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# STALINGRAD TO GROZNY

The war reporting of Vassily Grossman and Anna  
Politkovskaya.

James Rodgers. City University London.

# Vassily Grossman, 1905–64



# The Battle of Stalingrad, 1942–3



# Grossman interviews a sniper

‘When I first got the rifle, I couldn’t bring myself to kill a living being: one German was standing there for about four minutes, talking, and I let him go. When I killed my first one, he fell at once. Another one ran out and stooped over the killed one, and I knocked him down too ... when I first killed, I was shaking all over: the man was only walking to get some water! ... I felt scared: I’d killed a person! Then I remembered our people and started killing them without mercy.’

(2006: 157)

- ▶ No I don't believe she is still alive. I travel all the time around areas
- ▶ that have been liberated, and I see what these accursed monsters
- ▶ have done to old people and children. And Mama was Jewish. A
- ▶ desire to exchange my pen for a rifle is getting stronger and stronger
- ▶ in me.
- ▶ (2006: 224)

- ▶ There were black holes and craters from bombs everywhere along the
- ▶ railway. One could see trees broken by explosions. In the fields there
- ▶ were thousands of peasants, men and women, digging anti-tank
- ▶ ditches.
- ▶ We watch the sky nervously and decided to jump off the train if
- ▶ the worst came to the worst. It was moving quite slowly. The
- ▶ moment we arrived in Novozybkov there was an air raid. A bomb
- ▶ fell
- ▶ by the station forecourt. This train wasn't going any further.
- ▶ (2006: 8)