



外国文学经典

War and Peace



战争
与
和平

(下)

Leo Tolstoy (俄) 著

Louise & Aylmer Maude (英) 译

外语教学与研究出版社

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PART THREE

1



bsolute continuity of motion is not comprehensible to the human mind. Laws of motion of any kind only become comprehensible to man when he examines arbitrarily selected elements of that motion; but at the same time, a large proportion of human error comes from the arbitrary division of continuous motion into discontinuous elements. There is a well-known so-called sophism of the ancients consisting in this, that Achilles could never catch up with a tortoise he was following, in spite of the fact that he travelled ten times as fast as the tortoise. By the time Achilles has covered the distance that separated him from the tortoise, the tortoise has covered one-tenth of that distance ahead of him: when Achilles has covered that tenth, the tortoise has covered another one-hundredth, and so on for ever. This problem seemed to the ancients insoluble. The absurd answer (that Achilles could never overtake the tortoise) resulted from this: that motion was arbitrarily divided into discontinuous elements, whereas the motion both of Achilles and of the tortoise was continuous.

By adopting smaller and smaller elements of motion we only approach a solution of the problem, but never reach it. Only when we have admitted the conception of the

infinitely small, and the resulting geometrical progression with a common ratio of one-tenth, and have found the sum of this progression to infinity, do we reach a solution of the problem.

A modern branch of mathematics, having achieved the art of dealing with the infinitely small, can now yield solutions in other more complex problems of motion, which used to appear insoluble.

This modern branch of mathematics, unknown to the ancients, when dealing with problems of motion, admits the conception of the infinitely small, and so conforms to the chief condition of motion (absolute continuity) and thereby corrects the inevitable error which the human mind cannot avoid when dealing with separate elements of motion instead of examining continuous motion.

In seeking the laws of historical movement just the same thing happens. The movement of humanity, arising as it does from innumerable arbitrary human wills, is continuous.

To understand the laws of this continuous movement is the aim of history. But to arrive at these laws, resulting from the sum of all those human wills, man's mind postulates arbitrary and disconnected units. The first method of history is to take an arbitrarily selected series of continuous events and examine it apart from others, though there is and can be no *beginning* to any event, for one event always flows uninterruptedly from another.

The second method is to consider the actions of some one man — a king or a commander — as equivalent to

the sum of many individual wills; whereas the sum of individual wills is never expressed by the activity of a single historic personage.

Historical science in its endeavour to draw nearer to truth continually takes smaller and smaller units for examination. But however small the units it takes, we feel that to take any unit disconnected from others, or to assume a *beginning* of any phenomenon, or to say that the will of many men is expressed by the actions of any one historic personage, is in itself false.

It needs no critical exertion to reduce utterly to dust any deductions drawn from history. It is merely necessary to select some larger or smaller unit as the subject of observation — as criticism has every right to do, seeing that whatever unit history observes must always be arbitrarily selected.

Only by taking an infinitesimally small unit for observation (the differential of history, that is, the individual tendencies of men) and attaining to the art of integrating them (that is, finding the sum of these infinitesimals) can we hope to arrive at the laws of history.

The first fifteen years of the nineteenth century in Europe present an extraordinary movement of millions of people. Men leave their customary pursuits, hasten from one side of Europe to the other, plunder and slaughter one another, triumph and are plunged in despair, and for some years the whole course of life is altered and presents an intensive movement which first increases and then slackens. What was the cause of this movement, by what laws was it governed? asks the mind of man.

The historians, replying to this question, lay before us the sayings and doings of a few dozen men in a building in the city of Paris, calling these sayings and doings 'the Revolution'; then they give a detailed biography of Napoleon, and of certain people favourable or hostile to him; tell of the influence some of these people had on others, and say: That is why this movement took place and those are its laws.

But the mind of man not only refuses to believe this explanation, but plainly says that this method of explanation is fallacious, because in it a weaker phenomenon is taken as the cause of a stronger. The sum of human wills produced the Revolution and Napoleon, and only the sum of those wills first tolerated and then destroyed them.

'But every time there have been conquests there have been conquerors; every time there has been a revolution in any state there have been great men,' says history. And indeed, every time conquerors appear there have been wars, human reason replies, but this does not prove that the conquerors caused the wars and that it is possible to find the laws of a war in the personal activity of a single man. Whenever I look at my watch and its hands point to ten, I hear the bells of the neighbouring church; but I have no right to assume that because the bells begin to ring when the hands of the watch reach ten, the movement of the bells is caused by the position of the hands of the watch.

Whenever I see the movement of a locomotive I hear the whistle and see the valves opening and wheels turning; but I have no right to conclude that the whistling and the turning of wheels are the cause of the movement of the engine.

The peasants say that a cold wind blows in late spring because the oaks are budding, and really every spring cold winds do blow when the oak is budding. But though I do not know what causes the cold winds to blow when the oak-buds unfold, I cannot agree with the peasants that the unfolding of the oak-buds is the cause of the cold wind, for the force of the wind is beyond the influence of the buds. I see only a coincidence of occurrences such as happens with all the phenomena of life, and I see that however much and however carefully I observe the hands of the watch, and the valves and wheels of the engine, and the oak, I shall not discover the cause of the bells ringing, the engine moving, or of the winds of spring. To do that I must entirely change my point of view and study the laws of the movement of steam, of the bells, and of the wind. History must do the same. And attempts in this direction have already been made.

To study the laws of history we must completely change the subject of our observation, must leave aside kings, ministers, and generals, and study the common, infinitesimally small elements by which the masses are moved. No one can say in how far it is possible for man to advance in this way towards an understanding of the laws of history; but it is evident that only along that path does the possibility of discovering the laws of history lie; and that as yet not a millionth part as much mental effort has been applied in this direction by historians as has been devoted to describing the actions of various kings, commanders, and ministers and propounding reflections of their own concerning these actions.

The forces of a dozen European nations burst into Russia. The Russian army and people avoided a collision till Smolensk was reached, and again from Smolensk to Borodino. The French army pushed on to Moscow, its goal, its impetus ever increasing as it neared its aim, just as the velocity of a falling body increases as it approaches the earth. Behind it were a thousand versts of hunger-stricken, hostile country, ahead were a few dozen versts separating it from its goal. Every soldier in Napoleon's army felt this and the invasion moved on by its own momentum.

The more the Russian army retreated the more fiercely a spirit of hatred of the enemy flared up: and while it retreated the army increased and consolidated. At Borodino a collision took place. Neither army was broken up, but the Russian army retreated immediately after the collision, as inevitably as a ball recoils after colliding with another having a greater momentum, and with equal inevitability the ball of invasion that had advanced with such momentum rolled on for some distance, though the collision had deprived it of all its force.

The Russians retreated eighty miles — to beyond Moscow — and the French reached Moscow and there came to a standstill. For five weeks after that there was not a single battle. The French did not move. As a bleeding, mortally wounded animal licks its wounds, they remained inert in Moscow for five weeks, and then suddenly, with no fresh reason, fled back; they made a dash for the Kaluga road, and (after a victory — for at Malo-Yaroslavets the field of conflict again remained theirs) without undertaking a single serious battle, they fled still more rapidly back to

Smolensk, beyond Smolensk, beyond the Berēzina, beyond Vilna, and farther still.

On the evening of the 26th of August, Kutuzov and the whole Russian army were convinced that the battle of Borodino was a victory. Kutuzov reported so to the Emperor. He gave orders to prepare for a fresh conflict to finish the enemy, and did this not to deceive anyone, but because he knew that the enemy was beaten, as everyone who had taken part in the battle knew it.

But all that evening and next day reports came in one after another of unheard-of losses, of loss of half the army, and a fresh battle proved physically impossible.

It *was impossible* to give battle before information had been collected, the wounded gathered in, the supplies of ammunition replenished, the slain reckoned up, new officers appointed to replace those who had been killed, and before the men had had food and sleep. And meanwhile, the very next morning after the battle, the French army advanced of itself upon the Russians, carried forward by the force of its own movement now seemingly increased in inverse proportion to the square of the distance from its aim. Kutuzov's wish was to attack next day, and the whole army desired to do so. But to make an attack the wish to do so is not sufficient, there must also be a possibility of doing it, and that possibility did not exist. It was impossible not to retreat a day's march, and then in the same way it was impossible not to retreat another and a third day's march, and at last, on the 1st of September when the army drew near Moscow — despite the strength of the feeling that had arisen in all ranks, the force of circumstances compelled it to retire beyond Moscow. And the troops retired one more, last, day's

march, and abandoned Moscow to the enemy.

For people accustomed to think that plans of campaign and battles are made by generals — as any one of us sitting over a map in his study may imagine how he would have arranged things in this or that battle — the questions present themselves: Why did Kutuzov during the retreat not do this or that? Why did he not take up a position before reaching Fili? Why did he not retire at once by the Kaluga road, abandoning Moscow? and so on. People accustomed to think in that way forget, or do not know, the inevitable conditions which always limit the activities of any commander-in-chief. The activity of a commander-in-chief does not at all resemble the activity we imagine to ourselves when we sit at ease in our studies examining some campaign on the map, with a certain number of troops on this and that side in a certain known locality, and begin our plans from some given moment. A commander-in-chief is never dealing with the *beginning* of any event — the position from which we always contemplate it. The commander-in-chief is always in the midst of a series of shifting events and so he never can at any moment consider the whole import of an event that is occurring. Moment by moment the event is imperceptibly shaping itself, and at every moment of this continuous, uninterrupted shaping of events the commander-in-chief is in the midst of a most complex play of intrigues, worries, contingencies, authorities, projects, counsels, threats, and deceptions, and is continually obliged to reply to innumerable questions addressed to him, which constantly conflict with one another.

Learned military authorities quite seriously tell us that

Kutuzov should have moved his army to the Kaluga road long before reaching Fili, and that somebody actually submitted such a proposal to him. But a commander-in-chief, especially at a difficult moment, has always before him not one proposal but dozens simultaneously. And all these proposals, based on strategies and tactics, contradict each other.

A commander-in-chief's business, it would seem, is simply to choose one of these projects. But even that he cannot do. Events and time do not wait. For instance, on the 28th it is suggested to him to cross to the Kaluga road, but just then an adjutant gallops up from Miloradovich asking whether he is to engage the French or retire. An order must be given him at once, that instant. And the order to retreat carries us past the turn to the Kaluga road. And after the adjutant comes the commissary-general asking where the stores are to be taken, and the chief of the hospitals asks where the wounded are to go, and a courier from Petersburg brings a letter from the sovereign which does not admit of the possibility of abandoning Moscow, and the commander-in-chief's rival, the man who is undermining him (and there are always not merely one but several such), presents a new project diametrically opposed to that of turning to the Kaluga road, and the commander-in-chief himself needs sleep and refreshment to maintain his energy, and a respectable general who has been overlooked in the distribution of rewards comes to complain, and the inhabitants of the district pray to be defended, and an officer sent to inspect the locality comes in and gives a report quite contrary to what was said by the officer previously sent, and a spy, a prisoner, and a general who has been on reconnaissance, all describe the position of the enemy's army differently. People

accustomed to misunderstand or to forget these inevitable conditions of a commander-in-chief's actions describe to us, for instance, the position of the army at Fili and assume that the commander-in-chief could, on the 1st of September, quite freely decide whether to abandon Moscow or defend it; whereas, with the Russian army less than four miles from Moscow, no such question existed. When had that question been settled? At Drissa, and at Smolensk, and most palpably of all on the 24th of August at Shevardino and on the 26th at Borodino, and each day and hour and minute of the retreat from Borodino to Fili.

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When Ermolov, having been sent by Kutuzov to inspect the position, told the field-marshal that it was impossible to fight there before Moscow and that they must retreat, Kutuzov looked at him in silence.

'Give me your hand,' said he, and turning it over so as to feel the pulse, added: 'You are not well, my dear fellow. Think what you are saying.'

Kutuzov could not yet admit the possibility of retreating beyond Moscow without a battle.

On the Poklonny Hill, four miles from the Dorgomilov gate of Moscow, Kutuzov got out of his carriage and sat down on a bench by the roadside. A great crowd of generals gathered round him, and Count Rostopchin, who had come out from Moscow, joined them. This brilliant company separated into several groups who all discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the position, the state of the army, the plans suggested, the situation of

Moscow, and military questions generally. Though they had not been summoned for the purpose, and though it was not so called, they all felt that this was really a council of war. The conversations all dealt with public questions. If anyone gave or asked for personal news, it was done in a whisper and they immediately reverted to general matters. No jokes, or laughter, or smiles even, were seen among all these men. They evidently all made an effort to hold themselves at the height the situation demanded. And all these groups, while talking among themselves, tried to keep near the commander-in-chief (whose bench formed the center of the gathering) and to speak so that he might overhear them. The commander-in-chief listened to what was being said and sometimes asked them to repeat their remarks, but did not himself take part in the conversations or express any opinion. After hearing what was being said by one or other of these groups he generally turned away with an air of disappointment, as though they were not speaking of anything he wished to hear. Some discussed the position that had been chosen, criticizing not the position itself so much as the mental capacity of those who had chosen it. Others argued that a mistake had been made earlier and that a battle should have been fought two days before. Others again spoke of the battle of Salamanca, which was described by Crosart, a newly arrived Frenchman in a Spanish uniform. (This Frenchman and one of the German princes serving with the Russian army were discussing the siege of Saragossa* and considering the possibility of defending Moscow in a similar manner.) Count Rostopchin was telling a fourth group that he was prepared to die with the city train-bands under the walls of the capital, but that he still could not help regretting

having been left in ignorance of what was happening, and that had he known it sooner things would have been different.... A fifth group, displaying the profundity of their strategic perceptions, discussed the direction the troops would now have to take. A sixth group was talking absolute nonsense. Kutuzov's expression grew more and more preoccupied and gloomy. From all this talk he saw only one thing: that to defend Moscow was a *physical impossibility* in the full meaning of those words, that is to say, so utterly impossible that if any senseless commander were to give orders to fight, confusion would result but the battle would still not take place. It would not take place because the commanders not merely all recognized the position to be impossible, but in their conversations were only discussing what would happen after its inevitable abandonment. How could the commanders lead their troops to a field of battle they considered it impossible to hold? The lower-grade officers and even the soldiers (who also reason) also considered the position impossible, and therefore could not go to fight fully convinced as they were of defeat. If Bennigsen insisted on the position being defended and others still discussed it, the question was no longer important in itself but only as a pretext for disputes and intrigue. This Kutuzov knew well.

Bennigsen, who had chosen the position, warmly displayed his Russian patriotism (Kutuzov could not listen to this without wincing) by insisting that Moscow must be defended. His aim was as clear as daylight to Kutuzov: if the defence failed, to throw the blame on Kutuzov who had brought the army as far as the Sparrow Hills without giving battle; if it succeeded, to claim the success as his own; or if battle were not given, to clear himself of the

crime of abandoning Moscow. But this intrigue did not now occupy the old man's mind. One terrible question absorbed him and to that question he heard no reply from anyone. The question for him now was: 'Have I really allowed Napoleon to reach Moscow, and when did I do so? When was it decided? Can it have been yesterday when I ordered Platov to retreat, or was it the evening before when I had a nap and told Bennigsen to issue orders? Or was it earlier still?... When, when was this terrible affair decided? Moscow must be abandoned. The army must retreat and the order to do so must be given.' To give that terrible order seemed to him equivalent to resigning the command of the army. And not only did he love power, to which he was accustomed (the honours awarded to Prince Prozorovsky, under whom he had served in Turkey, galled him), but he was convinced that he was destined to save Russia and that that was why, against the Emperor's wish and by the will of the people, he had been chosen commander-in-chief. He was convinced that he alone could maintain command of the army in these difficult circumstances, and that in all the world he alone could encounter the invincible Napoleon without fear, and he was horrified at the thought of the order he had to issue. But something had to be decided, and these conversations around him which were assuming too free a character must be stopped.

He called the most important generals to him.

'My head, be it good or bad, must depend on itself,' said he, rising from the bench, and he rode to Fili where his carriages were waiting.

The Council of War began to assemble at two in the afternoon in the better and roomier part of Andrew Savostyanov's hut. The men, women, and children of the large peasant family crowded into the back room across the passage. Only Malasha, Andrew's six-year-old granddaughter, whom his Serene Highness had petted and to whom he had given a lump of sugar while drinking his tea, remained on the top of the brick oven in the larger room. Malasha looked down from the oven with shy delight at the faces, uniforms, and decorations of the generals, who one after another came into the room and sat down on the broad benches in the corner under the icons. 'Grandad' himself, as Malasha in her own mind called Kutuzov, sat apart in a dark corner behind the oven. He sat sunk deep in a folding arm-chair and continually cleared his throat and pulled at the collar of his coat which, though it was unbuttoned, still seemed to pinch his neck. Those who entered went up one by one to the field-marshal; he pressed the hands of some and nodded to others. His adjutant, Kaysarov, was about to draw back the curtain of the window facing Kutuzov, but the latter moved his hand angrily and Kaysarov understood that his Serene Highness did not wish his face to be seen.

Round the peasant's deal table on which lay maps, plans, pencils, and papers, so many people gathered that the orderlies brought in another bench and put it beside the table. Ermolov, Kaysarov, and Toll, who had just arrived, sat down on this bench. In the foremost place, immediately under the icons, sat Barclay de Tolly, his high forehead merging into his bald crown. He had a St