign minister.

“The next operation...I understand...”, grumbled his young friend and beheld the ducks thoughtfully. The animals were quacking loudly and came closer, while Frank gave them even more bread crumbs.

“You know, my boy, if I had told you a few years ago, that we would be free men in our own land one day, you would have called me insane, right?”

“Yes, you`re right!”, replied Frank.

“What`s about your sleep distrubances?”, Wilden wanted to know then.

Kohlhaas perked his eyebrows up. “Why do you ask me that now, Thorsten?”

“Why not, Frank?”

“I can live with them. It has become better if you want so...”, said Kohlhaas.

Wilden smiled paternally. “I am glad to hear this, my boy!”

Artur Tschistokjow sent thousands of his troopers to Estonia. His men had already prepared this invasion since months and had distributed huge masses of pamphlets and video discs among the people. Even a small private TV station they had set up in northern Latvia to influence the Estonians beyond the border with their propaganda.

Collectivist groups existed only in the capital Tallinn and in Tarku, but even these groups were not very strong. Furthermore, a great part of the Estonian police officers seemed to have sympathies for the freedom movement, above all in the rural regions.

So the invasion of the tiny country was planned for the 15th of December, but it should become more a military strike as a political coup. This time, Artur Tschistokjow`s armed troopers wanted to come with a lot of armored vehicles and moreover units of the newly established Volksarmee of the Rus. Frank and Alf had been in Estonia since days, helping their comrades to spread Tschistokjow`s propaganda.

In the early morning hours of 12.15.2036, several hundred troopers occupied the police headquarter and the city hall of Parnu. The operation ended without any fights and the policemen laid down their weapons or even joined the trooper units.

A few hours later, Frank was on the way to Tarku, where Tschistokjow had prepared a mass rally. The small GCF had already withdrawn from the city and about 20000 Rus were waiting for their leader. Furthermore, the most important targets in the city had already been occupied. Within a few hours, about 50000 Estonians joined Tschistokjow`s crowd outside the administration building. The head of the freedom movement finally declared the city to a "liberated territory".

His troopers camped overnight in the city streets and fought back some half-hearted attacks of the collectivists. On the next day, they marched towards Tallinn.

But in the southern suburbs, they had to stop and withdrew again. Several thousand GCF soldiers had meanwhile gathered in the center of Tallinn and even more units of the international army were on the way to Estonia. They came from St. Petersburg and Helsinki.

Tschistokjow cursed. The operation had lasted too long and finally the attack on the Estonian capital ended with a defeat. Now the soldiers of the World Union drove the Rus back to Latvia.

At the same time, further GCF troops, coming from Poland and the Ukraine across the Belarusian border, occupied the cities of Grondo and Pinsk.

Artur Tschistokjow called the Belarusian up to defend their homeland and sent several regiments of the Volksarmee to Grodno to oust the invaders. General Frank Kohlhaas finally led about 10000 troopers to southern Belarus.

When he arrived in Grondo and the rebellious masses flocked together in the streets under the leadership of Tschistokjow`s political functionaries, the GCF troops marched off and left the city again.

All in all, it was nothing more than a mutual scanning. Tschistokjow declared on television, that “the Freedom Movement of the Rus had won against the oppressors”, while the international media taunted him, because of the failed invasion of Estonia.

After a short time, the episode was over and nothing had changed. However, Artur Tschistokjow had understood the message of the World Government.

The rest of the year 2036 passed quietly, and finally the snow began to fall. Frank and Alfred went back to Ivas and celebrated a peaceful Christmas with the Wildens.

“A happy new year, Artur!”, said Frank and sat down at the conference table in the presidential palace.

“Yes, thanks!”, muttered Tschistokjow, examining some documents.

For several minutes, there was an awkward silence, then Tschistokjow rose from his seat and said some things in Russian. The politician looked extremely irritated.

“We have been defeated!”, he said to his German colleagues and stared angrily around.

Wilden explained the Russians his view of things and a lively discussion ensued. All in all, the men agreed that their revolutionary work was stagnating.

“Japan will provide us with some machines in the next weeks, so that we can produce artillery and anti-aircraft guns”, whispered the foreign minister.

“Better than nothing...”, returned Kohlhaas.

“Yes, a good message, but if we can not continue our revolution, then we will loose everything in the long term!”, remarked Tschistokjow.

Yuri Litschenko, the Interior Minister, told Wilden that the collectivists were the main enemy, not the GCF, because they had successfully absorbed the revolutionary energy in Russia so far.

Finally, the heated debate lasted for hours, but Artur and his followers came to no satisfying result. Only one thing seemed to be clear: If they were not able to expand the revolution to Russia, the GCF would end their reign in the near future. Tormented by frustration and doubt, the men went back home and continued to rack their brains. This state of stagnation was the worst, that could happen to the freedom movement.

Street Fights and Miniatures

The bad mood, Frank had to struggle with since days, was still there, when he returned to Ivas. In his mind, the disappointment about the failure in Estonia and the generally poor state of the freedom movement, was always rumbling under the surface.

Even Julia, who wanted to show him the new village school today, could not liberate Frank`s mind from all the sorrows and concerns. However, the daughter of the foreign minister had a much better vein, because she was still busy with her educational mission.

Now they walked down the main street of Ivas which was covered with a thick blanket of snow and Julia led Frank to a small house - the "school" of the village. Actually, it was not more than a large, lovingly renovated room, in which about two dozen chairs and a few wooden tables had been set up. "This is the place, where I am teaching the children of Ivas", explained Julia with a proud smile and walked through the front door of the house. A sign mit the inscription "Thorsten-Wilden-School" hung above the door sill and Frank grinned when he saw it.

"We didn`t name it "Artur-Tschistokjow-School", because it seems that meanwhile every second school in Belarus is named after him." She smirked.

"Nevertheless, I would prefer "Julia-Wilden-School", joked the young woman, nudging Frank with the elbow.

"School-of-the-great-hero-Frank-Kohlhaas" sounds much better", he answered.

"Idiot!"

When Julia and her friend entered the classroom, the heads of about 30 boys and girls immediately turned around.

Some children giggled quietly or whispered in the background.

"This is the boy-friend of Mrs. Wilden", Frank believed to have heard somewhere.

Julia went to the desk and beheld the pupils with a strict face. Frank remained in the back of the room and waited what would happen next.

"With a teacher like this, I would voluntarily go to school forever", he thought and leaned against the wall.

"Good morning, children!"

"Good morning, Mrs. Wilden!"

"Today we have a guest! Who could it be?", asked Julia with a loud voice.

A small, red-haired girl put her hand up and snapped her fingers.

"Maria!"

"General Frank Kohlhaas, the greatest hero of our country and the whole village", said the little girl enthusiastically.

The "greatest hero" behind her back reacted with an embarrassed smile and gave Julia a wink, while the children looked at him with boundless admiration.

On the opposite wall was a large portrait of Artur Tschistokjow. Under the picture was a small plate with some biographical informations about the leader of the freedom movement. On the other side hung a big dragon head flag, shining in bright colors.

"Today, general Kohlhaas will tell us about the first days of the revolution. At that time, Artur Tschistokjow, my father and many brave men like Mr. Kohlhaas have fought against our enemy, the World Government. It was a terrible time for us and the Belarusian people, who were tortured by the terror regime of the World Union."

"Shall I start with my...?" Frank paused confusedly. He had not expected this.

“I give you a sign, okay?”, replied Julia a little bossy.

“Who is governing the world and wants to destroy us?”, asked the young woman.

“The Lodge Brothers!”, chorused the children.

“Who are the Lodge Brothers?”

Almost all the children put their hands up and were whispered and talking. Julia eventually selected a pudgy blond boy.

“Gottfried!”

“The...uh...Lodge Brothers are a secret global organization that controls the earth...uh...since 2018, they have the world domination”, elucidated the boy and smiled.

It took a few minutes, because Julia led her students explain her astonished guest, which was the ruling group inside the global organization and how it was structured. Then the children talked about the political goals of the “world enemy”.

Frank was stunned. The pretty teacher had just transformed into a female Tschistokjow! Finally, she beckoned Frank, who looked nervously around, to come to the desk. Meanwhile, Kohlhaas tried to find some good stories he could tell the children.

“General Kohlhaas will tell you now about his experiences. Everything... must be written down!”, announced Julia.

“Then I just talk about some stuff, okay?”, whispered the young man into Julia`s ear.

“Let us be part of all your heroic deeds, my dear...”, she said softly and had to smirk because of Frank`s bashfulness.

“Well...uh...I`m Frank...I mean general Kohlhaas...uh...and I`m from Berlin. Hello, kids!”, said the leader of the trooper units, who was known for his fearlessness. Julia could barely suppress a laugh...

By significantly reducing the oil and gas prices, Tschistokjow tried to become even more popular among the Belarusians. Now he could look back on almost a year of his reign and his country had already recovered a bit. But this did not mean, that the economic crisis had already ended. After long periods of decay, starvation and freezing, the people of Belarus thanked their leader for even the smallest improvements of their life situation.

Meanwhile, Uljanin`s collectivists were the dominating force in many parts of central Russia and ruled the streets of the bigger cities. They had become stronger and stronger in the last months, and the CASJ was now a giant mass movement.

Several factories in Russia had finally not been closed or outsourced to other countries, after protests of the collectivists. So millions of Russians regarded the CASJ as some kind of protecting power for the poor.

Apart from that, Uljanin`s organization now also started feeding the poor on a grand scale and successfully defused the state of general discontent that had grown in the last time. The great international banks financed these operations at the behest of the World Government.

The ordinary Russian knew nothing about the backgrounds of these things and so the ranks of Uljanin`s CASJ filled with countless new members.

The sidewalks were overcrowded with cheering and shouting people. Ugly, dilapidated buildings surrounded the Rus and hundreds of flags were waving above the heads of the demonstrators. More and more men and women joined the crowd. Soon, the main street of Orel was completely clogged with people and the marching columns reached the city center. Artur Tschistokjow was in the first rank again and about 10000 supporters followed him. A lot of citizens

applauded and cheered when he came nearer, others were cursing or screamed: "Uljanin! Uljanin!"

After three kilometers, the Rus were welcomed by the first swarms of collectivists that greeted them with cobblestones and molotov cocktails. They were accompanied by a lot of police officers, who tried to encircle the demonstrators.

The troopers took their guns and went into position. From a side street they suddenly heard a piercing scream, then the collectivists and the policemen charged and began to fire.

Today, Frank and the other Rus had gone right into the lion's den, because Orel was not less than 250 kilometers away from the border of Belarus.

The troopers in their gray shirts fired back immediately, and the first opponents were sent to the ground. Then the collectivists surged like an furious wave against the front ranks of the marching columns and all hell broke loose.

Shortly afterwards, the armored cars of the Russian police rolled through the streets, firing with their heavy autocannons at every Rus in sight, while Tschistokjow's men were seized by panic.

Neither Frank nor Artur Tschistokjow could prevent them from fleeing. They finally run away, driven by boundless terror, right into the arms of the collectivist mobs behind them.

It was a catastrophe. Only with a big portion of luck, Frank and his troopers made it to escape the frenzied hordes that came over the Rus like a cloud of raging hornets.

They run through a long avenue, turned into a narrow side street and threw away their gray shirts before their enemies could recognize and lynch them.

On that day, the Rus were humiliated once more and the rally ended in a total defeat. Tschistokjow's bodyguards brought their leader out of the inner city and hid him in the

apartment of a comrade before the Russian police could catch or kill him.

Orel ultimately became another great disaster for the freedom movement. The collectivists chased their opponents for hours, beating anyone down who looked like a supporter of Tschistokjow. Finally, the demonstration ended with 64 dead and several hundred wounded Rus.

Alf had stayed at home. He had had a bad feeling from the beginning and Kohlhaas had to prove him right, when he came back to Minsk, totally exhausted and disturbed. Tschistokjow himself escaped to Belarus deep in the night and hid in his apartment for the next days. The media showered him with derision and scorn, declaring that the World Government would soon smash his regime.

“Tschistokjow and his movement are finished!”, exulted the New York Star after the rally in Orel.

Seized by frustration and desperation, the leader of the Rus sat in a small room in the farthest corner of the presidential palace in Minsk. He had locked the door behind him.

Today, Artur did not want to see anybody and even Wilden had been disinvited again. Whimpering he dropped down the wall, holding his head. It was a shattered picture of misery as he huddled in this dark corner, bereft of all hope.

The attempt to face the collectivist power in Orel had failed spectacularly. But the worst was the fact, that so many people had only given him nothing but scorn. They had insulted and derided him. His opponents and the police had smashed the Rus and chased them through the city like mangy dogs.

He had called, but the Russians had not heard his voice anymore. No, because meanwhile they followed Uljanin and his collectivists, who had triumphed once again. The rebel leader was terribly depressed and gave the impression as if he had finally lost his almost proverbial confidence. Artur

Tschistokjow was demoralized, and it was the same with most of his followers. Doubting and complaining, he was sitting alone on the ground, admitting to himself, that Orel had probably been the beginning of the end.

“Lord, how shall I fight the children of the devil, if you take my faith from me?”, he whispered, while he started to cry quietly. Bitter Tears filled his bright eyes. Tschistokjow knew no way out and fell into a dark sea of self-pity.

Vitali Uljanin had flown to the Middle East for a few days to meet a member of the Council of the 13 in a luxury hotel. This morning, they had already walked through a wonderful garden full of blooming olive trees, while they had talked about the strategies of the collectivist movement.

The wise seemed to have big plans with him and his new mass organization. Uljanin, the collectivist leader, who was born in Brooklyn, New York, was avid.

Now he was sitting in a sun-drenched suite, together with a multi-billion dollar company boss, waiting nervously for the next orders of the elders.

“Brother Uljanin, the success of your movement is amazing and we are fascinated by the rapid growth of your organization”, said the man and smiled.

“This is just the beginning, Sir. I will make collectivism to a stormy wave that will come over the whole world”, answered Uljanin and smiled back.

His counterpart cleared his throat and replied: “Please wait, brother. At first, it is the task of collectivism to absorb the discontented masses in Russia, in order to render them harmless...”

Uljanin scratched his chin. “Why Russia, Sir?”

“Why? Well, I will explain it again for you, brother. Do we need the collectivist movement in western Europe?”

“I do not know, Sir!”

“No, in western and central Europe, our decades long work of destruction and decomposition has already borne fruit, so that none of the old nations can oppose us anymore. Even in case of a big social crisis, the remnants of the German, English or French nation would not be able to revolt against us”, explained the gray-haired gentleman.

“Probably not...”, muttered Uljanin.

“Definitely not, brother! Rely on the foresight of the elders. The once powerful and great nations of the west are firmly in our hands. Furthermore, their old cultures, their value systems and their ethnic structures are so badly damaged, that they are too weak to stand up against us anymore. We have poisoned the nations of western Europe and there is no more chance to heal them.”

“Certainly you are right, Sir!”, answered the collectivist leader.

“Yes, of course I’m right, brother Uljanin”, whispered the councillor and looked at his fellow with a sarcastic grin.

Then he continued: “On the territories of the former western European nations we have established multiethnic societies. The French, the Germans, the English and so on, have already become minorities in their own lands and they are dying out. Germany, France or England are no more white and European lands. Meanwhile, these formerly important countries are inhabited by a population, that consists of countless fragments of different heritage.

We have brought people from all over the world to Europe, to destroy the old white world and because we know, that a population like this is unable to unite against us in a common front. But it is different in Russia!”

Uljanin nodded. “The Russian nation is still not completely destroyed. Its culture has not totally vanished so far and a lot of Russians still have some kind of patriotism.

The gentleman in the black suit raised his index finger: "Right, brother Uljanin! You have understood me. Hence, it is the task of collectivism to raze old Russia to the ground. The brutal violence of the collectivist revolution shall smash Russia to pieces. The last European nation, which still can become dangerous for us, shall be crushed by the force of collectivism.

You, brother Uljanin, shall extinguish the remnants of old Russia with flame and sword. You shall destroy its culture and wipe out the European population in the long term, but before that, we will take away even their last property.

If you are successful, then you can extend the collectivist revolution to other countries, for example to China or maybe to India. The elders will decide what shall happen in the future, brother."

Vitali Uljanin became enthusiastic: "This is great, Sir! After the era of capitalism, that has already destroyed the old world, the collectivist revolution will be the final chapter of the Great Plan."

The councilor pushed his underjaw forward and bared his teeth. His eyes glittered coldly and cynically. "Yes, maybe, brother Uljanin."

"We are always one step ahead of our enemies, aren't we, Sir?"

"Of course! In the long run, no one has ever been able to compete with our craftiness. We moreover don't attribute this Freedom Movement of the Rus any special significance. This organization is ridiculous, tiny and totally unimportant."

The head of the CASJ clenched his fist and growled: "I will crush Tschistokjow and his followers. I will turn the anger of the masses against him and finally ring the death knell of Russia!"

The elder leaned back contentedly in his chair and returned: "So it shall be! Ring the death knell, brother Uljanin! Ring it

and let its deafening noise resound across Eastern Europe. Ring it, until everything lays in ruins, until the last spark of hope has been extinguished under the boots of the revolutionaries. You are an important servant of the Great Plan, Uljanin brother! Never forget that!"

The collectivist leader humility looked at his superior and nodded. "I`m proud to make such a great contribution! And I will not disappoint the Council of the Wise!"

"What has happened?", asked Julia and looked at Frank.

"What do you mean?"

"At the demonstration in Ore!"

Frank`s distorted his mouth. "Don`t ask..."

"One day, they will shoot you", said the young woman worriedly.

"Probably...", she heard from the side.

"Oh great,! You are fearless – as always, aren`t you?"

Kohlhaas shook his head: "No, of course not. The rally in Ore! has been terrible and I`m more than gald, that they haven`t killed me.

"But nevertheless, you will go on. I`m sure that Artur has already planned the next demonstrations and street fights", muttered Julia.

"Yes, that`s the way it is. I am at least responsible for a big part of the trooper units."

"And Tschistokjow can`t find another man for this?"

The rebel stared at the ground and was silent.

"Please talk to him again!", demanded Julia.

Frank stopped her with a wave of his hand. "No, that`s my job. I lead the troopers..."

"I understand, Frank. You are the great general in the first rank. Anyway, I only see riots, chaos and dead people on TV", she said.

Kohlhaas slowly became angry. "The world can't be liberated in a few years. It is a long and exhaustive fight and..."

The pretty blonde grinned sardonically. "Liberate the world? Sometimes I think that you're nuts, Frank."

"However, it is important that we carry the revolution further towards Russia. Artur Tschistokjow has already explained it and I agree with his strategic plans. Stagnation is no option for us."

"Your fight is a fight against windmills, Frank. Our enemies are too strong. Maybe Artur should build up Belarus at first, before he starts the next revolution in a giant country like Russia."

"You do not understand anything!", grumbled Frank.

"Oh, no? Perhaps he should help the Belarusian people first and foremost, before he fights again somewhere", she added without understanding.

"Your father also says, that we must expand the revolution to Russia", remarked the rebel grumpily.

Julia reacted with a cynical smile and answered: "My father lives in his own world, since many years. His head is full of all the knowledge from his political books, but he is not able to see the little things around him. Little things like his wife or his daughter for example."

"I would prefer peace as well, but the World Government won't give us any room to live. Hence, we must fight to survive!", hissed Frank.

Meanwhile, Julia was annoyed and addressed further reproaches to Kohlhaas.

"Sometimes I do not believe that you really hope for peace too, Frank! It often seems, that you are only live to fight..."

The rebel interrupted her curtly: "This is nonsense! I want to live in peace as well, but our enemies will not leave us alone! Be realistic!"

“And if you would even try it exceptionally with negotiations?” she suggested.

Frank looked at her with an condescending smile, as if he wouldn't take her all too serious.

“Negotiations?”, he muttered softly. “You can even try it once, Julia...”

Now the daughter of foreign minister jumped up, positioned herself in front of him and narrowed her eyes to slits. Then she stared grimly down on the general and clenched her fists.

“What do you want from me?”, grumbled Frank.

“I would try it!”, said Julia vigorously.

Kohlhaas answered with a shake of his head and walked away.

“Wow, the great hero is speechless, isn't he?”, she sneered angrily.

“Shut up and take care of your primary school children! You have absolutely no idea who our enemy is”, screamed Frank.

“There he goes, the brave general! On to new heroic deeds! I promise you, that I will look after your grave from time to time, Frank”, shouted Julia.

Kohlhaas did not look back and finally left her alone. The daughter of the village chiefs stared after him in silence until he was out of sight.

Frank came back to Minsk in late January and talked with Tschistokjow about the future of the movement. According to the rebel leader, who had recovered more or less, there was no other option than going on with the political struggle in Russia.

Sergej Spehar, the mastermind of the freedom movement in Russia, had been attacked by some collectivists one week ago and had almost died. Now he was in intensive care in a

hospital in Smolensk. The authorities were already awaiting the day, when he could leave his bed again to put him on trial for “illegal, political activities” and “breach of the peace”. For months they had chased and now finally arrested him. It was clear, that Spehar would be sentenced to death after a show trial.

Therefore, Tschistokjow made Andrej Luschenko, an unemployed and extremely fanatical academic, to his successor.

However, the advance to western Russia took place very slowly and only a small number of new members could be recruited. Furthermore, Tschistokjow`s men were only able to get active in smaller towns and villages, while the bigger cities already belonged to the collectivists.

At that time, the Lodge Brothers saw no more necessity to fight the Rus with GCF troops. Meanwhile, collectivist groups tried to gain influence even in the underground of Belarus, while Peter Uljewski and his DSR men did everything to drive the opponents back.

Apart from that, the new year brought a lot of further conflicts, which attracted the attention of the World Government. In Bolivia, rebels groups almost succeeded to overthrow the vassal government, and in Palestine the quarrels between Israelis and Arabs were escalating more and more. And even in Iran, the guerrillas were still not completely defeated.

So the military strike against Belarus was postponed again, because the final victory of collectivism seemed to be only a question of time.

In China and India, Mardochow`s ideology was meanwhile spreading at breakneck speed and the first collectivist groups and associations had already been founded.

But the heart of the red-black movement remained Russia, where millions of people followed Uljanin. The media

supported the CASJ with all their might and reported almost every day about the collectivist leader and his “humanistic ideals of social justice and equality”.

“We are concentrating all our forces on Estonia. If we are not able to show the people another success, our revolution will finally fall asleep”, said the Belarusian president.

“But what is, if things go wrong again? You have success - here in Belarus. The people love you and are very content with your policy”, remarked Peter Ulljewski.

“Belarus is just a tiny piece of land and no mighty fortress. We are simply too weak and our country is too small. So it won’t change anything, if we can get some more weapons from the Japanese or the Belarusians are happy!”, snarled the leader of the Rus bitterly.

Artur Tschistokjow paced his apartment and suddenly turned around.

“Estonia has to be conquered in March”, he shouted and banged on the table. “I order, that we mobilize all we got. The operation must be ended within one day, and it must be be successful!”

“Our men will start to organize the invasion tomorrow. I have already talked to our chapter leaders in Tallinn”, returned Peter.

“I just hope that the Estonians will finally understand, that they have to break the chains of the World Union to take their nation back”, said Tschistokjow with a hint of impatience and anger.

Peter Ulljewski nodded and left the room. He began immediately with the preparations for the assault on the Lodge Brothers and their minions in Estonia.

Frank, Alfred, Sven and many others drove to northern Latvia and supported the local groups of the freedom

movement in their propaganda campaigns. They made a few smaller rallies in some villages and distributed countless pamphlets once more.

At the end of February, about 8000 demonstrators marched through the streets of Tartus and overpowered the local security forces. A few collectivists appeared on that day too, but they ran away quickly, when they saw the troopers of the freedom movement.

Finally, the invasion of Estonia started. The Belarusian government mobilized all its armed forces and began a large-scale assault on the tiny Baltic country.

Several thousand armed troopers crossed the Estonian border in the early morning hours and occupied the city of Tartu. Subsequently, the local Rus made a protest march through downtown, while numerous Estonian police officers and thousands of people joined the crowd. There was no resistance at all.

But in Tallinn, Estonia's largest city, the situation was different. Police squads and a small GCF force fought in the suburbs against Tschistokjow's troopers and tried to stop their assault in time. Nevertheless, they had to retreat after a short fire fight and finally fled towards the main administration building in the inner city.

The leader of the Rus and his men followed them, driving them out of Tallinn at the end. Shortly afterwards, a huge mass of people gathered in front of the administration building and Tschistokjow declared the resignation of the Estonian vassal government under thunderous applause.

The Estonian policemen did not dare to resist and finally laid down their weapons. All GCF soldiers had meanwhile retreated to Finland and no counterattack followed. This time, the Global Control Force and the Estonian vassal government had been hit between the eyes by Tschistokjow's well organized lightning attack.

Notwithstanding the above, the high command of the international forces was busy with more important things and didn't give much attention to the events in Estonia. The Freedom Movement of the Rus had nevertheless gained a great victory overnight and this time, the Rus had been supported by the Estonian people.

Frank and his troopers breathed again. Today, there had been no bloodshed in the streets and they were able to celebrate their success in Tallinn without casualties.

Artur Tschistokjow utilized the resignation of the Estonian sub-governor as good as he could. More than 200000 people celebrated the victory a few days later in Minsk, while the Belarusian president made a mountain out of a molehill.

Even Akira Mori congratulated the Rus in the name of the Japanese nation. The Belarusian state television and the newspapers reported several days about the successful "attack of the revolution". And even in Tallinn, thousands of members of the freedom movement celebrated the liberation of Estonia with loud hullabaloo and a lot of pathos.

Walter Vogel, a man of German heritage who was living in St. Petersburg, became the new governor of Estonia. Furthermore, Estonia was now a member of the newly found Nation League of the Rus, an alliance that included the three Baltic countries and Belarus.

Shortly afterwards, Peter Ulljewski's DSR units immediately swooped down on the few collectivist groups in Estonia to render them harmless. Now the international media paid them attention and screamed out hysterically. The time when the Rus were ignored or derided seemed to be over, while press, television and radio reported all day long about the uprising in Estonia.

The newspapers finally called Tschistokjow a “warmonger” and a “psychopath”, demanding immediate political and military reprisals.

They poured out a torrent of hatred and defamation on the Belarusian president, directing the attention of the world to the newly created Nation League of the Rus.

Malignant television reports accused the leader of the freedom movement of mass murder and war crimes. Even the former sub-governor of Belarus, Medschenko, suddenly emerged again on television. He alleged that Tschistokjow`s men had already executed over 150000 people since the revolution in 2036.

Ultimately, the World President threatened the Rus on TV and declared that he would never tolerate their “antidemocratic policy”. Soon the international forces would smash Tschistokjow`s terror regime, after they had pacified the other hotspots.

All in all, the Freedom Movement of the Rus had only conquered a tiny land with barely 1.4 million inhabitants, not much more people than in the German city of Cologne. But nevertheless, this had far-reaching psychological consequences. The people in Belarus and the Baltic countries recognized that the freedom movement was still strong and able to act. So the ranks of the organization filled with thousands of new members.

Shortly afterwards, the Rus continued their campaigns in Russia and the Ukraine with an increased morale. In Luck, in the northern Ukraine, about 12000 Rus marched through the city and prevailed against the local collectivists. Some smaller rallies, for example in Nowgorod, followed.

Kohlhaas bit on his tongue and slashed the tape on the side of the parcel with a kitchen knife. He had finally found the time to visit HOK again, and had brought his new Battle

Hammer miniatures home. Like a happy little boy, he carefully opened the carton and was totally excited. Then he recognized some of the old miniatures between countless polystyrene chips. Frank smiled broadly.

“Cool!”, he uttered, laughing happily and holding a small orc of tin in his hands. “A boar rider!”

Then Frank positioned dozens of little figures on the kitchen table and mumbled to himself, lost in thought. “An orc warlord, an orc shaman, goblins with spears, orcs with cleavers...”

In Minsk, Frank had bought superglue and a few colors for painting a few days ago. Now he had enough to do, because the orcs were waiting to get ready to fight. But it was necessary to agglutinate and paint them at first.

After about two hours, Alf came home and found his friend in the kitchen, highly concentrated, with a tiny brush in his hand. Bäumer wondered.

“What are you doing?”, asked the giant.

“HOK has bought a Battle Hammer orc horde for me on the Internet. That’s a lot of miniatures, but he will buy even more for me”, said Frank happily, painting a grim-looking troll of tin.

“What? What is this stuff?” Alf gaped and scratched his beard.

”Battle Hammer! Don’t you know it?”, asked Kohlhaas.

“No! I do not play with small figures. I’m not in the kindergarten”, sneered his roommate.

“This is no child`s play, but a highly complex strategy game. Just awesome! I have always played it in Berlin”, explained the hobbyist, putting on a solemn face.

“Now, clear the table, Frank. I want to eat!” Bäumer pushed a bunch of goblins to the side.

“Be careful! They are freshly painted!”, shouted Kohlhaas excitedly. Then he smiled again.

“Look at this, Alf! A dragon for my orc warlord. He can ride on it, you know?”

Alf beheld the winged monster in front of his nose and rolled his eyes.

“Nice wyrm! A true beauty!” he only returned, shaking his head.

Frank did not care if Bäumer liked his orcs or not. Until the middle of the night, he painted his new miniatures and slept only in the morning hours.

The next day, HOK and Frank met for another tabletop game. This time they played the science-fiction version of Battle Hammer. The portly and slightly eccentric computer freak had decorated a big table with a lot of plastic buildings, hills and other things. Two lovingly painted armies were waiting for the players who were totally excited.

For the next hours, the two men wanted to test their strategic skills with each other. Frank commanded a horde of alien monsters and HOK played again an army of humans.

“The laser guns shoot at your unit with the giant bug!”, said HOK, pointing at a massive tin miniature. Then the plump man diced. “Ha! 6 hits! The giant bug loses four health points! Say good bye to it, Frank. Ha! Ha!”

“Shit!”, hissed Kohlhaas and removed the giant bug from the table.

Now it was his turn. Countless smaller models were moved in the direction of HOK`s soldiers. The close combat phase followed, Frank diced. However, on that day, the luck of the dice was again not on his side.

“Damn! These small crawling creatures are nothing but useless!”, he grumbled.

“Yes, that`s bad luck, my friend!”, laughed HOK.

It went on for a while in this manner. Ultimately, the computer scientist defeated his opponent again, and the portly man let out a loud jubilant cry.

"I have diced only crap...", declared the loser of the game.

"How true, Frank!"

Kohlhaas scratched his chin. "Anyway..."

"It always makes sense to attack my tanks or my heavy units with your giant bug and your swarm lord", lectured HOK.

"It has definitely been funny. That's the main thing. The time?"

"It's 18.13 o'clock!"

Frank perked his eyebrows up. "What? That late?"

"Yes, you wanted to play a great battle today!"

"Eh...okay...please buy some more miniatures for me on the Internet. Anything you can get. I'll give you the money. Well, I have to go now", said Frank frantically.

"Do you have something to do?"

"Yes, I wanted to meet Julia - at 17.30 o'clock. We have planned to go to Steffen's bistro."

"Ups!" HOK waved his massive hands, as if he had burned himself.

Kohlhaas rushed through the village and reached the house of the Wildens a few minutes later. With a meaningful look, Julia opened the door and cleared her throat.

"I'm really sorry, but everything went wrong today. My giant bug was shot in the second round and then HOK...", stammered Frank in confusion.

Julia twisted her mouth. "Giant bug?"

"Yes, the giant bug was the key to my defeat. And also the smaller bug soldiers were just disappointing..."

"Do you have a plague of insects in your garden?", asked the young woman and was baffled.

“No! We have played Battle Hammer. I usually have an orc horde, but today I tried out HOK’s “Hyperspace Termites”. I mean, we have played Space Battle Hammer...”, Kohlhaas tried to explain.

“And that’s why you have come too late?”, Julia wanted to know.

“Yes...well...maybe...”

”Giant bug? Termites?” The blonde beauty narrowed her eyes to slits. “These things are more important than me?”

Frank paused. “No, of course not! I’m really sorry, I have just forgotten the time.”

Julia tapped her forehead at Frank. “Men!”, she moaned.

Fake Crisis

While the collectivist movement was still growing and countless Russians were united under the red-black flags, the first signs of a massive economic crisis in the whole sector “Eastern Europe” could be recognized. This social collapse was planned by the Lodge Brothers and should accelerate Uljanin’s revolution.

Collectivism had meanwhile reached Poland, Bohemia, Slovakia and the Balkans. New associations and organizations, that fought for Mardocho’s principles, were founded everywhere.

The Polish collectivist leader Gregor Wainizki made a rally with over 80000 people in Warsaw and railed not only against the capitalist exploiters and oligarchs, but even more against the “fascists and nationalists” in neighboring Belarus. He warned of the danger of a “new Russian imperialism” and called Artur Tschistokjow a “monster” and a “malicious tyrant”.

In the major supermarket chains, such as “Globe Food”, which were meanwhile dominating large parts of eastern Europe, the food prices exploded, while the media told the public that crop failures and transport problems were the cause of it.

Furthermore, the administrative sector “Eastern Europe” got no more credits from the Global Trust Fund, what led to its insolvency in the long run. While the chaos was rising, the media reported about proposed closures of large industry complexes that increased the fear of the population of unemployment immeasurably. Within one month, the whole sector “Eastern Europe” was shaken by a wave of indignation and anger.

However, all this played into the hands of Uljanin as the hidden powers in the background had planned it. During this time, the CASJ unfolded a feverish activity and the red-black revolution came over Russia like a dark shadow. Nevertheless, even the Rus benefited from the general discontent and the crumbling public order, although they had not the pecuniary resources of their rivals.

The summer of the year 2037 came, and with it an even bigger crisis. The food prices had already doubled and the number of unemployed and homeless people was growing at breakneck speed.

In many places, the people sank into a state of hopelessness and despair. Finally they hoped for Uljanin, who drove masses of neglected Russians like sheep into his organization.

CLJ squads took over the power in the streets of the Russian cities and the police had to behave passive by order from above. Where the Rus appeared, the collectivists immediately attacked them and were victorious in most cases, because of their greater number. On 15th of May, Vitali Uljanin spoke to a huge crowd in Moscow.

"We will soon be strong enough! It will not last long anymore, then Russia will be overrun by the collectivist revolution and capitalism will be destroyed", he preached, while countless people praised him like a Redeemer.

"One day, our maxims will reach even the last corner of this world! Then there will be only equality, freedom and justice - the kingdom of heaven on earth! No more poverty! No more hunger! Only peace and happiness!", exclaimed Uljanin, and the desperate were screaming in ecstasy.

The people raised their fists and waved their flags. Many of them seemed now to be ready to follow the collectivist leader even to the end of hell.

“We will make all equal! There can only be injustice because there are still differences. There are still different classes, cultures, races and religions. But in a world of collectivism, there will be just equality! Equality and eternal happiness!

We will not tolerate any social differences and will not allow any private property! Everything will belong to you! To the people!

The nations of this earth, we will melt together to one happy mankind. We will remove all the various religions, all the different cultures, to create a single world culture!

You, the poor and oppressed, will win not only all the power, no, you will also destroy the remnants of the ancient world in Russia, with root and branch.

And then everything will be new and good! Then we will build up the new order of eternal equality and justice!”

“Equality and justice!”, chorused the people and the asphalt was trembling under the thunder of countless voices. It was shaking with rage and brutal resoluteness.

“Look at this! Uljanin again, again huge masses of people”, said Frank, pointing at the TV screen.

Wilden walked through his apartment in the center of Minsk and muttered: “The revolution in Russia will come...”

“Yes, but not our revolution!”, added Kohlhaas.

“So it is! Collectivism is the final weapon of the Lodge Brothers to smash old Russia to pieces and to erase the Russian nation from history. If collectivism can’t be stopped, then the last nation of Europe, that still has some kind of inner substance, will be annihilated by the red-black revolution in the long term”, said the foreign minister.

The former businessman sat down in his chair and stared into space. Frank was silent and watched the television report about the CASJ in horror, then he turned off the TV.

“There are two ways, Frank...”, remarked Wilden.

“Oh, yeah? And which?”

“The first possibility is, that Uljanin is brought to power and nothing will really change - I mean the life situation of the ordinary Russians. People will continue to starve and even more chaos will rise. Finally, collectivism will turn out to be the big soap bubble that it is.

The second possibility is, that the collectivists succeed and establish their reign, because of the financial support of the World Government. Then they will bring the red-black rush into all neighboring countries. In return, our revolution and our movement will fall to dust, because we are not able to resist the power of collectivism and the World Government.”

Frank perked his eyebrows up. “What`s about Japan?”

“Japan? Foreign minister Mori has told me clearly, that Matsumoto will not interfere in the internal affairs of Russia. This would lead to another war with the World Union”, replied the old man.

“And if there would be a civil war in Russia? We against the collectivists and the GCF?”

“I don`t know it, Frank”, answered Wilden. “Perhaps the Japanese would help us in a situation like this, but I`m not sure. Nevertheless, we are too weak to survive a civil war...”

“And if the GCF attacks Belarus?”, asked Kohlhaas.

“I do not know! Japan can`t help us with its army. We are on our own here”, returned the foreign minister.

Frank stared thoughtfully at the wall. He was not able to find a solution and Wilden was helpless too.

Meanwhile, things took their course in Russia, while Artur Tschistokjow concentrated his actions on rebuilding his

country. He brought a national youth organization into being, which he called the Children of the Rus.

The young Belarusians were excited and joined the freedom movement in great numbers. The national television reported about the foundation meeting full of enthusiasm, and showed the president at a mass rally in Minsk.

A few days later, Tschistokjow went to Tallinn and supported his colleagues at the rehabilitation of the ailing agriculture and forestry of Estonia. The leader of the Rus was always working and allowed himself not even a single free day. He slept only four to five hours a night, and continued then to accomplish his countless tasks as a president of a renegade state. Piece by piece, the stress was devouring his body and even more his mind. Tschistokjow was often irritated and overwhelmed, and it still became worse.

In the early morning hours of the 4th of June, 2037, CLJ troopers took over the power in Nizhny Novgorod and Ryazan. The main administrative building and the police stations were occupied by the collectivists, while the officers were disarmed. The few GCF soldiers in these cities had already withdrawn to give Uljanin`s men free rein.

The chairman of the CASJ finally came to Nizhny Nowgorod and delivered a speech in front of a huge crowd of people. Now, his attack on Russia had reached the next level.

Shortly afterwards, the cities of Kazan and Samara were taken by the collectivists. Here and there, some Russian policemen still tried to keep back the aggressive hordes of CLJ troopers, but they had no chance against their numerical superiority. In Samara, over 40 policemen were killed, while the forces of collectivism finally conquered one city after another.

Then, the leading functionaries of the CASJ brought the red-black revolution to Yekaterinburg and Ufa, where the local administrative government was overthrown.

It did not take long, until the red-black flags were waving on the roofs of the city halls and all resistance had been eliminated. A few days later, Uljanin came to Yekaterinburg, declaring the victory of collectivism and the beginning of a new era of social justice and eternal equality.

And the red-black troopers marched on. Soon they had taken Celjabinsk and shortly afterwards Perm. Subsequently, they conquered the small towns in eastern Russia. On the 12th of June, Uljanin went to Astana in Kazakhstan and proclaimed the "Victory of the People".

In the last weeks, his CLJ units had overrun the country like a swarm of wasps, smashing all resistance with brutal violence. Finally, the revolution reached even Uzbekistan, where the non-Russian population followed the collectivists with great enthusiasm. Many Uzbeks joined Uljanin's CLJ squads, after all, the goateed man had promised them numerous privileges and preferred settlement areas in Russia.

The media reported about the revolution in the east of the administrative sector "Eastern Europe" in an objective and unemotional way. Although Uljanin had repeatedly threatened the powerful in Russia, his revolutionary measures and the many acts of violence of his followers were hardly condemned. When a reporter seemed to be "anxious", his alleged fear of the approaching revolutionaries was nothing but a part of a big theatre.

Until the end of June, the Siberian cities of Omsk, Novosibirsk and Krasnoyarsk were in the hands of the collectivists. In the course of this, it came to heavy clashes between Russians and Asians, which were quelled by CLJ units.

In August, all bigger cities in Eastern Russia were under collectivist control. Then Uljanin tried to conquer the rest of the country.

In Yaroslavl and Tver, in the north of Moscow, the red-black masses marched through the streets, occupied the cities and crushed all resistance. Their political opponents were arrested or just massacred in a night of the long knives. Several hundred people were executed by Uljanin's CLJ troopers as "enemies of the revolution" or "traitors of the workers".

During the riots in Yaroslavl and Tver, the World Government and the international media just looked away. And the collectivist revolution became more and more bloody and brutal. Soon the armed units of the CASJ were raging around Moscow, hunting down every Russian, who could become a future enemy of collectivism.

Meanwhile, Frank and Alf were back in Minsk. Kohlhaas had moved into an apartment in the western part of the Belarusian capital. Nevertheless, he still regarded Ivas as his real home.

The two rebels were sitting in front of their TV with a mixture of horror and amazement, watching the events in Russia.

"Uljanin overruns the whole country and they will just let him take over the power!", gasped Frank and took a sip from his beer bottle.

"This is nothing but a hypocritical game!", growled Alf.

"There has even been a collectivist demonstration in Paris yesterday. The cops haven't done anything to stop the so called revolutionaries. Can you still remember, when they have slaughtered the rebellious citizens after our bomb attempt on Wechsler?"

"Yes, of course!", said Bäumer angrily.

“What shall we do now? Waiting until Russia and the rest of Europe will be flooded by the collectivist wave?”, wailed Kohlhaas.

Bäumer had no answer. However, Artur Tschistokjow had one and sent for his general on the next day.

Frank went through the front door of the pompous, old hotel “Himmelblick” in the heart of Minsk. A porter in a blue uniform nodded at him with a smile and escorted Kohlhaas to the upper floor. Shortly afterwards, the young man reached a large conference hall and already heard Artur Tschistokjow ranting in Russian.

“Ah, General Kohlhaas...”, remarked the leader of the freedom movement when Frank entered the room. That was all he said to his delay.

The other members of Tschistokjow’s staff were already there. It were the entire cabinets of Belarus and the three Baltic countries. Moreover, the complete leadership of the Freedom Movement of the Rus.

Artur spoke only Russian today. This time, there was no special treatment for his two German friends. But Frank’s language skills were already good enough so that he hardly had any communication problems.

“Russia has descended into chaos. The capitalist and collectivist conspiracy works hand in hand, while Uljanin’s so called revolution moves from east to west, rolling faster and faster across the country. Soon the red-black flood will have swept away all opposition. Nobody can stop them - except from us!”, he shouted.

Dr. Gugin answered: “Mr. Tschistokjow, shouldn’t we wait how everything develops?”

A burly man with an angular face interjected: “How should the situation develop? Uljanin will overrun Russia and the Ukraine if it goes on like that.”

The Belarusian president brandished his index finger like a spear. "Now it is time to start our own offensive! Russia is drowning in chaos, the police does not know what to do. The GCF soldiers have left the big cities to give the collectivists free rein. This is also a chance for us!"

"But the Global Control Force will immediately come back if we show up!", said a chapter leader.

"Yes, perhaps! Anyway, the collectivists will cause a state of anarchy all over Russia in the next weeks. They will attack the remnants of the Russian police and furthermore start a crusade against their political opponents. We should at least try to take control in the cities of western Russia to build up a frontlinie against Uljanin`s flood", lectured the president.

Wilden agreed with Tschistokjow and nodded. Frank listened to everything and didn`t say a word.

"I am sceptic, Mr. President. In my eyes, we will wear our people against a too powerful enemy", warned Gregori Lossow, the defense minister.

Meanwhile, Artur Tschistokjow had become more and more hectic, trying to make his position understandable: "If Uljanin`s revolution is once established everywhere and the collectivists have access to the entire power structure in Russia, then it will be much more difficult for us to stop them.

Millions of Russians yearn for renewal and not everyone likes Uljanin, especially in western Russia. We must act now, because now there is chaos everywhere!"

Lossow tried to say something, but Tschistokjow interrupted him. "We will concentrate all our forces on the political conquest of the bigger cities in western Russia. Perhaps we can even manage it to take St. Petersburg."

Some of the other men could not believe their ears and shook their heads..

“St. Petersburg? This is crazy, Mr. Tschistokjow!”, they exclaimed in disbelief.

“It is worth a try! Anyway, this is an order! Tomorrow we will start our counterattack!”, shouted Tschistokjow and finally ended the conference.

The most of his followers were confused and went outside, while the Belarusian president waved Frank nearer.

“You will be the general of the Varangian Guard, Frank!”, said Tschistokjow in German.

Kohlhaas was puzzled. “What is the Varangian Guard?”

The Varangian Guard

On the next day, Frank Kohlhaas knew what the Varangian Guard was. Artur Tschistokjow and Peter Ulljewski had build up this elite unit of the Volksarmee a few weeks ago. It consisted of 1000 men. The best and most fanatical fighters from Belarus and the Baltic countries had been combined in it and now Frank should lead them.

The men had gathered in rank and file on the courtyard of the main barracks in Minsk and were waiting for him. Early in the morning, a jeep had brought Kohlhaas to his new unit. The General jumped out of the vehicle and looked at his soldiers with a broad smile.

Many of them knew him, because they had already fought under his command in the trooper units of the freedom movement. The tall soldiers smiled back and stood at attention.

”Ja priwjestowaju wasch, Soldati!” , shouted Frank.

“Mej priwjestowajem wij, General Gollchaas!” , answered the Varagians.

Frank grinned. “Chorochow!”

A little later, the general and his men hit the road and drove to Pskov, a Russian town near the Latvian border, where they were already awaited by a huge mass of Rus.

Artur Tschistokjow led to the growing crowd to the municipal building. Thousands of people followed him and after a few hours, over 30000 men and women had gathered in the city center.

Frank's troopers came on trucks and put some groups of armed collectivists to rout. Near the city center, the Varangians were attacked by CLJ men again, who had lied in wait in the streets.

They stopped immediately and fired back. After a few minutes, the collectivists ran away and fled right into the arms of the Varagians on the following trucks, who mowed them down with their assault rifles.

The local police officers were totally overwhelmed with a sudden strike like this and had apparently no desire to fight against Tschistokjow`s armed units. So the police station of the city was occupied without any problems and the surprised officers were disarmed. Finally, Tschistokjow walked under the loud cheers of his supporters into the town hall and announced the liberation of the city. All localities between Pskov and Velikie Luki were simultaneously occupied by the Rus and Peter Ulljewski`s DSR units immediately began to arrest and liquidate the collectivist leaders in this region.

In contrast, Velikie Luki had become a place of chaos and anarchy. Some CLJ units and the local collectivist organization were preparing the takeover of the city, as they, just one day after the conquest of Pskov, were surprised by the Rus.

The hastily erected barricades of the CLJ men in the inner city were surrounded by Frank`s motorized Varangian Guard and the collectivists were forced to surrender. Soon after, several hundred armed troopers marched through the streets and Tschistokjow followed them. The Russian policemen joined the crowd and most of them were even grateful, that the Rus had eliminated the collectivist menace. Ultimately, Tschistokjow`s followers gathered near the main administrative building and finally occupied it.

Alfred Bäumer came, at the head of a group of troopers in gray shirts, waving his hands, when he recognized his best friend in the distance.

“Frank!”, he shouted.

Kohlhaas jumped from the truck and gave Alf a hug. "Bäumer, you're here too?"

The tall man chuckled. "Of course, Wilden has tortured my nerves for days and finally sent me to this beautiful place. No revolution without uncle Alf!"

"We have made it! Velikie Luki is in our hands!" Kohlhaas raised his fist.

"Hey, Frank, I want to join your motorized elite unit. You can tell this to Artur!", said Alf and seemed to be a bit jealous.

"Ok, if you like. I would be glad, of course...", replied the general.

"Yes, I hope so. I can compete with any of these Russians there on the truck", grumbled Bäumer, giving his friend a wink.

"Well, all right, Mr. Bäumer! Welcome to the Varangian Guard, the elite of the elite!", boasted Kohlhaas and Alf climbed on a vehicle.

With roaring engines, the truck convoy drove away while the rest of the Rus was marching through the city, singing, and finally listening to Tschistokjow's speech.

Till the end of the day, the Varangians hunted down the collectivists in the small villages around Velikie Luki and returned to the city in the night. Meanwhile, the dragon head banner was waving on the roof of the town hall.

While the public order was crumbling everywhere in Russia, Tschistokjow's men tried to conquer the rural areas around Smolensk.

In Pocinok, three of them were shot by CLJ troopers at the end of August. A few days later, several hundred angry Rus came to the village and searched for the murderers of their comrades. They stormed the house of the local collectivist leader and killed him. Then they shot eight young men, who had been referred to them as members of the CASJ by the

frightened inhabitants. Subsequently, Artur Tschistokjow criticized some of his group leaders energetically, because of this brutal retaliation, but many of his troopers still backed this kind of counterterror. After they had brought the region under control, the Rus came back to Smolensk on 5th of September. And this time, they were prepared...

"Believe me, the collectivists in western Russia are not as strong as around Moscow or in the eastern parts of the land. Here, the CASJ is still under construction and this time they are not lead by Uljanin", remarked Frank confidently and adjusted his uniform.

Alf looked nervously around, while his friend clapped him on the shoulder. "Keep cool. Today we will smash them!", he said quietly.

The truck convoy drove through the matutinal dawn in the direction of Smolensk. An atmosphere of hate and tension had come over the city again. The collectivists and the Russian police were waiting in the city center and this time they were even supported by a small force of GCF soldiers. Some people hurried across the street and tried to hide, when they saw the trucks of the Varangian Guard coming closer, others greeted friendly and a couple of young girls even threw flowers out of a window.

On some houses in the city center, the old national flag of Russia or dragon head banners could be seen, on others hung the red-black flags of collectivism. The stuffy air of this day promised a discharge in smoke and death.

Frank`s cellphone rang, it was Artur Tschistokjow. "Oh, really? Well, we`ll see!", heard Alf him say after half a minute, then Kohlhaas put the cellphone back into his pocket.

"Several hundred GCF soldiers are in the city center. They even have some anti-riot tanks", explained Frank.

“Anti-riot tanks?”, stammered Alf and swallowed.

“Yes, but we have something to stop them!”, said Kohlhaas, staring across the street.

The crowd of Tschistokjow`s supporters was still growing, thousands of Russians had meanwhile gathered under the dragon head flag.

At 9.00 o`clock in the morning, about 20000 people marched towards the inner city, while 17000 were still waiting in the east of Smolensk. Artur himself led the bigger group. The yelling and chanting demonstrators marched through the streets, making a deafening noise, while the Varangian Guard stayed away from them and was operating independently. The truck convoy stopped and Frank`s men searched the streets for collectivists. Then they drove on, towards the inner city, where they immediately encountered Uljanin`s CLJ units.

“Here they are!”, shouted Kohlhaas. “Dawaj! Dawaj!”

The Varangians jumped out of their trucks and caught sight of a several hundred collectivists who were screaming insults and threats at them. Kohlhaas took his radio and gave some commands, three of the trucks disappeared in a side street.

“Now we`ll give these bastards a grilling!”, he said to Alf grimly.

Only seconds later, cobblestones rained down on the truck and a bullet cut through the air. With a loud clang the windshield of the vehicle bursted and some more shots could be heard.

”Get down!”

Bäumer jumped behind the truck. Frank and a group of Varangians followed him.

“Dirty Rus scum! Today you will be stomped!”, yelled the collectivists.

Now whole clouds of cobblestones flew through the air and a Molotov cocktail hit one of the trucks. The front part of it immediately burst into flames.

“Why don’t we shoot back?”, whispered Alf.

“Wait, the others will charge them from behind!”, Frank gave him to understand and loaded his rifle.

A few minutes later, three trucks appeared in the back of the collectivist mob and stopped with squeaky tires, while the CLJ men were silent for a moment.

“Get them!”, shouted Frank at the top of his lungs, jumping up and raising the rifle into the air. Then the Varangians attacked their enemies from two sides.

A volley from automatic gunfire hit the swarm of surprised collectivists and the first of them were riddled with bullets. They started to scream, tried to find cover and finally fled in all directions. Frank and the others drove them right into the arms of the Varangians behind them, who immediately shot them down with their machine guns. A moment later, the enemy was wiped out or was turning tail and run. Some dozens of dead or heavily wounded CLJ troopers were lying on the asphalt in pools of blood. Frank and Alf hurried forward and called the Varangians together.

“What shall we do now, general?”, asked one of them.

Kohlhaas looked at him with a pugnacious glance and ordered his soldiers to get back into the trucks. The convoy drove through some dirty streets and finally reached the center of Smolensk. Loud screaming men with dragon head flags in their hands were marching down the street in front of them. This time it were their comrades.

The demonstrating Rus cheered, when they saw the truck convoy and made way for the Varangians. After a while, about 40000 people had gathered in the center of Smolensk and the GCF soldiers moved forward, as soon as they saw the demonstrators appearing in the distance. Thousands of

collectivists and some units of armed CLJ men followed them.

"Here we are now!" Alf pointed at the city map on his DC-Stick.

"Well, we will attack them immediately! First the GCF soldiers, and then the rest", said Kohlhaas and fumbled nervously around on a button of his uniform jacket.

The Varangians heard the collectivists scream in the side streets around them, but the truck convoy unwaveringly sped further and broke through a police barrier. The officers jumped aside and hit the dirt.

"Our trucks are coming through the Novo Park, over the flank!", shouted general Kohlhaas into his radio, while the transport vehicles raced forward at breakneck speed. Shortly afterwards, the enemy was in sight.

"Get off the trucks!", yelled Alf at some Russians.

The Varangians reacted immediately and prepared for the attack on the GCF soldiers and the collectivists, who seemed to be irritated because of their sudden appearance.

"Fire!", screamed Frank and his men sent a storm of bullets in the direction of Uljanin`s troopers.

Dozens of GCF soldiers fell as under the strike of a giant scythe, even before they had found cover. The servants of the World Government tried to retreat, but the Varangians quickly encircled them and the fight turned into a bloodbath. Shortly afterwards, they came over the collectivists, who had already begun to attack the demonstrating Rus in front of them. Frank and Alf emptied one magazine after another, hurled hand grenades into the collectivist swarms and raged like berserks. The other Varangians followed their example, and within a short time, the collectivists and GCF soldiers were put to flight.

They ran through the streets, throwing their red-black flags to the ground, while the Rus chased them with burning hatred. Tschistokjow`s followers beat them to death with clubs, iron bars and axes or struck them down with their guns. In the end, the mass flight of the collectivists ended in a massacre.

After about two hours, the Rus had taken Smolensk. Hundreds of dead and wounded were covering the streets of the inner city, while the dragon head flag was waving on the top of the town hall. Artur Tschistokjow had never seen a slaughter like this before – except for the infamous rally in Gomel. Anyway, this time his men had won.

The lightning attack of the motorized Varangian Guard had hit the enemy like a hammer blow. Neither the collectivists nor the GCF soldiers had had a chance against the 1000 best-trained and highly motivated elite soldiers of the Volksarmee.

So they had to complain heavy casualties. About 80 GCF soldiers had been killed, furthermore over 500 collectivists. On the same day, Peter Ulljewski`s men had occupied the headquarter of the CASJ in the inner city of Smolensk. In the course of this operation, the DSR troopers had hanged the local CASJ chapter leader and his staff members.

There was no more doubt, Smolensk had witnessed the prelude to a civil war and the brutal manner of the Rus, that had this time been similar to Uljanin`s methods, shocked Tschistokjow`s rivals in the western part of Russia significantly.

But the collectivist movement had meanwhile conquered a lot of other cities, where all “counterrevolutionaries” had been arrested or executed by the CLJ. In the north of Moscow, for example in Vologda and Kostroma, the armed units of the CASJ and the Russian police fought against

each other for days, but in the end the collectivists succeeded. Uljanin`s revolution was now marching along the Volga. Mass demonstrations swept through Ulyanovsk and Syzran in early September. A few days later, the collectivists took over the cities and finally came to Balakovo, where their leader spoke in front of over 100000 people.

No one dared to resist the red-black masses in Balakovo, and after they had occupied the city, the troopers of the CLJ killed everyone on open street, who was considered to be an “enemy of justice and equality”.

The international media hardly reported about these bloody excesses or even tried to justify the brutal methods of the collectivists. Only the Rus were slandered once more and Russian television called them “terrorists” and “murderers”. Zarizyn should become the next stage of Uljanin`s revolution. Without any resistance, the CASJ took control over the city and expanded its influence towards the Black Sea. Rostov was occupied and conquered by the CLJ, while the street terror started to rage.

Political opponents were hunted down, shot and hanged on the market places and in the streets. Within a single day, several hundred people were liquidated by CLJ squads. A large part of Uljanin`s victims were middle class Russians, furthermore patriots, professed christians, so called intellectuals or nonconformist thinkers. At the end of September, the collectivist tide even reached the Ukrainian border and finally came over Moscow.

In the meantime, the Rus had established themselves in Bryansk after they had driven their opponents out of the city. Frank and countless other fighters carried the dragon head flag now further to the south and occupied a number of smaller towns.

Soon after, the city of Klincy and the surrounding villages were captured by some units of the Volksarmee. Tschistokjow`s followers continued with their advance until they finally reached Orel and Kursk. This time, the widespread chaos and the lethargic attitude of the security forces made it easy to takeover these two cities as well, what gave the freedom movement a much better strategical position. But it was impossible to advance to central Russia. The heart of the country was too far away from more or less safe Belarus and meanwhile the collectivists were ruling over it.

“In Nowgorod, the collectivists are not all too strong yet, their strongholds are in eastern and central Russia”, said Frank, looking expectantly at Tschistokjow.

“Maybe you`re right”, answered the rebel leader, scratching his head.

“We must lose no time. The rural region around Nowgorod is large and the collectivists will have problems to overrun it if we occupy the villages at first”, explained Kohlhaas.

The President was musing for a moment, then he returned: “This is a good strategy, Frank! We need to get a strong position in St. Petersburg, Nowgorod could become the key for it!”

“Yes, exactly! And around Nowgorod is a huge rural area, which extends up to Rybinsk. We must gain control over these region, as soon as possible.”

“Anyway, Uljanin will take over Moscow. One way or another!”, said Tschsitokjow angrily.

“Yes, and we are not able to stop him! Nevertheless, we have to conquer the western part of Russia. That`s all we can do at present!”

“And then we will expand our influence to the northern Ukraine. At first Nowgorod, then Ukraine”, remarked the Belarusian head of state in German and smiled.

“The collectivists will occupy the region around Donez and probably even some other areas in the Russian west. In return, we should try to take over Kiev.”

“Kiev!” Artur looked a little melancholically at his German friends. “I was born there. My hometown. In Kiev, we have a very active group of our organization, Frank!”

“All groups in the Ukraine shall immediately start with a propaganda campaign. Demonstrating, distributing leaflets and so on. We have to win as much sympathy as possible among the people.”

Tschistokjow only showed a simper. “There will be civil war in Russia. I’m sure. It is only a question of time, my friends. But how can we survive a conflict like this?”

General Kohlhaas shrugged his shoulders. “I don’t know, Artur! The superiority of our enemies is immense, but we have to try it anyway.”

“Well, then we should conquer Nowgorod at first. I’m counting on you and the Varangian Guard”, said the leader of the Rus and sat effately down on his chair.

Frank was happy that Alf was there. About hundred men of the Varangian Guard and he were sleeping tonight in an empty gym. When everything was quiet and Frank could only hear the quiet breathing and snoring of his soldiers, he was sometimes tortured by scattered thoughts. That night, he was depressive once again. The last few months, and the last years as well, had been a never-ending battle. The young man stared at the crumbling ceiling of the hall and let the thoughts wander through his head.

This state of rumination he had always tried to suppress, but this time, Kohlhaas wasn’t able to ignore his inner feelings

anymore. The blinders, which he had given to himself, had vanished for a moment, so that he could not avoid it to reflect about his life.

Again and again, Julia's face appeared in front of his mind's eye and he had to admit himself that he was still neglecting her. Nevertheless, Frank loved her, from the bottom of his heart, but he was always on the road. Tonight he slept in Pskov, a Russian city he had never heard of before. Soon they would advance to Nowgorod. And afterwards, Frank would be sent elsewhere.

"In the end, everybody has a part of me, but nevertheless I will die alone", he thought to himself, restlessly turning around in his sleeping bag.

"I will call her tomorrow", he promised to himself in moments like that - to forget it again on the next day. It had always been the same in the last years. Frank was always fighting somewhere, always on the run, from Japan to Russia to elsewhere. And the young man feared, that it would go on forever in this vein.

Sad and frustrated, he sighed quietly. Was this the price for all the heroism? And was he a hero anyway? Maybe tomorrow everything would turn out to be an illusion, a soap bubble that would burst and nothing would remain of it...

Artur Tschistokjow, who was in those days more a general than a statesman, and his men took Nowgorod. This time everything ended without bloodshed. The collectivists did not resist and most of the policemen defected to the Rus. The motorized Varangians and the trooper units with their trucks and assault rifles had been intimidating enough for their enemies.

The ordinary citizens of Nowgorod cheered and finally hoped for order and peace. Russia flags shyly hung out of some windows, while a group of young women was

throwing bouquets at the Rus, that were marching through the inner city. Impatiently, the people clogged the main streets to see the rebel leader from Belarus. Many inhabitants of Nowgorod had feared the collectivists and now they praised Tschistokjow as their protector and liberator. Finally, the head of the freedom movement delivered a speech in front of over 70000 people.

Frank and Alf breathed again at the end of this day. There hadn't been any fights, and the opponents had already fled. Several regiments of the Volksarmee and some trooper units secured the occupied cities in western Russia, while the political functionaries of the freedom movement tried to restore order.

The occupation of these border towns was an initial success, but measured against the fact, that the collectivists already controlled great parts of Russia, it was hardly worth mentioning.

In the middle of October, Uljanin came to Moscow and reorganized his party. Numerous rallies and parades, a sea of red-black flags and angry masses, stirred up the Russian metropolis and its 16 million inhabitants. Occasionally, the Russian police was ignoring their orders from above and tried to stop the collectivist mobs. But they were chanceless. On the 20th of October, bloody barricade fights began and about 50000 members of the CASJ attacked the police. The riots lasted for several days and Uljanin's men left a trace of devastation all over Moscow.

Not a single GCF soldier had been sent out to protect the city and not single a tank or Skydragon had appeared. The international forces had long retreated, leaving the helpless policemen alone, while the wrath of the collectivists came over them. It didn't take long, until the Russian police had

surrendered. Now the streets of the Russian capital belonged to Uljanin`s CLJ squads.

Kuluga and Tula, two cities in the south of Moscow, were also overrun by the red-black revolution, that had seized the old Russian capital like a raging wildfire. The members of the CASJ were now only waiting for Uljanin, who wanted to proclaim the collectivist victory in the heart of Russia`s most important metropolis.

In the meantime, CLJ units conquered Serpuhov and Kolomna and the entire south of Moscow. Finally, the leader of the CASJ followed them with his staff.

On the 30th of October, the collectivists occupied the Kremlin and the governor of the administrative sector "Eastern Europe", Maxim Blumenew, abdicated. Uljanin let him leave the city and Blumenew flew to North America a few days later.

"Artur Tschistokjow - The savior of Belarus will give you work and safety!", could be read under the image of the leader of the freedom movement, which was printed on the small data disc in Frank`s hand. The general, lost in thought, beheld the photo of the blonde man with a serious face. Anyone looking at it, could foresee the eerie power and strength of this fanatical revolutionary.

Meanwhile, Frank could repeat almost every word of the video presentation on this disc. He and his Varangians had already distributed thousands of them in the last weeks. Yes, he had watched the short propaganda movie countless times. The success of Tschistokjow`s regiment was shown to the viewer, while the video presentation warned of the "Gravedigger of Russia", Vitali Uljanin, in the same breath. The head of the CASJ was the mass murderer, the traitor, the red-black messenger of terror and so on. The same content was, only slightly compressed, on the leaflets, which

were distributed by the Rus in great numbers all over western Russia.

Artur Tschistokjow was the “savior”, Uljanin was the “devil” and the “Agent of the Lodge Brothers”. The freedom movement wanted to rescue Russia, the collectivists wanted to destroy it. Black and white, good and evil - this was the soul and the core of all propaganda and it would always work well, thought Frank.

Meanwhile, he had dedicated himself to Tschistokjow, like a disciple to his Redeemer. Frank had fought and killed for this man, and he was still on the front, risking his life over and over again. And the same did his friend Alf and all the other Rus.

“I know you since several years now, but you are still a stranger for me, my friend”, whispered Frank, staring at Tschistokjow’s photo.

Then he looked briefly around. Only some loud talking soldiers stood at the other end of the warehouse and smoked. Kohlhaas was sitting on a large cardboard box and was glad if no one was bothering him today with any new orders or vanities.

“I trust you, like a baby trusts its mother”, it flashed through the general’s mind as his eyes examined Tschistokjow’s charismatic, expressive facial features. “Don’t ever deceive me, Artur!”

As the word “mother” came back into Frank’s mind, he thought of her for a short moment. He had almost forgotten his mother, as he admitted and felt guilty. And it was the same with his father and his sister, who were already dead since several years. Could they see him now? Now, as he was sitting here in this gray warehouse, on a box, in the outskirts of Minsk? What would his father say? What would his mother think about him? What would his parents think of all this here? Would they be proud to have a son, who was

admired by his comrades, because he was a great killer? Frank came to no conclusion and ultimately he said to himself, that he alone was carrying the responsibility for his deeds and could only be judged by God. This world had become a vale of tears, a huge battlefield and again and again Frank said to himself, that he was fighting for a better future.

“Killing today, for a better tomorrow...”, muttered Kohlhaas and remembered the text of an old heavy metal song from his youth. Distraughtly, he shook his head because of all these absurd ideas.

“This world has lost its mind! You are the only light in this night full of madness and hatred”, he whispered and stared at Tschistokjow`s picture. He drilled his gaze into the portrait and meticulously studied every feature of the rebel leader.

“The good thing is, that this photo can not change. It can never change, it will always be as it is. An unchanging thing that can not be falsified. It must remain unchangeable - forever! Yes, this is good and true. You are true, Artur Tschistokjow. There can`t be any doubt”, muttered Kohlhaas.

”Do not disappoint me, my friend! At least, one thing on this damn planet must remain true and honest...”

The chairman of the Collectivist Association for Social Justice looked down on the huge mass around him. He was standing on a small stage, surrounded by a roaring, red-black crowd, that lusted for every word he said. Meanwhile, the cunning man had nearly fulfilled the task, the elders had given to him. Moscow was drowning in the collectivist flood, which had been unleashed by him. Now, only the west of Russia had to be conquered by his men. And after this, they would take the Ukraine and then the revolution would even reach central Asia. Afterwards, the collectivists would take

over Poland, the Czech Republic and finally western Europe.

Uljanin hoped, that the Council of the 13 would allow it to him one day, to carry the flag of collectivism around the world. But it depended on the decisions of the wise. It had to be a part of the Great Plan, because every action had to serve it. Uljanin was merely a lackey, an agent, but he had begun to love his role.

“We will prevail! Forever! The nations of the earth shall serve us and creep through the dust beneath our feet. We will devour them with skin and hair”, the collectivist leader said quietly to himself and smiled.

The people in front of him were crying, shouting and screaming, a riptide of human beings, flooding through the streets of Moscow.

“Freedom! Equality! Justice!”, it resounded out of tens of thousands of throats.

The head of the collectivist movement looked at his followers with a slight tang of contempt. Many of these men, who praised him today, were desperate, sad creatures. They had dirty faces and looked starved, emaciated, unshaven, unwashed and pale. But they were eager to follow his orders.

Nevertheless, some of them, though not the largest part of the collectivist mass, were not poor. For example the students of the university of Moscow, who had joined the CASJ. Many of these young academics had become functionaries in the collectivist movement and they liked it to theorize in front of the poor, reciting Mardochow`s maxims a thousand times.

Often, these sassy, self-righteous young graduates told the despaired and poor people around them, how Mardochow and Uljanin would end their pain one day. However, most of the uneducated men and women did not understand much

of what they preached them, but the promise of a better future always sounded like music in their ears.

“The revolution has conquered Moscow!”, shouted Vitali Uljanin with a trembling voice, throwing his arms into the air. The human carpet around him started to roar and the sea of red-black flags waved back and forth.

“Now it is done! You will be free! You will find social justice! Equality! Equality! Equality!”, screamed Uljanin, holding his fist high.

His followers answered him with the same gesture and chorused: “Equality! Equality!”

“But before I can save you, my collectivist brothers, we have to free also the rest of Russia from the capitalist exploiters and Tschistokjow’s fascist hordes!

These reactionist murderers have occupied several towns in the west, but we will drive them back! We will exterminate this criminal breed, with root and branch!

They are responsible for the fact, that I can not help you so far! They are to blame, if you are still hungry and I can not accomplish my work for the great equality! The Rus are the enemies of our revolution and the enemies of Russia!”

The seething mass answered with a deafening, hate-filled screaming, while thousands of men were brandishing clubs, axes and all kinds of other weapons. They looked archaic and barbaric, like a horde of ravenous prehistoric men.

“We start today, everything that keeps us away from eternal equality must be destroyed! Follow me, my brothers! Follows me, wherever I lead you to, because I will lead you into a bright future!”

The people around Uljanin fell into a feverish frenzy and were overturned by boundless enthusiasm. The leader of the CASJ smiled contentedly down on them. How easy it was, to manipulate the masses.

Death Toll for Ivas

Sven smiled and shook Frank`s hand. Then he went into the living room, where Alf was lying on the sofa. It seemed that Kohlhaas apartment in Minsk had meanwhile become his second home, because Bäumer was hanging around here since days.

“Sven! That's a surprise!”, said Bäumer, straightened up and turned off the television.

“I have been on the road in the villages around Nowgorod, with loudspeaker vans. That was an exhausting campaign”, answered Sven, while Frank gave him a soda.

“Nice that you visit us, old boy. We have been on the road too and haven`t seen Ivas for a long time”, explained Kohlhaas. “What`s about the other villagers?”

“They are constantly working for the Rus. Distributing pamphlets, driving around with loudspeaker vans, demonstrating and so on”, replied the young man who had been maimed in the Japanese war.

His remaining eye was staring at Frank and Alfred. Then he smiled. “What has happened in Smolensk?”

Kohlhaas grinned. “You have watched TV, haven`t you?”
”Yes!”

”Oh, we have just kicked the asses of some collectivists and GCF soldiers. My Varangian Guard and me”, said Frank proudly.

”A great success, without any doubt. Good work, general!”, remarked the guest from Ivas.

“Sven?”

”Yes!”

”I would be glad if you join my Varangian corps!”

The young man with the disfigured face pondered for a moment and answered: "No, Frank! I've already lost one eye and three fingers in the Japanese war. Moreover, I'm in the first rank at our demonstrations and this is already dangerous enough. I lead the boys from Ivas. Meanwhile, we are a punchy team."

"Are those teenage boys, who have made that crap back then in the neighboring village, still active?", asked Alf.

Sven laughed. "Yes, the whole youth of Ivas is still active. These boys have helped us in a lot of propaganda campaigns. Meanwhile, they are all right."

"And Ziegler?"

"Well, Michael is no longer a wimp. He has been with us at the first demonstration in Smolensk and was beaten up by some collectivists. But he is nevertheless still active. You can count on him."

Frank sighed. "I'm missing Ivas so much! Sometimes I think my ass will one day end up somewhere in Mongolia. Rallies here and street fights there – this whole shit makes me sick!"

Bäumer perked his eyebrows up and nodded. Sven clapped Frank with his hand, which had only two fingers, on the shoulder and said: "We have no time to rest too, my friend. Even the propaganda units are working around the clock. But what shall I say, you know all this..."

"Have you seen Julia again?", inquired Kohlhaas.

"I haven't been in Ivas all too often, Frank. She was in Steffen de Vries little shop, when I saw her last time", returned the guest.

"Aha, I will call her tonight...", muttered Frank quietly.

Sven Weber stayed overnight in Frank's apartment and the three men drunk a lot of alcohol. On the next morning, the guest from Ivas met with some other Rus and finally drove

to Kromy, a town south of Orel, to distribute the lately designed pamphlet "Who are the Powers Behind Vitali Uljanin?".

There had been a lot of reports on Belarusian television about this topic to enlighten the public about Uljanin's true identity and the forces behind his pseudo-revolution. The collectivist leader was exposed as an agent of the World Government, while his ideology was dismantled by Tschistokjow himself.

With tens of thousands of data discs and leaflets, which were distributed throughout the western part of Russia, and a big information campaign on the Internet, the Freedom Movement of the Rus started a large-scale assault on the leader of the CASJ.

All in all, the operation was very successful and reached millions of Russians who slowly began to scrutinize the collectivist ideology. Uljanin feared this campaign more than anything else.

When Frank and Alfred brought their friend to the door on the next morning, they could not imagine, that they would never see him again. Sven Weber paid for participating in the awareness campaign with his life.

The tireless fighter, who had already sacrificed so much in his young life, was killed by a group of collectivists in Kromy. It happened in the early evening hours in a little side street. The murderers shot Sven three times in the temple. Moreover, two of his Russian comrades were seriously injured. One of them died on the way to the hospital. Sven Weber had instantly been dead, as Frank and Alfred learned a few days later from the Rus, who had survived the assassination attempt.

Thorsten Wilden had finally broken the terrible news to Kohlhaas, and the general had just gaped speechlessly. At first, Frank had hardly been able to believe it.

Shortly afterwards, Bäumer knew it too and likewise stared into space with a deep shock in his guts. Their best friend had been murdered. Some collectivists had ended his life in a city, whose name Frank and Alf had never heard before.

“What the hell means “ubogij”?”, asked Alf glumly, trying to decipher the Cyrillic text on the computer screen.

“What?”, he heard from behind. Frank came.

“I’m on the website of the collectivist district chapter of Kursk. Here is something about the killing of Sven!”

Kohlhaas browsed his digital dictionary on the DC-Stick and stared at the screen. His eyes became two narrow slits.

“Ubogij? It means “crippled”! They write: “Ugly, crippled Rus mutant shot in Kromy!”. Those damn rats!”, he hissed.

Shortly thereafter, Frank translated also the rest of the text and read it out to his friend: “Some of Tschistokjow’s reactionary agitators had obviously had the illusion, that they could spread their deceitful propaganda in our city, and came to Kromy.

After the Rus had distributed their stupid leaflets for several hours, they finally got what they deserved. We made them pay for their insolence!

A group of collectivist activists wanted to talk to the Rus, but Tschistokjow’s fascist thugs immediately became aggressive and attacked us. So we had no other chance, than defending ourselves.

Two members of the freedom movement, including a particularly more than ugly guy, that Artur Tschistokjow had apparently sent to Kromy to scare us, were fatally injured. This incident is hopefully a lesson for the reactionary Rus scum. Stay away from our city! We do not tolerate any Rus in Kromy! Down with Artur Tschistokjow and his lies!”

“They deride Sven’s death!”, growled Bäumer and closed the website.

“They’ll soon be laughing on the other side of their faces! We should visit Kromy with some of our Varagians to cut some throats”, said Frank angrily.

“Forget it! Artur would never allow this. The Varangians are no tool of our personal revenge...”

“Yeah, I know that!”, grumbled Frank back and left the room.

The body of Sven Weber was brought to Ivas. Frank and Alfred returned to their home village to pay him the last respect. It was an overcast morning. The two rebels had borrowed suits and ties from some acquaintances, because today Sven's funeral was expecting them.

A restless night had tormented Frank and he had once again plunged into terrible dreams and visions. He had hardly slept a wink, and it was the same with Alf.

They were still too sad and confused to be able to feel hatred and vindictiveness. Again and again, Sven's face appeared in their minds and mostly it was his youthful and beautiful face, before the mission of war in Japan.

Wilden was already waiting at the door and picked them up. Julia and Agatha stood behind him, welcoming them reservedly. Then they went to the small cemetery outside of Ivas.

Almost every villager and hundreds of comrades from Belarus, Russia and the Baltic countries, who had learned to know Sven Weber during his tireless activities, had gathered there. Artur Tschistokjow had come too. He just shook hands without saying a word.

Somewhere among the mourners in their black suits, Frank could hear Sven`s mother and his father, sobbing quietly. There he lay, in a flower adorned coffin, the beloved son, cold and dead, with three bullet holes in his head. Frank and Alfred had seen him last night, laid out in the old church of Ivas.

Gray and bloodless, the friend had rested in his coffin, while his one eye had glassy stared into nothingness. The frozen hands had lain on Sven`s breast and the dried blood on his temple had still been in his blonde hair.

The two tough guys had wept like children, when they had seen him like this. Ultimately, they had stroked him one last time over his head, thankful for all the happy hours he had given to them. Then they had wished him a good journey to the other side, where the ancestors were waiting for him.

Thorsten Wilden delivered the eulogy in front of the villagers and the other funeral guests, strangely hesitant and often interrupted by tears. This time he was not the sovereign village boss and foreign minister, because all his proverbial dispassion had vanished.

In silence, the endless funeral procession was walking through the streets of Ivas and repeatedly a faint crying ended the cruel silence. Frank and Alfred threw a shovel of earth on the coffin of their good friend, then they went back home. With bowed heads and deeply grieved.

“Without Sven, we both had died in “Big Eye”, muttered Frank and turned around to Alf.

The giant just nodded and tried to hide his tears in front of his friend. Silently, he was walking ahead, while Kohlhaas was slowly tagging behind him.

Julia did her best to reassure Frank and Alfred. Since days, the two men talked about nothing else than bloody retribution .

”This won` t bring Sven back!”, she said again and again, but the minds of the rebels were meanwhile obsessed by the lust for revenge.

However, they would get enough opportunities to spill blood in the future and their constant outbursts of sadness and

anger were not very wise. But nevertheless, it was their way to deal with the death of their best friend.

“His sacrifice must not be in vain!”, preached Kohlhaas, but this phrase could hardly alleviate his grief.

In November, the rebels finally returned to Belarus. Julia Wilden came with them and spent a few days in Minsk. Frank asked her several times if she would move one day to the capital of Belarus and the young woman promised him to think about it.

Frank wanted her on his side, but Julia's concerns about him were right as Kohlhaas knew deep inside. Meanwhile, the political struggle was waiting and Frank was pushed forward once again. He put on his uniform, gritted his teeth and kept on going.

A few days later, about 8000 Rus marched through the streets of Kursk to show their power. Although there were some minor clashes with the local collectivists, the rally ended without bigger riots or gun fights.

Shortly thereafter, Frank, Alfred and the other Varangians came to the city and arrested some collectivist agitators who were brought to a prison in Belarus.

Then they returned and protected their comrades during their propaganda campaigns in the northern Ukraine. Near Cernihiv it came to a brief shoot-out with a group of CLJ men, otherwise everything went quiet.

Meanwhile, almost all GCF soldiers had left Russia and were sent to several crisis regions around the globe, especially to the Middle East or the Iran. This meant, that the collectivists had free rein now. CLJ troopers disarmed and replaced the Russian police in more and more cities, while Uljanin enforced his new order by all available means. Many thousands of unpopular persons fell victim to a nationwide wave of “purges” and the collectivists started with their expropriation campaign.

“All property is transferred into the hands of the people!”, declared Uljanin. This meant in reality, however, the transfer of all assets into the hands of the new rulers.

Apart from that, the international banks were not even touched by the collectivists and only nationalized in pretence. The old owners, who were also Lodge Brothers, remained in their positions. Meanwhile, the leader of the collectivist movement revealed more and more of his destructive plans for Russia.

One goal was the total annihilation of the remnants of the old Russian culture. Hence, the collectivists started to knock down historic buildings and the few remaining churches, monuments and relics in the cities.

“The Russian nation and its culture must perish! Only then, the new order of eternal equality can be realized”, hammered Uljanin into the heads of his followers again and again. And these began with their great opus of destruction, leaving rubble and chaos.

However, Uljanin`s unbridled destructive frenzy led to the fact that more and more Russians slowly asked themselves if the collectivist revolution would really solve their problems. But every publicly expressed criticism was muzzled by the fanatical CLJ men.

In the meantime, Artur Tschistokjow`s freedom movement was still growing in western Russia and the Rus had strengthened their positions. The awareness campaign about Uljanin and the forces behind his back had been of use. Thousands of new members and sympathizers filled the ranks of the freedom movement and the power of the collectivist onslaught against the western part of Russia seemed slowly to subside.

A demonstration of Uljanin`s men in Brjansk could be prevented in early December by the Rus, who attacked the

collectivists with several hundred troopers. Shortly afterwards, it was the same in Nowgorod.

The Varangian Guard was everywhere in use and constantly drove the collectivists out of the small towns and villages between Orel and Kursk. In Kolpny, the 1000 soldiers strong elite unit came into the town by night and arrested several functionaries of the CASJ who were shot on the spot.

The interaction between the armed trooper units of the freedom movement and the ordinary activists, which overflowed the towns and cities with leaflets and data discs, became better and better.

Meanwhile, the social situation in Russia was even more desolate. Not only the prices for food were still rising, but also those for commodities or fuel. The collectivist intervention in the economy and the complete expropriation of countless citizens exacerbated the social need up to an unbearable degree. A wave of famine and discontent shook central and eastern Russia, while the country's infrastructure was now in danger to collapse completely.

In the course of this chaotic situation, more and more Russians and Ukrainians recognized that the people in Belarus and the Baltic countries had a much better life under Tschistokjow's reign. There was neither famine nor chaos.

To the contrary, the political and economic measures of the Belarusian head of state were slowly growing fruit. A makeshift social security had been established, many industry complexes and factories had been saved from closing, and even agriculture had already recovered.

Furthermore, the Belarusians and Balts were also spiritually and culturally in some kind of healing phase. Crime and squalor in the cities had declined rapidly, and even the birth

rate was slowly rising again, thanks to the massive public support of families.

The ponderous but steady resurgence of Belarus could not even be stopped by the World Government in the long run. Despite of its economic boycott policy or anything else.

In addition, Japan and the Philippines also existed as export markets for Belarusian goods. That was not much, but nevertheless it was not nothing.

In the meantime, Vitali Uljanin had relocated his office into the Kremlin and was planning the next steps of the collectivist revolution with his CASJ functionaries.

“I have organized a steel worker strike in Luhansk. If we have Luhansk, then we will soon have the entire Donez region. And then the eastern Ukraine is in our hands”, said Roman Chazarovitsch, the CASJ leader of the Ukraine.

“Well...”, grumbled Uljanin and grimly beheld his staff members.

A pudgy man added: “In the west of Russia...”

But the Collectivist leader interrupted him harshly. “What’s about western Russia? Why is the revolution stagnating there?”

“These damn Rus have prevented our rally in Brjansk!”, returned the functionary.

Uljanin leaned thoughtfully back in his leather chair and said: “That Tschistokjow is tougher than I have thought!”

“Some of our chapter leader have been arrested or shot. These pigs have motorized squads, that appear out of nowhere!”, complained another CASJ leader.

“We have units like this too. Anyway...”, Uljanin put him off.

“It must be our goal to take St. Petersburg. If we control also the second largest city in Russia, then the west of Russia will soon be in our hands! Therefore, I have appointed

Theodore Soloto, one of our best orators and agitators, to lead the CASJ group in St. Petersburg from now on!”

The rest of the functionaries started to whisper secretly. One of them, a medium-sized man with glasses, black curly hair, long sideburns and an impenetrable look nodded and smiled.

”Thank you, Mr. Uljanin!”, he said.

The chairman of the CASJ kept a straight face, got up from his leather chair and positioned himself in front of his subordinates.

”I demand that Tschistokjow and his breed are stopped – at all cost. Recruit more men for our CLJ units in western Russia! Go on with the rallies! Let no Rus life undisturbed! Find out everything about their chapter leaders! Find out where they live! Gun them down! Put them down! Got it?”, vociferated Uljanin angrily.

His staff members murmured their approval and finally left the room. The angry glance of their leader followed them.

Before the winter of 2037 swept over Russia, the Rus extended their actions till the suburbs of St. Petersburg. The last big demonstration of this year took place in Kolpino. There were some attacks of the collectivists, who demonstrated on the same day, what led to 14 deads on both sides.

However, Frank and Alfred had remained in Minsk. A few days later, they drove back to Ivas and looked forward to a quiet Christmas with good food and much sleep.

Frank wiped off a load of snow from the old wooden bench near the forest outside the village, put a soft blanket over it and sat down. Julia Wilden did the same.

They were silent for a while and beheld the snowy tops of the trees above them. Somewhere in the distance, the cry of

an animal could be heard, otherwise there was only the wind, roaming quietly through the branches.

The young woman leaned her head against Frank's shoulder and tried to warm herself. He stroked her gently through the soft, blonde hair and was lost in thought.

"What's up with you? You are musing since hours, Frank", said Julia, looking thoughtfully at him.

"Oh, nothing, it's all right...", answered the general.

"Are you happy to be back in Ivas?"

"Yes, of course! I'm more than happy! If I would have a choice, I would never leave this place again."

Julia gave him a hug. "That would be great!"

"But I have no choice, as you know. Soon I have to go back to Belarus!"

"The revolution calls for its hero...", she muttered with a certain lack of understanding.

Frank stared at the snow-covered ground and cleared his throat. "If it continues like that, then I'll be just vanished one day."

Julia was astonished and stood up from the bench. "What do you mean?", she asked confusedly.

The leader of the Varangian Guard looked at her with a cynical expression: "Because I'll be dead then! One day, they will finally get me and my luck will have left me..."

From one moment to the next, Julia became indignant. She had planned to talk with Frank a bit about her future studying and her work in the village school, but now Frank came with the same old story again. Julia had finally enough of all the rallies, street fights and revolutions.

"Then let the others fight for once!", she scolded.

The general shook his head and said nothing. Shortly afterwards, he returned: "The others are already fighting. And they die. Just like me. Sven is already dead, and soon they will get me..."

“To hell with all this crap, Frank!”

“Anyway, I`m doing it for you too, Julia.”

“Yes, of course! I`m looking forward to the day when you finally bite the dust for me. That`s what I`ve always wanted, Frank!”

”But...?”

”But what? You are unable to live a normal life, that`s a fact. “If a man sacrifices himself for the cause, it is the greatest thing he can do!” Yes, listen to your beloved saviour Tschistokjow and die a heroic death, you fool!”, hissed the daughter of the village boss.

A second later, Frank jumped off the bench and angrily uttered a curse.

“Do not talk to me like that, Julia! I`m not one of your little pupils, got it? You have to pay me respect!”, roared Kohlhaas and positioned himself threateningly in front of the pretty woman.

Julia`s blue eyes sparkled at him, then she gave Frank a cynical grin. “So what? Do you want to beat me up now, general Kohlhaas?”

Frank paused. “No! Of course not...”

“It`s better if I go now. I had really looked forward to see you, but I can`t stand this theatre anymore...”, said Julia disappointedly. Then she turned around and walked back to the village.

“You`re a fool, Frank! Apparently, the only happiness in your life is the success in your eternal struggle. You don`t want to see anything else, poor hero!”, she shouted at him angrily and left. Kohlhaas remained on the bench and stared at the cloudy sky. Maybe Julia was right, he thought to himself.

Frustration and a Strange Professor

The freedom movement had expanded its influence in the northern Ukraine and the numbers of its members was growing. On the other hand, the enemy had taken the industrial area around Donez after several strikes and mass demonstrations. Now Uljanin`s men controlled the streets in this large and important region. CLJ units searched the cities for supporters of the freedom movement and executed everyone who was suspected to be a Rus.

All in all, Vitali Uljanin was content with the progress of his men in the Ukraine. In his eyes, it was only a question of time until Kiev and also the rest of the country would be in the hand of the CASJ. So his functionaries developed a restless activity, leaving their opponents no time to rest.

Nevertheless, more and more Ukrainians showed sympathies with the Rus. Others feared that their country would soon be ruled by Uljanin or Tschistokjow. In the latter case, they knew, however, that they would life in better conditions as under the collectivist yoke.

Moreover, Tschistokjow was admittedly of Russian descent, but at least born in Kiev. Therefore, the blonde politician became not tired to stress this fact in his speeches again and again.

“I feel with the Ukrainian people and I will give them back their freedom”, he promised.

Now it was the question, who was able to prevail in the long run. Frank and Alfred returned to Minsk in the second week of January.

A thick blanket of snow blocked the roads in the endless vastness of Russia. Therefore, the political activism stagnated and it was quiet until the snow started to

disappear. In February 2038, the struggle continued and both sides made their first rallies and demonstrations. In the western part of Russia, the collectivists proceeded now much more aggressive against the Rus and started a bloody guerrilla war in the cities.

Meanwhile, the Russian police looked away, trying to deal with the armed units of the two revolutionary movements. Overall, the frustrated police officers, who hadn't received any salary payments since weeks, felt much more sympathy for the freedom movement than for the CASJ. For this reason, the Rus did a lot to convert the Russian policemen to their column. They promised them the termination of the collectivist chaos and the return of law and order.

Frank beheld himself in the mirror. He believed that his hair had become a bit grayer, and he had some more little folds. Some overgrown scrapes and scratches were running down his cheek and his forehead. But they were not to recognize at first sight, as Frank said to himself.

Furthermore, shadows had formed under his green eyes. Since when were they there? Frank wondered and did not find an answer.

"Maybe I'm just fancying all this", he thought and continued to stare into the mirror.

Kohlhaas was now 36 years old. Damn old or at least not young anymore, as he meant. Meanwhile, he had become a general of the Volksarmee and the leader of the best unit of it. He was a great warrior, perhaps even a talented butcher. A lot of men had been killed by his bullets and blades. Therefore, his comrades were worshipping him.

He was also not stupid. Frank had a sharp intellect and was able to think strategically. The Varangians followed him, because of his inner strength, his iron will and his great

courage. But nevertheless, the general was tortured by a feeling of emptiness and permanent exhaustion.

"I am marching from battle to battle. This is my destiny. One day I will be an old man – if they don't kill me before - and I will have nothing but a pile of medals", he sometimes mused.

He imagined a group of little children, standing in front of his house, who were shouting: "There lives the old gentleman, Mr. Kohlhaas! He has once been a great fighter. He was like Achilles, like Siegfried, like Leonidas! Oh, how great would it be to become a man like him."

But it would not be his children. No, other people's children, because Frank would never have an own family. It would be his fate to live and die as a lonely man. A lonely but admired soldier, a forever fighting hero in a hamster wheel.

What would be if it was all in vain? If their rebellion would finally fail and nothing would remain of it?

He became increasingly unhappy, sad and listless. Nevertheless, Artur Tschistokjow would call him again soon. Today, however, he wanted to go out with Alfred, roaming through the pubs at night and going into a tavern, where they sometimes played "New Iron Metal", Frank's favorite music. Today the general wanted to drink and forget.

Until five o` clock in the morning, Frank and Alf had walked through the streets of Minsk. Bäumer had flirted with a pretty Russian girl, while Frank had thought of Julia once more. Some young Russians had reverently come to their table and had asked, if he really was "General Gollchaas". He had just nodded, with a broad smile.

Suddenly, the owner of the pub had come as well to shake their hands. Then they had drunken for free.

“I am also a member of the freedom movement, Mr. Gollchaas”, the pub owner had told. “We are proud, that you visit us today, general.”

Beyond all his depressions, Frank had been happy when he heard these words. Apparently, he meant something to many people. It did not solve his inner problems, but it sounded good, really good. Totally inebriated, the two men finally returned to Frank`s apartment in the gray of dawn.

A few days later, they drove back to the barracks in the outskirts of Minsk. Here, the Varangians were waiting for the next mission. The motorized force advanced into the rural area in the east of Nowgorod. With waving dragon head flags, the trucks drove through the villages and towns to show their colours. How strong were the collectivists here? They didn`t know it and it was their task to find it out.

In these tiny villages, it came to no incidents. All in all, the people reacted positively on their appearance and often the Varangians distributed data discs and pamphlets with headlines like “What are the Goals of Artur Tschistokjow?” or “Uljanin – The Face of Treason”.

The trip to the east brought Frank and his soldiers in desolate, impoverished regions. Here they found a lot of dilapidated and already half abandoned villages. Haggard and unhappy faces gazed after them out the windows of run-down houses. Sometimes there was nobody to see on the muddy, rain-soaked village streets, except for an old woman or a straying dog.

When they drove further eastward, they came into a wild country with meadows, large forests and only a few small farms. Russia seemed to be endless.

A cold wind was always blowing through the Russian vastness, and some villages could not even be reached, because mud and snow were still blocking the roads.

Finally, the trucks stopped near Rybinsk. This city was in the hand of the collectivists. It would have been a pointless provocation of the enemy to drive through the streets there. So they went back to Nowgorod and then made their way to St. Petersburg.

“Here we go! Artur says, that we shall distribute these data discs only in the suburbs. Prior in front of schools and in the neighborhoods”, explained Frank.

“What? Even the Varangians?”, wondered Alfred.

“Yes, every man is needed. We stay together in groups, if the red-black scum appears! The local chapter of the freedom movement is already working since weeks. They have warned us, because most parts of the city are in the hand of Uljanin`s men.”

Bäumer laughed gleefully. “I have thought, we are an elite unit, and not a bunch of paperboys...”

“Well, the distribution of advertising material is also very important. St. Petersburg can`t be taken without a good preparation”, Kohlhaas gave back sullenly.

“These words out of your mouth, Frank!”, muttered Bäumer, looking listlessly at his friend.

“I have meanwhile realized, that the mental preparation of the population is the base for any political change”, lectured Kohlhaas, while Alf raised his hands.

“Yeah, okay, Frank! Come on now!”, he grumbled.

Shortly afterwards, the truck convoy drove through the western outskirts of the city. Then the Varangians distributed leaflets and data discs in some streets. Many of the people seemed to be frightened and hardly anyone dared to refuse the “gifts” of the uniformed Varangians. Today, the collectivists were nowhere to be seen in this suburb. Nevertheless, one time a few guys shouted insults at Frank and his men in a side street. But otherwise all was

quiet. Apparently, Uljanin`s followers were waiting for a better opportunity to attack their enemies.

Apart from that, a lot of ordinary Rus were nonetheless assaulted by members of the CASJ at that day. Some armed troopers tried to give them protection, but St. Petersburg was far too big to keep every street in sight. Furthermore, many of the Rus, who distributed leaflets or data discs today, were normal young men or sometimes even women. In the north of the city, four members of the freedom movement were attacked at a subway station by more than 40 collectivists. Elsewhere, an activist of the Rus was stabbed down with a knife and another heavily wounded with brass knuckles.

Although the collectivists already controlled large parts of St. Petersburg, above all the inner city, they were nevertheless not that numerous and well organized as in Moscow or in the other cities of the east. But their organization was anyhow growing.

The propaganda campaign in the suburbs of St. Petersburg was the so far greatest operation the Freedom Movement of the Rus had ever started. Almost 200000 leaflets and data discs could be distributed in the city. In particular, the digital documentary "Who are the Forces Behind Vitali Uljanin?", which was distributed as a data disc, found a lot of interest among the people.

Of course, the collectivists hated this video, that had been produced by the Belarusian television, from the bottom of their hearts. Hence, the local leaders of the CASJ told their men to destroy any data disc they could get. However, the campaign became a great success and brought Tschistokjow a lot of sympathy. For the 10th of March, the leader of the freedom movement was finally planning a rally in the district Pushkin, a heartland of the collectivists.

"A march through Pushkin?", groaned Frank, clutching the cellphone in his hand.

"Yes! We must mobilize all of our men. The police will leave us alone. Meanwhile, they are more on our side than on that of the collectivists!", explained Artur Tschistokjow in German at the other end of the line.

"I hope so...", returned Kohlhaas and looked worried.

"See you, Frank!", said Tschistokjow and ended the call.

Alf wanted to know more details and tortured his friend with his questions. The general just rolled his eyes and remarked: "The last thing I need is that..."

"Be happy that the ordinary Russian policemen are facing us with so much sympathy. Believe me, meanwhile, the hate the collectivist scum too, after all the riots in the last months", said Bäumer grimly.

"This rally will end in another big street fight, Alf. I'm too exhausted for all this. This never ending struggle eats me up", groused Kohlhaas.

"Get a grip, Frank!", grumbled Alf, positioning himself in front of his friend, while his muscular arms were twitching under his shirt.

"Soon there will be civil war in Russia. It is only a question of time", moaned Frank.

"After the rally in Pushkin, we will drive back home to Ivas. Then we'll enjoy a few free days, okay?"

"A good idea! I want to see Julia again. Moreover, HOK and me wanted to play..."

Bäumer interrupted him. "Svetlana has called me yesterday. Have I already told you?"

"Svetlana?"

"Yes, the cute, blonde girl from the pub in Minsk. Can you remember her?"

"Oh! Yes, she was really cute!"

"I gonna meet her tomorrow", explained Alf proudly.

“What?” Frank looked distraught.

“Yes, why not? She seems to like me!”

“Congratulations!”, said Kohlhaas with a hint of jealousy in his voice.

One day later, Bäumer had met Svetlana and was somewhere in Minsk now. They wanted to go to a restaurant in the outskirts to eat comfortably, as Alfred had told.

Meanwhile, it was already 22.00 o`clock. Frank boredly sat on the couch in his living room and watched television. The Belarusian TV program was sometimes not very interesting, as he had to admit. Now he watched a report about the resettlement of young families in rural areas. His friend Artur Tschistokjow was interviewed once again and explained, that he would do everything to help the Belarusian farmers, who were still fighting for their existence.

Finally, a movie followed. It was an old film from the last years of the 20th century called “Braveheart”. Nevertheless, Frank liked it, at least, it was about a rebel.

After “Braveheart”, Kohlhaas started to clean up his traditionally messy kitchen, washed some dishes and tried to restore some order, because Alf wanted to stay for the night in his apartment.

Suddenly the phone rang. It was 1.12 o`clock in the morning.

“What's up?”, asked Kohlhaas and yawned.

Alf chuckled at the other end of the line. Frank could also hear the high, clear voice of Svetlana in the background.

“I won` t come anymore, buddy. I go home to Svetlana. Is it okay for you?”, Bäumer wanted to know.

“Yes, sure! No problem!”, replied Frank.

“All right, I just wanted to tell you. So don` t wait for me. What are you doing tonight?”

“Nothing special! I`m tired and looking forward to some sleep, Alf”, came back.

“Okay, Franky! See you tomorrow, I`ll be there around noon.”

“Have fun!” Frank hung up.

A second later, he threw the cellphone on his sofa and whispered a curse. Somehow he felt behind-addressed, treated like a fifth wheel.

“That`s nonsense”, he said then to himself, “Alf has a right to do what he wants. Do not act like a concerned mom!”

He looked out the window and beheld the rain-soaked streets below, thinking of Julia. Eventually he went to bed with a bottle of beer, stared at the wall and emptied it with a few strong sips. It took a while, until he was able to find some sleep.

Now it were only two days till the first big rally of the freedom movement in St. Petersburg. The tension was growing and Artur Tschistokjow had increasingly become nervous. This time, he admitted that he was really scared of the coming demonstration.

The protest march through the 8 million metropolis of the Russian north was smelling of violence and bloody clashes. Thoughtfully, the blond man sat in front of a laptop and tried to finish the text for a bill. Suddenly the phone rang.

“Yes?”

“Mr. President, there is a man in the foyer who wants to speak to you, it`s a foreigner!”, said a guard.

“Good for him! But I`m working!”, grumbled Tschistokjow.

“The man is quite persistent. He says that he is a scientist and has very important informations for you. Shall we throw him out, Mr. Tschistokjow?”

The President pondered for a moment. “Search him for weapons and bugs!”

A few minutes later, the phone rang again. "Mr. President, it's all clear. The man is clean!"

"Now tell me who he is!"

"He says that he is a physicist and would like to present you some important discoveries!"

"Aha..."

"He is begging me to let him in, Mr. President!"

Artur Tschistokjow did not really know what to make of it and scratched his chin.

"Send him up! Two security men shall accompany him!"

Shortly afterwards, two tall guards entered the office of the Belarusian head of state. An elderly man with a bald head, glasses and tousled white hair followed them. The leader of the Rus got up from his chair and walked towards the strange looking guest.

"What can I do for you? I'm Artur Tschistokjow!"

The visitor bowed and smiled. "Prof. Karl Hammer!"

"Are you from Germany, Professor Hammer?"

"Yes, from Hamburg. Can you talk German, Mr. President?"

The rebel leader started to grin. "Once I have learned German and two good friends of mine are Germans too! I can speak a bit of your language."

The scientists appeared relieved. "Now I'm standing in Tschistokjow's office..."

"What can I do for you?", asked the leader of the Rus.

The older man opened a suitcase and took out some DC-Sticks and a laptop. Then he said: "I want to show you something, Mr. President!"

A little later, Artur Tschistokjow was staring at the screen of the laptop in amazement. He beheld some blueprints and construction plans and didn't know what to say. However, he did not understand much of what he saw, but Prof. Hammer immediately started to explain everything.

"I have lead the faculty of physics at the university of Hamburg until I have left half a year ago. For about 30 years, I am already dealing with laser and plasma technology and I claim to be one of the leading scientists in this sector in "Central Europe". I have lectured at several universities: Berlin, Vienna, Paris. Most of the time in Hamburg, my hometown", told the scientist and looked at his surprised interlocutor.

"Laser and plasma technology?"

"Yes, exactly! In the course of my decades-long researches, I have won a lot of new insights. Among other things, this technology can be used even in the military sector..."

"What's that gun there on the screen?", Tschistokjow wanted to know, pointing at the laptop.

"This is a plasma gun", said the white-haired man.

"Plasma gun?"

"Yes, a plasma gun! It is my invention!"

"You have worked on a plasma gun?", asked Artur puzzledly.

"Right, Mr. President! And I am still working on it. However, I work not only on weapons. Laser and plasma technology can fortunately be used also in many other ways!

But you can guess, that certain people are particularly interested in my military researches. What you see here on this screen, has never made public before. These construction plans are my intellectual property and nobody knows about them."

"But why did you come to me?", inquired the leader of the freedom movement.

His guest was silent for a moment and looked around nervously. "That's a long story. Of course, I would have also had the possibility to go to your enemies, Mr. Tschistokjow, but I didn't do it.

Believe me, your opponents are very interested in these things. The GSA has asked me again and again about my inventions, after I have published a scientific report about the using of my technology for military purposes.

Anyway, they don't know that I already have complete construction plans for new weapons. They wanted me to come to North America or the Middle East, to put my knowledge into their services. I did not do it!"

"Plasma gun! This is crazy! Verrückt!", remarked Tschistokjow in German and laughed.

"The GSA has put me more and more under pressure. They offered me huge sums of money and threatened me, if I would dare to refuse", told the scientist.

"And now you want to help me with your inventions?", asked the rebel leader, perking his eyebrows up.

Prof. Hammer smiled and replied: "Well, maybe I can help you somehow, Mr. Tschistokjow. I do this with burning conviction, because people like you, and also president Matsumoto, are the only sparks of hope in this terrible times!"

The Belarusian president was still overwhelmed, while the German showed him further plans and told him about his life. The old man stayed in Tschistokjow's office until deep in the night, and the Belarusian president listened to his words in disbelief.

Enemy Territory Pushkin

The 10th of March, 2037, was a cold and rainy day. Frank and Alf had got up early and were now waiting for their comrades in a suburb of St. Petersburg. The whole city had already been shaken by clashes between Rus and collectivists for days - 16 people had so far been killed. Vitali Uljanin had personally come to St. Petersburg to lead the demonstrators through the inner city. That his rivals wanted to demonstrate too, was no secret anymore. For weeks, both sides had called up the people to join their rallies.

An atmosphere of tension had settled in the streets like a black cloud. The local newspapers and television had warned the citizens of St. Petersburg of massive riots, while the media in central and eastern Russia, which were already controlled by the collectivists, had preached hate and violence.

“No Rus will leave St. Petersburg unharmed!”, headlined “The Red-Black Flag”, the official party newspaper of the CASJ, on 10th of March.

Today, Uljanin expected about 200000 people at his rally. Frank and Alfred had hardly slept in the night before the big event and meanwhile they were extremely nervous.

At 11.00 o` clock, the first waves of Rus streamed into the city from all sides. The collectivists were already waiting at the stations and it came to the first conflicts of the day.

The beginning of the demonstration through Pushkin had been scheduled for 13.00 o`clock. As meeting point, Tschistokjow had chosen a shopping center in the west of the notorious district. Thousands of his supporters had already come and their number was still growing.

Ultimately, almost 50000 people gathered under the banner of the dragon head. Hundreds of armed troopers flanked the marching columns with loaded guns.

Then it began. Flag waving and singing, the huge mass slowly moved forward. Artur Tschistokjow was in the first rank, Peter Ulljewski, his oldest and best friend, walked next to him. At first, the Rus went through a dirty neighborhood full of gray apartment blocks, and started to scream at the top of their lungs.

“Freedom for Russia! Come to Artur Tschistokjow!”, it resounded through the streets out of countless throats, again and again.

The Russian policemen had apparently given it up to risk their health anymore in the conflict of the two rival revolutionary movements, and were nowhere to be seen. Perhaps they had even received an order from above to leave the streets to the collectivists.

Artur Tschistokjow looked around. Some Russia flags hung out of the windows of the houses in front of him. In addition, also the red-black flags of the CASJ. Crowds of people stood on the sidewalks, some of them hailed the Rus, others spat on the ground and uttered terrible curses. Soon the demonstrators would reach Pushkin to march through even more dirty and hostile streets.

Shortly afterwards, a big mob of collectivists appeared in the proximity and hate-filled calls came over them like a cold hailstorm. The opponents raised their fists and a wrathful chorus of voices resounded all around Tschistokjow`s followers. But the Rus persistently marched forward, while their rivals were flocking together everywhere.

Meanwhile, Uljanin was speaking in front of 150000 people in the inner city. It was not the number of demonstrators that he had expected, but nonetheless a true sea of red-black banners was filling the center of St. Petersburg. The

collectivist leader promised once more “freedom” and “social justice” and took a bath in the cheer of the crowd. At the same time, Artur Tschistokjow and his followers reached their aim, a large square in the middle of Pushkin. The blond man took the microphone and began with his speech.

“All quiet so far!”, muttered Frank and positioned himself behind a car. Alf and a group of Varangians followed him. Kohlhaas peered across the street. From a distance, he could hear Tschistokjow’s voice. The general and his soldiers were surrounded by shabby, crumbling houses and sometimes Frank imagined that their windows were angry eyes which were staring at him.

“Secure this side street!”, he shouted at some of his men and the Varangians disappeared.

“Nobody seems to be here”, said Bäumer and got into a truck.

With a loud hum, the vehicle began to move and drove through another street.

“Some of us will remain in the vicinity of the Ulitsa Miri to observe everything”, told Frank his soldiers.

Alfred yawned and started to smoke a cigarette. Obviously he was relieved that this day was peaceful so far.

But only a second later, a loud clang could be heard right in front of the vehicle and a wall of flames rose up. The forepart of the truck immediately caught fire.

“Shit! It came from the roof of the house to our left!”, shouted Frank and jumped out of the truck. The vehicles behind them stopped with screeching tires.

“There! The window!” Bäumer fired with his assault rifle at the house front and somebody was screaming behind a window, while mortar pieces rained down on the asphalt.

Then the enemy showed its face. Dozens of CLJ men appeared all around them and immediately started to shoot. Some Varangians were riddled with bullets and broke down. "Ran into the house there!", roared Kohlhaas and hurried as fast as he could through the front door of an apartment block. Bäumer and some of the others followed him.

The Varangians sprinted up the stairs and jumped into a dark hallway. Then they kicked in some doors and stormed into bleak looking apartments.

Dirty, pale people, scared to death and begging for their lives, were huddling here. Kohlhaas pulled a little girl out of a room and brought her to the hallway.

"Go into the basement and hide there!", he said in Russian. Only seconds later, the little girl and her wailing parents ran down the stairs.

Outside the house, down on the street, the CLJ troopers had gathered. Between them lay several dead Varangians on the asphalt, while the truck was burning brightly.

"Secure the hallway! We shoot from up here!", shouted Frank and waved a group of soldiers nearer.

Some young Russians positioned themselves on the stairs. Frank and the rest of the Varangians went back into an apartment and fired out the windows.

While the Varangians had a shoot-out with the men of the CLJ, Artur Tschistokjow had finished the rally successfully. Now the crowd started to march back, but they were already awaited by their opponents. Every street was blocked with screaming red-black mobs and thousands of hate-filled eyes were staring at the Rus.

"Piss off! Traitors of the workers! Fascist pigs!", yelled the angry collectivists .

"Slaves of the Lodge Brothers! Traisoners against the Russian people! We`ll get you!", answered the Rus.

Their leader was no longer able to keep his furious supporters under control. Within a few minutes, the opposing groups threw stones and Molotov cocktails at each other. Finally, the first shots resounded through the streets and the riot escalated.

Over 50000 Rus attacked the mass of the collectivists, who had occupied the streets around them to the last corner. Tschistokjow had not expected anything else and just hoped to survive this day.

A few dozen CLJ troopers tried to storm the building and jumped into the doorway. But their assault ended in front of the muzzles of the Varangian`s guns. Frank`s soldiers shot them down in the next second.

Meanwhile, the dirty house front was covered with countless bullet holes and the collectivists outside were still firing at the windows.

“More and more of those damn rats...”, growled Kohlhaas, crawled across the carpet into a secondary room and took his radio.

He called the rest of his soldiers, who were observing the streets in the proximity, with a wavering voice: “Hurry up! The CLJs have pinned us down in an apartment block in the Tischinaja Ulitsa!”

Bäumer peered over the sill and recognized a big horde of attackers who had apparently decided to storm the house again. Now screams from the staircase could be heard.

The next group of CLJ men had finally entered the apartment block. Kohlhaas scurried to the Russians, who guarded the staircase, and looked down. They were coming.

“A gift from Artur Tschistokjow!”, hissed Frank and let a hand grenade drop down.

A few seconds later, he heard a loud bang and the collectivists jumped apart. Then, they ran unwaveringly up the stairs. Shortly afterwards, they had already reached the first floor.

“You are as good as dead!”, they yelled.

The Varangians threw further hand grenades down and this time they hit. A group of explosions let the staircase shake, while some CLJ troopers were torn to pieces.

Machine gun fire followed the detonations and several collectivists tumbled down the stairs. Frank and his soldiers attacked the survivors, gunning them down in a dark hallway. Subsequently Kohlhaas crawled back into the apartment - to be pushed out by Alfred in the next moment.

“They have hand grenades too! Down!”, roared Bäumer and a cloud of dust and debris was hurled out of the room.

In the meantime, the other Varangians had reached the house and attacked the surprised CLJ troopers from several sides. A storm of heavy assault rifle fire rushed through the Tischinaja Ulitsa and dozens of collectivists were moved down by the elite soldiers.

The rest of the CLJ men fled in panic, while Frank and the others stormed out of the apartment block, back on the street. A little later, the enemy had disappeared.

Kohlhaas immediately gave his men the order to get into their trucks again, because Artur Tschsitokjow and the demonstrating Rus were in desperate straits.

When the truck convoy of the Varangian Guard sped over the cobbled pavement with a loud noise, racing straight towards another bunch of collectivists, Uljanin`s men jumped apart and screamed in horror. Now the mass of the Rus came into sight and general Kohlhaas saw, that his comrades were already encircled by thousands of

collectivists. The truck convoy stopped and the Varangians swarmed out.

“If we fire at the crowd, we`ll hit our own men!”, warned Bäumer, pulling his hot-tempered friend back. Frank nodded and gave another order.

”Bayonets!”, he shouted.

With a loud war cry the Varangians swooped down on the collectivist mobs and put them to rout.

A deafening cheering surged through the ranks of Rus, although some of them were seriously injured and tumbled around with bleeding heads. Soon the demonstrators were able to march on and to leave Pushkin again. For today, their opponents had enough.

Nevertheless, some Rus were still ambushed on the way home by Uljanin`s men, but all in all, the rally of the freedom movement had been a success.

The CASJ had finally not been able to avert the Rus from marching through the streets of Pushkin. But also Tschistokjow`s followers had suffered some casualties.

About 60 Varangians had been killed by CLJ troopers whose losses were, however, significantly higher.

“Now they respect us!”, remarked Kohlhaas after the bloody street fight and spoke of a great victory. The Belarusian TV did the same and also the newspapers of the country.

“Collectivist terror gangs stopped!”, headlined the state newspaper, while the collectivists were vowing vengeance.

Two days later, Frank and Alfred returned to Ivas. This time, Svetlana from Minsk came with them. Bäumer really seemed to have fallen in love.

Since the early morning hours, Frank was hearing the happy laughing and giggling of Alf and his new girlfriend. It was a torture for his ears and he slowly he became angry. The two behaved like two turtledoves.

Silently grumbling, the general shut the door of his room after he had placed the television in front of the bed. Around noon, he visited HOK to play Battle Hammer.

It was a nice and relaxing game, although Kohlhaas was beaten again by his corpulent friend who wiped his orcs off the table.

“I should read the rules again...”, admitted Frank sheepishly, when the game was over.

HOK just grinned. However, the computer freak essentially had much more time to study all the rules of Battle Hammer meticulously. Ultimately, the defeated rebel grabbed some of the new miniatures, HOK had bought for him on the Internet, and went back home, where he was already awaited by Alf and Svetlana – the happily grinning couple. That was weird!

They had baked a cake and presented it proudly as he came into the kitchen. It was a surreal scene: The sweet Svetlana and the huge Alf in front of the old oven. Frank couldn't suppress a laugh.

A little later, he started to paint some of his miniatures, trying to ignore the affectionate chatter in the kitchen as good as he could. Nevertheless, he was not able to concentrate on his work completely.

“Tomorrow I'll do something with Julia”, he promised to himself before he went to bed.

”What a surprise, the general is back!”, said Julia with a grin, as Frank, neatly combed and well dressed, picked her up at the front door.

“Yeah sure!”, came back quietly.

She hugged him and suggested to drive to Kaunas, the next larger town, to go into the theater.

“The theater in Kanaus? But...” The rebel paused.

“Yes, they play “Romeo and Juliet” today. I would like to see it”, explained the beauty.

“What is that for a play?”, asked Kohlhaas skeptically.

“Oh, I really love it! It's about a forbidden love between two young people”, said Julia with an expectant smile.

“Forbidden love?” Frank was confused.

“Yes, isn't it romantic? And I have never seen it in a real theater. Only once as a movie!”

“We could also hang around in Steffen de Vries cafe...”, suggested the young man and appeared helpless.

“No way!”, he heard. “Just be spontaneous once, and don't behave like a bonehead, Frank.”

“Why I'm a bonehead?”

“You always want to go to Steffen de Vries, this is more than boring. I can take the car of my mother. But you should wear a real suit, Frank.”

Kohlhaas twisted his mouth. “But why?”

“If you go to the theater, you should be dressed appropriately, Sir”, said Julia and was as precocious as her father.

“Hmph!”, muttered Frank.

“Yes! We'll do it tonight!”

“Driving to Kaunas to watch “Romeo and Juliet?”

“Yes! What did you think? That's an order, soldier!”, she joked, stroking Frank gently through his hair.

“Hmm...”, was his eloquent response.

At 17.45 o'clock, the daughter of the foreign minister took Kohlhaas with her to Kaunas. A romantic play was waiting for the fearless street fighter who was still confused.

Meanwhile, Julia was talking and laughing and laughing and talking, during the whole ride.

“Anyway, it can't be worse than the Sapporo front”, said Frank to himself and followed Julia into the theater of Kaunas.

The Freedom Movement of the Rus expanded its promotional activities in St. Petersburg now on a grand scale. Day by day, Tschistokjow`s supporters distributed leaflets or hung up posters. The constant clashes with the collectivists didn`t scare them anymore.

Occasionally, the local chapter of the Rus even organized some smaller rallies in the suburbs of the metropolis. So the freedom movement was growing at breakneck speed, but the streets of the inner city were still dangerous places for Tschistokjow`s men.

On the other hand, Uljanin was fuming with rage, when he heard, that St. Petersburg was still not completely in the hands of the CASJ. Hence, he called up his men to proceed against the Rus with an even more brutal street terror. Moreover, he put bounties on the leading activists of the freedom movement. Even gangs of non-Russian immigrants, he tried to recruit as thugs for his CLJ units for good pay.

So a new and much bigger wave of terror came over Tschistokjow`s followers in St. Petersburg, and they were brutally attacked in the following weeks. The collectivists burned their cars, assailed them in dark corners and parks or just shot them in the open street.

The members of the freedom movement finally tried to answer in the same way, although the CASJ was much stronger and powerful than Tschistokjow`s organization.

But in the end, the terror of the red-black mobs did not lead to the desired goal. Many citizens of St. Petersburg recognized the true face of Uljanin`s movement and a growing number of them started to support the Rus.

Even some collectivists, who had initially joined the CASJ with some kind of idealism, finally left Uljanin`s organization and changed sides.

At the beginning of April, the Rus made three rallies simultaneously, each with several thousand participants, in the suburbs of St. Petersburg and earned a lot acclaim from the people. The attacks of the collectivists had meanwhile slightly declined in the outskirts of St. Petersburg.

However, Frank, Alfred and about 100 Varangians were on the road in the regions around Smolensk. They showed presence in the smaller towns in the east of the city, trying to intimidate their political opponents.

In return, the collectivists had already started to implement their plans. Homeowners, middle class entrepreneurs and even the few remaining farmers were expropriated forcibly. Who did not oblige and didn't give his property voluntarily to the new rulers, was confronted with brutal coercive measures. Furthermore, people who were known as Russian patriots or publicly practiced the Christian Orthodox faith, were treated as "enemies of equality", what meant that they were imprisoned or liquidated. It were hundreds of thousands.

Soon, masses of refugees fled towards the western part of Russia or to Belarus and the Baltic countries. Artur Tschistokjow hosted his compatriots with open arms and many of them joined his organization, in order to fight against the collectivists.

On the 7th of April, several regiments of the Volksarmee occupied the cities of Luck, Rivne and Zytomyr in the Ukraine. It was another blitz that hit Uljanin's unprepared men hard. Finally, Peter Ulljewski and his DSR units followed the regiments of the Volksarmee and smashed the structures of the CASJ with merciless rigor.

In the meantime, Vitali Uljanin had flown to New York to meet the Council of the 13, in order to make a report about

the development of the collectivist revolution in Russia. All in all, he was in cheerful spirit, because he could exhibit a lot of great victories.

His men had only suffered a few minor setbacks, but that did not change his conviction, that the hated Rus would soon be destroyed and whole Russia would be in the hands of the CASJ.

“What’s about these cities, that have been taken by Tschistokjow’s men?”, asked the World President, the most prominent member of the global brotherhood.

The collectivist leader hesitated for a moment and thought about an appropriate answer, then he confidently replied: “Well, here and there, these reactionists have taken some towns. That’s right, but it is not important and nothing but a temporary phenomenon. The collectivist movement is expanding to western Russia and the Ukraine, as I have planned it. Even in China, we have already...”

A gray-haired member of the council with a broad beard interrupted him: “Brother Uljanin, we thought that you would bring Russia more quickly under control and we are, if I may remark this, somewhat disappointed that there is still so much resistance!”

“Tschistokjow and his Rus are ridiculous! In the long term, they are chanceless against the power of the red-black masses”, answered Uljanin in anger.

The chairman of the Council looked at him with cold eyes, drumming his fingers restlessly on the tabletop.

“Maybe you underestimate the leader of the Freedom Movement of the Rus, brother Uljanin...”

“No! Certainly not, Excellency! But I promise, that this man and his movement will be wiped out in the near future”, admitted the leader of the CASJ.

“And you are sure that you don’t need any further assistance of the GCF?”, inquired the World President.

Uljanin looked at him defiantly and seemed almost offended. He rubbed his hands and tried to withstand the arrogant gaze of the head of the World Union.

“No! There is no reason for it, Sir!”

A banker from London asked for the word and the chairman of the council nodded. “How is the situation in St. Petersburg?”

“St. Petersburg?” Vitali Uljanin looked nervously around for a few seconds. “The city is almost in our hands...”

“Almost?”, he heard the banker say gleefully.

“Yes, the Rus are down and out. They play no important role in St. Petersburg.”

“Thank you, brother Uljanin!”, said the chairman of the Council of the Elders. The interlocution was over.

Shortly afterwards, the collectivist leader left the room and heard the elders chatting and laughing behind the thick oak door. The goateed man appeared extremely displeased, because apparently the wise seemed to have doubts concerning his abilities.

“Soon they will see the might of my revolution!”, he whispered angrily and walked slowly towards the foyer of the magnificent lodge house.

Some weeks ago, Artur Tschistokjow had equipped Prof. Hammer with a secret research laboratory. The German scientist, whose family had been detained by the GSA, after his escape from “Central Europe”, called himself an “ardent admirer of Tschistokjow”.

The Global Security Agency had put the old man under pressure for months, even threatening to kill him if he did not cooperate. Finally, Prof. Karl Hammer had decided to flee to Belarus. His inventions were found to be extremely interesting for the small army of the renegade state. First of all, however, everything was still in the preparation phase

and a small team of scientists had been provided to support him. The inventor was still working on his plasma gun and in April he presented a first prototype which had been completed thanks to the generous financial donations of the Belarusian state.

Only a small group of trustworthy Rus knew about Prof. Hammer and his researches. Frank was one of them, as the leader of the Varangian Guard. Likewise, Thorsten Wilden and defense minister Lossov. On the 18th of April, the men drove to Druja in Latvia, because the German physicist wanted to show them the new weapon.

A steel door opened and gave access to a weakly lit underground passage. Pale light filled the long corridor and the visitors passed another door, before they were greeted by Prof. Hammer.

Frank did not know what to make of the technical mumbo jumbo around him. A futuristic-looking weapon, perhaps three times as heavy as an ordinary assault rifle, had been clamped on a metallic framework. The muzzle of the weapon was aiming at a thick steel plate.

“Now I'm really excited!”, said Wilden quietly.

Frank looked at him questioningly. “Does this guy want to shoot at this massive steel plate? That`s crazy.”

Artur Tschistokjow nodded at them and smiled expectantly.

“I have to adjust something...”, murmured the scientist and fumbled around on the strange weapon.

Defense minister Lossov asked the president what the old man was doing, but Artur did not know it and just shrugged his shoulders.

“They are to protect the eyes”, said Prof. Hammer and gave his guests some goggles.

“That`s what I call a freak!”, whispered Frank.

Wilden nudged him lightly and did not want to be distracted.

“The plasma gun!”, called the professor with a happy smile

and positioned himself behind the weapon. For some seconds there was a strained silence, but then followed a loud hissing and a bluish flash lit up.

For a second, Frank remembered the glaring light of the holo cell. A faint crackling scurried through the room, then the guest stared at the steel plate – speechless and gaping. “It works! It works!” The scientist jumped up and down like a hyperactive Rumpelstiltskin, while the other men were still silent.

The strange weapon had eaten a fist-sized hole through the steel plate. It was unbelievable! Frank had never seen something like that.

“Great!”, said Artur Tschistokjow with admiration.

Professor Hammer fired the plasma gun again and some shots later, the steel plate resembled a Swiss cheese.

“This weapon can even destroy a tank!”, muttered Wilden.

“But with a single plasma gun, we can’t do anything. The question is if we can produce them”, returned Frank.

“Maybe the Japanese can help us. It would be worth an inquiry”, answered the foreign minister.

“Some industrial plant should be modified to produce weapons like that, but I have no conception of it!”, whispered Kohlhaas.

“We will discuss this at our next meeting”, interrupted them Tschistokjow, giving his German friends a wink.

The Belarusian president was entranced by Prof. Hammers invention and told his confidants to keep their mouths shut. Everything else could lead to a catastrophe.

A whole team of selected physicists, chemists and technical experts from Belarus and the Baltic countries was sent to Prof. Hammers laboratory to support him. And while the German scientist was in his concrete cave, always inventing, musing, improving and working, the political

struggle on the surface went on with old hardness. In spite of Uljanin`s tirades of hate and the brutal street terror of his supporters, the collectivists lost more and more ground in St. Petersburg. They failed to oust their enemies from the suburbs of the metropolis.

Nevertheless, the CASJ saw it only as a matter of time, until they had finally worn the Rus down. Moscow and the whole Russian East were already firmly in its hand.

In return, Tschistokjow`s followers tried to expand their activities to the east and started several propagandistic counterattacks wherever it was possible.

So they made another rally in Voronez, where the city was shaken by riots for days. Shortly afterwards, Frank, Alfred and the Varangians stormed the collectivist headquarter of the newly founded CASJ chapter in Kursk and captured some of Uljanin`s functionaries. Then they destroyed the structures in the CASJ in Gubkin and Belgorod in the south of the city. At the end of the month, the area was finally cleared of collectivists.

Soon after, they made their way to Orel, where CLJ troopers tried to occupy the city. When they heard of the approaching Varangians, they retreated and camped in the outskirts. Artur Tschistokjow immediately sent a regiment of the Volksarmee to Orel and the collectivists finally fled eastward.

In the Ukraine, the region around Donez was meanwhile in the hands of the CASJ. Red-black flags were waving on the roofs of the town halls and "Administrative Councils of the CASJ" controlled the public life in the cities.

In the meantime, Uljanin was organizing strikes in Maryopol, Berdyansk and Zaporizza, and spoke to the masses. In early May, the collectivists had also conquered these cities. In the south of the Ukraine, the CASJ almost met no resistance. The few local groups of the freedom movement

in this region were far too weak to stop the collectivist advance

Apart from that, the people in central and eastern Russia were still hoping to finally experience Uljanin`s promises of “equality” and “social justice”. So far, the CASJ hadn`t ended the social crisis. To the contrary, the large-scale expropriations led to famine in the rural areas and to a much bigger social disaster in the cities.

And even Uljanin`s melodious phrases didn`t change anything. Many stomachs were still empty – beyond all promises of a rosy future.

Nevertheless, the collectivist leader was still preaching that the “reactionary enemies of the revolution” were responsible for the misery. Primarily the Freedom Movement of the Rus was blocking the path into a better collectivist world without any forms of injustice. Artur Tschistokjow tried to make the best of the situation and hoped that Uljanin`s revolution would lose its impetus in the long term.

After a further propaganda offensive and several demonstrations, the Rus took over the power in the northern Ukrainian cities of Nizyn, Pryluki and Sumy. All the town halls, administrative centers and press houses were occupied by gray uniformed trooper squads in a bold operation.

On the 12th of May, 2037, the Belarusian president visited his supporters in Kiev and spoke in front of several thousand people in an old football stadium in the outskirts. Moreover, he reorganized the local chapter in the largest city of the Ukraine and prepared it for the conflict with the collectivist movement, that already controlled the rest of the country. Frank and Alfred had meanwhile gone to St. Petersburg again, in order to support their comrades there. For the 18th of May, Tschistokjow had planned a demonstration in the north of the metropolis. After weeks of

preparation, he finally managed it to mobilize no less than 30000 of his followers. This time, the collectivists avoided an open confrontation and left it at their usual attacks on smaller groups of their opponents at railway stations or in side streets.

Artur Tschistokjow evaluated the cautious approach of the enemy as a first success and he was right. Since the bloody street fights in March, the St. Petersburg collectivists had become much calmer, at least, in terms of open attacks on the demonstrating Rus.

Into the Witch`s Cauldron

Today Artur Tschistokjow had summoned his group leaders in Minsk. He was determined to conquer St. Petersburg and was already planning the next protest marches.

“This is the headquarter of the collectivists in St. Peterburg, it is the “brain” of the entire CASJ structure in this city. The “House of Justice” - in the Ulitsa Nekrasova.”

Artur Tschistokjow pointed at a big screen. “And that’s Theodore Soloto, the head of the St. Petersburg CASJ and the mastermind of Uljanin`s movement in western Russia!”

“What an ugly pig face!”, hissed Frank in German, narrowing his eyes to slits.

“What did you say?”, he heard behind him.

“Nothing important...”, said Kohlhaas, shaking his head.

Artur was talking faster and faster now, and Kohlhaas had to sharpen his ears.

“Soloto is a very dangerous and unscrupulous man”, explained the chapter leader of St. Petersburg, Yuri Lebed, a man with reddish blonde hair and a serious look.

“Can you tell us more things about him?”, asked Tschistokjow.

Lebed paused for a moment and replied: “Theodore Soloto is in my age. I’ve heard that he has studied philosophy and social sciences in Moscow. Eventually, he abandoned his studies and joined the CASJ. There, he had quickly made career. Many of us fear him because of his shrewdness and ruthlessness. He is clever, like a fox.”

“We will defeat him anyway! No matter how clever he is”, grumbled the Belarusian president and stared at the photo on the screen, that showed Soloto with a cynical grin.

“In June, we will demonstrate in the city center and directly pass the House of Justice!”, added the blonde rebel leader. Frank gasped and some men looked anxiously around. One or the other expressed objections.

But Artur Tschistokjow interrupted them and said: “I understand, that you are afraid. And do not think, that I am not. It is not pleasant, but it is necessary if we want to win the battle for St. Petersburg.”

And the leader of the Rus was right, as Kohlhaas had ultimately to admit. Sooner or later, they had to venture into the heart of the metropolis. It meant, however, that hot days were waiting for them.

Alf was in Ivas to spent a few quiet days with his new girlfriend. Frank, however, was still in Minsk and tried to help Tschistokjow as good as he could. Wilden also visited him frequently and talked about the political course of the movement in the future.

Meanwhile, the general was exhausted and overwhelmed. Sometimes he was not even willing to answer a phone call anymore and was hiding in his apartment like a sick animal. The last weeks had sapped his strength, and in the few quiet moments, he was musing about Julia and a common future in a time without endless fighting.

Even his friend Alf had already leapfrogged him in “women`s questions” and now he was constantly flirting and kissing with Svetlana. Although, the young Russian woman with the auburn hair and the bright green eyes was a nice and sympathetic person, he often felt a certain envy when he saw her with Bäumer, always laughing and smiling.

Svetlana had graduated at the university of Minsk, and wanted to become an elementary school teacher, just like Julia. She was always very polite, so it was difficult for Frank to understand how a women like this could fall in love

with a warhorse like Alf. But in terms of Julia and him it was the same question, if Kohlhaas was honest to himself. Nevertheless, Julia had already been “shaped” by her father.

“Love is a factor, that can’t be calculated...”, said Kohlhaas sometimes in a state of melancholy, when he saw Alf and Svetlana together. They were a more than strange couple. The broad-shouldered, bearded street fighter from Dortmund and the aspiring elementary school teacher, who loved babies and puppies. But apparently, Cupid’s arrow had really hit them.

When Alf and Svetlana visited the general in his apartment in Minsk, Frank often only heard the excited, shrill voice of the young Russian woman in the background. And sometimes also the comfortable hum of his gigantic friend. Occasionally, Alf reminded Frank of a grumbling brown bear, who was lying on the sofa in his living room.

Frank waited a few minutes and grabbed the phone in a state of pleasant anticipation, while Agatha Wilden was looking for her daughter, somewhere upstairs. Alf’s happy billing and cooing with Svetlana had finally inspired him to call Julia again. Some minutes later, he heard her voice at the other end of the line.

“Frank?”

”Yes, it’s me! Hi Julia! I just wanted to talk a bit! Are you all right?”, asked Frank delightedly.

“Yes, everything is okay so far. Nice to hear your voice. When will you come back to Ivas?”

Kohlhaas paused. “I don’t know, if I’m honest. I’ll be in Russia for the next weeks.”

“I see...”, returned the young woman.

“But as soon as I can, I’ll come!”, promised Frank then.

They talked about some meaningless stuff and Frank assured that he would miss her very much. Meanwhile, he was musing about the question, if he should ask Julia to move with him to Minsk. And finally he took heart.

"Uh, Julia, I wanted to ask you something else..."

"Really? Well, I'm listening!"

"Would you come with me to Minsk?"

She was silent for a few seconds. Then she replied: "I'll reflect about it, okay?"

"You don't have to leave Ivas completely, I mean because of your mother and so on, but I would be happy if you would..."

"You say it!", interrupted him the young woman. "My father is somewhere out there. He is constantly on the road, just like you!"

"But it will not go on forever like this", muttered Frank, but it seemed that he would not believe his own words.

"Not forever? Well, if you have liberated the whole world, then you'll have some time for me - maybe", said Julia dryly. Kohlhaas paused and puffed into the phone. Then he hesitated for a moment and returned: "Really funny! You could just try it. I miss you so much. That's all I can say..."

"Please give me some time to think about it, okay?"

The rebel looked sad, because Julia had hit the bullseye with her hints. Then, they still phoned for a while. Finally, Frank went home and brooded for the rest of the day.

Alf came back to Minsk, while Svetlana remained in Ivas. The Varangian Guard set off, in order to patrol in the villages and small towns around Tula. There were no noteworthy incidents in this rural area, although they did not enter Tula itself. The streets of this city belonged to the collectivists.

The mass demonstration through downtown St. Petersburg was planned for the 17th of June, and again the freedom movement started a huge propaganda campaign in the metropolis to reach as many people as possible.

Theodore Soloto regarded the march past the House of Justice as a brazen provocation and called his followers up to fight the Rus by hook or crook. The collectivists finally decided to march on the same route and prepared themselves for bloody conflicts with Tschistokjow's men.

But this time, Vitali Uljanin would not come to St. Petersburg, leaving the fight against the Rus to Soloto. The collectivist leader himself was on the road in the Ukraine to build up his revolutionary movement.

Virtually all GCF soldiers had meanwhile left Russia and the World Government was glad, that they could be used as occupiers in the Middle East or other crisis regions.

Now the Lodge Brothers confided only in Uljanin and his collectivists. Furthermore, they were not all too interested in the ongoing conflict in western Russia, because it was not important on the global political stage.

Even if the freedom movement controlled some cities in western Russia, for the Council of the 13, the final triumph of collectivism was absolutely inevitable in the long run.

However, the Russian police behaved passively since months, because the ordinary officer had no interest to risk his life for a few hundred Globes anymore. Moreover, the policemen received their salaries irregularly, what made them even more lethargic. Meanwhile, they were just watching and waiting, which revolutionary movement would win the struggle in the end.

Apart from that, in the areas that were controlled by the CASJ, they had already been replaced by CLJ troopers.

The command to fight on the side of the collectivists against the Rus was meanwhile ignored by the majority of the Russian policemen.

To the contrary, the most of the them showed more sympathy for the freedom movement than for the rampaging mobs of Uljanin. The leader of the Rus was quite satisfied with this situation, because now both sides could fight for the power in Russia among themselves.

Ultimately, over 70000 people came to Tschistokjow`s rally in the inner city of St. Petersburg. His supporters flocked together at the Mesto Lenina, while the collectivists were gathering for their own demonstration. And the red-black crowd was even bigger!

At 12.00 o`clock, the inner city resembled a seething cauldron. Like warring tribes, the Rus and their opponents shouted insults at each other, before they startet to throw stones, bottles and Molotov cocktails. It came to the first heavy clashes of the day with several dead and injured people.

But Tschistokjow and his followers did not waver and marched loudly screaming across the Liteynii Bridge, while thousands of collectivists followed them. Other opponents blocked the street on the opposite shore and could only be driven back after another riot.

At the same time, the Varangian Guard and the local CLJ had a wild shoot-out in the streets near the marching route. Everywhere, the air was filled with hateful screams and a background noise that already sounded like a rising civil war.

At 13.30 o`clock, Artur Tschistokjow led his crowd through the Zakhareyvsckaja Uliitsa and finally entered a maze of narrow side streets, where the Rus were already awaited by thousands of collectivists. Both sides immediately attacked

each other with clubs, iron bars, knives and brass knuckles. CLJ troopers started to fire from the house roofs, while the armed Rus answered with their guns. Dozens of protesters were hit by bullets and died on the asphalt. Nonetheless, the remaining demonstrators marched forward, steadfastly and stubbornly.

“Artur Tschistokjow! The liberator of Russia!”, it resounded out of the sea of waving dragon head flags.

“Reactionary pigs! Minions of the capitalists!”, yelled the enraged followers of Uljanin.

The Rus marched on, meter after meter, while the streets around them filled with screaming red-black mobs. But not even bullets stopped the crowd which was lead by Artur Tschistokjow himself.

Shortly afterwards, the Rus had almost reached the House of Justice, but what they saw there, made even the hardest trooper become nervous. Theodore Soloto had called his followers together and hundreds of CLJ men were waiting behind barricades, while thousands of ordinary CASJ members were blocking every street around. They had armed themselves with everything they could find.

Then the CLJ troopers opened fire and a storm of bullets mowed down the Rus in the first rank. Tschistokjow`s armed gray shirts instantly hit the dirt and shot back. The deafening noise of rifle fire drowned everything else for a moment, then the collectivists rushed forward with a warcry on their lips.

This was already civil war! Within minutes, the demonstration turned into a giant street battle. Bones were broken and skulls were smashed, some men fired indiscriminately, while others beat or stabbed down anyone in their way.

Now Frank, Alf and the Varangians appeared with their trucks and immediately shot back. After a fierce battle, both sides parted again and the Rus were still trying to advance to the House of Justice. Some of them were bleeding or limping, others were lying dead or wounded on the asphalt. Meanwhile, Tschistokjow's followers could see the collectivist headquarter – it was only hundred meters away from them. But their enemies were still blocking the streets and their number was growing with each passing minute. The leader of the Rus briefly mused whether he should order his troopers to attack the collectivists again, but finally he decided to end the demonstration. For the many citizens of St. Petersburg, who had joined the rally today, even many women and old people, this would have been to dangerous.

“We retreat!”, said the blond rebel leader disappointedly and the demonstrators changed their route.

Now, the Rus marched across the Vosstaniya Mesto and finally reached the Ostrovskogo Mesto, a large square near the shore of the Neva river. Here the demonstrators stopped and Artur Tschistokjow delivered a speech.

Two hours later, the rally was over and the Varangians and troopers did their best to protect the participants on their way back.

But the riots still raged until deep in the night. St. Petersburg was shaken by a wave of violence, that devastated large parts of the inner city.

Trains and trams were attacked, shops were looted or set on fire, and even more people were killed. Some young members of the freedom movement burned down a lodge house near the Mariinnsky theater, while collectivist mobs flocked together with gangs of non-Russians, spreading terror throughout St. Petersburg and beating anyone up who crossed their path. The next morning offered a gruesome

picture of destruction. Shop windows had been smashed, burned-out cars covered whole streets of houses and dead people everywhere. The battle for the second-largest city of Russia had entered a new phase.

“Of course it has been a success!”, returned Frank annoyedly and gave his friend a nudge.

“But we did not make it till the House of Justice. Now the collectivists sell it as their victory”, said Bäumer.

“Fuck these bastards! Soon we will break their spine!”, grumbled Kohlhaas grimly, clenching his fist.

“Their number seems to be endless. Artur was right, when he stopped the march. Otherwise, even more people had been wounded or killed”, remarked Alf.

Kohlhaas uttered a few curses, stressing that he was already looking forward to drive the collectivists one day out of St. Petersburg.

“Believe me, in the long run, we will smash them. Meanwhile, more and more Russians are on our side. Even in St. Petersburg. If we increase our propaganda and fight back with all our might, we can finally make it”, growled Frank.

“But there are so many of them, and they are ruthless and brutal”, moaned Bäumer.

“Then we will answer them in the same language! Violence is the only thing they understand!”

“Anyway, let`s wait and see”, said Alfred and went into the secondary room.

Frank was staring at the TV screen and tried to calm down. He was watching a news channel from North America. Some kind of epidemic had broken out in southern India and several thousand people had already died, as the newscaster told. With a loud yawning, Kohlhaas switched the television off and left the living room too.

Both sides, the collectivists and the Rus, interpreted the events in St. Petersburg as their successes. Theodore Soloto said on the internet that the CASJ had stopped the “reactionaries”, while Tschistokjow stressed that the freedom movement had made it to march through the inner city, despite of the “collectivist blood mobs”.

The struggle for power in the heart of the metropolis was now continued with unabated force. Propaganda material of the two revolutionary movements was flooding the city and political violence was the order of the day.

The Rus did not relent in their efforts and steadily increased their activities. Soon the first Russian policemen joined Tschistokjow`s organization and their number was growing. But the most sympathy the Rus still found among the desperate, uprooted and disaffected Russians.

The CASJ slowly lost ground and had to ease its iron grip around the districts of the inner city. Uljanin started to criticize Soloto and looked at the development with anger and sorrow.

In August, Tschistokjow`s men made several smaller rallies in the city center. They were all spontaneous and after a short time, the demonstrators disappeared again, leaving the CASJ no room for organized counterattacks.

The collectivists finally reacted with the usual terror and tried to kill Yuri Lebed on the 16th of August. The head of the local chapter of the freedom movement was ambushed and stabbed down by his political opponents at a subway station.

Nevertheless, the tough man survived the attack, although he had to stay in a hospital for a long time. Shortly afterwards, the Rus stroke back and beat up several collectivists after a CASJ meeting.

Soloto`s men answered for their part with the murder of a group leader of the Rus in the following week.

Tschistokjow`s followers reacted immediately and killed a CASJ functionary in front of his home with a headshot a few days later.

The whole August was characterized by a bloody guerrilla war that was raging in the streets of St. Petersburg.

But all in all, more and more people left the collectivist movement and supported the Rus. On the 29th of August, Artur Tschistokjow came back to St. Petersburg, in order to speak in front of several thousand people in a festival hall in the outskirts. One day later, a similar event followed at the other end of the metropolis. Slowly, the freedom movement was able to gain influence in the biggest city of western Russia.

The conference hall in the hotel "Himmelblick" was packed with people. About 500 Rus had gathered here today, among them many functionaries of the freedom movement and furthermore the officers and commanders of the Belarusian army. Frank and Alfred were sitting in the first row. Behind them, a few Russians in gray shirts were whispering, while they waited for the arrival of the president. The great hall was hung all over with dragon head flags. It were dozens of banners, hanging on the sides of the hall or from the ceiling. Dozens of uniformed members of the Children of the Rus were also holding flags in their hands, standing in rank and file at the entrance.

Behind the stage, at the other end of the hall, a giant dragon head flag had been placed. Under it was a big banner with the inscription: "Victory through perseverance! Russia will live!"

When Artur Tschistokjow finally entered the hall, he was welcomed with a thunderous applause. Friendly smiling, he walked slowly towards the speaker`s desk, that was also

decorated with the symbol of the freedom movement. Then he began with his speech:

“My dear comrades!

The next month will bring the decision in the fight for St. Petersburg. I have decided to occupy the city, because I think that we meanwhile have realistic chances. Currently, our enemies are confused and don't really know how to stop us. That means for us: It is time to act!

And we have to act quickly before they can strengthen their position again. Soon our organization will start with the greatest propaganda campaign in the history of our movement and I am sure, that we can beat the CASJ, if we concentrate all our forces on St. Petersburg.

Regiments of the Volksarmee, armed troopers and of course also the Varangian Guard, furthermore thousands of other Rus, will now be mobilized.

We will occupy the strategically important targets in the city, organize strikes of the workers who have sympathies for us, and finally throw the CASJ out of St. Petersburg. The House of Justice and all other centers of the enemy must be taken as well. We must hit them hard with a sudden strike!

“Well, the band begins to play”, whispered Bäumer at his friend.

“We should try it, Artur is right”, replied Frank.

The blonde politician behind the speaker's desk raised his fist and exclaimed: “Despite of the risk, that this will be the staring shot of a civil war in Russia, we will occupy the second largest city with one great assault! I say: Now or never, my comrades!”

“Civil war will come soon anyway”, shouted an elderly man from behind.

A group of young Russian troopers babbled loudly in the background and Artur Tschistokjow asked for silence.

“I know, that most of you are worried and I`m worried too. But we have to try it now, my loyal fighters! There is no other chance for our organization. Uljanin and his red-black poisoners will never rest and we can not either. Fate leaves us no other choice anymore!

From tomorrow on, we will start the great propaganda offensive in St. Petersburg - and the military attack will follow. If we should succeed in taking over this important metropolis, then the balance of power in western Russia will change overnight. Then we will have a mighty fortress, a bulwark! Do not forget that!

The time is right, the GCF has almost completely left Russia to give the collectivist pseudo-revolutionaries, these agents of the world enemy, free reign. Nobody stands in their way anymore - except for us. My comrades, we all know who is behind this devilry. Let us bring freedom to the Russian nation and the sword to Uljanin`s hellish breed!”

The rebel leader still spoke for more than an hour and the orders were clear after his stirring speech. A few days later, Frank, Alf and the Varangians began work.

In the first week of September, the members of the Freedom Movement of the Rus advanced deeply into the streets of the suburbs of St. Petersburg. They distributed countless leaflets, newspapers and data discs. Other Rus drove through the city with loudspeaker vans, implacably preaching the doctrines of Tschistokjow.

The Varangians were patrolling around the clock in almost all parts of the metropolis and tried to protect their comrades from collectivist attacks. Their watchful eyes always searched the dark streets and corners for the political opponents, but St. Petersburg was far too big to keep everything in sight.

In a suburb in north of the city, some CLJ troopers fired at the trucks from a rooftop. Frank gave his men the order to pursue the collectivists. The hooded men disappeared in a rundown apartment block and the Varangians tried to get them. They searched apartment for apartment, always the weapon at the ready.

Frank and his soldiers walked through dark corridors, which were littered with debris and trash, they kicked in the doors of the ugly dwellings to find filthy and impoverished Russians, sitting in the corners.

Many of these poor people were followers of Uljanin and stared at the Varangians with hateful eyes. Women met them on the hallway, hissing something in Russian, then they spat on the ground in front of the Varangians to trudge back then into their bleak home holes.

In the end, Frank and his men found no one. Presumably, the CLJ men had already escaped through a back yard. Angry and frustrated, they left the ugly block of flats, got into their trucks and drove to another point of the giant city.

The Varangians spent the night in general outside of St. Petersburg in an old gymnasium or other, shabby accommodations. Sometimes they were also out at night, patrolling in the streets of the suburbs. This was tiring and monotonous, a form of political struggle that tortured Frank and his soldiers.

In the second and third week of September, the Varangians started to distribute advertising material in the city center. Here, they often met hostile people, who railed against them behind their backs. They got used even to this. At night, they were on patrol again.

But the Varangians could not be everywhere. St. Petersburg was a huge moloch and a confusing maze of streets. So the conflicts between the Rus and the collectivists went on.

Over 30 Rus died only in September in the course of the propaganda campaign of the freedom movement. They were shot, stabbed or slain in dark corners or on open street. Nevertheless, the campaign continued, because it had to be done.

Occasionally, Frank phoned with Julia, promising her, that he would return to Ivas as soon as possible. But she had heard things like this a thousand times before. The young woman had become tired to listen to the same old assertions again and again. Anyway, there was still a big fosse between Frank and her, because Kohlhaas was an always turning cogwheel in the machinery of the revolution. When the young man was lying that night in his dirty sleeping bag for a few hours, he was found again by a strange dream vision...

Shots and explosions could be heard everywhere between the dark ruins. Frank was alone in this apocalyptic landscape of destruction, huddling behind a gray concrete wall that was littered with bullet holes and burn marks.

Slowly, he crept forward, while a terrible slaughter was raging around him. GCF soldiers and armed men in the gray uniforms of the Volksarmee were savaging each other.

Flame-throwers whooshed in the distance, cloaking the ruins in an eerie glow. Then he could see the outlines of tanks that broke through the field of rubble, wildly shooting at everything in their way. Fear seized Frank's heart and made it difficult for him to breathe, while the stench of burnt flesh was stinging into his nose. The rebel jumped over a dead soldier whose blank eyes were staring at him out of a smashed, bloody face.

"I must find him!", he whispered to himself, hurried across a street that was covered with corpses and rubble.

Then he ran down a dark alley and finally saw a group of bombers in the distance. They were racing across the sky with roaring engines and let their deadly cargo rain down on earth.

“Bam! Bam! Bam!”, it thundered from afar and bright light lit up the dim, cloud-covered horizon. Frank began to run faster and finally came to a big square, where a dark building towered up into the sky.

It was a huge pyramid with a red light on its top. The light resembled an evil eye, and its ray went down on him in a flash as he approached.

Frank summed up all his courage and climbed up some stairs to enter the pyramid. The stone gate at the foot of the mysterious building was open and it seemed to expect him like the maw of a demon. Kohlhaas went inside and walked through endless corridors, then he climbed up some more stairs and eventually came into a large hall, which was lit by smoldering torches on the walls.

Ancient columns with reliefs, showing death and war, carried the hall. Frank went further into the huge vault and finally met two persons.

He came closer and realized, that one of the two men was sitting on a throne, which was made of human bones.

The other person was a soldier who lifted his rifle menacingly, positioning himself in front of the gruesome throne.

“It's you, my boy!”, said Kohlhaas and introduced himself to the soldier. It was Nico, his nephew.

The man on the throne, wearing a fiery red dress, got up from his seat and went towards his guard. It was none other than the World President.

Nico looked as if he was in the mid twenties, Frank was puzzled. The young man stared at him with empty eyes, pointing with the gun directly at Frank's chest.

“General Frank Kohlhaas!”, whispered the World President into Nico`s ear and grinned maliciously. “This is your uncle, my boy!”

“Yes, I am. Your uncle Frank...”, said the uninvited guest and tried to smile.

Nico did not answer him and just stared into space. The World President put his arm around the shoulder of his bodyguard and hissed: “Your uncle Frank has long resisted us! He wants to kill your master! He has already killed many people and now he wants to take my life!” The soldier said nothing and kept a straight face.

“What`s wrong with you, Nico? What have they done to you?”, asked Kohlhaas his nephew with wavering voice.

“He is an enemy of humanity, an enemy of justice, an enemy of the brotherhood! Kill him before he kills your master!”, ordered the World President, clapping on Nico`s back.

Frank was scared and confused. He showed his empty hands to his nephew. “I do not want to kill anyone! Here, I have no weapon. I just wanted to see you again.”

“Do not listen to him! He must die! Kill him! Shoot him! I will give you a great reward! Kill him! Kill him!”, shouted the man in the crimson robe.

A shot rang out and Frank felt how he was thrown backwards. Incredible pain was rushing through his body and he was breathing heavily. With the last of his strength, he put his hand on the chest, where a warm flow of blood poured out.

“Well done, Nico!”, he heard the World President`s malicious voice. Shortly afterwards, he suddenly had the feeling to fly above his body, watching the scene from the ceiling of the hall.

The young soldier smiled meekly at his master and said: “I have killed him, my lord! Do I get my reward now?”

His master was silent for a few seconds, then he uttered a bloodcurdling scream and Frank saw his body burst like a breaking cocoon.

“What is happening to you, my lord?” Nico fell on his knees and was speechless with terror.

Finally, a huge snake with a forked tongue suddenly stuck its ugly head out of the red robe, leaving its decayed human body lay on the ground. Then the snake crawled towards Nico.

“What is happening to you, master?”, cried the young soldier again and tried to run away, but the snake lunged at him, slamming their fangs deeply into his flesh.

Nico struggled and screamed, but the snake completely devoured him with a loud smack within a second. It choked down the young soldier with skin and hair, to finally creep back to the awful throne, made of human remains.

“Your reward, Nico? Well, that was your reward! You were allowed to serve me as food, like all the other people too!”, hissed the snake and curled up happily.

Forward Ever, Backward Never!

“A text message! Svetlana has wished me good luck!”, said Alf, showing Frank the display of his cellphone. Frank yawned and crawled out of his sleeping bag.

“That’s really nice!”, he muttered sleepily.

Around them, the other soldiers of the Varangian Guard slowly woke up, while bright sunlight was breaking through the dirty windows of the gym hall, awaking even the last of the men.

“It is 6.40 o`clock now!”, said Frank, stretching his aching back.

Tonight he hadn`t lain all too comfortable. Alf made some pushups and Kohlhaas looked with admiration at his big upper arm muscles. A few minutes later, the general did the same and tried to warm up too.

Shortly afterwards, the Varangians lined up outside the gym in rank and file. Their leader inspected them and explained the details of today`s mission in Russian. Tschistokjow had finally given his elite soldiers a heavy task - they had to conquer the House of Justice and to arrest or kill Theodore Soloto, if they had the chance.

So they got into their trucks and drove to St. Petersburg in a long convoy. At the same time, several regiments of the Volksarmee and thousands of other Rus tried to invade the metropolis.

Artur Tschistokjow wanted to lead his followers to the Palace Square in the heart of the city, and he hoped that his organization would be able to mobilize the masses on this important day. There wouldn`t be a second chance, if the takeover failed today, as Tschistokjow meant.

“The soldiers of the Volksarmee and the armed troopers will occupy the main administration building and the other strategic goals. We will concentrate our forces on the collectivist scum. Today, we will smash the CASJ!”, shouted Frank at some of his Russian soldiers.

“We will kill them all!”, growled a young Varangian who was screwing a bayonet on his rifle. The other men in the hold of the truck answered with a thunderous battle cry.

Kohlhaas beheld the soldiers around him. Some of them were brawny, brutal-looking guys with petrified faces. Others were still young, tall, athletic and full of fiery idealism. He felt comfortable among them. With one or the other Varangian, he had already become friends and he asked himself, how many of them he would see again, at the end of this day.

Next to him was Alf, his faithful friend. Frank loved him like a brother. He could always count on Bäumer, and also today he was glad that the giant from Dortmund was there. Kohlhaas clapped him on the shoulder with a smile and stared then silently at the ground.

“There is no reason for bad mood, buddy”, he said.

Bäumer shook his head. “I’m not grumpy, just tired. I think I should make a nap...”

Bäumer yawned and closed his eyes. Frank wondered once more, how Alf could have the nerves to sleep in a situation like this. He just shrugged his shoulders and had to chuckle in the next second. That was Bäumer - his best friend. Today, the tall German behaved as always, Alf was a constant in this otherwise so fickle world, thought Kohlhaas. The truck convoy came closer to St. Petersburg. It should become a hell of a day.

But the collectivists had not been unprepared. They knew that their enemies would try to take over the city today and

so they did everything to prevent it. Nevertheless, they did not know how many Rus would invade St. Petersburg. So they had already occupied some important buildings the night before. Moreover, they had taken over the local television and radio stations, that were now sending appeals to the people since the early morning hours. The citizens of St. Petersburg should gather under the red-black flag in the city center, proclaimed the CASJ. Now, Theodore Soloto put everything on one card too, giving his men the order to conquer St. Petersburg for collectivism.

All the conflicts in the previous months could not be compared to the street fights that were now waiting for the Rus. This was already real civil war.

Tschistokjow's followers came by train, by car or by truck. Thousands of them streamed into the city from all sides.

Meanwhile, the St. Petersburg chapter of the freedom movement had called their members and supporters together in the southern suburbs of the city. And the Rus had, as well as the collectivists, armed themselves with everything they could get. Those who had no firearms, had grabbed a club or something else.

The Varangian Guard reached the city at 8.00 o'clock in the morning and immediately became embroiled in a skirmish. Some collectivists had shot at the truck convoy in a side street, but this did not stop the advance of the Varangians. After a short shoot-out, the CLJ troopers retreated and the trucks drove on towards the inner city.

Several units of the Volksarmee followed them and occupied some important buildings in the outskirts. Then they tried to invade the city center too.

Artur Tschistokjow beheld the numerous troopers in their gray shirts and black pants, while cheering citizens came

out of their houses, waving Russia flags and joining the growing crowd. The Belarusian president, Peter Ulljewski and many of the leading functionaries of the freedom movement had already met at dawn in the west of St. Petersburg.

“Do you think we can make it today?”, asked Artur his oldest friend.

“Chapter leader Lebed says that the collectivists seem to be well prepared. They have already occupied some buildings, including the media district”, answered Ulljewski and appeared nervous.

“We are still waiting for more men. If everyone has arrived, we will march towards the inner city”, explained the leader of Rus.

Peter nodded and disappeared in the crowd to look for the leaders of the trooper units. Today, any mistakes could be deadly.

”Attention! Attention! Citizens of St. Petersburg! This is Theodore Soloto of the CASJ! Today, Tschistokjow`s fascist hordes try to take over the power in our city! Help us to fight back! Join the collectivist revolution here in St. Petersburg! We will bring you freedom and justice! Join the CASJ! Come to our mass demonstration! Today, at 13.00 o`clock in the summer garden!”

Frank turned off the radio and looked at Alf with concern.

“This won`t be a blitz anymore.”

“Damn!”, grumbled Bäumer and clung to his machine gun.

Suddenly the truck convoy stopped, as a barricade blocked its way. Frank peered across the street and saw some red-black flags behind a big pile of boards and rubble.

“Get out of the trucks! Swarm out!”, he shouted into his radio.

The soldiers got out of the transport vehicles and took cover. Some of the trucks sped away and turned into a side street.

In the distance, a hand grenade detonated and screams were heard, while the Varangians opened fire. A few minutes later, several trucks appeared behind the collectivists and 200 Varangians immediately encircled them.

“Come on!”, shouted Frank, and his soldiers attacked the collectivists from the front. Now there was no more escape for the surprised enemies.

The shoot-out did not last long. After a few minutes, most of the CLJ troopers behind the barricade had been killed or heavily wounded.

“This was just a small squad”, remarked Kohlhaas, looking at his men who were destroying the barricade, that was still blocking the street.

Shortly thereafter, the passage was free. About a dozen dead CLJ troopers lay between debris and planks, the soldiers dragged the bodies to the sidewalk. Then the truck convoy drove away to take position in a nearby park.

Tschistokjow`s followers had gathered in the west of St. Petersburg. Soon, their mass had already grown up to 30000 people. This time, women and even children were among the demonstrators in great numbers. Many people cheered enthusiastically, when they recognized the Belarusian rebel in the crowd. Everybody tried to shake his hand, while some women even brought him flower bouquets to express their admiration.

The leader of the Freedom Movement of the Rus itself, however, was bad-tempered. The fact, that Soloto`s men had occupied several important radio stations and were now constantly sending their propaganda appeals, made him

more than angry. Nevertheless, he tried to hide his bad mood in front of his supporters as good as he could. Finally, the mass started to move. Loudly chorusing, the Rus marched through the streets and more and more people joined them.

"Artur Tschistokjow! Freedom for St. Petersburg!", shouted the Rus at the top of their lungs and waved their dragon head flags.

Meanwhile, it was 10.21 o'clock. Everywhere in the city, the men of the freedom movement were gathering on squares or in the streets and it had already come to first clashes with the collectivists.

In the inner city of St. Petersburg, Theodore Soloto had meanwhile mobilized an even bigger crowd and the number of the people, who followed the red-black flag on this day, was still growing. When the Rus had already reached downtown, they suddenly came across several hundred Russian policemen.

Artur Tschistokjow immediately gave his followers the order to stop, while his troopers took their rifles from the shoulders. A police officer came nearer, waving his hands and trying to calm down the armed troopers, who still appeared sceptic.

"Do not shoot!", shouted the man. "We want to help you!"

Artur Tschistokjow came out the crowd, stared at the police officer and perked his eyebrows up. "What?"

"Do not shoot, Mr. Tschistokjow!", shouted the man again.

"The St. Petersburg police is on your side! We want to help you to drive the collectivists out of our city!"

The rebel leaders shook the police officer's hand and answered: "I'm glad to hear this! We have never been your enemies! At last, you have finally realized who destroys this country and also your future!"

“We have already recognized this months ago, but we had our orders from above. You know what I mean, Mr. Tschistokjow.”

“Absolutely!”

“At first, we had the order to fight against your movement - to be one day replaced by the CLJ troopers of the CASJ. Our masters have betrayed us, from the beginning!”, said the police officer.

“Today, this madness will end! Welcome to the freedom movement!”, returned the Belarusian president and the crowd behind him started to cheer.

“Do you still have some of your anti-riot tanks?”, Artur wanted to know then.

The police officer grinned. “Yes, but only five, the rest has already been scrapped at the behest of our bosses. We can give them to you, so that you can clean up the streets!”

“Sounds good...”, said the rebel leader. “I will remember you offer, my friend.”

Around 500 Russian policemen eventually joined the Rus. Most of them had brought along their own weapons, and some of them even wore their heavy body armor, what made them look very formidable. Shortly afterwards, the Rus marched on towards the inner city.

Frank`s radio was crackling continuously and the general tried to conceive the situation, even if it was hardly possible. Artur had just informed him, that his crowd had already grown on to about 40000 people.

“The city center has become a cauldron. I have heard of over 200000 collectivists in the summer garden. Furthermore, the House of Justice is protected by over 4000 CLJ troopers and thousands of ordinary CASJ members. And the day is still young...”, said Kohlhaas and swallowed.

“The number of our supporters will grow too in the course of this day, don’t worry, Frank”, calmed him Alf.

“Yeah sure! Just wait and see...”, came back.

“What shall we do now, general Gollchaas?”, asked a Russian behind Frank’s back.

“We stay in this park and wait”, answered Bäumer before Kohlhaas could say anything.

In the eastern part of St. Petersburg, the soldiers of the Volksarmee met the collectivist troopers, who had entrenched themselves behind barricades or in houses. It came to fierce gunfights in the streets and soon the eastern suburbs of the metropolis turned into a battlefield.

This time, Tschistokjow’s soldiers even used some small, mobile mortars to drive the enemy out of his fortified positions. Soon, a bloody battle was raging for every street corner, and the Volksarmee suffered great casualties within only a few hours.

At 13.00 o’clock, about 60000 people were led by Tschistokjow. In return, Soloto had gathered not less than 350000 followers and the heart of St. Petersburg was shaking under the voices of countless people, who were ready for everything.

Soloto preached them what they wanted to hear. Today, as he declared, collectivism would also liberate St. Petersburg and save its people from poverty.

“But at first, we must destroy the enemies of equality, the murderous hordes of the capitalist exploiters! We must break the spine of Tschistokjow’s reactionary and fascist movement. And we will break it today - in the streets of St. Petersburg!”, shouted the CASJ functionary, while the crowd answered him with a deafening noise.

Artur Tschistokjow and his followers marched through Vasilevsky Island, a district west of the Palace Square, and finally encountered the first CLJ troopers, who immediately opened fire. The armed troopers shot back in return, and stormed against the barricades. The armored Russian policemen followed them to support their attack.

Then Tschistokjow also gave the giant crowd behind him the signal to charge. Screaming and yelling, over 60000 people surged through the streets like a forceful wave, dashing against the positions of the collectivists.

The first attackers were mowed down by machine gun fire, while their comrades jumped over their dead bodies, climbed on the barricades and drove the CLJ men back. It was another bloody chaos, but finally the mass of the Rus made it to chase the collectivists away, so that the demonstration could go on. The troopers destroyed or burned the barricades and the crowd marched in the direction of the university-terrain, where they were already awaited by even more opponents.

The CASJ members welcomed them with Molotov cocktails and clouds of cobblestones, but the raging Rus did not hesitate and stormed forward again, while thousands of students, who had gathered under the red-black banners, tried to hold them back.

One of them shot at Artur Tschistokjow in the chaos and failed his head just barely. The bullet hit the shoulder of a trooper behind the politician.

Now, the rebel leader was raging too, while his followers slammed into the mass of the students, beating everyone down they could get. Many of the Rus, who had grown up in poverty, hated these often arrogant young academics more than anything else. Many of the students had already taken leading positions in the CASJ and so a lot of members of the freedom movement attacked them with sheer frenzy.

After the street riot near the university of St. Petersburg, about 20000 people joined Tschistokjow`s crowd. Now the Belarusian revolutionary lead more than 80000 people through the streets.

The demonstrators marched across the Neva river, where it came to the next clash with a huge mass of collectivists at the other shore. Meanwhile, they had almost reached the Palace Square.

”Let`s advance to the city center!”, shouted Frank and the truck convoy began to move with roaring engines.

The big transport vehicles raced across a long bridge and finally through the streets of the inner city. Some smaller groups of collectivists crossed their path and were immediately welcomed with gun-fire.

Shortly afterwards, the trucks broke through a half-finished barricade south of the metro station “Moscow” and the Varangians gunned down the CLJ troopers behind it. Then the heavy transporters unerringly rolled towards the Ulitsa Nekrasova.

In the meantime, Theodore Soloto had ended his mass rally and was now leading the huge crowd to the main administration building of the city, in order to occupy it with his men. But Artur Tschistokjow and his Rus were already there, waiting for their rivals.

Frank was sweating and tried understand the excited babble that came out of the radio.

“We shall come to the Palace Square?”

“Yes, the collectivists are attacking us! I have never seen a crowd like that, Frank. Hurry up, help us!”

“What`s about the House of Justice and...?”

“Forget it! We need you here! Don`t waste time, come on!”, screamed Peter Ulljewski`s panicky into Frank`s ear.

Artur`s best friend was right in the middle of an unbelievable chaos. All around him, bullets, bottles, stones and firebombs flew through the air, while cars and even houses were set on fire. This time, the number of the collectivists was far too big to hold them back anymore.

But the Varagians did everything to reach the Palace Square as fast as possible. They raced through the streets at breakneck speed, breaking through barricades and all kinds of other barriers, to drive across a bridge near the Pushkin Theater. Finally, they reached the giant mass of their enemies.

"Get out of the trucks!", yelled Kohlhaas and hundreds of Varagians jumped on the asphalt. They had appeared right on the flank of the hostile crowd.

The collectivists were confused for a moment, and CLJ men were rapidly called together to repel the attack of the Varagian Guard. A bazooka blew up one of the trucks and killed several men. Frank and Alfred hit the dirt and crawled into a doorway.

Suddenly, several hundred Russian policemen stormed out of a side street and opened fire on the collectivists. Three anti-riot tanks followed them and the terrible sound of heavy autocannons filled the air.

Soloto`s horrified men were moved down by a murderous volley and bloody clouds sprayed up between the red-black flags. Kohlhaas clenched his fist.

"God bless the Russian police!", he whispered grimly.

Then he gave his men the order to attack. The Varangians pounced on their opponents, who were meanwhile seized with sheer panic.

At that moment, a deadly hail of bullets came over Soloto`s collectivists, cutting down whole swarms of them. Finally, the elite soldiers jumped right into the middle of the turmoil

and unleashed a bloody melee. Frank tore a hatchet from his belt, which he always carried for situations like this, and hacked down a CLJ trooper with a well-aimed strike. Then he speared another with his bayonet. Bäumer also raged like a madman, pumping his bullets into the body of every collectivist in his way.

The unexpected arrival of the Russian policemen and the furious onslaught of the Varagian Guard totally outaced Soloto`s followers.

Now even the ordinary Rus started a counterattack and charged the wavering foe. With everything their fists could grab, they beat, stabbed and shot down their red-black rivals.

Finally, Soloto`s followers run away, and retreated back towards the summer garden. Nevertheless, Artur Tschistokjow had been hurt and was holding his thigh.

“Occupy the administration building!”, he yelled at his troopers, squirming with pain.

Shortly afterwards, the main administration building of St. Petersburg could be taken without resistance, and a dragon head flag was run up on the roof.

Meanwhile, the fleeing collectivists had been chased by the Varangians a few hundred meters through the streets and many of them had been massacred by Frank`s soldiers. And the Russian policemen had done the same. The anti-riot tanks and the heavily armored officers had slaughtered a great number of Soloto`s followers.

General Kohlhaas was holding his bleeding cheek. The steel teeth of brass knuckles had barely missed his face in the bloody chaos of the fight. Alf gave him a plaster, and Frank stuck it on the burning wound.

“What shall we do now?”, asked Bäumer.

The leader of the Varagian Guard took a deep breath and called his men together. Some of them were wounded,

others were lying somewhere in the streets. Frank ordered to bring the injured soldiers to the next hospital, while the rest of his men got into the transport vehicles. Before the elite soldiers left the Palace Square behind, they met with Tschistokjow and the other Rus. The leader of the freedom movement embraced Frank and tried to smile.

“We have captured the building of administration, my friend”, he exclaimed in German.

Kohlhaas just nodded. “And now, Artur?”

“I have called for more soldiers of the Volksarmee, they will come in the next hours”, said Tschistokjow.

Frank looked down on Artur’s leg. His trousers were already soaked with blood.

“What has happened?”

“They hit my leg!”

“You have to be doctored, Artur!”

“Peter will bring me to a hospital. Go to the House of Justice. You have to take it, Frank”, he moaned in German.

“Don’t worry, Artur. I’m sure that we can make it”, assured Kohlhaas confidently.

“What is about your...your...?”, asked Artur then, pointing at Kohlhaas face.

“Cheek! This is called “cheek” in German.”

“Yes, is the cheek hurting?”

“I have turned the other cheek, Artur”, returned Frank with a grin.

Tschistokjow perked his eyebrows up and looked questioningly at his friend. Kohlhaas smiled and went back to his men.

Elsewhere in the city, the street fights were still raging. In the east of St. Petersburg, the soldiers of the Volksarmee had almost reached downtown. Some important buildings,

for example power generation plants and waterworks, were already in their hands.

Apart from that, they collectivists, who had retreated to the streets in the proximity of the summer garden, were now gathering at the Mesto Lenina, in order to start a counterattack on the Rus. Finally, they tried to cross one of the Neva bridges to get back into the inner city.

After Peter Ulljewski has brought his best friend to the hospital, Yuri Lebed, the head of the St. Petersburg chapter, delivered an inspirational speech and finally ended the rally. The Varangian Guard had meanwhile reached the Ulitsa Nekrasova. It was accompanied by several hundred armed troopers and ordinary Rus. Frank ordered the trucks to stop in a side street and they waited. It was now almost 17.00 o'clock.

"Collectivist troopers block all the streets around the Ulitsa Nekrasova", explained the general, holding his bleeding cheek.

"How many are there?", Bäumer wanted to know.

"I can't say yet, perhaps several thousand!"

The radio croaked and interrupted them. Peter Ulljewski reported that Soloto and his followers were trying to advance to the main administration building.

"They want to expel us from the Palace Square, but the police will help us", said the head of the Belarusian secret service.

"Damn! The collectivists edge our comrades on the Palace Square again!", cursed Kohlhaas and stared at Alf.

"What are you waiting for, Frank? Give the command to attack the House of Justice! We are just wasting our time here!", urged Bäumer.

"All right, but I have to coordinate the assault with our comrades from the Volksarmee at first", answered Frank and fetched the radio.

The general contacted an officer of the Belarusian army and talked with him for a quarter of an hour. Then he positioned himself in front of the Varangians.

“The soldiers of the Volksarmee will come from the east. Together we will invade the Ulitsa Nekrasova from several sides. Moreover, the Volksarmee has also some mortars that will help us against the CLJ troopers behind the barricades!”

“Sounds good”, muttered Alfred.

“I`m looking forward for the end of this terrible day”, gasped Frank.

Decision in St. Petersburg

Meanwhile, one hour had passed and the Varangians stalked through the streets towards the Vosstaniya Mesto, a large square in the south of the Ulitsa Nekrasova.

“Look at these guys!” Alf pointed at several thousand collectivists, who had gathered around a loud screaming CASJ functionary.

“Are there CLJ troopers among them?”, asked Frank doubtfully.

“No, I don’t think so. I can only see ordinary CASJ idiots”, returned Alf.

Some soldiers of the Volksarmee, who had followed the Varangians, peered across the square. Kohlhaas waved them nearer and whispered: “Let’s attack them! Otherwise they will stab us in the back, if we advance further in the direction of the House of Justice.”

The Belarusian soldiers nodded. Not a minute later, Frank gave the order to charge and the soldiers rushed forward. When the collectivists recognized the Varangians, they screamed in horror and immediately took to their heels. Several dozens of them were gunned down, while the rest ran into some side streets.

“Follow me!”, grumbled Kohlhaas without showing any emotions.

The soldiers advanced across a broad main street that was littered with charred debris and wrecked cars. In the background, a big house was burning in front of a barricade, where a lot of CLJ troopers had entrenched themselves. When they saw the Varangians, they opened fire. Some of Frank’s men were riddled with bullets, while the others hit the dirt or tried to find cover.

In the meantime, Theodore Soloto and his followers had started their counterattack. Even more police officers had joined the Rus in the last hours, and had entrenched themselves in the streets around the main administration building.

Another part of the demonstrators was already marching through the neighboring district, while the rest prepared to stop the onrushing collectivists. Now, fierce firefights for every house and every street corner followed, what caused a lot of casualties on both sides. Meanwhile, the reinforcements of the Volksarmee had almost reached the city center, as well as further CLJ units.

“We should advance through the backyards and bypass the barricades”, said Frank to his gigantic friend and explained his strategy.

A few minutes later, about 300 elite soldiers and the general swarmed out and scurried down a narrow path between two gray house walls. They crept through overgrown gardens, full of high grass and sprouting weed, while the rest of the Varangians and the Volksarmisten fired at the collectivists behind the barricade.

After a while, they had evaded the enemy on the flank and finally attacked in a flash. They grimly jumped out of the narrow gap between the houses and shot at everyone in sight. A grenade was hurled right in the middle of a group of CLJ troopers and the explosion threw some of them on the asphalt with torn limbs.

Seconds later, the rest of the Rus stormed forward and mowed the remaining enemies down in a brutal stabbing and shooting. Drenched in sweat and heavily breathing, Kohlhaas called the survivors of his unit together and advanced into the Ulitsa Nekrasova.

“The rest of our men is here too!” Frank sighed wearily and turned his head to Alf. “I can’t go on any longer!”

“Damn! Keep your nerve! We will conquer their headquarter now”, answered Bäumer and nodded at his exhausted friend.

Then the Rus entered the Ulitsa Nekrasova from three sides and struggled through to the House of Justice. The soldiers of the Volksarmee, who came from the east, fired at the collectivist headquarter at the same time with their mortars.

After another hour, the House of Justice was a smoking ruin, and the surviving opponents, who had entrenched themselves in it, were finally defeated with a last, daring assault.

General Kohlhaas climbed over piles of rubble and some dead soldiers. Everything was covered with dust or had vanished behind thick clouds of smoke. Somewhere beside him groaned a few wounded men. Whether it were friends or foes was not recognizable anymore.

Meanwhile it was already 20.13 o`clock, and the shadows of the night were slowly crawling over the city. With a blood-smeared face, in a filthy and sweaty uniform and completely exhausted, Frank walked through the smashed front door of the House of Justice. He went up some stairs to the upper floor and took a dragon head flag from one of his soldiers.

Kohlhaas screwed up his face of pain, hunger and fatigue, then he held the banner out the window and his men burst into a deafening cheer of triumph.

They had actually made it. The House of Justice had been taken. Completely exhausted, Frank slid down the wall and closed his eyes. Only one wish had remained in his mind, the wish to fall asleep, here and now.

The loss of their headquarter was a huge shock for the St. Petersburg collectivists. After several hours of fighting, they

broke off their attack on the main administration building, after they had suffered great casualties against the Rus and the soldiers of the Volksarmee. Theodore Soloto finally fled with his staff members deep in the night to the northern city and took refuge there in a house. In other districts, the street battles between Rus and collectivists were still going on until the early hours of the next morning. The following day, the soldiers of the Volksarmee occupied the press houses and radio stations, what was another defeat for the local CASJ.

Artur Tschistokjow, who learned the news about the victory on his sick bed, was almost bursting with joy. His men had ultimately conquered Russia's second-largest city and the struggle for St. Petersburg had come to an end.

"Soloto has fled! They have said it on the radio", remarked Frank, taking a sip of mineral water.

"I think this rat is hiding somewhere in the underground...", answered Bäumer.

"Anyway, it is over. However, I hope so. Today we will just patrol in some streets - nothing else", said Kohlhaas, sighing with relief.

"Is Artur all right?"

"Peter told me an hour ago, that they have successfully cut out the bullet. Yes, I think he is all right, more or less."

"We have finally won. What a battle!", muttered Alf.

His friend was holding his head and still looked tired and worn out. "Yes, thank God!"

Three soldiers were playing cards next to them and laughed occasionally, while the other Varangian were sleeping. Most of them were also totally exhausted and barely spoke a word.

“This has already been real war. Sometimes I had to remember the hell of Sapporo”, said Frank quietly.

He went to the window and looked down on the dark street. Everything seemed to be abandoned, only a dog was barking somewhere in the distance.

“Do you think, this madness will end one day?”, asked Frank his friend.

“It will still last a long time...”, said Alf with his almost proverbial composure.

The situation in St. Petersburg was slowly easing again. Together with the Russian police, the troopers of the freedom movement and the soldiers of the Volksarmee restored some kind of order in the devastated metropolis.

Except for minor raids and ambushes, the resistance of the collectivists had faded away. Now, Peter Ulljewski and his DSR units started to hunt down the remaining CASJ functionaries and servants of the World Government in a large-scale operation.

Nevertheless, Theodore Soloto had disappeared and no one knew, whether he was still in St. Petersburg or had already fled to the east. The Belarusian secret service did everything to get the hated enemy, but it did not find him.

All in all, about 15000 people had died in the battle for St. Petersburg. But now the power of the CASJ was gone and the Rus ruled the city.

Outside the metropolis, the collectivists had overrun almost entire Russia and the Ukraine. Furthermore, Uljanin was not willing to accept his defeat in the west and was already planning a counterstrike. So the bloody riots and barricade fights should only be the prelude to a much bigger conflict. But first, Artur Tschistokjow`s freedom movement celebrated its victory.

Frank and Alfred still stayed in St. Petersburg until the end of October, in order to help to consolidate the rule over the important metropolis.

The soldiers of the Varangian Guard spent their days with endless patrolling or helped Peter Ulljewski's DSR units to arrest or execute collectivists, Lodge Brothers, collaborators of the World Government and other treasonous people.

Finally, the Rus eliminated their enemies with the same ruthless brutality as the CASJ did it in central and eastern Russia. Meanwhile, Artur Tschistokjow controlled the television and radio stations in St. Petersburg and used them to educate the population in his sense.

"It is more important to win people's hearts and minds, than to force them with the sword", he often said in these days.

This time, the international press and television gave the events in St. Petersburg a lot of attention. They spat their venom on Tschistokjow and made him to a violent monster. They depicted the collectivists throughout as "poor victims" and reported almost daily about the "appalling human rights violations" in Belarus and western Russia.

"Western Russia is drowning in blood!", headlined the biggest newspaper in North America.

"Stop the mad dictator Tschistokjow!", cried the press in the administrative sector "Central Europe".

The World President and the other leaders of the World Union expressed their "deep concerns" in front of the cameras, promising to intervene in eastern Europe as soon as possible.

Finally, the powerful had started to take notice of Tschistokjow. The fall of St. Petersburg had hit them hard and now they suddenly began to take the Freedom Movement of the Rus seriously.

In return, Akira Mori, Japan's foreign minister, and his colleague Thorsten Wilden, publicly proclaimed the unshakableness of their alliance.

Matsumoto moreover warned the World Government, telling them to keep their fingers away from Belarus. And while everything was finally reaching an international level, Frank and Alfred turned their backs to big politics and went back to Ivas.

It was raining since daybreak and Frank had hardly left his bed. His limbs felt heavy as lead and only now and then he scuffed into the kitchen to drink a cup of tea. Bäumer and Svetlana were upstairs and also wanted to be alone.

This morning, the young Russian woman had arrived in Ivas and had briefly talked to Frank. Then she had gone into Alf's room, just closing the door behind her.

Kohlhaas was confused, exhausted and unhappy, in spite of the great victory in St. Petersburg. When it started to get dark outside, he put on his jacket and left the house.

He slowly walked down the muddy streets of the village and had a short small talk with a young man, who had also witnessed the battle for St. Petersburg. Frank barely knew him. Stefan Weinert was the name of the 18 year old guy and Frank learned, that he had already joined the freedom movement under Sven Weber's leadership.

With the death of his friend and his constant absence, Kohlhaas had long lost the contact to the still very active youth of Ivas. But it was nice to talk with a young German from his home village, who was also fighting for Tschistokjow, as Frank thought.

After a while, it started to rain again, but Frank didn't care about it. To the contrary, he enjoyed the cold drops, which were pattering on his face. Then he took a deep breath and felt relieved for a moment.

Shortly afterwards, he came to the village square and looked around with a melancholic mien, while he heard the raindrops drumming on the rooftops around him. How much he had missed this little village and how far he had been carried away by the events of the last time.

There were only a few lights in the old houses that surrounded him. The moon had already vanished behind a thick curtain of rain clouds. Frank sauntered about for a while and finally went to the cemetery.

Grave stones with Cyrillic inscriptions, overgrown with all sorts of weed, were waiting for him here in the rainy darkness of this evening. It were the graves of the former inhabitants of the village, who had died decades ago. They were long forgotten.

However, eight grave stones on this cemetery were new. Most of today`s inhabitants of Ivas, who had come to the village under Wilden`s guidance, were still alive. An older couple had died between 2031 and 2033. Furthermore, six young men. And these young men had all given their lives for the revolution, as Frank said to himself.

He had not really known them. Except for Sven Weber, his good friend. In addition, there were two further young boys from Ivas, which had also died in the name of the great fight for freedom. Thomas Baastfeldt and Dennis Müller. But they had been buried somewhere in eastern Asia, and their corpses had never been transferred back home.

“In which mass grave are you rotting, my brothers?”, said Frank quietly, remembering the two volunteers of the Japanese war.

Then he stood in front of the grave of his friend Sven, whose gray stone seemed to stare at him. He crouched in the wet grass and stroke with his hand over the stalks.

“Here you rest, my friend. Buried as a hero. Was it really worth it?”, whispered Kohlhaas, beholding the graves

around him. Kohlhaas started to ponder again and was silent.

"Oh, Sven...", he muttered then, wiping a tear from his eye. "Maybe I'm lying next to you tomorrow. Then I will finally have found peace."

After Frank had sat at the grave of his friend for a while. Eventually he left the dark cemetery behind and went back to the village. Back home, he opened a bottle of vodka and emptied it with some strong sips. Another followed. A few hours later, he fell asleep and dreamed about nothing in this night.

On the following day, he visited Julia at noontide. When he met Agatha Wilden at the door, she welcomed Kohlhaas with only a few words.

"Julia is in her room", said Agatha.

Frank walked up the stairs and looked around in the hall.

"Just come in!", he heard from the side.

"Hello! Nice to see you. I thought that...", Frank interrupted himself.

"Yes, I know! How are you?"

Kohlhaas was silent for a moment, then he answered: "Are you happy to see me?"

"Yes, of course!", said the young woman, looking sadly at him.

"Well, I have always been on the road in the last months..."

"So it is!"

"But one day, this whole crap will be over..."

"Yes, when you're dead!", returned Julia with a cynical smile.

"I'm hard to kill", countered Frank.

Julia shook her head. "Of course, because you're the big hero. I read about you in the papers - how brave you are."

And if I want to see my father, then I only have to open the newspaper too. Yesterday he was even on TV again, but he hasn't been with his family since a long time."

Frank had to admit that she was dead right. He stood around confusedly and finally remarked: "Let's have a walk through the village. What do you think?"

She put him off. "Oh, Frank! Don't you understand, that all this doesn't make sense in the long term?"

The young man's eyes widened. "What do you mean?"

"This banter with us. There is only war on your mind, Frank. You just live for the revolution, while I don't play a role anymore."

Frank was baffled and looked for a suitable answer. "No, that's not true! I love you!"

Julia stared at him with an expressionless face, stroking through her hair. "You love me?"

"Why don't you come with me to Minsk?"

The daughter of the foreign minister shrugged her shoulders. "I don't know..."

"Then come with me to Minsk! What are you waiting for? I want you by my side! Just come with me!", he demanded.

"Stop! Wait a minute! I am not one of your soldiers and I accept no orders, Sir", returned Julia angrily.

"All right, sorry...", muttered Frank meekly.

"What has happened to your cheek?"

"Nothing! Just a scratch. It have been brass knuckles!", answered Kohlhaas with some pride.

Now Julia positioned herself in front of him. "You should know, you idiot, that I'm constantly worrying about you. I just fear that they kill you one day. You are always involved in any conflicts and it looks like it would go on forever in this manner. What I hear about the situation in Russia is horrible. Let the others fight for once! You have done more than enough heroics, Frank."

“But I must go on! And your father as well! It's just like that! This is our destiny!”

“Do you think that it would change anything if I follow you to Minsk?”, she suddenly screamed and started crying.

“Do you think that we can enjoy our quiet lives here in Ivas in the long run, if we don't fight?”, returned Kohlhaas.

“I don't know it, Frank! Anyway, I can not stand this terrible war any longer”, wailed the young woman.

Without further hesitation, Frank embraced her and gave her a kiss, while she silently cried in his arms.

“This constant struggle is a horror - also for me. It is destroying us all, but we are not able to change it. It is a awful time we were born into. A never-ending nightmare. Believe me, I'm hoping for peace too, deep inside.”

The daughter of the foreign minister didn't answer and just kissed him.

“I love you, my angel”, whispered Frank, hugging her tightly. Julia still said nothing and just clung to him, while she was quietly weeping.

Kohlhaas spent the night with Julia and left the house of the Wildens at dawn of the next day with a happy smile. Cheerfully liltng, he walked through the village and enjoyed the fulfillment of his deepest wish. This time, he had ultimately conquered the heart of his beloved. All opposing tendencies had been defeated after heavy fights on the battlefield of feelings. Frank had occupied Julia's heart, secured it and finally marked it with his flag.

Moreover, she had actually promised him that night, to rent an apartment in Minsk. The beautiful woman wanted to be with him, and Frank was sure that his dream of a romantic future with her would come true in the end.

He had never been that close to her. It had been wonderful, when their hearts had joined up and embraced each other.

But the young man kept his mouth shut. He talked about this night not even to Alf or Svetlana, who were now getting on his nerves with an entire armada of questions.

Around noon, he went to HOK to play Battle Hammer. This time, Frank's orcs competed against HOK's human knights – it seemed to become an exciting game.

All in all, it was relaxing and funny. Frank even managed it to get a draw at least. Furthermore, the pudgy computer expert had bought him a mass of new tin miniatures on the internet and Kohlhaas was looking forward to paint them.

Towards evening, he picked Julia up and went with her to Steffen de Vries cafe. This time, she stayed for the night in his house. For this reason, Frank had especially cleaned up his traditionally untidy bed room.

And now he was happy! Happy like a fish in the clear water of the ocean. It was wonderful to fall asleep with Julia in his arms, while her soft, blond hair was lying on his chest. The general wanted to stay in Ivas forever and become a real civilian. Yes, now it was time to fight for the others, as Frank said to himself. He had risked his life far too long.

The Last Chapter

The leader of the Varangian Guard, dreaded by his enemies, had suddenly become meek. He drove to Minsk with Julia and she moved into a small apartment in the city center. Sooner or later, they wanted to move together, just as Kohlhaas had always imagined it.

Meanwhile, it was November, and Frank had just ignored the recent news on Belarusian television. A lot had changed in the last weeks - for the worse.

The World Government had announced to support the collectivists with GCF units. Moreover, the World Union had begun to supply the enemies of the Rus with weapons from western Europe and North America. Now the Lodge Brothers even sent military experts to Russia, who should help Uljanin to build up a professional army.

"Artur Tschistokjow`s bloody regime won`t be tolerated by the international community anymore!", announced the World President in New York and this time he seemed to mean what he said.

The leader of the freedom movement had meanwhile returned to Minsk. And while Frank spent his days with love and relaxing idleness, the Belarusian president and his cabinet tried to find an answer to the question: What can we do, if the GCF attacks?

Their chances were ridiculously small, that was obvious. In these days, Thorsten Wilden visited his daughter a few times and disappeared again then, to confer with Artur Tschistokjow or even the Japanese foreign minister. If Russia would really descend into civil war, then Japan had to help.

"I have to leave you tomorrow. We have the order to drive to Nowgorod", said Frank sadly.

"Yes, and I accept it. I will support you, from now on, and wait for you here. In the next days, I will help out a bit at the "Scythians Elementary School", and then I will take a look at the university of Minsk", replied Julia and tried to smile.

"This mission will just be a patrol, as the command has told me. Just driving around and driving away then..."

"The main thing is, that you come back to me", whispered the young woman and hugged him.

"Of course, I will come back, as soon as I can. I promise it."

They spent a passionate night and fell asleep without worry. On the next day, general Kohlhaas left the apartment, still spurred by his luck, giving Julia a last kiss.

Then Frank made his way to the barracks in the outskirts of Minsk and drove with the Varangian Guard north. During the trip, he thought of Julia all the time, and always smiled happily to himself when he saw her beautiful face in front of his mind's eye.

The motorized unit advanced to Valdaj, where everything was quiet, because the villages and small towns here were already in the hands of the Rus. Most of the inhabitants greeted friendly when the trucks with the dragon head flags raced past them. This region seemed to be peaceful, and Frank was sure that the next days and weeks would remain quiet too.

In the last week of November, a group of collectivists occupied a school in the east of St. Petersburg, taking the teachers and students as hostages. Belarusian television reported explicitly about it. The red-black terrorists demanded the withdrawal of the Rus from the entire city, and threatened to kill all the school children and teachers. Finally, the school was under siege for three days, until it

was stormed by the police and the soldiers of the Volksarmee. In return, the hostage-takers left a terrible bloodbath, murdering 127 students and 14 teachers before they could be shot by the police.

This incident shocked the people in St. Petersburg and in the surrounding regions. However, the international press twisted the facts in the usual way, making the Rus responsible for the massacre. This meant another storm of lies and slander against Tschistokojow and the freedom movement, which lasted for weeks.

But the leader of the Rus used the incident in St. Petersburg in his sense, starting his own little media campaign with the Belarusian television and the few newspapers which were in his hands. However, the Belarusians and the people in the Baltic countries finally developed a burning hatred against Uljanin and the CASJ. Thus, the situation was further escalating and the way was paved for a civil war in Russia.

Meanwhile, Thorsten Wilden was in Tokyo since three days. Impatiently, he was waiting for a reaction of the Japanese foreign minister. For today, Akira Mori had invited him into his house in the outskirts of the capital, in order to discuss the behavior of Japan in the case of a future civil war in Russia.

The two diplomats were strolling through a beautiful garden, full of high trees and blooming bushes, and finally went into the house. Wilden gave his Japanese ally a friendly smile, while the Asian fetched a bottle of Sake. Then, the two men began to converse in English.

“Are you really sure that there will be a civil war in Russia, Mr. Wilden?”, asked Akira Mori.

“We have conquered St. Petersburg and now there is already civil war! The collectivists will never accept their

defeat in western Russia”, replied the Belarusian foreign minister.

Mori pondered for a moment and scratched his head. Then he sat down on a chair and studied various documents.

“President Matsumoto is not sure, whether Japan should actually get involved into this conflict. We are glad, that we have survived the attack of the GCF”, he remarked.

“Without the help of Japan, we will have no chance against Uljanin”, said Wilden worriedly, beholding the bottom of his sake glas.

“This is no easy decision for us!”

“I know, Mr. Mori.”

“What is if the World Government attacks us again? This could happen if we intervene in Russia...”

Wilden shook his head. “I do not think so. Please don’t forget that thousands of young men from all over the world have supported the Japanese in the independence war. Now, we want Japan’s help!”

Akira Mori pulled a long face and was obviously looking for a satisfying answer for his guest from Belarus.

“Our revolution must not fail, Mr. Mori! If we are successful and assume power in Russia, Japan will have an important ally in Europe”, continued Wilden.

“What’s about more money and weapons?”, suggested Mori.

The gray-haired German shook his head and was not content with the answer.

”This is not enough! We need the help of the Japanese army - in Siberia!”, explained the German.

“Attacking Siberia?”

“Yes!”

“But Siberia is nothing but thousands of kilometers of ice and stepps. There are only a few towns and cities, what means that there is not much we could attack, Mr. Wilden.”

The Japanese foreign minister seemed to be overwhelmed with the wishes of his colleague.

“My plan is a Japanese land invasion that reaches Irkutsk and Krasnoyarsk!”, said Wilden firmly.

“Irkutsk? Krasnoyarsk?” His interlocutor stared at him with wide eyes.

“The only way...”

“We have not the power for an operation like this, Mr. Wilden.”

“The collectivists and the GCF are not very strong in the eastern part of Siberia. Their forces are concentrated in central Russia, remember that”, returned Tschistokjow’s foreign minister.

“This sounds crazy, Mr. Wilden!”

“If Belarus is smashed by the GCF or overrun by the collectivist revolution, then Uljanin and the World Government will isolate and attack Japan again. Your nation needs allies, in order to survive in the long term. I promise you, that Tschistokjow will do everything to make Russia to a major power again. And we will always fight on the side of the Japanese people!”, said the German grumpy.

Akira Mori sighed and took another glass of rice wine. Then he shrugged his shoulders and replied uncertainly: “I will ask president Matsumoto...”

Vitali Uljanin felt uncomfortable in his role. Theodore Soloto and his CLJ units had finally lost control over St. Petersburg and the Council of the Wise had already received the unpleasant news. So they had sent one of the elders to him, in order to conceive a strategy for the coming civil war in Russia.

The leader of the CASJ was fuming with rage and saw it as a humiliation, that he had to justify himself in front of this man from North America, because of the defeat in St.

Petersburg. For days, he had obsessed about his fantasies of revenge, swearing one thing to himself: Artur Tschistokjow would soon pay for his audacity, but apparently he was stronger and more determined than he had expected. Now he had no more alternative, but to accept the help of the Global Control Force.

The gray-haired councilor beheld Uljanin with a hint of arrogance and said: "Well, brother! I have the impression, that your revolution is not able to destroy the freedom movement in western Russia. It means, in the eyes of the elders, that the GCF has to help you to take over the power in entire Russia. What do you mean, brother Uljanin?"

"Give me just a little more time. We'll drive these bastards out of St. Petersburg again", growled the goateed man.

"The council has no time for such games. We demand quick and unambiguous results in western Russia, but you have not been able to show them - so far. Anyway, we will send you some GCF divisions to support your organization. And then, the elders demand the extermination of the Rus, Mr. Uljanin."

"The formation of a powerful red-black army can't be done overnight", returned the collectivist leader angrily.

"Take my advice!", said the councilor coldly.

"How many GCF divisions will we get?"

"This is not yet clear. Soon, large contingents will be needed in India, Mr. Uljanin. But you'll get enough helpers. Don't worry."

"I'm not worrying because of the Rus. Believe me, we can also smash them with our own men - sooner or later", hissed the head of the CASJ.

The elder grinned cynically. "As we have seen it in St. Petersburg."

Uljanin didn't answer and just stared at his superior, narrowing his eyes to slits.

“Why does the Council of the 13 send so many soldiers to India?”, asked the goateed Lodge Brother then.

“We have our reasons...”, answered the councilor with an arrogant smirk.

“However, we will soon have conquered the Ukraine and then we will take over the power in the rest of Russia. What’s about Japan? Will Japan intervene?”

“I don’t think so. Matsumoto is happy if we leave him alone”, said the visitor from North America.

“Actually, the collectivst revolution does not need any support by the GCF”, grumbled Uljanin.

“No more discussions, brother!”, returned the elder. “You will get more money and more weapons - and now even GCF troops. This should be enough to conquer a land like Russia, shouldn’t it?”

The head of the CASJ got up from his seat and escorted the councilor to the door of his office. Suddenly, the guest turned around again and positioned himself right in front of Uljanin, looking him straight in the eyes.

“Finally, one last advice, brother. Do not always question the instructions of the Council of 13! If we decide something, then it is God's word. Just to be clear! Bye!”, said the gray-haired man, raising his forefinger.

“Yes, Sir!”, stammered Uljanin and bowed.

When the guest had left, the leader of the red-black movement sat down on his chair and stared angrily at the wall. Uljanin had the impression, that the high gentlemen of the Council of the Elders did not take him all too seriously anymore. Just now, he had been treated like a silly boy. Full of anger, he kicked against his desk.

“Soon, you will recognize the elemental force of the unleashed masses. I will take over Russia and serve the Great Plan as a true revolutionary. And when the biggest country on earth is in my hands, those snooty elders will

finally pay respect to me”, hissed Uljanin under his breath, clenching his bony fist.

The Varangian Guard had split up and was now driving in groups of three trucks through the large rural area west of Pestovo. Alfred Bäumer also led one of these groups, which was meanwhile about 50 kilometers away from Frank’s unit. Kohlhaas and his men were on the way to Krasuba, another small town in the Russian vastness.

Yesterday, they had been shot at from an ambush by some collectivists in a small village. Frank and his men had chased and finally caught them. It had been ten young men with a gun. The Varangians had disarmed the guys, but had not killed them.

“Because you’re still that young!”, Frank had told them and had given them a flyer of the freedom movement. “Join us! You are Russians and all Russians should help Artur Tschistokjow!”

Ultimately, the trucks had driven on to the next town. This giant country seemed to have no borders and appeared endless, above all the rural areas. Nevertheless, it was important to show colors here, because Tschistokjow had a lot of sympathies in this region.

Apart from that, the ride through the rural areas was not very spectacular. The collectivists had established their rule primarily in the bigger cities and so it should remain at first.

On the 28th of November, around noon, Frank and his men came to Sandovo, a sleepy little town west of Rybinsk. The soldiers were hungry and stopped at the village square. Between the run-down houses they could eventually make out a little shop. General Kohlhaas straightened up and said: “We are going to eat something! Tonight, we’ll stay in that dump!”

His Belarusian soldiers muttered their consent and jumped from the loading areas of the transport vehicles. The village looked almost abandoned, only the shrill screech of some children could be heard somewhere between the houses. At the end of the square was a small church, it was astonishingly similar to the church of Ivas.

Soon dusk would fall and the Varangians had to look for an accommodation. Finally, they found several old, empty barns outside the village. They parked the trucks in front of them and went to sleep after a meager supper.

Frank was totally exhausted and curled up in his sleeping bag like a tired cat. Musty straw was tickling his scalp, but he had meanwhile become accustomed to all kinds of inconveniences. Around him, the soldiers started to snore, while a few men kept guard outside the barns.

“Good night, sweetheart!”, he whispered, looking at Julia’s photo on the display of his DC-Stick. Shortly thereafter, he fell asleep - to be brutally torn out of his dreams in the early morning hours.

Someone was screaming and Frank heard a shot. Only a few seconds later, a swarm of bullets hit the wooden wall of the barn and a wood splinters flew around. A Varganian staggered into the room, heavily bleeding, and got a shot in the back. The man collapsed immediately, gasping quietly.

The soldiers around Frank woke up and fetched their rifles, while Kohlhaas crawled out of his sleeping bag and crept into a corner to peek outside. One of the trucks was burning. Dozens of dark shadows could be seen in the distance and they quickly came closer to the barn.

“What’s going on here?”, he shouted.

His haggard and sleepy soldiers did not know it. Meanwhile, the shadowy figures had become more numerous and were

now pouring out of the nearby forest. In no time, they had surrounded the barns and yelled: "Get out! All of you!"

The Varangians hesitated for some minutes and the men outside finally answered with a volley of their machine guns. Some of Frank's men threw themselves instantly to the ground, others were hit by bullets and broke down screaming.

"Shit!", hissed Kohlhaas, threw away his gun and came out of the barn. His men did the same and followed him without making a sound.

Cones of flashlights danced over their faces. Meanwhile, the adjoining barn had caught fire, and some coughing Varangians stumbled out of the smoke.

"Go there!", said a sinister figure and came nearer.

Kohlhaas and his soldiers lined up in a row and recognized some of their comrades, who were already lying dead on the meadow. Again, they were hit by flashlights.

"This guy is a general! The rest are ordinary Varangians!", shouted one of the attackers and pointed at Frank's uniform. "All right!", it resounded out of the darkness.

A moment later, Frank's men were riddled with bullets, while the general was speechless with horror. With wide eyes he stared at the ground, where his men were lying in pools of blood.

"Now it's over!", it flashed through his mind, while he was seized by sheer panic.

The men of the raiding party searched the ground, looking for Varangians who were not yet dead. They killed the wounded with shots in the heads and came then back to Frank.

"Bad luck for you, my friend!", whispered one of the guys and grinned maliciously. Then a rifle butt hit Frank's face and the leader of the Varangian Guard lost his consciousness.

“Leading general of the Volksarmee arrested and executed!”, headlined Russia's biggest newspaper, that was meanwhile in Uljanin`s hand, on 12.01.2038.

Artur Tschistokjow, the president of Belarus and the leader of the freedom movement, held his breath and sank down on his chair.

Beside him stood Alfred Bäumer, Frank's best friend, who had yesterday returned to Minsk. Furthermore, Thorsten Wilden and some other confidants of Tschistokjow.

The color had disappeared from their faces and the horror had paralyzed their brains like a power failure. Bäumer muttered something in German, trudged to the window and wiped the tears from his eyes.

“This must not be true!”, he whispered.

Wilden said nothing and just stared at the evil-looking title of the collectivist newspaper. No one of the men was able to find the right words in this moment. Frank had fallen...

Meanwhile, two hours had passed. Artur Tschistokjow still did not want to believe that his friend and best officer was really dead. Whereas Alfred and Wilden were totally confused. They fluctuated between sadness, wrath and a deep feeling of helplessness.

Finally, the foreign minister left the presidential palace with Bäumer and walked down the long staircase to the lower floor without saying a word.

“Frank must be replaced!”, Wilden suddenly remarked.

Alf turned his head around and answered: “What do you mean?”

“We have to replace him! The Varangian Guard needs a new leader!”

“Replace him? My best friend is not cold yet and you are talking about replacing?”, sobbed Bäumer angrily.

“It is necessary!”, returned Wilden.

“Necessary? Is that all you have to say to Frank’s death?”, yelled Alf at him.

“No! I’m sorry, my friend.”

“He was like a brother to me. How shall I go on without him? This whole shit just pisses me off, Thorsten!”, said Alfred with tears running down his cheeks that were marked with scratches and scars.

Wilden stopped and stared into space. Then he answered: “Many people say, that I’m sober and factual. I always try to see only the big things, while I ignore the small. I try not to be guided by grief and I try to keep a cool head.

But I will still have a lot of opportunities to grieve for the boy. He was my friend, my student, my best comrade, my hero. He was almost like my own son. Now he has fallen. Soldiers fall and must be replaced. I fall and must be replaced. And you and everyone else. The battle line has always to be closed, another man has always to move up, in order to replace the dead.” Wilden beheld Alf with his sad, old eyes.

“I can not remain that calm”, said Bäumer perplexedly and went out of the presidential palace. The foreign minister followed him.

”Cruel hours are waiting for me, Alf. When I am alone, then grief will find me. And if I must tell it to Julia, and she almost loses her mind with pain. Even a part of me has died, together with Frank. He was my boy!”, said the old man crying and walked away.

Alexander Merow`s “Prey World” books (Part 1-4, German version):

Available in all book stores and at Amazon!!!

Prey World I - Citizen 1-564398B-278843

The year 2028. Mankind is in the stranglehold of a worldwide surveillance state. Frank Kohlhaas, a petty citizen, lives a cheerless life, working as an agency worker in a steel plant.

One day, he gets into a conflict with the tyrannical system, because of an unfortunate accident. An automated trial convicts him to five years of imprisonment and Frank disappears in a detention centre, where he suffers under a cruel system of brainwashing and reeducation. After eight months of pain, the authorities decide to transfer him to another prison. On the way there, something unexpected happens. Suddenly everything changes and the young man finds himself caught between the fronts...

Prey World II – Rebellion Beyond

Oppression and manipulation are the order of the day in the year 2030. Only one single nation had been brave enough, to fight for its independence – Japan.

Frank Kohlhaas, Alfred Bäumer and millions of desperate people look at the Japanese president Matsumoto who has liberated his people. But the Lodge Brothers are not willing to leave the renegade nation in peace. They slander the Japanese with a big hate campaign and plan a military strike to bring the rebellious Asians to their knees.

Frank and Alfred decide to join the Japanese fight for freedom as volunteers. Soon the situation gets out of control and the fight against the New Worlder Order becomes a bloody nightmare.

Prey World III – Organized Rage

In the year 2033, the economic situation in Europe is more hopeless than ever before. The World Government still loots the nations without mercy and holds them in its iron claws. Artur Tschistokjow, a young dissident from Belarus, takes over the leadership of the Freedom Movement of the Rus, a small group of rebels that fights against the Lodge Brothers in the underground.

While a big economic crisis starts in Belarus, the rebels form a growing revolutionary movement. Frank, Alfred and an increasing number of discontent Belarusians join Tschistokjow's organization. They finally follow the Russian dissident to a point of no return.

Prey World V – Civil War 2038 (Coming soon!)