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Suworow's „The art of victory“ in action

How the Russian bayonet pierced the Alps

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In the autumn of 1799, the Alps Campaign of the Russian Army under the command of Field Marshal Alexander Suworow (1730-1800) ended. Today there exists plenty of literature on this operation that lasted for 17 days. Among the researchers having investigated the events of 1799 in Italy and Switzerland one can also find Clausewitz. Nevertheless there are, however, gaps, errors and mistakes, which complicate an objective perception of the events of that time. When Alexander Puschkin was born on 6th June 1799, Suworow had won another victory by the River Trebbia in Italy. Hundred years later, the Russian publicist Michail Menschikow denoted the great Russian commander "Puschkin of Military Culture". As a child already, Suworow read books about Alexander the Great, Caesar, Hannibal, Prince Eugene, Charles XII. Of Sweden, and Peter the Great. Other than his equals, Suworow increased his educational level in the course of his whole life. He spoke French and German fluently and had basic knowledge of the Finnish, Turkish and Italian languages. Before the Italian campaign, he had read scientific books in his Kontschanskoe Manor in Nowgorod, regularly subscribing not only Russian but also foreign newspapers and journals. Under these circumstances, the commander had watched the international developments attentively. In Russia, the generalissimo became a legendary personality and national heritage in his lifetime, which represents an exception in military history. His intellectual heritage is manifold and includes Military strategic, political and military pedagogic as well as other dimensions. After his death in May 1800, his pupils and successors assimilated his ideas, thus creating the fundamentals for future military successes. Many heroes and commanders of the 1812 War considered themselves Suworow's pupils. During the Soviet era, the focus of publications on Suworow was most of all on the achievements of the national art of war. It is remarkable that on 7th November 1941 the then commander-in-chief Josef Stalin ended his speech during the military review on the Red Square with the following words: "Let the heroic example of your great ancestors inspire you - Alexander Newskis, Dmitri Donskojs, Kusma Minins, Dmitri Poscharskis, Alexander Suworows, Michail Kutusows!" In 1942, the Suworow-Medal was implemented. In present Russia, the Suworow's intellectual heritage is still alive. Thus, it is urgently necessary to use Suworow's strategies and teaching approaches to further develop Russia's military strategy in order to continue to be successful.

